



HISTORIC RESOURCE STUDY

FORT DONELSON NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD
KENTUCKY, TENNESSEE

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Chapter 1. Introduction

Overview of Fort Donelson National Battlefield and National Cemetery

The victories in February 1862 at Forts Henry, Heiman, and Donelson presented the Union army with direct routes into the northern portions of the secessionist states by way of the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers. The campaign at the three forts provided a much needed morale boost to the United States military and northern citizens as these were the first significant victories of the Civil War for Union forces. Fort Donelson National Battlefield is comprised of land associated with the campaign at Forts Henry, Heiman, and Donelson and also conveys activities both prior to and after the Civil War (Figure 1.1). The National Cemetery serves as the final resting place for veterans dating to the battles at Fort Henry and Donelson.

General physical description

Fort Donelson National Battlefield is comprised of discontinuous tracts south, southwest, and west of downtown Dover, the county seat of Stewart County, Tennessee (Figure 1.2). The Dover Hotel, located in downtown Dover and long regarded as the “Surrender House,” is a significant resource of the park and to the history of the battle and the community. Situated on the south side of Lake Barkley (Cumberland River), the rugged, primarily wooded topography of the park features steep hillsides and undulating terrain. Fort Donelson National Cemetery is located at the site of the former Union fort. Indian Creek, currently a wide inlet of Lake Barkley (Cumberland River), separates the National Cemetery from the earthworks comprising Fort Donelson. The four-lane Donelson Parkway (Highway 79/Highway 76), extending in a general northeast–southwest direction, separates the north and northwest portions of the park from the south and southeastern sections.

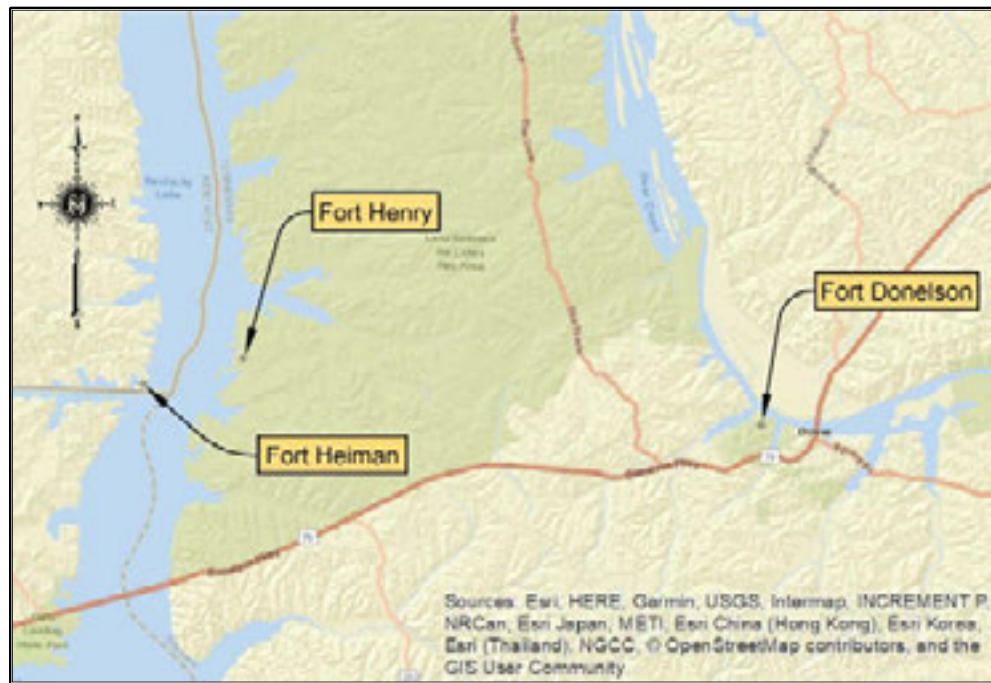


Figure 1.1. Overview map showing Forts Henry, Heiman, and Donelson.

Fort Donelson National Battlefield contains substantial quantities of historic Confederate earthworks – including a central fort, more than two miles of outer defenses, and artillery batteries. Also present is a historic Mission 66 visitor center, the Confederate Monument, the Texas monument, numerous field and fortification artillery, and historic iron interpretive tablets, as well modern interpretive panels. Historic road traces abound in all units of the battlefield park.

Fort Donelson, the visitor center, Confederate Monument, sections of earthworks, and the National Cemetery are situated north and northwest of Donelson Parkway (Highway 79/Highway 76). Areas to the southeast of the parkway (Highway 79/Highway 76) include Graves' Battery, a narrow strip of land with Maney's Battery, and a wider area containing French's Battery and the Confederate Center known as the Erin Hollow Area. The Confederate Breakout Unit, consisting of park Fee Lands composed of three acquisitions totaling approximately 180 acres, is a large, wooded, discontinuous tract south and southeast of the modern, paved Forge Road. The Union Reorganization Unit, also a discontinuous wooded tract located south of Wynn's Ferry Road, is the area in which Brigadier General Ulysses S. Grant rallied Federal forces to achieve the Union victory. Four privately-owned tracts with dwellings within the core area of the Union Reorganization Unit are surrounded or bordered on at least two sides by the Union Reorganization Unit/NPS property.

The circa 1851–1853 Dover Hotel, also known as the Surrender House, is the only standing structure dating to the Civil War in the park. The Dover Hotel is positioned at the northern terminus of Petty Street with Lake Barkley (Cumberland River) to the immediate north and an inlet to the east. Serving as a Confederate headquarters during the battle, the Dover Hotel also hosted the surrender of those forces to Brigadier General Ulysses S. Grant's Federal troops. The property is a small tract just east of downtown Dover and separated from the bulk of the park's land holdings.

Fort Donelson National Cemetery is located south-southeast of the Confederate fort along the east edge of the park. The National Cemetery, occupying the site of the former Federal fort erected after the battle, is encompassed by a stone wall. The curvilinear stone wall encloses just over three acres with linear rows of burials and a circular design of headstones near the center of the cemetery. To the immediate east of the circular design is a flagstaff in the middle of a heart-shaped pattern of interments. Within the stone wall is the 1878 cemetery lodge exhibiting the standardized plan developed by Quartermaster General Montgomery C. Meigs and utilized at national cemeteries in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

Scattered residential development is located adjacent to Fort Donelson National Battlefield and National Cemetery. Apartment complexes and an industrial factory are found along the Forge Road corridor next to the park boundary. Woods provide a buffer between residential development and the park in some areas, although the park boundary abuts the rear and side yards of many dwellings. It was recently announced that a large development consisting of residential lots and community amenities has been proposed adjacent to the southern and southwest boundary of the Union Reorganization Unit.

Resources relating to two Civil War forts on the Tennessee River are located in the vicinity of Fort Donelson National Battlefield. The Union capture of the two Tennessee River Confederate forts, Forts Henry and Heiman, took place prior to the engagement of forces at Fort Donelson. The capture of the Confederate forts defending the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers was a priority to Union forces, as the rivers provided transportation access to the upper secessionist states. All property and resources of the Fort Heiman Unit are located in Calloway County, Kentucky (Figure 1.3). Fort Heiman is situated on the west banks of Kentucky Lake (the Tennessee River) just north of the Kentucky/Tennessee state line. A very small portion of the property extends south into Henry County, Tennessee. The heavily wooded property, accessed by the Calloway County

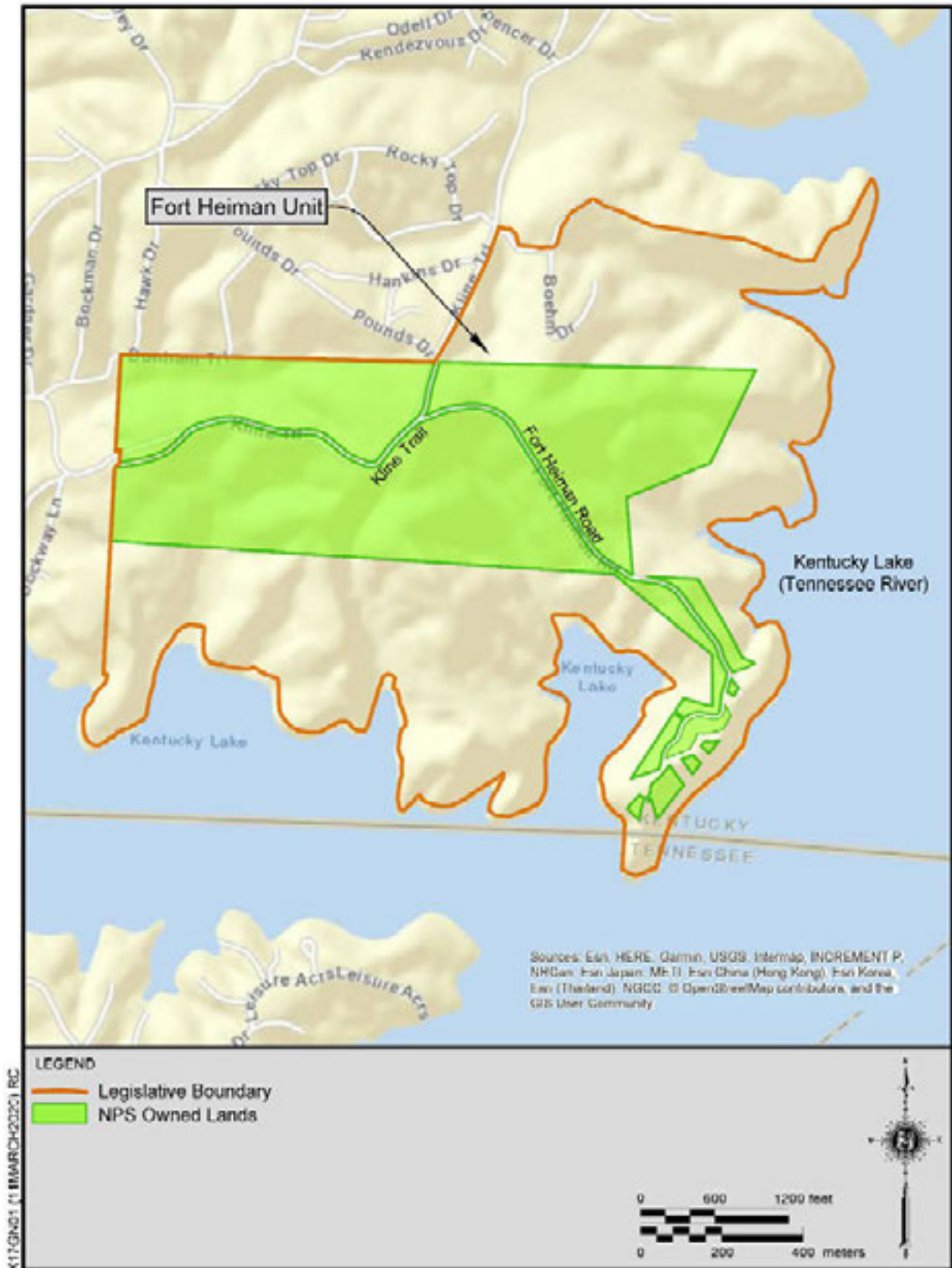


Figure 1.3. Map focused on Fort Heiman indicating property owned by NPS and non-NPS owned properties within the Legislative Boundary.

roadways of Kline Trail and Fort Heiman Road, contains earthwork remnants of the never-finished Confederate fort, a small Union fort and associated resources, and a circa 2013 interpretive shelter. Associated with the Fort Heiman Unit are also two historic cemeteries, and former burial sites of Union soldiers, who were transferred to Shiloh National Cemetery.

The topography is undulating with the primary earthworks on a rise along a peninsula extending southwest into Kentucky Lake. As of 2019, 176.4 acres of the Fort Heiman Unit are owned and managed by the National Park Service (NPS). A total of eight parcels, located in the most significant, peninsula area of the Unit, remained in private ownership, or unknown. The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) lands comprised 219 acres within the Legislative boundary.

Fort Henry, located on the east bank of Kentucky Lake (Tennessee River) northeast of Fort Heiman, was submerged with the impoundment of the Tennessee River in 1944, creating Kentucky Lake. An impressive surviving line of outer works associated with Fort Henry remain. The earthworks are broken by a gravel road that intersects Fort Henry Road. The heavily wooded terrain slopes away from the ridge on which the roadway is situated. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service owns the property containing the extant sections of Fort Henry's earthworks. The Fort Donelson National Battlefield Expansion Act of 2004 legislates mutual interpretation and preservation undertakings between the USDA Forest Service and NPS in regard to Fort Henry and its resources.

Fort Donelson National Battlefield interprets the Forts Henry, Heiman, and Donelson Campaign, and the related February 1862 battles associated with Forts Henry, Heiman, and Donelson through various methods. Interpretive components and methods utilized at the park include original earthworks and batteries, a reconstructed powder magazine and reconstructed line of lower river battery works, military hardware such as cannons, wayside panels, interpretive

tablets, pamphlets, and exhibits at the Dover Hotel. At present, the visitor center is closed to the public for renovation, limiting available interpretation and exhibit space. The park had been sharing space at the Stewart County Visitor Center, and, at this writing, is in the process to place a temporary, modular visitor center onsite. This facility will be used until the completion of the primary visitor center's renovation.

Brief historical summary of Fort Donelson National Battlefield and National Cemetery

On February 4, 1862, a relatively unknown Brigadier General, Ulysses S. Grant, began moving his soldiers from Paducah, Kentucky to attack both the poorly located and minimally protected Forts Henry and Heiman. The latter was located upstream and on the Kentucky side of the Tennessee River. The capture of the two forts was followed 10 days later with the surrender of Fort Donelson, on the Cumberland River. The loss of Confederate protection of the two parallel rivers, would allow for deep and rapid Federal advancement into the interior of the central Confederacy. Beginning the approach on the Tennessee River, Federal Naval Flag Officer Andrew H. Foote led Union gunboats upstream, while Grant's men trudged through a maze of muddy roads to attack the respective forts. On February 6, Foote's ironclads attacked Fort Henry. The Confederate forces abandoned Fort Heiman before the battle. The attack represented the first inland battle of armored ships. The minimally manned, and increasingly submerging Fort Henry allowed for Federal victory in a short time, and before Brigadier General Grant's army could arrive. Fort Heiman was found abandoned. Despite victory over the rebel fort, the heavy impact of Confederate fire upon the now disabled armored gunboats proved a Southern victory.

The utilization of newly designed, armored river vessels was a technological and strategic advancement – the very first field test truly being “trial by fire” at Fort Henry. The significance of this first utilization, followed

only a handful of days later at Fort Donelson, signaled the introduction of modern inland armored gunboats.

Most of the Confederate soldiers assigned to the Tennessee River fortifications had escaped capture the evening before, walking the 12 miles across the “land between the rivers” to Fort Donelson and the town of Dover on the Cumberland River. This stronghold became the next target of Union forces.

The capture of Fort Donelson proved to be a more difficult task than the two Tennessee River forts. Fort Donelson was placed on a bluff overlooking the Cumberland River and was fortified with heavy guns and some three miles of outer works on the land side. Fighting took place on February 13 as Union forces sought to encircle the Confederate outer defenses. The next day the Confederate river batteries repulsed and heavily damaged Federal ironclads as they bombarded the fort. In an effort to save the army, the Confederate command attempted to break out of the Union lines and escape to Nashville. This attempt failed after Confederate Brig. Gen. Gideon Pillow ordered a retreat back to Fort Donelson. During the night Confederate Col. Nathan Bedford Forrest escaped with his command and other troops that followed him out. The next morning Generals John Floyd and Gideon Pillow fled for Nashville on steamboats, Floyd took a brigade of Virginia soldiers with him. General Simon Buckner, left in command of the fort, asked Grant for terms of surrender on February 16, to which Grant replied no terms except unconditional surrender. Buckner and Grant met at the Dover Hotel for the formal surrender. The loss of the three river forts opened middle Tennessee and Nashville to Union forces and was the first success in Grant’s Civil War military career.

The Act to Establish and to Protect National Cemeteries, authorized by Congress on February 22, 1867, provided the Secretary of War with guidelines for the design of national cemeteries, including the use of iron or stone fencing and graves were to be marked with permanent headstones rather than the

impermanent wooden boards. Only those that died in the service of the United States were to be buried in national cemeteries. The Quartermaster General’s office had previously started the work of identifying the war-time burial locations of Union soldiers. The task of locating the remains was daunting, as many soldiers were buried near where they died on the field of battle, adjacent to military hospitals, or were interred in family or public cemeteries that had provided for burial. Without standardized means of personal identification, many of the remains could not be identified. The initial 15.34-acre tract for Fort Donelson National Cemetery was purchased in April 1867. The former Union fort, constructed after the victory at Fort Donelson, was located on the northern third of the National Cemetery land acquisition. Work was started immediately on improving the site, such as a stone wall to encompass the cemetery and leveling of the grounds. The cemetery received re-interments from Dover and the surrounding area, including Fort Henry and Hopkinsville, Kentucky. Wooden markers were utilized for the gravesites. The majority of initial interments were for unknown soldiers. A lodge utilizing the first standardized pattern for national cemeteries was hastily built for the cemetery superintendent. A new lodge, constructed of brick in the Second Empire-style following a standardized design, was completed in 1878. At about the same time, marble headstones utilizing standardized designs replaced the wooden markers.

A lock and dam was constructed by the United States Army Corps of Engineers near the former Confederate fort on the Cumberland River between 1913 and 1917. The lock and dam near Dover was a component of improving commercial navigation of the Cumberland River. Earlier lock and dam improvements occurred upstream along the river. It was during this time that efforts were initiated for the establishment of a national military park at Fort Donelson. The first four Civil War military parks, created in the 1890s, were thoroughly examined to determine their

significance to both the Union and Confederate armies. Interest in the Civil War was increasing at the turn of the twentieth century, leading to attempts to commemorate additional military parks. Congressmen, encouraged by their constituents, began advocating to create a military park at Fort Donelson. Efforts continued in Congress for the passage of legislation to establish such a park through the 1920s. On March 19, 1928, legislation for Fort Donelson National Military Park was passed by Congress and later signed by President Calvin Coolidge. The newly established battlefield park was to be developed and administered by the United States War Department. Assessments began immediately to determine what properties to purchase and how best to provide access and interpretation of the battlefield. Lands were purchased in 1930, and improvements began the following year. Fort Donelson Military Park was dedicated in July of 1932.

Executive Order No. 6228, issued by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on July 28, 1933, transferred Fort Donelson Military Park and National Cemetery to the Department of the Interior. The park and cemetery were to be operated by the NPS. Employment programs of the New Deal, such as the Civil Works Administration (CWA), the Public Works Administration (PWA), and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), were utilized for many improvements to the park. Fort Donelson Military Park, including the National Cemetery, was authorized by Congress for expansion in 1937. With the onset of World War II, improvements to the park came to a halt as budgetary constraints became the norm during the war years.

In the early 1960s the park was renamed Fort Donelson National Battlefield. This was a period of budget expansion for the NPS known as the Mission 66 era, and the celebration of the Civil War Centennial. It was during this time that the visitor center and upgrades were introduced to parks, utilizing modern architectural style and materials for new park buildings. Fort Donelson National Battlefield's visitor center opened to the public in 1962 and is an excellent example of

the Mission 66 philosophy. Land acquisition increasing the park's boundary also occurred in the 1960s and continues to the present time. The park's Legislative Area, designated by legislation through Congress, is approximately 1,200 acres for all units. The Legislative Area includes lands currently owned and not owned by NPS. The NPS owns approximately 800 acres in Tennessee and 179 acres in Kentucky. The Legislative Area contains remnants of Fort Heiman and Fort Donelson, the Dover Hotel, and other resources associated with the Battle of Fort Donelson and the 1862 Confederate surrender. Fort Donelson National Battlefield has a floating boundary, so that new lands acquired within the Legislative Area automatically become the park boundary and thus, new legislation is not necessary to increase the park's boundary.

Scope and purpose of study

According to the NPS's Cultural Resource Management Guideline, a "historic resource study (HRS) provides a historic overview of a park or region and identifies and evaluates a park's cultural resources within historic contexts."¹ An HRS integrates existing research from many fields of study with an examination of a park's resources, including buildings, objects, and landscape features, to fashion a narrative context. Not only does the report include the development of contextual information, but an HRS also addresses the significance and National Register eligibility of resources managed by park staff. The developed context assists park staff in formulating decisions pertaining to interpretation and management of the park's resources. The HRS may also serve as the foundation for completion of or updating a National Register nomination, as the park's resources are evaluated for integrity and significance through the developed context. Recommendations for interpretation and

¹ National Park Service, *NPS-28: Cultural Resource Management Guideline* (National Park Service, 1998), 25, https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/nps/28/28chap2.htm.

management of a park's resources are hallmarks of an effective HRS.²

This HRS for Fort Donelson National Battlefield and National Cemetery accomplishes the goals set out by the NPS for such documents. The context development expands the park's historical record to the present and examines the stewardship of the NPS and its related stakeholders. This HRS is not simply an academic exercise, detailing the history and resources of the park and cemetery, but is a valuable source document for the utilization of park managers, planners, interpreters, and the general public. Fort Donelson National Battlefield and National Cemetery HRS will prove beneficial in future management and interpretation decisions.

The settlement and antebellum periods of the area have not been comprehensively examined in the past, with scattered publications of varying degrees of scholarship available but not condensed into a single volume. The battles of Forts Henry, Heiman, and Donelson have been extensively researched and addressed in scholarly publications. Previous efforts have also focused on the history of Free State and its development within the town of Dover. The commemoration period, documenting the development of the national cemetery and park prior to and during its management by the NPS, has been researched and findings disseminated in a few publications. Previous reports completed for Fort Donelson National Battlefield and National Cemetery are beneficial as discrete publications and fulfill their intentions, such as National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) nominations, historic structure reports, the ethnographic overview and assessment, and the cultural landscape report. As a whole, the products of past research are insightful to the history of Fort Donelson National Battlefield and National

Cemetery, but do not blend the overarching history into a concise document.

This HRS coalesces previous research into a single report that will prove advantageous to park staff and future stakeholders. The following pages detail the settlement and antebellum periods of areas encompassing Forts Henry, Heiman, and Donelson; the prelude and outbreak of the Civil War; construction of the forts and the ensuing battles; establishment of the African American community known as Free State; and the commemoration period after the Civil War to the present day. The commemoration period includes the creation of Fort Donelson National Cemetery, efforts to preserve the battlefield and forts, establishment of the national battlefield, improvements to the property by the War Department, followed by the NPS, incorporating the Mission 66, and continuing land acquisitions.

While previous research has been synthesized in this HRS, staff also engaged in fieldwork to document the current condition of all aboveground cultural resources associated with Fort Donelson National Battlefield and National Cemetery. The documentation and interpretation of these resources allow NPS staff to convey an understanding of the battlefield and national cemetery. The aboveground resources, including the expansive collection of surviving earthworks, are presented with their current NRHP status (if applicable) and evaluated to provide current NRHP recommendations for each resource.

Recommendations concerning Fort Donelson National Battlefield and National Cemetery are contained in Chapter 7. Additional research, updating the existing NRHP nomination, maintenance of the earthworks, and additional interpretation of resources associated with African-American history are among the recommendations offered in the HRS.

The HRS will provide staff of Fort Donelson National Battlefield and National Cemetery a valuable resource in making informed decisions concerning the

² National Park Service, *NPS-28: Cultural Resource Management Guideline* (National Park Service, 1998), 25, https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/nps/28/28chap2.htm.

management and interpretation of the park and national cemetery. The HRS provides a synthesized context comprised of discrete prior research coalesced into a single document. The document also provides staff members with descriptions and NRHP evaluations of the park's resources along with recommendations concerning future research, maintenance, and interpretation.

Discussion of methods

Research and context development

Research for the HRS began with a review of records held by Fort Donelson National Battlefield and National Cemetery. NPS park staff provided valuable assistance with this task and are to be commended for their support. Information gleaned from research at the park facilities included historic maps, reports completed by consultants, monthly and quarterly reports completed by the cemetery and park's superintendents, various reports concerning the cemetery and battlefield, and other documentation. Research for primary and secondary materials was conducted at many institutions, including: Stewart County, Tennessee Archives (Dover, Tennessee); Stewart County Public Library (Dover, Tennessee); Tennessee Historical Commission (Nashville, Tennessee); Tennessee State Library and Archives (Nashville, Tennessee); Kentucky Heritage Council (Frankfort, Kentucky); Kentucky Historical Society (Frankfort, Kentucky); Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives (Frankfort, Kentucky); University of Kentucky Library and Special Collections (Lexington, Kentucky); Felix G. Woodward Library at Austin Peay State University (Clarksville, Tennessee); Campbellsville University (Campbellsville, Kentucky); and the Allen County Public Library (Fort Wayne, Indiana). Research conducted at these archives and institutions provided researchers with historic maps and images, secondary sources of information, and information concerning the historic resources located on and near the three forts and national cemetery. Research was also

conducted online for sources of information pertaining to the local iron industry, historic maps, the Civil War, national cemeteries, the Freedmen's Bureau, military parks, and census information.

This HRS evaluates the significance and integrity of above ground cultural historic resources at Fort Donelson National Battlefield and National Cemetery under four historic contexts. These four contexts were developed under the thematic framework created by the NPS and revised in 1993. The above ground resources of the park, including but not limited to buildings, the earthworks, monuments, and the park and cemetery's landscape, were evaluated for eligibility for listing in the NRHP as contributing or non-contributing resources to Fort Donelson National Battlefield and National Cemetery. A few privately owned resources, associated with the local African American community of Free State, were also examined for potential NRHP eligibility under the developed contexts.³

The first context, Defending the Cumberland and Tennessee Rivers (Chapter 3), explains the purpose and construction of the three forts and relates to the NPS theme of "Shaping the Political Landscape." The second context, The Battles of Fort Henry and Fort Donelson and Their Place in the Civil War and the Tennessee Campaign (Chapter 4) also communicates the NPS theme of "Shaping the Political Landscape." Reconstruction: Freedmen's Camp and Post-War African American Settlements (Chapter 5) relates to the NPS themes of "Peopling Places" and "Creating Social Institutions and Movements." The final context, Commemoration (Chapter 6), is associated with the NPS themes of "Creating Social Institutions and Movements," "Expressing Cultural Values," "Shaping the Political

³ National Park Service, "Revision of the National Park Service's Thematic Framework," (National Park Service, 2003), accessed May 30, 2019, <https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/hisnps/NPStthinki ng/thematic.htm>.

Landscape,” and “Transforming the Environment.”

The property and cultural historic resources located in Fort Donelson National Battlefield and National Cemetery relate to all four contexts, although privately owned resources are primarily associated with Reconstruction: Freedmen’s Camp and Post-War African American Settlements (Chapter 5). Resources within Fort Donelson National Battlefield and National Cemetery related with the contexts of Defending the Cumberland and Tennessee Rivers and The Battles of Fort Henry and Fort Donelson and Their Place in the Civil War and the Tennessee Campaign (Chapters 3 and 4) include the earthworks associated with the forts, gun positions, batteries, the reconstructed powder magazine, the Dover Hotel, historic roads, and properties linked to the battles. Resources within the park connected with the context of Commemoration (Chapter 6) are those associated with the National Cemetery such as the design of the cemetery, the stone wall, and the lodge, and the resources located on the battlefield.

The majority of the improvements to the park took place during its operation by the War Department and the NPS in the twentieth century. The current period of significance for the NRHP nomination ends in 1942. It is recommended that the period of significance be expanded to the early 1960s, thereby including the visitor center and its association with the Mission 66 era of expansion for the NPS. Improvements to the National Cemetery began in the late 1860s and continued into the second half of the twentieth century.

Recordation and evaluation of resources

An initial on-site meeting took place at Fort Donelson National Battlefield on October 25, 2017. Examples of HRS reports for other NPS parks were provided to the researchers. Prior to the meeting, archival research had been conducted at local libraries in Lexington, Kentucky and documents were requested electronically from the NPS Technical Information Center. In the following months

additional research was conducted online and at various institutions. As pertinent information was located, work began on compiling the annotated bibliography. The research team visited Fort Donelson National Battlefield and National Cemetery from January 29 to February 1, 2018. Research during this visit took place at the local library and archives along with the archival files of the park. The research team documented the earthworks, interpretive signs, and other resources associated with Forts Heiman, Henry, and Donelson along with those of the national cemetery. Each resource was documented during fieldwork noting its location using a global positioning unit system (GPS) unit, taking notes on its materials and condition, and photographs were taken of each resource.

An annotated and cross-referenced bibliography, along with an outline were submitted by the research team in March 2018. Drafts of Chapters 2 and 3 of the HRS were submitted for review to the NPS in August 2018. Comments on the two chapters were provided to the research team in September 2018. Afterwards the two chapters were revised and work continued on completing the remaining chapters of the HRS. The contexts for the HRS were developed through archival research using known primary and secondary sources along with maps and aerials, if available. Previously unknown archival sources were used for the context development and added to the bibliography.

After development of the contexts for the HRS, each resource for each of the three forts and the national cemetery was individually described in Chapter 7, including the construction date and the current NRHP status. Photographs also accompany the resource descriptions. Those resources that date to outside the current NRHP nomination’s period of significance, have not been evaluated before, or are located on private property, were evaluated for eligibility for listing in the NRHP. The NRHP recommendation for these resources are included in the written evaluations.

Chapter 2. Antebellum Settlement, Land Use, And Transportation

Pioneer Settlement of Land Between the Rivers

European settlement of land between the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers

The area between the Cumberland and Tennessee Rivers is divided by the Tennessee Ridge, which creates the watershed between the two rivers. The “land between the rivers” is a historical reference to the area situated between the Cumberland River to the east, the Tennessee River to the west, and the Ohio River to the north. The dissected topography between the Cumberland and Tennessee Rivers includes ravines, sloping hillsides, small streams, and bottomlands along the waterways. Hardwood forests comprised of oaks, black and sweet gum, chestnuts, and hickories encompassed most of the area prior to its European settlement, although the northeast portion of future Stewart County exhibited a more level landscape similar to a prairie. These areas, known as barrens, included fields filled with native grasses and flowers and often included oak and chestnut trees. Wild berries could be found on the hillsides and the barrens, including strawberries, blackberries, and grapes. The forests and undergrowth along with plentiful water provided the ideal habitat for large mammals such as bison, deer, and elk along with smaller game animals. The trees provided forage including pawpaws, persimmons, walnuts, acorns, chestnuts, and hickory nuts.⁴

⁴ Edward W. Chester and Betty Joe Wallace, *Fort Donelson National Battlefield: A Botanical and Historical Perspective* (Clarksville, Tennessee: Center for Field Biology, Austin Peay State University, 1997), 7, 15; Betty Joe Wallace, *Between the Rivers: History of the Land Between the Lakes* (Clarksville, Tennessee: Austin Peay State University, 1992), 9; J. B. Killebrew, *Recollections of My Life* (circa 1898) Volume 1

Native Americans frequented the land between the rivers prior to European settlement of the area. Previous archaeological investigations have resulted in few finds at Fort Donelson Battlefield Park, although most examinations focused on the Civil War period rather than earlier habitations. Archaeological studies at Fort Heiman provided insight into Native American habitation along the Tennessee River, most of which tends to be for short periods related to hunting.⁵ Unrecorded evidence of Native American sites reflecting early occupation may be located at Fort Donelson Battlefield Park and future archaeological investigations should focus on this early habitation.

European settlement between the two rivers began in the late eighteenth century, primarily by settlers from North Carolina which rewarded veterans of the Continental Army with land grants. These land grants could amount to as many as 1,500 acres for veterans, although most were much smaller. Some of the first recorded settlers arrived by the late eighteenth century. James Tagert settled near present-day Cumberland City around 1784 or 1785. George Petty and Samuel A. Smith settled in the vicinity of the future county seat, Dover. A large group of North Carolinians arrived in 1800 with Joseph Smith and Larry Satterfield settling near the present location of Dover. Just after the turn of the nineteenth century a European settlement was established on Long Creek and another on Byron Forge Creek. Virginians began arriving around 1804, settling their own farms in various locations. Contact with relatives back in Virginia through letters often took five to six weeks

(Franklin, Tennessee: Mrs. Clyde Lynch, 1971), 11–13.

⁵ Dayna Bowker Lee, Donna Greer, and Aubra L. Lee, *Fort Donelson National Battlefield and Cemetery: Ethnographic Overview and Assessment, Final Report* (New Orleans, Louisiana: Earth Search, Inc., 2013), 11.

because of the poor roads between the old homesteads and western Tennessee.⁶

The European settlers were not the initial inhabitants between the rivers. The recent immigrants from North Carolina and Virginia, those settling their land grants and others looking for fertile lands and new opportunities, were confronted by Chickasaw and possibly other Native American tribes that were striving to defend their indigenous lands from the new arrivals. Pioneers constructed log fortifications known as blockhouses on both the Tennessee River and Lick Creek near present-day Dover for protection from possible attacks. Fear of attacks by Native Americans continued for nearly twenty years from the initial European settlement as militia continued to patrol the Tennessee River as late as 1812.⁷

Pioneers constructed log cabins for shelter after locating nearby water sources. They practiced subsistence farming, but as early as 1805 local farmers and their enslaved laborers were raising corn, cotton, tobacco, and hemp with the surplus transported downstream to markets in

New Orleans. Wild honey bees were coaxed into hives and maple trees tapped as substitutes for refined sugar. Cotton was the major cash crop until tobacco overtook its economic position in the late 1830s. Corn was raised because of its value in food products and feeding livestock. Some subsidized farm income by utilizing their skills and education, working as part time ministers, surveyors, and carpenters, and also by leasing their enslaved laborers to work in the local iron industry. Game was plentiful during the European settlement years, providing food and clothing for families. Deer and turkeys supplemented the meat provided by hogs and cattle.⁸

These pioneers also had to contend with fraudulent property sales. Many moved to the area having purchased acreage and made improvements only to learn that their purchase was made from a fraudulent seller and/or deceitful representation. With little recourse, many rented property until they could afford to purchase their own tracts. Farm improvements occurred slowly in much of Stewart County. Those moving to the area as late as the mid-1830s purchased property that had only partially been cleared and contained simple cabins of horizontal log construction. The Killebrew family arrived in northeastern Stewart County in 1834; finding their newly purchased 300-acre tract to be only a tenth cleared for cultivation, and the barn in better condition than the log dwelling. Numerous clear springs provided water to early residents, although the flow could greatly decrease during the dry months. Originally feared harmful

⁶ Edward W. Chester and Betty Joe Wallace, *Fort Donelson National Battlefield: A Botanical and Historical Perspective* (Clarksville, Tennessee: Center for Field Biology, Austin Peay State University, 1997), 7, 15; Betty Joe Wallace, *Between the Rivers: History of the Land Between the Lakes* (Clarksville, Tennessee: Austin Peay State University, 1992), 9; *The Goodspeed Histories of Montgomery, Robertson, Humphreys, Stewart, Dickson, Cheatham, Houston Counties of Tennessee* (1886; repr., Columbia, Tennessee: Woodward and Stinson Printing Company, 1972), 896–897; J. B. Killebrew, *Recollections of My Life* (circa 1898) Volume 1 (Franklin, Tennessee: Mrs. Clyde Lynch, 1971), 11–13; Iris Hopkins McClain, “A History of Stewart County, Tennessee,” (Iris Hopkins McClain, 1965), 124.

⁷ *The Goodspeed Histories of Montgomery, Robertson, Humphreys, Stewart, Dickson, Cheatham, Houston Counties of Tennessee* (1886; repr., Columbia, Tennessee: Woodward and Stinson Printing Company, 1972), 898; Dayna Bowker Lee, Donna Greer, and Aubra L. Lee, *Fort Donelson National Battlefield and Cemetery: Ethnographic Overview and Assessment, Final Report* (New Orleans, Louisiana: Earth Search, Inc., 2013), 21.

⁸ Iris Hopkins McClain, “A History of Stewart County, Tennessee,” (Iris Hopkins McClain, 1965), 21; Betty Joe Wallace, *Between the Rivers: History of the Land Between the Lakes* (Clarksville, Tennessee: Austin Peay State University, 1992), 18, 34; *The Goodspeed Histories of Montgomery, Robertson, Humphreys, Stewart, Dickson, Cheatham, Houston Counties of Tennessee* (1886; repr., Columbia, Tennessee: Woodward and Stinson Printing Company, 1972), 898; Dayna Bowker Lee, Donna Greer, and Aubra L. Lee, *Fort Donelson National Battlefield and Cemetery: Ethnographic Overview and Assessment, Final Report* (New Orleans, Louisiana: Earth Search, Inc., 2013), 21.

because of the potential for disease, underground cisterns providing storage for drinking water did not become common until the mid-1830s.⁹

Farming was the livelihood of many who moved to the area in the first two decades of the nineteenth century, assisted by enslaved labor. Many tried other occupations to provide for their families and improve their economic status. William Williams arrived in Dover in 1814 from Chillicothe, Ohio and practiced numerous professions from businessman to local politician over the following three decades. Williams variously served as a wool carder, river man, merchant, state legislator and locally as the county and circuit court clerk, part-owner of an iron furnace, and farmer at the end of his life.¹⁰

The nearest mill and source for provisions for early residents was located in the community of Palmyra in Montgomery County, Tennessee,

⁹ James Ross, *Life and Times of Elder Reuben Ross* (Philadelphia: Grant, Faires and Rodgers, 1882), 15, 168–174, 178–182, 185, 212.

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=njp.32101072.314048;view=1up;seq=11>; J. B. Killebrew, *Recollections of My Life* (circa 1898) Volume 1 (Franklin, Tennessee: Mrs. Clyde Lynch, 1971), 6, 36–38; Chase C. Mooney, “Some Letters From Dover, Tennessee, 1814 to 1855,” *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 8, no. 2 (June 1949), 154–165, 170, 173; Chase C. Mooney, “Some Letters From Dover, Tennessee, 1814 to 1855,” *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 8, no. 3 (September 1949), 269, 272, 279; Chase C. Mooney, “Some Letters From Dover, Tennessee, 1814 to 1855,” *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 8, no. 4 (December 1949), 345–346, 351–352; Dayna Bowker Lee, Donna Greer, and Aubra L. Lee, *Fort Donelson National Battlefield and Cemetery: Ethnographic Overview and Assessment, Final Report* (New Orleans, Louisiana: Earth Search, Inc., 2013), 28.

¹⁰ Chase C. Mooney, “Some Letters From Dover, Tennessee, 1814 to 1855,” *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 8, no. 2 (June 1949), 154–165, 170, 173; Chase C. Mooney, “Some Letters From Dover, Tennessee, 1814 to 1855,” *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 8, no. 3 (September 1949), 269, 272, 279; Chase C. Mooney, “Some Letters From Dover, Tennessee, 1814 to 1855,” *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 8, no. 4 (December 1949), 345–346, 351–352.

situated approximately 25 miles upstream on the Cumberland River between present-day Dover and Clarksville. Manufactured goods and foodstuffs such as sugar often came from New Orleans, a major shipping point on the lower Mississippi River and near the Gulf of Mexico. Products and excess crops produced by local residents were loaded onto keelboats traveling down the Cumberland or Tennessee Rivers to the Ohio River, then downstream on the Mississippi River to New Orleans. Provisions could then be purchased in New Orleans. If the return trip was made upstream against the river current in keelboats, the roundtrip could take six months. The keelboats could also be sold in New Orleans for lumber with laborers/boatmen making the return trip overland transporting their provisions, which would normally take four months for the roundtrip. Early proprietors of commercial endeavors included James Russell who received a license in 1804 to sell whiskey at his house along with other goods. A store opened about the same time in the vicinity of what would later become Dover. Soon taverns began to open in dwellings and additional stores were established by 1816.¹¹

Water-powered mills were placed in service around 1800 on the area’s many creeks. Most often these were powered by tub wheels, spinning horizontally, rather than the upright undershot or overshot wheels. These early entrepreneurial establishments usually operated as grist mills, grinding locally produced corn, wheat, or other grains.¹²

¹¹ *The Goodspeed Histories of Montgomery, Robertson, Humphreys, Stewart, Dickson, Cheatham, Houston Counties of Tennessee* (1886; repr., Columbia, Tennessee: Woodward and Stinson Printing Company, 1972), 898–899; Iris Hopkins McClain, “A History of Stewart County, Tennessee,” (Iris Hopkins McClain, 1965), 31.

¹² *The Goodspeed Histories of Montgomery, Robertson, Humphreys, Stewart, Dickson, Cheatham, Houston Counties of Tennessee* (1886; repr., Columbia, Tennessee: Woodward and Stinson Printing Company, 1972), 899.

Early organization of Stewart and Calloway Counties

Stewart County was established by the state legislature on November 1, 1803. Named in honor of one of its early settlers, Duncan Stewart, the county boundary originally was situated 13 miles west of Clarksville and continued north to the Kentucky state line, west to the Tennessee River, and south down the Tennessee River to the current Alabama state line (Figure 2.1). A commission of local men was created to determine the location for a county seat of government. The state legislature authorized the commission to purchase 30 acres for the establishment of a town as the county seat to be named Monroe. One-and-a-half-acres were to be set aside for a public square that would contain the courthouse and jail. Sale of lots within the 30 acres paid for the purchase of the property and the construction of the municipal buildings. The first court met at the home of William Martin close to Bald Island, situated in the Cumberland River near the mouth of Cross Creek.

Rather than Monroe, the commission named the new community Dover, although the reasoning is unknown. It is possible that the Cumberland River bluffs reminded local residents of the cliffs of Dover from their native England, although this is speculative. The location chosen for the new county seat was located on the south side of a bend of the Cumberland River. The community was situated on a bluff with low-lying terrain on the opposite side of the river. The river stretches upstream approximately 2.75 miles to the northeast before another curve in the river. Beyond the bend at the county seat, the Cumberland River extends nearly two miles north-northwest before another slight curve. To the east of Dover, the terrain is slightly lower, allowing access to the river.

Of log construction, the courthouse and jail were ready for occupancy by mid-1806. By 1810 there were over 4,200 inhabitants of Stewart County and this increased to nearly 8,400 residents in 1820, of which 19 percent were enslaved African Americans. Once the state of Tennessee obtained the lands west of the Tennessee River from the Chickasaw, Stewart

County's boundary was extended westward to the Mississippi River. The county boundary was greatly reduced in 1821 with the creation of the western counties of Tennessee. The southern portion of Stewart County was removed in 1871 for the creation of Houston County.¹³

A new two-story brick courthouse was completed in 1826. The jail fell victim to a number of fires, in 1820, twice in 1830, in 1846, and 1856. All but the last fire resulted in prompt replacement of the jail structure. Following the 1856 destruction, the county utilized the Montgomery County jail in Clarksville for a period of three years. For local needs, a metal cage was later placed in the courthouse to hold prisoners. A new, jail-specific structure was erected in 1860, but it too was short lived. In 1862 an open field of view over the surrounding area was determined necessary to defend against impending Confederate assault. The new jail, along with the courthouse and most all other structures in the core of town, were burned by the occupying Federal troops.¹⁴

¹³ *The Goodspeed Histories of Montgomery, Robertson, Humphreys, Stewart, Dickson, Cheatham, Houston Counties of Tennessee* (1886; repr., Columbia, Tennessee: Woodward and Stinson Printing Company, 1972), 901–902; Iris Hopkins McClain, “A History of Stewart County, Tennessee,” (Iris Hopkins McClain, 1965), 124; Larry L. Miller, *Tennessee Place Names* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2001), 65; Chase C. Mooney, “Some Letters From Dover, Tennessee, 1814 to 1855,” *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 8, no. 2 (June 1949), 154.

¹⁴ *The Goodspeed Histories of Montgomery, Robertson, Humphreys, Stewart, Dickson, Cheatham, Houston Counties of Tennessee* (1886; repr., Columbia, Tennessee: Woodward and Stinson Printing Company, 1972), 904–905, 913; Dayna Bowker Lee, Donna Greer, and Aubra L. Lee, *Fort Donelson National Battlefield and Cemetery: Ethnographic Overview and Assessment, Final Report* (New Orleans, Louisiana: Earth Search, Inc., 2013), 27; Iris Hopkins McClain, “A History of Stewart County, Tennessee,” (Iris Hopkins McClain, 1965), 11.



Figure 2.1. Northern portion of circa 1807 hand-drawn map of Stewart County showing Dover, the Kentucky/Tennessee state line, and the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers, Tennessee State Library and Archives.

Comprised of lands between the Tennessee and Mississippi Rivers, the Jackson Purchase area of Kentucky and Tennessee was created by an 1818 treaty, later ratified in 1819, between the United States and the Chickasaw Nation. Situated west of the Tennessee River, the Jackson Purchase currently encompasses eight Kentucky counties, including Calloway County, and seventeen Tennessee counties. Created in 1822, Calloway County, Kentucky, is bordered by Henry County, Tennessee to the south, Graves County, Kentucky to the west, Marshall County, Kentucky to the north, and the Tennessee River (present-day Kentucky Lake) to the east. The northern portion of Calloway County began to be settled before ratification of the treaty with the Chickasaw Nation, although settlement in the remainder of the county did not take place until after its ratification. New

Concord was the closest community to the future location of Fort Heiman on the Tennessee River. Originally known as Humility, the New Concord community was settled by the Stubblefield family circa 1818 to 1828. Purportedly the original inhabitants were immigrants from Germany and Norway. A few years later settlers from Concord, North Carolina moved to the area and renamed the community after their former home. With another town having the same name in Kentucky, the community became New Concord in 1841.¹⁵

¹⁵ Dayna Bowker Lee, Donna Greer, and Aubra L. Lee, *Fort Donelson National Battlefield and Cemetery: Ethnographic Overview and Assessment, Final Report* (New Orleans, Louisiana: Earth Search, Inc., 2013), 28; Robert M. Rennick, *Kentucky Place Names* (Lexington,

The hilly terrain bordering the Tennessee River was covered in forests and dissected by streams that had created ravines. Calloway County's population expanded between 1830 and 1860 from 5,164 to 9,915 residents. Each year the federal census recorded less than 20 free persons of color in the county. The enslaved population nearly quadrupled over the period, from 427 in 1830 to 1,492 slaves in 1860 representing 15 percent of the county's population. Similar to Stewart County's agricultural economy, tobacco was Calloway County's most important cash crop by the 1850s.¹⁶

Antebellum Period in Stewart County

Transportation

The Cumberland River flows in a northwesterly direction through the southeastern and north-central portion of Stewart County. The river enters the southeastern corner of the county from Montgomery County, flowing a semi-winding southwestwardly direction to Cumberland City. From there, the north-flowing river flows curving to the northwest and continuing for approximately 10 miles before a bend directs the river slightly to the west-southwest for a distance of 3.5 miles to the county seat of Dover. From Dover, the Cumberland River flows in a northerly direction to the Kentucky state line at Trigg County. The Tennessee River serves as the current western boundary of Stewart County as it did originally, flowing in a northerly direction to the Kentucky state line at Trigg and Calloway Counties.

The Cumberland River of the nineteenth century was unlike the wide, slow, calm river today. Named by explorer Dr. Thomas Walker in the mid-eighteenth century in honor of the Duke of Cumberland, the river was described in

about 1770 as approximately 250 yards wide at its mouth at the Ohio River. French Lick, later known as Nashborough and Nashville, was the principal community on the Cumberland River in the late eighteenth century. Agricultural products, including tobacco and livestock, were transported in flatboats and keelboats down the Cumberland River to the Ohio River, then to New Orleans via the Mississippi River.¹⁷

The first steamboat arrived in Nashville in March 1819. Passage on the Cumberland River could be arduous, as the waterway was filled with sand and gravel bars, rapids, and shoals. The river's water level was prone to sudden rises and falls. Dry weather in the late summer and autumn months, causing low water conditions, curtailed steamboat traffic on the Cumberland River. Despite these obstacles, the number of steamboats plying the Cumberland River continued to increase, especially during the 1830s. Dover, with its local iron industry, and Bowling Green (later renamed Cumberland City), were early landings in Stewart County for steamboats plying the Cumberland River.¹⁸ Muscle Shoals in Alabama was an obstacle to steamboat traffic on the Tennessee River, serving as an impediment to commerce up and downstream. There was considerable river traffic below (north) of the shoals with the Tennessee River connecting to the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. The water level for steamboat operations

Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 1984), 212.

¹⁶ Dayna Bowker Lee, Donna Greer, and Aubra L. Lee, *Fort Donelson National Battlefield and Cemetery: Ethnographic Overview and Assessment, Final Report* (New Orleans, Louisiana: Earth Search, Inc., 2013), 28, 31.

¹⁷ Joe E. Brent and Maria Campbell Brent, "Subduing the Cumberland: A History of the 'Old' Locks and Dams on the Cumberland River" (Versailles, Kentucky: Mudpuppy and Waterdog, Inc. for Duvall and Associates and United States Corps of Engineers, Nashville District, 2001), 5, 7–15; J. Milton Henry, *The Land Between the Rivers* (Taylor Publishing Company, 1979), 23, 25; Iris Hopkins McClain, "A History of Stewart County, Tennessee," (Iris Hopkins McClain, 1965), 31.

¹⁸ Joe E. Brent and Maria Campbell Brent, "Subduing the Cumberland: A History of the 'Old' Locks and Dams on the Cumberland River" (Versailles, Kentucky: Mudpuppy and Waterdog, Inc. for Duvall and Associates and United States Corps of Engineers, Nashville District, 2001), 2–3, 9–12; Iris Hopkins McClain, "A History of Stewart County, Tennessee," (Iris Hopkins McClain, 1965), 31.

was usually adequate on the Tennessee River throughout the year.¹⁹

Early efforts to improve conditions along the Cumberland River for steamboat traffic were ineffective. The federal government inaugurated improvements to the lower Cumberland River, downstream from Nashville, in the 1830s. Improvements included dredging and clearing obstacles such as sand bars and trees that could rip open the hulls of steamboats. A change in administrations ceased federal improvement projects to the Cumberland River in the late 1830s with appropriations resuming in 1871. Although improvements to the river ceased once again, steamboat traffic on the Cumberland River continued to thrive even in the upper reaches of the waterway. River traffic was able to transport goods up and downstream from markets throughout the upper south, including portions of Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia, and Alabama. The economical transportation provided by steamboats on the Cumberland River would not be rivaled until the introduction of railroads in the region during the 1850s. The outbreak of the Civil War in 1861 proved an additional adverse effect to river traffic, as well as the region's economy.²⁰

In the late 1840s steamboats and stage coaches were the only conveyances between Clarksville and Nashville as the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad was under construction. Over 1,200 miles of railroad lines were built in Tennessee between 1850 and 1860, although only a short section extended through Stewart County at Cumberland City.²¹

Roads in the county remained little improved in the antebellum period. Dover was connected by a stage coach service from Nashville that traveled through Clarksville in the 1830s. An 1865 regional map indicates roads and their conditions, including those that were pikes, good dirt roads, poor dirt roads, and bridle paths (Figure 2.2).²² The roads leading to Dover in 1865 were good dirt roads. Pikes were generally toll roads that included improvements. The only pikes in the vicinity connected Randolph Forge to Cumberland Iron Works near the Cumberland River. The pike continued from Cumberland Iron Works to the Dover Furnace and a short distance to the south before becoming a good dirt road. The pikes from the furnaces may have been covered in cinders and slag, byproducts of iron production, resulting in a road surface similar to gravel. Most of the roads in the county at the time were good dirt roads with a few poor dirt roads and bridle paths. The interior road conditions reinforce the significance of the two rivers and the railroad as local transportation corridors.²³

¹⁹ Iris Hopkins McClain, "A History of Stewart County, Tennessee," (Iris Hopkins McClain, 1965), 31.

²⁰ Joe E. Brent and Maria Campbell Brent, "Subduing the Cumberland: A History of the 'Old' Locks and Dams on the Cumberland River" (Versailles, Kentucky: Mudpuppy and Waterdog, Inc. for Duvall and Associates and United States Corps of Engineers, Nashville District, 2001), 12–15.

²¹ J. B. Killebrew, *Recollections of My Life* (circa 1898) Volume 1 (Franklin, Tennessee: Mrs. Clyde Lynch, 1971), 106, 121.

²² Edward Ruger, *Map of Middle Tennessee* (Topographical Engineering Office Department of the Cumberland, 1865), <https://www.longbranchgenealogy.com/1865-map-of-middle-tennessee.html>.

²³ Iris Hopkins McClain, "A History of Stewart County, Tennessee," (Iris Hopkins McClain, 1965), 32; Edward Ruger, *Map of Middle Tennessee* (Topographical Engineering Office Department of the Cumberland, 1865), <https://www.longbranchgenealogy.com/1865-map-of-middle-tennessee.html>.



Figure 2.2. Portion of 1865 Map of Middle Tennessee showing types of roads providing access to Dover and vicinity in the mid-nineteenth century, Edward Ruger, *Map of Middle Tennessee*, 1865.

The county commission began to authorize ferry crossings for Stewart County as early as 1804.²⁴ Ferry crossings and landings on the rivers were vital for the transportation of residents and the local economy (Figure 2.3).²⁵ The ferries and landings also provided access to overland transportation routes to Dover and adjacent counties.²⁶

The Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers were Stewart County's primary transportation routes during the antebellum period. The first steamboat reached Dover in 1818. With few improvements during the antebellum period, steamboats continued to face difficulties traveling the rivers. Although confronting river obstacles such as shoals, sand bars, and low water, locals were able to travel to cities adjacent to waterways, such as Cincinnati, relatively easily by the 1830s. It was not unheard of for merchants to travel to Philadelphia for purchasing excursions at the time.²⁷

²⁴ *The Goodspeed Histories of Montgomery, Robertson, Humphreys, Stewart, Dickson, Cheatham, Houston Counties of Tennessee* (1886; repr., Columbia, Tennessee: Woodward and Stinson Printing Company, 1972), 902–903.

²⁵ Edward Ruger, *Map of Middle Tennessee* (Topographical Engineering Office Department of the Cumberland, 1865), <https://www.longbranchgenealogy.com/1865-map-of-middle-tennessee.html>.

²⁶ Edward Ruger, *Map of Middle Tennessee* (Topographical Engineering Office Department of the Cumberland, 1865), <https://www.longbranchgenealogy.com/1865-map-of-middle-tennessee.html>; *The Goodspeed Histories of Montgomery, Robertson, Humphreys, Stewart, Dickson, Cheatham, Houston Counties of Tennessee* (1886; repr., Columbia, Tennessee: Woodward and Stinson Printing Company, 1972), 902–903.

²⁷ Joe E. Brent and Maria Campbell Brent, "Subduing the Cumberland: A History of the 'Old' Locks and Dams on the Cumberland River" (Versailles, Kentucky: Mudpuppy and Waterdog, Inc. for Duvall and Associates and United States Corps of Engineers, Nashville District, 2001), 10–12; Iris Hopkins McClain, "A History of Stewart

Population growth

The area near Dover remained sparsely settled in 1820, as corroborated by a map of the period. The importance of the rivers as transportation corridors is emphasized by the communities' locations on the banks of the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers, such as Dover. Improved roads were non-existent as the map depicts local creeks and tributaries rather than roads or traces.²⁸ Dover remained a small community throughout the nineteenth century. Over the first 20 years of Dover's existence the community contained a number of general stores, taverns, and at least one blacksmith/woodworker. Throughout the remainder of the antebellum period various general stores, hotels, tailors, a drugstore, and a haberdashery were located in the county seat. One enterprising business person operated a wool carding machine in the 1820s. Dover was first incorporated in 1836.²⁹

The primary communities of Stewart County during the antebellum period included Tobacco Port, Cumberland City, and Indian Mound. Tobacco Port and Cumberland City were both situated on the Cumberland River, providing landings and access to river traffic for the surrounding area. Bowling Green was renamed Cumberland City with the arrival of the railroad through the town circa 1860. The community of Indian Mound was established

County, Tennessee," (Iris Hopkins McClain, 1965), 31; Chase C. Mooney, "Some Letters From Dover, Tennessee, 1814 to 1855," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 8, no. 3 (September 1949), 255, 259.

²⁸ Map showing Houston and Stewart Counties, Tennessee; parts of Dickson, Montgomery and Humphreys Counties (Nashville, Tennessee: Tennessee State Library and Archives Map Collection, circa 1820s), <http://teva.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/p15138coll23/id/9736/rec/8>.

²⁹ *The Goodspeed Histories of Montgomery, Robertson, Humphreys, Stewart, Dickson, Cheatham, Houston Counties of Tennessee* (1886; repr., Columbia, Tennessee: Woodward and Stinson Printing Company, 1972), 913–915.

by the second decade of the nineteenth century.³⁰

Agricultural pursuits

Stewart County exhibited a diversified economy during the antebellum period as exhibited by its agrarian and iron production pursuits. While the iron industry was visually more dramatic, providing great wealth to a few individuals and utilizing a large number of laborers, the local agricultural economy sustained the population at large within Stewart County.

