

Battle Of Parker's Crossroads

Lowell L. Getz and Gerald E. Degnen

Prologue

On 31 December 1862 a battle between Confederate and Union Civil War forces took place at and around a small obscure crossroads, Parker's Crossroads, in Henderson County, southwestern Tennessee. The number of troops involved (roughly 3,000 Union and 1,800 Confederate), duration of the battle (about 6 ½ hours) and number of casualties (approximately 265; 51, KIA), are minor in comparison to many other Civil War battles. The Confederates were represented by one of their most proficient and flamboyant cavalry officers, Brigadier General Nathan Bedford Forrest. In this battle General Forrest is purported to have issued one of his classic orders. When told he was trapped between two Union Brigades and asked what he was going to do, "*Charge them both ways!*" was the supposed response. Whether this occurred or not, it has attracted historical attention to the "Battle of Parker's Crossroads."

Although there are three detailed published accounts of the battle (Bearss, 2003; Kennerly, 2001; Manes, 1975), they are out of print and not readily available; the latter does not include maps. None is available via the internet. The present account has been written to provide easy access to details of the battle. In describing the action, we have relied primarily on the official reports of the participants in the battle (War of the Rebellion, 1887), with consideration of the accounts of Bearss (2003), Jordan and Pryor (1868), Kennerly (2001), Morton (1909), and Roth, et al. (2003). The Jordan and Pryor account was compiled with the active participation of General Forrest. Although written six years after the battle and subject to the vagaries of the mind over time, Jordan and Pryor's account provides more detail than does General Forrest's original after-battle report. Because of General Forest's in-put, we have placed considerable weight on Jordan and Pryor's description of the battle. We acknowledge the importance of these four accounts in arriving at our description of the battle.

In preparing the maps, while based primarily on information provided in the official reports, we have relied on Roth, et al. (2006) for positioning of some of the units. Other sources we utilized are listed in the References. Exact routes of movements of the various units throughout the course of the battle are not known. We have indicated approximate routes the units may have taken, based upon from whence they departed and their new positions. Location of General Forrest and his staff during most of the flow of the battle also is not documented. From various sources, it appears he and his staff moved about the battlefield, examining the terrain, locating Union forces, positioning Confederate units, and offering encouragement to the troops. Where there is conflicting information regarding the sequence of events or details of the battle among the official reports and the published accounts, we include a **Comments Section** at the end of the text, indicating how we arrived at our conclusions.

An additional personal interest in the Battle of Parker's Crossroads, is that the Great, Great Uncle (Private James Thornton, Company A, 122nd Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment) of the senior author was killed in the battle. James' twin brother, Richard also participated in the battle. He survived, uninjured.

Prelude to the Battle

In late autumn 1862 Union Forces were beginning to make a move onto Vicksburg, Mississippi in an attempt to gain complete control of the Mississippi River, thus isolating the western Confederate states from those in the east. The attack was to be two pronged, with Major General Ulysses S. Grant, Commander of the Department of Tennessee, moving over land toward Vicksburg through central Mississippi, following the route of the Mississippi Central Railroad. Major General William T. Sherman simultaneously would move down the Mississippi River by boat from Memphis, approaching Vicksburg from the river side. The Confederate defenders would be confronted by attacks on two sides of the city.

In mid November, General Grant, with 30,000 troops, began moving southward from Jackson, Tennessee. Because of an autumn drought, rivers in Tennessee and Mississippi were very low, reducing the ability to supply General Grant's army by water. As a result, General Grant relied mainly on rail systems, including the Nashville and Northwestern, Memphis and Ohio, Memphis and Charleston, Memphis and Clarksville, Mississippi Central, and Mobile and Ohio Rail Roads, to supply his troops. He arrived at Oxford Mississippi on 3 December. With the subsequent disruption of his supply lines by General Forrest, General Grant concluded he could not sustain an attack on Vicksburg through central Mississippi. On 23 December, he moved his headquarters back to Holly Springs. On 10 January 1863, General Grant moved his headquarters to Memphis.

On 10 December, General Sherman departed Memphis, moving his force of 20,000 men down the Mississippi River. He was reinforced by 12,000 more troops at Helena, Arkansas. General Sherman arrived at the Yazoo River on 25 December. Unbeknownst to General Sherman, General Grant was not there to attack the city from the land side. The Confederates were able to concentrate all their forces against General Sherman. After a series of failed attempts to approach Vicksburg, General Sherman was forced to move back to Arkansas.

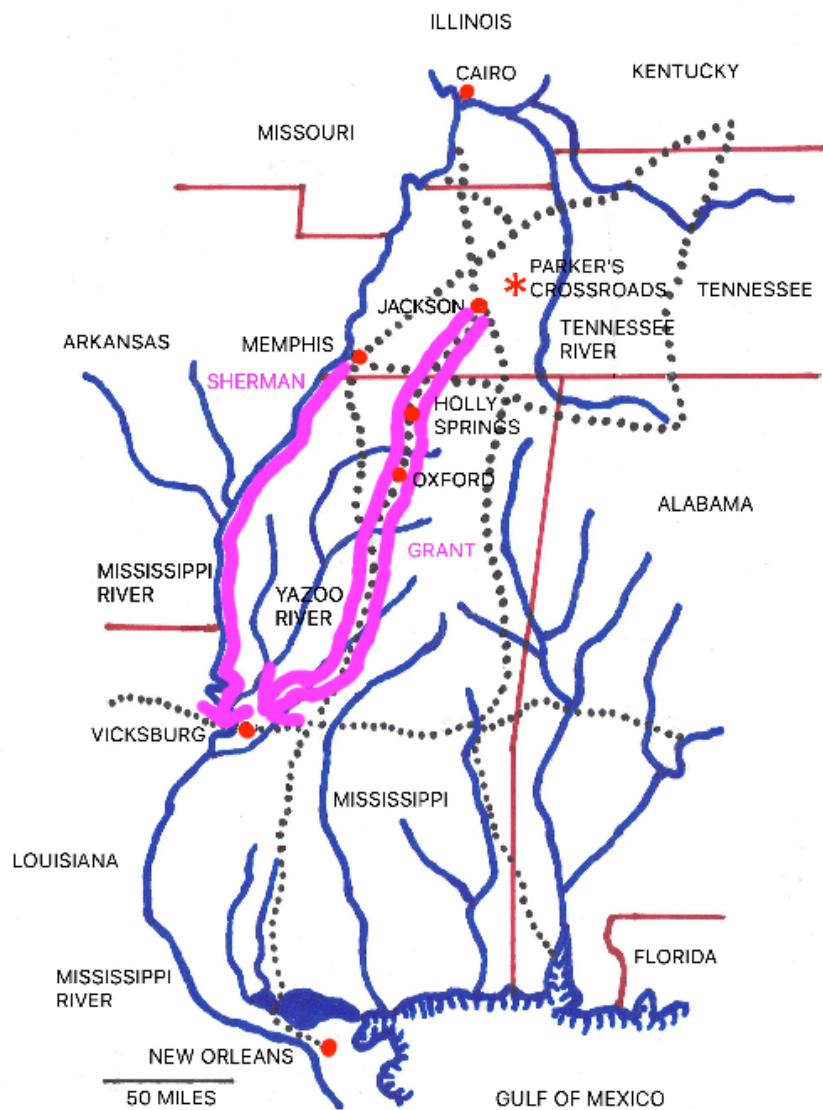


Figure 1. Planned movements of Generals Sherman and Grant in an attempt to occupy Vicksburg, Mississippi. General Sherman went as far as the Yazoo River, returning back up river when the strength of Confederate defensive positions made it impossible for him to approach Vicksburg. Because of disrupted supply lines, General Grant did not proceed beyond Oxford, Tennessee.

Recognizing dependency of the General Grant upon rail lines as a means of supply, the Confederates mounted an effort to disrupt the rail system and capture badly needed Union supplies for their own use. On 10 December 1862, General Braxton Bragg, Commander of the Army of Tennessee, ordered General Forrest to assume command of a mission to interrupt Union supply lines in western Tennessee. General Forrest had just completed putting together his cavalry command at Columbus, Tennessee, consisting of the following units:

4th Tennessee Cavalry Regiment, Colonel James W. Starnes, Commanding
8th Tennessee Cavalry Regiment, Colonel George G. Dibrell, Commanding
19th Tennessee Cavalry Regiment, Colonel Jacob B. Biffle, Commanding
4th Alabama Cavalry Regiment, Colonel Alfred A. Russell, Commanding
Napier's Cavalry Battalion, Colonel Thomas Alonzo Napier, Commanding
Freeman's Artillery Battery, Captain Samuel I. Freeman, Commanding
Morton's Artillery Battery, Lieutenant John W. Morton, Commanding

(Comment 1)

Before General Forrest departed Columbus the morning of 11 December, his command was reinforced by the addition of:

2nd Tennessee Cavalry Battalion, Major Nicholas N. Cox, Commanding

Woodward's Kentucky Cavalry Battalion (2 companies), Colonel Thomas G. Woodward, Commanding

Captain William Forrest's Scouts (Captain Forrest was General Forrest's Brother)

General Forrest's Escort (Seventy-five men)

General Forrest moved his force through Waynsboro to Clifton, where he crossed the Tennessee River on 17 December and headed toward Lexington. For the next 10 days the Confederates moved northward, through Jackson, Trenton, and Union City, Tennessee and Moscow, Kentucky. He then turned southward back through Union City to Dresden and finally, McKenzie, arriving there the night of the 27th. Along the way General Forrest fought at least 13 pitched battles, destroyed miles of rail tracks and numerous trestles, as well as rail support facilities. In the process, General Forrest captured large quantities of Union supplies, much of which he used to replace obsolete weapons and replenish his stores. What he could not take, he destroyed. From McKenzie, General Forrest planned to continue on and cross the Tennessee River into Middle Tennessee.

General Grant, on 26 December, directed Brigadier General Jeremiah C. Sullivan, commander of the District of Jackson, to drive General Forrest out of western Tennessee and back across the Tennessee River. On the 27th, General Sullivan sent three trains to shuttle two Brigades, commanded by Colonels Cyrus L. Dunham (1st Brigade) and John W. Fuller (2nd, [Ohio] Brigade), from Bolivar and Jackson, respectively, to Trenton to begin the operation against General Forrest. General Sullivan arrived at Trenton the 27th and took over command of the operation from Brigadier General Isham Nicholas Haynie who was already at Trenton. General Haynie remained with General Sullivan's staff during the rest of the campaign against General Forrest.

General Sullivan hoped to confront and destroy General Forrest's forces before they could cross the Tennessee River. Colonel Dunham's Brigade left Trenton the

evening of the 28th, Colonel Fuller and his Brigade the next morning, both moving eastward toward Huntington, where they met up and bivouacked the night of the 29th.

The Union forces consisted of:

1st Brigade, Colonel Cyrus L. Dunham, Commanding

50th Indiana Infantry Regiment, Lt Colonel Samuel T. Wells,
Commanding

122nd Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment, Colonel John I. Rinaker,
Commanding

18th Illinois Mounted Infantry Regiment

Companies A and E), Captain John Davis, Commanding

*

39th Iowa Volunteer Infantry Regiment, Colonel Henry J. B.
Cummings, Commanding

7th Wisconsin Artillery Battery (three cannon), Lieutenant Arthur B.
Wheelock, Commanding

2nd (Ohio) Brigade, Colonel John W. Fuller, Commanding

27th Ohio Infantry Regiment, Lt Colonel Zephaniah Swift Spaulding,
Commanding

39th Ohio Infantry Regiment, Colonel Edward F. Noyes, Commanding

63rd Ohio Infantry Regiment, Colonel John W. Sprague, Commanding

7th Wisconsin Artillery Battery, (three cannon), Lieutenant G. E. Green,
Commanding

* The 39th Iowa Regiment had been mustered into service on 24 November. As such, the 39th was comprised of raw, inadequately trained troops when it engaged in the Battle of Parker's Crossroads, its first taste of combat.

General Forrest encamped at Dresden the night of the 26th, remaining there through the following day to rest his troops and horses. On the morning of the 27th he received a report that General Sullivan and his two brigades were moving south from Trenton, in the direction of McLemoresville and Huntington, in an attempt to cut him off before he could reach the Tennessee River. To meet the Union forces, General Forrest moved south in the direction of Huntington, stopping for the night at McKenzie. The next morning General Forrest continued southward, reaching the Obion River around 9:00 PM. Because of a recent heavy rain, the river was flooded and the river flood plain, boggy. Only one weak bridge was available. The river crossing was not completed until the morning of the 29th. General Forrest's column moved on to McLemoresville, where it stopped to rest the men and animals and feed the horses. Shortly thereafter, civilians in the area told General Forrest of the presence of a large Union force twelve miles to the west, at Huntington. At 10:00 AM, General Forrest moved out and continued on to a place called Flake's Store, four miles west of Clarksburg and six miles northwest of Parker's Crossroads. General Forrest remained there through the day of the 30th to allow his men and horses to rest.

