

Kingston

**tennessee
civil war
preservation
association**

NARRATIVE

On November 24, 1863, the Confederate cavalry divisions of Brig. Gen William Martin and Brig. Gen. Frank Armstrong under Maj. Gen. Joe Wheeler conducted a reconnaissance in force against the Union forces in Kingston Tennessee consisting of the First Brigade, Second Division, XXIII Corps (Col. Samuel Mott), the First Tennessee Infantry (Col. Robert Byrd), Second Brigade, 4th Division, XXIII Corps, and the 2nd Tennessee Cavalry (Col. Daniel Ray). Advancing on the Old Knoxville Road, Wheeler's cavalry engaged the Union force along a ridge east of town. Discovering that the Union force was larger than expected, Wheeler withdrew his cavalry back to Knoxville after a 7-hour engagement. Confederate casualties were approximately 25; reported Union losses were 1 killed and 14 wounded in the 118th Ohio Infantry.

HISTORICAL THEMES

Controlling Resources, Hard Hand of War, Transformation in Warfare, Link to Campaign (Knoxville)

EXPLANATION OF ATTACHMENTS/VIDEO:

Reports from Official Records, Regimental Memoir from Newspaper, Regimental History (25th Michigan Infantry)

LINKS FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

N/A

COUNTY:

Roane

DATE:

11/24/1863

GEO COORDINATES:

35.8733° N,
84.5047° W

PRESERVATION

OPPORTUNITY INDEX:

HIGH

CONFEDERATE UNITS:

Wheeler's Cavalry
Martin and
Armstrong's
Divisions

UNION UNITS:

1st Brigade, 2nd
Division,
23rd Corps
1st Tennessee
Infantry (Byrd)
2nd Tennessee
Cavalry (Ray)

Kingston, TN Battlefield (Nov 24, 1863) Reports from Official Records and Other
OR Series I, XXXI Part 1, pp. 543-544 Report of Maj. Gen. Joseph Wheeler- Engagement at
Kingston, Nov 24, 1863

On the 21st, I had received a communication from the lieutenant-general commanding, of which the following is an extract :

Colonel Lyon, in command near Kingston, reports two regiments of cavalry and two pieces of artillery at Kingston. It appears to me this party might be captured.

About 10 o'clock on the night of the 22d, I received a dispatch from the lieutenant-general commanding, saying that the contemplated attack would be postponed, and continued by saying :

You will have to march, therefore, early to-morrow for Kingston, leaving a brigade to picket and scout upon our left. You will please give particular and minute instructions to the brigade commander whom you leave. Try and reach Kingston before day on the 24th ; drive in the pickets there, and you will then ascertain whether the enemy has been re-enforced. If he has not, capture or disperse the force that is there.

Pursuant to these instructions I issued orders for the march and directed the command to fall back and feed. To accomplish this it was necessary for half the command to fall back 7 miles, and therefore it did not get into camp until nearly daylight, shortly after which time I was obliged to commence the march. The roads were so bad that the most strenuous exertions enabled me to make but 26 miles before dark. Being still 20 miles from Kingston, I left orders for the command to follow, and proceeded with my escort rapidly on the road toward that place. On arriving in the vicinity I learned that the enemy had re-enforced with infantry, but could not learn the extent.

About 3 a. m. the command came up much worn and exhausted, half of the men having lost two nights' sleep, and during the march of the preceding day had necessarily received short allowance of rations. Five of our best regiments had been left at Knoxville, and, as I afterward learned, many of our men had been left at various points along the road, they from exhaustion being absolutely unable to keep up with the command. After an hour's rest I proceeded on with the command and encountered the enemy's pickets 3 miles from

Kingston about one hour before day. A party was sent to cut off the pickets but failed. We pressed on toward the town against a warm resistance of the enemy. It was my hope to reach the town before they could form. In this I was disappointed. Notwithstanding the rapidity of our movements, on arriving at the foot of a hill near the town, we found it covered with long lines of infantry and dismounted cavalry. I immediately dismounted the entire command, except one regiment to guard my flanks, and pressed upon the enemy, who had by this time opened a warm fire of infantry and artillery, two of their guns throwing 24-pound shot. The enemy's line extended along the crest of the ridge, the concavity being toward us. Their flanks were thrown forward so as nearly to envelop our lines, which enabled him to fire upon our flanks, and even the rear of our right.