In the first decades of the nineteenth century a substantial amount of cotton was cultivated in Stewart County, at least through the 1820s. Local resident William Williams was raising tobacco, cotton, and corn along with hogs and cattle in 1818.³¹ Farmers in the area such as Williams were reliant on the assistance of enslaved workers for their prosperity. Williams expected to transport his surplus downriver to New Orleans in two of his own boats. Williams indicates cotton production was “tolerable” “but little corn Produce this Year.”³² The market for cotton fluctuated in the first decades of the nineteenth century, although Williams states the price was rising in the Spring of 1825 with an expectation that “there will be more Cotton Raised in this quarter this Season than there has been in any one year heretofore.”³³ By the

late 1820s corn, tobacco, and wheat were the crops Williams’ discusses in his letters back to his family in Ohio.³⁴ Williams states in 1836 that he is “Not being in a cotton part of the state,” indicating cotton production has shifted away from Stewart County.³⁵

Very little ginned cotton was produced by the mid-nineteenth century, with only 40 400-pound bales in 1850 and nearly 800 bales in 1860. In comparison, neighboring Henry County to the west produced 685 bales of cotton in 1850 and 225 bales in 1860 while the far southwest counties of Fayette, Hardeman, and Shelby produced 28,302, 15,065, and 20,741 bales of cotton in 1850 and 35,281, 19,237, and 23,179 in 1860, respectively. Stewart County’s cotton may primarily have been utilized for local consumption by 1850 rather than shipping downstream to New Orleans. The number of improved and unimproved acres in farms in Stewart County remained essentially the same over the decade from 1850 to 1860. Farmers began practicing crop rotation and fertilization, increasing yields of tobacco, corn, and wheat. More than 584,000 bushels of corn were produced in 1850, although 1860 saw a major decline to over 430,000 bushels. The reasons for the decrease in corn production in 1860 are unclear, although weather conditions, the effects of the nationwide financial panic of 1857, and the greater production of tobacco may all have contributed to the crop’s

³⁰ *The Goodspeed Histories of Montgomery, Robertson, Humphreys, Stewart, Dickson, Cheatham, Houston Counties of Tennessee* (1886; repr., Columbia, Tennessee: Woodward and Stinson Printing Company, 1972), 915–916; Iris Hopkins McClain, “A History of Stewart County, Tennessee,” (Iris Hopkins McClain, 1965), 124; Stewart County, Tennessee Genealogy Research Databases, “Stewart County Post Offices and Postmasters,” <http://www.tngenweb.org/stewart/postoff.htm>.

³¹ Chase C. Mooney, “Some Letters From Dover, Tennessee, 1814 to 1855,” *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 8, no.2 (June 1949), 164.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*, 174.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 177, 179.

³⁵ Chase C. Mooney, “Some Letters From Dover, Tennessee, 1814 to 1855 (Continued),” *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 8, no.3 (September 1949), 272.

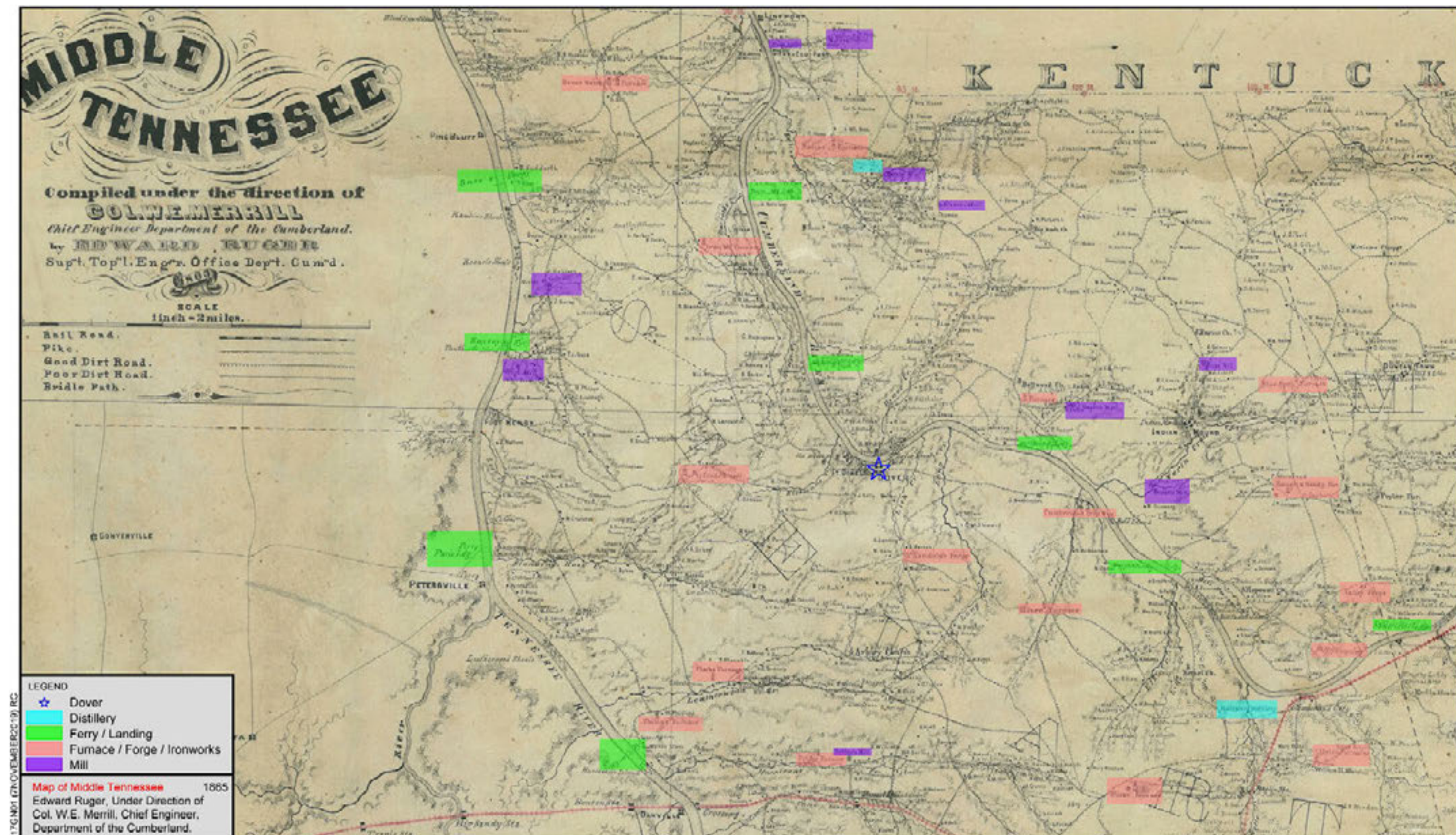


Figure 2.3. Portion of 1865 Map of Middle Tennessee showing locations of landings and ferries, furnaces, iron works, forges, mills, and distilleries, Edward Ruger, Map of Middle Tennessee, 1865.

decline. Corn provided corn meal for domestic use, feed for hogs, and the basis for producing whiskey. Tennessee produced more corn than any other state in 1840. Wheat production was the second most important cereal crop produced in the state, although Stewart County was not a large producer in the mid-nineteenth century.³⁶

Stewart County's principal cash crop was tobacco in the late antebellum years, raising dark fired varieties of the crop. Burley tobacco was introduced to the area after the antebellum period. Tobacco was one of the first crops raised by settlers to the area, primarily for local consumption. By 1810 Tennessee was producing sufficient quantities of tobacco to ship to markets down river. Tobacco production is a labor intensive agricultural enterprise that relied heavily on enslaved labor during the antebellum period. In 1820 the state was transporting 7,000 hogsheads downstream to New Orleans. Tobacco was transported in the nineteenth century in hogsheads, approximately four-foot tall wooden barrels that were about 30-inches in diameter. The cured tobacco was placed in the barrels and pressed, also known as prizing, into the barrels for shipping. A hogshead could weigh 1,000 pounds when filled. Cooperies utilized the abundant local timber to produce the hogsheads. The hogsheads were filled at prizing houses, with several located in Stewart County, including Indian Mound, Big Rock,

³⁶ *History of Tennessee: From the Earliest Time to the Present, (1887) Including Its Early Explorations and Pre-Historic Races, Also Its Aboriginal and Pioneer Annals* (Nashville, Tennessee: The Goodspeed Publishing Company, 1887; repr., Nashville, Tennessee: Charles and Randy Elder Booksellers, 1973), 232–233, 235–236; *The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850* (Washington, D.C.: Robert Armstrong, Public Printer, 1853), <http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/usda/AgCensusImages/1850/1850a-01.pdf>; *Secretary of the Interior, Agriculture of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1864), <http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/usda/AgCensusImages/1860/1860b-07.pdf>; Stewart County Historical Society, *Stewart Count Heritage, Dover Tennessee, Volume 1* (Dallas, Texas: Taylor Publishing Company, 1980), 10.

and Dover. Tobacco warehouses also began to be erected in Clarksville in the mid-1840s, providing a nearby market for farmers. Clarksville was second only to Louisville, Kentucky in opening the earliest tobacco inspection warehouses west of the Appalachian Mountains. In 1840 the western and middle Tennessee counties were the largest producers of tobacco, with Stewart County ranking ninth in the state in tobacco production. Stewart County produced slightly over 290,000 pounds of tobacco in 1850. Production expanded greatly by 1860, with nearly 788,000 pounds taken to market.³⁷

Swine and cattle served both the domestic needs of farmers while producing a surplus for

³⁷ *History of Tennessee: From the Earliest Time to the Present, (1887) Including Its Early Explorations and Pre-Historic Races, Also Its Aboriginal and Pioneer Annals* (Nashville, Tennessee: The Goodspeed Publishing Company, 1887; repr., Nashville, Tennessee: Charles and Randy Elder Booksellers, 1973), 236–238; W. F. Axton, *Tobacco and Kentucky* (Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 1975), 30–31; John Van Willigen and Susan C. Eastwood, *Tobacco Culture: Farming Kentucky's Burley Belt* (Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 1998), 11, 39, 41; Jane Bagwell, "Stewart County," from *The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture* (Knoxville, Tennessee: University of Tennessee Press, 2017–2018), <https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/stewart-county/>; Thomas H. Winn, "Clarksville," from *The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture* (Knoxville, Tennessee: University of Tennessee Press, 2017–2018), <https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/clarksville/>; Stewart County Historical Society, *Stewart Count Heritage, Dover Tennessee, Volume 1* (Dallas, Texas: Taylor Publishing Company, 1980), 10; *The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850* (Washington, D.C.: Robert Armstrong, Public Printer, 1853), <http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/usda/AgCensusImages/1850/1850a-01.pdf>; *Secretary of the Interior, Agriculture of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1864), <http://usda.mannlib.cornell.edu/usda/AgCensusImages/1860/1860b-07.pdf>.

sale. In the early nineteenth century hogs roamed the woods of the farmer's property, foraging in the forest. Surplus livestock, including cattle, hogs, and turkeys, were driven from farms to the river landings to be transported by flatboats, keelboats, and later steamboats to markets both up and downstream. Farmers in closer proximity to Clarksville could hire drovers to herd their livestock to market rather than the expense of river transportation.³⁸

Iron Industry

The iron industry played a substantial role in Stewart County's nineteenth-century history. The county's abundance of natural resources for the industry included timber, limestone, and iron ore. Limonite, or in its brown form known as brown hematite, was a form of iron ore plentiful in portions of Middle Tennessee, especially Stewart County. Iron ore was found primarily in the area between the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers. This type of iron ore was utilized in the nineteenth century to produce pig iron. Pig iron could be fashioned into valuable products such as kettles, boiler plates, and other industrial and domestic uses, and later, munitions.³⁹ Accessible on or just below the surface, or on hillsides and the banks of streams, iron ore was mined by hand using shovels and pick axes. The ore was usually hauled by wagons or carts on rails to the furnace where it was washed before placed in the blast furnace. The iron ore was usually a short distance from the furnace to keep operational expenses at a minimum. In one instance the iron ore was a mere 300 yards from the furnace, while another furnace was served by mining the ore from about 1.5 miles

away on the banks of the Tennessee River. Some iron ore occurred in thin slabs that were difficult to retrieve from the ground. One large iron furnace complex had an elaborate system of carts pulled by mules along inexpensively constructed cast iron rails to the river bank, where the ore was loaded onto a boat utilizing a windlass. The ore was unloaded from the boat at another dock and transported using similar methods to its destination.⁴⁰

The cold-blast process was generally utilized in Stewart County furnaces. The furnace was constructed of limestone near a hillside and was approximately 35 to 40 feet in height. The four-sided structure tapered toward the top. Local timber was converted to charcoal to fire the furnaces. Two acres of timber could be consumed daily by a furnace in production, as 400 tons of charcoal were necessary in the production of one ton of iron. The charcoal and iron ore were placed in the furnace along with limestone acting as a flux to assist in the formation of molten slag. Outside air was forced into the bottom of the structure to increase the heat of the furnace. The slag floated at the top and was removed. The liquid iron was poured into forms often in sand at the bottom of the furnace resembling a litter of pigs, thus the name "pig iron." The blast for the furnaces was furnished by either water power or steam from boilers. Steam was utilized during the heyday of the iron furnace industry in the area because of its better efficiency. The hot-blast method is similar to the cold-blast method except hot air is forced into the furnace, shortening the overall time to complete the process. The iron complexes could be comprised of furnaces alone for smelting the iron, or could also include forges and a rolling mill to further process the pig iron. The forges utilized water or steam powered hammers to produce iron bars. The

³⁸ Stewart County Historical Society, *Stewart Count Heritage, Dover Tennessee, Volume 1* (Dallas, Texas: Taylor Publishing Company, 1980), 9.

³⁹ *The Goodspeed Histories of Montgomery, Robertson, Humphreys, Stewart, Dickson, Cheatham, Houston Counties of Tennessee* (1886; repr., Columbia, Tennessee: Woodward and Stinson Printing Company, 1972), 894–896.

⁴⁰ J. P. Lesley, *The Iron Manufacturer's Guide to the Furnaces, Forges and Rolling Mills of the United States with Discussions of Iron as a Chemical Element, an American Ore, and a Manufactured Article, in Commerce and in History* (New York: John Wiley, Publisher, 1859), <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.32044021.084439;view=1up;seq=11>.

rolling mills heated the iron bars and ran the iron through large rollers to produce iron sheets for boilers or other purposes. The rolling mills could also produce railroad rails.⁴¹

Furnaces also produced blooms, a form of spongy iron produced by the combination of flux, charcoal, and iron ore. Blooms were hammered to remove impurities, forming wrought iron, a malleable form of iron that could easily be formed into useful products. Bloomery forges (or furnaces) usually rely on a purer form of iron ore, which was relatively rare in west Tennessee. This probably explains the growth of blast furnaces in Stewart County and the Highland Rim region and the decline of bloomery forges. Terminology for the iron production also continued to change, such as referring to some types of forges as bloomeries.⁴²

An example of an antebellum iron furnace in Stewart County is the Great Western Iron Furnace, which was only in operation between 1854 and 1856 (Figure 2.4). A general description of the cold blast furnace indicates

the furnace structure was comprised of a limestone stack of locally quarried stone with four tapering sides, casting house, and a bridge connecting the top of the stack to the hillside along with additional support structures. The bridge provided access for charging the stack from the top, filling the stack with iron ore, charcoal, and limestone from above. The base of the stack was 43 feet across and it tapered to a width of 21 feet across the top. The interior was lined with special fire brick because of the high temperatures arising during its operation. Narrow, triangular openings on three sides of the stack allowed for removal of the molten iron and slag from the stack.⁴³

The local iron industry employed a structured labor force with specific roles. Managers of the overall operations could have a financial interest in the company and at times were relatives of the principal owners. The managers often lived near the operations, in some instances on a hill overlooking the industrial complex. Clerks involved in the financial matters of the company were often below the managers in the company hierarchy. Managers supervised laborers performing specific duties, such as cutting timber; creating charcoal; hauling timber or lumber; mining, hauling, and cleaning the ore; feeding the furnace; breaking up and transporting the slag; and finally transporting the finished product, be it pig iron, iron bars, or sheet iron.

⁴¹ Ernest F. Burchard, "The Brown Iron Ores of West-Middle Tennessee," Bulletin 795-D (Department of the Interior, United States Geological Survey, 1927): 57–58, 79; Samuel D. Smith, Charles P. Stripling, James M. Brannon, Claudette Stager, Historic and Historic Archaeological Resources of the Iron Industry on the Western Highland Rim of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form nomination (Nashville, Tennessee: Division of Archaeology, Tennessee Historical Commission, 1987), E-1, E-4, E-7; Earl Sexton, "The Iron Industry," *Stewart Count Heritage, Dover Tennessee, Volume 1* (Dallas, Texas: Taylor Publishing Company, 1980), 12–13; Betty Joe Wallace, *Between the Rivers: History of the Land Between the Lakes* (Clarksville, Tennessee: Austin Peay State University, 1992), 47.

⁴² Samuel D. Smith, Charles P. Stripling, James M. Brannon, Claudette Stager, Historic and Historic Archaeological Resources of the Iron Industry on the Western Highland Rim of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form nomination (Nashville, Tennessee: Division of Archaeology, Tennessee Historical Commission, 1987), E-1, E-4, E-7, F-4, F-5.

⁴³ J. Porter Taylor, Great Western Furnace National Register of Historic Places nomination (Knoxville, Tennessee: Tennessee Valley Authority, Division of Reservoir Properties, 1974), 7-1, 8-1; Iris Hopkins McClain, "A History of Stewart County, Tennessee," (Iris Hopkins McClain, 1965), 25; J. P. Lesley, *The Iron Manufacturer's Guide to the Furnaces, Forges and Rolling Mills of the United States with Discussions of Iron as a Chemical Element, an American Ore, and a Manufactured Article, in Commerce and in History* (New York: John Wiley, Publisher, 1859), <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.32044021.084439;view=1up;seq=11>.



Figure 2.4. Bear Spring Furnace, located in Stewart County, similar to Great Western Furnace, Library of Congress.

There were also laborers working in farm fields to raise food for the workers, cleaning, washing laundry, and cooking. During the months of the year the furnaces were operating, a portion of the workforce was hired as contract labor, usually local farmers and their families supplementing their farm income. Other tasks were contracted to individuals who then hired their own workers, such as those cutting timber for the furnaces. To supplement the furnace's workforce, the manager would visit local farmers at the end of the year to establish contracts to hire enslaved laborers to work at the furnace. These contracts were often for an annual period and a set price per slave. The arrangement allowed the farmer to subsidize their income and not have to provide clothing, food, and shelter for the enslaved workforce if their labor was not needed at the farm. The furnace manager provided essentials for their enslaved laborers while under contract. The contracting of slave labor was much more

economically prudent than other options, such as purchasing enslaved laborers outright, or the hiring of free, white workers.⁴⁴

Men served the greater portion of the workforce in the local iron industry, although women also labored at the furnaces. The exact number of women—white, free women of color, and enslaved women—cannot be easily determined because, as with men, many were not employed full time by the iron industry

⁴⁴ Susanna Delfino, "Invisible Woman: Female Labor in the Upper South's Iron and Mining Industries," in *Neither Lady Nor Slave: Working Women of the Old South*, eds. Susanna Delfino and Michele Gillespie (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 287–290. Susanna Delfino, "Running Southern Manufactories: The Antebellum Origins of Managerial Professions," in *The Southern Middle Class in the Long Nineteenth Century*, eds. Jonathan Daniel Wells and Jennifer R. Green (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University, 2011), 110–120.

and census records may only record them as day laborers or keeping house. Little if any written documentation of their labors is available. Besides tasks normally associated with women, such as cooking, cleaning, laundry, and tending gardens, it is probable that women were also found performing demanding physical tasks such as mining, cleaning ore, working in farm fields, and various other duties at the industrial complex. In 1860 the federal census indicates that 156 females were employed in iron manufacturing in Montgomery and Stewart Counties, Tennessee, and this is probably an underestimation. One source indicates 123 females were employed at the Cumberland Iron Works in 1860 comprising 18.5 percent of the company's workforce.⁴⁵

The first iron was produced in the region in the vicinity of future Dickson County in 1797. An iron furnace was purportedly in use in Montgomery County by 1802. The first iron furnace in Stewart County, in the vicinity of Wells Creek, is mentioned in court documents in 1806. The first pig iron produced in Stewart County was at the Cumberland Iron Works. A rolling mill at the Cumberland Iron Works shipped its products down the Mississippi River to markets in Memphis, Vicksburg, and New Orleans. The iron industry progressed slowly over the first three decades of the nineteenth century in middle and west Tennessee. Six furnaces were operating in the region in 1831.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Susanna Delfino, "Invisible Woman: Female Labor in the Upper South's Iron and Mining Industries," in *Neither Lady Nor Slave: Working Women of the Old South*, eds. Susanna Delfino and Michele Gillespie (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 294–300.

⁴⁶ Iris Hopkins McClain, "A History of Stewart County, Tennessee," (Iris Hopkins McClain, 1965), 22–23; Samuel D. Smith, Charles P. Stripling, James M. Brannon, Claudette Stager, Historic and Historic Archaeological Resources of the Iron Industry on the Western Highland Rim National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form nomination (Nashville, Tennessee: Division of Archaeology, Tennessee

Expansion of the industry began in the 1830s, with four furnaces in production in Stewart County in 1835 along with 19 others in the region. In 1840 there were 25 bloomery forges, refining forges, and rolling mills in the land between the rivers in west Tennessee, often referred to as the western Highland Rim region of the state, producing 13,000 tons of cast iron and over 6,700 tons of bar iron. The Highland Rim iron industry employed slightly over 1,600 workers in 1840, although exact figures are difficult to obtain.⁴⁷

The mid-1850s were the peak years of iron production in Stewart County, as the county claimed 14 iron furnaces in operation in 1856 (see Figure 2.3). The Cumberland Rolling Mill was built in 1829 and was the only one of its type remaining in the state in 1856. The iron industry declined in the Highland Rim region from its peak in the mid-1850s to 1860, when there were 13 furnaces and 3 forges operating. Various reasons have been offered for this decline before the outbreak of the Civil War, including exhaustion of ore or timber near furnaces, lack of capital by some owner/operators, and the escalating expense of hiring and owning

Historical Commission, 1987), E-1, E-4–, E-7; Earl Sexton, "The Iron Industry," *Stewart Count Heritage, Dover Tennessee, Volume 1* (Dallas, Texas: Taylor Publishing Company, 1980), 12–13.

⁴⁷ Ernest F. Burchard, "The Brown Iron Ores of West-Middle Tennessee," Bulletin 795-D (Department of the Interior, United States Geological Survey, 1927): 57–58, 79; Samuel D. Smith, Charles P. Stripling, James M. Brannon, Claudette Stager, Historic and Historic Archaeological Resources of the Iron Industry on the Western Highland Rim National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form nomination (Nashville, Tennessee: Division of Archaeology, Tennessee Historical Commission, 1987), E-1, E-4–, E-7; *History of Tennessee: From the Earliest Time to the Present, (1887) Including Its Early Explorations and Pre-Historic Races, Also Its Aboriginal and Pioneer Annals* (Nashville, Tennessee: The Goodspeed Publishing Company, 1887; repr., Nashville, Tennessee: Charles and Randy Elder Booksellers, 1973), 262; Earl Sexton, "The Iron Industry," *Stewart Count Heritage, Dover Tennessee, Volume 1* (Dallas, Texas: Taylor Publishing Company, 1980), 12–13.

enslaved labor. The national financial panic of 1857 probably played a large role in the decline of the local iron industry.⁴⁸

Large tracts of land were necessary to furnish the iron furnaces with both iron ore and timber. The iron ore was scattered in small pockets rather than in large veins. Timber was necessary in the creation of charcoal, which was a physically demanding and dangerous task. The trees were cut and sawn into specific lengths and stacked in a specific manner in pits that were covered with clay and leaves. The wood was then slowly burned in the pits to create charcoal. The charcoal was utilized in the furnace because it created greater heat in the furnace. An example of the large land holdings of the furnaces is that of the Cumberland Iron Works, which was the largest antebellum period iron complex in Stewart County. The Cumberland Iron Works at one time included five furnaces on a property comprised of approximately 100,000 acres. The Cumberland Rolling Mill also operated on the property. In 1834 the property, or a portion of it, was offered at auction. Advertisements for the auction listed the

following for sale: five machines for producing nails, the furnaces and rolling mill, houses and furnishings for laborers, 200 enslaved workers, various shops, stables, livestock including mules and horses along with wagons and tools. Other furnaces also owned property comprised of thousands of acres to satisfy the raw material demands of the industrial complexes.⁴⁹

Early iron furnaces in the county could produce three to six tons of pig iron during a single blast. Production at the furnaces varied from year to year and at each furnace depending on the size of the furnace, raw material and workforce availability, market forces, and available capital. For example, utilizing steam power the Cumberland Rolling Mill produced over 2,500 tons of bar, sheet, and plate iron in 1856. Operated by steam power, the Randolph Forge in 1857 produced nearly 2,700 tons of blooms.⁵⁰ Furnaces were often shut down and abandoned, only to be reopened under new owners as market demands changed. The Dover Furnace “was abandoned in 1834, only to be rebuilt in 1854,

⁴⁸ Iris Hopkins McClain, “A History of Stewart County, Tennessee,” (Iris Hopkins McClain, 1965), 22–23; Ernest F. Burchard, “The Brown Iron Ores of West-Middle Tennessee,” Bulletin 795-D (Department of the Interior, United States Geological Survey, 1927): 57–58, 79; Samuel D. Smith, Charles P. Stripling, James M. Brannon, Claudette Stager, Historic and Historic Archaeological Resources of the Iron Industry on the Western Highland Rim National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form nomination (Nashville, Tennessee: Division of Archaeology, Tennessee Historical Commission, 1987), E-1, E-4–, E-7; *History of Tennessee: From the Earliest Time to the Present, (1887) Including Its Early Explorations and Pre-Historic Races, Also Its Aboriginal and Pioneer Annals* (Nashville, Tennessee: The Goodspeed Publishing Company, 1887; repr., Nashville, Tennessee: Charles and Randy Elder Booksellers, 1973), 262; Earl Sexton, “The Iron Industry,” *Stewart Count Heritage, Dover Tennessee, Volume 1* (Dallas, Texas: Taylor Publishing Company, 1980), 12–13; Betty Joe Wallace, *Between the Rivers: History of the Land Between the Lakes* (Clarksville, Tennessee: Austin Peay State University, 1992), 47.

⁴⁹ Iris Hopkins McClain, “A History of Stewart County, Tennessee,” (Iris Hopkins McClain, 1965), 23, 26–27; J. P. Lesley, *The Iron Manufacturer’s Guide to the Furnaces, Forges and Rolling Mills of the United States with Discussions of Iron as a Chemical Element, an American Ore, and a Manufactured Article, in Commerce and in History* (New York: John Wiley, Publisher, 1859), <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.32044021.084439;view=1up;seq=11>.

⁵⁰ J. P. Lesley, *The Iron Manufacturer’s Guide to the Furnaces, Forges and Rolling Mills of the United States with Discussions of Iron as a Chemical Element, an American Ore, and a Manufactured Article, in Commerce and in History* (New York: John Wiley, Publisher, 1859), <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.32044021.084439;view=1up;seq=11>; *The Goodspeed Histories of Montgomery, Robertson, Humphreys, Stewart, Dickson, Cheatham, Houston Counties of Tennessee* (1886; repr., Columbia, Tennessee: Woodward and Stinson Printing Company, 1972), 894–896.

and repaired extensively in 1873.”⁵¹ The recorded furnaces in Stewart County are listed in Table 2.1. The construction dates are approximate; as various dates are provided by different sources.⁵²

Major investors and managers in the iron furnaces of the antebellum period provided large sums of capital for the operation of the industrial facilities. One such early investor was Thomas Yeatman, principle owner of the Cumberland Iron Works, which also at one time included the Cumberland Rolling Mill, LaGrange Furnace, Bear Spring Furnace, Dover Furnace, Bellwood Furnace, and Randolph Furnace (see Figure 2.3). Yeatman died and the company was placed at auction in 1834. Yeatman’s widow, Jane Yeatman, thereafter took an active role in managing the company and later married John Bell, a prosperous businessman and prominent political figure who was also involved in the local iron industry. Bell was the leader of Tennessee’s Whig Party and also served various rolls in Congress. Bell also served for six months as Secretary of War in President William Henry Harrison’s cabinet and ran as the presidential candidate of the Constitutional Union Party in 1860. In 1856 the Cumberland Rolling Mill produced over 2,500 tons of bar, sheet, and plate iron. Utilizing steam power,

the Cumberland Rolling Mill was owned by Woods, Lewis, and Company in 1859. It is estimated that 400 enslaved laborers were utilized at the Cumberland Iron Works, the largest furnace complex in the county prior to the Civil War. The Cumberland Iron Works was valued at just over \$500,000 just before the outbreak of hostilities. The rolling mill associated with the Cumberland Iron Works was in the vicinity of the Cumberland River and its operations ceased after Union forces bombarded it from the river.⁵³

The decline of the iron industry in the area began in the late 1850s and never regained its substantial influence after the Civil War. The loss of capital and workforce with the freeing of the enslaved population, a lack of local railroad transportation alternatives, and technological advancements that were never appropriated were setbacks from which the local industry could not recover. Some furnaces were reopened after the Civil War but production of iron was minor compared to the peak period of the mid-1850s. Larger iron ore quarries and improved technologies provided cheaper and more efficient methods than those of the charcoal furnaces. The last iron furnace in Stewart County ceased production in the 1920s.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Iris Hopkins McClain, “A History of Stewart County, Tennessee,” (Iris Hopkins McClain, 1965), 24.

⁵² Iris Hopkins McClain, “A History of Stewart County, Tennessee,” (Iris Hopkins McClain, 1965), 23–26; Center for Historic Preservation (Middle Tennessee State University) and the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area (Middle Tennessee State University), “Tennessee Iron Furnace Trail,” created in cooperation with the Buffalo Duck River and Five Rivers Resource Conservation and Development Councils, <http://www.tnironfurnacetrail.org/MTSU%20Web%20Page.htm>; J. P. Lesley, *The Iron Manufacturer’s Guide to the Furnaces, Forges and Rolling Mills of the United States with Discussions of Iron as a Chemical Element, an American Ore, and a Manufactured Article, in Commerce and in History* (New York: John Wiley, Publisher, 1859), <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.32044021.084439;view=1up;seq=11>.

⁵³ Iris Hopkins McClain, “A History of Stewart County, Tennessee,” (Iris Hopkins McClain, 1965), 23, 26–27; J. P. Lesley, *The Iron Manufacturer’s Guide to the Furnaces, Forges and Rolling Mills of the United States with Discussions of Iron as a Chemical Element, an American Ore, and a Manufactured Article, in Commerce and in History* (New York: John Wiley, Publisher, 1859), <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.32044021.084439;view=1up;seq=11>; Jonathan M. Atkins, “John Bell,” from *The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture* (Knoxville, Tennessee: University of Tennessee Press, 2017–2018), <https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/john-bell/>; Betty Joe Wallace, *Between the Rivers: History of the Land Between the Lakes* (Clarksville, Tennessee: Austin Peay State University, 1992), 38–39.

⁵⁴ Ernest F. Burchard, “The Brown Iron Ores of West-Middle Tennessee,” Bulletin 795-D (Department of the Interior, United States Geological Survey, 1927), 58.

Table 2.1. Nineteenth Century Iron Furnaces, Forges, and Rolling Mills in Stewart County.

Iron Furnaces, Forges, and Rolling Mills located in Stewart County	Placed Into Production
Dover Furnace	1828
Dover Furnace Number 2	1854
Cumberland Rolling Mills	1829
Bear Springs Furnace	1832
LaGrange Furnace	1832
Randolph Furnace	1837
Byron Forge	ca. 1830
Randolph Forge (on site of former Randolph Furnace)	1852
Rough and Ready Furnace	1850
Peytonia Furnace	1847
Bellwood Furnace	ca. 1840
Saline Furnace	1853
Iron Mountain Furnace	ca. 1850-1854
Great Western Furnace	ca. 1850-1854
Clark Furnace	1854
Cross Creek Furnace	1854
Eclipse Furnace	prior to 1855
Union Furnace	1853

The extensive use of timber for the local iron industry removed mature trees and undergrowth from large tracts of land. The charcoal pits scorched the immediate ground and affected nearby soils for a number of years. The removal of the tree canopy also negatively impacted habitat for native bird and animal species. Over a span of years portions of the forest returned, although large sections of area cleared of timber for charcoaling were utilized for pastures or cultivation.⁵⁵

Enslaved Labor During Antebellum Period

Enslaved persons were brought to the land between the rivers with early settlers to assist in clearing the land for agricultural purposes. As more people settled in the area, free persons of color also lived in Stewart County.

⁵⁵ Dayna Bowker Lee, Donna Greer, and Aubra L. Lee, *Fort Donelson National Battlefield and Cemetery: Ethnographic Overview and Assessment, Final Report* (New Orleans, Louisiana: Earth Search, Inc., 2013), 26; Hart, Justin L., Saskia L. van de Gevel, David F. Mann, and Wayne K. Clatterbuck. "Legacy of Charcoaling in a Western Highland Rim Forest in Tennessee." *The American Midland Naturalist* 159, no. 1 (January 2008): 238–239, 245–247.

While the majority of enslaved persons toiled in fields and cutting timber, many men and women obtained skills that were highly valued, both on farmsteads and in the iron industry. Large slave owners were rare in Stewart County, with the largest associated with the iron industry.

Free and Enslaved African American Population in Middle Tennessee Prior to Civil War

Tennessee's laws pertaining to the institution of slavery in the early nineteenth century were less restrictive than in the years leading to the Civil War. The movements of enslaved persons were restricted and required a pass from their owner during the first decades of the nineteenth century. An owner could not compel an enslaved person to commit a crime. It was the responsibility of the owner to provide adequate clothing and meals to ensure a slave would not have to resort to stealing for provisions. Additional restrictions enacted by the state legislature were fueled by fears of slave insurrections, including former slave Denmark Vesey's purported planned revolt in Charleston, South Carolina in 1822. Vesey's purported insurrection was thwarted prior to its

execution, although recent research indicates the supposed revolt may have never existed at all. The Charleston court executed numerous enslaved persons along with Vesey on the merits of hearsay testimony, although actual proof of the rebellion seems non-extant. The results of the court's findings and the associated executions are proof of the paranoia that existed in slave holding states in regards to enslaved rebellions.⁵⁶ The Tennessee legislature enacted laws in 1831, the same year as the Nat Turner rebellion in Virginia, further restricting the movement of enslaved individuals, providing additional authority to patrols, banning free persons of color from moving into the state, and prohibiting the emancipation of slaves unless forced to leave the state. Passage of the 1834 state constitution included the provision forbidding free blacks the right to vote. Two years later the state legislature enacted laws sentencing anyone, white or black, up to twenty years for inciting uprisings of the black population. The stricter laws limiting the movement of slaves, while prompted by fears of insurrections, was also influenced by the abolitionist movement gaining strength in the northern states. Between 1826 and 1855, interstate trafficking of enslaved individuals was illegal in Tennessee, although no doubt it continued in a covert manner. And in 1854 the state mandated that emancipated slaves had to be transported to Liberia or other African locations.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Ethan J. Kytle and Blain Roberts, *Denmark Vesey's Garden, Slavery and Memory in the Cradle of the Confederacy* (New York, New York: The New Press, 2018):20; Michael P. Johnson, "Denmark Vesey and His Co-Conspirators," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 58, no. 4 (October 2001), 969–971.

⁵⁷ Jonathan M. Atkins, *Parties, Politics and the Sectional Conflict in Tennessee 1832–1861* (Knoxville, Tennessee: University of Tennessee Press, 1997), 18–19; Myers Brown, "The Interpretation of Middle Tennessee Slave Life, 1830–1860," MA thesis, (Murfreesboro, Tennessee: Middle Tennessee State University, 2000), 3–4; Chase C. Mooney, "Some Institutional and Statistical Aspects of Slavery in Tennessee," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 1, no. 3

The federal census and the tax rolls of 1837 indicate the number of whites, free persons of color, and enslaved persons living in Stewart County during the antebellum period (Table 2.2). Free persons of color remained a very small portion of Stewart County's overall population throughout the antebellum years. The federal census of 1810 indicates only 18 free persons of color living in the county and enslaved persons comprising 18.2 percent of the county's population. Compared to the county's total population, the percentage of enslaved persons declined slightly to just over 16 percent of the population in 1820 and free persons of color represented only 0.5 percent. Between 1820 and 1830 the number of free persons of color in Stewart County doubled. The total number of inhabitants enumerated by the 1830 federal census represented a 17 percent decrease in the county's population. This decrease was caused by the creation of the counties west of the Tennessee River from Stewart County in 1821. The number of free persons of color in Stewart County increased 54.5 percent between 1830 and 1840, while the number of enslaved persons increased significantly from the previous decade. Of the county's total population in 1840, enslaved persons represented nearly a quarter (24.6 percent) of the county's population. The number of free persons of color decreased to 127 in Stewart County in 1850, while the enslaved population increased to 26.5 percent of the county's total population. The number of both enslaved persons and free persons of color in Stewart County decreased by the 1860 federal census. Enslaved persons enumerated in the 1860 census represented 24.4 percent of the county's total population. This decrease may be attributed to the decline in the local iron industry after its peak in the mid-1850s and the after-effects of the slave insurrection panic in late 1856. The number of free persons of color decreased 40 percent in Stewart County between 1850 and 1860. While the number of

(September 1942), 195–200; J. Merton England, "The Free Negro in Ante-Bellum Tennessee," *The Journal of Southern History* 9, no. 1 (February 1943), 41–42.

Table 2.2. Antebellum Census Information for Stewart County

Year	White	Free Person of Color	Enslaved	Enslaved between 12 to 50 years old	Total County Population
1810	3,465	18	779		4,262
1820	6,997	48	1,352		8,397
1830	5,469	99	1,400		6,968
1837				848	
1840	6,317	153	2,117		8,587
1850	7,017	127	2,575		9,719
1860	7,404	76	2,415		9,896

free persons of color had always been small in comparison to the county's total population, this decrease can be attributed to the effects of state laws enacted in recent years to reduce the freedom of free persons of color to induce them to leave the state, along with the effects of the 1856 slave insurrection panic.⁵⁸

Enslaved labor utilized for agricultural purposes

Stewart County's topography was never advantageous for the development of plantations on a large agricultural scale, as those found in Mississippi, Alabama, or even southwest Tennessee. The county was never one of the largest counties in the state in numbers of enslaved persons utilized for agricultural labor. Although raised by Stewart County farmers in the first half of the nineteenth century, cotton was not well suited to the physical conditions of the county. The crop also quickly reduced the fertility of the soil as crop rotation and fertilization were not practiced by local farmers in the first decades of the nineteenth century, as fertile lands could always be found further west in new territories. The first enslaved persons were

brought to the area by early settlers. Tax lists indicate four individuals were taxed for their enslaved laborers at the turn of the nineteenth century.⁵⁹

Early census efforts did not record farming information, although the 1820 census indicates there were 2,238 residents of Stewart County engaged in agriculture. This number increased slightly to 2,780 residents in 1840. In both instances these were probably free white farmers and did not include enslaved laborers. In view of the rural nature of Stewart County's development in the antebellum period, few towns of any size developed in the county. In 1840 only 31 persons are recorded in the census as employed in commerce.⁶⁰

When first enumerated by the federal government in 1850, Stewart County contained over 900 farms (Table 2.3). The number of farms decreased substantially over the next decade, a loss of 237 farms by 1860. By 1860 there was only one farm containing over 1,000 acres and three were from 500 to 999 acres in size. The majority of farms were small, between 3 and 49 acres in size. The small size of most farms in 1860 also relates to the number of slave holders in the county. In 1860, for the 2,415 enslaved persons enumerated by the federal census there were 277 slave holders in Stewart County. The vast

⁵⁸ Iris Hopkins McClain, "A History of Stewart County, Tennessee," (Iris Hopkins McClain, 1965), 2, 36–38; Dayna Bowker Lee, Donna Greer, and Aubra L. Lee, *Fort Donelson National Battlefield and Cemetery: Ethnographic Overview and Assessment, Final Report* (New Orleans, Louisiana: Earth Search, Inc., 2013), 29; Nelda Saunders, "Black History In The County," *Stewart County, Tennessee, History and Families, Volume II* (Humboldt, Tennessee: Rose Publishing Company, 2000), 79.

⁵⁹ Iris Hopkins McClain, "A History of Stewart County, Tennessee," (Iris Hopkins McClain, 1965), 36.

⁶⁰ Dayna Bowker Lee, Donna Greer, and Aubra L. Lee, *Fort Donelson National Battlefield and Cemetery: Ethnographic Overview and Assessment, Final Report* (New Orleans, Louisiana: Earth Search, Inc., 2013), 29.

Table 2.3. Nineteenth Century Agricultural Census Information and Slaveholders in Stewart County in 1860.

Agricultural Census Information												
Year	Total Number of Farms	Number of Farms Up to 49 acres	Number of Farms Between 50-99 acres	Number of Farms Between 100-499 acres	Number of Farms Between 500-999 acres	Number of Farms Over 1,000 acres	Persons Engaged in Agriculture	Persons Engaged in Manufacturin g				
1820							2,238	135				
1830												
1840							2,780	810				
1850	936							771				
1860	699	392	178	125	3	1		636				
Slaveholders in Stewart County in 1860 (U.S. Federal Census 1864)												
Year	Holding 1 to 3 Slaves	Holding 4 to 5 Slaves	Holding 6 to 8 Slaves	Holding 9 to 14 Slaves	Holding 15 to 19 Slaves	Holding 20 to 39 Slaves	Holding 40 to 99 Slaves	Holding 100 to 199 Slaves	Holding 200 to 299 Slaves	Holding 300 to 499 Slaves	Holding 500 to 999 Slaves	Total Number of Slaveholders
1860	126	44	45	26	13	18	3	1	0	1	0	277

majority, 61 percent, owned between one and five slaves in 1860. Just over 25 percent owned between 6 and 14 slaves. The largest owners of enslaved African Americans in the county were probably the iron furnace companies. Three persons or companies (the owner is not indicated in the census) owned between 40 and 99 enslaved persons, and one is indicated as owning between 100 and 199 enslaved persons. The largest owner of enslaved laborers in Stewart County in 1860 was probably the Cumberland Iron Furnace company. In 1860, between 300 and 499 enslaved persons were owned by one individual or company in Stewart County.⁶¹

Enslaved labor at the iron furnaces

The iron furnaces were the largest owners of enslaved African Americans in the county and augmented their labor demands by hiring enslaved persons from local owners. Many enslaved laborers were highly valued for their various skills working at the iron furnaces and forges. In 1837 the largest owner of slaves in Stewart County by far was the Stacker, Woods and Company with a total of 184 enslaved persons ranging in age from 12 to 50 years old. The next largest owner of slaves of this age range owned 45 slaves. Most owners of enslaved African Americans owned fewer than 10 enslaved persons.⁶²

The number of enslaved laborers outnumbered white workers at the iron furnaces, rolling mills, and forges of the region in a survey conducted in 1852. It was after this survey that the iron furnace industry in the area reached its peak. Between 1852 and 1856 there were 12 blast furnaces opened, 5 furnaces reconstructed, and 2 forges established. Enslaved laborers were often

owned by the company or its financial backers. Much of the work involved in the iron industry was demanding physical labor, including mining, cutting timber, cleaning the iron ore, transporting the iron ore, timber, charcoal, and the completed iron products. Often the iron industry was unable to attract white laborers in sufficient numbers to fulfill their labor demands. When the iron producing establishments were unable to fill their manpower needs through slave ownership and employing white workers (both full time and contract laborers), the local iron companies would contract local enslaved African Americans from their owners. These were usually annual contracts beginning in January, although they could be agreed upon anytime during the year. The company paid the owner a set fee and provided food, clothing, and lodging for the contracted slave labor. The hiring out of enslaved laborers by owners to others in need of their services was a common practice during the antebellum period, providing income to the owner while also enabling the hiring person to acquire cheaper labor than employing a free person.⁶³

A survey in 1852 reveals that most of the iron producing establishments in the region utilized more enslaved laborers than free white laborers, although the percentages could range from over 50 to nearly 70 percent enslaved labor. Only one of the regional iron works in Stewart County surveyed at the time had a larger percentage of free white employees than enslaved laborers. The 1852 survey of iron manufacturers on the Cumberland River included 19 furnaces, 9 forges, and 2 rolling mills. In December 1852 the iron manufacturers on the river employed 1,395 whites and utilized 1,910 enslaved laborers. Enslaved women were also part of the industry's workforce, working domestic chores such as cleaning, cooking, and laundry, while also laboring on farms that raised food

⁶¹ Dayna Bowker Lee, Donna Greer, and Aubra L. Lee, *Fort Donelson National Battlefield and Cemetery: Ethnographic Overview and Assessment, Final Report* (New Orleans, Louisiana: Earth Search, Inc., 2013), 29–30.

⁶² Iris Hopkins McClain, "A History of Stewart County, Tennessee," (Iris Hopkins McClain, 1965), 36–38.

⁶³ Michael Gavin, "From Bands of Iron to Promise Land: The African-American Contribution to Middle Tennessee's Antebellum Iron Industry," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 64, no. 1 (Spring 2005), 26–27, 31.

for the industry's workers. Enslaved African American and free white women worked physically demanding tasks alongside men at the iron furnaces. In 1859 the owners of the Cumberland Iron Works company, John and Jane Erwin Yeatman Bell, owned 417 African-American slaves, including 58 women and 92 boys and girls, comprising 36 percent of the total enslaved population at the iron works.⁶⁴

Enslaved African Americans continued to be outnumbered in the general county population, but whites would have recognized the concentration of African-American laborers at these somewhat remote industrial sites posed a threat of possible uprisings. In Calloway County, Kentucky, enslaved African Americans comprised 15 percent of the county's population in 1860, and in Trigg County, Kentucky 31 percent of the county's residents were enslaved. In Stewart County, Tennessee enslaved African Americans comprised nearly a quarter of the county's residents. The proximity to the rivers for transportation and free states to the north also provided additional concerns for the white populace and business owners.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Charles B. Dew, "Black Ironworkers and the Slave Insurrection Panic of 1856," *The Journal of Southern History* 14, no. 3 (August 1975), 324–325; Michael Gavin, "From Bands of Iron to Promise Land: The African-American Contribution to Middle Tennessee's Antebellum Iron Industry," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 64, no. 1 (Spring 2005), 26–27, 31; Freeman Hunt, "Manufacture of Iron on Cumberland River, Tennessee," *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine* 28, no. 5 (May 1853), 644–645; Betty Joe Wallace, *Between the Rivers: History of the Land Between the Lakes* (Clarksville, Tennessee: Austin Peay State University, 1992), 46–47.

⁶⁵ Charles B. Dew, "Black Ironworkers and the Slave Insurrection Panic of 1856," *The Journal of Southern History* 14, no. 3 (August 1975), 324–325; Betty Joe Wallace, *Between the Rivers: History of the Land Between the Lakes* (Clarksville, Tennessee: Austin Peay State University, 1992), 46–47; Michael Gavin, "From Bands of Iron to Promise Land: The African-American Contribution to Middle Tennessee's Antebellum Iron Industry," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 64, no. 1 (Spring 2005), 26–27, 31.

Memories of the feared 1835 uprising in Montgomery County no doubt were a strong reminder to the white population of the potential for violence in the community. The first suspected insurrection of the enslaved populace in the vicinity of Stewart County took place in adjoining Montgomery County. In 1835 rumors of an intended slave revolt surfaced in Montgomery County and authorities procured armaments from the Tennessee Armory for protection from the feared insurrection. The 1835 insurrection never took place and amounted to little more than rumors, although the fear of a possible slave revolt remained in the minds of local white residents.⁶⁶

Rumors of a slave insurrection began in the autumn of 1856, possibly reflecting fears rooted in the existing national political climate throughout the southern states. The continuation and possible expansion of slavery in the United States was of primary concern to residents of Tennessee and the nation during the presidential election of 1856. The emotional issue was in the forefront of the election due in part to the continuing violence in the Kansas Territory. In Tennessee, speculations of a slave revolt began occurring in October and November 1856, during the national election, ultimately leading to a panic in the iron furnace region of western Tennessee that spread to the southern counties of Kentucky.⁶⁷

The iron furnace region was seen as a likely area for a slave insurrection, as it was understood to be populated by a large number of enslaved laborers in close proximity to one another. At the Louisa Furnace in neighboring Montgomery County, six or eight enslaved African Americans were arrested in November 1856 after plans for a purported slave rebellion were discovered to take place over the

⁶⁶ Iris Hopkins McClain, "A History of Stewart County, Tennessee," (Iris Hopkins McClain, 1965), 36.

⁶⁷ Charles B. Dew, "Black Ironworkers and the Slave Insurrection Panic of 1856," *The Journal of Southern History* 14, no. 3 (August 1975), 322–323.

Christmas holiday. On Christmas day it was rumored that enslaved laborers were going to surge into Clarksville, rob the local banks, and escape north to the Ohio River. The widespread reporting of unsubstantiated rumors added fuel to the fear and near panic of the local white population. An open letter to a newspaper attempted to report the facts in the matter, indicating the few enslaved African-American leaders of the revolt were apprehended at furnaces in Montgomery and Dickson Counties and lodged in local jails.⁶⁸

Reports of the purported slave rebellion in Stewart County, following the news in Montgomery County, are full of inaccuracies and rumors that were tossed about the countryside. It appears the rumors of a slave insurrection in Stewart County started at one or more of the iron furnaces around Christmas 1856. Even though there was no proof of the rebellion, it was reported that eighty slaves were immediately arrested. Suspected enslaved laborers throughout the area were arrested. Slaves at the iron furnaces were beaten to induce confessions of the purported rebellion. Approximately six or seven enslaved African Americans, possibly more, were killed in Stewart County during the height of the panic. Within months the panic began to subside. The panic caused not only a loss of life and inflicted punishment for those accused of crimes but also financial losses for the local iron furnace industry. Many of the iron furnaces shut down during the panic with some never recovering and ending operations.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Charles B. Dew, "Black Ironworkers and the Slave Insurrection Panic of 1856," *The Journal of Southern History* 14, no. 3 (August 1975), 326–329; Susan Hawkins, "Forts Henry, Heiman, and Donelson: The African-American Experience," Master's thesis (Murray, Kentucky: Murray State University, 2005), 21–22.

⁶⁹ Charles B. Dew, "Black Ironworkers and the Slave Insurrection Panic of 1856," *The Journal of Southern History* 14, no. 3 (August 1975), 329–334; Iris Hopkins McClain, "A History of Stewart County, Tennessee," (Iris Hopkins McClain, 1965), 36; J. B. Killebrew, *Recollections of My Life* (circa 1898) Volume 1 (Franklin, Tennessee: Mrs. Clyde

The inevitable demise of Stewart County's and the surrounding region's iron industry was caused by a number of factors, including reliance on enslaved labor, lack of sufficient capital, relying on older and inefficient technologies, diminishing raw materials in close proximity to the furnaces, and an absence of a nearby railroad system to provide efficient access to markets. The continued use of enslaved labor stilted the local iron industry's adaptation of new and efficient technologies, including the use of coal as a fuel and the utilization of free laborers. A lack of capital, with so much of it tied to the enslaved workforce, meant there was no additional funding to build railroad spurs to the area, connecting it to larger markets than those situated along river routes. The Civil War may have brought a virtual end to the iron industry in Stewart County, but the seeds of its demise were sown decades earlier.⁷⁰

Election of Lincoln in 1860

The presidential election of 1860 was more divisive than the prior 1856 election. The Supreme Court's 1857 decision in the Dred Scott case made slavery legal in all territories of the United States. John Brown's raid at Harpers Ferry in 1859 provided additional emotional agitation to the election. The southern states' fear of losing the slavery issue led to four contenders in the presidential race. Abraham Lincoln of Illinois, nominated by the Republican Party, was viewed as a moderate on the slavery issue but southern states were vehemently opposed to his candidacy. The Democratic Party split, with

Lynch, 1971), 161–162; Susan Hawkins, "Forts Henry, Heiman, and Donelson: The African-American Experience," Master's thesis (Murray, Kentucky: Murray State University, 2005), 21–23; Nelda Saunders, "Black History In The County," *Stewart County, Tennessee, History and Families, Volume II* (Humboldt, Tennessee: Rose Publishing Company, 2000), 79–80.

⁷⁰ Michael Gavin, "From Bands of Iron to Promise Land: The African-American Contribution to Middle Tennessee's Antebellum Iron Industry," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 64, no. 1 (Spring 2005), 27.

northern Democrats nominating Stephen A. Douglas from Illinois and the southern bloc of the party nominating Kentuckian John C. Breckinridge who was then serving as vice president. Tennessean John Bell was nominated as a candidate of the Constitutional Union Party, primarily supported by the border states. Four-fifths of the electorate cast ballots in the 1860 presidential election. Lincoln received only 40 percent of the ballots cast, although by carrying all the northern states he easily won the electoral college. Lincoln was not on the ballot in the southern states. In Stewart County, Douglas received 144 votes and Breckinridge 786 votes. John Bell, who along with his wife owned the Cumberland Iron Works in Stewart County, received 612 votes in the county. Bell received the most votes in two of the border states and Tennessee. After the election, talk of secession increased in the southern states as the only method to preserve the rights of slaveholders.⁷¹

After Lincoln's Election

Having been elected on November 6, 1860, Lincoln would not be sworn in as president of the United States until March 4, 1861. This turbulent period would see the seeds of secession sown and take root. Although political compromises were attempted, many of the southern states refused to be governed by Lincoln. With a lame-duck president (James Buchanan) and Congress at an impasse, the future secession of southern states seemed unavoidable. Beginning in December 1860, southern states began the political process of seceding from the United States. South Carolina was first, followed by six other states by February 1861 and the creation of the Confederate States of America. Many of the secessionists' hoped the political upheaval would not result in armed conflict. Eight southern slave-holding states remained

in the Union, including Tennessee. In February 1861, Tennessee voters defeated an initiative by the governor to call a sovereignty convention as a means to secede from the Union. The election of Lincoln alone was not enough for most Tennesseans to leave the Union, with the majority of eastern counties rejecting the convention and middle Tennessee counties more closely split on the vote. The majority of west Tennessee counties were in favor of secession, with 11 of 15 counties voting for the convention. The feelings of the western counties, with its agricultural economy and ironworks dependent on enslaved labor, more closely aligned with its southern neighbors such as Mississippi and Alabama.⁷²

With the capture of Fort Sumter in Charleston, South Carolina by Confederate forces in April 1861, the die was cast. After the loss of Fort Sumter and Lincoln's request for military volunteers, four additional southern states succeeded from the United States, including Tennessee. The geographically important Border States, Missouri, Kentucky, Maryland, and Delaware, were retained in the Union through political and military means. With the stage set, military strategies were developed by both sectional factions. The importance of transportation corridors into the south, both water and railroads, were quickly realized by military leaders on both sides. Efforts to thwart incursions on the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers into the heart of the south by Union forces were soon set in motion by Confederate leaders.⁷³

⁷¹ Michael Levy, "United States presidential election of 1860," from Encyclopedia Britannica, <https://www.britannica.com/event/United-States-presidential-election-of-1860>.

⁷² James Copeland, "Secession and the Union in Tennessee and Kentucky: A Comparative Analysis," *Border States: Journal of the Kentucky-Tennessee American Studies Association* No. 11 (1997), from Boarder States On-Line, <http://spider.georgetowncollege.edu/htallant/border/bs11/fr-cope.htm>; Clifford J. Rodgers, Ty Seidule, and Samuel J. Watson, editors, The United States Military Academy, *The West Point History of the Civil War* (New York, New York: Simon and Schuster, 2014), 26–31.

⁷³ William J. Cooper, *We Have The War Upon Us, The Onset of the Civil War, November 1860–April*

1861 (New York, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012), 3; Clifford J. Rodgers, Ty Seidule, and Samuel J. Watson, editors, The United States Military Academy, *The West Point History of the Civil War* (New York, New York: Simon and Schuster, 2014), 30–31, 46.

Chapter 3. Defending the Cumberland and Tennessee Rivers

Introduction

Within three months of Abraham Lincoln's election as president seven southern states—Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Texas—seceded from the Union and formed a government in Montgomery, Alabama. These states of the lower south used a rhetoric based on white supremacy to justify secession. The northern states and the new president-elect refused to acknowledge the right of secession. Before Lincoln's inauguration in March 1861, forces of the new Confederacy began seizing federal property—mints, arsenals, customhouses and forts—within its borders. In his March 1861, inaugural address Lincoln promised not to attack the south unless they attacked first. He hoped that this declaration would buy enough time for cooler heads to prevail.⁷⁴

Tennessee, with the other upper south and border states, watched the development of the Confederacy with keen interest. In January 1861, Tennessee Governor Isham Harris, (Figure 3.1) an ardent secessionist, called the general assembly into special session. The assembly passed an act allowing the people to decide whether or not a succession convention should be called. The referendum was held February 9, 1861; those opposed to the convention prevailed. Tennessee would not secede at this time.⁷⁵

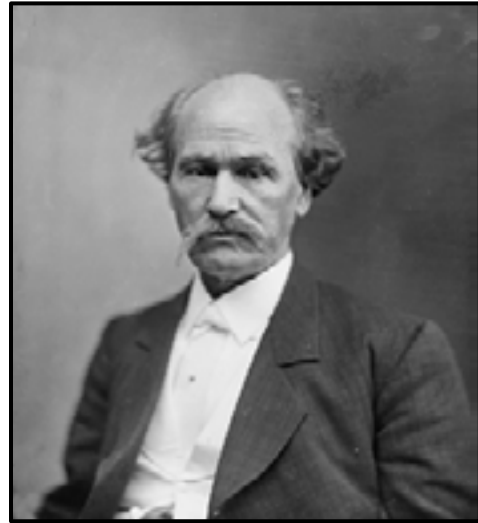


Figure 3.1. Isham Harris, Library of Congress.