On the 30th, General Forrest detached Colonel Biffle's 19th Tennessee to capture an isolated Union force that was moving toward Trenton. Colonel Biffle overtook and captured 120 men and officers, who he paroled and sent under a flag of truce, with Captain John S. Grove of Company G, to the nearest Federal Command. Colonel Biffle then moved his force southeast to catch up with General Forrest. General Forrest also detached Colonel Starnes' 4th Tennessee for a reconnaissance in force to a crossroads near Huntington. There, they encountered and routed a small Union cavalry detachment of 80 men. Colonel Starnes also moved his regiment back toward Parker's Crossroads.

The evening of 30 December, General Forrest sent his brother, Captain Forrest, and his company toward Huntington in search of Union forces. If any were encountered, he was to report their presence back to General Forrest. Captain Forrest encountered and engaged Union troops near Clarksburg, four miles from and moving in the direction of General Forrest. When he received the report of the presence of the nearby Union force, General Forrest decided to remain where he was so his exhausted troops could rest during the night. Captain Forrest was instructed to impede the movement of the Union column as much as he could. To engage the Union forces, on the morning of 31 December, General Forrest moved his command down the McLemoresville Road that intersected Rock Springs Road west of Parker's Crossroads.

About 2:00 PM, the 30th of December, Colonel Dunham's 1st Brigade moved south from Huntington along the Huntington-Lexington Road. General Sullivan, Colonel Fuller and the 2nd Brigade remained at Huntington. As Colonel Dunham's Brigade neared Clarksburg, the advanced guard, the 18th Illinois, became engaged in a brief skirmish with Captain Forrest's scouts, who were quickly dispersed. Arriving just after dark, Colonel Dunham occupied Clarksburg and bivouacked there for the night. Scouts reported to Colonel Dunham that General Forrest was bivouacked only four miles to the west. Believing General Forrest was attempting to escape through Lexington back to the Tennessee River, and hoping he could intercept the Confederate force, Colonel Dunham decided to cut him off at Parker's Crossroads.

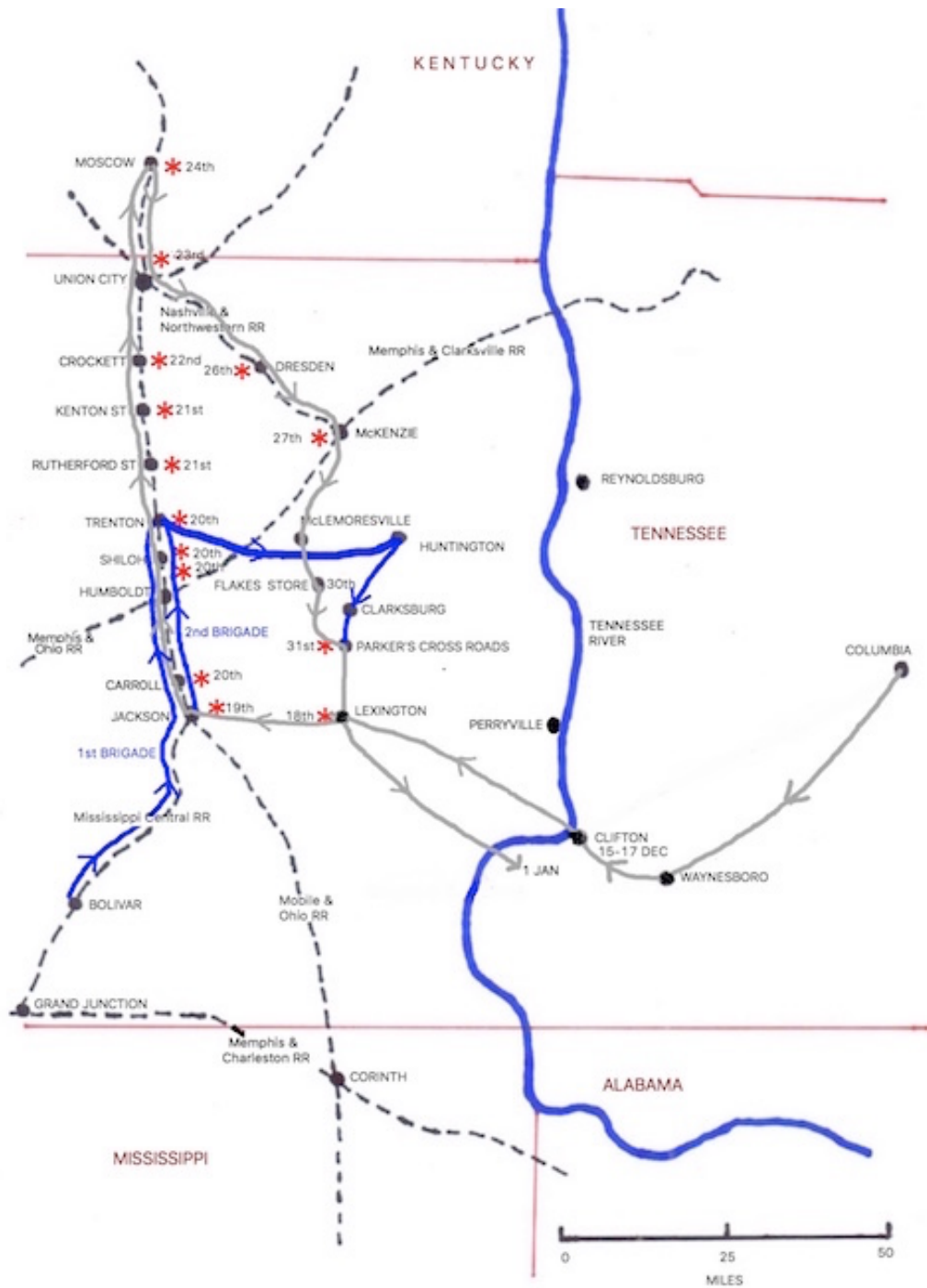


Figure 2. Gray lines trace the route General Forrest took in raiding Grant's rail supply lines, ending up at Parker's Crossroads, and his route out of West Tennessee following the battle. Blue lines are routes the two Union Brigades followed as they moved to intercept General Forrest. Red asterisks represent pitched battles between General Forrest's force and Union troops.

The Battle

Just after daybreak the 31st, Colonel Dunham's Brigade began moving from Clarksburg south toward Parker's Crossroads, with the 18th Illinois serving as rear guard for this move. Company A, 50th Indiana, under command of Lieutenant John J. Judy, formed the advanced guard. As Company A approached Parker's Crossroads it was attacked by Confederate pickets; Lt Judy deployed the company into a line of skirmishers and drove the pickets back.

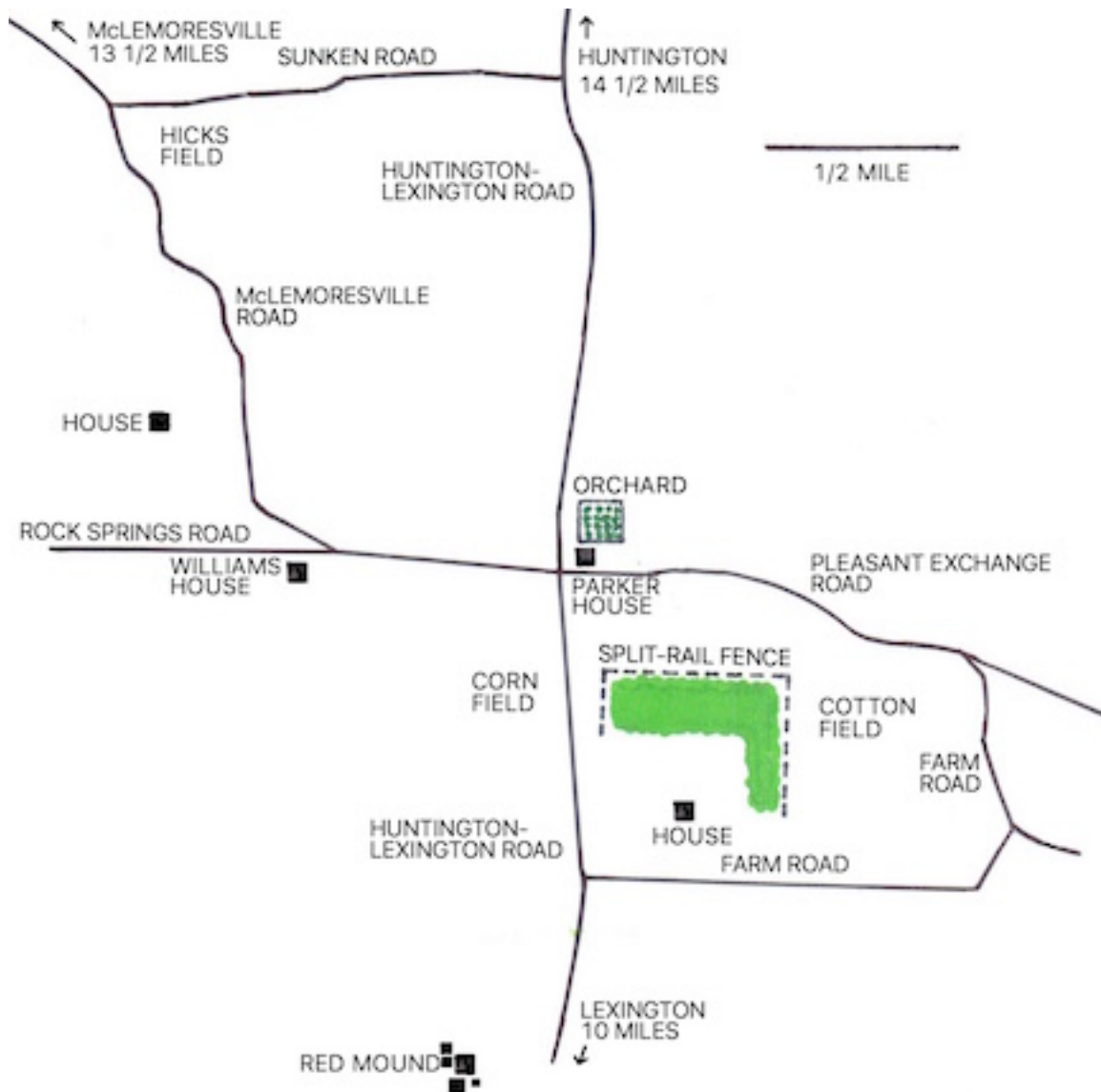


Figure 3. The site of the Battle of Parker's Crossroads, with key features mentioned in the text and depicted in subsequent maps. Green, woods.

Upon arriving at Parker's Crossroads, Colonel Dunham observed a small Confederate force of one or two companies moving west toward the Williams House. The advanced guard opened a "brisk" fire upon the Confederates, causing them to retreat to the shelter of house, its out buildings and the adjacent woods. Colonel Dunham ordered two artillery pieces forward to fire upon the house and woods. **(Comment 2)** After having been subjected to a few rounds, the Confederates retreated to the woods northwest of the Williams House.

Colonel Dunham left the 39th Iowa across the Huntington-Lexington Road north of Parker's Crossroads to guard the approaches from the northwest. He moved the 122nd Illinois to a position across Rock Springs Road just to the west of Parker's Crossroads. Lt Colonel Samuel T. Wells and the 50th Indiana, along with Captain Davis and the 18th Illinois, were sent to occupy the hill upon which the Williams House stood. Colonel Wells deployed his Companies A, D and F forward as skirmishers, followed by the rest of the Regiment. They found the site unoccupied by Confederates. With the house and surrounding buildings occupied, Colonel Wells sent Company F, under command of Lieutenant Thomas H. Jones, to reconnoiter a skirt of woods to the north. Company F engaged a company of mounted Confederates at a house a little northwest of the Williams House and drove them across Hicks' field and over the crest of the ridge overlooking the field. Colonel Wells then sounded recall and Company F returned to the house.



Figure 4. Disposition of the Union 1st Brigade regiments upon arriving at Parker's Crossroads. Company F, 50th Indiana drove the small group of mounted Confederates up and over the ridge to the north of the Sunken Road. Union forces in blue, Confederates in gray

As the main Confederate force approached Parker's Crossroads, it encountered the mounted troops being driven north by Company F and saw the Union line some 400 yards to the south. General Forrest ordered some of the 4th Alabama and 8th Tennessee to dismount and placed them behind the ridge just north of the Sunken Road, with the 4th Alabama on the left, the 8th Tennessee to the right. General Forrest then personally placed one cannon from Freeman's battery, commanded by Sargent Nathaniel Baxter, on the south side of the ridge, just beyond the Sunken Road.

As the Confederates moved into position overlooking Hicks' field from the northwest, General Forrest sent a battalion consisting of three companies, approximately 100 troops, from the 4th Tennessee under command of Captain William

McLemore, to Clarksburg to block the Huntington-Lexington Road and warn him of the arrival of Colonel Fuller's Brigade, which he knew to be operating in the Confederate rear. The orders were poorly phrased, with Captain McLemore understanding he was to make a reconnaissance to Clarksburg and then rejoin the main column. After reaching Clarksburg, Captain McLemore, not encountering Union troops, began retracing his route back to General Forrest, leaving the Confederate rear unguarded.

Once his forces were in position, General Forrest ordered the dismounted troops to begin advancing as skirmishers down the ridge and across Hicks' field. Observing the Confederate troops moving south down the hill toward the Williams house, Colonel Wells sent the 18th Illinois to join Company F.