I hoped from their extended position that I might charge their center, but after a careful personal reconnoissance I found that they were very strong at every point. To approach the enemy it was necessary to advance up a gentle slope through open fields which the enemy swept by both direct and cross fire. Finding that I could gain nothing by continuing in my present position, I determined to withdraw, Generals Martin and Armstrong recommending it. At this moment the enemy charged our right, but were most gallantly repulsed with considerable loss by a counter-charge by our troops. We then withdrew quietly without being followed by the enemy.

OR Series I, XXXI Part 1 p.545. Report of Maj. Gen. Will T. Martin, Commanding Longstreet's Cavalry

A few days afterward, the First and Sixth Georgia having reported to me for duty, the command moved upon Kingston by a forced march and made an ineffective attempt to take that place. The strength of the position, the weight of metal of their artillery, and the steadiness of the enemy's force there foiled our efforts. Major-General Wheeler, under whose immediate orders the foregoing movements were made, placed me in command and left to report to General Bragg on November 24 last.

OR Series I, XXXI, Part 1 pp. 381-382 Report of Col. Samuel Mott, 118th Ohio Infantry, commanding 1st Brigade

Report of Col. Samuel R. Mott, One hundred and eighteenth Ohio Infantry, commanding First Brigade.

HDQRS. FIRST BRIG., SECOND DIV., 23D ARMY CORPS,
Kingston, Tenn., December 3, 1863.

COLONEL: I have the honor to report that this brigade was attacked on the 24th ultimo at this place by General Wheeler's force of cavalry and mounted infantry, numbering from 8,000 to 12,000 men, with eight pieces of artillery.

The attack was made at daylight, and after a brisk engagement of seven hours' duration the enemy was handsomely whipped and driven back with a loss of 250 killed, wounded, and prisoners. Among their killed was Colonel Russell, of the Third [Fourth] Alabama, and 2 other colonels were wounded. Wheeler retreated to Loudon, where he destroyed a large amount of quartermaster and commissary stores and ammunition, a large train of cars, three engines, and three bat-

teries of artillery, alleging to citizens that he was pursued by Rosecrans' whole army.

Too much cannot be said in praise of the cool and determined bravery of the officers and men under my command. Each one did his whole duty. As an instance, I may mention the case of Captain Murphey, of the Sixteenth Kentucky, who with a single company charged a rebel regiment and demanded their surrender. Indeed, there were many instances of both officers and men performing prodigies of valor.

Our loss was 15 wounded, 1 of whom has since died.

I have the honor to be, colonel, with high consideration, your obedient servant,

SAMUEL R. MOTT,

Colonel, Comdg. First Brig., Second Div., 23d Army Corps.

Col. LEWIS RICHMOND, *Assistant Adjutant-General.*

OR Series I, XXXI Part 1, pp. 422 Report of Col. Robert Byrd, 1st Tennessee Infantry

No. 43.

Report of Col. Robert K. Byrd, First Tennessee Infantry, commanding Second Brigade.

HEADQUARTERS,

Kingston, Tenn., November 24, 1863—4.30 p. m.

A rebel force attacked us this morning about daylight, and we drove them back, taking 12 prisoners, killing 8 of them. The force is said to be from 5,000 to 6,000 strong; we saw a large number. Wheeler is in command. I sent the hull of a steam-boat last night. I hope it will arrive safe. I hear of 20 mules below here; all safe. General Burnside is still in Knoxville; said to be surrounded. We have no communication with him.

Your obedient servant,

R. K. BYRD,

Colonel, Commanding Post.