As President Lincoln waited, dwindling supplies at Fort Sumter, a federal fort in the harbor of Charleston, South Carolina, brought the crisis to a head. An emissary sent by Lincoln told Gov. Francis Pickens that a ship carrying only provisions would resupply the fort. He assured the governor that the United States would bring no additional men or ammunition without notice unless the fort was attacked. Lincoln dropped the decision—war or peace—into the lap of Confederate President Jefferson Davis. Davis issued orders to Gen. P.G.T. Beauregard, commander of the Confederate forces in Charleston, to take the fort before Union relief ships arrived. On April 9, the Confederate cabinet endorsed Davis's orders. On April 11, 1861, Major Robert Anderson, commander of Fort Sumter, rejected Beauregard's demand for surrender.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 234-270.

⁷⁵ Thomas L. Connelly, *Civil War Tennessee: Battles and Leaders* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1979), 3-4; Digby Gordon Seymour, *Divided Loyalties: Fort Sanders and the Civil War in East Tennessee*, (Knoxville: East Tennessee Historical Society, 2000), 6-7.

⁷⁶ John R. Alden, *Rise of the American Republic* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1963), 413; McPherson, 271-273; John S. Bowman, *The Civil War Almanac* (New York: World Almanac Publications, 1983), 50.

The War Begins

On April 12, 1861, Confederate forces in Charleston, South Carolina, opened fire on Fort Sumter. Three days later President Abraham Lincoln (Figure 3.2) issued a proclamation calling 75,000 militiamen into national service to put down the rebellion. Many, though not all, of Tennessee's people and politicians, including Governor Isham Harris, were ardent secessionists and opposed Lincoln's action. In response, Gov. Harris worked with the state legislature to align the state with the newly created Confederacy. On May 6, 1861, the Tennessee General Assembly adopted a "Declaration of Independence." A public vote scheduled for June 8 would decide if the declaration was accepted or rejected.⁷⁷

On May 6, Tennessee's General Assembly also passed the "Army Bill," which authorized raising 55,000 men that became the Provisional Army of Tennessee. By summer those men would be in Confederate service. The next day, May 7, 1861, Tennessee entered into a military league with the Confederacy, effectively severing ties with the Union. Gov. Harris now faced the daunting task of protecting his now-independent state. The most vulnerable area was the some 350 miles that bordered Kentucky. No doubt, Gov. Harris, like Confederate President Jefferson Davis, hoped that Kentucky's secession would move the border to the Ohio River, but for now he was on his own.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ McPherson, 273-274; E.C. Bearss, "The Construction of Fort Henry and Fort Donelson," *The West Tennessee Historical Society Papers* 21 (1967), 24; Lowell H. Harrison, *The Civil War in Kentucky* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1975), 9; Benjamin Franklin Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson: The Key to the Confederate Heartland* (Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1987), 12-14; Timothy B. Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee: The 1862 Battle for Forts Henry and Donelson* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2016), 9-10.

⁷⁸ Connelly, *Civil War Tennessee*, 4; Kendall D. Gott, *Where the South Lost the War: An Analysis of*

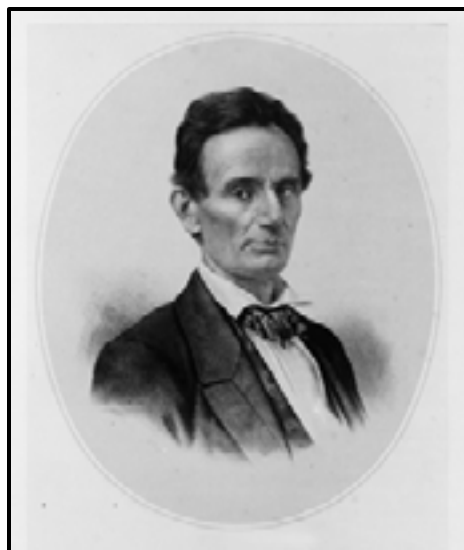


Figure 3.2. Abraham Lincoln, Library of Congress.

Kentucky Neutrality

While Gov. Harris struggled to determine and organize the defense of Tennessee, Governor Beriah Magoffin of Kentucky (Figure 3.3), a man of strong Southern leanings, tried to bring his state into the Confederate fold. Gov. Magoffin's road proved more daunting than Gov. Harris's. In spring 1861, Kentuckians who had supported John Bell and Stephen Douglas in the 1860 presidential election formed a Union Party. While this group acknowledged wrongs done to the South, they opposed secession. The pro-Southern faction led by former vice-president and now-senator John C. Breckinridge favored secession and called for a convention to decide Kentucky's fate. Everything fell apart when President Abraham Lincoln called for troops to suppress the rebellion.⁷⁹

the Fort Henry-Fort Donelson Campaign, February 1862 (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2003), 16.

⁷⁹ Harrison, *The Civil War in Kentucky*, 8-9; Lowell H. Harrison and James C. Klotter, *A New History of Kentucky* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1997), 186-189.



Figure 3.3. Beriah Magoffin, Library of Congress.

Gov. Magoffin refused the president stating: "Kentucky will furnish no troops for the wicked purpose of subduing her sister Southern States."⁸⁰ The Union Party endorsed Gov. Magoffin's stance but insisted that any request from the Confederacy should also be declined. The idea of neutrality grew out of the governor's declaration. In May a special session of the legislature was called—the pro-Confederates still hoping for a secession convention. On May 16, the Kentucky House passed a resolution of neutrality: "This state and the citizens thereof shall take no part in the Civil War now being waged."⁸¹ Four days later Gov. Magoffin issued a proclamation of neutrality. Kentucky, which bordered the Ohio River and Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio, as well as the Mississippi River and Missouri, now found itself in a unique position. Tennessee Governor Isham Harris, however, found himself in a bind.⁸²

⁸⁰ McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 276.

⁸¹ Harrison, *The Civil War in Kentucky*, 9.

⁸² Harrison and Klotter, *A New History of Kentucky*, 186-189; McPherson, 294-295.

Kentuckians wishing to take sides left the state, Unionists for Camp Joe Holt in Indiana across the Ohio River from Louisville and those with southern leanings for Camp Boone, just across the state line near Clarksville, Tennessee. Both sides respected the state's neutrality—for a while. Lincoln, seeking to keep the state out of the Confederacy, treaded lightly until after the summer elections, when the Unionists won most of the U.S. house seats and those in the Kentucky general assembly. In July, pro-Union forces began recruiting at the newly established Camp Dick Robinson in central Kentucky. When Gov. Magoffin demanded Lincoln remove it, the president politely declined. As summer wore on, worries in Tennessee about protecting what was now the northern border of the Confederacy grew.⁸³

Siting the Forts - Defending the Heartland

Months before Tennessee officially left the Union, Gov. Isham Harris began planning for the state's defense. He realized that defensive works were needed on the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers to prevent a Union invasion. In April 1861, two months after the failed February referendum and just after hostilities between the United States and the Confederacy began, Gov. Harris hired Adna Anderson, a well-known civil engineer, and Wilbur F. Foster, a topographer and surveyor, to "locate and construct defensive works on the northward flowing Cumberland and Tennessee Rivers."⁸⁴ The works would protect portions of Tennessee, Alabama, and Mississippi upriver of the forts from assaults by land or water and would also protect vital infrastructure. Railroads connecting major cities in the Confederacy crisscrossed the region. The Mobile and Ohio (M&O) terminated at Columbus, Kentucky, and the Louisville and Nashville ran through Bowling Green, Kentucky to Nashville. Troops and

⁸³ Harrison and Klotter, *A New History of Kentucky*, 190-191.

⁸⁴ Bearss, "The Construction of Fort Henry and Fort Donelson," 24.

material at Columbus could be shifted from there to the river forts; Clarksville, Tennessee, or Bowling Green, Kentucky, via the Memphis, Clarksville and Louisville Railroad, which intersected the M&O near Paris, Tennessee. This vital link crossed the Tennessee River at Danville, just upriver of Fort Henry. It also crossed the Cumberland at Clarksville and was equal in importance to the Danville Bridge on the Tennessee.⁸⁵

Anderson and Foster arrived at Dover on May 10, scouted the area, and selected a site on the Cumberland River northwest of Dover and Indian Creek for the first fort. There Anderson “marked out”⁸⁶ the proposed fort and water battery. Anderson and Foster placed the second fort on the east side of the Tennessee River, southwest of that “marked out” fort on the Cumberland River. The site was just upstream (south) of the mouth of Standing Rock Creek and almost opposite the mouth of the Sandy River. According to Foster, “In all these surveys great care was taken to ascertain true high water mark and note the conditions which would exist in time of floods.” A civil engineer, Foster understood that the rivers were not static and were subject to annual flooding. During his surveys, he noted high water marks on trees and took them into consideration when selecting the fort sites. Foster wanted the forts on good defensive ground, but knew that they must be out of the floodplain.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ James Jobe “Fort Henry and Donelson,” *Blue & Gray Magazine* 28, no. 4 (2011), 7; Robert C. Black, *The Railroads of the Confederacy* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 71.

⁸⁶ Bearss, “The Construction of Fort Henry and Fort Donelson,” 25.

⁸⁷ Stanley F. Horn, *The Army of Tennessee*, (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1941; reprint, Norman, OK: University Press of Oklahoma, 1993), 76; Bromfield L. Ridley, *Battles and Sketches of the Army of Tennessee* (Mexico, MO: Missouri Printing & Publishing, 1906), 75-76, 65; Bearss, “The Construction of Fort Henry and Fort Donelson,” 24-25; James L. Nichols, *Confederate Engineers* (Tuscaloosa, AL: Confederate

Sometime later, Sam Stacker brought a crew from Cumberland Iron Works to Dover and began construction. It is unclear if the men Stacker brought were enslaved, though many such men worked there. With work underway at Dover, Anderson and Foster returned to Nashville. Construction had yet to begin at the Standing Rock Creek site.⁸⁸

Anderson and Foster, for all of their experience and skill, were civilians. Gov. Harris felt the need for a military perspective on the locations chosen by Anderson and Foster for the critical fortifications.⁸⁹ He selected sixty-year-old Daniel S. Donelson, a newly appointed brigadier general in the Provisional Army of Tennessee, West Point graduate and former state attorney. Gov. Harris reminded Donelson that regardless of the terrain the forts must be located in Tennessee. Donelson approved the site on the Cumberland River but rejected the one on the Tennessee River. He selected a site on the east bank of the river at Kirkman’s Old Landing, almost seven miles downriver, north of Standing Rock Creek. When Foster disagreed with Donelson’s location, Gov. Harris sent Major Bushrod Johnson, recently named Chief Engineer of the Provisional Army of Tennessee, to examine the sites. Johnson, who was Donelson’s subordinate, approved the general’s choice and wrote a justification for placing a fort on the floodplain.⁹⁰

Publishing Company, Inc., 1957), 43; Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 17.

⁸⁸ Ridley, *Battles and Sketches*, 65; Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 17.

⁸⁹ Some sources say that Gen. Daniel S. Donelson formed a committee and hired Anderson and Foster; others sources state that Gov. Isham Harris hired them. It will require primary research to determine which is correct. All sources examined agree that Harris sent Donelson to check the sites after Anderson and Foster returned.

⁹⁰ Bearss, “The Construction of Fort Henry and Fort Donelson,” 26-27; Ridley, *Battles and Sketches*, 65-66; Nichols, *Confederate Engineers*, 43; Charles M. Cummings, *Yankee Quaker Confederate General: The Curious Career of Bushrod Rust Johnson*, (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1971; reprint, Columbus, OH: The General’s Books, 1993), 172-173; Jobe “Fort

Building the River Forts

Before he left the area Major Johnson issued orders for work to begin on the Tennessee River fort, named Fort Henry after Tennessee senator Gustavus Henry. The fort near Dover, already under construction, was named for Brig. Gen. Daniel S. Donelson. In May 1861, the 10th Tennessee Infantry arrived at the site of Fort Henry, where they organized, mustered-in, and began construction.⁹¹

Work began earlier at Fort Donelson but progressed more quickly at Fort Henry; by mid-July 1861 the fort had mounted and fired its first gun. However, progress on both forts slowed as Colonel Adolphus Heiman's 10th Tennessee Infantry at Fort Henry and the less than fifty unarmed men at Fort Donelson sweated out the long summer months. Perhaps it was because Gov. Harris believed that Kentucky neutrality would hold, or that he was focused on protecting the Mississippi River, but for whatever reason construction at the Cumberland and Tennessee River forts lacked a sense of urgency.⁹²

Union Activity in the Region

Ulysses Simpson Grant (Figure 3.4) served in the Mexican War (1846–1848) and was twice promoted. He resigned his commission in 1854, having attained the rank of captain. When the Civil War began in April 1861, Grant was working in the family business in Galena, Illinois. When President Abraham

Lincoln called for 75,000 volunteers, Grant helped organize a company of men from his hometown. After that, he wrote letters and travelled to Cincinnati in a vain effort to re-enter the U.S. Army. In May 1861, while he was away, a second call for volunteer troops was issued; this time for 300,000 men. Grant returned from his unsuccessful efforts to find that he had been appointed colonel of the 21st Illinois Volunteer Infantry.⁹³

While in Mexico, Missouri, with his new regiment, Colonel Grant read in a St. Louis newspaper that he had been given a commission as a brigadier general of volunteers. The appointment took place August 7, 1861. The first few months of his generalship were spent in Missouri in command of troops in the southern part of the state. During the summer and fall Grant's commanding officer General John C. Frémont moved him around the state, eventually placing him in command of the District of Cairo in November 1861.⁹⁴



Figure 3.4. Brig. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant, US, Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buel, editors, *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, New York: Century Co., 1887, Vol. 1, p. 352.

Henry and Donelson,” 7. Some sources have both Anderson and Foster disagreeing with Donelson. Regardless, there seems to have been a disagreement and as a result Bushrod Johnson was sent to look at the sites.

⁹¹ Horn, *The Army of Tennessee*, 76; Ridley, *Battles and Sketches*, 66. Documentation on how the forts got their names is sketchy but most sources agree that they were named after Daniel S. Donelson and Gustavus Henry.

⁹² Ridley, *Battles and Sketches*, 66; Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson*, 48; Thomas Lawrence Connelly, *Army of the Heartland: The Army of Tennessee, 1861-1862* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1986), 39.

⁹³ Jobe “Fort Henry and Donelson,” 19; McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 322.

⁹⁴ Ezra J. Warner, *Generals in Blue: Lives of the Union Commanders* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992), 184.

During the summer of 1861 both sides avoided moving into west Kentucky, respecting the state's neutrality. Grant busied himself training the soldiers under his command. All the while, the Union navy was readying a brown water fleet they hoped would control the inland waterways.⁹⁵

The End of Kentucky Neutrality

In August 1861, as Gov. Harris neglected the river forts, the situation in Kentucky began heating up. With the arrival of weapons, also known as "Lincoln Guns," at Camp Dick Robinson, which President Lincoln had earlier refused to remove, Kentucky began a slow slide toward the Union. A month earlier, Major General Leonidas Polk had arrived in Tennessee. He took command of the Confederate Second Department, which in Tennessee extended only to the western bank of the Tennessee River. Gov. Harris's provisional army controlled the rest of the state. Militarization grew in earnest, causing Kentucky's fragile neutrality to wobble.⁹⁶

The situation seemed dire for those Kentuckians hoping that the state would join the Confederacy. Unionists controlled the legislature. Men flocked to the Union recruiting camps at Barbourville and Camp Dick Robinson. Ironically, the Confederacy forced Kentucky to abandon neutrality, resulting in the acceleration of the war in the west. For weeks, Confederate Maj. Gen. Leonidas Polk had sought permission from the Confederate government to seize Columbus, Kentucky—a location of significant elevation and defense above the Mississippi River and a short distance below the confluence of the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers. His patience at an end, Maj. Gen. Polk ordered General Gideon Pillow to occupy the city on September 2. Two days later, in retaliation, Brigadier General Ulysses S. Grant captured

Paducah, Kentucky. Then, on September 7, Union General Charles Ferguson (C.F.) Smith took Smithland, Kentucky. Union troops now held the mouths of the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers.⁹⁷

On September 11, the Kentucky General Assembly voted overwhelmingly for Gov. Magoffin to order the Confederates expelled from the state. The governor vetoed the resolution, the legislature overrode the veto, and Gov. Magoffin reluctantly issued the order. A week later the general assembly again demanded that Confederate troops leave. They did not and Kentucky neutrality ended. Suddenly, the Confederates urgently needed to complete the Cumberland and Tennessee River forts.⁹⁸

Construction Continues, September – December 1861

In late September Confederate troops, including new departmental commander, General Albert Sidney Johnston, arrived in Bowling Green, Kentucky. Soon after Confederate Engineer Lieutenant Joseph Dixon visited the forts. Lieut. Dixon wrote that Fort Henry was "a good enclosed work, with bastion fronts, mounting 6 32-pounders and 2 12-pounders."⁹⁹ Fort Henry, he reported, would require a garrison of 1,000 men and Fort Donelson needed outer works to protect against land-side attacks. His superiors approved the recommendations and leased laborers from slaveholders to undertake the work.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁵ Jobe "Fort Henry and Donelson," 19; Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson*, 19-24.

⁹⁶ Jobe "Fort Henry and Donelson," 19; Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson*, 19-24.

⁹⁷ Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 37-39.

⁹⁸ Harrison and Klotter, *A New History of Kentucky*, 192.

⁹⁹ United States War Department, *War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, in 128 volumes, Series I, Vol. IV, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), 408, hereafter cited as *O.R.*

¹⁰⁰ United States War Department, *War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, in 128 volumes, Series I, Vol. IV, (Washington, DC:

On September 2, 1861, Captain Jesse Taylor and fifty men of Company B, 1st Tennessee Heavy Artillery, reported to Col. Heiman at Fort Henry for duty. Capt. Taylor wrote that “extraordinarily bad judgement, or worse, had selected the site [for the fort].”¹⁰¹ Assigned six 32-pounder cannon and one six-pounder, all smoothbore, he found the powder in poor condition and the remedy—adding fast-burning powder—dangerous. Fast burning powder was meant for use in smaller caliber weapons, such as pistols and rifles. Using it in artillery posed the danger of premature ignition, causing an explosion that destroyed the gun and often killed its operators. Nonetheless, he began training his men on the guns.¹⁰²

On September 25, 1861, Lieutenant Felix R.R. Smith, an engineer with the Provisional Army of Tennessee, reported to Col. Heiman, who commanded both Forts Henry and Donelson. Lieut. Smith had found a cable chain in the water at an abandoned ferry crossing on the Tennessee River near Aurora, Kentucky. He wrote in his report: “The crossing was formerly accomplished by means of buoy-boats, the buoys being held in their places by anchors and a cable chain.” A steam ferry had rendered the chain obsolete but it had never been removed from the river. Lieut. Smith suggested that the chain, which was three-quarters of a mile long, could be placed across the river at a narrow channel between Highland and Aurora. He believed that the chain, used in conjunction with a barrier of

felled trees, would successfully obstruct the river.¹⁰³

Major Jeremy Gilmer (Figure 3.5), who succeeded Lieut. Dixon as the departmental engineer, visited the forts in October. Satisfied with the location of the works, he recommended more artillery for Fort Donelson. As work on the forts progressed, Maj. Gilmer implemented his plan to obstruct the river, ordering his engineers to sink three barges filled with rock. The labor shortage worsened when only 500 of the 5,000 promised enslaved laborers arrived. To make matter worse, white soldiers refused to work alongside the enslaved, thus the labor force could not be combined. There were also problems with the chain of command. By November, there were four engineers working at the forts, all under Maj. Gilmer, yet generals often ordered men to stop work on a task set by Maj. Gilmer and concentrate on another.¹⁰⁴ An exasperated Maj. Gilmer wrote Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston: “It will be impossible for me to rely upon any work being done properly if each subordinate brigadier-general be allowed to suspend operations ordered by me.”¹⁰⁵

Union Lieutenant Ledyard Phelps steamed from Paducah aboard the U.S.S. Conestoga on October 14 to reconnoiter Fort Henry. The

Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), 408, hereafter cited as *O.R.*

¹⁰¹ Jesse Taylor, “The Capture of Fort Henry,” in *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, Vol. 1*, edited by Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buel, 388-372, (New York: Century Co, 1887), 368.

¹⁰² Civil War Centennial Commission, *Tennesseans in the Civil War: A Military History of Confederate and Union Units with Available Rosters of Personnel in Two Parts*, Part I (Nashville, TN: Civil War Centennial Commission of Tennessee, 2000), 156; Taylor, “The Capture of Fort Henry,” 368-369.

¹⁰³ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. IV, 428; United States War Department, *List of Staff Officers of the Confederate States Army* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1891), 152. Several local individuals own links of a chain that family tradition holds are part of the chain that the Confederates placed across the river in 1862.

¹⁰⁴ Nichols, *Confederate Engineers*, 44; Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 18; Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 48-50.

¹⁰⁵ Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 18; *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VII, 710. The 500 enslaved laborers arrived from Alabama. While outside of the scope of this project addition research to determine where those laborers came from, that is how many slave owners in Alabama sent enslaved men. Also did these enslaved men remain in the area after the fighting began and if so did they come within the Union lines afterwards?

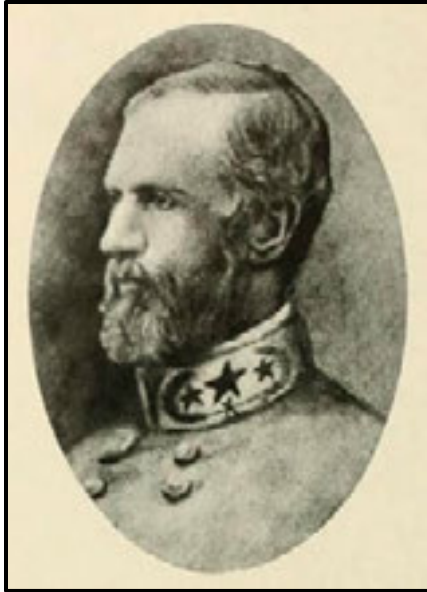


Figure 3.5. Jeremy Gilmer as a Major General ca. 1864, Holland Thompson, editor, *The Photographic History of the Civil War* complete and unabridged two volumes in one, Vol. V p. 257.

next day his timber-clad gunboat drew within 2.5 miles of the fort. The Confederates saw the boat but refused to fire on it, which would have given away the range of their guns. Lieut. Phelps reported that Fort Henry was “quite an extensive work and armed with heavy guns . . . garrisoned by a considerable force.” He returned several times that fall and winter to gather more information on the fort.¹⁰⁶

A few days after the Conestoga’s first visit, Col. Heiman wrote a letter to Maj. Gen. Polk, his commanding officer, outlining the situation at the forts. He reported that Fort Henry lacked sufficient heavy artillery to repel a naval attack. If it fell, the railroad across the river could be destroyed, which would cut Maj. Gen. Polk off from the river forts and Bowling Green. He wrote that until recently, Fort Donelson had been abandoned but that he had sent a detachment of the 10th Tennessee Infantry there, where they built and armed a two-gun battery. Col. Heiman rightly feared that, given their current condition, Union

gunboats could run past the Cumberland and Tennessee River forts and create havoc upriver. He also believed that the effort to obstruct the Cumberland River below Dover “will be a fruitless operation.”¹⁰⁷

Later that month, Lieut. Joseph Dixon led an expedition to obstruct the Cumberland River. Despite his reservations, Col. Heiman sent a detachment of cavalry, two companies of infantry, and two pieces of artillery downriver to protect them. Lieut. Dixon selected a site at Ingram’s Shoals, a few miles upriver (south) of Eddyville, Kentucky, where the engineers dumped 1,200 tons of rock. The Confederates spent an enjoyable two weeks in Kentucky living off the largess of the sympathetic locals.

Tilghman Takes Command

On November 17, Brigadier General Lloyd Tilghman (Figure 3.6) while in Hopkinsville, Kentucky, received Special Orders No. 89, which put him in command of Forts Henry and Donelson. The Orders stated:

*You will push forward the completion of the works and their armament with the utmost activity, and to this end will apply to the citizens of the surrounding country for assistance in labor. . .*¹⁰⁸

Finally, six months after construction of the forts began, they were commanded by an officer with the rank of general—an officer with the authority to make major decisions. Assigning a general officer to command the forts underscored their significance.¹⁰⁹

When he arrived, Brig. Gen. Tilghman found Fort Henry poorly armed and Fort Donelson virtually unarmed. His command comprised one armed infantry regiment and six companies of an unarmed infantry regiment. A few days later he ordered work stopped on the river obstructions, for which he received a rebuke from Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston. Adding to an already chaotic

¹⁰⁶ Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 51; Taylor, “The Capture of Fort Henry,” 369; Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 32.

¹⁰⁷ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. IV, 460-463.

¹⁰⁸ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. IV, 560.

¹⁰⁹ Smith, *Grant invades Tennessee*, 20; Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 52-53.



Figure 3.6. Brig. Gen. Lloyd Tilghman, CSA, Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buel, editors, *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, New York: Century Co., 1887, Vol. 1, p. 366.

situation, on November 24, Brig. Gen. Gideon Pillow telegraphed the engineer in charge at Fort Donelson and ordered him to Fort Henry to “survey an additional work on the Tennessee River.”¹¹⁰ Brig. Gen. Tilghman concurred with Brig. Gen. Pillow and in a letter to Gen. Johnston five days later reiterated the “absolute necessity of our occupying an eminence on the opposite side of the river.”¹¹¹ He hoped to complete the work quickly—a regiment of Alabama troops and 500 enslaved laborers were on the way and could construct what would become Fort Heiman. Brig. Gen. Tilghman also pressed headquarters in Bowling Green for more heavy artillery and Johnston assured him the request would be granted.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VII, 699.

¹¹¹ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. IV, 723.

¹¹² *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VII, 724; Connelly, *Army of the Heartland*, 84, 732; William Preston Johnston, *The Life of Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston*, (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1878), 416; Jim Vaughan, *Staff Ride Handbook for the Battle of Fort Donelson, February 12-16, 1862 Part I* (Special studies: manuscript, 2014), Archives at

The forts still lacked the guns needed to successfully engage ironclad vessels. Maj. Gilmer, with the backing of Gen. Johnston, wrote the Ordnance Department in Nashville requesting four eight-inch Columbiads, four unspecified heavy, long-range guns, and four 32-pounder guns for Fort Henry. He also wanted platforms, chassis, carriages, and fifty rounds of ammunition for each gun.¹¹³

In the last months of 1861, as Brig. Gen. Tilghman scrambled to get his command in fighting shape, his superiors worked against him. On December 4, Maj. Gen. Leonidas Polk ordered him to excuse both black and white laborers from Cumberland Iron Works from any military work. Polk’s orders arrived as Tilghman lamented the lack of labor and the desperate need for work on the fortifications. Work at Fort Heiman would not get underway until after Christmas when the promised soldiers and enslaved laborers from Alabama arrived.¹¹⁴

In a December 11 letter to headquarters, Brig. Gen. Gideon Pillow outlined how and where he believed the Union attack in the region would take place. Brig. Gen. Pillow, known for his bluster, wrote a short, succinct note. Echoing what Col. Heiman stated earlier, he warned that Union gunboats could capture Fort Henry, destroy the railroad bridge south of that point, and cut off the Confederates in Columbus from those in Bowling Green. The warning fell on deaf ears. Confederate department commander Albert Sidney Johnston sincerely believed the Union attack would be aimed at Columbus or Bowling Green.¹¹⁵

Fort Donelson National Battlefield and Cemetery, Dover, Tennessee, 25.

¹¹³ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VII, 709.

¹¹⁴ Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson*, 60; *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. IV, 737; Noel Crowson and John V. Brogden, eds., *Bloody Banners and Barefoot Boys: “A History of the 27th Regiment Alabama Infantry CSA,” The Civil War Memoirs and Diary of J.P. Cannon, M.D.*, (Shippensburg, PA: Burd Street Press, 1997), 2.

¹¹⁵ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VII, 759; Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 21.

While the Confederate command worried about progress on the forts and where and when the Federals might attack, commercial steamboats still ran, bringing provisions from the South to troops at the river forts. Dr. J.P. Cannon of the 27th Alabama, which was encamped at Fort Henry, wrote in January 1861:

*Our rations consisted of a fair article of beef and cornmeal, which we supplemented by luxuries we got from home on the steamboats which made regular trips, enabling us to fare sumptuously and we began to think a soldier's life not so bad as represented.*¹¹⁶

An Alabama minister living at Fort Donelson recalled fifty years later:

*We lived, all of us, luxuriously in comfortable tents. Some had their trunks and abundance of clothing and could dress up for occasional social functions. Not only did the government furnish the usual ration of flour, fresh and cured meats, sugar and coffee, but every boat brought great boxes from home filled with all the good things that farm or store could furnish or mother love suggest for our comfort. It was just a big picnic.*¹¹⁷

While those “luxurious” conditions may not have been the norm for the soldiers at Fort Donelson during the battle, especially those that arrived in the frantic days after the fall of Fort Henry, they were common in early-war Confederate encampments, which often featured many of the comforts of home, especially for officers. Archaeologists excavating the Confederate encampment at Mill Springs on the Cumberland River in Wayne County, Kentucky, which Union forces captured in January 1862, found evidence of high living both in the ground and in the written record, where soldiers reported “living fat.” Upon entering the hastily abandoned camp, Union soldiers found huts with glass windows and carpeting, elegant dress clothes, jewelry,

fine china, pillows, bedding, trunks, and even a silver tea service. Artifacts recovered from the site confirmed the Union soldiers’ reports.¹¹⁸

By the end of 1861, the Confederate stronghold at Columbus, Kentucky, mounted 142 guns, yet Maj. Gen. Polk asked for more. At Fort Pillow, on the Mississippi River just north of Memphis, another fifty-eight 32-pounders awaited any Union gunboats that might test it. As recently as the first of November, the Confederate Ordnance Department in Richmond shipped four 8-inch siege howitzers to Columbus and four 32-pounders to Bowling Green. Meanwhile, Brig. Gen. Tilghman waited in vain for the Ordnance Department in Nashville to send an additional four guns to the forts that protected the Tennessee capital and the heartlands of Alabama and Mississippi.¹¹⁹

The heavy artillery mounted by the Confederates along the waterways in the west came for the most part from weapons captured in April 1861 at the Gosport Navy Yard in Portsmouth, Virginia. Some 1,200 heavy guns were captured by Virginia State Troops at the former U.S. Navy facility. These weapons were distributed throughout the Confederacy, including the citadel at Columbus and Forts Henry and Donelson. As far as is known only the 6.5-inch rifled gun, at Fort Donelson was cast at the Tredegar Iron Works in Richmond, Virginia.¹²⁰

¹¹⁶ Crowson and Brogden, eds., *A History of the 27th Regiment Alabama Infantry CSA*, 3.

¹¹⁷ James H. McNeilly, “Early Confederate War Days,” *Confederate Veteran* 27, no. 6, (June 1919), 208.

¹¹⁸ W. Stephen McBride, Ph.D. and Kim A. McBride, Ph.D., *Archaeological Investigations at Beech Grove, Mill Springs Battlefield, Wayne County, Kentucky*, Mill Springs Battlefield Association, Nancy, Kentucky, 2017, 13-16.

¹¹⁹ Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 21-22; *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VII, 509, 728.

¹²⁰ Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson*, 87; William H. Peters, *Doc. XXV, Report of Wm. H. Peters, Commissioner, Appointed By The Governor To Take An Inventory Of Property taken from the U.S. Government, At The Navy Yard, Gosport, And In And Near Portsmouth, Virginia*, (Richmond, VA, 1861), 26.

Chapter 4. The Battles of Fort Henry and Fort Donelson and Their Place in the Civil War and the Tennessee Campaign

The Fighting Begins

January 1862– The Union Forces March South

The year 1862 began with the situation in the Western Theater was unchanged. Neither Union Brig. Gen. Don Carlos Buell, whose troops had faced the Confederate army at Bowling Green, Kentucky, nor Maj. Gen. Henry Halleck, who kept watch over the Confederates along the Cumberland, Mississippi, and Tennessee rivers, had demonstrated little initiative for offensive action. The lethargy on the part of the Union commanders could have aided the Confederates at Fort Henry and Fort Donelson if they had taken advantage of it (Figure 4.1).¹²¹

On January 2, 1862, Brig. Gen. Lloyd Tilghman reported to Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston, “I have still near 2,000 unarmed men in my command.”¹²² He also reported some good news—the inner work at Fort Donelson was nearing completion as was his command’s winter quarters. He rather glibly wrote: “The houses are admirably built, well situated, and present an appearance of real comfort that will compare favorably with any command in the field.”¹²³

Finally, in early January, Gen. George B. McClellan, General-in-Chief of the Armies of the United States, ordered Maj. Gen. Henry Halleck to send expeditions south to keep the Confederate forces in the region from reinforcing Bowling Green. On January 6, Halleck ordered two columns of Union troops south on reconnaissance missions. Brig. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant, commander of the District of

Cairo, sent a brigade under Brig. Gen. Charles F. Smith with an escort of two gunboats and a transport from Paducah, Kentucky toward Mayfield and Murray. A second column under Brig. Gen. John A. McClernand (Figure 4.2) left from Cairo, Illinois, on transports for Fort Jefferson on the Mississippi River in Kentucky. Grant had hoped that both columns would reach their destinations and begin reconnaissance on January 9 but the weather, which proved awful throughout, caused delays from the outset. McClernand’s brigade could not move until January 11 and Smith’s didn’t push off until the 15th.¹²⁴

When Brig. Gen. John A. McClernand’s transports arrived at Fort Jefferson he established his base and then marched south toward Columbus, Kentucky. His brigade moved from Fort Jefferson to Blandville and then toward Milburn, where his men encamped in line of battle ten miles from Columbus. One Illinois soldier wrote: “Our camp is in the Mayfield Creek bottom. The water is standing all around us. The creek is rising very high, and it is still raining.”¹²⁵ Grant joined the column, which marched into Milburn, east to Lovelaceville, and then back to Fort Jefferson. Conditions during the expeditions were abysmal. McClernand’s

¹²¹ Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 44-45.

¹²² *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VII, 817.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ Warner, *Generals in Blue*, 291; Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 56; Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson*, 68-70; W.S. Morris, L.D. Hartwell and J.B. Kuykendall, *History 31st Regiment Illinois Volunteers*, (Evansville, IN: Keller Print. and Pub. Co., 1902; reprint, Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1998), 27; Dan Lee, *The Civil War in the Jackson Purchase, 1861-1862: The Pro-Confederate Struggle and Defeat in Southwest Kentucky* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc. Publisher, 2014), 98.

¹²⁵ Lee, *The Civil War in the Jackson Purchase*, 100.

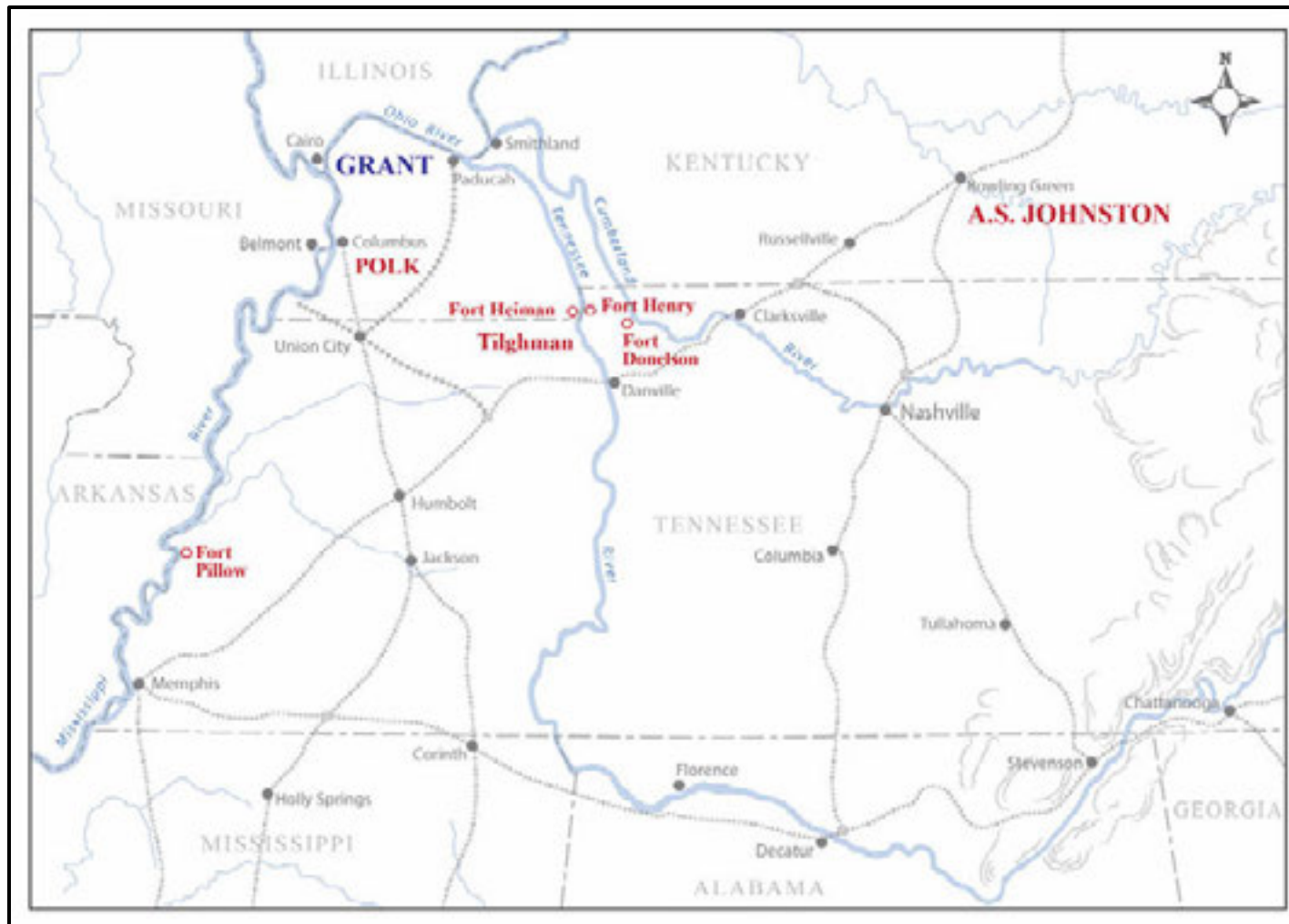


Figure 4.1. Western Kentucky and Tennessee, 1861, Mudpuppy & Waterdog, Inc.

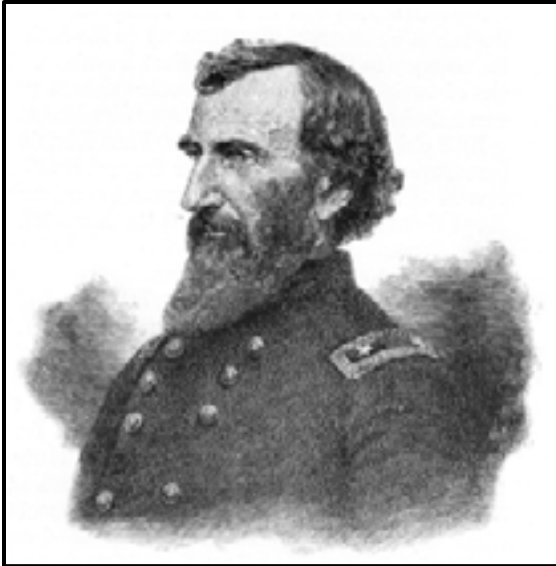


Figure 4.2. Brig. Gen. John A. McClernand, US, from Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buel, editors, *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, New York: Century, Co., 1887, Vol. 1, p. 405.

cavalry traveled 140 miles and the infantry marched some seventy-five miles along routes that he described as “icy or miry roads during a most inclement season.”¹²⁶

Grant wrote years later: “We were out more than a week splashing through the mud, snow and rain, the men suffering very much.”¹²⁷ The Union troops fought the elements but encountered few Confederates. McClernand returned to Fort Jefferson on January 20, just as Brig. Gen. Charles Ferguson Smith arrived at Murray, Kentucky. The reconnaissance demonstrated that Maj. Gen. Leonidas Polk, who had been aggressive when Union soldiers occupied Belmont, Missouri, had become timid, taking no action when the federals brushed his eastern, landside defenses.¹²⁸

Brig. Gen. C.F. Smith’s movements were intended to confuse the Confederates, making

them believe that his objective was Dover, Tennessee. By the time, Smith’s column reached Murray, Kentucky the men had exhausted their rations. As the brigade awaited resupply Smith boarded the U.S.S. *Lexington* and steamed upriver for a look at Fort Henry. The *Lexington* got within two and one-half miles of the fort and then fired four shots, which the Confederates answered. No one was harmed. Smith reported between 2,000 and 3,000 men working at the fort.¹²⁹ He also stated: “I think two iron-clad gunboats would make short work of Fort Henry.”¹³⁰

During the “Calloway March,” as the First Illinois Battery called it, Brig. Gen. C.F. Smith’s brigade covered forty-six miles in three days, from Aurora back to Paducah. The miserable Union troops tramped back from whence they came, grumbling as soldiers do. The expeditions proved useful in gathering intelligence and as a training exercise, providing the soldiers important field experience. Each man carried five days’ rations and full cartridge boxes; the accompanying supply wagon train carried an additional twenty rounds of ammunition per man. The expedition demonstrated the difficulty of moving large numbers of troops and supplies along muddy roads and under adverse conditions. The lessons learned would prove useful in the coming campaign (Figure 4.3).¹³¹

Brig. Gen. Grant, for his part, understood that the mission into Confederate territory would preclude the enemy from sending reinforcements to Bowling Green. None were sent and, in fact, the Union reconnaissance operation alerted Confederate Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston to the dangers his line faced and made Maj. Gen. Leonidas Polk more determined than ever to hold every resource he

¹²⁶ Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 57; *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VIII, 68-72.

¹²⁷ E.B. Long, editor, *Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant*, reprint, (New York: Charles L. Webster and Company, 1885, New York: Da Capo Press, 1982), 146.

¹²⁸ Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson*, 70-71; Lee, *The Civil War in the Jackson Purchase*, 101.

¹²⁹ Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 57-58.

¹³⁰ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VII, 561.

¹³¹ Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 56-58; Charles B. Kimbell, *History of Battery “A” First Illinois Light Artillery Volunteers* (Chicago: Cushing Printing Company, 1899), 35-36

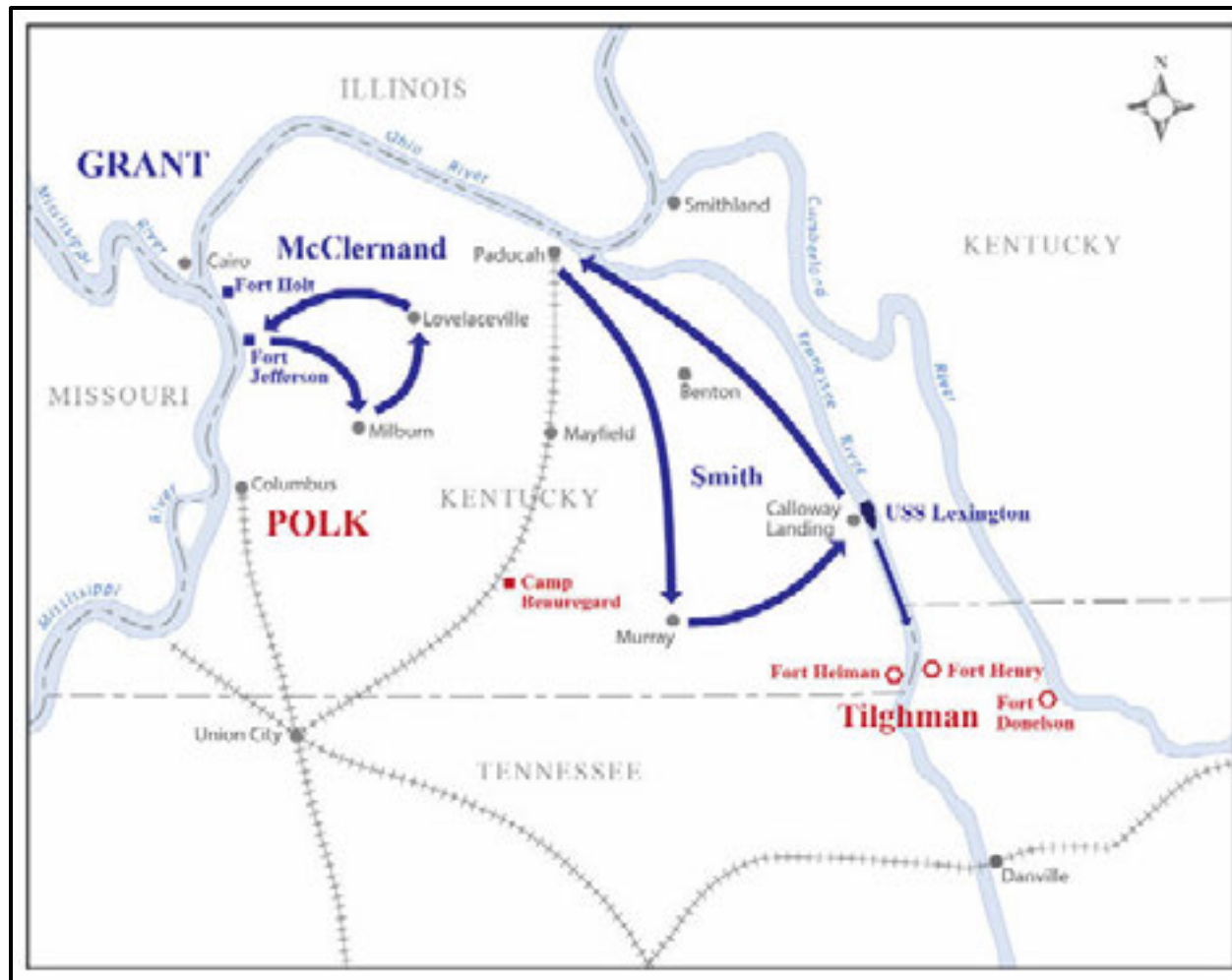


Figure 4.3. Route of McClernand's [add 'S'] and Smith's columns January 1862, Mudpuppy & Waterdog, Inc.

had at Columbus. Galvanized by the knowledge that Union troops were freely moving about Kentucky's Jackson Purchase, Gen. Johnston shifted 8,000 troops (a brigade under the command of Brig. Gen. John Floyd and a portion of Brig. Gen. Simon B. Buckner's division) from Bowling Green west to Russellville. Though not necessarily his intention, Gen. Johnston's move placed the troops in a position where they could quickly aid the twin river forts in Tennessee.¹³²

January 1862–Tilghman Readies the Confederate Forts

Nor did the Union activity go unnoticed by Confederate Brig. Gen. Lloyd Tilghman, who commanded Fort Henry and Fort Donelson. Both forts were almost finished but arming them, training the gunners, and obtaining a well-armed garrison remained elusive.

Fort Henry, a star-shaped earthwork (Figure 4.4), rose twenty feet from marshy ground near the Tennessee River. Its wall, some ten feet thick at the base, boasted an armament of seventeen guns. Twelve of those guns looked down the Tennessee River, awaiting any Union boats that might try to pass the fort. The rest were poised to repel a land assault.¹³³

Fort Donelson and its water batteries were completed by soldiers and the enslaved laborers initially brought from Alabama to work on Forts Henry and Heiman. The fort occupied fifteen acres on a hill behind and south of the water batteries, which unlike those at Fort Henry were detached from the main fort (Figures 4.5 and 4.6). Fort Donelson's walls stood ten feet high and about ten feet wide at their base. The north and west approaches to the fort seemed secure but the south and east sides needed work. A railroad gun was mounted on a hill, probably on the

west side of Indian Creek, to address weakness on the east side. Work on the southern approaches waited as the main concern in January was the perceived threat posed by the Union navy.¹³⁴

Brig. Gen. Tilghman transferred his headquarters from Fort Donelson to Fort Henry in mid-January, which coincided with Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston, Maj. Gen. Leonidas Polk, and Gov. Isham Harris taking renewed interest in the condition of the twin river defenses. Polk, for his part, sent Lieutenant Colonel Milton A. Haynes to instruct the gunners at the forts. Haynes reported to Tilghman on January 16 and was ordered to Fort Donelson, where he organized a 300-man battalion composed of Capt. Frank Maney's artillery company and two volunteer infantry companies to act as gun crews for the heavy artillery at Fort Donelson. He then began instructing the soldiers in their operation. Haynes began the training but found that he needed more help. He telegraphed Maj. Gen. Polk and requested that two additional lieutenants be sent to assist him. Polk granted the request and the men soon arrived in Dover. Part of the daily drill included firing at targets placed in the river 1,000, 1,500 and 2,000 yards from the fort.¹³⁵

The battalion was divided into detachments of fifteen men each for the purpose of manning each gun. When not training, the detachments helped construct the magazine and a covered way (a covered path between the magazine and the water batteries), mounted guns, filled sand bags and finished the embrasures. Fort Donelson's gunners and their guns stood ready to meet an attack.¹³⁶

¹³² Long, *Personal Memoirs*, 146; Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 60-61; *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VII, 840.

¹³³ Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 61; Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson*, 86.

¹³⁴ Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 62-63; Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson*, 87.

¹³⁵ Vaughan, *Staff Ride Handbook, Part I*, 162; Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson*, 85; *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VII, 410-411.

¹³⁶ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VII, 410-411.

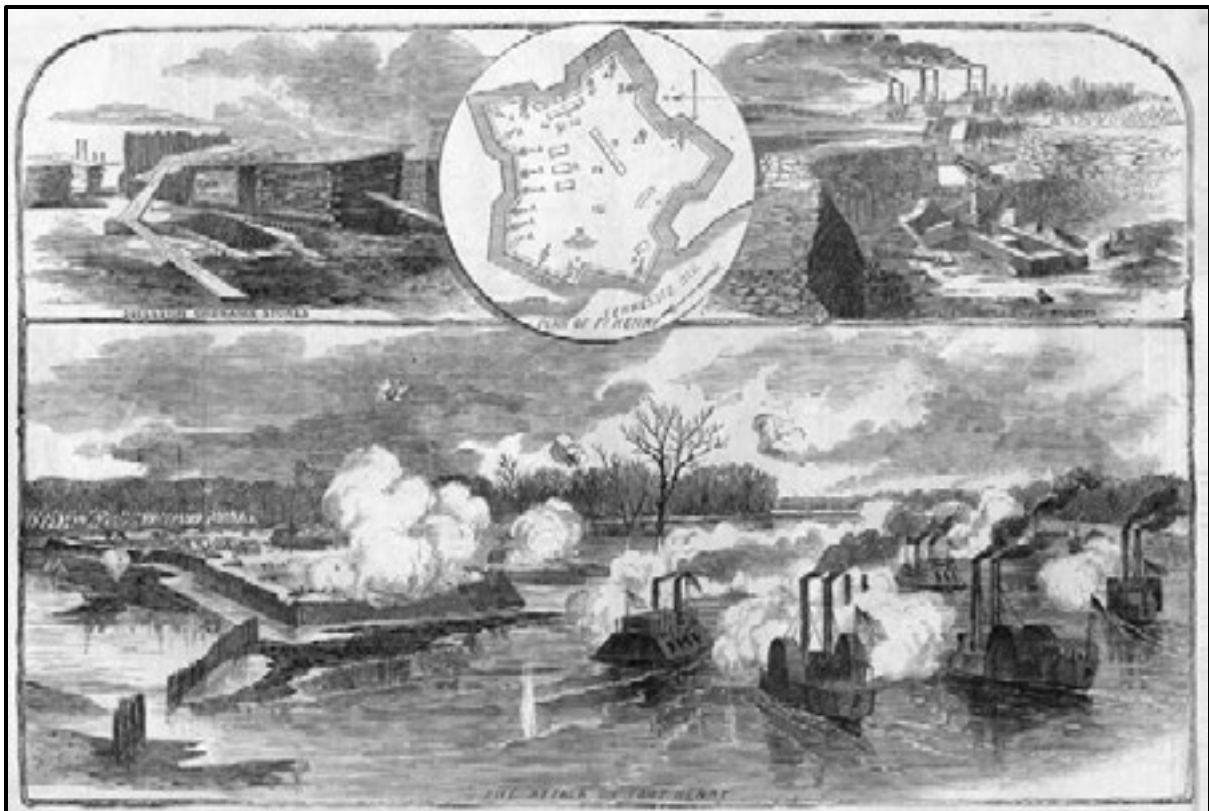


Figure 4.4. Views of Fort Henry clockwise from the bottom: The attack on Fort Henry, session ordnance stores, plan of the fort, and bursted [sic] rifled 24-pounder, *Harper's Weekly*, March 1, 1862, 133.



Figure 4.5. Interior of Fort Henry, on the morning after its capture, February 6, 1862, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, March 1, 1862, Library of Congress.



Figure 4.6. Water Batteries at Fort Donelson, Alfred H. Guernsey and Henry M. Alden, *Harper's Pictorial History of the Civil War*, Chicago, IL: The Puritan Press, 1894, Vol.1, p 232.

Fort Donelson's water batteries mounted formidable guns—ten 32-pounders, two of which were obsolete ship Carronades that had no role in the battle, a 6.5-inch rifled gun, and a ten-inch Columbiad that took three weeks to install due to its size and weight. The twelve guns swept the bend in the Cumberland River west of the battery. Obstructions—trees anchored by their roots with the limbs protruding into the channel—were placed 900 yards downriver of the fort. Unfortunately, they installed these obstacles in low water and the floods of February rendered them useless.¹³⁷

While the arming of Fort Donelson proceeded smoothly, Brig. Gen. Lloyd Tilghman continued to have problems securing needed armament for Fort Henry. As late as January 18 he wired Bowling Green seeking ammunition for nine 32-pounders, a rifled 24-pounder, a smooth-bore 24-pounder, a 12-pounder, and a 10-inch Columbiad, for which he also lacked loading fixtures. Capt. M.H. Wright assured the high command in Bowling Green that he had complied with Tilghman's request. On January 16 he sent the needed tools and 100 rounds of ammunition for the 10-inch Columbiad. He also listed the other ammunition that had been forwarded to Fort Henry: "They have there 782 rounds

complete for 32-pounders; 274 [rounds for the] 12-pounder, fixed; 300 for 6-pounder, fixed; 100 rounds for 24-pounder rifled gun; 150,000 small-arm ammunition, besides lead, powder, and caps." Inexplicably no one mentioned the two 42-pounders, which Major Jeremy Gilmer noted less than two weeks later.¹³⁸

The appearance of Union gunboats on January 17 spurred Brig. Gen. Tilghman to action. That morning three gunboats appeared above Fort Henry and opened fire. The guns at the fort remained silent, Tilghman not wanting to reveal their firepower or range. Brig. Gen. C.F. Smith's column from Murray came all too close to Fort Heiman, and might have captured the fledgling fort if the Union troops had pushed further east.¹³⁹ Work continued on Fort Heiman and at Fort Donelson, where Colonel John W. Head reported: "I have had the whole command turned out and put to cutting timber and preparing rifle pits, so as to protect the approaches. Everything will be done that can be accomplished by energy and industry."¹⁴⁰ Head's men began the process of preparing outer works at Fort Donelson, works that would be desperately needed in less than a month.

¹³⁷ Vaughan, *Staff Ride Handbook, Part I*, 28; Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson*, 87; Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 63.

¹³⁸ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VII, 837-838.

¹³⁹ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VII, 835; Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 63.

¹⁴⁰ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VII, 835.

James A. Saunders, a Confederate congressman from Alabama, visited Fort Heiman and sent Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston a letter on or about January 17. According to Saunders the Alabama regiment and enslaved labor force arrived and crossed the Tennessee River in early January to begin the earthworks that would become Fort Heiman. However, he reported that no work had been done as the fortification had not yet been laid out. The congressman noted that the 27th Alabama had built one hundred winter huts but made no mention of where or how the enslaved laborers were housed.¹⁴¹

On January 21, as his column awaited resupply at Aurora, Brig. Gen. C.F. Smith asked Lieutenant James W. Shirk (Figure 4.7), Captain of the U.S.S. *Lexington*, to steam upriver toward Fort Henry to determine if rumors that the Confederates had abandoned the fort were true. Shirk came upon a Confederate gunboat and fired but the boat escaped. The *Lexington* proceeded to Panther Island where Fort Henry could be observed. After returning to Aurora, Lieut. Shirk reported to Brig. Gen. Smith that he saw numerous soldiers at Fort Henry and assured him that it had not been abandoned.¹⁴²



Figure 4.7. A later war drawing of James W. Shirk as a Commander, David D. Porter, *The Naval History of the Civil War*. Reprint, Secaucus, New York: Castle Books, 1984, p. 160.

¹⁴¹ Johnston, *The Life of Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston*, 423-424.

¹⁴² Lee, *The Civil War in the Jackson Purchase*, 103.