Figure 5. Movement of the 18th Illinois to join Company F at the house to the NW of the Williams House as the Confederates appeared over the ridge to the north of Hicks field. B, Sargent Baxter's cannon.

As the Confederates continued to move southward, Colonel Wells ordered Company F and the 18th Illinois to drive them back north, over the ridge. Colonel Dunham, seeing that a large force of Confederates was deploying along a line behind the ridge, sounded recall for Company F and the 18th Illinois to rally back at the house from which they had departed. As the Union troops reached the house, Sargent Baxter's artillery piece fired upon them. The skirmishing party was withdrawn farther back, to the Williams house.



Figure 6. Company F of the 50th Indiana and the 18th Illinois drove the Confederate skirmishers back over the ridge to the north and moved back to the house northwest of the Williams House and subsequently to the Williams House.

To determine the strength of the Confederate force beyond the ridge, Colonel Dunham ordered forward two pieces of artillery from the 7th Wisconsin, supported by four companies of the 50th Indiana under command of Major Horace N Attkisson, to fire upon the Confederate line. Sargent Baxter's cannon returned fire, disabling one of the 7th Wisconsin guns. Half an hour later Freeman moved up his other guns and Morton, his two cannon, as the Confederate artillery continued to rake the Union line **(Comment 3)**.

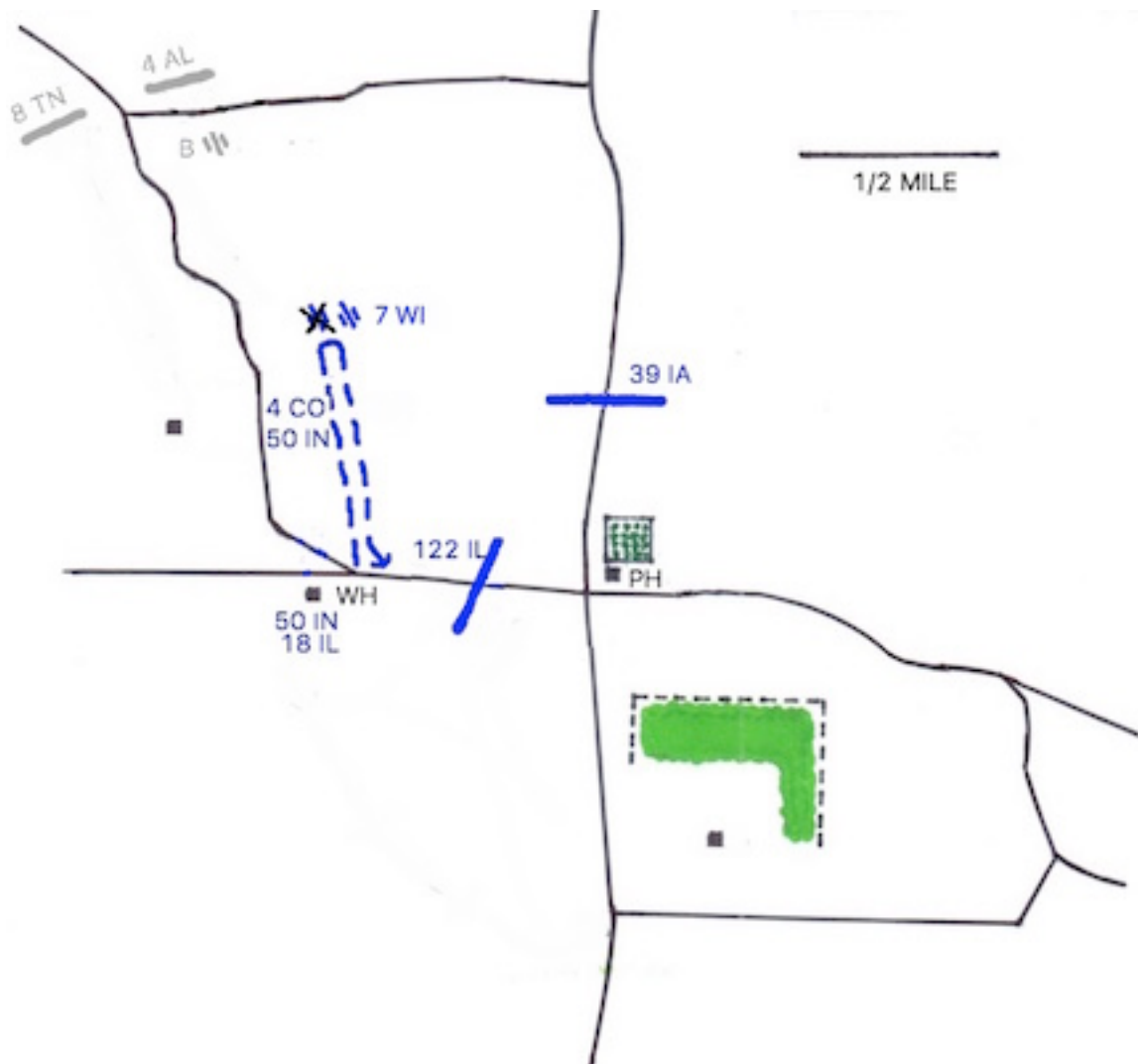


Figure 7. Two cannon of the 7th Wisconsin artillery battery, accompanied by four companies of the 50th Indiana, placed forward to fire upon the opposing Confederate lines. One of the Union cannons (crossed out) was disabled by fire from Sargent Baxter's cannon (B). Exact positioning of the other Confederate cannon not known.

It was now 9:00. Seeing that the Confederates had deployed a large force along the rear of the ridge, Colonel Dunham ordered a cease-fire and withdrawal of the brigade back to Parker's Crossroads. Under heavy fire from shell and grape shot, the

still functional 7th Wisconsin cannon, whose horses had been disabled, was recovered by a detachment of the 50th Indiana.

Colonel Dunham moved his brigade to southeast of Parker's Crossroads, forming a north-south, west-facing line, along the east side of the Huntington-Lexington Road for half the length of the line, where it turned to the northeast. Alignment of the brigade was: 39th Iowa on the left flank, three fourth mile south of Parker's Crossroads, 7th Wisconsin artillery (two cannon), 122nd Illinois, and 18th Illinois, with the 50th Indiana in front of and slightly northwest of the 18th Illinois. The wagon train was placed in a hollow to the rear, protected by Companies A of the 39th Iowa and G of the 122nd Illinois, positioned near the house on a mound southeast of the Parker house.

Before the Union line was fully established, General Forrest began moving his Confederate forces from the woods onto Rock Springs Road near the Williams House and on along the road to east of Parker's Crossroads in an effort to flank the Union line. Colonel Dunham ordered artillery fire on the Confederate column, but the effect was minimal. He then ordered Colonel Wells to send two companies, G and B, of the 50th Indiana, toward the crossroads to check and watch the Confederate advance. Captain Isaac Carothers moved Company G at double-quick up the Huntington-Lexington Road and opened "galling fire" upon the Confederates. His company, soon outnumbered, was forced to withdraw back down the road. **(Comment 4)** Lieutenant John B. Davies also moved Company B out at double-quick, deploying to the right, in front of the northeast corner of the split-rail fence and the woods.



Figure 8. Alignment of Colonel Dunham's 1st Brigade when he first withdrew to Parker's Crossroads. Companies G and B of the 50th Indiana were moved forward in response movement of the Confederate column onto the Pleasant Exchange Road. Precise location of the house southwest of the Parker House and Companies A and G not recorded. WWW, Union wagon train.

To avoid being flanked, Colonel Dunham quickly rearranged his front northward, deploying the units on an east-west line along a ridge north of the split-rail fence, facing north and parallel to the Confederate column moving along the east-west road through Parker's Crossroads. The Union left was anchored on the Huntington-Lexington road, the right in an open cotton field. Alignment of the Union forces was, from left to right: Company G 50th Indiana (where it had been forced back to), 39th Iowa, 122nd Illinois, 18th Illinois, and 50th Indiana, the right three companies of which were bent back perpendicular to and behind the line so as to protect the Union right flank. Companies A of the 39th Iowa and G of the 122nd Illinois remained near the house on the mound to cover the Union rear as well as protect the wagon trains.

Colonel Dunham ordered the 7th Wisconsin Artillery's two remaining cannons to move forward and take up a position between the 39th Iowa and 122nd Illinois, where they would be most effective against the Confederate artillery. Instead, they deployed on the far left of the Union line. Colonel Dunham approached the artillery troops, which had already begun firing on the Confederates in the lane and on the hill, to move them to their assigned position. However, Lieutenant Wheelock told him that his ammunition was about exhausted and it would be useless to redeploy. Colonel Dunham told the Lieutenant to do the best he could at their present position. Ammunition soon expended and the horses disabled, the two cannon were pushed back and abandoned in a small depression to the rear.

Prevented from flanking the Union line, General Forrest deployed his units in an arcing line northwest, north and northeast of the Union line: Napier's Battalion on the northwest, 8th Tennessee and 2nd Tennessee Battalion (about 600 yards in front of the Union line), on the north and Woodward's Kentucky Cavalry to the northeast. The 4th Alabama was placed in the cotton field to the east of the Union line, forming the left flank of the Confederate line. The two cannons of Morton's Battery were located on the ridge in front of the 8 TN. One section, each, of Freeman's Battery was placed on the flanks, a few paces forward of the Confederate line, where they were able to concentrate fire on several portions of the Union line and enfilade parts of it. Both batteries fired ferocious volleys of solid shot, shell, canister, and grape into the Union line. In an attempt to silence the Confederate cannons, Colonel Dunham ordered the 122nd Illinois, 18th Illinois and 50th Indiana to charge the Confederate line. The Union troops were beaten back, as was a second attack.



Figure 9. Realigned of the Union line northward in response to General Forrest's attempt to flank the Union line. General Forrest, in turn, aligned his units north of the Union line. The exact positioning and number of Freeman's cannon on the flanks are not known. Colonel Dunham ordered two attacks on the Confederate line, both of which were repulsed. When the ammunition of the two cannon of the 7th WI was exhausted, they were removed from and abandoned. G, Company G of the 50th Indiana. NAP, Napier's Battalion. WOOD, Woodward's Kentucky Cavalry.

Counter attacking, General Forrest ordered his dismounted troops forward to bring musket fire upon the Union line, pushing it back into the edge of the woods behind the split-rail fence. The Confederates, now occupying the ridge vacated by the Union, began pouring heavy musket fire into the Union line. The Confederate artillery, repositioned forward to within 200 yards of the Union line, continued to rake the Union positions.

In response to the heavy Confederate musket and artillery fire, Colonel Dunham mounted an attack to try to drive back the Confederates. The Union troops came to within 80 yards of the crest of the ridge before withering fire forced them back into the woods. Colonel Dunham's troops attempted another advance around 11:00 that was easily repulsed. Again, at noon, Colonel Dunham unleashed another major advance, this time coming to within 60 yards of the Confederate artillery pieces before being repulsed. **[Comment 5]**

Just then, Colonel Rinaker was struck in the right leg, below the knee, severing an artery. His Second in Command, Lt. Colonel James F. Drish, rushed to Colonel Rinaker, tied handkerchiefs around his right leg, stopping the flow of blood within two minutes time, saving the Colonel's life. Colonel Rinaker would have bled to death in another few minutes. Colonel Rinaker passing out from loss of blood, was unable to participate in the subsequent action, relinquished command of the Regiment to Colonel Drish.

At this point Colonel Napier, without orders and on his own initiative, attacked the 39th Iowa on the left flank of the Union line. As Colonel Napier stood atop the split-rail fence, behind which the left flank of the 39th was deployed, to rally his troops forward, he was mortally wounded. The Battalion fell back in the face of heavy Union fire.



Figure 10. Advance of the Confederate line, forcing the Union units back to the edge of the woods behind the split-rail fence. Colonel Dunham attempted three more attacks, which were driven back to beyond the split-rail fence. The 8th Tennessee and 2nd Battalion switched positions in the Confederate line as they closed upon the Union line. Positioning and number of Confederate cannons approximate.

As the above action was taking place, the 4th Tennessee and 19th Tennessee arrived on the scene. The 19th Tennessee moved into a blocking position slightly southwest of Parker's Crossroads. As part of a double envelopment movement ordered by General Forrest, the 4th Tennessee continued moving on south along the west side of the engagement, down and around the left flank and to the rear of the Union line.



Figure 11. Arrival of the 4th Tennessee and 19th Tennessee to Parker's Crossroads after completing detached assignments at Huntington and Trenton, respectively.

On the east, as the second part of the double envelopment, General Forrest ordered the dismounted 4th Alabama and Woodward's Kentucky Cavalry to infiltrate the rear of the Union line under cover of a hill and woods. Only the 2nd Tennessee Battalion and the 8th Tennessee remained in front of the Union line.

Fire from Freeman's artillery section on the Union right became intense. Colonel Dunham ordered yet another attack to silence the cannons. As he was riding along the line to ensure the orders were understood, the Union line was "ferociously" attacked from the rear by the 4th Alabama and Woodward's Kentucky Cavalry. **[Comment 6]** The Confederates had turned the Union right flank and moved parallel to the line, between it and the two companies protecting the wagon train and the Union rear.