General GRANT.

Lieut. John W. Andes, 10th installment of "Reminiscences of the Second Tennessee Cavalry."

On the night of the 23rd, Gen. Wheeler came down the Knoxville road to attack Kingston. The Second [Tennessee Cavalry] was in camps on the old Knoxville road about two and a half miles out of Kingston. Wheeler came in with a pretty heavy force and got in between us and town, before daylight in the morning [24th], and had us cut entirely off. Our only chance was to fight our way through. We soon ascertained his weakest point, made a bold front and dashed through his lines while his principal force was engaged with the infantry was engaged with the infantry on the old Knoxville road, on the opposite side of the town, or rather on our right. We gained a strong position near the residence of Maj. Thomas Tipton. Lieut. Frank A. Little, who was then in command of Company C, reached Tipton's house, where he and his command took refuge and boldly held their ground. The enemy made repeated attempts to drive them from their position, but were repulsed every time, by the gallant Lieutenant and his gallant men. The fight was kept up here from daylight until about 4 p. m., the enemy having made several unsuccessful charges. Lieut. Little had a few men wounded, but none killed. The enemy left twenty-five dead on the field. The wounded were carried away. Our entire force at Kingston at the time did not exceed 2,000 men. The infantry was commanded by Col. Byrd and did some gallant fighting. Gen. Wheeler had about 5,000 men.

Knoxville Daily Chronicle, March 11, 1879. **Note 1**

It had been evident that he was moving his main force against Knoxville and not against ourselves. He had probably placed a small band out in front of us to make a show and prevent a supposed union of ourselves with Burnside. They

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made several attacks upon us but they were too weak to make an impression of any consequence. However large or small in numbers, it hovered on our front, threatening attacks and then withdrawing under compulsion for several days. This was kept up till the morning of the twenty-fourth, when they again pressed on to feel of us more severely. But, after considerable moving around through the woods and underbrush, they got felt of most severely themselves. I had no means of learning their strength. They brought their artillery into play, the sound of which no sooner disclosed its position in the woods to us, than Captain Wood of the Elgin battery gained a range upon them, sent a few shells over to their side and soon drove them into silence. Their bullets flew among the 25th, which was lying in support of the battery, but not with any aim, as they came through the woods and to little purpose, as no one was hurt by them beyond two of Company D, who were wounded, and one killed in the 16th Kentucky. The rebels were driven back a mile and a half and were content to stay there the rest of the day. Thence they finally left, for this was the last they were seen there during our stay at Kingston.

Union Order of Battle: Second Division, First Brigade

SECOND DIVISION.*

Brig. Gen. MAHLON D. MANSON.

First Brigade.

Col. SAMUEL R. MOTT.

80th Indiana, Col. James L. Culbertson.
 16th Kentucky, Col. James W. Gault.
 25th Michigan, Capt. Samuel L. Demarest.
 118th Ohio, Lieut. Col. Thomas L. Young.
 Elgin (Illinois) Light Battery, Capt. Andrew M. Wood.

Second Brigade.

Col. MARSHAL W. CHAPIN.

107th Illinois, Lieut. Col. Francis H. Lowry.
 13th Kentucky, Col. William E. Hobson.
 23d Michigan, Maj. William W. Wheeler.
 111th Ohio, Maj. Isaac R. Sherwood.
 Henshaw's (Illinois) Light Battery, Capt. Edward C. Henshaw.

1st Tennessee Infantry, Col. William Byrd

2nd Tennessee Cavalry, Col. Daniel Ray

Confederate Order of Battle
Wheeler's Cavalry, Maj. Gen. Joseph Wheeler

Maj. Gen. WILLIAM T. MARTIN.

MARTIN'S DIVISION.

First Brigade.

Brig. Gen. JOHN T. MORGAN.