At the request of Brig. Gen. Smith, Lieut. Shirk returned to Panther Island the next day with the general on board. When in range the *Lexington* fired several shots at the fort. A Tennessee soldier at Fort Henry wrote: “As soon as the first shot was fired by her the Confederate flag was raised at the fort. . .but as soon as we fired one shot, she responded with a shell (which burst some yards below the Fort) and retired behind the island.”¹⁴³ The shot from Fort Henry also fell far short of the Union vessel. The *Lexington* returned Smith to his column and the next day the boats steamed downriver for Paducah.¹⁴⁴

As Brig. Gen. C.F. Smith’s column retired from Calloway County, Confederate Maj. Gen. Leonidas Polk sent 1,000 cavalry from Columbus, Kentucky, in pursuit. Brig. Gen. Lloyd Tilghman sent an additional 950 cavalry and some artillery from Fort Henry to aid Polk’s cavalry. The Confederate cavalry nipped at the Union infantry’s heels, turning back only when they were within twelve miles of Paducah. It is unclear how much skirmishing actually took place. Brig. Gen. Smith’s brief after-action report makes no mention of rear-guard fighting.¹⁴⁵

Between January 18 and 25, Brig. Gen. Tilghman sent several short reports to his commanding officer Maj. Gen. Leonidas Polk describing the ongoing situation with his command. Tilghman, who had his headquarters at Fort Donelson, believed the Union column’s objective had been the railroad at Paris. His scouts estimated that Brig. Gen. C.F. Smith had 7,500 troops at Murray—infantry and cavalry—and twelve pieces of artillery.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³ Myron J. Smith, Jr., *The Timberclads in the Civil War: The Lexington, Conestoga and Tyler on the Western Waters* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc. 2008), 207.

¹⁴⁴ Lee, *The Civil War in the Jackson Purchase*, 103; Smith, *The Timberclads in the Civil War*, 206-207.

¹⁴⁵ Connelly, *Army of the Heartland*, 106; *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VII, 73, 847.

¹⁴⁶ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VII, 74-75.

As the Union soldiers marched ever closer to Tennessee River forts, work on the defensive positions continued. Confederate soldiers preformed some of the labor but most was carried out by enslaved men. On January 18, the 10-inch Columbiad and another 32-pounder were mounted. Brig. Gen. Tilghman moved 600 men and three field pieces from Fort Donelson to Fort Henry. Work also continued on the west bank of the river at Fort Heiman. Tilghman wrote: "I have the hill and am fortifying hard. Can make it strong, if time is allowed." The presence of the Union troops clearly troubled the general; the tone of the messages reflected his concern and also his determination.¹⁴⁷

Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston sent Major Jeremy Gilmer back to the twin river forts to again inspect the defenses. Gilmer arrived at Fort Henry on January 31 and met with Brig. Gen. Lloyd Tilghman. Gilmer remained at Fort Henry for three days. His report, written in March 1862, describes at best a state of affairs that could and later did fail. He listed the guns, including two 42-pounders not reported earlier and that had no ammunition. He noted that the garrison included a company of seventy-five to man the guns but reported a problem with the best gun: "A defect was found in the carriage of the ten-inch columbiad, which was partially remedied. With this exception, the guns were in fair working order."¹⁴⁸

Maj. Gilmer had last visited the area in November, 1861. He determined then that a second work should be completed on the hills across the Tennessee River overlooking Fort Henry. He noted that Lieutenant Joseph Dixon had drawn up plans for such a fort, which was later named Fort Heiman. In his March 1862 report Gilmer stated that the promised enslaved laborers had not arrived until January and, as Gilmer noted: "Much valuable time was lost." The good news was that Fort Heiman was substantially complete, though lacking heavy artillery. Gilmer's March report concluded that even without the desired

artillery a strong defense could be made by infantry if the enemy attacked the fort.¹⁴⁹

As January drew to a close Brig. Gen. Lloyd Tilghman continued preparations for an anticipated assault. He shipped the sick soldiers at Fort Donelson to hospitals in Clarksville and Chattanooga and requested reinforcements for his garrisons. A doctor in the 27th Alabama wrote of those days in January: "Towards the latter part of the month, however, rumors of the advance of the enemy were circulated in camp and frequently we were roused from our slumber by the 'long roll' in the dead hours of the night."¹⁵⁰ Time, it seemed, was no longer on the Confederates' side.¹⁵¹

January 28, 1862–The Union Army Gets Its Marching Orders

Early in January, while Union Major General Henry Halleck (Figure 4.8), commander of the Department of the Missouri, argued with General-in-Chief George B. McClellan and Brigadier General Don Carlos Buell over the best way to proceed along the Kentucky-Tennessee border, Brig. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant made plans. Grant, the local commander, went to St. Louis to meet with Halleck. Armed with maps and information, he laid out his plan for an attack on Fort Henry. After a few seconds Halleck cut him off and ended the meeting. The distraught Grant returned to Cairo.¹⁵²

By the end of January Maj. Gen. Halleck had received additional correspondence from Brig. Gen. C.F. Smith and Commodore Andrew H. Foote, who commanded the U.S. Navy in the area. Halleck had asked Smith for his opinion and Smith replied on January 28

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 132

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 74.

¹⁴⁹ O.R., Series I, Vol. VII, 132; Johnston, *The Life of Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston*, 427.

¹⁵⁰ Crowson and Brogden, eds., "A History of the 27th Regiment Alabama Infantry CSA," 3.

¹⁵¹ O.R., Series I, Vol. VII, 836, 74; Ella Palmer, "Reminiscences of Her Service in Hospitals," *Confederate Veteran* 27, no. 2 (February 1910), 72

¹⁵² Long, *Personal Memoirs*, 147; Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson*, 73; Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 69.



Figure 4.8. Maj. Gen. Henry Halleck, US, Library of Congress.

that he firmly believed Fort Henry could be taken and urged an attack. Com. Foote, who had conferred with Grant, also urged an attack on Fort Henry, which he felt could be taken with four ironclad gunboats.¹⁵³ Later that same day Foote wired Halleck and asked: "Have we your authority to move for that purpose when ready?"¹⁵⁴ Grant also wired Halleck on January 28 stating: "With permission, I will take Fort Henry on the Tennessee."¹⁵⁵

The Battle of Fort Henry January 30–February 2, 1862

Finally, on January 30, 1862, Maj. Gen. Henry Halleck relented. In a brief telegram to Brig. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant he ordered: "Make your preparations to take and hold Fort Henry. I will send you written instructions by mail."¹⁵⁶ Jubilation reigned in Grant's headquarters in Cairo; officers whooped and threw their hats into the air. Grant, who remained cool during the outburst, reportedly

asked his officers to calm down or they might wake Bishop Polk in Columbus.¹⁵⁷

Maj. Gen. Henry Halleck cabled General-in-Chief of the Army George B. McClellan, informing him that Brig. Gen. U.S. Grant had begun an operation directed at Fort Henry on the Tennessee River. Halleck stated that Grant had been reinforced with eight regiments of infantry as well as additional artillery. The movement of troops, transports and gunboats turned Paducah, on the Ohio River at the mouth of Tennessee, into a hub of military activity and hope of keeping the operation a secret vanished. Grant split his army into two divisions. First Division, under Brig. Gen. John A. McClernand, was made up of troops that had been at Cairo, mostly men from Illinois and reinforcements Halleck sent from Missouri. Second Division, commanded by Brig. Gen. Charles Ferguson Smith (Figure 4.9), consisted of troops stationed at Paducah and Smithland, Kentucky.¹⁵⁸

On the morning of February 2, Brig. Gen. McClernand's First Division boarded transports and left Cairo, Illinois. That same morning the ironclads U.S.S. *St. Louis*, U.S.S. *Carondelet* and U.S.S. *Cincinnati* steamed for Paducah. A few hours later the timberclad U.S.S. *Tyler* departed for Paducah with Flag Officer Andrew Hull Foote aboard. When the fleet reached Paducah, Foote put the four ironclads *St. Louis*, *Carondelet*, *Cincinnati* and *Essex* (which was already in Paducah) in one division and the three timberclads *Tyler*, *Lexington* and *Conestoga* in another. He transferred his flag from the *Tyler* to the *Cincinnati*, which served as his flagship for the operation.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson*, 88-89.

Before Jefferson Davis made Leonidas Polk a general he was the Episcopal Missionary Bishop of the Southwest.

¹⁵⁸ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VII, 121-122; Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 68-69; Jobe, "Forts Henry and Donelson," 21.

¹⁵⁹ United States War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies*, 28 Vols., (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1894-1921), Series I, Vol. 22, 529,

¹⁵³ Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 64-65.

¹⁵⁴ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VII, 120.

¹⁵⁵ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VII, 121.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*



Figure 4.9. Brig. Gen. Charles Ferguson Smith, US, Library of Congress.

Before the operation got underway Brig. Gen. U.S. Grant issued General Orders No. 7:

"On the expedition now about starting from Smithland, Paducah, Cairo, Bird's Point, and Fort Holt the following orders will be observed:

- 1. No firing, except when ordered by proper authority, will be allowed.*
- 2. Plundering and disturbing private property is positively prohibited.*
- 3. Company officers will see that their men are kept within camp, except when on duty.*
- 4. Rolls will be called evening and morning and every man accounted for, and absentees reported to regimental commanders.*
- 5. Company commanders will have special care that rations and ammunition are not wasted or destroyed by carelessness.*
- 6. Troops will take with them three days' rations and forage, all camp and garrison*

hereafter cited as ORN; Smith, *The Timberclads in the Civil War*, 214.

equipment, and not to exceed four teams to each regiment.

*7. Regimental commanders will be held strictly accountable for the acts of their regiments, and will in turn hold company commanders accountable for the conduct of their companies."*¹⁶⁰

Grant's order shows that he expected his soldiers to maintain a high level of discipline on the march. It also made clear that he expected his officers to enforce his orders or face consequences. He intended for his army to travel light. Discipline would be maintained at all costs, eliminating problems like the looting that had taken place at the Battle of Belmont and earlier expeditions. Brig. Gen. C.F. Smith's Second Division was the first to reach Paducah. High water on the Ohio River delayed Brig. Gen. McClelland's First Division, which arrived the afternoon of February 3.¹⁶¹

February 3, 1862

The Confederate fort at Columbus closed the Mississippi River, which left many riverboats and their crews idle in Paducah, but even this surplus of steamboats proved inadequate to transport the 17,000-man Union army and its equipment. As a result, Brig. Gen. U.S. Grant had to send his force up the Tennessee River in two shifts. Brig. Gen. John A. McClelland's First Division, which had arrived on boats, departed first. McClelland's 8,568 men steamed into Paducah from Cairo, stopped briefly, and then continued up the Tennessee River escorted by the ironclad gunboats *Essex* and *St. Louis*. Grant wired Maj. Gen. Henry Halleck in St. Louis: "Will be off up the Tennessee at six o'clock. Command twenty-three regiments in all."¹⁶² He then accompanied First Division to Itra Landing, nine miles

¹⁶⁰ Lee, *The Civil War in the Jackson Purchase*, 109-110.

¹⁶¹ Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 77; Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson*, 89-90.

¹⁶² Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 80.

downriver from Fort Henry, arriving in the early morning hours of February 4.¹⁶³

In the meantime the Confederates made haste preparing for the attack they knew was coming. After his arrival on January 31, Chief Engineer Maj. Jeremy Gilmer spent several days at Fort Henry inspecting the works and helping find solutions for problems. There were issues everywhere. Fort Heiman, the fortification west of Fort Henry, was still under construction, though only a few more days' work would finish it. No heavy artillery was available and only field pieces graced the fort's earthen walls.¹⁶⁴

At Fort Henry, the ammunition had finally arrived, except that for the two 42-pounders. The 10-inch Columbiad showed a "defect in the cast-iron carriage and chassis." Major Gilmer explained: "With the ordinary charge of 16 pounds of powder the recoil was so great as to cause most violent shocks against the rear hurter, threatening each time to dismount the piece." The fort's mechanics fitted the carriage with "ingenious mechanic clamps" which everyone hoped would solve the problem.¹⁶⁵

During Gilmer's visit to Fort Henry, Brig. Gen. Lloyd Tilghman told him that he believed an attack on the fort by Union gunboats posed the greatest threat. The commanding general did not believe the fort could withstand a vigorous attack. On February 3, with no sign of the enemy fleet, Gilmer and Tilghman left to inspect the defenses at Fort Donelson, leaving Colonel Adolphus Heiman in charge of Fort Henry (Figure 4.10). Heiman's men busied themselves building dikes to protect the powder magazine and bridging the water that had begun to surround the fort.¹⁶⁶



Figure 4.10. Col. Adolphus Heiman, CS, John Berrien Lindsley, editor, *The Military Annals of Tennessee, Confederate. Volume I, First Series: Embracing a Review of Military Operations, with Regimental Histories and Memorial Rolls, Compiled from Original and Official Sources*, Nashville, TN: J.M. Lindsley & Co., Publishers, 1886, p. 282.

February 4, 1862

At 4:30 a.m. on February 4, 1862, the first of Brig. Gen. McClelland's soldiers began coming ashore at Itra Landing. A three-gun Confederate battery at Bailey's Landing three miles downriver of Fort Henry observed the smoke of the Union flotilla and fired a rocket. The battery's signal was answered by Fort Henry and almost immediately the Confederates at Bailey's Landing sent up three more rockets signaling that three gunboats were headed for the fort.¹⁶⁷

As the sun came up on the morning of February 4, Confederate Captain Jesse Taylor, commander of Fort Henry's heavy artillery, observed: "Far as the eye could see, the course of the river could be traced by the dense volumes of smoke issuing from the flotilla—indicating that the long-threatened attempt to break our lines was to be made in earnest."¹⁶⁸

¹⁶³ Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 73-76; Long, *Personal Memoirs*, 147-148; Vaughan, *Staff Ride Handbook, Part I*, 76-77.

¹⁶⁴ Taylor, "The Defense of Fort Henry," 369; *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VII, 132.

¹⁶⁵ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VII, 132.

¹⁶⁶ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VII, 132-133; Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 83; Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 81.

¹⁶⁷ Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson*, 92; *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VII, 149.

¹⁶⁸ Taylor, "The Defense of Fort Henry," 369.

Confronted with the presence of the Union fleet, Col. Heiman ordered two detachments of Lieutenant Colonel Nathan Bedford Forrest's cavalry to "ascertain whether the enemy was landing troops."¹⁶⁹

Col. Heiman ordered Captain Anderson's detachment to the west bank of the Tennessee River and Captain Milner's to the east bank. Milner, on the road between Fort Henry and Bailey's Landing, observed Union troops landing. He knew he could not hold the road but that he could slow the Union advance and warn Col. Heiman of their presence. Heiman ordered Colonel Joseph Drake to cover Dover Road on the east bank. Drake sent Captain W.C. Red in command of a detachment of the 4th Mississippi and a section of Culbertson's Battery out along the road. Major Garvin, with two companies of the Third Alabama Battalion, occupied the rifle pits near the fort, covering the road from Bailey's Landing to Fort Henry. That morning Col. Heiman also ordered twelve torpedoes, what are now called mines, placed in the chute on the west side of Panther Island.¹⁷⁰

Each torpedo contained seventy pounds of gunpowder. Two anchors held the charge, which was encased in a twelve-inch diameter, sixty-six-inch-long iron cylinder, to the river bottom. The device detonated when the pronged iron rod attached to the cylinder snagged the bottom of a moving boat.¹⁷¹

The situation at Fort Henry had deteriorated since Brig. Gen. Tilghman and Maj. Gilmer had left the day before, though to his credit Col. Heiman acted cool under pressure. Captain Ellis of the 10th Tennessee Infantry reported to Heiman that he saw only Union cavalry landing. Heiman sent a courier to Fort Donelson updating Brig. Gen.

Tilghman on the Union activities near Fort Henry. He then sent the steamboats *Dunbar* and *Lynn Boyd* to Paris Landing to bring the 48th and 51st Tennessee regiments to Fort Henry. All the while the Confederates fought the rising river, which forced the removal the ammunition from the lower magazine to a temporary shelter above ground.¹⁷²

When Brig. Gen. U.S. Grant arrived at Itra Landing in the late morning of February 4 he was pleased to find that McClelland had selected a location safely out of range of the Confederate guns. Grant met with Flag Officer Foote and they decided to test the range of Fort Henry's guns. Grant hoped to move his troops further upriver so that they could avoid crossing so many creeks, which were swollen from the heavy rains. Following his meeting with Foote, Grant boarded the U.S.S. *Essex* and steamed toward Fort Henry. According to Col. Heiman's report, five Union gunboats formed in a line two miles below the fort. It is unclear exactly how many gunboats steamed toward Fort Henry on February 4. Some sources have the *Essex* proceeding alone or with escorts behind. The Naval O.R. is silent on the matter. Heiman's report, which was written on February 8, 1862, clearly states that five gunboats attacked the fort and that they came within range of his 32-pounders, which only had a range of 1,500 yards. It seems unlikely that Foote would have brought a timberclad within range of Fort Henry's guns, so it's likely that Heiman got the numbers wrong but he reported an attack by multiple vessels that came within range of the fort's smoothbore guns. Brig. Gen. Lloyd Tilghman's report also states that while at Fort Donelson: "At noon heard heavy firing at Fort Henry for a half an hour." Maj. Gilmer reported that "heavy firing was heard in the direction of Fort Henry."¹⁷³ The three Confederate reports are at odds with Brig. Gen. Grant's memoirs in which he states that the *Essex* turned back after one rifled shell very nearly hit him and Captain William Porter. It is possible that Grant's account,

¹⁶⁹ O.R., Series I, Vol. VII, 149.

¹⁷⁰ O.R., Series I, Vol. VII, 149, 137; Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson*, 93.

¹⁷¹ O.R., Series I, Vol. VII, 149; Henry Walke, "The Gun-Boats at Belmont and Fort Henry," in *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, Vol. I*, 358-367, edited by Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buel, (New York: Century Co, 1887), 364.

¹⁷² Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 83; O.R., Series I, Vol. VIII, 149.

¹⁷³ O.R., Series I, Vol. VII, 133.

which was written more than twenty years later, may not be as accurate as the two Confederate reports.¹⁷⁴

Regardless of how many boats approached Fort Henry or how many shots were fired, they withdrew as soon as their reconnaissance mission was completed. Col. Heiman breathed a sigh of relief and sent a second report to Brig. Gen. Tilghman, describing the attack of the gunboats and stating that a substantial number of troops were landing and more transports had been sighted. After witnessing first-hand the range of the Confederate rifled guns Brig. Gen. Grant moved First Division from Itra Landing to Bailey's Ferry, approximately four miles from Fort Henry. By three o'clock that afternoon McClelland's division was ashore and the infantry and artillery had taken position on a ridge line along the river. Brig. Gen. McClelland sent cavalry south toward Fort Henry, where they briefly skirmished with Confederate pickets, probably some of the soldiers who had been at Bailey's Landing earlier. The cavalry pushed them back and returned to what McClelland had named Camp Halleck.¹⁷⁵

Upon arrival at Fort Donelson on February 3 Maj. Jeremy Gilmer oversaw needed improvements that included work to secure the safety of the water batteries and "locating lines of infantry cover on the commanding ground around the fort."¹⁷⁶ It is unclear how much was accomplished during the time Gilmer and Brig. Gen. Lloyd Tilghman spent at Fort Donelson, but at least the bare bones of the outer works were established. On February 4, after receiving a second dispatch from Col. Adolphus Heiman, Tilghman issued some final orders and he and Gilmer left Fort Donelson. Escorted by Lieutenant Colonel George Gantt and three companies of the 9th

Battalion Tennessee Cavalry, they reached Fort Henry at 11:30 that night.¹⁷⁷

Around midnight Brig. Gen. Lloyd Tilghman wired Maj. Gen. Leonidas Polk at Columbus requesting reinforcements and that Polk himself come to Fort Henry. Polk did not come and provided little more than some additional cavalry. Tilghman was on his own.¹⁷⁸

February 5, 1862

In the early morning hours of February 5, Brig. Gen. Lloyd Tilghman ordered Fort Heiman abandoned. According to Dr. J.P. Cannon, the 27th Alabama Infantry boarded "a boat that was waiting for us, with lights all covered and with renewed caution to keep perfect silence, we steered direct to Fort Henry."¹⁷⁹ With his scattered forces gathered, Tilghman had some 2,600 men, which he divided into two brigades. Col. Adolphus Heiman commanded the First Brigade—the 27th Alabama Infantry, the 10th and 48th Tennessee infantries, a four-gun light battery, and a battalion of Tennessee cavalry. Col. Joseph Drake commanded the Second Brigade—the 15th Arkansas, 4th Mississippi, and 51st Tennessee infantries, a three-gun light battery, and several detachments of cavalry.¹⁸⁰

While Brig. Gen. Tilghman was preparing to defend Fort Henry, Union Brig. Gen. Grant returned to Paducah with the transports "to hasten up the balance of the troops."¹⁸¹ The commanding general arrived at Camp Halleck with Brig. Gen. C.F. Smith's advance and began preparing to assault Fort Henry. In the late afternoon Smith's Second Division landed two brigades in the pouring rain at Pine Bluff on the west bank of the Tennessee River. The other brigade joined Brig. Gen. McClelland's First Division at Camp Halleck. With the

¹⁷⁴ Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 81; Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 83-84; Long, *Personal Memoirs*, 148; *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VIII, 149-150, 137, 133; Smith, *The Timberclads in the Civil War*, 217; *O.R.N.*, Series I, Vol. 22, 537-542.

¹⁷⁵ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VII, 127.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 133.

¹⁷⁷ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VIII, 137; Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 84.

¹⁷⁸ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VIII, 858-859.

¹⁷⁹ Crowson and Brogden, eds., "A History of the 27th Regiment Alabama Infantry CSA," 4.

¹⁸⁰ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VIII, 137-138.

¹⁸¹ Long, *Personal Memoirs*, 148.

arrival of Smith's Second Division Brig. Gen. U.S. Grant had approximately 15,000 troops at his disposal.¹⁸²

Meanwhile, the swollen Tennessee River was causing problems for the anchored Union gunboats, which were being bombarded by all manner of debris carried downriver by the flood waters. The *Carondelet* became entangled with flotsam and was nearly dragged downstream. The raging torrent also pulled some of the Confederate torpedoes loose from their moorings.¹⁸³

Commander Henry Walke of the U.S.S. *Carondelet* wrote that the crew saw torpedoes floating toward their boat. The men reported "a large number of white objects, which through the fog looked like polar bears, coming down the stream." Small boats were dispatched from gunboats to intercept the objects and get them out of the river. One torpedo was brought onboard the U.S.S. *Cincinnati* where Brig. Gen. Grant and Flag Officer Foote inspected it and watched as the boat's armorer disassembled the weapon (Figure 4.11). At some point in the process it let out a hiss, prompting the two officers to scramble up a ladder out of harm's way. After it was disabled the crew pushed the torpedo back into the river.¹⁸⁴

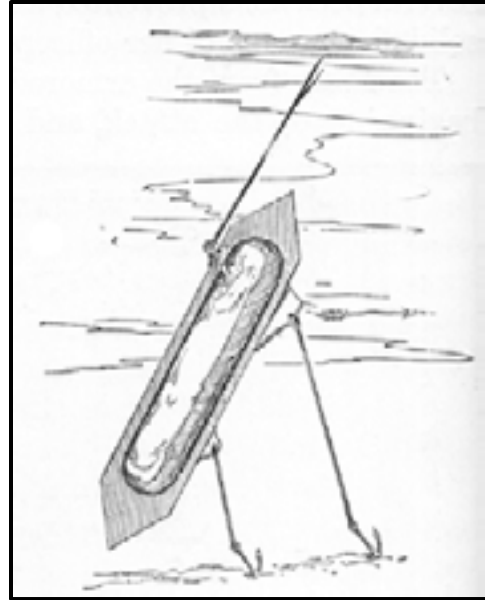


Figure 4.11. A Confederate torpedo, Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buel, editors, *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, New York: Century Co., 1887, Vol. 1, p. 364.

Brig. Gen. U.S. Grant placed forces on both sides of the river and ordered the attacks on Fort Henry and Fort Heiman to begin at 11:00 a.m. the next day, February 6. Brig. Gen. C.F. Smith's column on the west bank would march from Pine Bluff and capture Fort Heiman. After securing the fort all available artillery would be sited so that it could fire on Fort Henry. Smith would then leave a detachment to hold the fort and take the remainder across the river where they would join the land assault on Fort Henry. Brig. Gen. John A. McClelland's First Division would cover the roads between Fort Henry and Dover, stopping any Confederate reinforcement attempt and rounding up soldiers fleeing from Fort Henry. If called upon, McClelland's troops would take Fort Henry by storm.¹⁸⁵

Flag Officer Andrew Hull Foote had drawn up his battle orders before he left the Ohio River. The only addition to his original orders was the departure time, which was set for 11:00 a.m. on February 6. Foote suggested staggering the time to allow the army to get in position but Brig. Gen. Grant refused, wanting

¹⁸² Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 91; Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 78; Marion Morrison, *A History of the Ninth Illinois Volunteer Infantry*, (Monmouth, IL: John S. Clarke, 1864), 21.

¹⁸³ Long, *Personal Memoirs*, 148; Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 81-82; Henry Walke, *Naval Scenes and Reminiscences of the Civil War in the United States on the Southern Waters During the Years 1861, 1862 and 1863*, (New York: F.R. Reed & Company, 1877), 54-55.

¹⁸⁴ Walke, "The Gun-Boats at Belmont and Fort Henry," 362; Walke, *Naval Scenes and Reminiscences*, 55; Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 82; Smith, *The Timberclads in the Civil War*, 219; Jobe, "Forts Henry and Donelson," 21-22; Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 82.

¹⁸⁵ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VIII, 125.



Figure 4.12. U.S.S. Essex at Baton Rouge, Louisiana, ca. 1862, Library of Congress.

a simultaneous assault. The U.S.S. *Essex* would lead the ironclads' assault, followed by the U.S.S. *Cincinnati*, U.S.S. *Carondelet*, and U.S.S. *St. Louis*. The timberclad vessels under the command of Lieutenant Seth Ledyard Phelps would fire only with "accurate aim" to conserve ammunition. Once the navy subdued Fort Henry, Phelps's command would continue upstream and destroy the railroad bridge across the river.¹⁸⁶

Confederate Brig. Gen. Lloyd Tilghman sent a detachment of cavalry to determine the whereabouts of the Union troops. The cavalry had advanced less than two miles when it encountered Union cavalry also reconnoitering the area. The two sides clashed, each losing a man. The Union force withdrew but soon returned with infantry and additional cavalry forcing the Confederates back to Fort Henry. When the cavalry commander reported to Tilghman, the general led fifty cavalry, four companies of the 10th Tennessee Infantry, and

four companies of the 4th Mississippi Infantry back into the field. Once he determined that the Union forces had withdrawn he returned and reinforced his outer works.¹⁸⁷

Brig. Gen. Tilghman realized his force was inadequate to hold the extensive outer works of Fort Henry. He pulled back most of his infantry and manned the works near the camps of the 10th Tennessee and 4th Mississippi regiments closer to the river. Eventually, all forces in Fort Henry except those operating the guns were withdrawn and sent to the works near the camps. As night fell on February 5, Confederate soldiers were given time to find food and allowed to rest. During the night, reports filtered in that more Union transports had landed reinforcements. The incessant rains began again and both sides spent a miserable night knowing that on the morrow they would fight.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁶ *O.R.N.*, Series I, Vol. 221, 535-537; Jobe, "Forts Henry and Donelson," 21; David D. Porter, *The Naval History of the Civil War*, (New York: The Sherman Publishing Company, 1886; reprint, Secaucus, New York: Castle Books, 1984), 143.

¹⁸⁷ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VIII, 138-139.

¹⁸⁸ Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 87-89; Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 91-92; *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VIII, 133.

February 6, 1862

The Civil War is considered by many historians to be the “first modern war,” but the battle plan that Brig. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant and Flag Officer Andrew Foote (Figure 4.13) drew up for the assault on Fort Henry was not unlike an eighteenth-century plan: the navy’s artillery batters the walls and silences the enemy’s artillery, which allows the army to storm and capture the fort. Yet the attack on February 6 was different—it was the first attack by armored gunboats on an earthen fortification and the gunboats and the fort both employed rifled artillery. It was not yet known if the vessels’ armor would stand up to the fort’s artillery or if their guns would reduce the fort.

Union preparations for the assault got underway before 10:30 a.m. Brig. Gen. John McClelland’s soldiers slowly got into position and the advance began. The rain had brought the river up and made the roads soft. A reporter for the *Cincinnati Gazette* wrote, “the storm of the previous night had soaked the soft alluvial soil of the bottom; until under the tread of the troops, it speedily became reduced to the consistency of soft porridge.”¹⁸⁹ The muddy roads and roiling creeks slowed the army to a crawl.

On the west bank of the Tennessee River Brig. Gen. C.F. Smith’s soldiers pushed forward along the one road that led to Fort Heiman with the cavalry in the lead. The U.S.S. *Conestoga* shadowed Smith’s column, firing shots ahead of the Union soldiers to flush out any Confederates who might lay in wait. The boat’s fire cheered the men who drew ever closer to their objective.¹⁹⁰

It was a tortuously slow march for Brig. Gen. McClelland’s men. Brig. Gen. Grant, who was with the reserve, could only follow his division commander’s lead as the Union soldiers sloughed through mud, crossed



Figure 4.13. Flag Officer Andrew Foote, USN, Library of Congress.

creeks, and inched toward Fort Henry. McClelland’s column stopped for a while at the intersection of Dover and Telegraph roads. The awful roads slowed even the cavalry. A trooper with the 4th Illinois Cavalry wrote: “Our regiment had the advance and our company the advance guard. We went around in the rear of the fort, but before we got halfway around the gunboats opened fire.”¹⁹¹ In perhaps the greatest error of the day, the Union infantry, delayed by the muddy roads, failed to close the southern road to Fort Donelson.¹⁹²

At 10:20 a.m., Flag Officer Andrew Foote signaled his fleet to prepare for battle. Thirty minutes later he signaled the fleet to get underway. Foote brought his boats at Fort Henry via the chute on the west side of Panther Island. The rise in the river had made the channel navigable and it allowed the navy

¹⁸⁹ Charles G. Beemer, “My greatest quarrel with fortune”: Major General Lew Wallace in the West, 1861-1862, (Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 2015), 61.

¹⁹⁰ Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 91-93.

¹⁹¹ P.O. Avery, *The Fourth Illinois Cavalry Regiment*, (Humbolt, NE: The Enterprise: A Print Shop, 1903), 52.

¹⁹² Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 95.

to come head-on toward the fort. This was significant as the bow of the vessels carried the heaviest armor. The U.S.S. *Essex* emerged from the chute about 11:30, followed by the rest of the ironclads and timberclads. Foote ordered the boats to hold their fire until the flagship U.S.S. *Cincinnati* fired. At 1,700 yards the *Cincinnati* opened fire; seconds later a sheet of fire erupted from the river and Fort Henry responded (Figure 4.14).¹⁹³

Confederate Capt. Jesse Taylor assigned each of the guns in Fort Henry to a vessel. When the Union fleet came within a mile of the fort Taylor ordered all guns to fire. Recalling this action Taylor later wrote, "Let me say that as pretty and as simultaneous a 'broadside' was delivered as I ever saw flash from the sides of a frigate."¹⁹⁴

The *Essex* fired the first shot that hit Fort Henry and it produced a shower of earth.¹⁹⁵ The ironclads pressed closer to the fort as the wooden boats fired arcing shots into it. Most of the shots missed the weapons on the parapet and fell into the interior. The earthen fort proved its worth as many rounds from the Union fleet struck the wall without passing through. The fire from both sides produced great clouds of smoke that concealed the fighting from those watching from the shore.¹⁹⁶

The Confederate artillery pounded the gunboats. In a letter to his wife Flag Officer Foote wrote: "I had the breath, for several seconds, knocked out of me as a shot struck opposite my chest, in the ironclad pilot house."¹⁹⁷ As the fleet drew closer the timers on the explosive shells were reset from fifteen

seconds to ten and finally to five. The gunners depressed the elevation of their guns as the fort came up on the horizon. Rifled shells from Fort Henry whistled past the gunboats as Capt. Taylor's gunners found their marks. The fleet drew within 600 yards of Fort Henry and every available gun in the fleet and those in the fort hammered away.¹⁹⁸

The two sides pounded each other for an hour; the noise must have been deafening. Then a shell from Fort Henry's Columbiad hit the *Essex*: "A shot from the enemy pierced the casemate just above the port-hole on the port side, then through the middle boiler."¹⁹⁹ Steam and boiling water escaped, instantly killing several of the crew and putting the *Essex* out of the fight. As the gunboat drifted astern of the flotilla, the other three ironclads hesitated.²⁰⁰

At or about the time that Fort Henry's artillery disabled the *Essex* the two most important guns at the fort failed. First the 24-pounder rifled gun under the command of Capt. Jesse Taylor exploded (Figure 4.15). Soon afterward the priming wire on the 10-inch Columbiad jammed in the gun's vent. A blacksmith worked for several minutes under constant fire from the Union gunboats to remove the wire but the gun could not be repaired. Two other guns had been disabled earlier in the battle. A premature discharge of one of the 42-pounders killed three men and crippled the gun; a shell fired from the *Carondelet* exploded at the mouth of a 32-pounder, putting it out of action and killing or wounding its crew. Less than an hour into the fight Fort Henry was down to four 32-pounders, and the Union ironclads continued to bombard the fort.²⁰¹

¹⁹³ Walke, "The Gun-Boats at Belmont and Fort Henry," 362; Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 109; John L. Holcombe and Walter J.

Buttgenbach, "Coast Defense in the Civil War: Fort Henry, Tennessee," *Journal of the United States Artillery* 19, part 2, (1913), 86.

¹⁹⁴ Taylor, "The Defense of Fort Henry," 370.

¹⁹⁵ Taylor, "The Defense of Fort Henry," 370; Walke, *Naval Scenes and Reminiscences*, 62.

¹⁹⁶ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VII, 134; Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 94.

¹⁹⁷ Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson*, 103.

¹⁹⁸ Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 112.

¹⁹⁹ Walke, *Naval Scenes and Reminiscences*, 63.

²⁰⁰ Taylor, "The Defense of Fort Henry," 370; Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson*, 106.

²⁰¹ Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 96; Taylor, "The Defense of Fort Henry," 370-371; *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VIII, 134; Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 114. The 42-pounders were fired using ammunition designed for other guns.

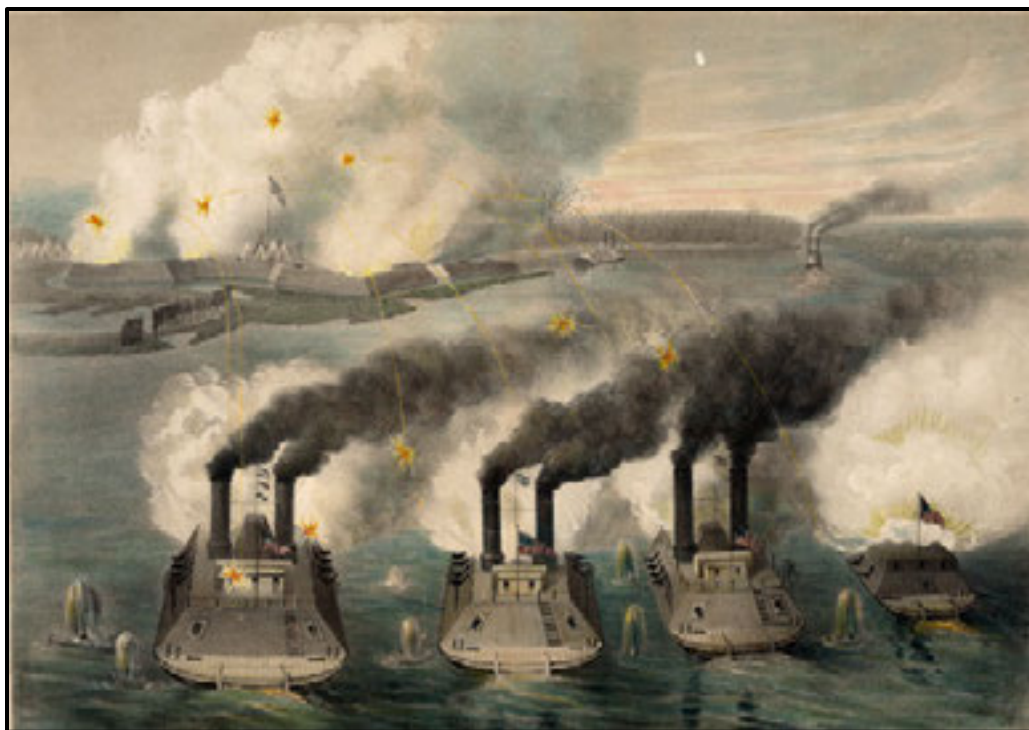


Figure 4.14. A fanciful color engraving of the Union gunboat attack on Fort Henry, Library of Congress.

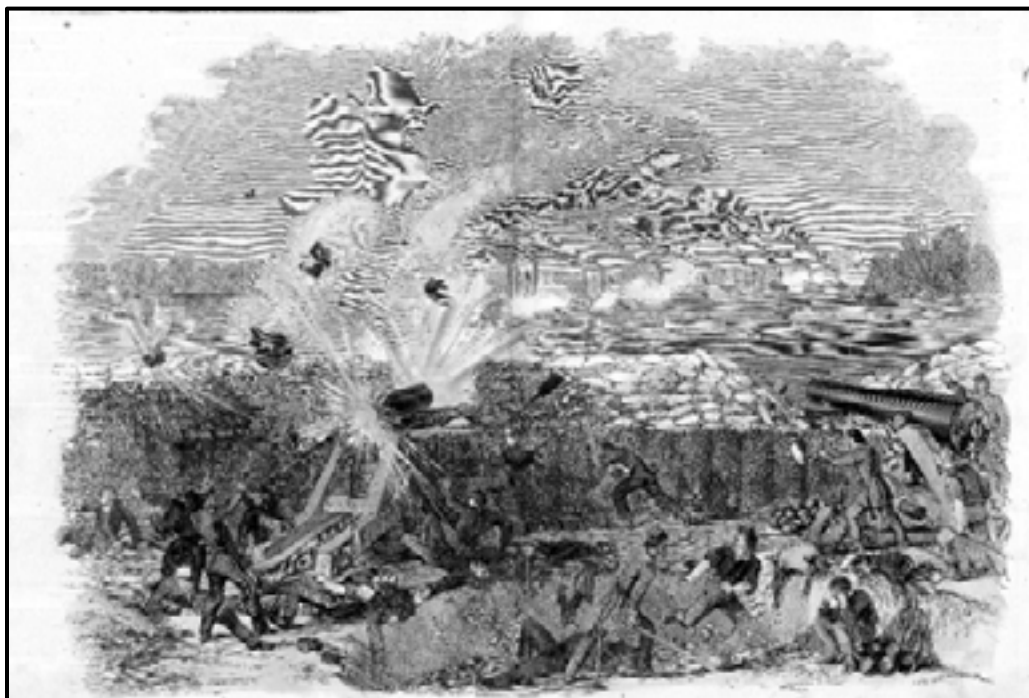


Figure 4.15. During the battle the 24-pounder rifled gun in Fort Henry exploded, from Paul F. Mottelay and T. Campbell-Copeland, editors, *The Soldier in Our Civil War: A Pictorial History of the Conflict, 1861-1865*, New York, Vol. 1, p. 230-231.

The gun crews serving the last four guns were discouraged and spent. Brig. Gen. Lloyd Tilghman, Maj. Jeremy Gilmer and Col. Adolphus Heiman gathered behind the parapet to confer. Tilghman offered to help man the guns and ordered Col. Heiman to bring fifty men from his regiment to relieve the tired gunners. Heiman started for his regiment only to be recalled. Realizing that the situation was hopeless Tilghman ordered Heiman to take the infantry to Fort Donelson. He then ordered a white flag raised over the parapet. In the smoke of battle the Union navy either failed to see the flag or thought it was a ruse and continued firing. The general then ordered his colors struck; the Confederate flag was cut down and he ordered his guns to cease firing.²⁰²

After he struck his colors Brig. Gen. Tilghman sent two officers in a small boat to find the flag officer and set up a conference. In response Flag Officer Andrew Foote dispatched Commander R.N. Stembel of the *Cincinnati* and Lieutenant Commander Phelps of the *Tyler* to raise the U.S. flag over the fort and to tell Tilghman that the commander of the fleet would meet with him. The sailors aboard one of the *Conestoga's* long boats rowed into the Fort Henry's sally port and raised the Stars and Stripes above the fort. The *Lexington's* log recorded the flag as flying above Fort Henry at 2:43 p.m. Tilghman and some members of his staff boarded the gunboat and formally surrendered to Foote. Commander Henry Walke took command of the fort until Brig. Gen. U.S. Grant arrived, at which point the navy turned the fort and its prisoners over to the army (Figure 4.16).²⁰³

While the two sides worked out the terms of surrender the Confederate infantry evacuated, which had evacuated prior to the capitulation of the fort, made their way toward

the river and the southern road to Fort Donelson. A member of the 27th Alabama Infantry wrote: "It soon dawned upon us that the fort had surrendered and we were retreating, running from the Yankees."²⁰⁴ Colonel John C. Wright of the 15th Arkansas added: "As the retreat was made from the field, all baggage and camp equipment was left in camps and fell into the hands of the enemy."²⁰⁵ Col. Heiman caught his troops some two miles from Fort Henry, probably just before Union cavalry found the retreating Confederates.²⁰⁶

A sergeant with the 4th Illinois Cavalry wrote, "[we saw] Confederate infantry, some two or three thousand in two different columns, about six hundred yards away moving rapidly down a long slope and disappearing in a heavy forest of timber."²⁰⁷ The 4th Illinois pursued and caught the rear of the retreating Confederates at least once but the 15th Arkansas and the Alabama Battalion checked them. At some point thirty-eight men of the Alabama Battalion were captured along with six pieces of artillery.²⁰⁸

²⁰² O.R., Series I, Vol. VIII, 152; Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson*, 106; Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 118-119; Taylor, "The Defense of Fort Henry," 371.

²⁰³ O.R., Series I, Vol. VIII, 123; Smith, *The Timberclads in the Civil War*, 222; Walke, *Naval Scenes and Reminiscences*, 58.

²⁰⁴ Crowson and Brogden, eds., "A History of the 27th Regiment Alabama Infantry CSA," 5.

²⁰⁵ Bobby N. Downs, *Arkansas Fifteenth (Gee-Johnson) Regiment Infantry, 1861-1865*, (Arkadelphia, AR: Clark County Historical Association, 1998), 13.

²⁰⁶ Lewis R. Clark, "Tenth Tennessee Infantry," In *Military Annals of Tennessee: Confederate*, Volume. 1, edited by John Berrien Lindsley, 282-290, (Nashville, TN: J.M. Lindsley & Co., 1886), 283.

²⁰⁷ Avery, *The Fourth Illinois Cavalry Regiment*, 54.

²⁰⁸ Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 123; O.R., Series I, Vol. VIII, 152; Avery, *The Fourth Illinois Cavalry Regiment*, 55.

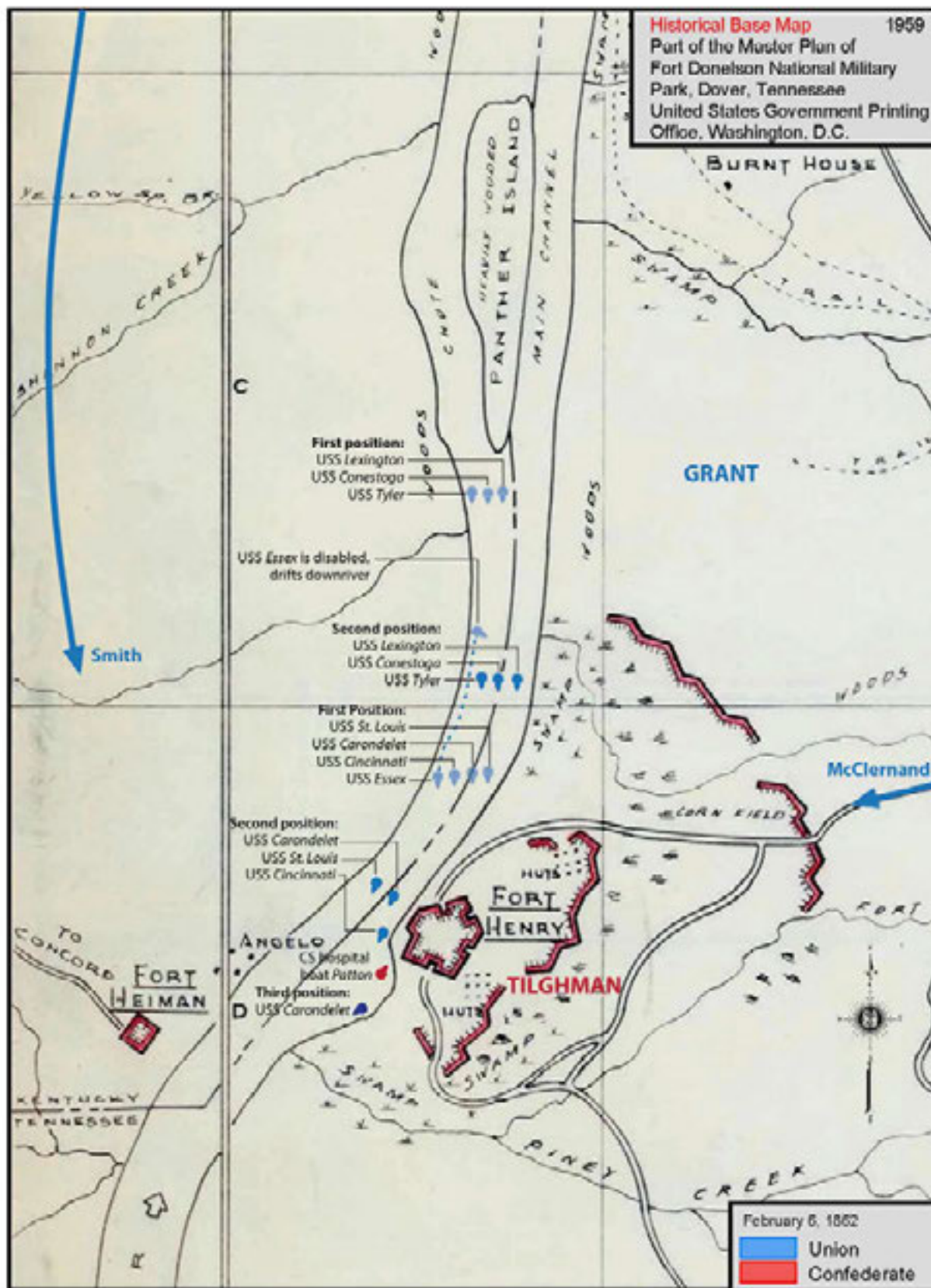


Figure 4.16. Battle of Fort Henry, February 6, 1862.

An Illinois trooper reported the road being strewn with “guns, overcoats, blankets, haversacks, knapsacks and nearly every paraphernalia of camp.”²⁰⁹ The Union cavalry pursued the Confederates for several miles before turning back to Fort Henry. The Confederates crossed swollen creeks and trudged up and down hills. The exhausted and hungry soldiers marched all night, finally arriving at Fort Donelson the following morning.²¹⁰

Brig. Gen. C.F. Smith’s column approached Fort Heiman on the west bank of the river above Fort Henry. They heard the battle raging below and then the firing stopped. Smith, who was riding with Brigadier General Lew Wallace, took possession of Fort Heiman, where they found a hot meal abandoned by the Confederate cavalry in their haste to escape the advancing federal infantry. Across the Tennessee River, Brig. Gen. John McClelland took possession of Fort Henry around 3:30 that afternoon; the struggle was over. Brig. Gen. U.S. Grant, who arrived somewhat later, telegraphed Maj. Gen. Henry Halleck in St. Louis: “Fort Henry is ours.”²¹¹

The Union fleet, however, had not finished heaping misery upon the Confederates. Lieut. Com. S. Ledyard Phelps, who had greeted Brig. Gen. Tilghman in Fort Henry, waited in the fort until Brig. Gen. Grant arrived and assumed command. Sometime around 4:00 p.m. Phelps left the fort and returned to the *Conestoga*. At approximately five o’clock the three timberclads steamed upriver. Their mission, according to Special Orders No. 3, was to destroy the Memphis and Clarksville Railroad bridge and to wreck anything on or near the river that might aid the rebellion. The small fleet arrived at the bridge after dark. The few Confederates guarding the bridge fired at the gunboats, which returned fire, chasing the soldiers away. Sailors from the *Tyler* (Figure 4.17) found that the bridge had been sabotaged—the draw operation jammed closed.

The Union vessels could not go upriver until the drawbridge was opened. Repairing the bridge took about an hour and several Confederate steamboats used the delay to escape. While the *Lexington* and *Conestoga* set out in pursuit of the Confederates the *Tyler* stayed to await a transport carrying soldiers to secure the bridge. While they waited, the sailors burned an abandoned Confederate camp, destroyed railroad track on both sides of the bridge, and wrecked the railroad trestles.²¹²

The *Lexington*, could not keep up with the *Conestoga*, which set a brisk pace in pursuit of the fleeing Confederates. As it caught up with the Confederate steamer *Samuel Orr*, which was carrying ammunition, the boat’s captain blew it up rather than surrender. In the early morning hours of February 7, as the *Conestoga* closed in, two Confederate steamboats set a trap. The vessels dropped anchor and the crew set the boats on fire, igniting a ton of black powder and ammunition. The *Conestoga* avoided the blast but the nearby house of a Unionist family was flattened. As the hulks of the burning Confederate boats sank in the river, Lieut. Com. Phelps dropped anchor to wait for the Union timberclads *Lexington* and *Tyler*.²¹³

Phelps’s little fleet was on the river for four days. They returned to Fort Henry on February 10, having ventured as far south as Florence, Alabama (Figure 4.18). Although the Confederates burned six boats to prevent their capture, the raid netted two steamboats and an unfinished gunboat, the *Eastport*, which became a Union navy vessel. The Union fleet also seized or destroyed large quantities of munitions and other supplies.²¹⁴

²⁰⁹ Avery, *The Fourth Illinois Cavalry Regiment*, 55.

²¹⁰ Crowson and Brogden, eds., “*A History of the 27th Regiment Alabama Infantry CSA*,” 6.

²¹¹ Lew Wallace, *An Autobiography, Volume I*, (New York: Harper & Brother Publishers, 1906), 370; Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 125; *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VII, 124.

²¹² Smith, *The Timberclads in the Civil War*, 226-228; Jobe, “Forts Henry and Donelson,” 24; *O.R.N.*, Series I, Vol. 22, 537, 571.

²¹³ Smith, *The Timberclads in the Civil War*, 228; *O.R.N.*, Series I, Vol. 22, 572; Jobe, “Forts Henry and Donelson,” 24.

²¹⁴ Porter, *The Naval History of the Civil War*, 149-150; *O.R.N.*, Series I, Vol. 22, 570-574; Jobe, “Forts Henry and Donelson,” 24.

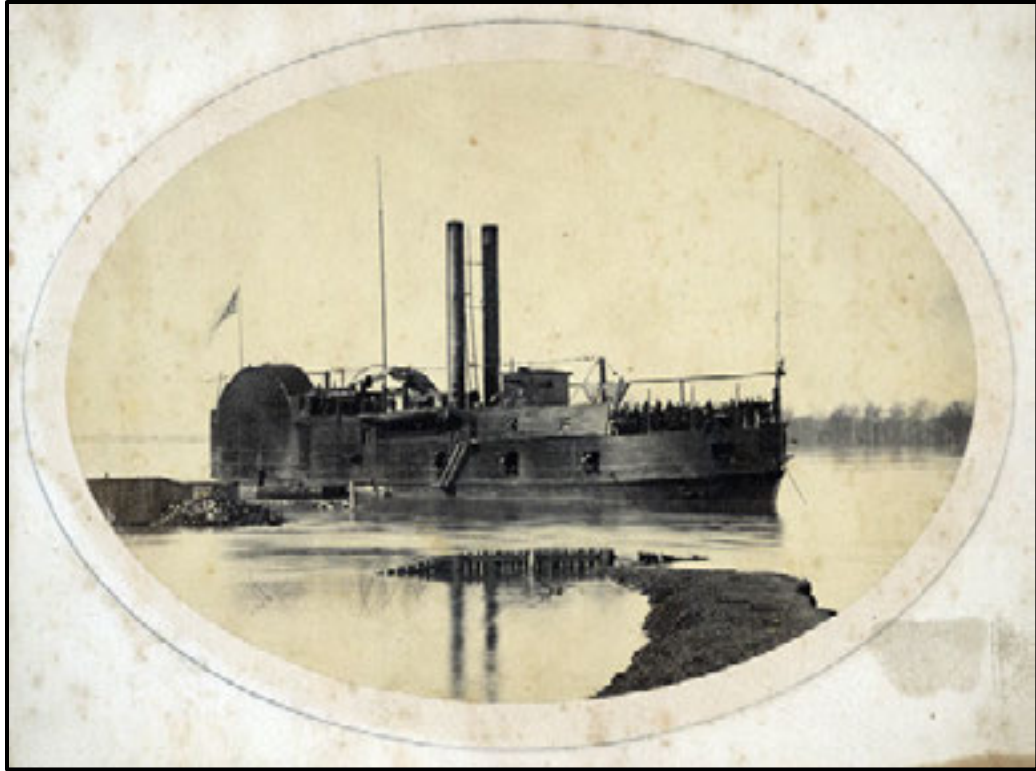


Figure 4.17. Timberclad U.S.S. *Tyler*, Library of Congress.



Figure 4.18. Alabama Unionists cheer the arrival of Union gunboats on the Tennessee River, Alfred H. Guernsey and Henry M. Alden, *Harper's Pictorial History of the Civil War*, Chicago, IL: The Puritan Press, 1894 Vol. 1, p 229.

In the Battle of Fort Henry the Confederates lost seventeen pieces of heavy artillery, many damaged beyond repair. There were ninety-nine casualties: five dead, eleven wounded, five missing, and seventy-eight taken prisoner, including Brig. Gen. Lloyd Tilghman. Union Brig. Gen. John McClelland reported one man killed and several wounded in a skirmish on February 5. His cavalry captured an additional thirty-eight Confederates who were retreating with Col. Adolphus Heiman's column. The Union cavalry also captured six pieces of field artillery and other equipment abandoned during the retreat. The Union fleet lost fifteen men killed and thirty-four wounded. The *Essex* and the *Cincinnati* were damaged in the battle but could be repaired.²¹⁵

The Interlude – February 7–10, 1862

The Confederates Respond to the Fall of Fort Henry

The fall of Fort Henry was a serious, if not mortal, blow to the fledgling Confederacy. The loss of the only fortification on the Tennessee River opened the river to Union gunboats and transports as far south as Florence, Alabama. It cut the railroad bridge at Danville, Tennessee, which cut off possible support to Fort Donelson from Confederate troops in Columbus. It also severed the ties between Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston's troops in Bowling Green and Maj. Gen. Leonidas Polk's command in Columbus. Gen. Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard, who had just arrived from Virginia to join Johnston in Bowling Green, wrote in a February 7

²¹⁵ Edwin C. Bearss, *The Fall of Fort Henry, Tennessee*, (Dover, TN: Eastern National Park Association with Fort Donelson National Military Park, 1963), 28; *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VIII, 128-129; Holcombe and Butgenbatch, "Coast Defense in the Civil War: Fort Henry, Tennessee," 88; Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 117. The figure of killed on the gunboats includes thirteen men who died on board the U.S.S. *Essex* as a result of scalding.

memorandum that the loss of Fort Henry would necessitate a retreat from Bowling Green to Nashville. He advocated transferring any useful supplies to Nashville and abandoning Clarksville. He suggested that the retreat from Nashville might go as far as Stevenson, Alabama, and perhaps further. He postulated that the situation would require those troops in Columbus to retreat to Humboldt and then to Grand Junction, which would, if necessary, allow them to pull back to Grenada or even as far south as Jackson, Mississippi.²¹⁶

Finally, after it was perhaps too late, the Confederate government realized that the northern border of their country faced grave peril. President Jefferson Davis' (Figure 4.19) policy of defending everywhere, while politically expedient, proved to be woefully poor military strategy. Among other things it left thousands of Confederate troops along the Gulf Coast idle. On February 8, Confederate Secretary of War Judah Benjamin ordered troops from the Deep South to East Tennessee to reinforce Albert Sidney Johnston's line. He also ordered an additional 5,000 men from New Orleans to Tennessee.²¹⁷



Figure 4.19. Jefferson Davis, Library of Congress.

²¹⁶ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VII, 861.

²¹⁷ Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 148; *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VIII, 862-863.

The quick defeat at Fort Henry led Confederate Commander Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston (Figure 4.20) to conclude that earthen forts were no match for ironclad gunboats. He wrote Secretary of War Benjamin: "I think the gunboats of the enemy will probably take Fort Donelson without the necessity of employing their land forces in co-operation, as seems to have been done at Fort Henry."²¹⁸ The disaster on the Tennessee River had shaken Johnston, who feared that if Fort Donelson fell his army in Bowling Green could get caught by Union gunboats as it tried to cross the Cumberland River. The letter he wrote to the secretary of war seemed designed to prepare the government in Richmond for the worst. Though Johnston, it seemed, still planned to defend the fort. He had some 7,000 men at Fort Donelson and more ready to go there.²¹⁹



Figure 4.20. Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston, CS, Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buel, editors, *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, New York: Century Co., 1887, Vol. 1, p. 542.