While this action was taking place, the 4th Tennessee charged up the Lexington Road from the south toward the rear of the 39th Iowa, where it was repulsed by the companies (now commanded by Adjutant John R. Simpson) guarding the Union rear and the wagon train. The 4th Tennessee rallied and charged a second time, only to be repulsed again. The 4th Tennessee regrouped and infiltrated in behind the 122 Illinois.

Colonel Dunham immediately ordered the main line of the Union to face about, fix bayonets and charge the Confederate forces attacking from the rear. **(Comment 7)** The 4th Alabama and Woodward's Kentucky Cavalry were driven back beyond the east flank of the Union line. As this action was taking place, the Union wagoners panicked and drove the wagons northwesterly into a hollow, where they were captured by Major J. P. Strange, General Forrest's adjutant general.

When Commissary Sargent Thompson informed him of the capture of the wagons, Colonel Dunham asked if a company from the 39th Iowa would volunteer to recapture the wagon train. Captain Cameron of Company G immediately stepped forward. He was placed under command of Major Attkisson of the 50th Indiana and recaptured the wagons. In the process, Company G captured several prisoners, including Major Strange and another of General Forrest's staff, along with Colonel McKee and his aide. **(Comment 8)**

When the 39th Iowa faced about to attack, several officers ordered, "Rally to the rear." This was interpreted by the inexperienced, raw troops to mean retreat. Six companies on the west side of the line began moving to the southwest. Colonel Dunham, seeing the confusion in the west flank of the 39th Iowa rode to them, hoping to stem the retreat. Unfortunately, the Confederates also saw the movement of the 39th Iowa companies away from the line. Napier's Battalion began pouring heavy musket fire into the companies. The six companies rapidly moved west into the cornfield across the Huntington-Lexington Road. Companies D and F, along with a number of troops from the other companies, maintained their position on the west flank of the 122nd Illinois. With the retreat of the main body of the 39th Iowa, the west flank of the Union line was exposed to fire from Napier's Battalion, and the rear from the 4th Tennessee that had moved into the hollow behind the 122nd Illinois.

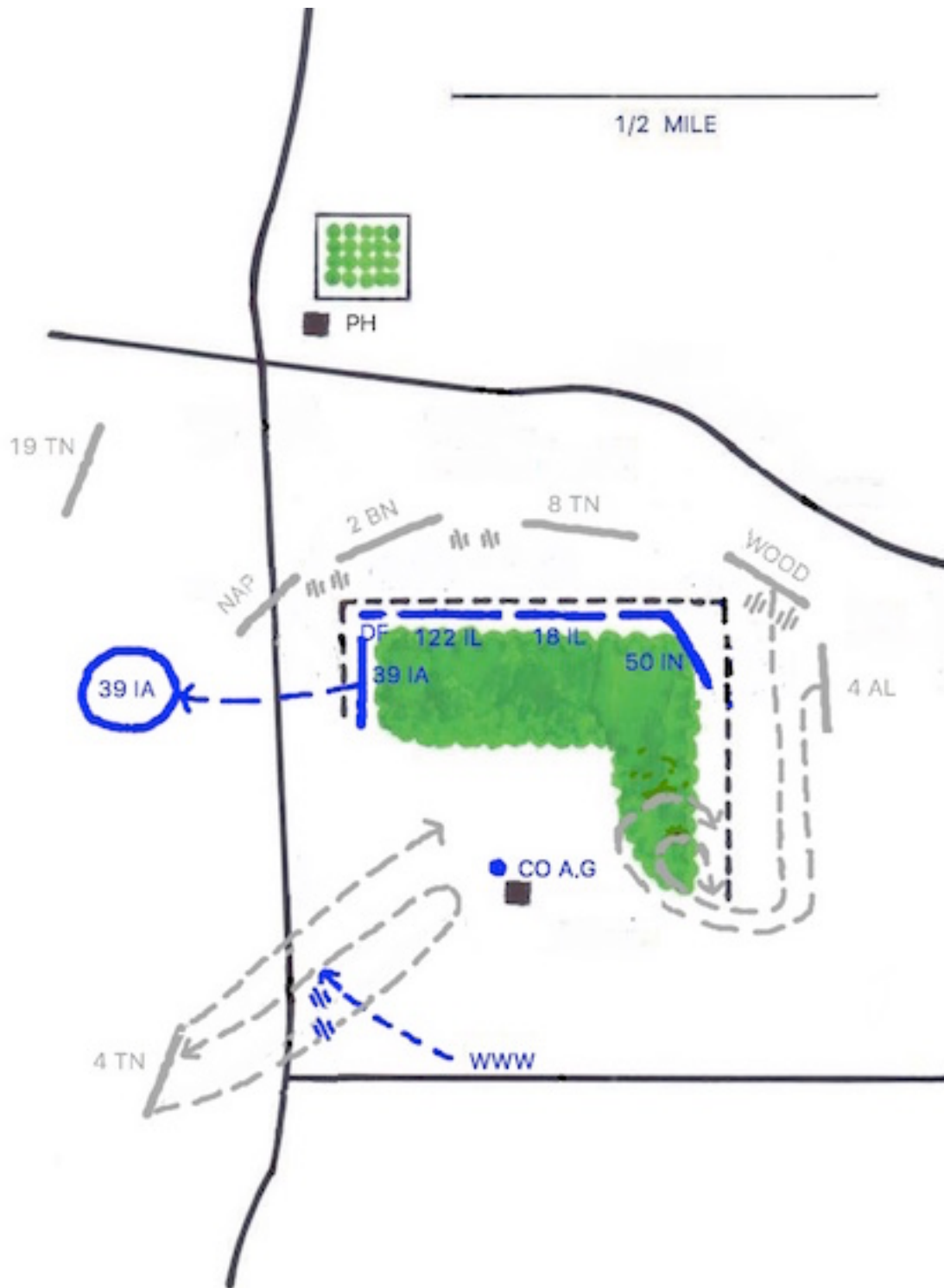


Figure 12. General Forrest's double envelopment of the Union forces. The 4th Tennessee made two advances toward the Union left, both of which were repulsed by Companies A of the 39th Iowa and G of the 122nd Illinois. The 4th Tennessee then moved up into the rear of the left of the Union line.

Once the Confederates had been cleared from behind the Union east, the 50th Indiana was placed in a position to cover the east flank, from which the attack had come. It was barely in place when it was charged from the south by a large cavalry force (4th Alabama and Woodward's Kentucky Cavalry), causing the companies on the east of the reversed line to fall back slightly. Companies H (Captain John Scott) and C (Captain Joseph L. Marsh), on the west of the 50th, changed front and fired into the flank of the charging cavalry, causing it to break off and retreat. Companies H and C and the rest of the 50th Indiana then rallied back to their original positions. **(Comment 9)**



Figure 13. Placement of the 50th Indiana to guard against another attack by the 4th Alabama and Woodward's Kentucky Cavalry. **(Comment 9)** Location of the east section of Freeman's battery not recorded after movement of Woodward's Kentucky Cavalry to the east and south of the Union line.

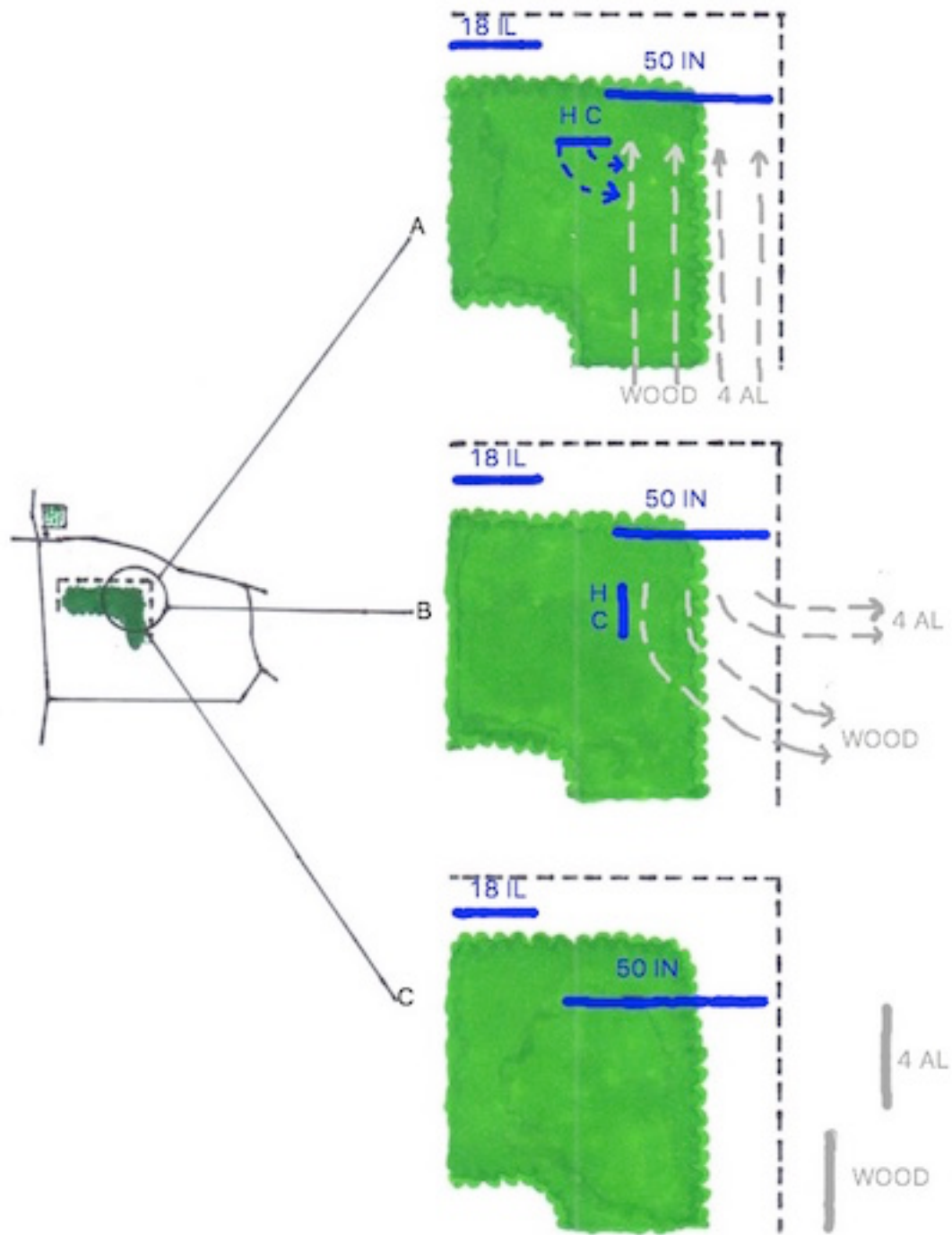


Figure 14. *Movements of the 50th Indiana, 4th Alabama and Woodward's Kentucky Cavalry during and following the Confederate attempt to flank the Union line. (Comment 9)*

The entire Union line, under command of Colonel Dunham, began advancing against the Confederate troops in its rear. The 4th Alabama and 4th Tennessee, stood

aside to allow Colonel Dunham and men from 122nd Illinois, 18th Illinois, 50th Indiana and companies D and F of the 39th Iowa to keep on moving to about one half mile south of the rail fence. There they formed a temporary battle line. Some men from these units, not hearing the command to attack to the south, remained in the woods near the split-rail fence. General Forrest ordered Colonel Biffle's 19th Tennessee to move to the west of and farther south, coming up on the west rear flank of Colonel Dunham's group, while Woodward's Kentucky Cavalry moved in from the east. After Colonel Dunham's group had moved south, the 4th Tennessee, on the west, and the 4th Alabama, on the east, moved in north of Colonel's Dunham's group.

To the north, Colonel Cummings, with help from Adjutant Simpson and Captain (first name not available) Silence from Colonel Dunham's staff, eventually was able to gain control of the six 39th Iowa companies on the west side of the Huntington-Lexington Road. Colonel Cummings moved the troops back east to the woods. Napier's Battalion, 2nd Battalion Tennessee Cavalry and 8th Tennessee moved up close to the split-rail fence.