1st Alabama, Lieut. Col. D. T. Blakey.
3d Alabama, Lieut. Col. T. H. Mauldin.
4th Alabama, Lieut. Col. J. M. Hambrick.
7th Alabama, Col. James C. Malone, jr.
51st Alabama, Capt. M. L. Kirkpatrick.

Second Brigade.

Col. J. J. MORRISON.

1st Georgia, Lieut. Col. S. W. Davitte.
2d Georgia, Lieut. Col. F. M. Ison.
3d Georgia, Lieut. Col. R. Thompson.
4th Georgia, Col. Isaac W. Avery.
6th Georgia, Col. John R. Hart.

ARMSTRONG'S DIVISION.

Brig. Gen. FRANK C. ARMSTRONG.

First Brigade.

Brig. Gen. WILLIAM Y. C. HUMES.

4th Tennessee, Lieut. Col. Paul F. Anderson.
8th Tennessee, Lieut. Col. Ferdinand H. Daugherty.
9th Tennessee, Col. Jacob B. Biffle.
10th Tennessee, Col. Nicholas N. Cox.

Second Brigade.

Col. C. H. TYLER.

Clay's (Kentucky) Battalion, Lieut. Col. Ezekiel F. Clay.
Edmundson's (Virginia) Battalion, Maj. Sylvester P. McConnell.
Jessee's (Kentucky) Battalion, Maj. A. L. McAfee.
Johnson's (Kentucky) Battalion, Maj. O. S. Tenney.

ARTILLERY.

Tennessee Battery, Capt. A. L. Huggins.
Tennessee Battery, Capt. Gustave A. Huwald.
Tennessee Battery, Capt. B. F. White, jr.
Arkansas Battery, Capt. J. H. Wiggins.

RESERVE ARTILLERY.*

Maj. FELIX H. ROBERTSON.

Missouri Battery, Capt. Overton W. Barret.
Georgia Battery (Havis'), Lieut. James R. Duncan.
Alabama Battery (Lumsden's), Lieut. Harvey H. Cribbs.
Georgia Battery, Capt. Thomas L. Massenburg.

All of the Confederate artillery was engaged at Kingston with the exception of Huwald's Tennessee Battery.

LEGEND OF TERMS:

Historical themes: Topics and subject matter that characterize the battlefield including Control of Tennessee's Resources, Crucible for Leadership, Guerilla Warfare, Transformation in Warfare, Enslaved People, and Influence on Campaign. Sites are identified that exhibit themes at moderate to high levels, and some sites may contain one or more Historical Themes.

Preservation Opportunity Index (POI): A rating assigned for each battlefield to indicate relative opportunity and potential for successful site preservation. The Index is generated by a model that evaluates ratings assigned for site significance, condition, risk of loss, protection potential, and opportunities for interpretation. Based upon the POI values for each region in Tennessee (West, Middle, East), sites are indicated as having High, Medium, or Low opportunity.

Geo Coordinates: General/central location of the battlefield area per latitude and longitude coordinates utilized in Google Earth

DO YOU HAVE INFORMATION ON A BATTLE SITE?

Please email us at info@tcwpa.org and we will reach out to you soon. If you have copies of documents or photos to share, you can include those. If you want to discuss by phone, we will schedule that too.

HELP US COLLECT INFORMATION TO PRESERVE THESE BATTLEFIELDS

TCWPA's Statewide Preservation Plan team captains are recruiting volunteers to help gather information about many of the lesser-known sites with hopes of verifying the condition of each site and identifying opportunities for preservation and interpretation.

If you are interested in helping, please contact TCWPA at info@tcwpa.org.

TCWPA will not publish nor release any confidential information, or the name of the contributor, unless you request to be recognized.

Thank you!

The logo for the Tennessee Civil War Preservation Association (TCWPA) is displayed in a light blue, lowercase, sans-serif font. It is positioned in the lower-left corner of a dark blue banner that features a background image of a Civil War-era cannon. The banner also contains contact information on the right side.

tcwpa

Have Information on a Civil
War Battlesite?

Contact our team at info@tcwpa.org