The River Ironclad - Modern but Not Invulnerable

While the Confederates feared that the gunboats spelled doom for Fort Donelson, Flag Officer Foote's small fleet did not emerge unscathed. Soon after the battle Foote, "[his] services being indispensable in Cairo" steamed downriver aboard the U.S.S. *Cincinnati* with nearly half his fleet. He was accompanied by the U.S.S. *St. Louis* and the U.S.S. *Essex*, which was towed by the steamer *Alps*, having been disabled by Fort Henry's artillery.²²⁰

Of the three vessels accompanying Flag Officer Foote only the *St. Louis*, which sustained minor damage at Fort Henry, would participate in the action at Fort Donelson. The *Essex* was completely disabled and its commander, Commander William D. Porter (Figure 4.21), injured during the fight. They would require time for repairs and medical treatment, respectively, before returning to action. The *Cincinnati* also required extensive repairs. Her smokestacks and rear cabin were riddled with holes from the gunfire and two of the guns had been dismounted as the result of thirty-two hits taken from Confederate artillery.²²¹

Foote had to shift crewmen from the damaged vessels to those ready for action. Thirty-four men were transferred from the *Essex* to the U.S.S. *Louisville* and thirty-three from the *Cincinnati* to the U.S.S. *Pittsburg*. The action demoralized the Union sailors, which led twenty-eight to desert. Foote requested an additional 600 men; they would not reach him in time for the battle at Fort Donelson.²²²

²¹⁸ O.R., Series I, Vol. VII, 863.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ Walke, *Naval Scenes and Reminiscences*, 67; O.R.N., Series I, Vol. 22, 545, 539.

²²¹ Lee, *The Civil War in the Jackson Purchase*, 124

²²² Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 160-161; O.R.N., Series I, Vol. 22, 550.



Figure 4.21. Com. William Porter, USN, Library of Congress.

Fort Donelson Prepares for Battle

On February 6, a newly minted brigadier general, Bushrod Johnson (Figure 4.22), received orders in Nashville from his commander, Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston, to take command of Fort Donelson. Johnson boarded a steamer in Nashville and proceeded downriver. He stopped briefly in Clarksville, where he reported to Brig. Gen. Gideon Pillow. The 2nd Kentucky Infantry joined him on the boat, which then steamed the last thirty-five miles to Dover. Johnson debarked and rode his horse to the Dover Hotel, which would serve as his headquarters.²²³

Brigadier General Johnson inherited a garrison that consisted of the 30th, 49th, 50th and 53rd Tennessee infantries and two brigades made up of the survivors of Fort Henry. Heiman's brigade, commanded by Col. Adolphus Heiman, was made up of the 10th

Tennessee, 48th Tennessee, 27th Alabama infantries, Culbertson's Battery and Gantt's Battalion Tennessee Cavalry. Drake's Brigade, under the command of Col. Joseph Drake, was composed of 4th Mississippi, 15th Arkansas and 51st Tennessee infantries, a detachment of 26th Alabama Infantry, Crain's Battery and several companies of cavalry. Johnson brought with him the 2nd Kentucky under the command of Col. Roger Hanson, a relative of Mary Todd Lincoln. In the mad scramble following the fall of Fort Henry, Confederate troops poured into Dover. Soon after Johnson arrived, two regiments of Virginia troops belonging to General John B. Floyd's brigade stepped off the wharf at Dover. The rest of the Virginia brigade arrived the next day, February 8. Boats bringing supplies from Nashville and Clarksville arrived daily. Johnson set his garrison to work housing the supplies and strengthening Fort Donelson's outer defenses.²²⁴

Brig. Gen. Bushrod Johnson's brief command of Fort Donelson ended on February 10, when Brig. Gen. Gideon Pillow (Figure 4.23) arrived from Clarksville. As the ranking officer, Pillow assumed command and set up his headquarters at the Rice House, where he also lodged. Accompanying the new fort commander were 2,800 men of Colonel Thomas J. Davidson's Brigade. Pillow assigned Johnson command of the left wing of the outer defenses. He then set about improving morale and preparing Fort Donelson to defend the Cumberland. As a part of this effort he continued to strengthen the outer works, construction of which had begun just before the Battle of Fort Henry.²²⁵

²²³ Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 163; Johnston, *The Life of Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston*, 433-434; Cummings, *The Curious Career of Bushrod Johnson*, 188-189.

²²⁴ O.R. Series I, Vol. VII, 358; Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 163, 408.

²²⁵ O.R. Series I, Vol. VII, 358; Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 117.



Figure 4.22. Brig. Gen. Bushrod Johnson, CS, Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buel, editors, *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, New York: Century Co., 1887, Vol. 1, p. 585.



Figure 4.23. Brig. Gen. Gideon Pillow, CS, Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buel, editors, *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, New York: Century Co., 1887, Vol. 1, p. 424.

Confederates Construct Outer Works at Fort Donelson

Pillow examined Fort Donelson and pronounced it adequately protected for an assault by river but ill-prepared to repel an assault from the landside. Fortunately Maj. Jeremy Gilmer, who had designed the defenses, was still at the fort to oversee improvements. Pillow described the finished defenses:

To guard against the effects of fire of artillery from these heights a line of defensive works, consisting of rifle pits and abatis for infantry, detached on our right but continuous on our left, with defenses for our light artillery, were laid off by Major Gilmer, engineer, of General A.S. Johnston's staff (but on duty with me at the post), around the rear of the battery and on the heights from which artillery could reach our battery and inner field work, enveloping the inner work and the town of Dover, where our principal supplies of commissary and quartermaster's stores were in depot.²²⁶

The “rifle pits and abatis” were the more than two miles of outer works that covered the landward side of Fort Donelson. It was these works that the Confederates would defend when Grant’s Union army attacked the fort.

Gilmer, who had roughed out the line of the outer works before the Battle of Fort Henry, directed the Confederate infantry and enslaved laborers.²²⁷ As he later wrote: “The lines for these works being decided upon, they were at once pressed to completion and the batteries for the defense of the river strengthened.”²²⁸ According to Pillow, the works “were not quite completed” when Brig. Gen. John B. Floyd arrived on February 13.²²⁹

Brig. Gen. Pillow also spent his energy completing the water battery and drilling the artillerists. The men drilled daily, firing at targets that had been placed earlier in the river

²²⁶ *O.R.* Series I, Vol. VII, 279.

²²⁷ Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 121; *O.R.* Series I, Vol. VII, 133, 262.

²²⁸ *O.R.* Series I, Vol. VII, 262.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*

spaced at 1,000, 1,500 and 2,000 yards out from the water batteries. When the Maury Light Artillery arrived at Fort Donelson, Pillow summoned its commanding officer and asked if his men would volunteer for duty on the fort's heavy artillery. The battery commander, Captain Reuben R. Ross, agreed and his men concurred and began training on the guns. After one drill a member of the battery suggested whitewashing trees on the shore to indicate distance. His idea was implemented and greatly aided the Confederate artillerists in the engagement that followed.²³⁰

Brigadier General Grant's Army Prepares for Battle

On February 7, Brig. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant sent Companies A and B, 2nd Illinois Cavalry, and two companies of 4th U.S. Cavalry from Fort Henry toward Dover to reconnoiter the Confederate position. The 200 or so men under the command of Colonel Silas Noble rode east along a steep ridge. As Col. Noble surveyed the fort Confederate cavalry attacked the rear of his column. The 4th U.S. Cavalry formed in line of battle and checked the initial assault.²³¹

Soon afterward, Confederate infantry on the opposite side of the ridge attacked the Union cavalry as it rode west along the road: "A large body of infantry appeared upon the river-side of the lane which we were obliged to traverse for half a mile. . . . It was an exciting ride. The 'zip' of the bullets was constant but the enemy, being below us, made the common mistake under such circumstances, of aiming too high."²³² Although unable to discover the number of Confederates in the fort, the men returned with valuable information regarding

the terrain and the roads leading to Fort Donelson.²³³

The cavalry discovered that the northern road from Fort Henry to Dover split into Telegraph Road to the north and Ridge Road to the south. Telegraph Road trended east, crossing numerous streams before intersecting with a road that ran from a ferry landing connecting the east bank of the Tennessee River with Pine Bluff Landing. From that point it continued generally eastward about 3.5 miles to an intersection with an unnamed road that connected Telegraph Road to Eddyville Road. Telegraph Road then turned south and intersected Ridge Road. Eddyville Road continued to Rowlett's Mill, some 1.5 miles further east. The Confederate outer works were just east of the mill.²³⁴

Ridge Road turned south and followed a ridge east through Peytona Furnace before descending into a valley formed by Bear Creek. It then climbed Hickman Creek Hill and from there followed the ridge above Hickman Creek before descending into the valley and crossing Hickman Creek. Telegraph Road met Ridge Road about 1,000 feet east of the crossing. Ridge Road then continued east for several miles before terminating at Indian Creek, just south of the Confederate outer works. These roads, identified by his cavalry, would enable Grant to move troops and supplies to Fort Donelson once the weather cleared (Figure 4.24).²³⁵

²³⁰ O.R. Series I, Vol. VII, 388; Jill K. Garrett and Marise P. Lightfoot, *The Civil War in Maury County, Tennessee*, (Columbia, TN: By the authors, 1966), 56.

²³¹ O.R. Series I, Vol. VII, 596; Samuel H. Fletcher, *The History of Company A, Second Illinois Cavalry*, (Chicago: D.H. Fletcher, 1912), 30-31.

²³² Fletcher, *The History of Company A, Second Illinois Cavalry*, 31.

²³³ O.R. Series I, Vol. VII, 596; Long, *Personal Memoirs*, 150-151; Fletcher, *The History of Company A, Second Illinois Cavalry*, 31. Grant states in his *Memoirs* that he accompanied the cavalry; the historian of the 2nd Illinois Cavalry makes no mention of the commanding general being with the detachment.

²³⁴ Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 168; Edwin C. Bearss, *Troop Movement Map: Fort Henry to Fort Donelson, Sheet 1 of 11, Part of the Master Plan of Fort Donelson National Military Park, Dover, Tennessee*, (Division of Design & Construction, United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1960), Archives at Fort Donelson National Battlefield and Cemetery, Sheet 1.

²³⁵ Bearss, *Troop Movement Map: Fort Henry to Fort Donelson*, Sheet 1.

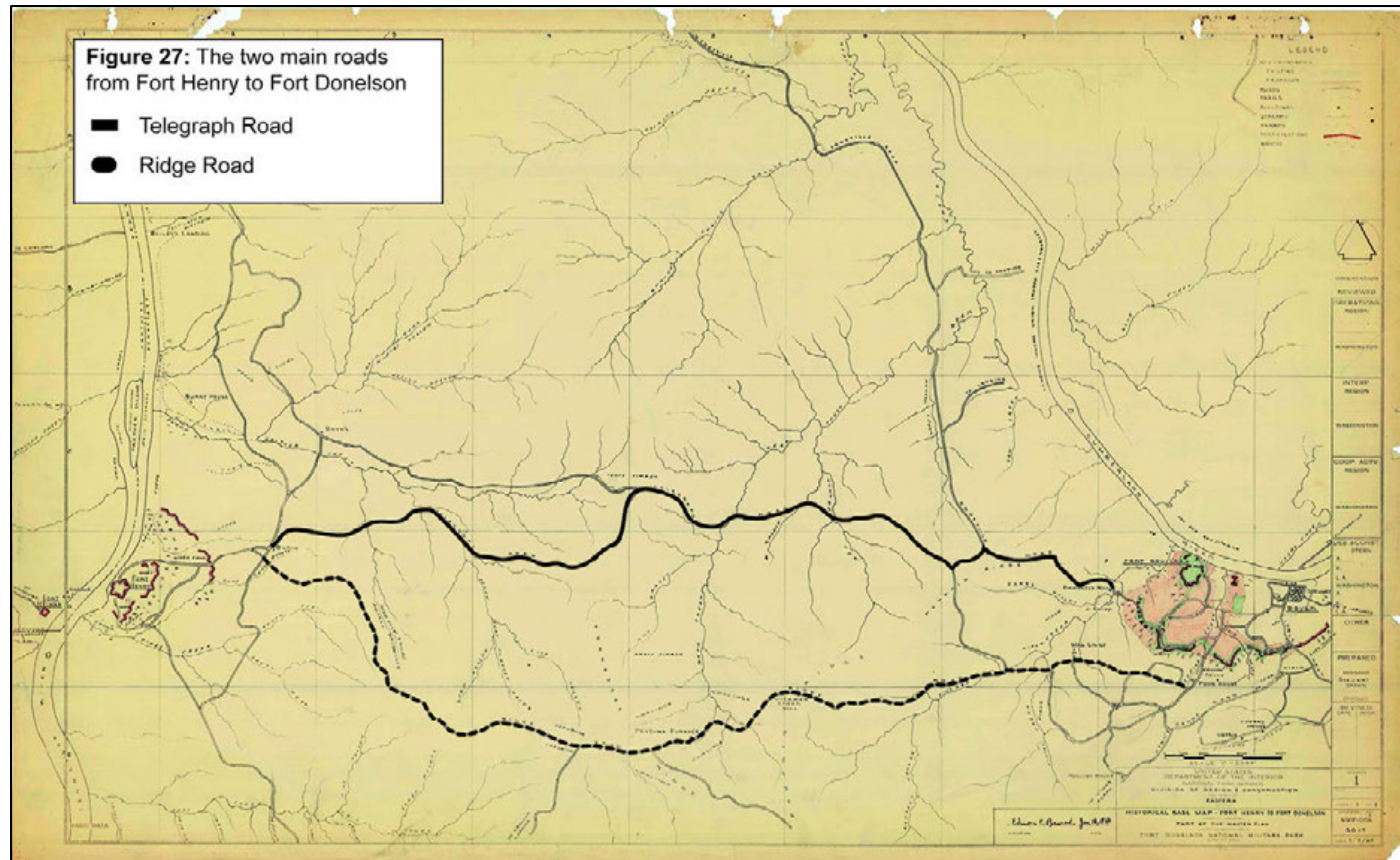


Figure 4.24. The two main roads between Fort Henry and Fort Donelson, February 1862.

Brig. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant wanted to march on Fort Donelson on February 8 but his gunboats had yet to arrive and the weather failed to cooperate. Heavy rain turned the roads into a morass of mud that would not support the movement of artillery or supply wagons. As a result, he spent the days following the capture of Fort Henry at the fort fuming about the weather and road conditions and preparing the area as a base of operations. Grant worked to keep his troops' morale high in spite of the delays and miserable weather. He forbade officers from leaving their commands and taking rooms onboard the more comfortable steamboats. He forbade marauding and looting. His orders placed the responsibility for any malfeasance squarely on the officers. Officers who overlooked the acts would be arrested.²³⁶

Grant issued orders on February 10: the army would march Wednesday, February 12. Grant wanted to move fast; there would be no tents or baggage other than what a soldier might carry. Each man was issued forty rounds of ammunition and two days' rations. Additional supplies would follow in wagons, but these were not to slow the army as it moved east toward Fort Donelson.²³⁷

That same day, Lieut. Com. Ledyard S. Phelps's (Figure 4.25) squadron of timberclads, *Lexington*, *Tyler* and *Conestoga*, returned to Fort Henry from Alabama. When the timberclads arrived Grant sent a message to Flag Officer Andrew Foote requesting that two ironclad gunboats leave Cairo and steam up the Cumberland "to make a simultaneous attack upon Fort Donelson."²³⁸ Grant also met with Captain Henry Walke at Fort Henry and ordered him to take the U.S.S. *Carondelet* and the timberclads down the Tennessee and on to the Cumberland, where they would be ready to aid his assault on Fort Donelson. However, Phelps made an ill-considered decision not to

take his squadron up the Cumberland River with the *Carondelet*.²³⁹

The Battle of Fort Donelson, February 11–16, 1862

February 11, 1862–Grant Readies His Army

During the long weather delay Grant's command had grown. Two additional brigades arrived at Fort Henry, which he split between the First and Second divisions. Brig. Gen. John A. McClernand's First Division now consisted of three brigades under the command of Col. Richard J. Oglesby, Col. William H.L. Wallace, and Col. William R. Morrison, respectively. Brig. Gen. Charles F. Smith's Second Division had now four brigades under the command of Col. John McArthur, Col. John Cook, Col. Jacob G. Lauman, and Col. Morgan L. Smith, respectively.²⁴⁰

On the morning of February 11, Brig. Gen. Grant called a council of war aboard the steamboat *New Uncle Sam* and asked his brigade commanders if they thought it best to march now or await reinforcements. Grant felt that having 15,000 troops now was better than 50,000 a month later. All of the assembled officers except McClernand urged Grant to march now. The meeting ended and the officers returned to their commands to await further orders.²⁴¹

²³⁹ Smith, *The Timberclads in the Civil War*, 238-239; Walke, *Naval Scenes and Reminiscences*, 68-69.

²⁴⁰ Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 168-169, 411-413; O.R. Series I, Vol. VII, 601; Jim Vaughan, *Supplement for Staff Ride Handbook Battle of Fort Donelson, Part II*, (Special studies manuscript, 2012), Archives at Fort Donelson National Battlefield and Cemetery, Dover, Tennessee, 6-17; Long, *Personal Memoirs*, 152.

²⁴¹ Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 136; Long, *Personal Memoirs*, 152; Lew Wallace, "The Capture of Fort Donelson," in *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, Vol. 1, edited by Robert

²³⁶ O.R. Series I, Vol. VII, 598-599.

²³⁷ Ibid., 601.

²³⁸ Ibid., 600.



Figure 4.25. Lieut. Com. Ledyard S. Phelps, USN, David D. Porter, *The Naval History of the Civil War*. Reprint, Secaucus, New York: Castle Books, 1984, p. 340.

That afternoon, Grant ordered Brig. Gen. John A. McClelland's First Division forward. First Brigade marched five miles out on Ridge Road. Third Brigade followed and bivouacked a half mile behind. Second Brigade proceeded five-and one-half miles out on Telegraph Road. This deployment allowed Brig. Gen. C.F. Smith's Second Division freedom of movement without undue crowding on the roads.²⁴²

February 11, 1862—Confederate Generals, Confusion, and the Coming Battle

On February 10 Lieut. Col. Nathan Bedford Forrest (Figure 4.26) arrived at Fort Donelson from Hopkinsville. The next day Forrest and 300 cavalry were riding toward Fort Henry on a reconnaissance mission when they encountered a larger Union cavalry force approximately three miles west of Fort Donelson. Forrest attacked the larger force and in a running fight pushed it six miles back toward Fort Henry. His cavalymen captured one Union trooper and wounded several

others. He returned to Fort Donelson and reported no casualties.²⁴³

The identity of the Union force Forrest encountered on February 11 is unknown. Brig. Gen. John A. McClelland's division was the only one with cavalry. His after-action report mentions no engagement taking place on that day. There are no reports in the *Official Records* from any Union cavalry commander for the action related to the Battle of Fort Donelson. The available regimental histories are also silent. Forrest stated he encountered a force of enemy cavalry "supposed to be about 600." It is likely that the Union force was smaller and that the officer in command did not think the action significant enough to report or that the document was lost or simply not included in the *Official Records*.²⁴⁴

Though most of his division had arrived earlier, Brig. General Simon B. Buckner (Figure 4.27) reached Fort Donelson from Clarksville on February 11. He came with orders from Brig. Gen. John B. Floyd to bring his division out of Fort Donelson and march it to Cumberland City, which provided access to river and railroad communication between the army and Nashville. It also gave the army freedom of movement, which ensured it would not be flanked or cutoff by gunboats and could

²⁴³ John Allan Wyreth, *That Devil Forrest: Life of General Nathan Bedford Forrest*, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959; reprint, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989), 37; Brian Steel Wills, *The Confederacy's Greatest Cavalryman: Nathan Bedford Forrest*, (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 1992), 58; *O.R.* Series I, Vol. VII, 383.

²⁴⁴ See *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VII, 157-158, 170-171, 383 and also Fletcher, *The History of Company A, Second Illinois Cavalry*, 31; Henry G. Hicks, *Fort Donelson*, in *Glimpses of the Nation's Struggle*, (St. Paul, MN: H.L. Collins, 1898), 440. The author, adjutant of the 2nd Illinois Cavalry at that time, does mention "reconnoiter and skirmishing" prior to February 12, 1862 but gives no particulars; Avery, *The Fourth Illinois Cavalry Regiment*, 57. Additional primary research might identify the Union force Forrest encountered.

Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buel, 398-428, (New York: Century Co, 1887), 404-405.
²⁴²

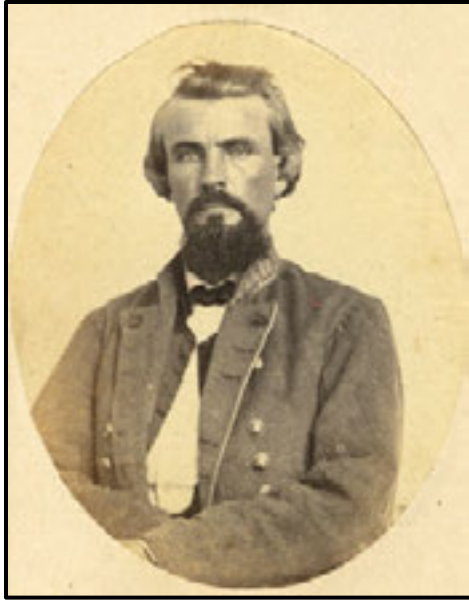


Figure 4.26. Lieut. Col. Nathan Bedford Forrest, CS, pictured as a brigadier general, Alabama Department of Archives and History.



Figure 4.27. Brig. Gen. Simon B. Buckner, CS, Library of Congress.

attack Grant's supply lines between Fort Donelson and Fort Henry.²⁴⁵ The arrival of Brig. Gen. Buckner with orders from Floyd inflamed Brig. Gen. Pillow—he despised Buckner and had been at odds with him since a particularly nasty senatorial campaign five years earlier. Pillow proclaimed, “I will never surrender the position [Fort Donelson], and with God’s help I mean to maintain it.”²⁴⁶ He expressed doubt that the plans formulated by Buckner and Floyd for the Cumberland City defense reflected those of their overall commander Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston and thus flatly refused to allow Buckner’s division to leave “his” fort until he had spoken to Floyd. This set off a series of events too absurd for fiction.²⁴⁷

In the early morning hours of February 12 Pillow boarded a steamboat for Cumberland City, leaving Brig. Gen. Buckner in command of Fort Donelson with strict orders that Lieut. Col. Nathan Bedford Forrest’s cavalry reconnaissance should not bring on a general engagement. Upon his arrival at Cumberland City, however, Pillow discovered that Brig. Gen. Floyd had gone to Clarksville. As he waited in Cumberland City telegrams arrived bringing the news that the Union army and gunboats had begun their move against Fort Donelson. Pillow then sent a rash of telegrams to Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston, Tennessee Gov. Isham Harris, and Brig. Gen. John B. Floyd before leaving for Dover. After arriving at Fort Donelson Pillow sent another telegram to Johnston stating that he needed Buckner’s division to hold the fort—with those troops, he said, he could take the field; without them his position was tenuous.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁵ Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson*, 132-133.

²⁴⁶ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VII, 870.

²⁴⁷ Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson*, 132-133.

²⁴⁸ Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 164-165; Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson*, 132-133.

Gen Johnston, who put Brig. Gen. John B. Floyd (Figure 4.28) in command on February 12, sent a terse telegraph to Cumberland City: “I do not know the wants of General Pillow, nor yours, nor the position of General Buckner. You do. You have the dispatch. Decide. Answer.”²⁴⁹

February 12, 1862

On February 12, transports arrived at Fort Henry bearing Colonel Charles Cruft’s (Figure 4.29) brigade and Colonel John M. Thayer’s brigade. Grant ordered the transports to turn around and to steam for Fort Donelson—a two-day journey on the Tennessee, Ohio and Cumberland rivers.²⁵⁰

The next morning, February 12, leaving his sick and wounded and 2,500 men under Brig. Gen. Lew Wallace to secure Fort Henry and Fort Heiman, Brig. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant, with his cavalry out front, sent 15,000 Union soldiers marching east across the twelve or so miles between Fort Henry and Fort Donelson. A soldier in the 45th Illinois described the march, “through the mud and water, over the hills and hollows, of that region, sometimes wading streams swollen by the late rains”²⁵¹ Brig. Gen. John A. McClernand’s First Division led the way with troops on both Ridge and Telegraph roads. Brig. Gen. Charles Ferguson Smith’s Second Division followed. The weather turned unseasonably warm as the Union soldiers tramped along the rough terrain between the forts.²⁵²

Lieut. Col. Nathan Bedford Forrest had left the fort with his regiment, three companies of Kentucky cavalry, and Gantt’s Tennessee Battalion. Forrest, now in command of all Confederate cavalry at Fort Donelson, was



Figure 4.28. Brig. Gen. John B. Floyd, CS, Library of Congress.

under strict orders not to bring on a general engagement.

McClernand’s advance arrived about two miles from Fort Donelson sometime before noon. There, Major John J. Mudd, 2nd Illinois Cavalry, encountered a detachment of Forrest’s cavalry. Both sides fired. Forrest brought up additional troops and Mudd’s scouts retreated. The federals regrouped and, reinforced by infantry, attempted to flank Forrest. He countered their move and charged. The Confederates hit the Union line, which they believed to be only cavalry. At the point of contact, concealed Union infantry rose up and fired a volley, which was followed by at least one round from McClernand’s artillery. Though Forrest pulled his out-numbered troopers out of the fray and returned to Fort Donelson, the brisk skirmish delayed the Union advance for three hours.²⁵³

²⁴⁹ Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson*, 134.

²⁵⁰ Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 158.

²⁵¹ John M. Adair, *Historical Sketch of the Forty-Fifth Illinois Regiment*, (Lanark, IL: Carroll County Gazette, 1869), 3.

²⁵² Vaughan, *Staff Ride Handbook, Part I*, 105; Jobe, “Forts Henry and Donelson,” 26; Long, *Personal Memoirs*, 152-153.

²⁵³ O.R. Series I, Vol. VII, 170-171, 183-184, 383; Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 174; Morris, *History of the 31st Regiment Illinois Volunteers*, 33; Jobe, “Forts Henry and Donelson,” 26.



Figure 4.29. Charles Cruft, US, pictured as a brigadier general, Library of Congress.

About the time Lieut. Col. Forrest returned to Fort Donelson, Brig. Gen. Pillow arrived from Cumberland City and again assumed command. Pillow apparently told Brig. Gen. Simon B. Buckner, who he had left in command of the fort, that the Confederate troops in Cumberland City and Clarksville were advancing to Fort Donelson. The Confederate defense of the Cumberland, and by extension Nashville, would be fought at Fort Donelson.²⁵⁴

The U.S.S. *Carondelet* arrived within view of the fort at about the same time as Brigadier General Pillow. Once in range, Commander Henry Walke (Figure 4.30) ordered the bow guns to open fire. The *Carondelet* fired some nine rounds at the fort but according to Walke the Confederate guns did not reply.²⁵⁵ His report is contradicted by that of Captain Reuben R. Ross of the Maury Light Artillery who commanded the 10-inch Columbiad in the lower water battery and the 6.5-inch rifled gun in upper water battery. Ross wrote, "We mostly answered her with the rifle [which was in the upper battery], firing only a few rounds from the Columbiad. The rifle did fine service, striking with an

elevation of thirteen and one-half degrees, probably four or five times out of the twelve or fifteen shots fired (Figure 4.31)."²⁵⁶ About forty minutes after the firing began, Com. Walke steamed downriver a few miles, out of sight and range, and dropped anchor.

Reports of the engagement on the river arrived via telegraph in Cumberland City and Union soldiers remembered hearing shots, as they shifted their line on the landside of the fort.²⁵⁷

Brig. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant arrived on the field around 2:00 p.m. on February 12 and set up his headquarters in a small log house about two miles from town on Dover Road, the residence of a Mrs. Crisp also known as "Widow Crisp." A large fireplace provided heat. The kitchen, furnished with a double feather bed, served as Grant's sleeping quarters; offices for the general's staff occupied the remaining rooms (Figure 4.32). Grant occupied the Crisp house until the surrender of Fort Donelson.²⁵⁸

Late that afternoon, Brig. Gen. Grant ordered two divisions to surround Fort Donelson. Brig. Gen. McClelland's larger First Division filed off to the Union right, hoping to put artillery on the heights above Dover. Second Brigade came within a mile of the outer works, close enough that they could see the tents and hear the voices of the enemy. As they moved eastward the brigade came under fire from Confederate artillery so intense that it spooked a detachment of

²⁵⁶ R.R. Ross, "Batteries at Fort Donelson," *Confederate Veteran* 4, no. 11 (November 1896), 394.

²⁵⁷ *O.R.N.*, Series I, Vol. 22, 587-588; Walke, *Naval Scenes and Reminiscences*, 82; Ross, "Batteries at Fort Donelson," 394; D. Leib Ambrose, *History of the Seventh Regiment Illinois Volunteer Infantry*, (Springfield: Illinois Journal Company, 1868), 30-31.

²⁵⁸ Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 147; John H. Brinton, *Personal Memoirs of John H. Brinton Civil War Surgeon, 1861-1865*, (New York: Neale Pub. Co., 1914; reprint, Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1996), 116.

²⁵⁴ *O.R.* Series I, Vol. VII, 330.

²⁵⁵ *O.R.N.*, Series I, Vol. 22, 587-588; Walke, *Naval Scenes and Reminiscences*, 82.

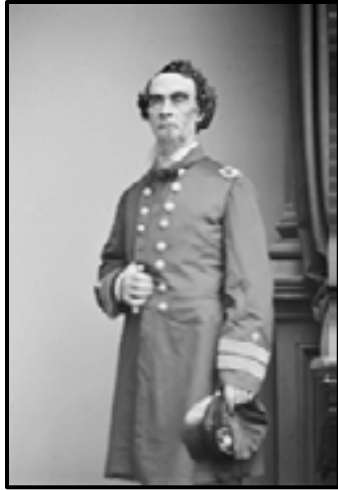


Figure 4.30. Com. Henry Walke, USN, Library of Congress.



Figure 4.31. Capt. Rueben R. Ross, CS, *Confederate Veteran*, November 1896, p 493.

cavalry, who panicked and forced the infantry to clear the road to let them pass. As Colonel Richard Oglesby moved First Brigade into position, one of his regiments strayed too close to the Confederate lines and drew artillery fire. Darkness had fallen and as Oglesby adjusted his line one of his regiments mistakenly fired on the 29th Illinois, killing and wounding several men.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁹ Jim Huffstodt, *Hard dying men: the story of General W.H.L. (William Henry Lamb) Wallace, General T.E.G. (Thomas Edwin Greenfield) Ransom and their "Old 11th" Illinois Infantry in the American Civil*

The Confederate position that the Union army attempted to surround had two parts—Fort Donelson itself and the fort's outer works. The fort sat on a high hill bounded by Hickman Creek, the Cumberland River, and Indian Creek. The irregularly-shaped bastioned earthwork was built on the face of a hill some 125 feet above the Cumberland River. Its garrison had one field artillery battery as well as two 9-pounders and an 8-inch howitzer in the fort. None of these guns participated in the engagement with the Union gunboats. In addition, there were two water batteries sited on the slope of the hill west of the fort and facing the river. The lower water battery, built twenty feet above the river, was armed with one 10-inch Columbiad and eight 32-pounder smooth bore cannon. The upper water battery fifty feet above the river mounted a 6.5-inch rifled gun and two 32-pounder carronades. All except the rifled gun in the upper water battery were too old and too light and proved useless in the engagement.²⁶⁰

The outer works, designed for infantry, were south of the main fort and protected it and Dover from a landside attack. The Confederates began constructing these earthworks before the battle at Fort Henry and continued to work on them until, and probably after, fighting at Fort Donelson began on February 12, 1862. In addition to the infantry trenches there were four redans—open-ended gun emplacements—manned by Porter's, Graves', Maney's and French's batteries. Other field artillery was scattered along the eastern portion of the trench line. Brig. Gen. Gideon Pillow placed Brig. Gen. Simon B. Buckner, in command of Brown's Brigade and three regiments of Col. William E. Baldwin's Brigade, on the west side of Indian Creek. Brig. Gen. Bushrod Johnson commanded the six brigades east of the creek: Heiman's, Drake's and Davidson's brigades, three

War (1861-1865), (Bowie, MD: Heritage Books, 1991), 61; *O.R.* Series I, Vol. VII, 184.

²⁶⁰ Walter J. Buttgenbach, "Coast Defense in the Civil War: Fort Donelson, Tennessee," *Journal of the United States Artillery* 19, part 1 (1913), 210-211; Garrett and Lightfoot, *The Civil War in Maury County, Tennessee*, 55.

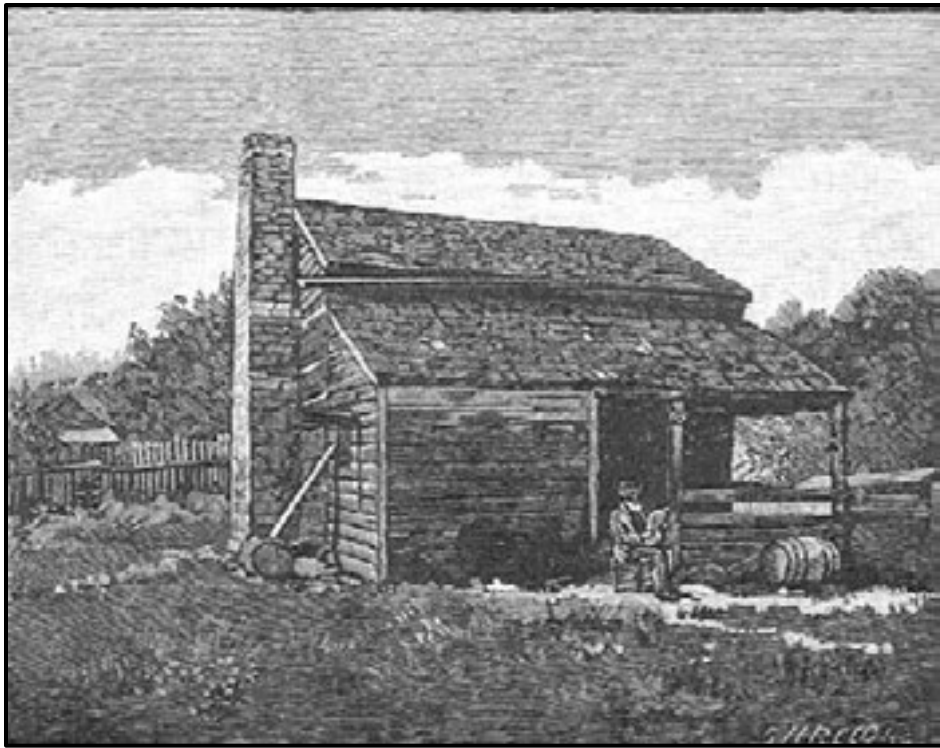


Figure 4.32. A post-war drawing of the Widow Crisp House, Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buel, editors, *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, New York: Century Co., 1887, Vol. 1, p. 413.

regiments of Baldwin's Brigade, and the two small Virginia brigades originally commanded by Brig. Gen. John B. Floyd. These Confederate soldiers watched from their positions on the ridges as the Union army deployed on February 12.²⁶¹

Sometime on the evening of February 12, Brig. Gen. Gideon Pillow wired his commanding officer Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston, Brig. Gen. John B. Floyd, and Tennessee Gov. Isham Harris: "We shall have a battle in the morning, I think certainly, and an attack by gun-boats. The enemy are all around my position and within distance to close in with me in ten minutes' march."²⁶² Pillow later made speeches to his men imploring them to "drive back the ruthless invader from our soil." His time as the commander of Fort Donelson was drawing to

a close but his influence on the outcome would still be felt.²⁶³

At 10:30 p.m. on February 12, Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston ordered Brig. Gen. John B. Floyd: "Leave a small force at Clarksville and take the remainder, if possible, to Donelson tonight. Take all the ammunition that can be spared from Clarksville."²⁶⁴ At long last a decision had been made, though Brig. Gen. U.S. Grant had forced it. Brig. Gen. John B. Floyd would command the Confederates at Fort Donelson, and the outcome of the battle there would decide the fate of Nashville.²⁶⁵

February 13, 1862

The morning of February 13 broke clear and cool. The weather, which had been unseasonably warm, hinted of winter. Brig. Gen. Floyd walked off the steamboat at Dover

²⁶¹ *O.R.* Series I, Vol. VII, 133, 262; Jobe, "Forts Henry and Donelson," 14; Cummings, *The Curious Career of Bushrod Johnson*, 190-192.

²⁶² *O.R.* Series I, Vol. LII, Part 2, 271.

²⁶³ Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 166-167.

²⁶⁴ *O.R.* Series I, Vol. LII, Part 2, 271.

²⁶⁵ Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson*, 134.

and met with Brig. Gen. Pillow. The two men rode out along the outer works, inspecting the Confederate line. Floyd seemed satisfied with what he saw.²⁶⁶ He wired Gen. A.S. Johnston informing him: "The enemy's gun-boats are advancing. They are in force around our entire works. Our field defenses are good. I think we can sustain ourselves against the land forces."²⁶⁷ Brig. Gen. Floyd checked into the Dover Hotel, which he made his headquarters, soon after the U.S.S. *Carondelet* reappeared (Figure 4.33).²⁶⁸

Union Commander Walke returned to the position he had taken the *Carondelet* to the day before. Shortly afterward he received a dispatch from Brig. Gen. Grant asking him to create a diversion with his gunboat. The general told him, "we will be ready to take advantage of every diversion in our favor."²⁶⁹ Walke opened fire, shooting 139 rounds into the Confederate stronghold. The guns in the water batteries replied. Captain Jacob Culbertson later stated: "I did not open fire until directed to do so by Captain Dixon, half an hour after action commenced. We opened with the 32-pounder at our maximum elevation; but our shot all fell short."²⁷⁰ The two sides exchanged fire for over an hour. During the initial exchange Captain Joseph Dixon, stationed at a 32-pounder in the lower water battery, was killed by a round from the *Carondelet*. The shot dismounted the gun, shearing off a bolt that struck Dixon in the head.²⁷¹

The *Carondelet* withdrew but returned in the afternoon and fired another 45 shells into Fort Donelson. When the Union gunboat was within range the 6.5-inch rifle, the Columbiad, and a howitzer all fired at once. After the first

barrage most of the firing from the water batteries came from the 6.5-inch rifle. In spite of all of the ordnance directed toward the gunboat, the Confederates only hit the *Carondelet* three times and caused only minor damage. There were five Confederate casualties: Dixon, another gunner who was killed, and three men wounded. There were no casualties aboard the *Carondelet*.²⁷²

Both sides believed that they had caused severe damage to the other. Confederate Capt. Ross, who commanded the upper water battery, reported: "It was seldom that the rifle missed now, we supposed, as we could tell by the spray to the right or left when we did not strike."²⁷³ One of the two Confederate rounds that hit the *Carondelet* caused a great deal of excitement aboard the vessel but little damage. Commander Walke stated: "It passed through our port casemate forward, and glancing over our barricade at the boilers, and again over the steam-drum, struck and burst the steam-heater; and fell into the engine-room without striking any person."²⁷⁴ Walke believed that he had dismounted three Confederate guns. The Confederates thought that there had been two boats on the river and that they had badly damaged one. In fact, the *Carondelet* suffered only minor damage and a few sailors were wounded by splinters resulting from the bouncing Confederate shell. Beside the six casualties, the dismounting of one 32-pounder in the lower water battery was the only significant damage the Confederates suffered.²⁷⁵

²⁶⁶ Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 206; Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson*, 138; Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 157; *O.R.* Series I, Vol. LII, Part 2, 272.

²⁶⁷ *O.R.* Series I, Vol. LII, Part 2, 272.

²⁶⁸ Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 157.

²⁶⁹ *O.R.N.*, Series I, Vol. 22, 594.

²⁷⁰ *O.R.* Series I, Vol. VII, 389.

²⁷¹ *O.R.N.*, Series I, Vol. 22, 588; Ross, "Batteries at Fort Donelson," 394; Garrett and Lightfoot, *The Civil War in Maury County, Tennessee*, 56.

²⁷² *O.R.N.*, Series I, Vol. 22, 588; Ross, "Batteries at Fort Donelson," 394; Garrett and Lightfoot, *The Civil War in Maury County, Tennessee*, 56; Jim Vaughan, *Gunboats and Water Batteries, Thursday, February 13, 1662*, (Special studies annotated sketch map, 2012), Archives at Fort Donelson National Battlefield and Cemetery, Dover, Tennessee.

²⁷³ *O.R.* Series I, Vol. VII, 398.

²⁷⁴ Walke, *Naval Scenes and Reminiscences*, 73.

²⁷⁵ Vaughan, *Gunboats and Water Batteries, Thursday, February 13, 1662*; Walke, *Naval Scenes and Reminiscences*, 73; *O.R.* Series I, Vol. VII, 398.

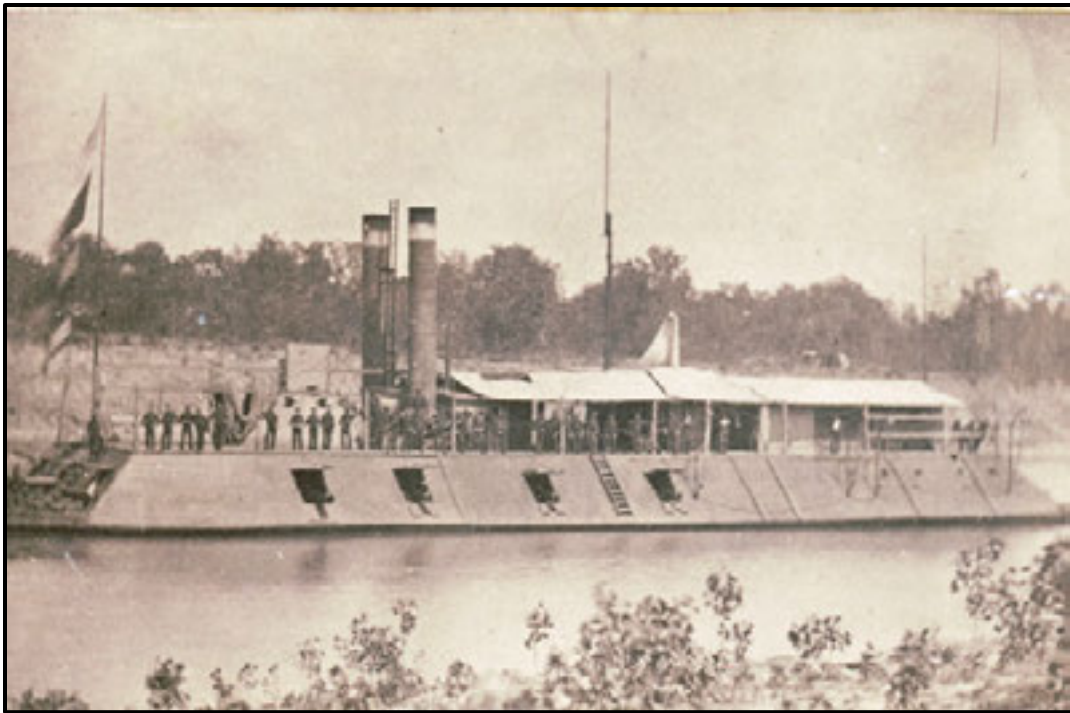


Figure 4.33. The ironclad pictured here is the U.S.S. *Louisville*, a “City Class” gunboat. Except for the boat’s number and the markings on the smokestacks the *Louisville* and the *Carondelet*, *Cincinnati*, *St. Louis*, and *Pittsburg* were identical. Library of Congress.

Early on the morning of February 13, the men of Union Brig. Gen. C.F. Smith’s Second Division ate a hardy, if cold, breakfast from their haversacks. Smith ordered Fourth Brigade under Col. Jacob Lauman and Third Brigade under Col. John Cook forward to test the Confederate earthworks. Once the brigades got underway skirmishers were thrown forward and moved across the heavily wooded and hilly ground that obstructed the soldiers’ view. Companies, A, E, H and I of Birge’s Sharpshooters formed the skirmish line for Colonel Lauman’s brigade. These men, all dressed in gray with dark-dyed squirrel tails adorning their gray felt hats, were expert marksmen. The Sharpshooters pushed the Confederate skirmishers back and silenced a Confederate battery with their Dimick rifles.²⁷⁶

²⁷⁶ O.R. Series I, Vol. VII, 220; Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 158; Lorenzo A. Baker, *With the Western Sharpshooters: Michigan Boys of Company D, 66th Illinois*, (Reed City, MI: R. Baker, 1905; reprint, Huntington, WV: Blue Acorn Press, 1994), 156.

Col. Lauman’s brigade formed the western end of General Smith’s line. The 25th Indiana and 14th Iowa led the advance, which moved smoothly until they reached a ravine below the Confederate trench line and came under heavy small arms and artillery fire. The 14th Iowa moved right, the 25th Indiana left, and the 7th Iowa moved up to a position between the two regiments, supporting them. Captain Frederick Welker’s Battery H, 1st Missouri Light Artillery fired at the Confederate position with limited results, being forced by the accurate fire of the Confederate gunners of Porter’s Battery to change position several times.²⁷⁷

Col. John Cook’s brigade on the right of Lauman’s pushed forward; the 7th Illinois and 52nd Indiana led the way, with the Hoosiers out front as skirmishers. Cook’s advance pushed through thick timber and across a ravine without opposition. When the 7th Illinois climbed out of the ravine with its colors flying a masked Confederate battery

²⁷⁷ O.R. Series I, Vol. LII, Part 1, 13.

some seventy-five yards from the regiment opened fire. The initial burst killed Captain Noah E. Mendell and wounded several others, pinning the regiment down.²⁷⁸

Colonel Andrew J. Babcock and other officers rallied the 7th Illinois. The regiment pulled back and took up a position in support of Battery D, 1st Missouri Light Artillery. Cook brought the rest of Third Brigade forward—to within 600 yards of the Confederate earthworks. From this position the colonel could see the enemy behind a tangled wood abatis and trenches. He realized he could go no further without sustaining substantial casualties.²⁷⁹

Col. Roger Hanson of the 2nd Kentucky commanded the Confederate troops in front of Lauman. After the Kentuckians came under attack, Colonel Joseph B. Palmer sent companies E and K of his 18th Tennessee to reinforce them on the Confederate right. The Confederate line held. Union Col. Jacob Lauman's Fourth Brigade pushed across another ravine, where they came under heavy fire from Hanson's troops and the guns of Porter's Battery. Lauman's Fourth Brigade held the forward position for two hours. They were recalled that night and returned to the position from which they had started.²⁸⁰ Colonel Hanson praised the Confederate artillery: "I was greatly assisted by Porter's Battery upon the left. It always fired at the right time and at the right place."²⁸¹ The Confederate colonel also reported repulsing three Union assaults with "slight loss on our part and very heavy on theirs."²⁸²

Col. Hanson was probably right in his assessment. Union Col. Lauman reported that the casualties of the 25th Indiana in killed and wounded "were very severe." In fact, the regiment lost fourteen killed and sixty-one

wounded.²⁸³ Colonel Cook's Third Brigade, who assaulted the 18th Tennessee and Porter's Battery south of Lauman's position, lost several men in an artillery barrage, but Cook pulled the 7th Illinois back before it suffered more losses.²⁸⁴ Brig. Gen. C.F. Smith reported: "Our casualties were numerous on this day."²⁸⁵

After the initial advance by the Union brigades on the Confederate right there was a period of inaction in the afternoon. After observing the advance and talking to his officers, Union Brig. Gen. C.F. Smith believed that to assault and carry the enemy position he faced would require the sacrifice of many Union soldiers. Smith's demonstration did attract the attention of Brig. Gen. Simon B. Buckner, the commander of the Confederate right—he reinforced Col. Hanson with the whole 18th Tennessee Infantry.²⁸⁶

On the eastern side of the Union line the morning of February 13, Brig. Gen. John A. McClernand began extending his lines east. First he sent cavalry in the direction of Lick Creek on the heights above Dover. They returned to report no opposition along the proposed line. As McClernand shifted the line his men suffered harassing fire from Confederate sharpshooters and the Graves', Maney's and French's artillery batteries. According to Captain Jasper Dresser, Battery A, Illinois Light Artillery, each time the Confederate guns fired Union artillery silenced them—the first time they engaged in fifteen minutes, the second in ten minutes, and finally when his battery united with two other batteries five rounds apiece did the trick.²⁸⁷

²⁷⁸ *O.R.* Series I, Vol. VII, 220; Ambrose, *History of the Seventh Regiment Illinois Volunteer Infantry*, 31

²⁷⁹ *O.R.* Series I, Vol. VII, 220.

²⁸⁰ *O.R.* Series I, Vol. VII, 342-343, 352; *O.R.* Series I, Vol. LII, Part 1, 10.

²⁸¹ *O.R.* Series I, Vol. VII, 342-343.

²⁸² *Ibid.*

²⁸³ *O.R.* Series I, Vol. LII, Part 1, 10; Smith *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 223.

²⁸⁴ *O.R.* Series I, Vol. VII, 220; Ambrose, *History of the Seventh Regiment Illinois Volunteer Infantry*, 31.

²⁸⁵ *O.R.* Series I, Vol. LII, Part 1, 8.

²⁸⁶ Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 163; *O.R.* Series I, Vol. LII, Part 1, 8; Jobe, "Forts Henry and Donelson," 43.

²⁸⁷ Jobe, "Forts Henry and Donelson," 43; *O.R.* Series I, Vol. VII, 191.

Although swiftly dispatched, the Confederate guns refused to remain silent. The Southern artillery harassed the movement of First Division whenever the opportunity arose. By afternoon, McClelland had had enough. The general rationalized that if he left Maney's Battery, which he called Redan 2, alone the Confederates would continue to annoy his forces and could attack his line "at an exposed comparatively weak point." He decided that Colonel William R. Morrison's Third Brigade, consisting of the 17th and 49th Illinois, with the 48th Illinois from Second Brigade—1,907 officers and men—would assault the works and end the threat.²⁸⁸

Preparations for the assault started badly and went downhill from there. Col. Morrison received orders to assault the enemy's works as soon as Colonel Isham Haynie arrived with the 48th Illinois. Col. Haynie informed Morrison that he believed he outranked him. Haynie's proclamation caused confusion. Morrison agreed to move the line into position and then let Haynie assume command. According to Morrison, at some point Haynie decided that they could take the Confederate position together. Haynie stated that Morrison offered to "yield" command to him. Both officers claimed command status in their after-action reports.²⁸⁹

The line—with the 48th Illinois on the left, the 17th Illinois in the center, and the 49th Illinois on the right—went down a hill and then up the high ground toward the Confederate earthworks on the ridge above Indian Creek. Col. Adolphus Heiman's Brigade—the 10th, 42nd, and 53rd Tennessee and the 27th Alabama—and Captain Frank Maney's four-gun battery held the Confederate line. Union skirmishers, which included sharpshooters, advanced ahead of the main Union line and killed two officers in Maney's Battery. In spite of the casualties the

undermanned battery continued firing throughout the attack. The 49th Illinois, its path less obstructed, pushed ahead faster than the other two regiments.²⁹⁰ When the Union line moved to within fifty paces of the Confederate line Col. Morrison reported: "[We] encountered an almost impassable abatis, made by felling small trees crosswise of each other, the tops always meeting us, the difficulty increasing the nearer we approached the breastworks, where brush had been piled upon brush, with the sharpened ends confronting us."²⁹¹ While the Union soldiers struggled to get through the obstructions, the Confederates opened fire.

The Confederate infantry and artillery fired and Graves' Battery west of them joined in, catching the Union soldiers in a crossfire: "We opened an enfilading fire with shell and shrapnel, when they wavered, then rallied, but were again repulsed, falling back in disorder."²⁹²

Confederate Colonel Heiman stated that the initial Union assault lasted fifteen minutes. Col. Morrison waited for the 48th Illinois to hit the left of the Confederate line, which he hoped would create a diversion, allowing his two regiments to carry the works. As he waited a Confederate shot hit him in the hip, forcing him to the rear. About an hour into the attack Brig. Gen. McClelland ordered the 45th Illinois forward in support of the 49th Illinois.²⁹³

Colonel John E. Smith led his regiment into the fray. A member of the 45th Illinois wrote: "As we climbed the hill we were met by a murderous fire of musketry; the men falling in bunches and the enemy poured into us grape and canister from the cannons."²⁹⁴ The soldiers did not return fire until they

²⁸⁸ O.R. Series I, Vol. VII, 172-173; Richard L. Kiper, Frank Williams and Virginia Williams, *Major General John Alexander McClelland: Politician in Uniform*, (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1999), 78.

²⁸⁹ O.R. Series I, Vol. VII, 213; 203-204.

²⁹⁰ O.R. Series I, Vol. VII, 212, 368.

²⁹¹ O.R. Series I, Vol. VII, 213.

²⁹² Selden Spencer, "Diary Account of Fort Donelson," *Confederate Veteran* 5, no. 6 (June, 1897), 283.

²⁹³ O.R. Series I, Vol. VII, 213, 173.

²⁹⁴ Wilber F. Crummer, *With Grant at Fort Donelson, Shiloh and Vicksburg*, (Oak Park, IL: E.C. Crummer, 1915), 28.

moved within fifty yards of the Confederate line. Soon after the 45th Illinois began fighting the 49th Illinois retreated, leaving the new regiment unsupported. The 45th Illinois fought on for about an hour before receiving orders to retire, which they did in good order.²⁹⁵

The documentation for what happened that day is missing. In his memoirs Brig. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant is critical of Brig. Gen. McClelland, yet it is unclear exactly how his orders or the perception of those orders changed during the day. McClelland wrote: "At the expiration of this time, deeming it within the spirit of your order, which required me, while acting on the defensive, to preserve my line and hold my ground, I ordered the fire to be returned."²⁹⁶ He wrote the preceding passage in his after-action report after he noted that Grant did not wish to bring on a general engagement. Had Grant given the Illinois Democrat some idea that he could attack the Confederates if the situation presented itself? Brig. Gen. C.F. Smith also attacked the Confederate line but escaped Grant's post-war wrath. Neither attack proved successful; both were costly. Col. Morrison's two regiments lost 128 men; Col. Haynie lost nine, which indicates that he did not make the kind of assault Morrison needed. Col. Smith did not report his losses, though they must have been light as the regiment only sustained twenty-two casualties between February 12 and 16.²⁹⁷

Wounded Union troops who fell in front of Maney's Battery suffered even more as many died in the fire that began when the leaves littering the ground combusted. After the conflagration began some Confederate soldiers jumped over the earthworks and brought those they were able to reach, within their lines. It was a sad end to the engagement (Figure 4.34).²⁹⁸

²⁹⁵ O.R. Series I, Vol. VII, 202.

²⁹⁶ Ibid., 172.

²⁹⁷ Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 223; Long, *Personal Memoirs*, 153; O.R. Series I, Vol. VII, 213, 206, 182.

²⁹⁸ O.R. Series I, Vol. VII, 368; Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 230; Adair, *Historical Sketch of the Forty-Fifth Illinois Regiment*, 4.