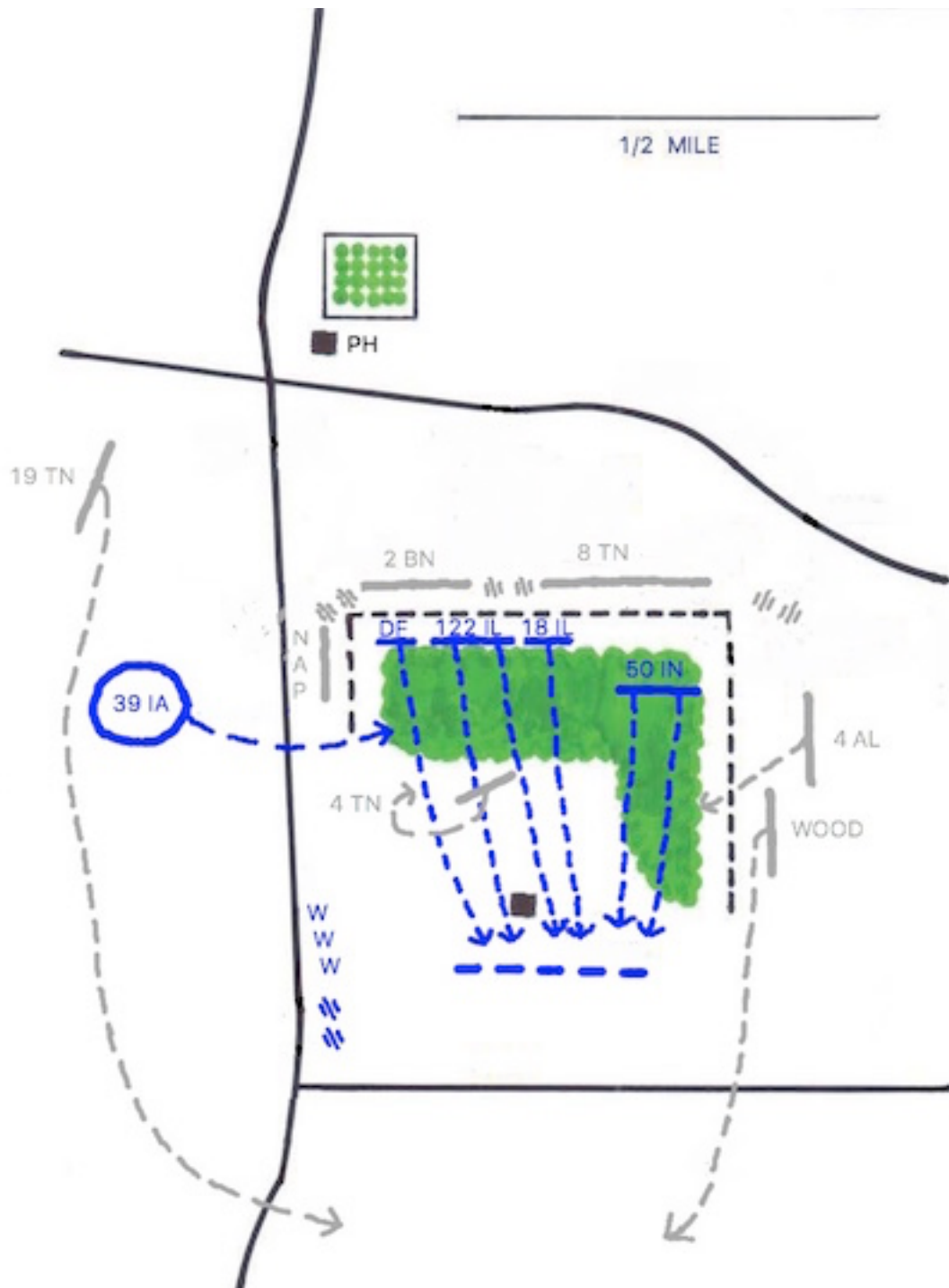


Figure 15. Movements of the 50th Indiana, 122nd Illinois and 18th Illinois as they charged the Confederate units in their rear. Colonel Cummings regained control of the six companies of the 39th Iowa on the west side of the Huntington-Lexington Road, moving them back to behind the split-rail fence. Location of Confederate artillery approximate. **(Comment 1)**

The Union forces were now divided into two surrounded pockets several hundred yards apart, one in the woods south of the rail fence, the other near the farm road, three fourths of a mile south of Parker's Crossroads.



Figure 16. Movements of the 4th Tennessee and 4th Alabama in between the two Union groups while the 19th Tennessee and Woodward's Kentucky Cavalry took up positions to the south of Dunham's group (no longer aligned in a battle line).

Unbeknownst to Colonel Dunham, several white flags appeared among the Union ranks in the woods. An aide to General Forrest approached Colonel Dunham under a flag of truce, saying the General understood he was surrendering. Colonel Dunham told him "The General is entirely mistaken; we have never thought of surrendering." When told by the aide that a white flag had appeared, Colonel Dunham replied, "You are mistaken, or if not, it was done without my authority or knowledge, and you will so report to your general." The aide left, to return shortly under a white flag, telling Colonel Dunham that General Forrest demanded unconditional surrender. Colonel Dunham retorted, "You will get away with that flag very quick, and bring me no more such messages. Give my compliments to the General and tell him I never surrender. If he thinks he can take me, he can come and try." The aide rode away.



Figure 17. The two groups of Union troops were now isolated from each other. Flags of surrender appeared in the northern group, but Colonel Dunham refused to concede.

Meanwhile, to the North, Union reinforcements were approaching Parker's Crossroads. At 5:00 AM on the 31st, Colonel Fuller and the main force of the 2nd Brigade had moved out from Huntington, heading toward Parker's Crossroads. General Sullivan and General Haynie remained with a seven-company rear guard, saying they would leave when ready. Between 10:00 and 11:00 AM, Colonel Fuller paused the column for a rest near Clarksburg. Generals Sullivan and Haynie and their aides caught up with the column and ordered Colonel Fuller to halt for an hour and a half until the rear guard caught up. The generals then rode on toward Clarksburg. Ten minutes later an aide rode up to Colonel Fuller, telling him that Confederate cavalry (Captain McLemore's detachment) had come in between the main body of the Brigade and the Generals, who had ridden on through Clarksburg with the enemy following them.

Fearing the generals might be captured, Colonel Fuller ordered the Brigade to move out at double-quick. Lt Colonel Zephaniah Swift Spaulding, Commanding the 27th Ohio, sent Company A, under command of Lieutenant Theodore Sawyer, ahead as skirmishers. When arriving at Clarksburg, Colonel Fuller encountered an officer of the 39th Iowa, who inadvertently had been left behind on picket duty. The officer had observed the Generals' group turn to the east shortly after passing through Clarksburg. A group of about fifty Confederate cavalry that was following them apparently saw Colonel Fuller's force approaching, turned and moved to the west. After a ten-minute halt, Colonel Fuller continued on toward Parker's Crossroads. Colonel Fuller reported hearing, a few minutes later, artillery fire to the west of the Huntington-Lexington Road, which he presumed to be the Confederates firing upon Colonel Dunham's Brigade. Half an hour later, the sound of the cannon fire moved from where the road from McLemoresville joined the Rock Spring Road to directly in front of the Ohio Brigade and another half hour later, to the east of Parker's Crossroads. **(Comment 10)** Colonel Fuller assumed the Confederates were driving Colonel Dunham's troops ahead of them. He urged his men on at "utmost speed."

As the 2nd Brigade neared to within two miles of Parker's Crossroads, an orderly, Captain Dustan, from General Sullivan, who apparently was now back with the rear guard three miles behind the main force, arrived with orders for Colonel Fuller to halt and wait until the rear guard caught up with him. Colonel Fuller told Captain Dustan to return to General Sullivan, appraise him of the situation and ask that the orders be countermanded. Just as Captain Dustan left, one of Colonel Fuller's orderlies, who had been sent forward to communicate with Colonel Dunham, returned saying he could not get through to Colonel Dunham as the Confederates were in force between the two brigades.

Colonel Fuller's Brigade continued its double-quick advance toward the Parker House. When within 200 yards of the slight hill overlooking the Confederate position, General Sullivan caught up with Colonel Fuller and concurred with the movement. Firing had ceased and the 2nd Brigade officers observed flags of truce being passed among the troops. As the 2nd Brigade swept on past the Parker House, Confederate horses that had been left in the yard and nearby orchard by the dismounted Cavalry, now fighting as infantry, were captured when their handlers abandoned them. Also captured were a number (the exact number is not known) of their horseless riders, along with Major Cox of the 2nd Battalion. Two or three (the reports differ as to the

number) of Freeman's brass cannon and eight limbers had to be abandoned to the Union forces, when their horses were killed or disabled.

Fuller positioned all three 2nd Brigade regiments to the rear of the Confederates, from left to right, 27th, 63rd (to the east of the Huntington-Lexington Road) and 39th, centered on the road. At the beginning of the attack, the 63rd had been ordered to move by the right flank to west of the Huntington-Lexington Road. As the 63rd moved out at double-quick, it was ordered to move back to the east of the road.

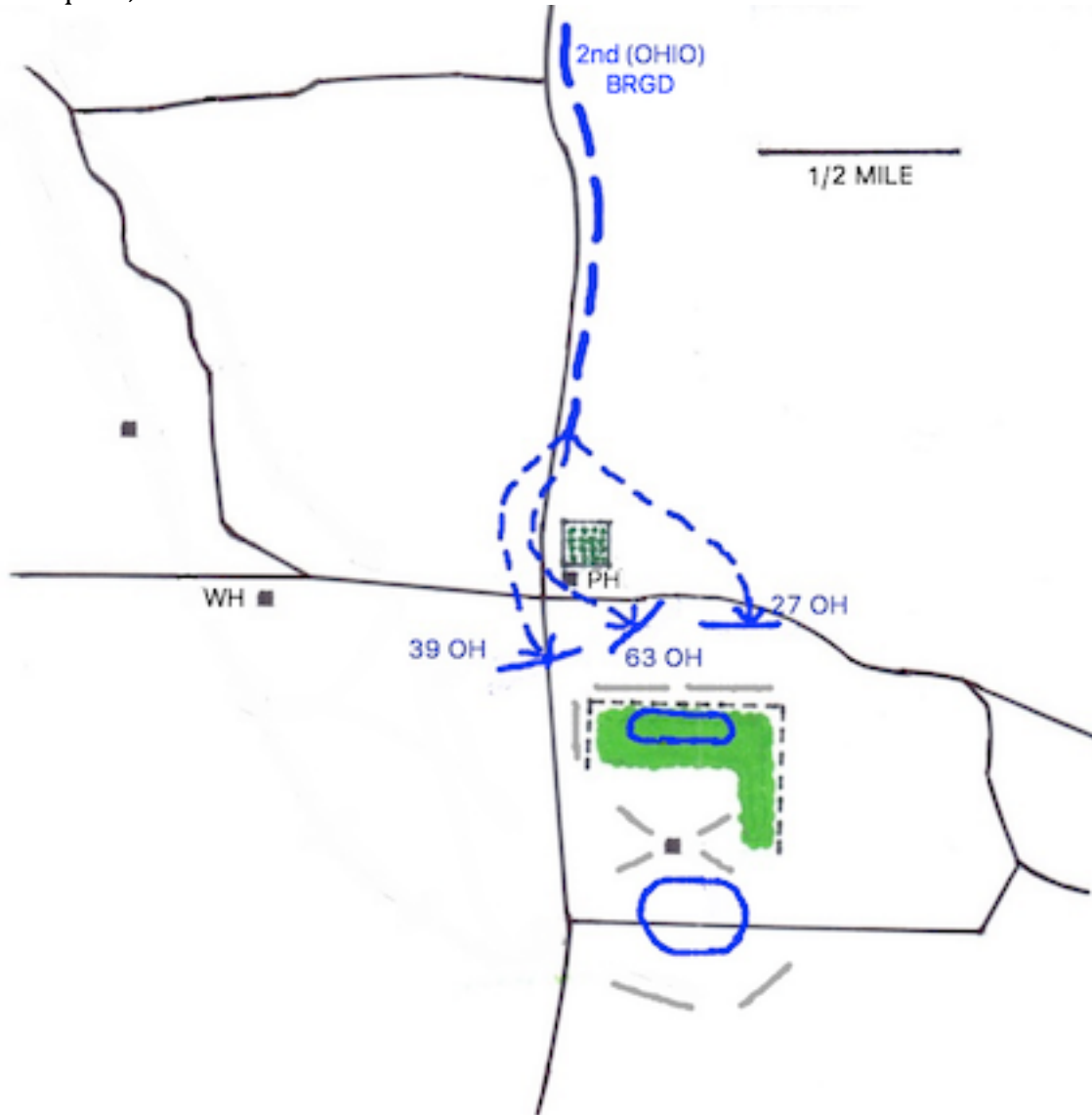


Figure 18. Arrival of the 2nd Brigade at Parker's Crossroads.



Figure 19. Organization of the Parker's Crossroads battlefield once the 2nd Brigade was in position. Location of the Confederate artillery approximate. **(Comment 1)**

During the double envelopment action, the Confederate units had become somewhat disorganized with troops from different companies and regiments becoming intermingled. General Forrest paused the action briefly to reorganize his forces before moving to complete the capture of Colonel Dunham's surrounded Brigade. It was at this juncture that Colonel Charles Carroll of General Forrest's staff rode up to tell the General of the approach of Colonel Fuller's Brigade. General Forrest quickly ordered his forces to align in response to this new threat (It was then that General Forrest was said to have given the order to "*Charge them both ways!*") and rode out to see for himself what was developing in his rear. He came to within 80 yards of the Union forces when he observed them in battle formation, ready to attack. Before he could turn back a Federal officer challenged him to surrender. Replying that he had already done so and would bring up the rest of his command to surrender formally, General Forrest turned and galloped back to his troops.

By not remaining at Clarksburg, Captain McLemore missed seeing Colonel Fuller's approach. Thinking his rear was clear, General Forrest was taking his time in subduing the surrounded Union troops, relying mainly on his artillery so as to reduce casualties among his men. Had he been informed of the approach of the 2nd Brigade, he most likely would have accelerated his attack, resulting in the capture of Colonel Dunham's Brigade. That would have resulted in an interesting situation, the Union relief arriving after Colonel Dunham had surrendered.