February 13–14, 1862–Extreme Cold, Rain, Sleet and Snow

During the night of February 13–14 a cold front blew in and it began to rain. As the temperature dropped the rain changed to snow and the men on the front lines suffered greatly as winter returned to Stewart County. The morning broke clear and cold; many men awoke to find themselves covered in ice and snow. The drastic change in the weather was seared into the memories of those who lived it.²⁹⁹

Captain Thomas Daniel Jeffress, 56th Virginia Infantry, wrote: "The weather was very cold. . . . Rain fell in torrents, and driving snow and sleet followed. Those who experience it will never forget it."³⁰⁰

Chaplain Marion Morrison, 9th Illinois Infantry, recalled: "On the evening of the 13th from having been warm and pleasant when they left camp, the weather changed and became extremely cold. Rain, sleet and snow fell alternately during the night. No fires were allowed. Hence, they suffered much from cold."³⁰¹

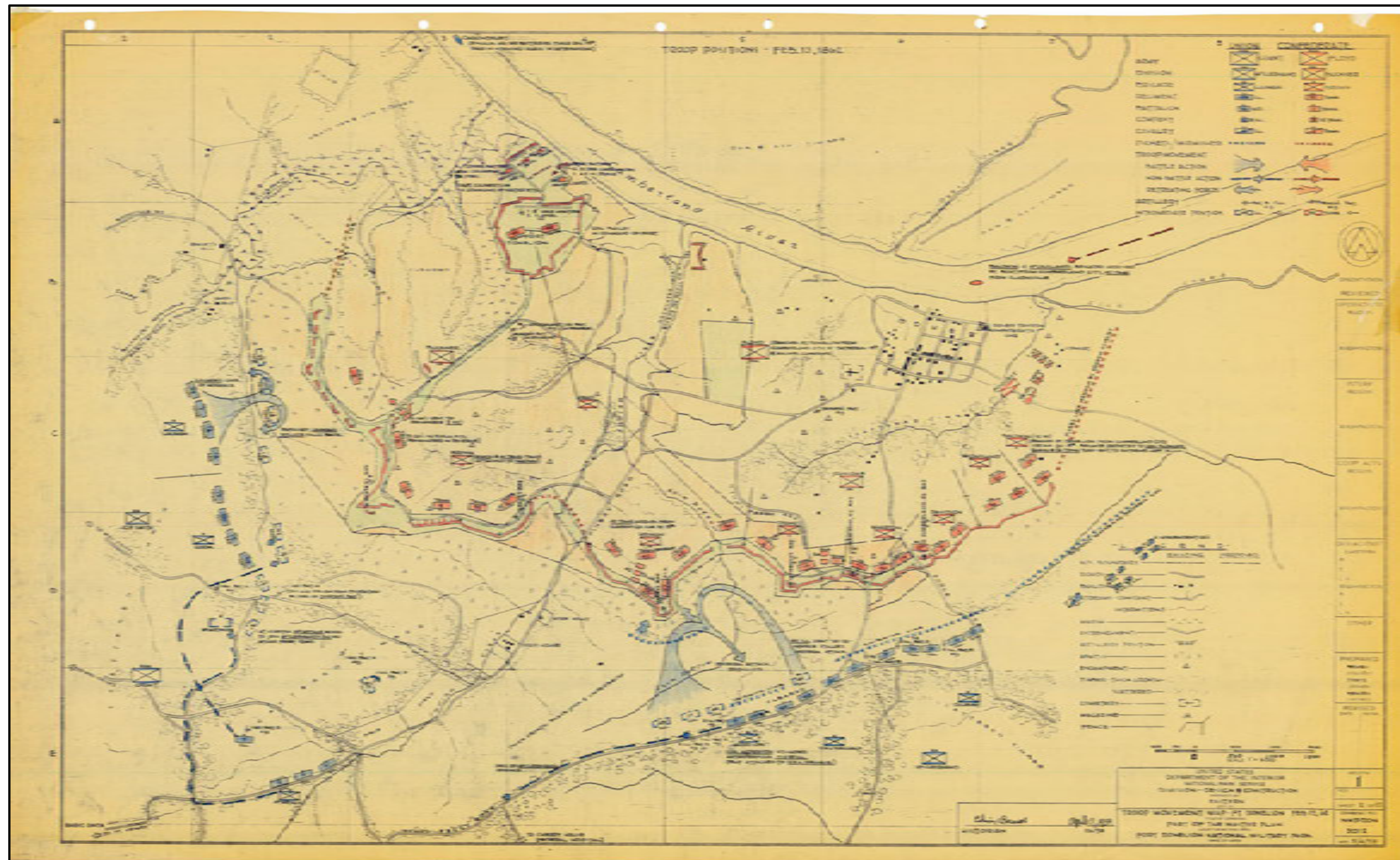
Lieutenant Seldon Spencer, Graves' Kentucky Battery, remembered: "Thursday evening about dusk a gentle rain began to fall, but it grew cold very fast, and before nine o'clock it was snowing furiously. It snowed nearly all night but the weather broke gradually growing colder, daylight broke upon us clear. The wounded on the battlefield suffered beyond the power of words to tell."³⁰²

²⁹⁹ William A. Young, Jr. and Patricia C. Young, *56th Virginia Infantry*, (Lynchburg, VA: H.E. Edwards, 1990), 28.

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

³⁰¹ Morrison, *A History of the Ninth Illinois Volunteer Infantry*, 22.

³⁰² Spencer, "Diary Account of Fort Donelson," 282.



Major Samuel Mahon, 7th Iowa, wrote: "The rain fell in torrents wetting every man in the command to the skin from private to general. Towards morning the rain changed to snow and it became bitter cold; this continued all day and the following night. No fires were allowed".³⁰³

That night the temperature dropped to approximately 12°F. Some Union soldiers ran around in circles or marched up and down to keep warm. Many Confederates passed the time building or improving earthworks. Officers roused men who were sleeping and had them move around for fear of frostbite. Both sides fired on the other sporadically throughout the night. The water batteries lobbed shells at the gunboats to keep them awake. Though later accounts tell of soldiers throwing away blankets and overcoats, no contemporary accounts have been found to confirm this. Most, if not all, of the men in the field had blankets and many had overcoats. Most had just been left behind the lines and were later retrieved.³⁰⁴

February 14, 1862–Union Reinforcements Arrive

Brig. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant greatly overestimated the Confederate strength, believing there were 21,000 men behind the earthworks at Fort Donelson. Acting on this supposition, on February 14 Grant sent a courier ordering Brig. Gen. Lew Wallace (Figure 4.35) to bring his 2,500 soldiers from Fort Henry to Fort Donelson. The commanding general also asked Commander Walke to make a diversion with the *Carondelet* and ordered his division commanders to extend and improve their lines. Grant specifically ordered his subordinates Brig. Gen. John A. McClernand and Brig.

Gen. Charles F. Smith not to bring on a general engagement.³⁰⁵

Just after midnight on February 14 a convoy of a dozen or so transports and their gunboat escorts left Paducah. In the early morning hours they landed three miles downriver of Fort Donelson. As the convoy came within eleven miles of Dover, Flag Officer Andrew H. Foote signaled the boats to close up. A second signal alerted the gunboats to prepare for action. The drummers aboard the navy vessels "beat to quarters" and the boats cleared for action. As the flotilla tied up near the *Conestoga* a snowstorm raged and bitter cold temperatures greeted the newly arrived sailors and soldiers. The troop transports carrying reinforcements for Brig. Gen. U.S. Grant's army tied up on trees along the Cumberland River bank as the men awaited orders to disembark.³⁰⁶

The reinforcements included the Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, and Nebraska soldiers that Brig. Gen. Grant had ordered from Fort Henry to Fort Donelson on February 12. When they



Figure 4.35. Brig. Gen. Lew Wallace, Library of Congress.

³⁰³ H.I. Smith, *History of the Seventh Iowa Veteran Volunteer Infantry*, (Mason City, IA: E. Hitchcock, 1903), 42.

³⁰⁴ Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson*, 147-148; Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 230-246.

³⁰⁵ Long, *Personal Memoirs*, 153; O.R. Series I, Vol. VII, 172; Jobe, "Forts Henry and Donelson," 43.

³⁰⁶ Smith, *The Timberclads in the Civil War*, 243-245.

arrived in Paducah they found that three Ohio regiments had arrived in time to accompany them to Fort Donelson. Most of the soldiers were green recruits; only the Indiana and Kentucky troops under the command of Col. Charles Cruft had any experience. Confederate gunners at the water batteries saw the transports and asked for permission to fire on the infantry marching along the frozen rutted ground. By the time Brig. Gen. John B. Floyd gave permission to do so the Union soldiers had marched out of range. The Confederates threw a few shells in the direction of the transports but it is not clear if any of the shells hit their mark. In any case, they steamed off soon after, bound for Paducah.³⁰⁷

February 14, 1862–The Union Gunboats Attack

Around 9:00 a.m. on February 14 Brig. Gen. U.S. Grant arrived and met with Flag Officer Andrew H. Foote aboard the U.S.S. *St. Louis*. Grant devised a plan that, if successful, would result in the gunboats destroying the Confederate heavy artillery at Fort Donelson as they had at Fort Henry. Foote's gunboats were to engage the water batteries at close quarters and silence them if possible. During the attack on the water batteries other gunboats would run the guns and proceed upriver of the fort and Dover. If all went well the Confederates would have no choice but to surrender.³⁰⁸

About noon the Confederate gunners in the water batteries began lobbing shells at the gunboats and transports tied up upriver along

the bank, at the edge of their range. Soon afterward the transports got up steam and headed downriver. A little after 2:00 p.m. Flag Officer Foote steamed upriver toward the water batteries. He wrote in his after-action report, "although, not in my opinion properly prepared, I made an attack. . ."³⁰⁹ The gunboats moved out toward the water batteries, the ironclads *St. Louis*, *Louisville*, *Pittsburg*, and *Carondelet* moving abreast (arranged west to east) with the timberclads *Conestoga* and *Tyler* one thousand yards behind. The flotilla moved upriver at about three miles per hour. About 2:35 p.m. the Union fleet came into view of the Confederate water batteries. Three minutes later the 6.5-inch rifle in the upper water battery opened fire.³¹⁰

The gunboats rounded the bend and appeared to those manning the water batteries one after another, until the entire line of the four boats stretched across the river. The first shot from the 6.5-inch rifle missed. The second splashed into the water and ricocheted over a second ironclad. As it cleared the bend the Union fleet began firing. The first shot was high, exploding over the fort, the second hit just below the upper water battery, creating a huge hole. Confederate Captain Ruben Ross's third shot from the rifled gun hit a Union vessel and the Confederate gunners cheered. The Union line got a little ragged as the *Louisville* and *Pittsburg* fell behind. Flag Officer Foote signaled for them to "steam up" and close the gap.³¹¹

As the gunboats approached the water batteries they unknowingly steamed over the obstructions the Confederates had placed in the river the summer before; high water from the recent rains had rendered them useless. At this range, about 900 yards from the water batteries, the 32-pounders added their weight

³⁰⁷ Benjamin Franklin Cooling, "The First Nebraska Infantry Regiment and the Battle of Fort Donelson," *Nebraska History* 45 (1964), 136-137; Clarence O. Soehner, "History of the Fifty-Eighth Ohio Volunteer Infantry in the War of the Rebellion from 1861 to 1865," [Dayton, OH: 1921]. Soehner Unverferth. <https://www.scribd.com/document/245394287/SOEHNER-UNVERFERTH-1> (Accessed November 22, 2017), 3. Garrett and Lightfoot, *The Civil War in Maury County, Tennessee*, 56.

³⁰⁸ Smith, *The Timberclads in the Civil War*, 245; Long, *Personal Memoirs*, 154.

³⁰⁹ *O.R.N.*, Series I, Vol. 22, 585.

³¹⁰ Smith, *The Timberclads in the Civil War*, 245-247; *O.R.* Series I, Vol. VII, 399.

³¹¹ Garrett and Lightfoot, *The Civil War in Maury County, Tennessee*, 57; Ross, "Batteries at Fort Donelson," 395; Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 246.

to the Confederate firepower. “The first from that battery was fired at nearly the same time by all guns, and the report was tremendous. The cannonade was then at its utmost and beyond anything ever seen by any of the parties engaged.”³¹² The artillerists on shore faced problems caused by the rapid firing, especially with the rifled weapons. At one point a ball was stuck about halfway down barrel of the 6.5-inch rifle. Capt. Ross, commander of the damaged gun, sent men to find a large log to jam into the barrel and drive the ball home. Upon returning several of the men climbed out onto the parapet where they were exposed to Union gunfire and by sheer force freed the ball, getting the gun back into action.³¹³

After an hour the Union fleet had moved to within 400 yards of the Confederate guns. At this short range all nine of the fort’s heavy guns—seven 32-pounders, the Columbiad and the 6.5-inch rifle—pounded the Union vessels. The *Carondelet* was hit hard. One shot struck the anchor, smashing it to bits and throwing up metal shards that riddled the boat’s smokestack. Another shot destroyed the iron boat-davits, dropping a lifeboat into the river. Shot and shell hit the iron plate covering the vessel, ripping it. Fire from shore passed through the pilot house and mortally wounded one of the boat’s two pilots (Figure 4.36).³¹⁴

During the fighting in front of the Confederate water batteries the steering mechanism of Flag Officer Foote’s flagship *St. Louis* was shot away. Another shot from the same barrage passed through the pilot house and killed the pilot and wounded Foote. The *St. Louis* took fifty-nine hits, disabling it. The

boat began drifting downstream, out of action.³¹⁵

As the *St. Louis* fought for her life the *Louisville* took numerous hits. A Confederate shell tore away the top of the boat’s wheelhouse, smashing the ship’s wheel. The uninjured pilot ran to the rear of the boat to take control with the tiller. The damage caused by Confederate guns could have been mitigated if not for the impact of friendly fire. As the pilot grappled with the tiller chains, a shot from the *Tyler*, which fell woefully short of her target, destroyed the *Louisville*’s rudder. Uncontrollable, the boat fell back and drifted out of the battle. According to Foote’s after-action report the *St. Louis* and the *Louisville* were lost in succession, leaving four vessels to carry on the fight.³¹⁶

As the *Carondelet* fired on the water batteries one of its rifled guns exploded. The gun, which broke into three pieces, miraculously killed no one, though the explosion stunned the men nearby and wounded a dozen others. The continuous cannon fire that hit the *Carondelet* ripped the remaining lifeboats from the sides of the vessel and threw the still-tethered boats into the water, dragging on the *Carondelet*. As Commander Henry Walke turned the *Carondelet* to bring his broadside to bear on the Confederates he saw the *St. Louis* and *Louisville* falling back. The *Pittsburg*, in its haste to turn and follow the rest of the fleet out of harm’s way, clipped the *Carondelet*’s rudder forcing the *Carondelet* to pull back as well. The damage, while not incapacitating, was extensive. The vessel was “terribly cut up.” Fifteen feet of the iron plating on the port

³¹² Ross, “Batteries at Fort Donelson,” 395.

³¹³ Ibid.

³¹⁴ *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 246; Henry Walke, “The Western Flotilla at Fort Donelson, Island Number Ten, Fort Pillow, and Memphis,” in *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, Vol. I*, edited by Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buel, 430-452, (New York: Century Co, 1887), 433.

³¹⁵ Smith, *The Timberclads in the Civil War*, 247; *O.R.N.*, Series I, Vol. 22, 584; Walke, “The Western Flotilla at Fort Donelson,” 434.

³¹⁶ *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 248; Smith, *The Timberclads in the Civil War*, 247-248; *O.R.N.*, Series I, Vol. 22, 584.

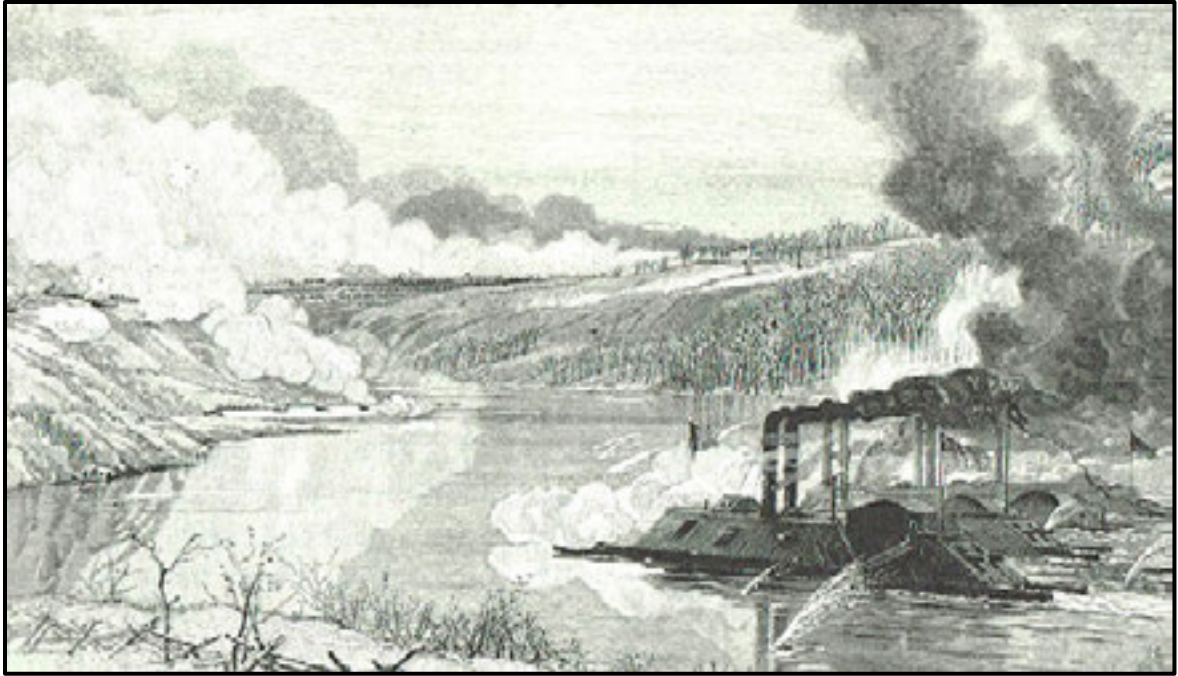


Figure 4.36. Union gunboats attack the water batteries at Fort Donelson, Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buel, editors, *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, New York: Century Co., 1887, Vol. 1, p. 435.

side was ripped open, all masts and spars sheared off, the pilot house and smokestacks riddled with holes, and the deck punched and gouged by shot and shell.³¹⁷

The *Carondelet* kept firing as she drifted out of action and the Confederate guns replied. This time the Union fleet, one ship smaller than the fleet that subdued Fort Henry, had met its match. The Union vessels received such a pounding that Foote declared: “The enemy must have brought twenty guns to bear upon our boats.”³¹⁸ The Confederates had in fact employed less than half that number. The Union fleet suffered fifty-four casualties, ten killed and forty-four wounded. The Confederate water batteries sustained only light casualties, a few slightly wounded but no one killed. The gunboats’ role in the Battle of Fort Donelson ended and the following day the navy buried its dead (Figure 4.37).³¹⁹

³¹⁷ Walke, “The Western Flotilla at Fort Donelson,” 434; Walke, *Naval Scenes and Reminiscences*, 78.

³¹⁸ *O.R.N.*, Series I, Vol. 22, 585.

³¹⁹ Walke, *Naval Scenes and Reminiscences*, 80; *O.R.N.*, Series I, Vol. 22, 584; *O.R.* Series I, Vol.

February 14, 1862–The Confederate High Command Plots an Escape

Around noon on February 14, prior to the gunboat attack, the Confederate command at Fort Donelson held a council of war. Brig. Gen. John B. Floyd, convinced that some 20,000 additional troops had arrived, giving the Union army an advantage of 40,000 to their 17,500, resolved to retreat to Nashville. Brig. Gen. Gideon Pillow suggested an attack on the Union right, which would open Wynn’s Ferry Road and provide an avenue for the Confederate army to escape. Brig. Gen. Floyd and Brig. Gen. Simon B. Buckner concurred and Pillow began shifting troops from the right

VII, 391, 397; Garrett and Lightfoot, *The Civil War in Maury County, Tennessee*, 57. In the attack on Fort Henry Foote used three timberclads; he only had two for this attack. At Fort Donelson the timberclads harmed the Union effort more than they helped as shells fired from them struck the ironclads.

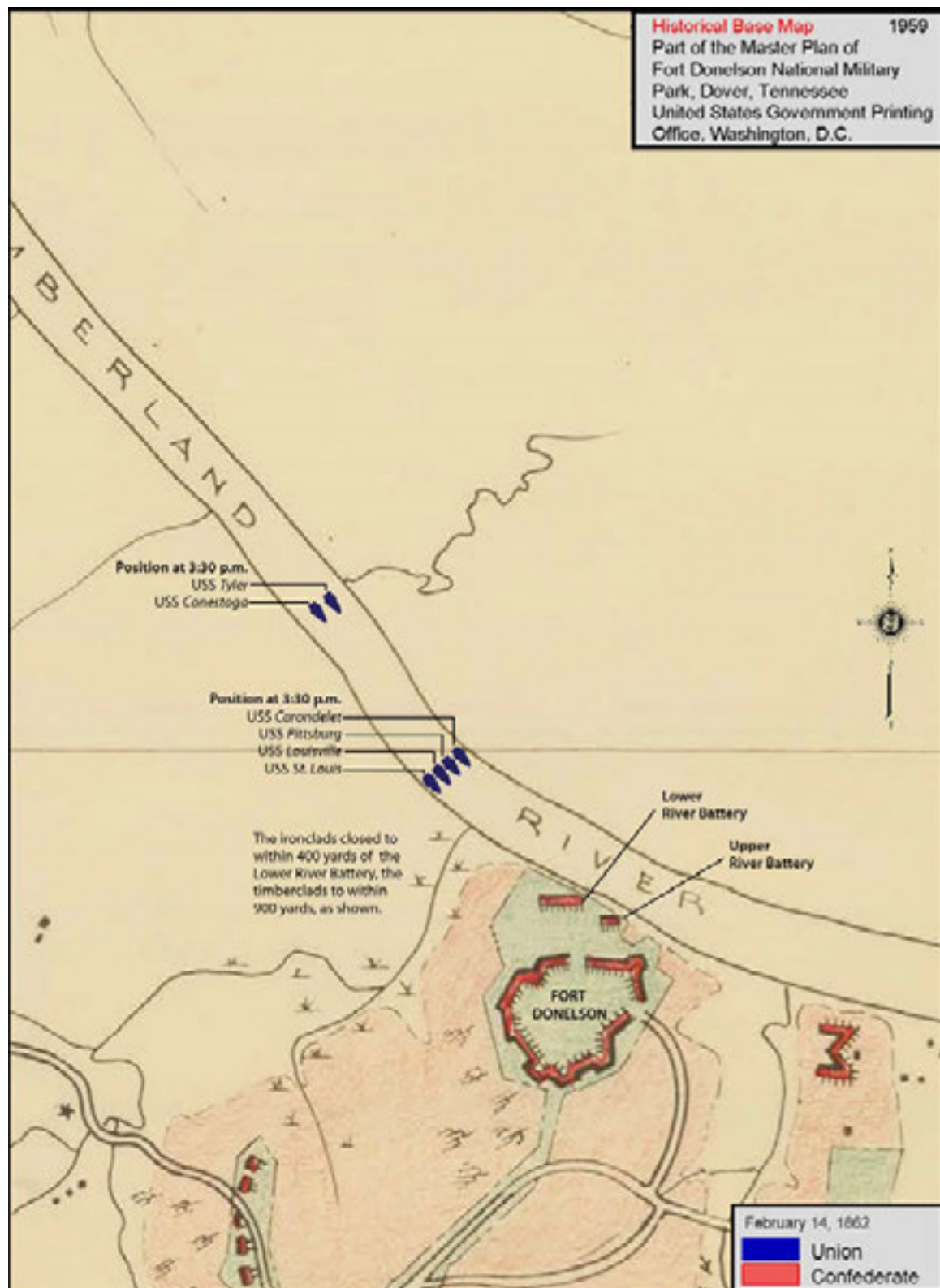


Figure 4.37. Union Gunboat Attack, February 14, 1862.

to the left. He formed a Left Wing with Col. John McCausland's Virginia Brigade (36th and 50th Virginia); Col. Thomas J. Davidson's Brigade (1st and 3rd/23rd Mississippi, 7th Texas, and 8th Kentucky); and Col. William E. Baldwin's Brigade (20th and 26th Mississippi, 26th Tennessee, and Lieut. Col. Nathan Bedford Forrest's cavalry brigade).³²⁰

Brig. Gen. Pillow positioned the Left Wing in open ground to the left and rear of the Confederate outer works and on their extreme left. This placed the Left Wing near Dover, where they deployed along Old Charlotte Road. Lieut. Col. Forrest's cavalry was ordered to screen the infantry attack. Forrest wrote: "On Friday I was ordered out with the infantry, passing our intrenchments [sic] on the left; but after maneuvering a short time and some sharp shooting between the cavalry and the enemy, I was ordered back into the intrenchments [sic]."³²¹ After his recall, Brig. Gen. Pillow ordered Forrest to clear out Union troops, probably Union cavalry, which were on the "heights and trees annoying our infantry in the intrenchments [sic]." His troopers accomplished the task and returned to the Confederate lines at about the time of the gunboat attack.³²²

The exact sequence of events on the Confederate left that day is unclear but Col. William E. Baldwin reported that his men formed by columns and advanced. If the attack had taken place, Baldwin's Brigade would have been in a position to flank the Union line on Dudley's Hill. Instead, the Confederate infantry advanced perhaps one-quarter mile before Brig. Gen. Pillow called off the attack, telling Baldwin "it was too late in the day to accomplish anything."³²³ The exact time the attack was called off is unknown but it is known that Lieut. Col. Forrest returned in time to witness the naval battle, which took place

from about 2:30 to 5:00 p.m. Major William N. Brown, 20th Mississippi, stated: "About 1 o'clock I received an order to form my regiment on the extreme left, in an open field, for the purpose of making a sortie on the enemy."³²⁴ Given the time of year, if the bulk of the Confederate infantry did not move until 3:00 p.m. or later the attack, or at least part of it, would have been fought in the dark. Regardless, after some minor skirmishing in Barn Hollow, the Confederates returned to their jump off positions.³²⁵

February 14, 1862—The Union Army Organizes

Col. John M. Thayer moved his brigade off the transports the afternoon of February 14. Thayer's Third Brigade—the 58th, 68th, and 76th Ohio, and his regiment, the 1st Nebraska—had been on the transports far too long and were ready to show their mettle. Thayer's brigade joined that of Col. Charles Cruft—the 31st and 44th Indiana and 17th and 25th Kentucky—which were detached from Brig. Gen. Don Carlos Buell's Army of the Ohio. Grant formed the two newly arrived brigades, together with an unassigned brigade composed of the 40th, 57th, 58th Illinois and 20th Ohio, into Third Division, giving that command to Brig. Gen. Lew Wallace. Cruft's were the only soldiers in the new division with much experience. Third Division took up a position south of Brig. Gen. C.F. Smith's Second Division, between present-day US 79 and Indian Creek, with Thayer's brigade on the left nearest C.F. Smith and Cruft's on the right near the creek. Brig. Gen. Grant ordered Third Division to hold its position and to prevent the Confederates from escaping. With the influx of reinforcements, Grant's army now numbered some 25,000.³²⁶

³²⁰ Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 257; Connelly, *Army of the Heartland*, 120-121

³²¹ Jobe, "Forts Henry and Donelson," 17; *O.R.* Series I, Vol. VII, 384.

³²² Jobe, "Forts Henry and Donelson," 17; *O.R.* Series I, Vol. VII, 384.

³²³ *O.R.* Series I, Vol. VII, 338

³²⁴ *O.R.* Series I, Vol. VII, 379.

³²⁵ *O.R.* Series I, Vol. VII, 338, 379, 330; Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 257.

³²⁶ *O.R.* Series I, Vol. VII, 252; Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 242-243, 411-412; Jobe, "Forts Henry and Donelson," 16, 44.

Late in the day of February 14, Colonel John McArthur, (Figure 4.38) commander of Third Brigade under Brig. Gen. C.F. Smith, received orders to move his brigade to the extreme Union right atop Dudley's Hill overlooking Barn Hollow. This placed McArthur's brigade on the right of Brig. Gen. John A. McClelland's First Division. Confederate artillery shelled his column as it moved and it was dark when the brigade took position on the hill. McArthur later stated: "I regret to add, without adequate knowledge of the nature of the ground in front and on our right."³²⁷

February 15, 1862

The spirits of the Confederate soldiers at Fort Donelson were high after their artillery defeated the Union gunboats. Lieut. Col. Nathan Bedford Forrest, who had witnessed the gunboat battle the day before reported: "Never were men more jubilant than when the victory crowned the steady bravery of our little fort; old men wept; shout after shout went up; the gunboats driven back; the army was in the best possible spirits, feeling that, relieved of their greatest terror, they could whip any land force that could be brought against them." The men's optimism was not, however, shared by those in command.³²⁸

During the waning hours of February 14 until just after midnight February 15, the Confederate high command held a council of war at the Dover Hotel during which Brig. Gen. John B. Floyd, Brig. Gen. Gideon Pillow, Brig. Gen. Simon B. Buckner, and engineer Maj. Jeremy Gilmer roughed out the plan of attack for February 15.³²⁹ Floyd later wrote: "I had already seen the impossibility of holding out for any length of time with our inadequate numbers and indefensible position. There was no place within our intrenchments [sic] but could be reached by the enemy's artillery from their boats or their batteries."³³⁰



Figure 4.38. Col. John McArthur, US, Library of Congress.

The generals feared Brig. Gen. U.S. Grant had a force of some 40,000 ready to attack the less than 20,000 defending Fort Donelson. Fearing a siege in which Union artillery and gunboats commanding the river would cut off supplies and a viable escape route, Brig. Gen. Floyd, in consultation with his senior officers, decided a breakout was necessary. Floyd had already received a telegram from his commander, Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston, stating, "If you lose the fort, bring your troops to Nashville if possible." In essence telling Floyd: If you cannot hold the fort at least save the army.³³¹

According to Brig. Gen. Pillow, those present at the meeting "determined unanimously to give the enemy battle next day at daylight, so as to cut open a route of exit for our troops to the interior of the country, and thus save our army."³³² Brig. Gen. Buckner concurred with Pillow and later wrote of the course of action slated to take place at dawn: "The object of the attack was to force our way through his lines, recover our

³²⁷ O.R. Series I, Vol. VII, 215.

³²⁸ O.R. Series I, Vol. VII, 384.

³²⁹ Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 258; Jobe, "Forts Henry and Donelson," 45; Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 185-186.

³³⁰ O.R. Series I, Vol. VII, 268; Cummings, *The Curious Career of Bushrod Johnson*, 197.

³³¹ Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 185;

Johnston, *The Life of Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston*, 453; Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 258.

³³² O.R. Series I, Vol. VII, 281.

communications, and effect our retreat upon Nashville by way of Charlotte, Tenn. This movement had become imperatively necessary in consequence of the vastly superior and constantly increasing force of the enemy, who had already completely enveloped our position.”³³³

The plan agreed upon was roughly the same as the plan Brig. Gen. Pillow had formulated for the attack aborted the day before. Pillow, who had taken control of Brig. Gen. Bushrod Johnson’s Division when Floyd took command of the fort, would lead the attack. The Confederates shifted fifteen regiments that constituted five brigades of infantry—Drake’s, Davidson’s/Simonton’s, half of Baldwin’s, McCausland’s, and Wharton’s Virginia—as well as Forrest’s Brigade of cavalry, along Old Charlotte Road just east of Dover. This action required most of the troops on the extreme Confederate right to move to the left and stripped the Confederate right of all but one regiment, which now faced Union Brig. Gen. C.F. Smith’s Second Division alone. The Confederates kept Col. Heiman’s Brigade with Maney’s and a section of Parker’s batteries on the heights between Indian Creek and Erin Hollow. Brig. Gen. Buckner moved most of his division from the Confederate right to the position vacated by Brig. Gen. Bushrod Johnson’s Division, east of Heiman’s position. Buckner commanded French’s, Goochland’s, Graves’ and Green’s batteries.³³⁴

At a second council of war the brigade commanders and Brig. Gen. Bushrod Johnson received instructions regarding the upcoming assault. The Confederates assigned a rallying point well beyond the Union lines where troops would gather after an escape route was opened or if the plan to do so failed. According to Johnson, “all the plans were skillfully and minutely adjusted.” When the council adjourned the officers returned to their positions and began moving their brigades to their jump off points. In a final check made just before the assault Johnson discovered that Davidson’s Brigade was not in

position. Col. Thomas Davidson had become too ill to participate and had not alerted his subordinates of the coming assault. A considerable amount of time was lost while Brig. Gen. Pillow ordered Col. John M. Simonton to take command of Davidson’s Brigade. After much delay, the sleeping men were roused and moved into position.³³⁵

Brig. Gen. Simon B. Buckner’s Division also experienced a delay. Buckner’s orders specified that he wait until the 30th Tennessee, which was part of the garrison at Fort Donelson, arrive before he moved his forces east. Colonel John W. Head’s 30th Tennessee was late. To make matters worse, the snow and ice made moving men, horses and artillery difficult and no doubt noisy. However, the movement was not detected, or was not reported if it was. Moving Buckner’s Division from the Confederate right to the position east of Erin Hollow required the men to march up and down very steep terrain. This is not easy in good weather today; under the extremely adverse conditions of that night and in footwear provided by the Confederate government it would have been laborious indeed.³³⁶

Though Brig. Gen. Johnson stated that “all the plans were skillfully and minutely adjusted” it seems that they were, in fact, not. Brig. Gen. Buckner had his men bring knapsacks, equipment and other personal items that they might want to take on the march to Nashville. Brig. Gen. Pillow, on the other hand, planned to take his men back into the trenches to get their possessions once he rolled up the Union right. How he planned to pull a division off line and allow them to do so is unknown.³³⁷

³³³ Ibid., 330-331.

³³⁴ O.R. Series I, Vol. VII, 282; Jobe, “Forts Henry and Donelson,” 16-17, 46; Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 259; Vaughan, *Staff Ride Handbook, Part I*, 82.

³³⁵ O.R. Series I, Vol. VII, 360-361; Cummings, *The Curious Career of Bushrod Johnson*, 196-198.

³³⁶ Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 260-261; Edwin Bearss, “General C.F. Smith’s Attack on the Rebel Right,” unpublished manuscript prepared for the United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Fort Donelson National Military Park, 1959, 1-2; Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson*, 167.

³³⁷ Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 262.

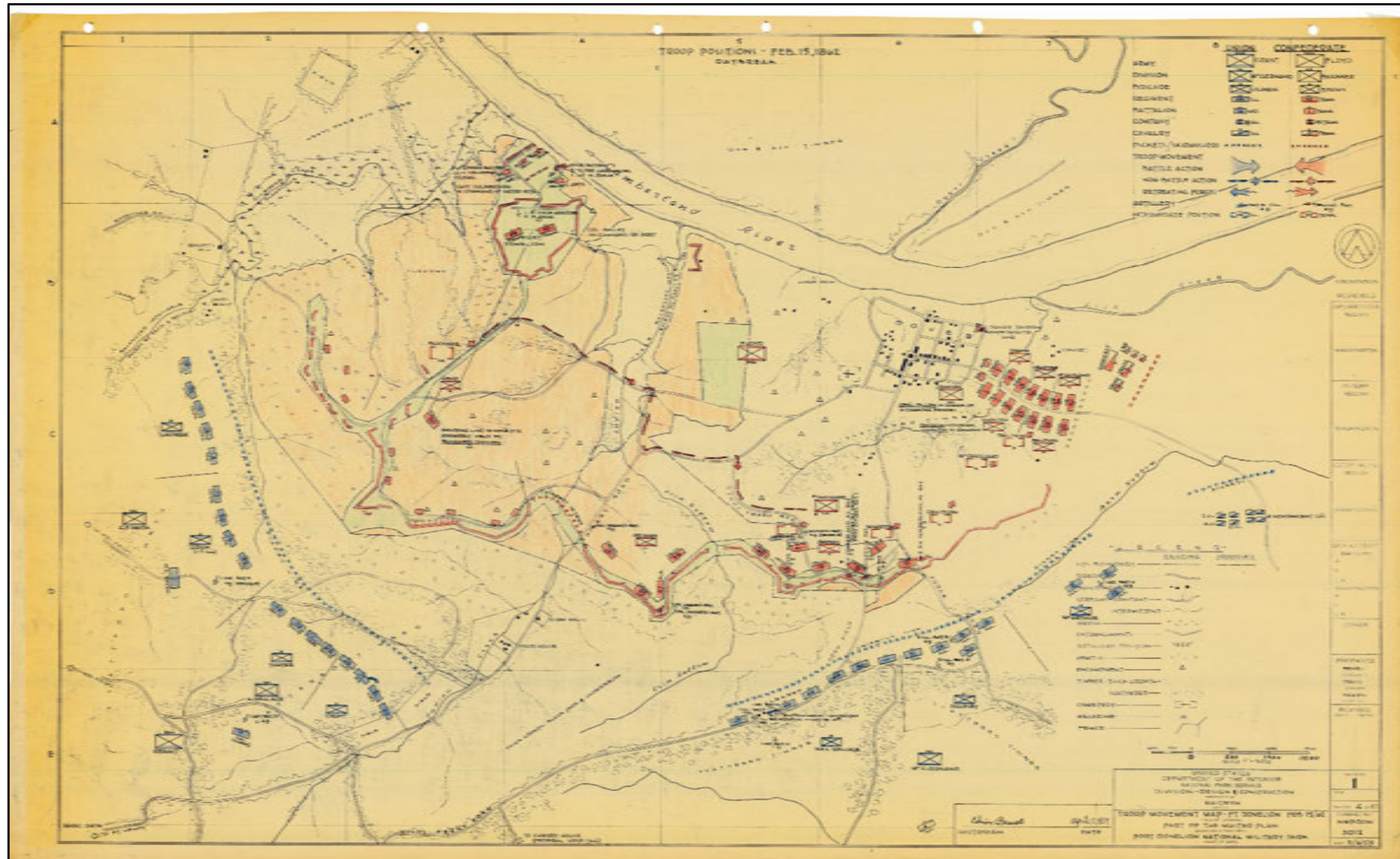


Figure 4.39. Troop Positions Daybreak February 15, 1862. Edwin C. Bearss, *Troop Movement Map – Fort Donelson February 15, 1862, Map 4 of 11, Part of the Master Plan of Fort Donelson National Military Park, Dover, Tennessee*. Washington, D.C: United States Government Printing Office, 1959.

February 15 – Confederate Breakout Attempt, 6 a.m. – 9 a.m.

At six o'clock on the cold, clear morning of February 15, Brig. Gen. Gideon Pillow ordered the assembled Confederate troops forward. That same morning, Union Brig. Gen. U.S. Grant received a message from Flag Officer Andrew Foote "before it was yet broad day." The commanding general quickly readied himself to meet with Foote aboard the U.S.S. *St. Louis*. After ordering his division commanders not to bring on a general engagement, he rode off to his meeting.³³⁸

At daylight, a picket of the 41st Illinois informed his commander Colonel Isaac C. Pugh that a large force of Confederates was advancing up the hill. The picket's report was the first indication that the Confederates had left their works. Pugh sent two companies into the woods to reconnoiter and the Confederates immediately attacked them. By the time the 41st Illinois managed to form in line of battle the Confederates' overwhelming numbers had flanked them.³³⁹ As Pugh's commander Col. John McArthur put it, "at daylight, were surrounded by the enemy, who opened on us a heavy fire of musketry, at the same time outflanking us by one regiment on our right."³⁴⁰

For the first hour or so Col. McArthur's brigade bore the brunt of the Confederate attack spearheaded by Col. William E. Baldwin's Brigade (Figure 4.40). A company of the 26th Mississippi that served as his advance pushed up a "slight elevation" where it drew fire from what was believed to be Union pickets. Baldwin then ordered a second company forward and the Mississippians rushed the federals hoping to open the heights for their comrades. They were driven back not by Union pickets but by Col. McArthur's brigade. Both sides were surprised by what they found on Dudley's Hill that morning. The Confederates had planned to form on the hill



Figure 4.40. Col. William E. Baldwin, CS, Library of Congress.

and roll up the Union right. Given the previous lack of initiative on the Confederates' part, the Union soldiers certainly did not expect an attack but here they were. Baldwin quickly withdrew his companies and reformed his line (Figure 4.41).³⁴¹

As he formed a new line, Col. Baldwin sent a courier to Brig. Gen. Pillow alerting him that the Union army was in his front in force. Pillow came forward and began deploying regiments with, at first, disastrous results. Pillow sent Baldwin's 20th Mississippi forward into a field where it met murderous fire from the 41st Illinois, forcing the Mississippians back. Pillow then sent Colonel Gabriel Wharton's small Virginia Brigade into the same field with much the same result. Captain Danby Harrison leading his company of the 56th Virginia was struck by four balls before the fifth pierced his right lung, killing him.³⁴²

³³⁸ Jobe, "Forts Henry and Donelson," 46; Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 194; Long, *Personal Memoirs*, 155.

³³⁹ O.R. Series I, Vol. VII, 218; Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson*, 168.

³⁴⁰ O.R. Series I, Vol. VII, 216.

³⁴¹ Vaughan, *Staff Ride Handbook*, Part I, 49; Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 270-273; Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 194-195; O.R. Series I, Vol. VII, 339, 216.

³⁴² O.R. Series I, Vol. VII, 339-340, 380; Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 274-275; Young, Jr. and Young, *56th Virginia Infantry*, 31.

Even the bombastic Brig. Gen. Pillow admitted that he had issues getting his men properly aligned: “For the first half hour of the engagement I was much embarrassed in getting the command in position properly to engage the enemy.”³⁴³ Trying to gain control of the heights, Pillow and Brig. Gen. Johnson began putting other brigades in line to flank the Union force on Dudley’s Hill. Baldwin’s Brigade held the center of the Confederate line with Wharton’s Brigade on the left and McClausland’s Brigade on the right. The Confederate left experienced the greatest difficulty as they faced the well-positioned 41st and 12th Illinois on the Union right. Colonel Augustus Chetlian sent two companies of the 12th Illinois out front and to the right of his regiment. One company occupied some buildings and the other formed on a fence to the right of the buildings. These men kept a devastating fire on the Confederate left, which extended out into an open field where they found the going rough.³⁴⁴

With Baldwin’s Brigade already in place, Brig. Gen. Johnson moved Drake’s Brigade to Baldwin’s left and Simonton’s Brigade to his right. These brigades brought needed firepower and strengthened the Confederate line, adding seven regiments to reinforce Baldwin’s three. Drake’s Brigade flanked the Union right, cleared the Union infantry from the buildings and fence line, and forced Col. John McArthur’s Union brigade from Dudley’s Hill.³⁴⁵

The push by Drake’s Brigade proved to be a turning point. Col. Baldwin and Brig. Gen. Pillow ordered the rest of the brigades forward. Confederate artillery from the heights on their right fired on the Union left. As Col. McArthur’s line began to waver, both from the pressure of the Confederates and a lack of ammunition, Col. Richard Oglesby’s brigade felt the brunt of the Confederate attack:

“Texans and Tennesseans who swarmed about the front and right of the line with their rifles, double-barrel shotguns, and muskets, yelling like tigers.”³⁴⁶ Col. Michael K. Lawler of the 18th Illinois and Col. John A. Logan of the 31st Illinois fell wounded and were forced to the rear. Despite the battering Oglesby held his position for over an hour before the combined weight of the Confederates and a lack of ammunition forced him to fall back.³⁴⁷

The Confederates took the hill and Lieut. Col. Nathan Bedford Forrest captured two 10-pounder Parrott rifles, probably from Welker’s Missouri Battery, that had been used to deadly effect on Simonton’s Brigade. Some Virginians planted their flag on the heights, claiming the hill for the Old Dominion. With the rout of Col. McArthur’s brigade and the bending of Col. Oglesby’s, Brig. Gen. John A. McClelland realized he needed help. He sent Lieutenants Erastus S. Jones and Julian Carter to Generals Lew Wallace and U.S. Grant to request reinforcements. Grant, however, was still aboard the *St. Louis* and all his staff could or would do was to send a message. Wallace, under orders to hold his position, also sent a courier seeking instructions from Grant.³⁴⁸

February 15 – Confederate Breakout Attempt, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Around 9:00 a.m. Brig. Gen. Pillow rode to Brig. Gen. Buckner, whose division held the Confederate trenches above Wynn’s Ferry Road. After consulting with Pillow, Buckner sent the 14th Mississippi under the command of Colonel W.L. Doss to the Union right. The

³⁴³ O.R. Series I, Vol. VII, 282.

³⁴⁴ Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 276; O.R. Series I, Vol. VII, 217; Vaughan, *Staff Ride Handbook, Part I*, 52.

³⁴⁵ O.R. Series I, Vol. VII, 361; Cummings, *The Curious Career of Bushrod Johnson*, 198.

³⁴⁶ Morris, Hartwell and Kuykendall, *History 31st Regiment Illinois Volunteers*, 36.

³⁴⁷ Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 196-918; Vaughan, *Supplement for Staff Ride Handbook, Part II*, 7; O.R. Series I, Vol. VII, 190; Morris, Hartwell and Kuykendall, *History 31st Regiment Illinois Volunteers*, 36-37.

³⁴⁸ O.R. Series I, Vol. VII, 175, 362; Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 279; Wills, *The Confederacy’s Greatest Cavalryman*, 61-62; Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson*, 169-170.

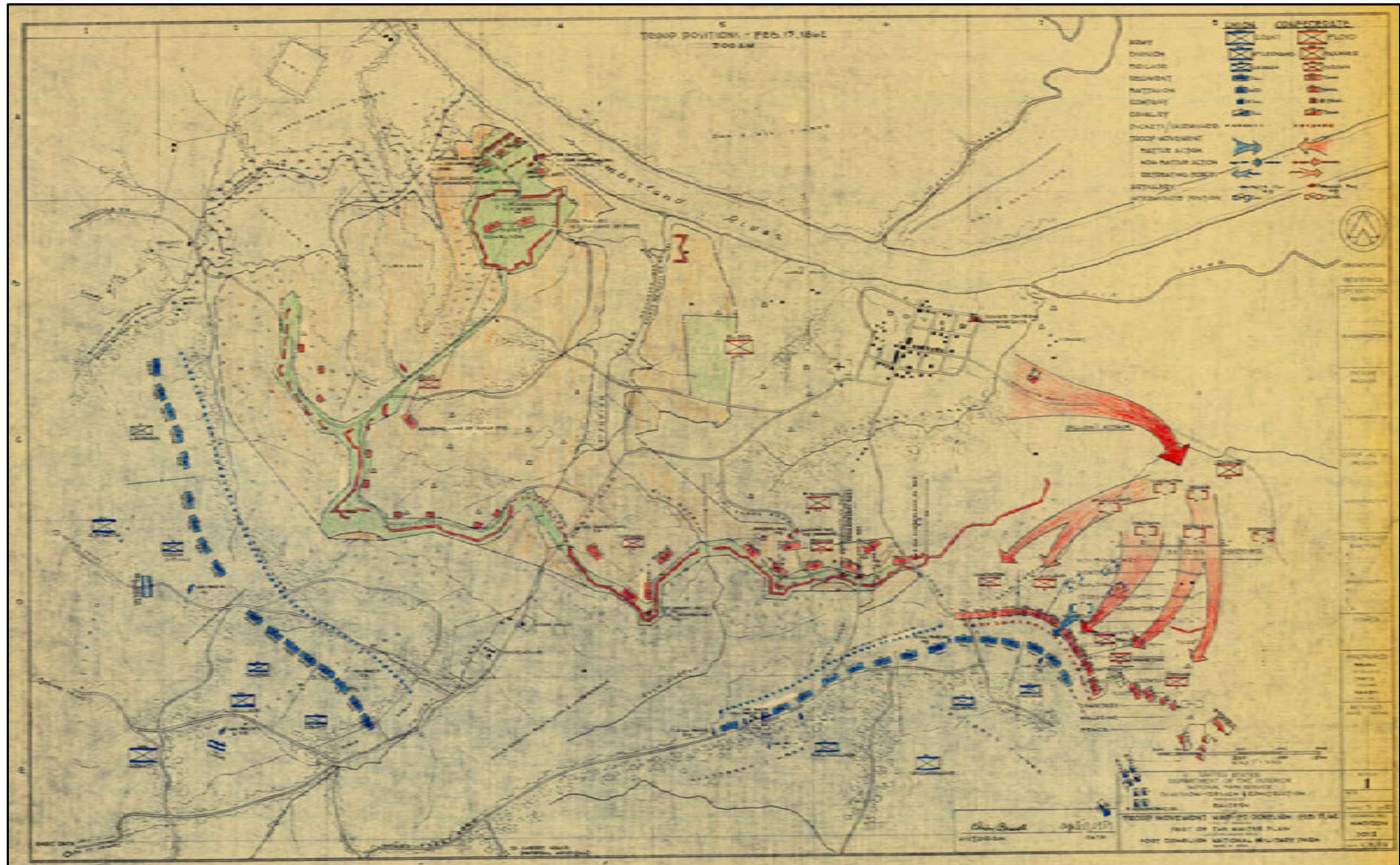


Figure 4.41. Troop Positions 7:00 AM February 15, 1862. Edwin C. Bearss, *Troop Movement Map – Fort Donelson February 15, 1862, Map 5 of 11, Part of the Master Plan of Fort Donelson National Military Park, Dover, Tennessee*. Washington, D.C: United States Government Printing Office, 1959.

Mississippians crossed the ground between the lines and neared the Union abatis where they met Union skirmishers who withdrew to the main line. Doss's regiment moved forward and fought two regiments of Col. William H.L. Wallace's brigade along the northern flank of the Union line for about an hour before they withdrew to the Confederate outer works. This assault added to the pressure on the Union line, which in addition to the Confederate attacks suffered a dwindling supply of ammunition.³⁴⁹

As Col. Richard Oglesby's and Col. John McArthur's line began to crumble Brig. Gen. Lew Wallace, against standing orders, sent reinforcements to Brig. Gen. McClernand. He ordered Col. Charles Cruft's Brigade—the 25th Kentucky, 44th Indiana, 17th Kentucky, and 31st Indiana—forward. Cruft arrived sometime between 9:00 and 10:00 a.m. amid a battlefield hung thick with smoke and rife with chaos. The guide leading the brigade disappeared; leaving it hanging still in column just as the Confederates arrived trying to flank a Union battery. Cruft deployed the 25th Kentucky and 31st Indiana and they met the arriving Confederates and drove them back. Cruft tried to sort out what was happening in order to place his men where they could do the most good. Adding to the confusion, other officers who desperately needed help directed Cruft's troops elsewhere. In the swirl of muddled orders and smoke, the 25th Kentucky fired on the 8th and 29th Illinois. The inexperienced Illinois regiments, thinking the enemy was on their rear, panicked and ran. All that was left of the Union line facing east was the 31st Illinois and Cruft's Brigade. This line faced increasing pressure from Simonton's Brigade on the Union left and Drake's Brigade on the right as the Confederates worked to flank the Union line (Figure 4.43).³⁵⁰

Sensing that the fight was reaching a tipping point three Confederate brigades pressed their advantage. Col. Baldwin pushed

the center of the Union line while Col. Simonton pushed around the Union left and Col. Drake circled the Union right. Schwartz's Battery B, 2nd Illinois Light Artillery pounded the Confederate left, sending 146 rounds into the Confederate line. Drake's Brigade, crossing the Union flank, found itself in a position to neutralize Schwartz's guns.³⁵¹ Colonel John C. Wright of the 15th Arkansas, part of Drake's Brigade, described the attack:

"The 15th Arkansas, on the extreme left, was opposed by a battery with heavy infantry support which held their position defiantly and slaughtered our men, but not a man faltered but steadily closed in. Now we are in close range and our shot guns get in their deadly work. It was more than Yankee soldiers could stand. They began to waver, when with a yell we charge and rout them and drive them back on their own men. Now our whole line charged and drove everything before them in confusion."³⁵²

The 15th Arkansas led the charge on Schwartz's artillery, closing to within shotgun range before firing. This action, which required the Arkansas troops to get very close to the artillery, encouraged the other Confederate regiments, leading to a general assault that resulted in the capture of the Union battery.

By 10:45 a.m. the Confederates had defeated McArthur's and Oglesby's brigades, captured the two 6-pounder and two 12-pounder howitzers of Schwartz's battery, and opened Forge Road. In addition to the two guns captured earlier on Dudley's Hill, they also gathered up two flags and some band instruments. Still, the Union army was too close for Floyd's army to use Wynn's Ferry Road as an escape route. The federals had to be driven further west.³⁵³

At noon Confederate Brig. Gen. Pillow ordered a second attack by Buckner's

³⁴⁹ O.R. Series I, Vol. VII, 331, 344-345; Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 297-298.

³⁵⁰ Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 289-294; Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson*, 169-171; O.R. Series I, Vol. VII, 244-245.

³⁵¹ Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 294-295; O.R. Series I, Vol. VII, 176

³⁵² Downs, *Arkansas Fifteenth (Gee-Johnson) Regiment Infantry*, 20.

³⁵³ O.R. Series I, Vol. VII, 175, 346; Vaughan, *Staff Ride Handbook, Part I*, 166.

Division, which was led by Colonel John C. Brown (Figure 4.44). After two very cold days, the weather improved on Saturday, February 15. The snow that covered the battlefield began to melt, turning the frozen ground into soft, slick mud. Brown's Brigade—the 3rd, 18th and 32nd Tennessee—left the Confederate earthworks under cover fire from Maney's and Graves' batteries and emerged into the wet slippery landscape. They climbed out of the trenches, scrambled over and through the abatis, and gathered in an "open field on the right of Wynn's Ferry Road" where they were met by fire from Union artillery of McAllister's and Taylor's Illinois batteries and small arms fire from the Union infantry on the hill above.³⁵⁴

The Confederates moved forward until they hit the Union skirmishers, who retreated through an area of trees and dense underbrush through which Brown's men could not see. Confederate skirmishers went forward, trying and failing to gain information on the Union position, particularly the troublesome batteries. Several officers also tried and failed to gather information. Acting on what intelligence he had Brown ordered the brigade to charge. The three regiments rose up and got within 100 yards of the Union line where they encountered the batteries, which opened fire with canister. A volley from the Union infantry followed. Fortunately for the Confederates the Union fire, which was on higher ground, passed over their heads. Brown's line stopped and returned fire. The Confederates fell back a hundred yards or so and regrouped. Lieutenant Colonel Thomas M. Gordon of the 3rd Tennessee was wounded and could not continue and was replaced by Major Nathaniel F. Cheairs. At this point, the 14th Mississippi joined Brown's Brigade and the line surged forward toward Col. William Hervy Lamme (W.H.L.) Wallace's brigade on Wynn's Ferry Road.³⁵⁵

³⁵⁴ O.R. Series I, Vol. VII, 348; Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 299-300; Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 205-206

³⁵⁵ O.R. Series I, Vol. VII, 348, 350, 353; Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 206-207.

The Union right crumbled and fell back; the 11th and 31st Illinois regiments now became the Union right. Col. Logan's 31st Illinois was out of ammunition and without any other recourse also fell back, leaving the Union right in the hands of the 11th Illinois. Lieutenant Colonel Thomas E.G. Ransom was wounded in the melee and passed command of the 11th Illinois briefly to Major Garrett Nevins as he sought medical care in the rear. Ransom, now bandaged, returned and shifted the regiment into gap once held by the 31st Illinois. The 11th Illinois soon found itself in greater danger as Lieut. Col. Forrest's cavalry hit the Illinois soldiers in the flank while attacking the rear of their formation.³⁵⁶

As Lieut. Col. Forrest's men struck the right flank and rear of the 11th Illinois, Confederate Col. Roger Hanson's 2nd Kentucky hit the regiment's left flank. Col. William E. Baldwin and Col. John McClausland had requested the aid of the Kentuckians. Hanson, who could not locate Brig. Gen. Buckner for permission, took matters into his own hands and added the weight of his oversized regiment to the force pressing the Union line.³⁵⁷ He ordered his men to hold their fire until they closed in on the Union position:

*"I directed the regiment, when the command was given, to march at quick-time across the space and not to fire a gun until they reached the woods in which the enemy was posted. The order was admirably executed, and although we lost 50 men in killed and wounded in crossing the space, not a gun was fired until the woods were reached."*³⁵⁸

³⁵⁶ Wallace, "The Capture of Fort Donelson," 417-418; Huffstodt, *Hard Dying Men*, 67-69; Wyeth, *That Devil Forrest*, 45.

³⁵⁷ Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 306-307; Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 207-209; O.R. Series I, Vol. VII, 343.

³⁵⁸ O.R. Series I, Vol. VII, 343.

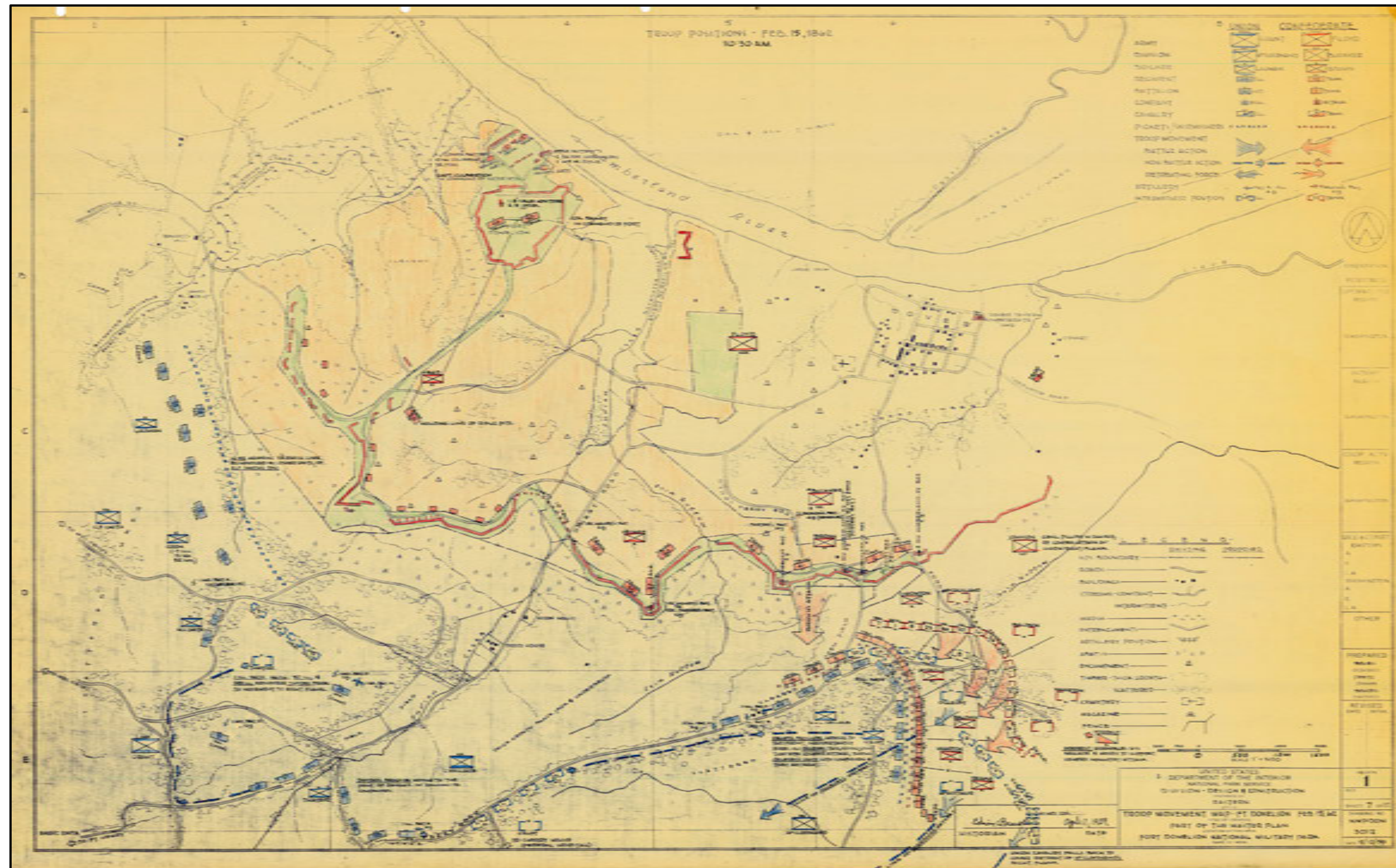




Figure 4.44. Col. John C. Brown, CS, John Berrien Lindsley, *The Military Annals of Tennessee, Confederate. Volume I, First Series: Embracing a Review of Military Operations, with Regimental Histories and Memorial Rolls, Compiled from Original and Official Sources*, Nashville, TN: J.M. Lindsley & Co., Publishers, 1886, p. 175.