As he began moving back to General Forrest, Captain McLemore saw evidence of movement of a large Union force along the roads and saw a small group of Union cavalry moving ahead of him, in the same direction. Hearing the sound of artillery fire from the direction of Parker's Crossroads, Captain McLemore assumed General Forrest was heavily engaged and needed his force. Believing the main road to be occupied by the Union, he detoured by an indirect route. In so doing, by the time he reached the scene of the battle, he found the Union in control and General Forrest leaving the field. Furthermore, the Union 2nd Brigade was between him and General Forrest. In order to save his command, Captain McLemore detoured southeastward, safely crossing the Tennessee River at Perryville the 1st of January.

Colonel Fuller placed two artillery pieces of the 7th Wisconsin battery to the east of the Huntington-Lexington Road, in front of the 27th Ohio, to support an infantry attack upon the Confederate artillery. The other 7th Wisconsin cannon was positioned to the west of the road, where it fired into Confederate troops attempting to escape to the south of the 39th Ohio. When they discerned the attack of Colonel Fuller's Brigade, Colonel Dunham's troops resumed firing into the Confederate forces.

Having been caught by surprise, General Forrest gathered as many men as possible, including 75 men of his escort and a 50-man detachment from the 8th Tennessee, ordered his artillery out from between the enfilading lines of Union fire, and charged Fuller's two artillery pieces and their infantry support. (**Comment 11**) The charge created confusion within the 27th Ohio. The horses attached to the two 7th Wisconsin cannon were spooked and bolted into the Confederate forces where they were captured. At the same time the 4th Alabama and 4th Tennessee fired into the southern group of Colonel Dunham's forces preventing them from cooperating with Colonel Fuller's attack. The 27th Ohio's advance was halted long enough to allow

General Forrest to escape by moving eastward in front of Colonel Fuller's Brigade to 800 yards east of the Parker House. There, with the approximately 200 troops he had accumulated by now, General Forrest had his men gather their horses, remount and move down around the rear of the Union forces, and on southwest to the Huntington-Lexington Road. As General Forrest passed the rear of Colonel Dunham's southern group he gave it a final clout.

The other units moved southward to meet up with General Forrest's group, in the process recapturing the Union wagon train, taking it along. (**Comment 12**) The Confederate column then moved on to the Huntington-Lexington Road, from whence it continued to the south along the road. General Forrest kept his troops moving on southward to Lexington, where they stopped for the night.

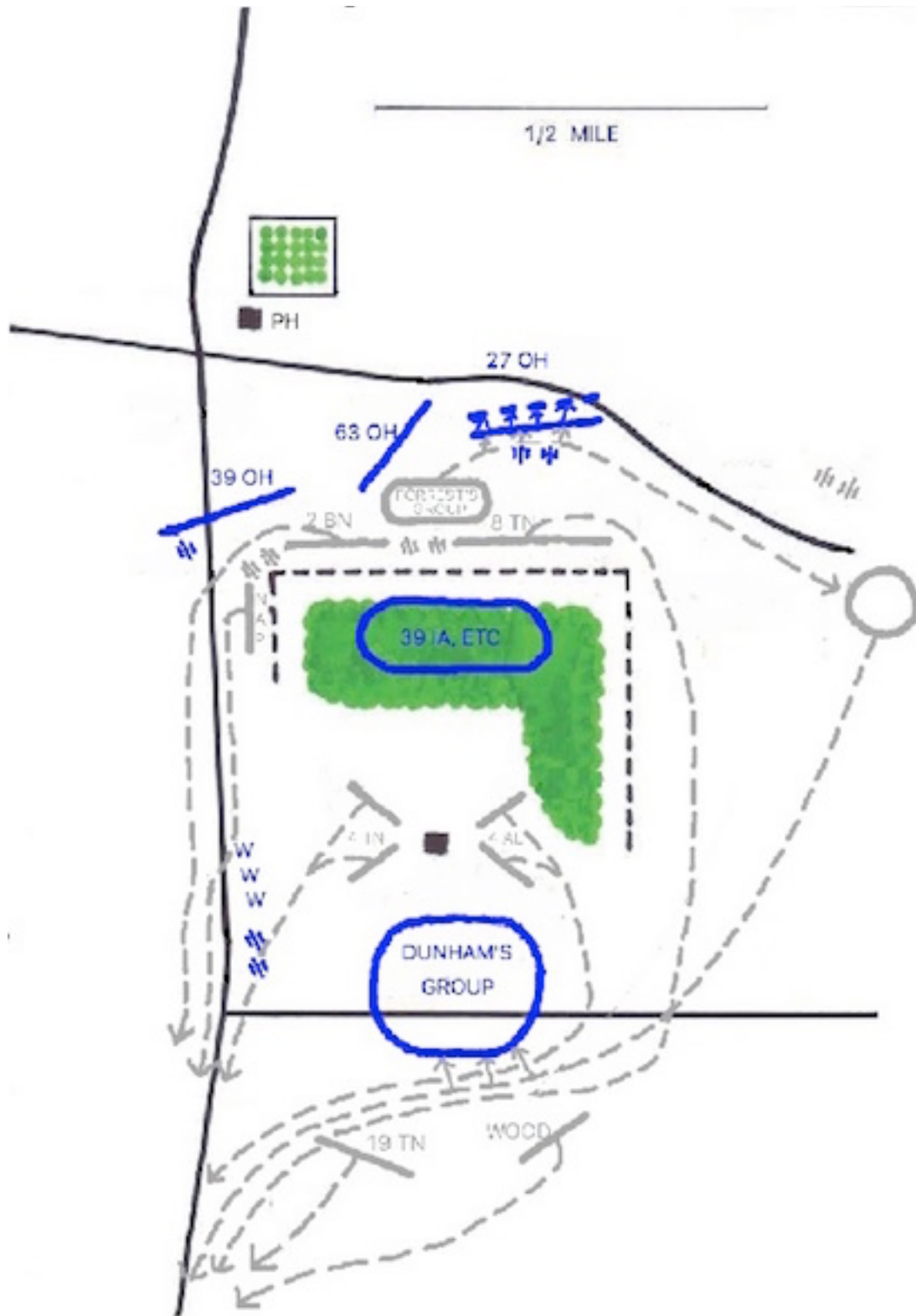


Figure 20. Presumed movements of Confederate Units from the Parker's Crossroads battlefield. The attack on the 27th Ohio, as General Forrest's group as it moved east, caused it to fall back, slightly disorganized.

Receiving information from scouts that a force, most likely Captain McLemore's, was approaching Parker's Crossroads from the north, General Sullivan assumed General Forrest was circling back for another attack. He ordered the 2nd Brigade into an obliquely formed defensive position, with the 27th north of the Pleasant Exchange Road and the 63rd between the Pleasant Exchange Road and the split-rail fence. The 39th was positioned across the Huntington-Lexington Road south of Parker's Crossroads. The attack never came. General Forrest's command crossed back over the Tennessee River the evening to 1 January 1863.

The Battle of Parker's Crossroads was over.

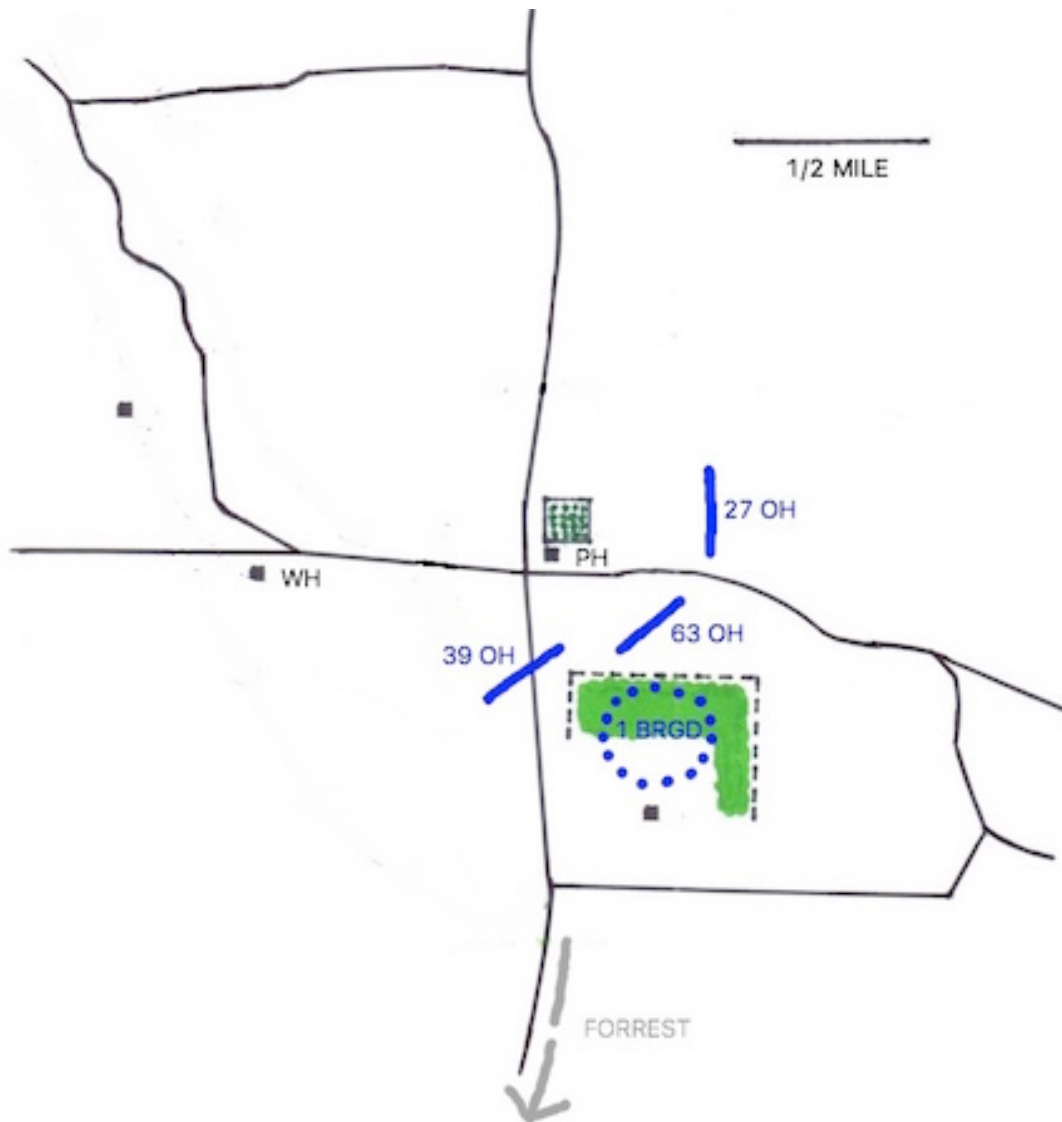


Figure 21. Blocking positions of the Ohio Brigade the night of 31 December, in anticipation of an attack by General Forrest.

Epilogue

Neither side won nor lost the Battle Of Parker's Crossroads. General Forrest had the battle "won" with the surrounding of the two pockets of Colonel Dunham's 1st Brigade. In control of the field, General Forrest was utilizing his artillery to effect the surrender of the Union forces, rather than incur additional casualties by storming the surrounded pockets. Flags of surrender were already being passed about in the northern group of Union troops. Arrival of Colonel Fuller's 2nd Brigade changed the dynamics of the battle. Now, General Forrest was surrounded. Owing to his tactical skills, General Forrest was able to escape from the "clutches" of the Union forces, saving his command to fight another day.

Both forces emerged from the battle relatively intact. Casualties were modest. However, for those troops killed or seriously wounded, the battle could not have been worse. There is no definite number of casualties on either side. Union losses appear to be approximately 26 killed, 139 wounded and 61 captured. Confederate losses are less precise. Pryor and Jordan (1868) put Confederate losses at 25 killed, 75 wounded and 250 captured, most likely relying on General Forrest's input, but there is no verification of the accuracy of these numbers.

In a strategic sense, General Forrest's foray into western Tennessee was a success. During the 14 days preceding the Battle of Parker's Crossroads. General Grant's supply line had been completely disrupted. Miles of railroad track had been destroyed, supply depots captured, allowing replenishment of General Forrest's supplies and replacement of antiquated rifles, or destroyed. With his supply lines cut, General Grant had to abandon his overland attack on Vicksburg and withdraw to Memphis. From there, he began anew his attack on Vicksburg, this time down the Mississippi River, culminating in the long and costly siege of Vicksburg that was not successfully completed until 4 July 1863.

Comments

Comment 1: There is confusion in the records regarding the number of Confederate artillery pieces available to Forrest at the Battle of Parker's Crossroads. The unit history of Freeman's Battery (as extracted by Amariah L. Huggins from "Tennesseans in the Civil War", Volume 1., Copyrighted © 1964 by the Civil War Centennial Commission of Tennessee) stated that an inspection report, dated 11 November 1862, showed Freeman's Battery armed with two 6-pounder guns and two 12-pounder howitzers, bronze. On 14 November, Freeman's Battery, with six guns, was reported with Forrest six miles from Nashville.

In early December, 1862, General Bragg assigned Lieutenant John W. Morton to General Forrest with orders to take command of Freeman's battery. When Lieutenant Morton reported to General Forrest, the General looked at him sharply and said curtly,

"I have a fine battery of six guns under Captain Freeman, and I don't propose to be interfered with by Bragg." General Forrest did let Morton remain with him.

As General Forrest's force readied to cross the Tennessee River at Clinton, Lieutenant Morton sought out the General at his headquarters and asked permission to obtain muskets for his men and serve with Starnes's Regiment, Fourth Tennessee Cavalry, until some pieces of artillery should be captured. General Forrest regarded the stripling with a frown for a moment, then, turning to his Adjutant, Major J. P. Strange, directed him to order Captain Freeman to send two guns and sufficient additional men to man the pieces to Lieutenant Morton. Thus, Freeman apparently had only 4 guns at start the campaign into western Tennessee (Morton 1909). Jordan and Pryor wrote that General Forrest had four guns when he reached the Tennessee River the evening of 13 December. General Forrest, in relating this information to the authors, may have been referring to Captain Freeman's battery.

Morton (1909) reports that at Lexington, a section (two 3 inch steel rifled Rodman cannon) of the 14th Indiana artillery took the brunt of the Confederate onslaught. Lieutenant Morton, with his eye on the two guns, trained his borrowed pieces on them with such effect that they were abandoned. Lieutenant Morton thus found himself in possession of two fully equipped three-inch, steel-rifled Rodman guns, enabling him to return to Captain Freeman the two pieces that he had been loaned.

Morton(1909) also reported that Napier's battalion, which had joined General Forrest shortly after the battle of Trenton, contained two mountain howitzers, commanded by Lieutenant A. W. Gould. Morton further stated that these cannons were consolidated with Morton's guns at Dresden on 27 December 1862, forming the battery known thereafter as Morton's Battery. There is, however, no mention in any of the reports of the Battle of Parker's Crossroads that Morton had more than the two Rodmans in any phase of the ensuing battle.

Forrest in his report of the battle, states he had one cannon destroyed when it exploded, three captured and six safely removed from the field, suggested a total of ten cannon available to him during the battle. Both Roth, et al. (2003) and Kennerly (2001) show between 8 and 13 artillery pieces in their maps, with no consistency in the number of pieces in a specific position along the line among phases of the battle. Neither do they provide a reference to the number of guns involved or the positioning of the guns.

Given the inconsistencies among the various reports, we were unable to establish the number of artillery pieces available to Forrest during the battle. Neither were we able to identify the exact disposition of the Confederate cannon during the course of the battle. The comments in the official reports are vague in terms of exactly where along the line the cannon were placed. In the text, we include the general statements of deployment of Confederate artillery as they appear in the official reports and in Jordan and Pryor. In the maps, we show Confederate cannon, but not the exact number, located in the approximate positions as suggested in the various reports.

Comment 2. Both Kennerly (2001) and Bearss (2003) state three cannon were sent forward. Colonel Dunham reported, however, he sent forward only two cannon "to

ascertain whether the enemy was there in force.” (War of the Rebellion, Chapter 29, page 580).

Comment 3. Nowhere in the records does it state exactly where along the Confederate line, General Forrest positioned the rest of the cannon. If Freeman had six cannon in his battery, as seems possible, then he brought up only five additional artillery pieces. Colonel Dunham said he first received fire from a cannon on the “extreme right” of the Confederate line. He also said that “soon” he received fire from another cannon “considerably farther to the east.” Since “soon” can be loosely interpreted, this fire may have been from the additional cannon brought up half an hour after Baxter’s initial barrage. When the Federal artillery opened up on the Confederates, Baxter’s returning fire disabled one Union cannon. General Forrest said the Union force (along with the rest of the 50th Indiana and the 18th Illinois) quickly withdrew back to Parker’s Crossroads. This agrees with the timing of Colonel Dunham’s report.

Comment 4. Roth, et al. (2003; Map 2) shows Company G on the far left of the 39th Iowa while the Union line was aligned north-south (facing west) along the Huntington-Lexington Road. Colonel Dunham reported that he did not send Company G up to the crossroads until the Confederate column moved on the crossroads, and as he prepared to realign the Union line, east-west, facing north. Company G was driven back from the crossroads to where it formed up on the left flank of the newly realigned 39th Iowa.

Comment 5. Neither Dunham nor Rinaker mentions these three attacks in their reports. Jordan and Pryor (1868) describe them in their book. Given the detail of the account, undoubtedly based on General Forrest’s in-put, it seems most likely such attacks took place and simply were not included in Colonels Dunham’s and Rinaker’s reports.

Comment 6. Bearss (2003) and Kennerly (2001), report that Colonel Dunham, sensing an opportunity because of the now weakened Confederate line in front of him, mounted an attack that was caught in a withering artillery cross-fire and pushed back to the rail fence. These accounts obviously are taken from Jordan and Pryor’s (1868) account of the battle. These authors state that at this time, Colonel Dunham charged the “diminished Confederate” line, which “was met and foiled by a discharge of grape and canister from the whole Confederate artillery.” Neither of Colonel Dunham’s nor Colonel Rinaker’s accounts indicate such a charge was made. Colonel Dunham, however, reported he had given the order for a charge, but before the troops had moved out, the Union line was attacked from the rear by Russell’s 4th Alabama and Woodward’s Kentucky Cavalry. There is no indication in the reports that Colonel Dunham realized the dismounted 4th Alabama and Kentucky Woodward’s Kentucky Cavalry had left the Confederate line and infiltrated in behind the Union line until they attacked him from the rear. It is possible General Forrest’s in-put to Jordan and Pryor’s

account, was based on his supposition that Colonel Dunham had perceived such a weakening of the Confederate line in front of him. Colonel Dunham does not mention an attack on the “diminished Confederated line” before being attacked from the rear.

Comment 7. It is difficult to determine from the official reports, the right/left orientation of the Union line after Colonel Dunham ordered an about face. In some places, it appears reference is made to the original north-facing left-right alignment, whereas in others, right and left seem to relate to the south-facing line. From this point on, to avoid confusion, we describe movements of the units, based on west and east sides of the battle line, rather than left or right.

Comment 8. The sequence of events regarding the capture and recapture of the wagon trains are somewhat vague in the official records and descriptions by Bearrs (2003) and Kennerly (2001). Our time-line is based on the following: the wagoners were spooked by the attack of the 4th Tennessee, resulting in capture of the wagon train by Major Strange. When informed of their capture, Colonel Dunham still had to be in the original Union line in order to request a volunteer company from the 39th Iowa (Company G responded). Had he done so later, Colonel Dunham would have been near the southern farm road. Nowhere in the official reports is Colonel McKee identified.

Comment 9. There is no description as to the exact disposition of the 50th Indiana after Colonel Dunham ordered it to protect the east flank, which the 4th Alabama and Woodward’s Kentucky Cavalry had attacked from the south. We have positioned them as best we can, based on Colonel Dunham’s orders, description of the alignments of Companies H and C and eventual location the 4th Alabama and Woodward’s Kentucky Cavalry after being fired upon by Companies H and C.

Comment 10. Although the sequence of events agree, the time line reported by Colonel Fuller does not agree well with that of General Forrest and Colonel Dunham. Most likely Colonel Fuller generalizes regarding the time line, based on when he first heard firing in front of him.

Comment 11. Kennerly (2001) states that General Forrest moved 800 yards east of the Parker house, before making the attack back on the 27th Ohio. Jordan and Pryor (1868) have him making the attack as his group passed in front of the 27th, throwing the Union line into disarray. This allowed General Forrest’s troops to remount and escape with around 200 men to 800 yards east of the Parker house. It was from there General Forrest swung this group of troops down and behind Colonel Dunham’s surrounded southern group. As indicated in **Comment 1**, General Forrest stated he had one cannon destroyed when it exploded, three captured and six safely removed

from the field. Nowhere is it reported which cannon were involved and the route taken as they were “removed from the field.”

Comment 12. The route(s) taken by the Confederates in retiring from the battle are not clearly indicated in the reports and published accounts. Colonel Dunham merely reports that General Forrest’s forces passed southward on the “right” (east) of the 50th Indiana. Colonel Dibrell reported the 8th Tennessee retreated through the large cotton field (on the east). Jordan and Pryor state that General Forrest had “taken post with about two hundred men on an eminence some eight hundred yards eastward of Parker’s house, from whence he, threw himself upon the rear of Dunham’s Brigade.”

Bearss (2003) states the 2nd Tennessee Battalion remounted and headed for the Lexington road (to the west of the battle line). Roth et al. (2003; Maps 7 and 8) indicate Napier’s Battalion and the 2nd Tennessee Battalion moved to their right (west) and on down the Huntington-Lexington Road, past the Union wagon train. The 4th Tennessee also is shown moving southward down the road. On the east, the 8th Tennessee, 4th Alabama and General Forrest’s group are depicted moving around to the south of Colonel Dunham’s encircled group. Movements of the 19th Tennessee and Woodward’s Kentucky Cavalry are not shown.

Colonel Fuller indicated the 2nd Brigade recaptured Colonel Dunham’s wagon train, as well as taking prisoner Major Cox, Major Strange and the other officers. However, Dunham’s wagon train was located well to the south of the 2nd Brigade Battle line. The 39th Ohio Regiment was closest to the wagon train. Colonel Edward F. Noyes, commander of the 39th makes no mention of moving down the Huntington-Lexington Road or the recapture of Dunham’s wagon train and associated Confederate officers. Colonel Fuller stated that the wagon train was captured by the 27th Ohio, which was positioned on the opposite side of the 2nd Brigade line. He reported that among the Confederates captured by the 27th was Major Strange, who had initially captured the wagon train. Both Colonel Dunham’s report and Jordan and Pryor indicate the Union wagon train was captured (by Major Strange) before Colonel Dunham’s Brigade was surrounded, and divided into two pockets. Colonel Dunham immediately asked Company G, 39th Iowa to retake the wagons, which was accomplished, along with the capture of Major Strange and his officers. There was no mention of the capture of Major Cox. This action took place before the Ohio Brigade moved upon the Confederate line. Major Cox was captured by the 27th Ohio when it captured the Confederate horses and some of their riders near the Parker House.

General Forrest began his mad dash to the east, upon arrival of the 2nd Brigade. Colonel Dunham makes no mention of the wagon train being re-captured by General Forrest on his way to the Huntington-Lexington Road. General Forrest’s group moved down to the Huntington-Lexington Road well after the time of the initial capture of the Union wagon train by the Confederates and recapture by the Union. Jordan and Pryor (1868) report that fifteen Union wagons, two ambulances and their teams, with some eighteen hundred knapsacks and as many blankets were “carried off the field.” The latter numbers, perhaps rounded off on the high side, are only slightly greater than the number of Union troops under Colonel Dunham’s command. Thus, we follow Forrest’s

apparent input to Jordan and Pryor that the Union train was taken off the field by the Confederates.

Kennerly (2001; Map 11) shows Dunham's encircled group moving south between the 19th Tennessee and Woodward's Kentucky Cavalry and beyond the farm road. The report of Colonel Dunham is vague regarding such a movement south. He reports that movements following repulse of the Confederate attack from the rear by the 50th Indiana "brought our line back to Red Mound, where our first had been formed, but at nearly right angles to it, the left resting where the right of the first had rested." This statement is unclear. The first battle line (north-south) formed at Parker's Crossroads had its most southerly point (far left, not right, of the line) anchored on the north side of the field road, about one half mile north of the Red Mound post office. Kennerly (2001; Maps 11, 12) interprets Dunham moving on south to across from the Red Mound post office, with Forrest moving onto the Huntington-Lexington Road north of Dunham, through the area the latter had just vacated. Roth (2003; Map 8) leaves Dunham's group astraddle the farm road, with Forrest moving to the south of Dunham. Given the looseness of reference to the location of "Red Mound", we interpret that Colonel Dunham's reference to the original north-south line, irrespective of the confusion in right and left positions, is where his group stopped moving, astride the farm road. Accordingly, we have General Forrest's group moving south of Colonel Dunham. It then follows that, if the Union wagon train was re-recaptured by the Confederates, the 2nd Tennessee Battalion, Napier's Battalion or the 4th Tennessee accomplished the task.

Participants

Several of the photographs of participants in the Battle of Parker's Crossroads were taken later in the war, when they had been promoted to a higher rank. A few were taken after the war.