If not for the valiant effort of the 11th Illinois Col. W.H.L. Wallace's (Figure 4.45) line might have been rolled up. The Union line bent back in an inverted L as all that remained engaged were Wallace's brigade and the 11th Illinois. Lieut. Col. Ransom ordered the beleaguered Illinois regiment to retire as Col. Hanson and Lieut. Col. Forrest struck and the 11th dissolved into groups of desperate men fighting their way out of a hellish situation. Going through Forrest's cavalry, which was between them and safety, was the only recourse for many. One soldier wrote "There was no order given that I heard. The whole line just seemed to melt away and scatter."³⁵⁹ Lieut. Col. Ransom collected a handful of men who gathered around the regimental colors and fought their way to the rear. In the melee the Confederates shot down Color Sergeant Hurbert A. McCaleb. When he fell, Color Corporal William Armstrong grabbed the colors and with Ransom led the group of survivors to the rear.³⁶⁰

The retreat of the 11th Illinois turned into hand-to-hand combat. The men fought with

³⁵⁹ Huffstodt, *Hard Dying Men*, 70.

³⁶⁰ O.R. Series I, Vol. VII, 199-200; Huffstodt, *Hard Dying Men*, 70-71; Vaughan, *Staff Ride Handbook, Part I*, 53-55.

muskets, bayonets and swords as they tried to make their way to the safety of the newly formed Union line. Forrest's troopers seized the guns of McAllister's battery. Col. W.H.L. Wallace's brigade fell back to Buford Hollow where Lieut. George Carrington described the scene: "The woods seemed full of men all drifting to the rear, wounded men assisted by comrades moving slowly and sullenly."³⁶¹ Col. Wallace later wrote his wife: "The Eleventh lost nearly everything but their flag and their honor."³⁶²

February 15 – Union Line Regroups, 12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Brig. Gen. U.S. Grant, having concluded his conference with Flag Officer Foote, boarded a boat and returned to shore. A shaken Captain William S. Hillyer (Figure 4.46) greeted the general and described the scene on the Union right. He told his commander that the Union right was in full retreat. Grant, some four or five miles from Brig. Gen. John A. McClelland's First Division, found his horse and galloped in that direction. He passed Brig. Gen. C.F. Smith's Second Division on the Union left. His men showed no signs of panic, holding the flank as ordered. When he reached them, Brig. Gen. Lew Wallace evidenced no excitement nor did his men within the ranks but Grant did discover that he had sent Col. John M. Thayer's (Figure 4.47) brigade forward to aid the survivors of the Confederate attack.³⁶³

Brig. Gen. Lew Wallace ordered two batteries onto Wynn's Ferry Road, placing them in what proved to be a good defensive position, "on the brow of a descent, down which the road narrowed as it dipped between walls of low trees of second growth."³⁶⁴

³⁶¹ Huffstodt, *Hard Dying Men*, 73.

³⁶² Isabel Wallace, *The Life and Letters of General W.H.L. Wallace*, (Chicago, IL: R.R. Donnelley & Sons Company, 1909; reprint, Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2000), 165.

³⁶³ Long, *Personal Memoirs*, 155-156; Jobe, "Forts Henry and Donelson," 47; Wallace, "The Capture of Fort Donelson," 420-421.

³⁶⁴ Wallace, *An Autobiography, Volume I*, 405.

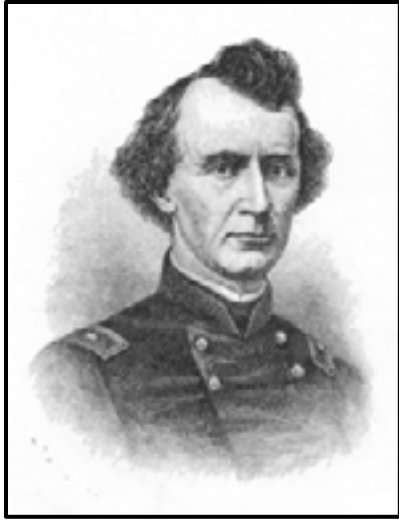


Figure 4.45. William H.L. Wallace, US; shown as a brigadier general, Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buel, editors, *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, New York: Century Co., 1887, Vol. 1, p. 478.



Figure 4.46. Capt. William S. Hillyer, US, Library of Congress.

opened with canister and grape, ripping the Wood's Battery A and Taylor's Battery B, 1st Illinois Light Artillery, were placed astride Wynn's Ferry Road. The 32nd Illinois took up position on the right flank of the artillery with the 58th Ohio on the slope of the hill behind the Illinois soldiers. On the left flank was the 1st Nebraska, with the 58th Illinois to their right. About fifty yards behind the Nebraskans stood the 76th Ohio. In reserve behind the main line on Wynn's Ferry Road were the

46th and 57th Illinois; their job was to fill any hole punched by the Confederate attack.³⁶⁵

As Brig. Gen. Lew Wallace had envisioned, Col. John C. Brown's Tennessee brigade charged up Wynn's Ferry Road, one gun of Graves' battery firing in support behind them. The Union artillery and the 1st Nebraska took the brunt of the assault. The Confederates could not get through the thicket on either side of Wynn's Ferry Road and tried to force their way up the road. Expecting to confront demoralized troops they had pushed around all morning, they instead met fresh troops. The Union gunners

underbrush and the Confederate infantry. Driven back under the heavy artillery and incessant small arms fire of the Nebraskans, the 3rd Tennessee regiment panicked.³⁶⁶

Lieut. Col. Thomas M. Gordon ordered the 3rd Tennessee to retreat, forcing Col. Brown to fall back with his other two regiments and reform his line. The Confederates attacked again with no better results. The energy of the Confederate attack begun that morning had run its course. Brig. Gen. Simon Buckner's line now pulled back and traded fire with Wallace's new line across Wynn's Ferry Road. Buckner stated that he would hold the line until reinforcements arrived so that the rest of the Confederate army could make its escape on Forge Road, which was open to them (Figure 4.48).³⁶⁷

³⁶⁵ Cooling, "The First Nebraska Infantry Regiment," 140-141; *O.R.* Series I, Vol. VII, 252.

³⁶⁶ Cooling, "The First Nebraska Infantry Regiment," 142; Wallace, *An Autobiography*, Volume I, 405-406; Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 318

³⁶⁷ *O.R.* Series I, Vol. VII, 332; Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 212-213.



Figure 4.47. Post-war image of John M. Thayer, US, Library of Congress.

February 15 – Pillow Orders a Retreat

Brig. Gen. Buckner, who had moved up with the Confederate formation near Col. Brown's position on Wynn's Ferry Road, sent for Colonel Robert Farquharson's 41st Tennessee and additional artillery. While trying to regroup in an effort to finish the job begun that morning, he received an order from Brig. Gen. Pillow to pull back to within the Confederate outer works. Pillow's troops, who were in line on Buckner's left, had already begun their withdrawal.³⁶⁸ Pillow stated: "I called off the further pursuit, after seven and a half hours of continuous and bloody conflict. After the troops were called off from the pursuit, orders were immediately given to the different commands to form and retire to their original position in the intrenchments [sic]."³⁶⁹

³⁶⁸ Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson*, 180-182; Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 322-323.

³⁶⁹ O.R. Series I, Vol. VII, 283.

With a single order Brig. Gen. Gideon Pillow had negated the effort and sacrifices of his men. An enraged Buckner found Brig. Gen. John Floyd who, Buckner later reported, was not aware of Pillow's order.³⁷⁰ Floyd told him "that nothing had occurred to change my view of the necessity of the evacuation of this post. . ."³⁷¹ Floyd ordered Buckner to stop the retreat and rode off to confront Pillow.

After meeting with Pillow, Floyd changed his mind regarding the retreat Pillow had ordered. The Confederate commander later wrote: "This movement was nearly executed before I was aware of it. As the enemy were pressing upon the trenches, I deemed that the execution of this last order was all that was left to be done."³⁷² The enemy was not, in fact, pressing at all. The Confederate command at Fort Donelson failed the soldiers and their country. Pillow deserves the lion's share of the blame for issuing the order but Floyd cannot go blameless as he was the commanding officer and agreed to its execution rather than cancel it. The chance the Confederates had of retreating out of Fort Donelson to Nashville melted away like the snow on the battlefield (Figure 4.49).³⁷³

February 15 – Grant Arrives on the Battlefield

While the Confederate generals struggled to figure out a course of action, the general in command of the battered Union army had already decided on his. Brig. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant (Figure 4.50) arrived behind the Union line on Wynn's Ferry Road in the afternoon to find Brig. Gen. John A. McClernand and Brig. Gen. Lew Wallace sitting on their horses talking about the battle. Accompanied only by staff officer Colonel Joseph D. Webster, Grant rode up chewing a cigar given to him by Flag Officer Foote. He carried a roll of papers in his right hand that Lew Wallace thought might have been telegrams. Grant acknowledged the two generals and told

³⁷⁰ Jobe, "Forts Henry and Donelson," 47.

³⁷¹ O.R. Series I, Vol. VII, 332.

³⁷² O.R. Series I, Vol. VII, 269.

³⁷³ Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 323-326; Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 219-220; Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson*, 180-183.

them Foote was taking the gunboats back to Cairo and that the Union line must be withdrawn out of range of the fort. It seemed he was contemplating a siege.³⁷⁴

Then, according to Brig. Gen. Wallace, Brig. Gen. Grant was told that no Union troops held the right and that the road to Charlotte was open. This stopped the commanding general cold. He crushed the papers in his hands and in a clear, calm voice told the generals, "Gentlemen, that road must be recovered before night."³⁷⁵ Again according to Wallace, Grant told them, "I will go to Smith now. At the sound of your fire, he will support you with an attack on his side."³⁷⁶ As Grant and Webster rode off they ordered the men who were milling around to fill their cartridge boxes and get in line. "The enemy," Col. Webster called out, "is trying to escape and he must not be permitted to do so."³⁷⁷ Years later Grant wrote: "This acted like a charm. The men only wanted someone to give them a command."³⁷⁸ Brig. Gen. Grant also sent a note to Flag Officer Foote reading: "If all the gunboats can will immediately make their appearance to the enemy, it may secure a victory. I do not expect the gunboats to go into action, but make an appearance, and throw a few shells at long range."³⁷⁹ Commander Benjamin M. Dove, who had taken command of the gunboats, acceded to Grant's request. The *Pittsburg* had already left with Foote aboard, leaving only the *Carondelet*, *St. Louis* and *Louisville*. Due to the boat's extensive

damage, Dove ruled out the *Carondelet*. He brought the *St. Louis* and *Louisville* out of their anchorage and steamed toward the fort. Given the condition of the gunboats, anything more than what Grant had asked would have been foolish. The vessels did not close in on the fort. The *St. Louis* fired a few rounds at long range, the fort replied at least once, and the two boats returned to their base.³⁸⁰

February 15 – McClelland and Wallace Reestablish the Union Right

Around three o'clock Brig. Gen. Grant returned to the Union right and ordered Brig. Gen. John McClelland and Brig. Gen. Lew Wallace to attack the Confederate right and close the Charlotte Road. McClelland, his division spent as a result of the morning fighting, asked Wallace if he would take the lead. The Hoosier general agreed and requested that McClelland loan him Col. Morgan Smith's brigade. The brigade was part of Wallace's old command and the reunion excited the general and the men. Gathering his troops, Wallace moved out in command of ten regiments—the 8th Missouri and 11th Indiana under the command of Col. Morgan L. Smith; Col. Leonard F. Ross's brigade of the 17th and 49th Illinois; the 31st and 44th Indiana and the 17th and 25th Kentucky under the command of Col. Charles Cruft; and the 46th and 58th Illinois of Thayer's brigade, which served as his reserve.³⁸¹

³⁷⁴ Wallace, *An Autobiography*, Volume I, 411; Grant, *Person Memoirs*, 157; Bearss, "General C.F. Smith's Attack on the Rebel Right," 24; Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 328; Wallace, "The Capture of Fort Donelson," 421-422.

³⁷⁵ Wallace, *An Autobiography*, 412.

³⁷⁶ Ibid. *O.R.N.*, Series I, Vol. 22, 588; Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 330-331; Smith, *The Timberclads in the Civil War*, 251; *O.R.* Series I, Vol. VII, 401.

³⁷⁷ Long, *Personal Memoirs*, 157; Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 330.

³⁷⁸ Long, *Personal Memoirs*, 157; Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 330.

³⁷⁹ Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 225.

³⁸⁰

³⁸¹ Wallace, *An Autobiography*, 413-415; *O.R.* Series I, Vol. VII, 238, 245; Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 332-334. *O.R.N.*, Series I, Vol. 22, 588; Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 330-331; Smith, *The Timberclads in the Civil War*, 251; *O.R.* Series I, Vol. VII, 401.

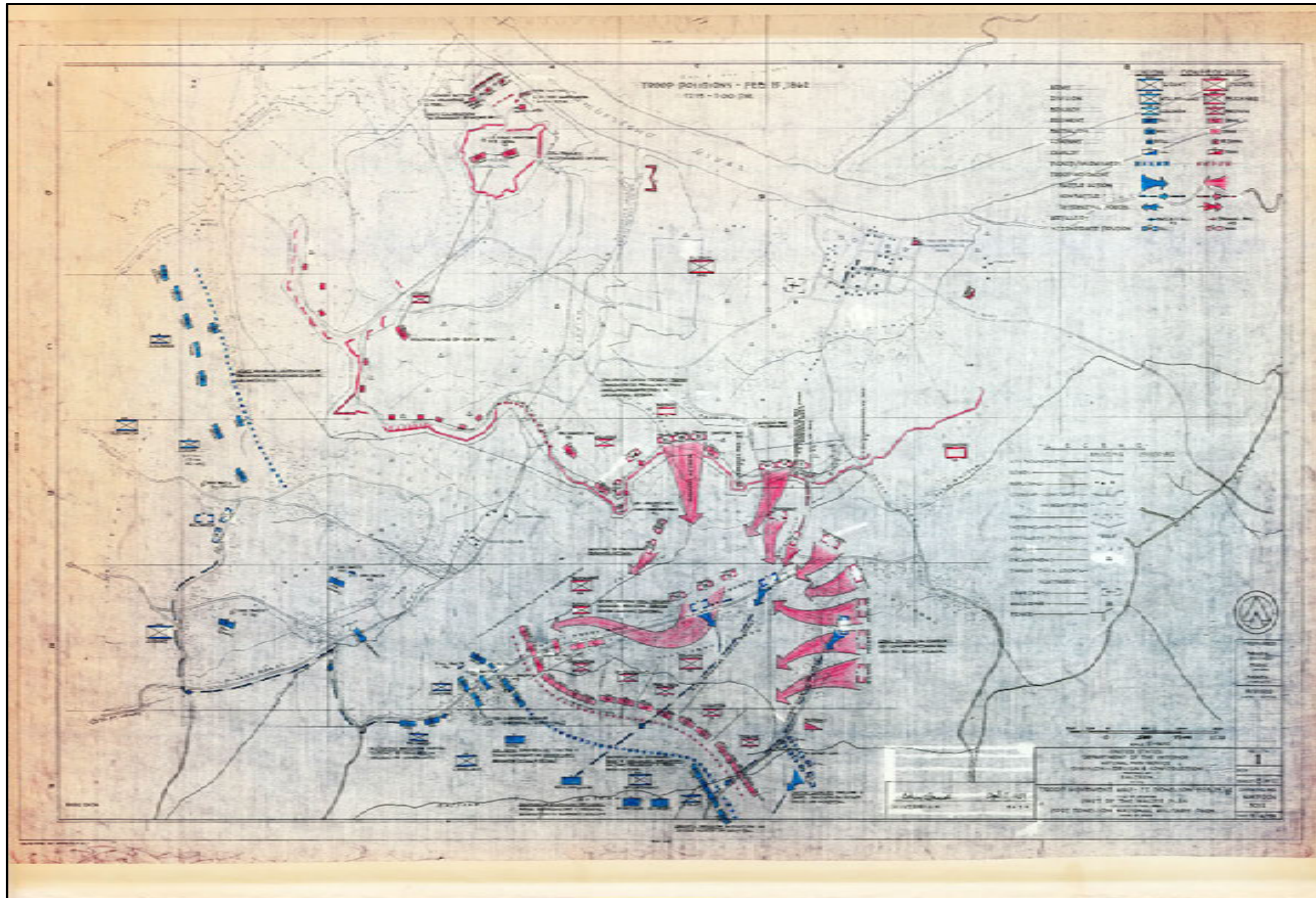


Figure 4.48. Troop Positions 12:15-1:00 PM February 15, 1862. Edwin C. Bearss, *Troop Movement Map – Fort Donelson February 15, 1862, Map 8 of 11, Part of the Master Plan of Fort Donelson National Military Park, Dover, Tennessee*. Washington, D.C: United States Government Printing Office, 1959.

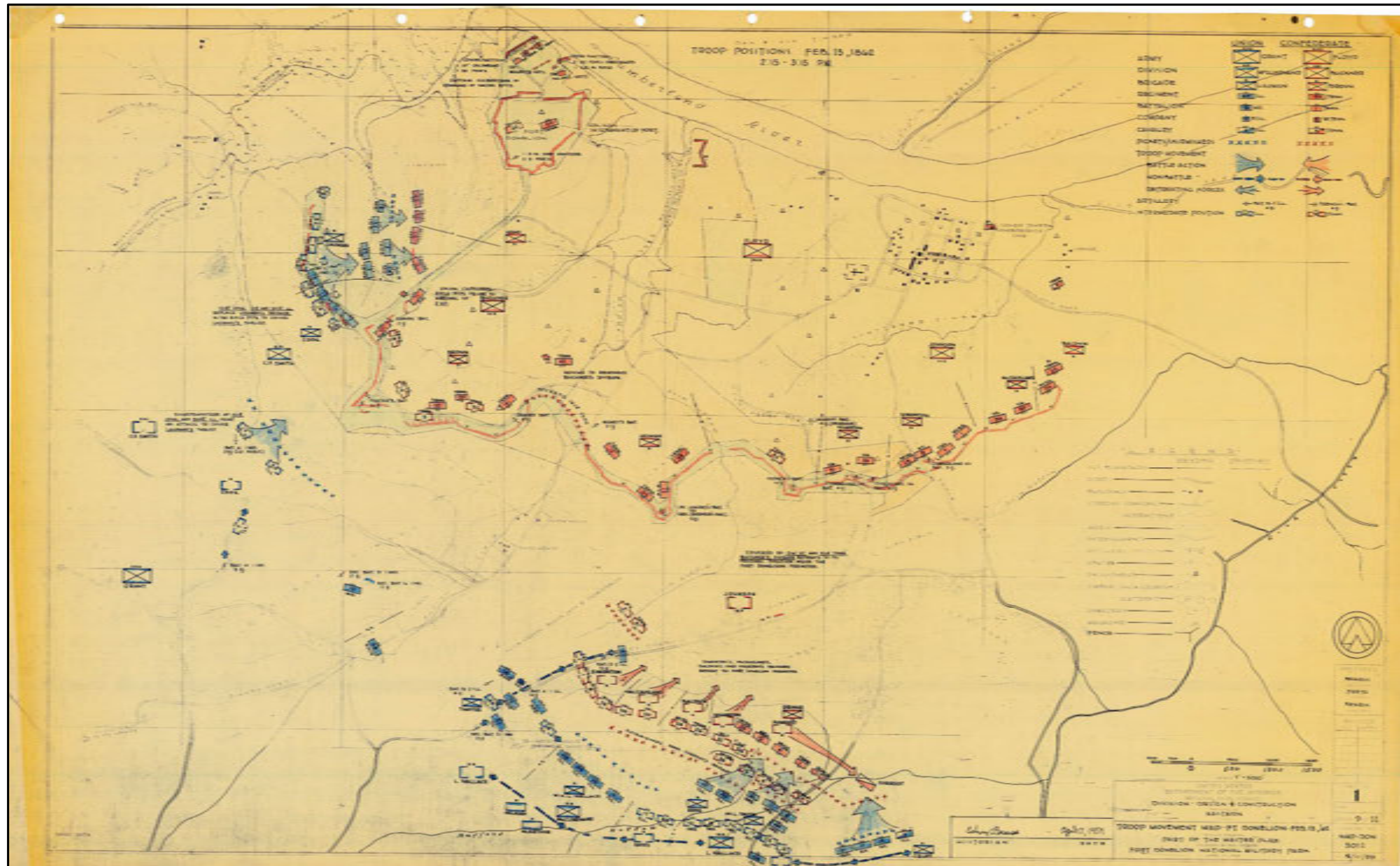


Figure 4.49. Troop Positions 2:15-3:15 PM February 15, 1862. Edwin C. Bearss, *Troop Movement Map – Fort Donelson February 15, 1862, Map 9 of 11, Part of the Master Plan of Fort Donelson National Military Park, Dover, Tennessee*. Washington, D.C: United States Government Printing Office, 1959.



Figure 4.50. A determined Brig. Gen. Grant returned to the battlefield from the steamboat on the afternoon of February 15, 1862, Library of Congress.

Brig. Gen. Wallace aligned his force with Col. Smith's brigade as the advance. He placed Cruft's brigade on the right, Ross's on the left, and Thayer's in reserve. The brigades deployed, Cruft's brigade getting into position last and coming under fire as it did so. Wallace, ready to move, ordered Col. Smith forward. Smith, who knew the general well, said "Wait until I light a fresh cigar." That done, the Union line surged forward.³⁸²

By the time Brig. Gen. Wallace began to move out of Bufford Hollow, most of the Confederate infantry had left the field, abandoning the ground they had won earlier. Drake's Brigade, which Brig. Gen. Bushrod Johnson had ordered to simply "display" and cover the retreat of the rest of the Confederate infantry, held an unfortified ridge just south of Wynn's Ferry Road and served as a rear guard. Col. Morgan Smith's two regiments, trained in Zouave tactics, were urged by

Wallace to use their training in the assault:³⁸³ "They were nimble on their hands and knees far beyond the ordinary infantryman, that they could load on their back and fire with precision on their bellies, and were instinctively observant of order in the midst of disorder" (Figure 4.51).³⁸⁴

Though the after-action reports make no mention of the *Zouave* tactics, Lieutenant Thomas Wise Durham of the 11th Indiana described the assault in his memoirs.

We dropped flat on the ground (this was our Zouave tactics) and we crawled forward on our bellies, not firing a shot, letting the enemy shoot over us until they thought we had retreated and then slackened their fire; then we would spring to our feet, give them a volley and at them with bayonet. The fact of us crawling toward them while they were firing surprised them and when we gave them the volley and charge so close to them they did not understand our tactics. They would fallback when we would charge, then they would rally and make another stand; we would again drop to the ground and crawl toward them. We kept these tactics up until we drove them back into their works.

The tactics employed by the 11th Indiana to good effect originated in the French army in the 1830s. At the beginning of the Civil War several regiments adopted the unusual tactics and flamboyant uniform of the French Zouaves.³⁸⁵

Regardless of the overall tactics, Wallace's command pressed the Confederate position, which had no real intention of standing and fighting the new threat. Cruft's brigade on the Union right encountered Drake's Brigade as it pushed up the hill in line of battle and threatened to flank Drake's left.

³⁸² Wallace, *An Autobiography*, 414-415; Wallace, "The Capture of Fort Donelson," 423-424; Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 231-232.

³⁸³ Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 232; Cummings, *The Curious Career of Bushrod Johnson*, 200; Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 334; Jobe, "Forts Henry and Donelson," 60.

³⁸⁴ Wallace, *An Autobiography*, 416.

³⁸⁵ William L. Priest, *Swear Like A Trooper: A Dictionary of Military Terms & Phrases*, (Charlottesville, VA: Rockbridge Publishing, 2000), 222.



Figure 4.51. Col. Lew Wallace and members of the 11th Illinois, Paul F. Mottelay and T. Campbell-Copeland, editors, *The Soldier in Our Civil War: A Pictorial History of the Conflict, 1861-1865*, New York, 1886, Vol. 1, p. 229.

The Confederate colonel, who could get only token reinforcements, continued shifting to the right to avoid being flanked.³⁸⁶

At one point in the Union effort to regain lost ground, Cruft's 17th Kentucky became engaged with Confederate Col. Roger Hanson's 2nd Kentucky. The fight proved hard and was probably personal. It took three charges by the Union Kentucky regiment to dislodge Hanson's Confederate Kentuckians. Given the disparity in manpower between the forces engaged it is no wonder that the usually offensive-minded Lieut. Col. Forrest advised Col. Drake to retreat.³⁸⁷

In the advance against the Confederate rear guard, Col. Morgan L. Smith's (Figure 4.52) cigar was shot from his mouth. Uninjured, the colonel fished out another, obtained a match from an enlisted man and pushed on. The entire Union line followed

Drake's fighting withdrawal as he inched back to the Confederate outer works. Wallace's Third Division made the assault and stood within musket range, seventy-five yards or so, from the Confederate line.³⁸⁸

Union Major John McDonald, 8th Missouri, wrote of the successful operation in his after-action report: "We regained the position and maintained it all that night by standing in position and stationing pickets within 80 yards of the enemy's intrenchments [sic]."³⁸⁹ The colonel of the 11th Indiana, George F. McGinnis, stated "[we] occupied a position in advance of that from which a portion of our forces had been compelled to retire in the morning and within 500 yards of the enemy's intrenchments [sic]. We held that position under a heavy fire from the enemy's guns until ordered to fall back and take position for the night."³⁹⁰ The Confederate Right Wing, which spent most of February 15 pushing McClernand's First Division from Dudley's Hill and down Wynn's Ferry Road, could only watch as Brig. Gen. Lew Wallace's Third Division regained the ground in just a few hours. Is it any wonder that a despondent Confederate Brig. Gen. John B. Floyd wrote, "we had no force adequate to oppose their progress, we had to submit to the mortification of seeing the ground which we had won by such a severe conflict in the morning reoccupied by the enemy."³⁹¹ While Floyd's statement may not have been entirely accurate—the Confederates might have stopped Wallace's advance with a well-placed division—they had in essence ceded the hard won ground back to the Union army.

³⁸⁶ Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 334-336.

³⁸⁷ *O.R.* Series I, Vol. VII, 362; Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 336.

³⁸⁸ Wallace, "The Capture of Fort Donelson," 424-425; Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 337.

³⁸⁹ *O.R.* Series I, Vol. VII, 235.

³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 234.

³⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 269.



Figure 4.52. Col. Morgan L. Smith, US, pictured as a brigadier general, Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buel, editors, *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, New York: Century Co., 1887, Vol. 1, p. 410.

February 15 – Brig. Gen. C.F. Smith's Attack on the Confederate Right

As Brig. Gen. C.F. Smith's soldiers woke up to another cold February morning, they began to hear the sound of gunfire on the Union right. As the morning grew warmer the battle sounds increased. By the time he learned that Brig. Gen. Lew Wallace had reinforced the Union right with one of his brigades, Smith began to fear a Confederate attack on his line. To alleviate his fears, Smith directed Colonel John Cook to send the 13th Missouri in support of Battery K of the 1st Missouri Light Artillery on his right and to shift the 52nd Indiana to Colonel Jacob G. Lauman's left flank. With these redeployments the southern portion of the Union left, the area under Cook's command, was down to two regiments.³⁹²

A little before 2:00 p.m., Brig. Gen. U.S. Grant and his aide Col. Joseph D. Webster arrived in the area of Brig. Gen. C.F. Smith's Second Division, where they found the general and his staff sitting under a large tree on a ridge.

³⁹² Bearss, "General C.F. Smith's Attack on the Rebel Right," 21.

That vantage point provided an excellent view of the Confederate line. Grant called to Brig. Gen. Smith: "All has failed on our right—you must take Fort Donelson." Smith rose to his feet and replied: "I will do it!"³⁹³

Grant briefed Brig. Gen. Smith on the situation on the right. As the two generals conferred, Smith sent an aide, Captain Thomas Newsham, to find his field commanders and alert them of the coming assault. Second Division, not relying on surprise, opened the proceedings with an artillery barrage. Two Parrotts—a section of Battery K, 1st Missouri Light Artillery—opened fire.³⁹⁴

Col. Jacob G. Lauman (Figure 4.53) would command the main attack, led by the 2nd Iowa and followed by the 52nd Indiana. The two regiments deployed in columns of battalions, five companies each. The 25th Indiana and 7th and 14th Iowa, in that order, followed the lead regiments in line of battle with the crack marksmen of the 14th Missouri deployed on the flanks as skirmishers. The men were ordered to fix bayonets and "uncap their muskets," that is, to take the percussion cap off their muskets. The old-school Brig. Gen. Smith wanted a bayonet charge.³⁹⁵ Smith ordered Col. John Cook's brigade, now consisting of the 12th Iowa and 50th Illinois, "to make a feint attack to draw the enemy's fire."³⁹⁶ A member of the 50th Illinois remembered, "Our general direction or line of advance, led us over two steep ridges and across two deep ravines, the timber had been cut low and the limbs trimmed so as to impede our progress."³⁹⁷

³⁹³ Ibid, 25.

³⁹⁴ Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 338; *O.R.* Series I, Vol. LII, Part 1, 108; *O.R.* Series I, Vol. VII, 226; Bearss, "General C.F. Smith's Attack on the Rebel Right," 26.

³⁹⁵ *O.R.* Series I, Vol. LII, Part 1, 10; *O.R.* Series I, Vol. VII, 228; Bearss, "General C.F. Smith's Attack on the Rebel Right," 28; Baker, *With the Western Sharpshooters*, 156.

³⁹⁶ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VII, 223

³⁹⁷ Bearss, "General C.F. Smith's Attack on the Rebel Right," 21; Charles F. Hubert, *History of the Fiftieth Regiment Illinois Volunteer Infantry in the War of the Rebellion*, (Kansas City, MO: Western Veteran Publishing Company, 1894), 67.

Cook's men pushed through the obstructions, focusing their efforts on Porter's Battery. The Confederate artillery opened on the blue line with what Colonel Joseph J. Woods called "a galling fire of grape." The brigade charged the battery but failed to take it. They did gain ground and from there kept that portion of the Confederate line busy as the rest of Second Division trudged forward.³⁹⁸

Brig. Gen. Charles Ferguson Smith was fifty-four years old when he gathered his division for the assault on the Confederate right. He divided his lead regiment, the 2nd Iowa, into left and right wings. "The mustached old General, who, wearing everything which regulations assigned to his rank, placed himself in the center, sitting rigidly erect upon his horse with his face toward the enemy."³⁹⁹ Just before he ordered the brigade to advance, Smith addressed his lead regiment: "Second Iowa, you must take the fort—take the caps off your guns—fix bayonets and I will support you."⁴⁰⁰ Taking his place behind the right wing of the 2nd Iowa, the old general ordered Col. Lauman's brigade forward (Figure 4.54).⁴⁰¹

When Brig. Gen. Grant first discussed the assault on the Confederate right, he assured Brig. Gen. Smith it was thinly held. In fact, one regiment, the 30th Tennessee, held Brig. Gen. Simon Buckner's old position. However, by the time the Union assault got organized Buckner's Division had returned or was on their way to the line. The Confederate general wrote: "My troops were already much exhausted, but returned as rapidly as possible, a distance of 2 miles, to their positions."⁴⁰² Without this infusion of troops Smith's attack may well have ended the battle (Figure 4.55).

Buckner managed to get the 3rd, 18th, 32nd and 41st Tennessee regiments moving

back toward the outer works overlooking the rugged ground that the Union soldiers were crossing to reach their old positions. Colonel Joseph Palmer, 18th Tennessee, explained, "before I could get all my dead and wounded from the field . . . an order came to me . . . to move my command immediately back to the position from which I started on that morning."⁴⁰³ Graves' and Porter's batteries were also moved to their old positions.⁴⁰⁴



Figure 4.53. Col. Jacob G. Lauman, US, Holland Thompson, editor, *The Photographic History of the Civil War complete and unabridged two volumes in one*, Vol. X, p. 205.



Figure 4.54. Brig. Gen. Charles Ferguson Smith, US, Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buel, editors, *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, New York: Century Co., 1887, Vol. 1, p. 411.

³⁹⁸ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VII, 223; Gott *Where the South Lost the War*, 228.

³⁹⁹ Baker, *With the Western Sharpshooters*, 21.

⁴⁰⁰ Bearss, "General C.F. Smith's Attack on the Rebel Right," 28-29.

⁴⁰¹ Warner, *Generals in Blue*, 455; Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 339.

⁴⁰² *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VII, 333.

⁴⁰³ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VII, 354.

⁴⁰⁴ Bearss, "General C.F. Smith's Attack on the Rebel Right," 30; Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 344.

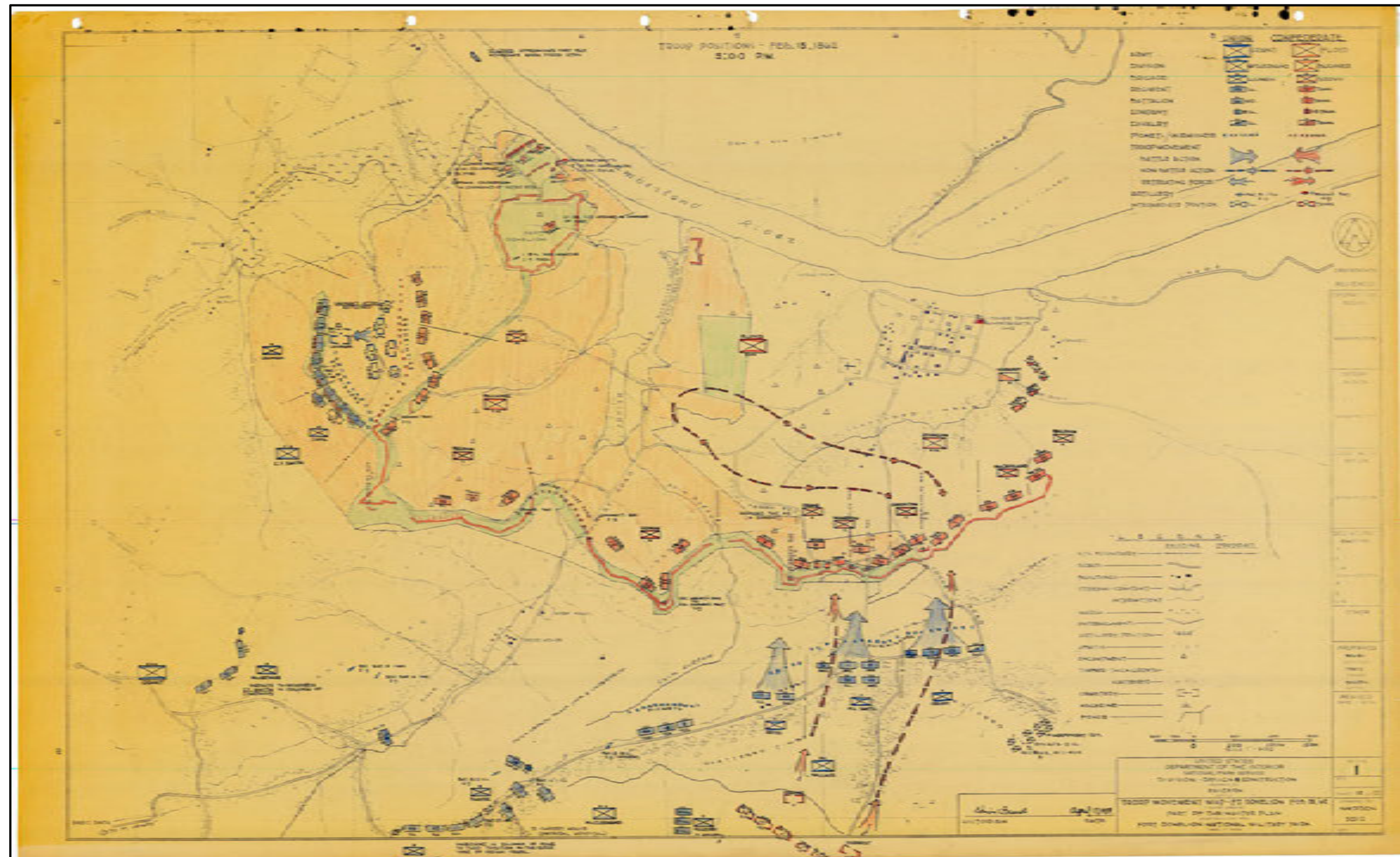


Figure 4.55. Troop Positions 5:00 PM February 15, 1862. Edwin C. Bearss, *Troop Movement Map – Fort Donelson February 15, 1862, Map 10 of 11, Part of the Master Plan of Fort Donelson National Military Park, Dover, Tennessee*. Washington, D.C: United States Government Printing Office, 1959.



Figure 4.56. A highly stylized print of the Union attack on Fort Donelson by Kurz and Allison, Library of Congress.

A sergeant in the 2nd Iowa described the obstacles they faced: “In front of the [Confederate position] there was a cleared space about six yards wide, then for the distance of about one hundred and fifty yards, the timber had been felled in all directions, to prevent an advance upon the fortifications. From this to the bottom of the ravine there was a skirt of open woods, near two hundred yards. At the bottom of the ravine stood a rail fence, and from this, clear beyond our left flank, the ground was clear.”⁴⁰⁵ Forty years later Captain Henry I. Smith of the 7th Iowa remembered charging up toward the Confederate works: “It was impossible to keep much of an alignment in the charge, on account of the obstruction, abatis and natural conformation of the land.”⁴⁰⁶

Three companies of the 3rd Tennessee were alone on the far right of the Confederate line, the point at which the center and left of

Lauman’s attack was directed. The Union force crossed the open field, got through a ravine, and reached the rail fence that they threw aside before heading up the hill. The men became entangled in the Confederate abatis but somehow kept their formation together. No shots were heard as they struggled through the morass of felled trees but as they cleared the obstructions with their goal in sight the Confederates opened fire (Figure 4.56).⁴⁰⁷

In the clearing below the Confederate line the 25th Indiana and the 14th Iowa deployed in line of battle. The 2nd Iowa pressed the charge home. Later, Col. John W. Head recalled the actions of Major James J. Turner’s three companies, which held the Confederate left: “They held their position with great gallantry, pouring a destructive fire into the ranks of the enemy until he passed between

⁴⁰⁵ V.P. Twombly, *The Second Iowa Infantry at Fort Donelson, February 13, 1862*, (Des Moines, IA: Plain Talk Printing House, N.D.), 15.

⁴⁰⁶ Smith, *History of the Seventh Iowa Veteran Volunteer Infantry*, 39.

⁴⁰⁷ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VII, 378; John T. Bell, *Tramps and Triumphs of the Second Iowa Infantry*, (Omaha, NE: Gibson, Miller & Richardson Printers, Binders and Stationers, 1886; reprint, Des Moines, IA: The Valley Bank and Trust Company, 1961), 9-10.

the pits and overpowered them.”⁴⁰⁸ The first volley of the Confederates was high, raining bark and debris on Brig. Gen. C.F. Smith’s soldiers. The second, delivered at point blank range, staggered the Iowans.

Over 200 of the 2nd Iowa were killed or wounded. A captain, mortally wounded, shouted at his men: “Go! Go! Don’t stop for me!” Other officers including Colonel James M. Tuttle and Lieutenant Colonel James Baker were also hit. Color Sergeant Henry B. Doolittle fell and Corporal Garfield S. Page picked up the fallen flag only to be shot down. Corporal James H. Churcher retrieved the colors and reached the trenches only to fall before he crossed them. The last member of the color guard, Corporal Voltaire Twombly, grabbed the flag and was immediately hit and he dropped. Fortunately, the ball that hit him was spent and only knocked him down. He regained his feet and waved the flag as the Hawkeyes entered Fort Donelson. In 1897, Twombly received the Congressional Medal of Honor for his action.⁴⁰⁹

Most of the Tennesseans fled; those that did not were bayoneted by the enraged Iowans. The earthworks taken, Union soldiers planted The Stars and Stripes atop them. Col. Tuttle, still on the field, ordered the 2nd Iowa to fire on the fleeing Confederates. The 25th and 52nd Indiana reached the Confederate outer works soon after the 2nd Iowa. The rest of Col. Lauman’s brigade followed and Brig. Gen. Smith began organizing it to finish off the Confederate resistance. What remained of Confederate Maj. Turner’s three Tennessee companies took up a position some 400 yards east of the earthworks. Col. James W. Head brought the rest of the 30th Tennessee back and directed the Confederate reinforcements as they arrived. The new position was higher than the one they had lost but if it fell Union

artillery could fire into the water batteries, which would compromise them.⁴¹⁰

Two 10-pounder Parrotts of Battery K, 1st Missouri Light Artillery, were brought into the captured line to aid the Union assault on the new Confederate line. Graves’ and Porter’s batteries, supported by a couple of the smaller siege guns in Fort Donelson, helped stem the tide of the battle. Confederate reinforcements, now in place, probably outnumbered the Union troops on the heights.⁴¹¹ As the shadows of the day grew long, Lieut. Col. A.J. Babcock of the 7th Illinois ordered a charge on Porter’s Battery only to have it countermanded by Brig. Gen. Smith. The general told Babcock: “It is too late; I will leave that work for you tomorrow.”⁴¹²

Around 4:00 p.m. Smith called off the attack and both sides settled into what would be another cold night. Taking the outer works had cost the Union army some 400 casualties, about half of them suffered by the 2nd Iowa. Confederate Brig. Gen. Buckner overestimated the size of the force he faced and never ordered a counter attack that might have pushed Smith’s thin line off the ridge. But the men holding his line were spent; with the exception of the 49th and portions of the 30th, 42nd and 50th Tennessee, which reinforced Buckner, all had fought in the morning attack. There was sporadic firing during the night but nothing else. Brig. Gen. Smith allowed his men fires, which made their night much more comfortable.⁴¹³

⁴⁰⁸ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VII, 378.

⁴⁰⁹ Bell, *Tramps and Triumphs of the Second Iowa Infantry*, 10; Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 228; Bearss, “General C.F. Smith’s Attack on the Rebel Right,” 33; Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 342.

⁴¹⁰ Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 343; *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VII, 221; Bearss, “General C.F. Smith’s Attack on the Rebel Right,” 33-37.

⁴¹¹ Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 229-231; *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VII, 401; Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 245-249.

⁴¹² Ambrose, *History of the Seventh Regiment Illinois Volunteer Infantry*, 34.

⁴¹³ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VII, 333; Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson*, 187-188; Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 230.

February 15 – Caring for the Wounded

On the Confederate left more than 1,000 men were missing, wounded or killed outright. Some of the Confederate regiments brought their wounded with them as they returned to the outer works. The rest lay in the cold, wet fields where they fell. Brig. Gen. Gideon Pillow reported: “We left upon the field nearly all of his [Brig. Gen. U.S. Grant’s] wounded, because we could not remove them. We left the dead unburied, because we could not bury them. Such carnage and conflict has perhaps never before occurred on this continent.”⁴¹⁴ It seems Pillow may have been mistaken. Brig. Gen. Bushrod Johnson directed efforts to recover the wounded from the battlefield as well as any weapons and ammunition that could be found.⁴¹⁵ Lieut. Col. Forrest confirmed what Johnson reported, stating: “We were employed the remainder of the evening in gathering up the arms, and assisting in getting off the wounded. I was three times over the battle-field.”⁴¹⁶

Thomas W. Fry, Medical Director of the Third Division, reported: “Most of the forenoon on the day of battle I was busily engaged at the hospital on the extreme right, in a narrow valley near the scene of action, where the wounded from Brig. Gen. McClelland’s division was rapidly crowding in.”⁴¹⁷ Fry’s work, it seemed, involved wounded brought off the field as the battle raged. A captain of the 8th Illinois who took a party out to bury the Union dead and bring back the wounded failed in his mission because he was “unable to reach the ground, the pickets of the enemy still holding it.”⁴¹⁸ One source indicates that Confederate surgeons removed only the walking wounded from the battlefield. Those left on the field

suffered and most probably died during the long cold night of February 15-16.⁴¹⁹

The Confederate reports are generally silent concerning the care the wounded on the right of their line received following Brig. Gen. C.F. Smith’s attack. In one of his after-action reports Brig. Gen. Pillow indicated that the Confederates spent until about midnight bringing in wounded.⁴²⁰ An officer in the 2nd Iowa confirmed that the Confederates were attending to their injured: “Inside the main line of fortifications we could hear the cries and groans of the rebel wounded as they were being picked up and conveyed to the hospitals.”⁴²¹ Chaplain Frederick F. Kiner, 14th Iowa, wrote: “As we sat upon the side of the embankment that night, which was cold and freezing, our hearts were often pained by the groans of the poor wounded men who lay bleeding upon the field.”⁴²²

It is not known how dangerous it was for those trying to retrieve the wounded from between the lines but some accounts indicate that the men feared for their safety. The reports of some Union regiments indicate that successful forays were undertaken. Col. Morgan Smith, 8th Missouri wrote: “[We] had details from the Eleventh Indiana and Eighth Missouri carrying the wounded from the battle ground of the morning to the rear nearly all night. The wounded thus carried off were principally from the Eighth [Missouri], Eleventh, and Twentieth Illinois Regiments.”⁴²³ The colonel of the 25th Indiana praised the work of his surgeons. One cared for the wounded brought to a field hospital he organized. The other remained with the regiment and treated the men as they fell during battle. The colonel also reported: “The regimental band and chaplain were actively engaged in removing the wounded from the field.”⁴²⁴

⁴¹⁴ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VII, 283.

⁴¹⁵ Cummings, *The Curious Career of Bushrod Johnson*, 200.

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 385.

⁴¹⁷ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VII, 242.

⁴¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 187.

⁴¹⁹ Huffstodt, *Hard Dying Men*, 75.

⁴²⁰ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VII, 287.

⁴²¹ Bell, *Tramps and Triumphs of the Second Iowa Infantry*, 10.

⁴²² Kiner, *One Year’s Soldiering*, 34.

⁴²³ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VII, 233.

⁴²⁴ *Ibid.*, 228.

Brigadier General Gideon Pillow wrote, “We sent up from Dover 1,134 wounded. A Federal surgeon's certificate which I have seen says there were about 400 wounded Confederates in the hospital at Paducah, making 1,534 wounded.”⁴²⁵ The Confederates also sent 224 prisoners by boat to Nashville sometime before the surrender, either on February 15 or early in the morning of February 16, 1862. Total casualties for the Union forces were 510 killed, 2,152 wounded and the 224 captured noted above.⁴²⁶

February 16 – The Confederate Council of War

Any bold action or aggressiveness on the part of the Confederate generals at Fort Donelson ended in the late morning or early afternoon of February 15. At some point during that time Brig. Gen. Gideon Pillow telegraphed departmental commander Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston exclaiming: “On the honor of a soldier the day is ours!” By the end of the day the gains the Confederate forces made on the Union right had vaporized when Pillow ordered a withdrawal. Brig. Gen. C.F. Smith’s assault on the Confederate right pushed the Southern forces from their earthworks and back toward the main fort. The three principal Confederate generals greatly overestimated the strength of Grant’s army, their fear leading almost to the point of paralysis. Brig. Gen. John B. Floyd in his after-action report stated that Grant had eighty-three regiments, when in fact he had less than half that number. Pillow estimated that Grant had between 30,000 and 40,000 troops and that he had only 10,000. Buckner, the West Point trained officer, believed that the force waiting

beyond the fortifications numbered 50,000, while they could muster only a paltry 12,000.⁴²⁷

In the parlor of the Rice House, Confederate generals John B. Floyd, Gideon Pillow and Simon B. Buckner planned another escape. The new plan got so far as ordering the guns spiked and dictating that each soldier pack three days’ cooked rations before moving to the Confederate left. The orders were issued at 1:00 a.m. and two hours later many of the regiments had made their way back to where they had begun fighting the previous morning. After some of the men began marching out Floyd called the whole thing off. The plan, predicated on the Union army not blocking the escape route, was cancelled because cavalry scouts reported that the presence of Brig. Gen. U.S. Grant’s forces and flooding caused by the recent rains made it impossible for infantry to pass on the roads.⁴²⁸

According to Brig. Gen. Pillow, Brig. Gen. John Buchanan Floyd asked: “Well, gentlemen, what is best now to be done?” When neither Pillow nor Brig. Gen. Buckner answered, Floyd asked each directly. Pillow said he was in favor of trying to cut their way out. Buckner answered that he believed any further resistance would bring a “virtual massacre of the troops.” He believed the men were too tired and demoralized to fight. Buckner also cited a lack of ammunition and stated that the men had not been issued rations in days, which was interesting as many of the troops had just been issued three days’ rations for the aborted escape attempt. When asked about Pillow’s plan for escape, he argued that the attempt would cost three-fourths of the army. Buckner said, “that it was wrong; that no officer had the right to sacrifice three-fourths of the command to save one-fourth.”⁴²⁹

Finally, Buckner summed up, “the army had done all it was possible to do, and that duty and honor required no more.”⁴³⁰ While the quote

⁴²⁵ O.R., Series I, Vol. VII, 291.

⁴²⁶ Works Progress Administration, *The American Series, Military History of Kentucky, Chronologically Arranged, Written by Workers of the Federal Writers Project of the Works Progress Administration for the State of Kentucky*, (Frankfort, KY: The State Journal, 1939), 98, https://kynghistory.ky.gov/Media/Publications/DM_A/MilitaryHistoryKY1939AnlRpt.pdf, Accessed March 4, 2020.

⁴²⁷ O.R., Series I, Vol. VII, 269, 284, 335; Jobe, “Forts Henry and Donelson,” 47.

⁴²⁸ Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 354, 358; Cummings, *The Curious Career of Bushrod Johnson*, 200-201.

⁴²⁹ O.R., Series I, Vol. VII, 287; Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 354-355.

⁴³⁰ O.R., Series I, Vol. VII, 288.

above comes from Pillow's after-action report, in his report Buckner did not dispute the gist of what Pillow wrote regarding the meeting. Once the men decided to surrender Floyd feared, and rightly so, that if captured he faced a trial for misappropriating public property and possibly treason. Floyd stated: "I cannot surrender; you know my position with the Federals; it wouldn't do; it wouldn't do." Brig. Gen. Pillow also refused to surrender saying that he would rather die. Command of Fort Donelson passed to Brig. Gen. Buckner who said: "I will accept and share the fate of my command."⁴³¹

The deed was done. If Floyd and Pillow would not surrender they must escape. Floyd told the two generals that he was leaving and that he would take with him as much of his brigade as he could. Floyd called Lieut. Col. Nathan Bedford Forrest into the room. The cavalry commander heard the discussion and asked if the plan was to surrender the fort and was told that it was. About that decision, Forrest later wrote: "I had not come out for the purpose of surrendering my command, and would not do it if they would follow me out; that I intended to go out if I saved but one man."⁴³² Forrest asked for and received permission to take his command from the fort. Pillow, also fearing for his personal safety, asked the two generals about the propriety of accompanying Brig. Gen. Floyd. To their credit both told him that the decision was his alone to make. Not hesitating, Pillow called to his enslaved valet to gather his trunk and they along with Floyd and most of the Floyd's old brigade boarded two steamers and headed for Clarksville (Figure 4.57).⁴³³

The 20th Mississippi had stood guard over the steamboats that took Brig. Gen. Pillow and Brig. Gen. Floyd and his Virginia soldiers away. Most had expected to board with the Virginia troops but they had been left to their fate. The men laid down their arms and remained in Dover, pretty much on their own.

⁴³¹ O.R., Series I, Vol. VII, 298; Long, *Personal Memoirs*, 157-158.

⁴³² O.R., Series I, Vol. VII, 295.

⁴³³ Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 356-357; O.R., Series I, Vol. VII, 306, 334-335; Wyeth, *That Devil Forrest*, 52-53.

During the chaos, and feeling frustrated with the turn of events, they broke into army and perhaps civilian stores, looting hardtack, sugar and whiskey. The regiment spent that night in an old stable; one soldier described their accommodations: "Although our bed chamber was an old muddy, and otherwise filthy stable without weather boarding, our mental and physical facilities [sic] were so exhausted and benumbed, that we slept as sweetly as if we had been in marble halls."⁴³⁴

February 16 – The Confederates Surrender

Upon taking command Brig. Gen. Simon B. Buckner set about the task at hand. He ordered all of the troops that had gathered on the eastern side of the fort to return to their trenches. He then wrote a short note that he sent to Brig. Gen. U.S. Grant:

*In consideration of all the circumstances governing the present situation of affairs at this station I propose to the commanding officers of the Federal forces the appointment of commissioners to agree upon terms of capitulation of the forces and post under my command, and in that view suggest an armistice until 12 o'clock to-day.*⁴³⁵

As a rule, armies would discuss the terms of surrender. It was evident from Buckner's short note to Grant that he expected the Union commander to agree to send commissioners to discuss terms under which Buckner could honorably surrender his forces.

⁴³⁴ H.B. Ware, "Fort Donelson to Camp Douglas," *Confederate Chronicles of Tennessee* 4 (April 1994), 96-97.

⁴³⁵ O.R., Series I, Vol. VII, 160.



Figure 4.57. Lieut. Col. Forrest and his command escape Fort Donelson, John Allan Wyreth, *That Devil Forrest: Life of General Nathan Bedford Forrest*, Reprint, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989, p. 65.

Maj. Nathaniel Cheairs carried Buckner's letter, sent under flag of truce, to the Union lines. The major was escorted to Brig. Gen. C.F. Smith who told him, "I make no terms with rebels with arms in their hands—my terms are unconditional and immediate surrender."⁴³⁶ When Cheairs protested Smith cut him off and gave him one-half hour to return with an answer. Smith sent a captain to Brig. Gen. Grant's headquarters with the note and instructions to tell the commanding general what he told the Confederates. Grant approved the actions of his senior general.⁴³⁷

Grant replied with the now-famous three-sentence note:

Yours of this date, proposing armistice and appointment of commissioners to settle terms of capitulation, is just received. No terms except unconditional and immediate surrender can be accepted.

⁴³⁶ William Farrar Smith, "Operations at Fort Donelson," *Magazine of American History* 15 (January-June 1886), 41.

⁴³⁷ Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 361; Smith, "Operations at Fort Donelson," 41-42.

*I propose to move immediately upon your works.*⁴³⁸

Buckner, though unhappy with the conditions, had no choice but to accept the "ungenerous and unchivalrous terms." He had white flags placed along the earthworks to prevent any renewed fighting.⁴³⁹

On the Confederate left Brig. Gen. Bushrod Johnson and an aide rode across the earthworks looking for the nearest Union soldiers. They came upon Col. Thayer's brigade and found Brig. Gen. Lew Wallace. The Confederates were stopped and questioned and then Wallace rode forward to speak with them. The men brought a note from Brig. Gen. Buckner requesting a cessation of hostilities and Johnson told them that Buckner and Grant were conferring about surrender. Johnson confirmed to Wallace that surrender had begun and that his men had stacked arms and stood awaiting their fate. Wallace, who knew Buckner, asked Johnson where he might find him. Johnson volunteered to take Wallace

⁴³⁸ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VII, 161.

⁴³⁹ Long, *Personal Memoirs*, 159.

to Dover where he found Buckner and his staff just finishing breakfast in the Dover Hotel. Wallace shook hands with Buckner and his staff, all of whom he knew (Figure 4.58).⁴⁴⁰

Upon receiving Brig. Gen. Buckner's answer Gen. Grant and his staff rode to Dover. Grant was no doubt annoyed that Brig. Gen. Lew Wallace and even the navy had once again beaten him inside the enemy's fort. There was no formal exchange of swords as Grant did not care for such formalities. He ordered Union troops to guard the perimeter to prevent any other Confederates from escaping. The battle was over and now the wounded and the prisoners took priority.⁴⁴¹

Union Colonel Valentine Bausenwein of the 58th Ohio brought his regiment within the Confederate lines. The regiment had been in the fighting the day before and his men were relieved that the battle was over. Bausenwein described their entrance into Fort Donelson:

*The Fifty-eight Ohio Regiment was the first regiment on the enemy's battery; the flags presented by the ladies of Columbus [Ohio], the first planted on the battery; the band the first playing our national air, "the Star-Spangled Banner." We took upwards of 2,000 prisoners, ten cannon, one 12-pound howitzer . . . and 1,000 boxes of ammunition*⁴⁴².

The Buckeyes entrance into the once foreboding Confederate fort was an occasion that many, including their colonel, would remember the rest of their lives.

⁴⁴⁰ Wallace, *An Autobiography*, 426-429; Cummings, *The Curious Career of Bushrod Johnson*, 204-205.