Union



*General Jeremiah C. Sullivan, Commanding Officer Union Forces at Battle of Parker's Crossroads
(Rich Mountain Images)*



Colonel Cyrus L. Dunham, Commanding Officer, 1st Brigade (Wikipedia)



*Colonel John I. Rinaker, Commanding Officer, 122nd Illinois Infantry Regiment
(The Parker's Crossroads Battle Field Association)*



*Lt Colonel James F. Drish, 122 Illinois Infantry Regiment
(Illinois State Historical Library)*



*Colonel Henry J. B. Cummings, Commanding Officer, 39th Iowa Infantry Regiment
(History of the 39th Iowa Infantry Regiment)*



Lieutenant Arthur B. Wheelock, Commanding Officer, 7th Wisconsin Artillery Battery with the 1st Brigade (The Parker's Crossroads Battlefield Association)



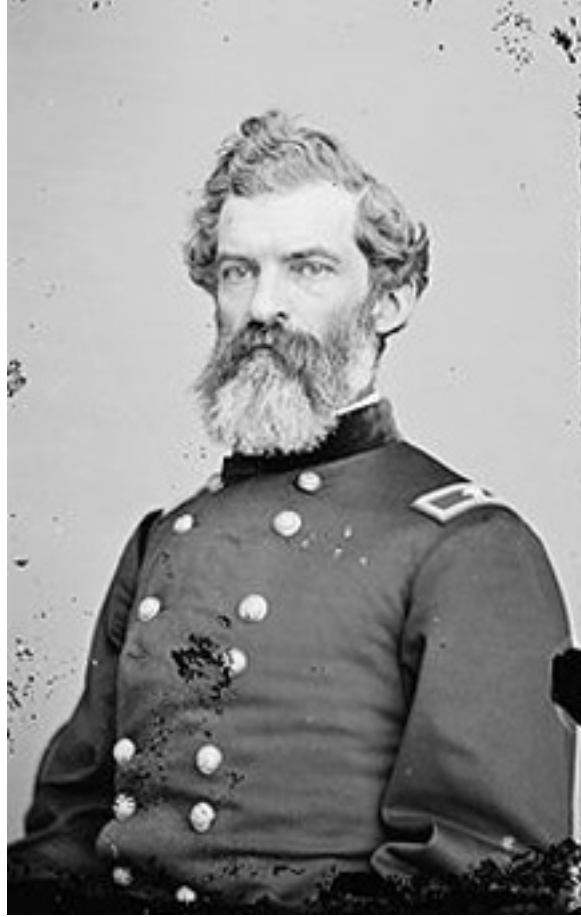
Colonel John W. Fuller, Commanding Officer, 2nd (Ohio) Brigade (Wikipedia)



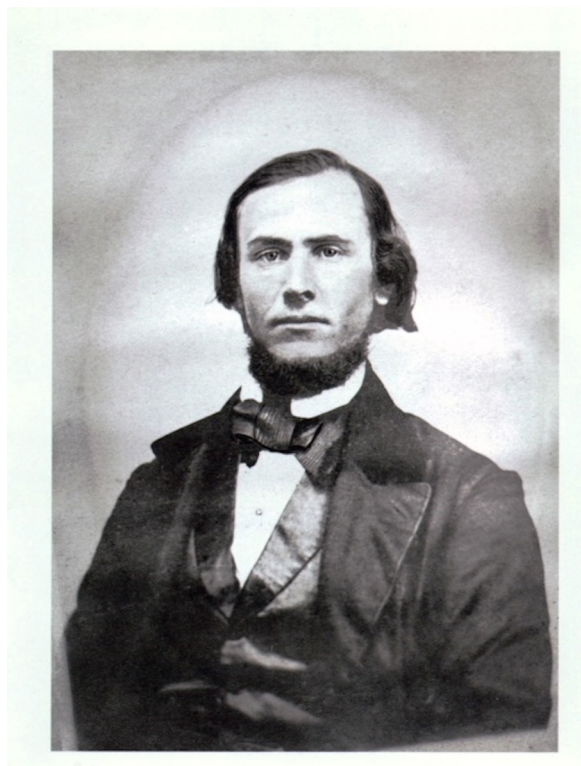
*Lt Colonel Zephaniah Swift Spaulding, Commanding Officer 27th Ohio Regiment
(Images of Old Hawai'i)*



*Colonel Edward F. Noyes, Commanding Officer, 39th Ohio Infantry Regiment
(The Parker's Crossroads Battlefield Association)*

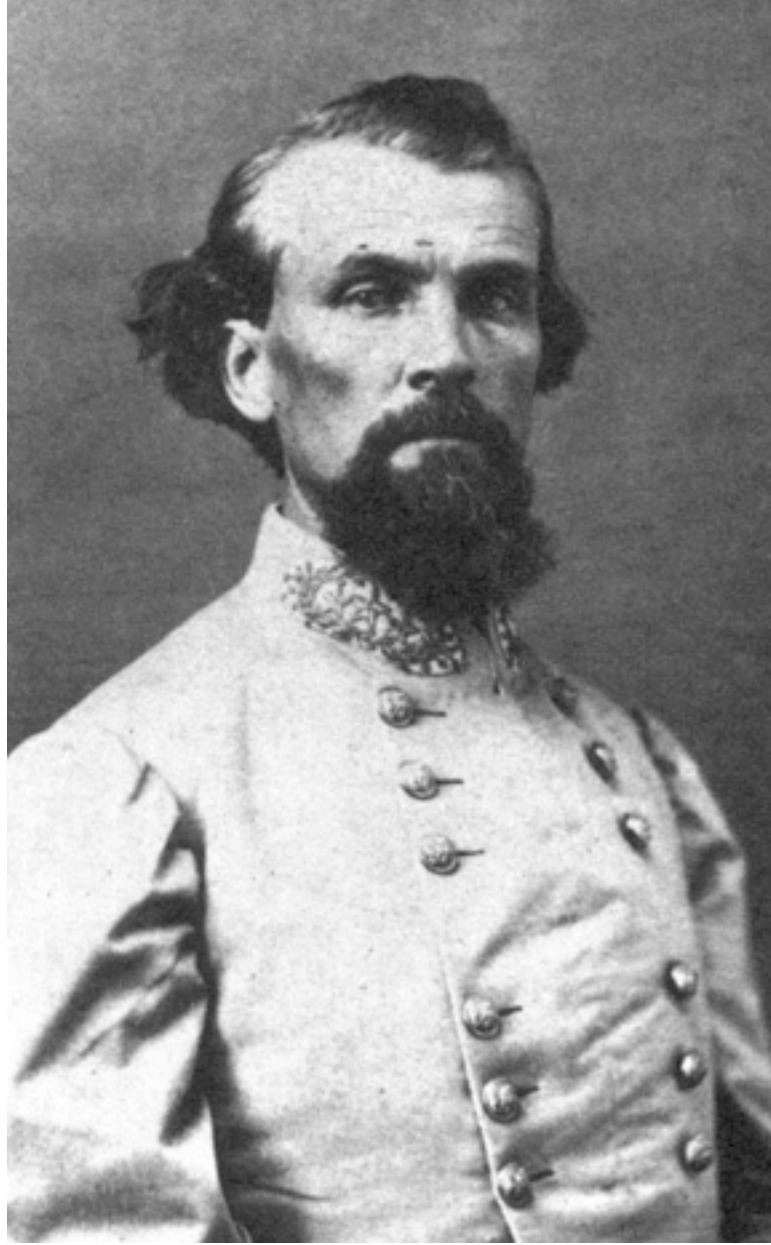


Colonel John W. Sprague, Commanding Officer 63rd Ohio Infantry Regiment (Wikipedia)



*Private James Thorton, Company A, 122nd Illinois Volunteer Infantry.
Killed in action, Battle of Parker's Crossroads. (Lowell L. Getz)*

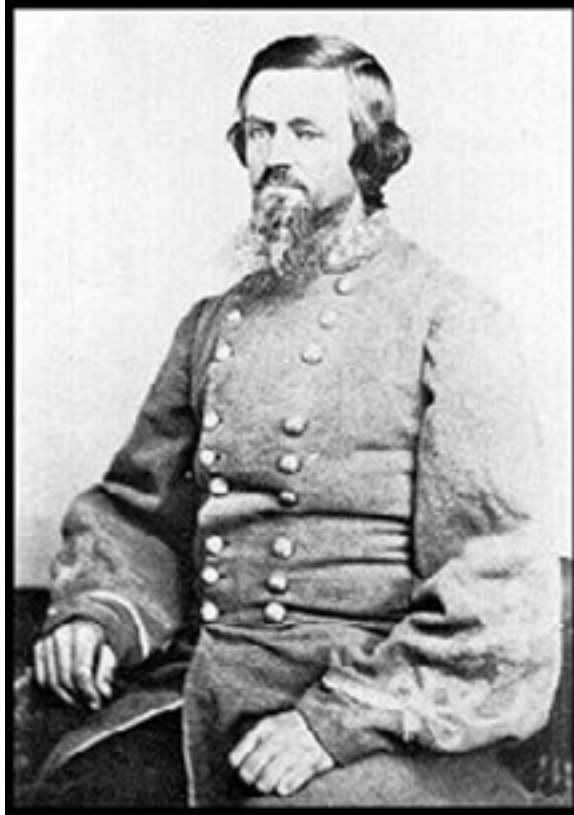
Confederates



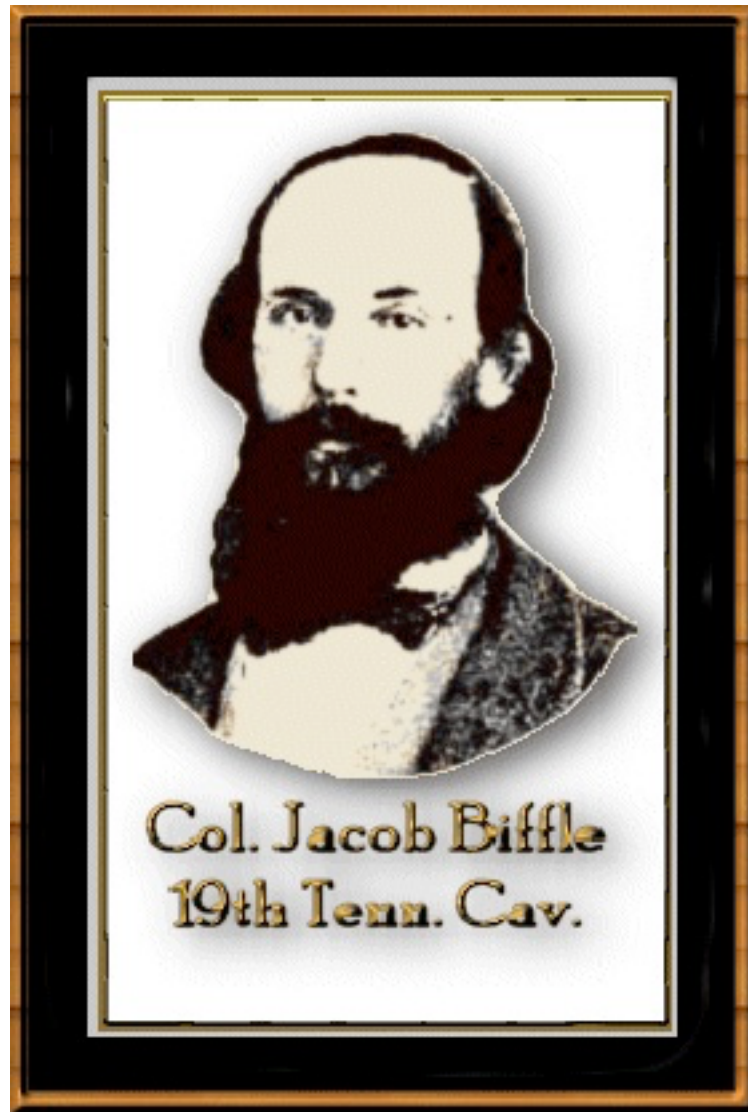
Brigadier General Nathan Bedford Forrest



*Colonel James W. Starnes, Commanding Officer 4th Tennessee Cavalry Regiment
(The Parker's Crossroads Battlefield Association)*



Colonel George G. Dibrell, Commanding Officer, 8th Tennessee Cavalry (Wikipedia)



*Colonel Jacob B. Biffle, Commanding Officer, 19th Tennessee Cavalry Regiment
(Tennessee Service Organization)*



*Colonel Alfred A. Russell, Commanding Officer, 4th Alabama Cavalry Regiment
(The Parker's Crossroads Battlefield Association)*



Lieutenant John W. Morton, Commanding Officer, Morton's Artillery Battery

(The Parker's Crossroads Battlefield Association)



Major Nicholas N. Cox, Commanding Officer, 2nd Tennessee Cavalry Battalion (Wikipedia)



*Colonel Thomas G. Woodward, Commanding Officer, Kentucky Cavalry Battalion
(The Parker's Crossroads Battlefield Association)*



*Sargent Nat Baxter, Jr., Freeman's Artillery Battery
(The Parker's Crossroads Battlefield Association)*

References

Bearss, Ed. 2003. Forrest's West Tennessee campaign of 1862 and the Battle of Parker's Crossroads. *Blue and Gray*. 20 (Issue 6): 6-22; 43-50.

Grant, Ulysses S. 1885-6. *Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant*. New York: Charles L. Webster & Company.

Jordan, Thomas and Pryor, J. P. 1868. *The Campaigns of Lieut. Gen. N.B. Forrest, and of Forrest's Cavalry*. New York. Blelock & Company.

Kennerly, Dan. 2001. *Forrest at Parker's Crossroads, The Dawn of Lightning War*. Parker's Crossroads Press. Richmond, Texas. Seventh Edition.

Maness, Lonnie E. 1975. *Forrest and the Battle of Parkers Crossroads*. Tennessee Historical Society. Summer Issue: 154-167.

Morton, John Watson. 1909. *The Artillery of Nathan Bedford Forrest's Cavalry, The Wizard of the Saddle*. Nashville, Tennessee. Publishing House of the M. E. Church.

Roth, Dave; McDaniel, Steve; Weaver, Jim. 2003. *Forrest in West Tennessee, 1862*. *Blue and Gray*. 20 (Issue 6): 51-58.

War of the Rebellion: Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies. 1887. Series 1. Volume 17, Part 1: 568-599. Washington, D. C. Government Printing Office.