⁴⁴¹ Long, *Personal Memoirs*, 160; Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 369-371; National Cemetery Administration, *Federal Stewardship of Confederate Dead*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 2016), 11.

⁴⁴² Janet B. Hewett, Noah Andre Trudeau, and Bryce A. Sudcrow, eds., *Supplement to the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, in 100 Serials, (Wilmington, NC: Broadfoot Publishing Company, 1994-1998), Part I, Vol. 1, Serial 1, 521. Hereafter cited as *O.R. Supplement*.

Union Occupation

Confederate Prisoners

A U.S. army had not captured such a large number of prisoners since the Revolutionary War. Their sheer number, estimated to be more than 14,000, overwhelmed not only Brig. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant but also the Union Quartermaster Department. In a letter to Maj. Gen. Henry Halleck's chief of staff he wrote: "I am now forwarding prisoners of war to your care and I shall be truly glad to get clear of them. It is a much less job to take than to keep them."⁴⁴³

Initially prisoners moved more or less freely about Dover, visiting comrades in hospitals, helping retrieve wounded, and watching as Union soldiers pillaged the town. In the days that followed tensions between the captured men and those holding the fort escalated. The Confederates lacked food and means of warmth. Officers trying to locate men under their command were often arrested. Grant and Confederate Brig. Gen. Simon B. Buckner met and agreed that Buckner would look after the needs of prisoners. When it became apparent to Buckner that Union officers were not respecting his authority he sent a note to Grant requesting additional help. Buckner suggested sending a provost-marshal or some other officer to aid him. Instead, Grant issued orders that Buckner's passes and other documents were to be honored, which no doubt helped streamline processing the prisoners. The Union army provided rations. The prisoners were allowed to keep clothing, blankets, and personal property that they could carry with them. Officers were allowed to keep their side arms (Figure 4.59).⁴⁴⁴

⁴⁴³ *O.R.*, Series II, Vol. III, 271.

⁴⁴⁴ *O.R.*, Series II, Vol. III, 267-268; Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 370-371.

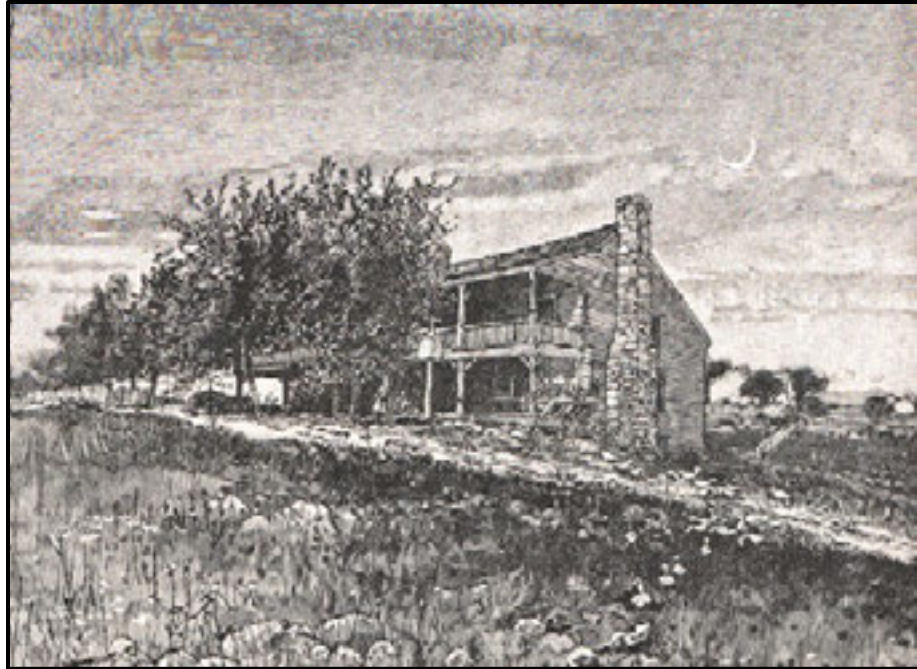


Figure 4.58. The Dover Hotel drawn from a post-war photograph, from Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buel, editors, *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, New York: Century Co., 1887, Vol. 1, p. 409.



Figure 4.59. Confederate prisoners at Fort Donelson, Paul F. Mottelay and T. Campbell-Copeland, editors, *The Soldier in Our Civil War: A Pictorial History of the Conflict, 1861-1865*, New York, 1886, Vol. 1, p. 237.

Sometime soon after the capture of the Confederate army at Fort Donelson, Maj. Gen. Halleck telegraphed a number of Union governors asking if they could take prisoners and if so how many. Governor Oliver P. Morton of Indiana offered to house 3,000 prisoners. The state of Illinois volunteered to take between 11,000 and 14,000 to be divided between Springfield and Chicago. Camp Chase in Ohio, which already housed civilians charged with participating in the rebellion, also agreed to accept Confederate prisoners. Sorting out where to send the men fell to the Union army and the governors of the northern states.⁴⁴⁵

About 3:00 p.m. on February 17, several regiments of Confederate prisoners were formed up and marched through Dover about a half mile to the dock, where they waited several hours. As they boarded the steamers the prisoners were often searched and weapons confiscated; a number had blankets and personal effects taken and some officers lost their swords and side arms. A Mississippi soldier later wrote: "As we entered the boat, men with guns stood ready to search us, who relieved our knap-sacks and pockets of such articles as they thought proper to seize."⁴⁴⁶ Yet for the most part, Union officers and men were well behaved and the prisoners well treated.

The 20th Mississippi marched up the gang plank of the *Universe*. Men of the 3rd Tennessee boarded the *Tecumseh*; the men of the 10th and 41st Tennessee found themselves accommodated on the *Empress*, one of the largest steamers on the rivers. It transported the two Tennessee regiments and others totaling some 2,100 prisoners. Most of the men spent the night on the boats before departing first to Smithland, Kentucky, and then up the Ohio to Paducah, Kentucky, and eventually up the Mississippi to Cairo, Illinois. They were the first of many to leave Dover. Steamer upon steamer passed through Cairo,

where the Union commissary issued a total of 14,623 rations for the Confederate prisoners aboard them.⁴⁴⁷

Brig. Gen. Simon B. Buckner, the only prisoner holding the rank of general, was sent to Fort Warren in Boston Harbor. Other officers were sent to Johnson's Island in Lake Erie near Sandusky, Ohio. The enlisted men were transferred to former camps of instruction in the nearest Midwestern states—Camp Morton in Indiana, Camp Douglas and Camp Butler in Illinois, and Camp Chase in Ohio—as well smaller facilities, including the old Illinois State Prison in Alton, Illinois. Grant kept 250 prisoners at Fort Donelson to exchange for Union soldiers captured during the battle.⁴⁴⁸

The estimated number of soldiers in Fort Donelson before it surrendered varies from 17,000 to 21,000. There were approximately 1,500 Confederate casualties, most of them wounded. The number of Confederates who escaped in the days between the surrender and the time the final steamers loaded with prisoners departed Dover is unknown but estimates put the number between 2,000 and 2,900. Many of the prisoners given passes to help with the dead or wounded simply walked away. On February 18, Brig. Gen. Bushrod Johnson and Captain John H. Anderson of the 10th Tennessee walked across the old Confederate outer works and continued

⁴⁴⁵ National Cemetery Administration, *Federal Stewardship of Confederate Dead*, 11, 65; *O.R.*, Series II, Vol. III, 270, 274.

⁴⁴⁶ Ware, "Fort Donelson to Camp Douglas," 97.

⁴⁴⁷ Ware, "Fort Donelson to Camp Douglas," 97-99; Robert H. Ferrell, ed., *Holding the Line: The Third Tennessee Infantry, 1861-1864*, (Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 1994), 35-36; John A. Simpson, ed., *Reminiscences of the 41st Tennessee: The Civil War in the West*, (Shippensburg, PA: White Mane Books, 2001), 15-16; National Cemetery Administration, *Federal Stewardship of Confederate Dead*, 11; Jim Vaughan, *Forts Henry & Donelson Confederate Prisoners of War (Documented to Date)*, Revised February 4, 2014, (Special studies document, 2014), Archives at Fort Donelson National Battlefield and Cemetery, Dover, Tennessee; Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 370-373.

⁴⁴⁸ National Cemetery Administration, *Federal Stewardship of Confederate Dead*, 11; Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 262-263.

walking until they reached Nashville. Johnson had violated his parole but no official action was ever taken.⁴⁴⁹

Wounded Soldiers

The Union army, though it had little experience coping with the numbers of wounded at Fort Donelson and care that they needed, did an adequate job. During the battle each regiment kept dressing stations nearby. The army created four field hospitals, three in houses and one in a tent. Attached to the army at the brigade level, ambulances shuttled between the aid stations and the field hospitals, though it is likely that this system broke down on February 15 as Brig. Gen. McClelland's division lost its unit cohesion.⁴⁵⁰

After the fighting ended there were some 3,200 wounded soldiers in and around Fort Donelson; in contrast to the 800 or so persons who lived in Dover. Many of the wounded on both sides still lay on the field the morning of February 16. They had remained where they fell the day before because it was deemed too dangerous to retrieve them. After the surrender, details of Union soldiers and Confederate prisoners began the task of taking the wounded to hospitals and burying the dead. Houses outside of Dover, including Grant's former headquarters, the Crisp house, and the Rollins and Cherry houses

accommodated wounded (these were probably the general hospitals). Many other buildings in Dover became hospitals out of necessity. The U.S. Christian Commission reported finding twenty-three "log-house hospitals at Dover housing Confederate wounded."⁴⁵¹

On February 17, Maj. Gen. Henry Halleck sent Brig. Gen. U.S. Grant orders for dispersing the wounded. Grant was directed to send 500 sick and wounded, both Union and Confederate, to Cincinnati to be treated at the Sanitary Commission's medical facilities. The boats were to be fitted up with Union soldiers and prisoners treated equally. The remaining wounded Halleck ordered sent to St. Louis and Mound City, Illinois. All available steamboats were pressed into service and a dozen or more surgeons and a corps of nurses left St. Louis the afternoon of February 17 to assist in the transportation of the wounded.⁴⁵² Halleck emphasized: "All sick and wounded must be withdrawn from Fort Henry and Fort Donelson."⁴⁵³

As Maj. Gen. Halleck sent Brig. Gen. Grant orders directing the care of wounded soldiers, Governor Oliver P. Morton of Indiana offered to provide space for 900 wounded. The governor told Halleck that he could house 300 each at Evansville, New Albany and Indianapolis. The night of February 17 a special train left Indianapolis at 7:00 p.m. carrying physicians, twenty-five nurses and a large quantity of hospital stores. Morton also left for Fort Donelson that night.⁴⁵⁴

⁴⁴⁹ Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson*, 214-216; Jim Vaughan, *Comparison of Campaign Strength & Casualties Data*, Special studies manuscript, August 16, 2012, Archives at Fort Donelson National Battlefield and Cemetery, Dover, Tennessee, 1-4; Jim Vaughan, *Confederate Escapes From Fort Donelson*, Special studies manuscript, July 27, 2017, 1-17; Cummings, *The Curious Career of Bushrod Johnson*, 207-209; Vaughan, *Forts Henry & Donelson Confederate Prisoners of War*). In his 2017 study Vaughan identifies the names of 1,053 individuals who escaped the fort. In his 2014 study he puts the figure for prisoners taken at the fort at 14,125.

⁴⁵⁰ George Worthington Adams, *Doctors in Blue: The Medical History of the Union Army in the Civil War* (New York: H. Schuman, 1952; reprint, Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1980), 80.

⁴⁵¹ Vaughan, *Comparison of Campaign Strength & Casualties Data*, 1-4; Cummings, *The Curious Career of Bushrod Johnson*, 209; O.R. Series I, Vol. VII, 242; Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 369-370; Edward Parmelee Smith, *Incidents of the United States Christian Commission*, (Philadelphia, PA: J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1871), 63.

⁴⁵² Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson*, 254; "Latest from the West," *The National Republican* (Washington, DC), February 19, 1862.

⁴⁵³ O.R. Series II, Vol. III, 270.

⁴⁵⁴ O.R. Series II, Vol. III, 269; "How the News Was Received," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 18, 1862.

Richard Yates, Governor of Illinois, and several Cabinet members left for Fort Donelson the morning of February 17 to “look after the wounded Illinois troops.” On his way he telegraphed, “Many sad hearts today, but a glorious victory. People by thousands on the road and at the stations, with shouting and with flags. Thank God that our Union is safe now and forever. Send surgeons, friends and clothing for the wounded.”⁴⁵⁵

Several private organizations also provided aid to the wounded at Fort Donelson. The U.S. Christian Commission, U.S. Sanitary Commission, and the Western Sanitary Commission sent agents to Dover (Figure 4.60). Anticipating the number of wounded arriving from Fort Donelson at Paducah, Mound City and Cairo, upon receiving news of the surrender the Western Sanitary Commission in St. Louis ordered boxes of bandages and hospital supplies to leave the city at 3:00 a.m. for those cities. Upon receiving news of the victory at Fort Donelson the U.S. Sanitary Commission in Cincinnati telegraphed Maj. Gen. Halleck to send to the city as many wounded soldiers as he saw proper, saying that the citizens of the city would gladly provide for them. In one day residents of Cincinnati contributed \$3,000 dollars to the Commission for the relief of the wounded. The Commission’s agents secured the steamboat *Allen Collier* and it left the evening of February 17 with twelve surgeons, twenty-five volunteer nurses, and 100 boxes of hospital stores. The *Allen Collier* stopped at Louisville, where more supplies were loaded and doctors and nurses came aboard. When the boat arrived at Dover the agents of the commission found that the army had only two hospital boats, *City of Memphis* and *Fanny Bullitt*, which one agent described as: “Hospitals only as any unfurnished receptacle for vast numbers of suffering men is a hospital.”⁴⁵⁶

⁴⁵⁵ “Gov. Yates En Route to Donelson,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 18, 1862.

⁴⁵⁶ Charles J. Stille, *History of the United States Sanitary Commission in the War of the Rebellion*, (New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1868; reprint,

Some of the Union surgeons worked to get the wounded moved from field hospitals onto boats for transport to facilities downriver. The Medical Director of Grant’s army, Thomas W. Fry, wrote that in some cases soldiers were moved too quickly. He believed that the removal of those men, “on whom amputations and other severe operations had been performed was unwise and highly injudicious endangering the lives of those who might have otherwise recovered.”⁴⁵⁷

Fry later wrote that he established a general hospital in Grant’s former headquarters around noon after the surrender. The medical director complained that the army did not forward supplies needed by the wounded troops, later writing, “nothing was sent us, neither medicine nor food, neither bandage nor plaster. The field service of the surgeons and such articles as could be pressed into service constituted our supply.”⁴⁵⁸

The army had neither the medical personnel nor the facilities in Dover to cope with the thousands of Union and Confederate soldiers needing care. The regimental surgeons and their staff could not be spared to travel with the wounded as they had to accompany the regiment when it moved out. Thus, private organizations assumed responsibility for the preparation and transportation of the wounded.⁴⁵⁹

Gansvoort, NY: Corner House Historical Publications, 1997), 145-146; “How the News Was Received,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 18, 1862; “The Gallant Wounded,” *Cincinnati Daily Press*, February 18, 1862.

⁴⁵⁷ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VII, 241-242.

⁴⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 242.

⁴⁵⁹ Margaret B. Davis, *The Woman Who Battled for the Boys in Blue*, *Mother Bickerdyke*, (San Francisco, CA: A.T. Dewey, 1886), 45.



Figure 4.60. Interior of a Sanitary Commission steamer, *Harper's History of the Civil War*, Vol. 1, p. 301.

Grant's Army Leaves Fort Donelson

On February 19, Brig. Gen. C.F. Smith's Second Division occupied Clarksville, Tennessee, about forty miles upriver from Dover. The next day Grant and several other officers visited the town, where they were shunned by the city's white citizens but welcomed by the enslaved population. Upon his return to Dover Grant set about reorganizing his army, which had grown to four divisions—the original three under the command of John McClelland, C.F. Smith and Lew Wallace and the Fourth Division led by Brig. Gen. Stephen A. Hurlbert.⁴⁶⁰

On February 24, Brig. Gen. William "Bull" Nelson and his division arrived in Dover. He had been sent by Brig. Gen. Don Carlos Buell to reinforce Grant's attack on Fort Donelson. Not needed in Dover, Grant sent Nelson to Nashville. When Buell arrived on the north bank of the Cumberland and found Nelson in the city he was livid. Buell had planned to defend the area from the north

bank, which put the river between him and any Confederate attack. Now he was forced to defend the south bank, for which he sincerely believed his force inadequate. Buell immediately ordered Brig. Gen. C.F. Smith at Clarksville, who was technically within his command, to bring his division to Nashville.⁴⁶¹

While Buell fretted, Grant decided to go to Nashville. He wired Maj. Gen. Halleck the details of his proposed trip, saying that if Halleck objected he would not go. Hearing nothing from Halleck, Grant set off. When he stopped in Clarksville he learned that Buell had ordered Smith's Second Division to Nashville. When Grant met with Buell he told him that his sources informed him that the retreating Confederates were nearing Mississippi. Buell retorted that he "knew" Nashville was in serious danger. Grant replied: "Well I do not know" and returned to Dover.⁴⁶²

On March 2, Maj. Gen. Halleck ordered Gen. Grant to move his army to Fort Henry to organize an expedition up the Tennessee River. To Grant's astonishment, soon after he

⁴⁶⁰ Steven E. Woodworth, *Nothing But Victory: The Army of the Tennessee, 1861-1865*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 124-125.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid., 127-129.

⁴⁶² Long, *Personal Memoirs*, 163-165; Woodworth, *Nothing But Victory*, 127-129.

arrived he received a telegram from Halleck relieving him of command and ordering him to turn the army over to Brig. Gen. C.F. Smith, who would proceed with the expedition; Grant would remain at Fort Henry. Halleck berated Grant and said his actions had attracted the notice of the authorities in Washington. What Grant did not know was that Halleck had brought the situation, for which he himself was responsible, to their attention.⁴⁶³

The Union soldiers marched from Fort Donelson to Fort Henry. There, Grant gathered fifty-eight steamboats—enough to transport 15,000 men and 3,000 horses—and awaited further developments at his headquarters aboard the steamboat *Tigress*. On March 9 a new division composed almost exclusively of troops from Ohio arrived under the command of Brig. Gen. William T. Sherman. The general and his men departed the next day for Savannah, Tennessee, near an obscure place on the Tennessee River called Pittsburg Landing.⁴⁶⁴

Halleck disliked and distrusted Grant but the issue that led him to strip Grant of command was a failure of communication. The problem was due in part to the southern sympathizer who ran the Dover telegraph office and habitually “ran off with”⁴⁶⁵ Halleck’s dispatches. Consequently, Grant was reinstated as commander of the army on March 13 and joined his command in Savannah.⁴⁶⁶

A Union Garrison for Fort Donelson

Maj. Gen. Henry Halleck had decided that one regiment would be sufficient to garrison

both Fort Henry and Fort Donelson. Brig. Gen. Grant had left Col. Richard J. Oglesby’s brigade at Fort Donelson when he left for Fort Henry to marshal troops for the upcoming campaign. Grant ordered the colonel to disassemble all of the heavy artillery and to ship it to Cairo. He also told the colonel that he would soon move his brigade, with the exception of one regiment that would remain as Fort Donelson’s garrison.⁴⁶⁷

Grant chose Col. Phillip B. Fouke’s 30th Illinois as the garrison for Fort Donelson. A March 1862 report listed almost 700 soldiers on duty at Fort Donelson. Apparently, the heavy artillery had not been moved from the fort because on March 28 Halleck sent a letter to officers in St. Louis stating that the guns would be moved to Columbus, Kentucky. Halleck must also have changed his mind about the number of troops needed in the area. He ordered Col. William W. Lowe and his 5th Iowa Cavalry to Fort Henry and assigned him command of the garrison there and at Fort Heiman.⁴⁶⁸

In April, Colonel Rodney Mason, 71st Ohio, was ordered to relieve Col. Fouke and to take command at Fort Donelson. Mason was ordered to prevent, “marauding and destroying of private property.” Specifically, he and his soldiers were to respect private property and any soldier who could not obey these orders was to be severely punished. Mason was instructed to keep at least fifteen days’ rations and eight days’ forage on hand at all times and to make sure that the telegraph line was protected.⁴⁶⁹

⁴⁶³ Woodworth, *Nothing But Victory*, 127-129; Stephen E. Ambrose, *Halleck: Lincoln’s Chief of Staff*, (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), 36-37; Long, *Personal Memoirs*, 165-167.

⁴⁶⁴ Kiner, *One Year’s Soldiering*, 42; Smith, *History of the Seventh Iowa*, 43; Woodworth, *Nothing But Victory*, 132-133.

⁴⁶⁵ Ambrose, *Halleck*, 37.

⁴⁶⁶ Ambrose, *Halleck*, 36-37; Long, *Personal Memoirs*, 167-169.

⁴⁶⁷ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. X, Part 2, 16-17.

⁴⁶⁸ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. X, Part 2, 72-73; A.A. Stuart, *Iowa Colonels and Regiments: Being A History of Iowa Regiments in the War of the Rebellion*, (Des Moines, IA: Mills & Company, 1865), 623-624.

⁴⁶⁹ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. X, Part 2, 22, 85, 108-109; Benjamin Franklin Cooling, *Fort Donelson’s Legacy: War and Society in Kentucky and Tennessee 1862-1863*, (Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1997), 53; Frederick H. Dyer, *A Compendium of the War of the Rebellion*, in three volumes, (Des Moines, IA: The Dyer Publishing Company, 1908; reprint, New

The Three Forts—Summer 1862 to 1865

The 71st Ohio Infantry was divided between Fort Donelson and Clarksville, where Col. Mason had moved his headquarters. The four companies of the 71st left at Fort Donelson began constructing a small fort east of the larger Confederate fort, which was designed for a much larger garrison. On August 17, 1862, Mason surrendered the Union force at Clarksville to a Confederate force under the command of Col. Adam Rankin Johnson. After this action, Maj. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant, now a departmental commander ordered Mason and the other paroled Union soldiers sent to Benton Barracks in Missouri. He then gave Col. Lowe command of Forts Henry, Heiman and Donelson.⁴⁷⁰

August, 1862—Skirmishes at Fort Donelson and Cumberland Iron Works

On August 26, 1862, a detachment of Confederate cavalry under the command of Colonel Tom Woodward (Figure 4.61) approached Dover. Woodward's small command—335 cavalry, 450 infantry, and a small artillery piece—hoped to bluff the Union garrison into surrendering as Col. Johnson had at Clarksville. The garrison, now under the command of Major James H. Hart, who commanded 155 men in Dover, received a flag of truce from Woodward demanding the surrender of the post. Hart reportedly told Woodward that they would fight him, "till hell froze over [and]



Figure 4.61. Col. Thomas Woodward, CS, Kentucky Library Research Collections, Western Kentucky University.

then fight them four days on the ice." Undaunted, Woodward sent a mounted attack at the Ohio infantry, which was repulsed after four horses and five or ten men were killed or wounded. The two sides exchanged fire for a while but the Confederates eventually pulled out.⁴⁷¹

During the fighting Maj. Hart set fire to several buildings in Dover to keep them from being used by the Confederates. Chaplain A.L. McKinney of the 71st Ohio reported: "In the height of the engagement thick volumes of smoke were ascending from houses and the red tongues of flame were leaping from the windows and darting through roofs."⁴⁷² At least 17 buildings were destroyed during the engagement including the courthouse. McKinney's account also states that there were earthworks in Dover at the time of the battle and that both sides had artillery. Woodward's Confederates had a small

York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1959), Volume III: *Regimental Histories*, 1058, 1530.

⁴⁷⁰ Ohio Civil War Central, *71st Ohio Volunteer Infantry (1861-1865)*, <https://www.ohiocivilwarcentral.com/entry.php?rec=665>, (Accessed March 6, 2019); Stuart, *Iowa Colonels and Regiments*, 623; *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. XVI Part 1, 862; Cooling, *Fort Donelson's Legacy*, 53-54, 94-95.

⁴⁷¹ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. XVII, Part 1, 37-38; Cooling, *Fort Donelson's Legacy*, 101.

⁴⁷² A.L. McKinney, "Fights at Fort Donelson, Tenn., Chaplain McKinney's Account," in Frank Moore, editor, *The Rebellion Record: A Diary of American Events with Documents, Narratives, Illustrative Incidents, Poetry, Etc.*, Fifth Volume, (New York: G.P. Putnam, 1863), 592.

cannon captured from the Union garrison in Clarksville. The men in Dover had a howitzer and a 6-pounder left behind by the Confederates at Fort Donelson.

McKinney goes on to say: "They [the Confederates] sent citizens, with revolvers concealed, who approached the [Union] pickets and asked permission to come within our lines, as citizens had been doing some previous days. . . . As soon as these citizens were near enough to our pickets they drew their revolvers and demanded their surrender."⁴⁷³ According to McKinney the citizens captured eight pickets. Soon after the attack the 11th Illinois, 13th Wisconsin, and a battery of artillery were sent from Paducah to augment the small garrison. The Union soldiers quickly began throwing up earthworks in preparation for a second attack. Though the Confederates threatened to take the town, Col. Woodward never again attempted to do so.⁴⁷⁴

On August 26, Col. Lowe with 120 men of the 5th Iowa Cavalry led by Lieutenant Milton S. Summers' company pursued Col. Woodward's Confederates, catching up with them at Cumberland Iron Works. Summers sent Sergeant James H. Wing ahead with a few troopers. Wing's small detachment scattered some Confederate pickets but soon discovered a much larger force with a piece of artillery. The sergeant got within seventy-five yards of them before wheeling his men about and returning to the main line.⁴⁷⁵

Col. Lowe dismounted Cos. B and D and sent them forward as skirmishers. The Iowans drove in Col. Woodward's skirmishers and pursued them. Company D was stopped by a deep creek but Co. B found a bridge and crossed. The Union cavalry tried to turn Woodward's flank but the Confederate artillery drove them back. The Confederates had captured a number of good Union muskets at Clarksville and now employed

them against Lowe's cavalry. Confederate Captain W.B. Albright (Figure 4.62) was in command of the 6-pounder cannon that broke up the Union attack and, as Col. Lowe put it, had become "somewhat annoying." As a result, the Union colonel ordered a charge on the artillery.⁴⁷⁶

With sabers drawn Co. B charged. Capt. Albright's gun, protected by infantry, was in a well-hidden and protected location. When the cavalry galloped up the road Albright fired from his concealed position. The Confederate cannon and musket fire unsaddled several Union troopers. According to one account Lieut. Summers fell and could not regain his feet. Nonetheless he fought off Confederate soldiers first with his sword and then with his pistol, firing until Woodward's men yanked it from his hand and took him captive.⁴⁷⁷

Recovering from the shock of the attack, the 5th Iowa ran down the Confederate gunners. The troopers killed the horses and overturned the gun then rushed after the fleeing Confederates until they ran into the main body of Woodward's command. The Confederate infantry was posted in the ruins of houses and other structures associated with the furnace. The well-placed soldiers scattered the charging Iowans, capturing several. Lowe, unable to dislodge or entice Woodward into the open, withdrew. Citing fatigued horses and a lack of food, he took his men back to Fort Donelson. Of the 120 men he took to Cumberland Furnace he lost twenty-three: one officer and three men killed; one officer and seven men wounded; and eleven men captured.⁴⁷⁸

⁴⁷³ Ibid, 591.

⁴⁷⁴ Cooling, *Fort Donelson's Legacy*, 102; A.L. McKinney, "Fights at Fort Donelson, Tenn., Chaplain McKinney's Account," 591-592.

⁴⁷⁵ Iowa Adjutant General's Office, *Report of the Adjutant General and Acting Quartermaster General of the State of Iowa*, (Des Moines, IA: F.W. Palmer, State Printer, 1864-1866), 987.

⁴⁷⁶ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. XVII, Part 1, 39; "Service By Kentucky Cavalry," *Confederate Veteran* 6 no. 3, (March 1898), 115; Iowa Adjutant General's Office, *Report of the Adjutant General*, 987.

⁴⁷⁷ "Service by Kentucky Cavalry," *Confederate Veteran* 6, no. 3, (March 1898), 115; Iowa Adjutant General's Office, *Report of the Adjutant General*, 987.

⁴⁷⁸ Iowa Adjutant General's Office, *Report of the Adjutant General*, 987; Cooling, *Fort Donelson's Legacy*, 102.

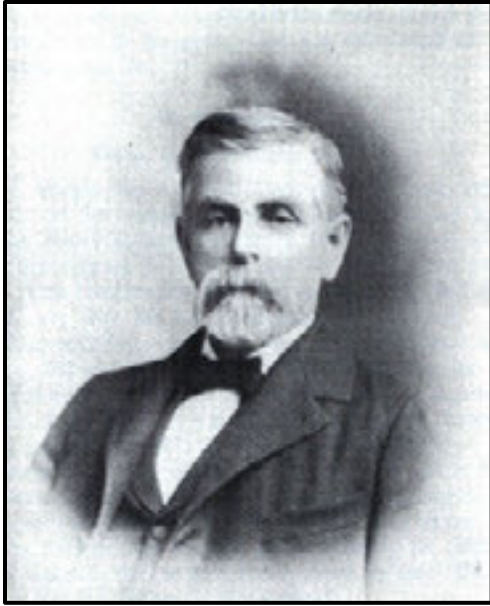


Figure 4.62. Capt. W.B. Alright, CS, Rankin Johnson and W. J. Davis, *The Partisan Rangers of the Confederate States Army*, Louisville, Ky.: G. G. Fetter Company, 1904, p. 303.

September, 1862—Expedition to Clarksville, Tennessee

On September 5, 1862, Col. William Lowe left Dover and marched toward Clarksville. His mixed force included eight companies of the 5th Iowa Cavalry, about 500 men, and about the same number of infantry—six companies of the 11th Illinois, four companies of the 71st Ohio, and eight companies 13th Wisconsin. He also had four guns, one section from each of Batteries C and H, 2nd Illinois Light Artillery, approximately 1,030 men. Lowe left the recently arrived 83th Illinois Infantry to garrison the forts.⁴⁷⁹

The first night, the Union soldiers marched as far as Blue Springs, where about midnight Lowe received a telegram saying he “need not attempt to take Clarksville at

present.”⁴⁸⁰ Having come this far and up for a fight, Lowe sent word back that he would menace the Confederates. On September 6, the Union column continued its march, stopping at Free Stone Springs about ten miles from Clarksville.⁴⁸¹

On September 7, a small party under Lieutenant Levi Moreing sent ahead to determine the Confederate cavalry’s location found Woodward’s pickets near New Providence. The Confederates fired on Moreing’s detachment, mounted up, and took off. The Union cavalry gave chase and about a mile down the road found they had been led into an ambush when fifty Confederates opened fire on the Union column. No one was hurt but one horse was killed and three others wounded. Lowe ordered a larger column with infantry and artillery forward and forced the Confederates to withdraw.⁴⁸²

Colonel Lowe’s column reached Riggins Hill where he found Woodward’s main line behind a split-rail fence. Lowe brought up his artillery and the four guns fired 120 rounds on the Confederate position. The 6-pounders shattered fence rails, throwing them into the air. The Confederates had no artillery and for ninety minutes simply endured the barrage. When their line finally began to give way Lowe brought up the infantry. The Union line straddled the road, with Col. Thomas E. G. Ransom (Figure 4.63) of 11th Illinois in command of the troops on the right and Lieutenant Colonel James F. Chapman of the 13th Wisconsin Infantry in command of those on the left. The line was ordered forward and Ransom’s men rushed forward “with bayonets at the charge.” The 11th Illinois regiment’s band broke into *Yankee Doodle* but the

⁴⁷⁹ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. XVI, Part I, 955; Cooling, *Fort Donelson’s Legacy*, 104; *Cincinnati Commercial*, “Expedition to Clarksville, Tenn., Cincinnati “Commercial” Account,” in Frank Moore, editor, *The Rebellion Record*, Fifth Volume, 609.

⁴⁸⁰ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. XVI, Part I, 955; *Cincinnati Commercial*, “Expedition to Clarksville, Tenn., Cincinnati “Commercial” Account,” in Frank Moore, editor, *The Rebellion Record*, Fifth Volume, 610.

⁴⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸² Cooling, *Fort Donelson’s Legacy*, 105; *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. XVI, Part I, 955.



Figure 4.63. Col. Thomas E.G. Ransom, US, shown as a brigadier general, Library of Congress.

engagement was over before it started.⁴⁸³ Ransom later remembered: “It was too much for the butternuts. They broke without giving us a volley.”⁴⁸⁴

The Union infantry was unable to catch Woodward’s fleeing cavalry so Lowe sent a detachment of cavalry forward to save the bridge over the Red River. Lieutenant Colonel M.T. Patrick’s detachment arrived as the Confederates were desperately trying to burn it. Patrick charged the soldiers on the bridge and they fled, leaving the way into Clarksville open. The Union soldiers entered the town and the Iowans helped themselves to dry goods and other spoils. Col. Ransom stopped his soldiers from looting a store by riding into the crowd brandishing his sword, which sent the culprits running.⁴⁸⁵

The Confederates lost seventeen dead, forty or fifty wounded, and about fifty captured. Lowe spent that night and most of

the next day in Clarksville. The Union force captured forty horses and a quantity of arms and other military goods, burned 1,000 bales of hay, and destroyed 250 boxes of commissary stores. Before leaving, Lowe pressed several teams of horses and wagons into service and hauled off about 200 boxes of commissary stores.⁴⁸⁶

Col. Lowe’s column left Clarksville on September 9 and marched back to Dover accompanied by several Union families afraid to remain in the city. A Clarksville woman, Nannie Haskins, recorded in her diary that the “Jay Hawkers” had carried off a great many enslaved individuals and horses, including her favorite gray, Stonewall Jackson, during their “thieving expedition.”⁴⁸⁷ According to Clarksville Mayor Cave Johnson, the Union soldiers took 240 enslaved people with them when they left the city. On the return to Dover the column foraged with abandon. One soldier cataloged the plunder: “We lived off the citizens from here up there and back [taking] all the fowl, pork, beef, mutton, sweet potatoes, and roasting ears that the men could eat, as well as about eight hundred horses.”⁴⁸⁸

While the men of the 11th Illinois were at Fort Donelson they visited the old battlefield where so many of their comrades were killed. The regiment, which fought in the February 1862 battle with 800 men, now numbered 250. The survivors built a rough fence around the mass grave where so many old friends were buried and visited a house turned field hospital where many of their regiment had spent their last hours. The owner told the men that “the smell of gunpowder and blood was yet in the rooms where [your] wounded had lain.”

⁴⁸⁶ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. XVI, Part I, 956.

⁴⁸⁷ Cooling, *Fort Donelson’s Legacy*, 106; *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. XVI, Part I, 956.

⁴⁸⁸ Cooling, *Fort Donelson’s Legacy*, 106; *O.R.* Series I, Vol. XVII, Part II, 731. Following the Confederate occupation of Clarksville Union forces rebuilt and enlarged Fort Defiance, which they renamed Fort Bruce. While outside of the scope of this project additional research on Union efforts at Clarksville would greatly aid understanding of the Civil War in the region.

⁴⁸³ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. XVI, Part I, 955; Cooling, *Fort Donelson’s Legacy*, 105; Huffstodt, *Hard Dying Men*, 118-119.

⁴⁸⁴ Huffstodt, *Hard Dying Men*, 119.

⁴⁸⁵ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. XVI, Part I, 956; Huffstodt, *Hard Dying Men*, 119.

Afterward the 11th Illinois marched across the land between the rivers to Fort Henry.⁴⁸⁹

A little over a month after the Union assault on Clarksville the citizens of the city wrote to Confederate president Jefferson Davis requesting the protection of the Confederate government. The committee described the outrages committed by Col. W.W. Lowe and Col. A.C. Harding, commander of the 83rd Illinois—"arresting many of the citizens of this portion of country and placing them in a loathsome dungeon and keeping them there unless they take the oath of allegiance. . . seizing [citizens], and destroying or carrying away all their property of every description. . . insulting ladies, and threatening to shoot, stab, bayonet, or even burn them . . . taking all the negroes wherever they go and also all the horses . . . [burning] the rolling-mill of Woods, Lewis & Co., destroying everything, and taking away 240 negroes. . . [destroying] various iron mills and furnaces." Davis declared that the two Union officers should be considered outlaws; if Lowe and Harding were captured they would not be treated as prisoners of war.⁴⁹⁰

September, 1862—Skirmishes near Fort Donelson

The Confederate government authorized the formation of partisan rangers on April 21, 1862. The act allowed the creation of irregular guerrilla bands under a commissioned officer. Some of these organizations were legitimate as the officers and men had been mustered into the Confederate army under the Partisan Ranger Act. The Confederate soldiers mustered in under the Partisan Ranger Act were allowed to keep any weapons and ammunition captured from the enemy. Others were armed civilians who used the war as an excuse to murder, steal and loot. A number of Confederate partisan detachments operated near Fort Donelson and Fort Henry and by September Col. Lowe was sending out scouting parties from both garrisons to locate

the Confederates and people who aided them.⁴⁹¹

By the fall of 1862, the front of the war in the western theater was well south of Fort Donelson. Fighting in the area was confined to engagements between small detachments of Union garrison troops and Confederate raiders such as Brigadier General Nathan Bedford Forrest's cavalry and Confederate partisans/guerrillas. The Confederates harassed Union patrols and when strong enough attacked and sometimes captured Union garrisons. The policy of the U.S. government changed as the army in the rear began fighting a different war, with different players. Loyalty oaths, destruction of property, confiscation, imprisonment, and even execution replaced the earlier policy of pacification. The goal was now to ferret out guerrilla leaders and those aiding them. Union troops at Fort Heiman, Fort Henry and Fort Donelson undertook small operations designed to combat guerrilla activity and to intimidate Confederate sympathizers. These "scouts" made forays into the countryside throughout the remainder of the war, combing the area in search of Confederates and anything that would aid their cause.⁴⁹²

The week of September 18, 1862, Col. William Lowe sent out four scouting parties, taking men from each of the three forts. His report of September 23 chronicles typical activities in which the Union troops engaged.⁴⁹³

⁴⁸⁹ Cooling, *Fort Donelson's Legacy*, 106; Huffstodt, *Hard Dying Men*, 117.

⁴⁹⁰ O.R., Series I, Vol. XVII, Part II, 731-732.

⁴⁹¹ O.R., Series I, Vol. XVII, Part I, 62; James M. Matthews, *Public Laws of the Confederate States of America, Passed at the First Session of the First Congress, 1862*, (Richmond, VA: R.M. Smith, Printer to Congress, 1862), 48; Cooling, *Fort Donelson's Legacy*, 65. In many Union reports Woodward's troops are cited as the men being sought/fought. This was often not the case.

⁴⁹² O.R., Series I, Vol. XVII, Part I, 62; James M. Matthews, *Public Laws of the Confederate States of America, Passed at the First Session of the First Congress, 1862*, (Richmond, VA: R.M. Smith, Printer to Congress, 1862), 48.

⁴⁹³ B. Franklin Cooling, "A People's War: Partisan Conflict in Tennessee and Kentucky," in *Guerrillas, Unionists and Violence on the*

The first scouting party, a detachment of the 5th Iowa Cavalry under the command of Lieutenant D.A. Waters, reached Huntingdon, Tennessee, on September 18. There it captured, “8 horses, 8 mules, 1 wagon and harness, 4 barrels of salt, 1 rifle, 1 common pistol, and four revolvers.”⁴⁹⁴ The report did not mention an engagement so it is likely that the animals and goods were confiscated from disloyal citizens.

The second, a detachment of soldiers under Captain J.C. Wilcox, engaged a band of Confederate guerrillas on September 22 and apparently killed a captain and captured four of his men. The report mentions no Union losses. That same day the third scouting party, a detachment of the 5th Iowa cavalry under the command of Captain John T. Croft, encountered and engaged a band of Confederate guerrillas in the vicinity of Fort Donelson. The Union cavalry killed two Confederates and captured one. Croft located and burned the guerrillas’ supplies and threw the ammunition into the river.⁴⁹⁵

During the fourth and probably largest scout, Colonel Abner Harding led the 83rd Illinois in pursuit of Col. Thomas Woodward. Lowe’s biggest nemesis, Woodward had fought his men on several occasions but remained elusive; killing or capturing him would greatly reduce guerrilla activities in the area. Harding, however, failed to do either.⁴⁹⁶

October, 1862—Skirmishes at LaFayette Landing

During October 1862, Fort Donelson was garrisoned by eight companies of the 83rd Illinois Infantry, two companies of the 5th Iowa Cavalry, and one section of Flood’s Battery (Battery C, 2nd Illinois Light Artillery). On October 8, Colonel William P.

Lyon (Figure 4.64) took command of the 13th Wisconsin Infantry, which was scattered around the region. The four companies elsewhere joined the six at Fort Henry, where they remained. It is likely that the other Union troops in the area—two companies of the 83rd Illinois Infantry, four companies of the 71st Ohio Infantry, the remaining companies of the 5th Iowa Cavalry, and the other section of Flood’s Battery—were split between Fort Henry and Fort Heiman.⁴⁹⁷

Confederate guerrillas under Col. Tom Woodward were still active in the area between the rivers as were those led by Colonel Thomas A. Napier, who was actively recruiting men in the Charlotte and Centerville, Tennessee, areas. About the first of October, Col. William W. Lowe ordered Major Alfred B. Brackett with a detachment of



Figure 4.64. Col. William P. Lyon, US, Adelia. *Reminiscences of the Civil War Compiled from the War Correspondence of Colonel William P Lyon.* San Jose, California: William P. Lyon, Jr., 1907, front piece.

Confederate Home Front, edited by Daniel E. Sutherland, 113-132 (Fayetteville, AR: The University of Arkansas Press, 1999), 127-128; Cooling, *Fort Donelson’s Legacy*, 108.

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁶ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. XVII, Part I, 62; Cooling, *Fort Donelson’s Legacy*, 108.

⁴⁹⁷ Adelia C. Lyon, *Reminiscences of the Civil War Compiled from the War Correspondence of Colonel William P. Lyon*, (San Jose, CA: William P. Lyon, Jr., 1907), 64; *O.R. Supplement*, Part II, Vol. 19, Series 31, 321.

the 5th Iowa Cavalry out on a scout. On October 3 the force was on the road beyond LaFayette Landing⁴⁹⁸ when an unknown number of Confederates fired at them. The 5th Iowa returned fire, killing a Confederate lieutenant named Maddern.⁴⁹⁹ One Union soldier was killed. The area where the engagement occurred was shrouded in dense fog, which no doubt enabled the Confederates to set the ambush and also aided their eventual escape. After the engagement Brackett and his force returned to Fort Henry.⁵⁰⁰

November, 1862—Expedition to Garrettsburg, Kentucky

Union soldiers at Fort Henry, Fort Heiman, and Fort Donelson spent the last three months of 1862 hunting Confederate guerrillas. A rumor began circulating at the end of October that Confederate Brigadier General John Hunt Morgan was at Hopkinsville, Kentucky. It was, in fact, true. Morgan, who had been briefly with Confederate Maj. Gen. Braxton Bragg during the fall 1862 invasion of Kentucky, had taken his cavalry brigade from Lexington, Kentucky, to Hopkinsville the last week in October. On October 29, Maj. Gen. Grant ordered Col. Thomas E.G. Ransom at Paducah to attack Morgan. In preparation Ransom incorporated all available troops at Fort Henry and Fort Donelson into his force.⁵⁰¹

Maj. Gen. Grant told the regional commander, Brig. Gen. Thomas A. Davies, at Columbus, Kentucky: “Where you can

suppress guerrillas with force at your command do it.”⁵⁰² The men at Fort Henry and Fort Donelson boarded steamers on the Tennessee River. Col. William Lyon, 13th Wisconsin Infantry, described their line of march:

*“We went down the river forty miles to Chaudt’s Landing, October 31. Thence we marched southeast to Canton on the Cumberland River, in Trigg county [sic], Kentucky; thence southeast to La Fayette; thence northeast to Hopkinsville, Christian county [sic], Kentucky; and thence south to Garrettsburg [sic], near the line of Tennessee, and all about that place.”*⁵⁰³

The search for Confederate Brig. Gen. John Hunt Morgan’s command took Col. Lyon’s men 40 miles downriver from Fort Donelson and then on a 50-mile or so march through Trigg and Christian Counties Kentucky.

Thus, a force of approximately 1,200 men and one section of artillery assembled to move on Morgan at Hopkinsville—the 11th Illinois Infantry, detachments of 83rd Illinois and 13th Wisconsin infantries, the 5th Iowa Cavalry, one company of 6th Illinois Cavalry, and two guns of Flood’s Battery. As it happened, by the time they reached LaFayette on November 5, Morgan had left Hopkinsville.⁵⁰⁴

Upon finding Morgan gone, the Union force split. Col. Thomas Ransom took the infantry; Lieut. Col. M.T. Patrick took the cavalry and artillery. Patrick’s force rode for Gordon Springs where he hoped to find Confederate guerrillas. The guerrillas had left the area but Patrick captured several wagons and commissary supplies, though it is not clear if the supplies were military or if they were taken from civilians. The cavalry then rode to

⁴⁹⁸ The location of LaFayette Landing is unknown.

⁴⁹⁹ Lyon, *Reminiscences of the Civil War*, 60-61; Civil War Centennial Commission, *Tennesseans in the Civil War: A Military History of Confederate and Union Units with Available Rosters of Personnel in Two Parts, Part I*, (Nashville, TN: Civil War Centennial Commission of Tennessee, 2000), 45; Iowa Adjutant General’s Office, *Report of the Adjutant General*, 989; *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. XVII, Part I, 150.

⁵⁰⁰ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. XVII, Part I, 150.

⁵⁰¹ Basil W. Duke, *A History of Morgan’s Cavalry*, (Cincinnati, OH: Miami Printing and Publishing Company, 1867), 290-292; *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. XVII, Part 2, 303.

⁵⁰² *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. XVII, Part II, 309.

⁵⁰³ Lyon, *Reminiscences of the Civil War*, 68.

⁵⁰⁴ Iowa Adjutant General’s Office, *Report of the Adjutant General*, 989; Duke, *A History of Morgan’s Cavalry*, 292.

Cross Roads, Kentucky, where they reunited with Col. Ransom and the infantry.⁵⁰⁵

In the early morning hours of November 8, Lieut. Col. Patrick's cavalry and artillery were outside of Garrettsburg, where they captured several of Confederate Col. Tom Woodward's scouts. Patrick left a rear guard on the road and the rest of the cavalry rode into town. Some of the Union cavalymen were having their horses shod by local blacksmith George Wells when a detachment of Woodward's cavalry attacked the Union rear guard. Those in town rushed to their aid and a brief skirmish ensued. The Union force pulled back and Patrick turned the artillery on the Confederates, forcing them to retreat. Two Union soldiers were killed in the encounter.⁵⁰⁶

Col. Ransom and the infantry arrived in Garrettsburg that afternoon and the force proceeded out of town in search of Woodward's camp. They found it on John Thomas's place on Noas Road, where the Union column caught Woodward by surprise. Ransom dismounted his cavalry and the federals attacked. The assault overwhelmed and routed the Confederates. Woodward lost, depending upon the account, sixteen or seventeen killed and forty to eighty-five wounded, with Ransom taking anywhere from twenty-five to sixty prisoners. Ransom lost three killed and seven wounded. The Union force captured fifty mules and numerous weapons, as well as equipage salvaged from the Confederate camps before they destroyed them. Maj. Gen. Grant called the expedition a great success. By mid-November the garrison troops had returned to the forts.⁵⁰⁷

⁵⁰⁵ Iowa Adjutant General's Office, *Report of the Adjutant General*, 989. The locations of Gordon Springs and Cross Roads could not be verified.

⁵⁰⁶ Iowa Adjutant General's Office, *Report of the Adjutant General*, 989; William Henry Perrin, *County of Christian, Kentucky, Historical and Biographical*, (Louisville, KY: F.A. Battey Publishing Co., 1884), 296-297.

⁵⁰⁷ Iowa Adjutant General's Office, *Report of the Adjutant General*, 990; Perrin, *County of Christian, Kentucky*, 297; *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. XX, Part I, 9; Lyon, *Reminiscences of the Civil War*, 67.

During the final month of 1862 there was little activity in the land between the rivers. The 5th Iowa spent their time building winter quarters and stables at Fort Heiman and the 13th Wisconsin built sixty log houses at Fort Henry. Troopers continued to scout the area but there were no reports of engagements or captured contraband.⁵⁰⁸

Battle of Dover, February 3, 1863

The Union garrisons were calm in January 1863, the daily routine broken only by the occasional scout or expedition. A detachment of troops was sent to Paris, Tennessee, to keep guerrillas from breaking up an election. Col. William P. Lyon was slightly injured when his carriage overturned coming back from Fort Donelson. Col. William Lowe's wife held a dance aboard the Ewing, where Lowe maintained his headquarters; most of the officers and their wives attended.⁵⁰⁹

Meanwhile, Confederate Maj. Gen. Braxton Bragg put plans in motion to destroy boats on the Cumberland River carrying supplies to Union-occupied Nashville. He ordered Major General Joseph Wheeler to take a cavalry division to the river to carry out the mission. Wheeler commanded two brigades. The first, approximately 2,000 men and two pieces of artillery, was under the command of Brigadier General John Wharton (Figure 4.65). The second, some 800 men under Brig. Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest, now promoted to general, had four pieces of artillery. By late January Wharton and Forrest had placed artillery on heights above the Cumberland. Wharton set his guns near Harpeth Shoals; Forrest at Palmyra, twenty miles downriver of Dover in Montgomery County.⁵¹⁰

⁵⁰⁸ Iowa Adjutant General's Office, *Report of the Adjutant General*, 990; Lyon, *Reminiscences of the Civil War*, 73.

⁵⁰⁹ Lyon, *Reminiscences of the Civil War*, 74-77.

⁵¹⁰ John Walsh, "After Donelson: The Battle of Dover, Tennessee," *Blue & Gray Magazine* 28, no. 4 (Special Issue, 2011), 37.



Figure 4.65. Brig. Gen. John A. Wharton, CS, Holland Thompson, editor, *The Photographic History of the Civil War complete and unabridged two volumes in one*, Vol. X, p. 313.

On January 27, Brig. Gen. Wharton's artillery fired on the U.S.S. *Lexington*. The heavily armed timberclad returned fire and chased the two Confederate guns from their position. In an effort to save face after this failure Maj. Gen. Wheeler decided to attack, and if possible capture, the Union garrison at Dover. The problem with the plan was that his force was low on both small-arms and artillery ammunition. Forrest's men had only fifteen rounds per man and a total of forty-five rounds for the four artillery pieces; Wharton's men were just slightly better off.⁵¹¹

When Maj. Gen. Wheeler laid out his plan to Brig. Gen. Forrest, the latter argued strongly against it. He cited the lack of ammunition and the cost in lives to secure the town, which when captured they could not hope to hold for long as Union infantry and gunboats would make their position untenable. Wheeler shrugged off Forrest's objections—feeling compelled to return with something to show as a result of the raid. He ordered Forrest to set off toward Dover on the Charlotte Road.

⁵¹¹ Benjamin Franklin Cooling, "The Battle of Dover, February 3, 1863," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 22, no. 2 (June 1963). 144-145.

Alerted by a local man that Union soldiers were at Cumberland Iron Works, Forrest's cavalry advanced upon them. They captured all but three or four of the men of Co. G, 5th Iowa Cavalry, commanded by Captain Henning von Minden. Those who escaped raced to Dover to spread the alarm.⁵¹²

Colonel Abner C. Harding (Figure 4.66), commander of the 83rd Illinois and the garrison at Dover, cancelled an expedition set to depart by steamboat to Palmyra and ordered those soldiers and the artillery into defensive positions around the city. Harding had 700 men of the 83rd Illinois, one company of 5th Iowa, two sections (four twelve-pounder rifled guns) of Captain Elijah V. Moore's Battery C, 2nd Illinois Light Artillery, and a 32-pounder siege gun removed from the Fort Donelson's lower water battery.⁵¹³



Figure 4.66. Col. Abner Clark Harding, US, Holland Thompson, editor, *The Photographic History of the Civil War complete and unabridged two volumes in one*, Vol. X, p. 199.

⁵¹² Wyeth, *That Devil Forrest*, 126-128; Wills, *The Confederacy's Greatest Cavalryman*, 98; *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. XXIII, Part I, 34-35; Terry Wilson, "Against Such Powerful Odds: The 83rd Illinois Infantry at the Battle of Dover, Tennessee, February, 1863," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 53, no. 4 (Winter 1994), 264.

⁵¹³ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. XXIII, Part I, 34; Wilson, "Against Such Powerful Odds," 265; Lyon, *Reminiscences of the Civil War*, 78.

Col. Harding had created a defensive position in the center of Dover, which was protected by the Cumberland River on the north and deep ravines on the east, west and south. Earthworks enclosed three-quarters of an acre around the main Union encampment near the intersection of Forge and Charlotte roads, what Col. Harding labelled South and East roads, respectively, on his map (Figure 4.67). The 32-pounder siege gun, which sat on a swivel mount, was on high ground where the landing road made a 90° turn to the south, a position Harding had fortified. A semi-circular ridge surrounded Dover on the east, south and west sides. The only way to reach the town without crossing the ravines was from the southwest.⁵¹⁴

Col. Harding began preparing for the arrival of the Confederate cavalry around 11:30 a.m. The Union commander put all of the women and children in town aboard the *Wild Cat* and another steamboat tied up at the dock. He sent a note to the captain of the *Wild Cat* to be passed on to the first Union gunboat the steamer encountered and the boats departed downriver toward Paducah. He then sent two companies of the 83rd Illinois infantry out as skirmishers to cover the approaches to Dover. Captain Philo Reed's Co. A covered the southern approach; Captain John McClanahan's Co. B the eastern. Around noon, just as the Union soldiers began to suspect that the alarm was false, Forrest's advance, pushing up the road east of town, fired on Co. B.⁵¹⁵

Maj. Gen. Joseph Wheeler (Figure 4.68) got his two brigades into position around the city and then sent Col. Harding a note signed by himself, Brig. Gen. Forrest and Brig. Gen. Wharton:

Having invested Fort Donelson with a force sufficient to take it, and desiring to

*prevent the effusion of blood, we have the honor to demand an immediate and unconditional surrender of the fort, with all the forces, stores, &c. If you surrender, you will be treated as prisoners of war; if not, you must abide the consequences.*⁵¹⁶

Harding replied: "I decline to surrender the forces under my command or the post without an effort to defend them."⁵¹⁷ Harding's blunt reply may have been influenced by the fact that on November 10, 1862, he and Col. William W. Lowe had been declared renegades by the Confederate government and as such would not be treated as prisoners of war if captured.⁵¹⁸

After rejecting the demand for surrender Col. Harding sent one piece of artillery and three companies of infantry under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Arthur A. Smith to a hill on the east side of the Union position near a cemetery. The position protected the road leading into Dover from Fort Henry and other points east. Harding correctly surmised that the Confederates would try to block it to stop reinforcements from the fort from coming to his aid.⁵¹⁹

Maj. Gen. Wheeler had ordered a coordinated assault to begin at 2:30 p.m. Brig. Gen. Wharton placed his brigade on the southwest and deployed along the old Confederate outer works and above the ridge overlooking the cemetery. He then sent the 8th Texas Cavalry west along the road to Fort Henry to slow or stop any reinforcements. While Harding and Wheeler maneuvered their troops, Brig. Gen. Forrest's artillery prematurely opened fire.⁵²⁰

⁵¹⁴ *Map of Dover, Tennessee, and the battlefield, 1862*, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Library Collection, Drawer 6, Folder 158; *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. XXIII, Part I, 36-37.

⁵¹⁵ *O.R.N.*, Vol. XXIV, 25-26; *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. XXIII, Part I, 36; Wilson, "Against Such Powerful Odds," 265.

⁵¹⁶ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. XXIII, Part I, 39.

⁵¹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵¹⁸ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. XX, Part II, 397-398.

⁵¹⁹ Wilson, "Against Such Powerful Odds," 265-266; *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. XXIII, Part I, 35-36.

⁵²⁰ Wyeth, *That Devil Forrest*, 128; Wills, *The Confederacy's Greatest Cavalryman*, 98; Cooling, "The Battle of Dover," 147.



Figure 4.68. Maj. Gen. Joseph Wheeler, CS, Library of Congress.

Forrest had seen movement within the Union lines, probably Harding shifting his infantry west to the position near the cemetery, and decided to attack. He ordered his men, who had dismounted for Wheeler's planned assault, to remount. Forrest thought the Union soldiers were retreating and that he could capture the lot of them with one bold move. He was wrong.⁵²¹

Forrest's mounted troopers gave a yell and charged down into the ravine and back uphill, racing toward the Union position from the east. Harding rushed 300 men to meet the charge while Adjutant W.A. Casey, in command of the siege gun, "double-shotted" the 32-pounder with canister and, possibly, grape shot. When the Confederate cavalry was within a few yards of the gun, Casey fired. Col. Harding later wrote, "300 Springfield rifles and a double-shot of canister from the siege gun was too much for them; the line gave way and their yells suddenly ceased."⁵²² Forrest's horse was killed and fell atop the general. His men, thinking their commander had been killed, retreated in disorder. The impetuous Forrest got out from under the dead

horse and made his way back to the Confederate lines; many of his men were not so fortunate.⁵²³

When Brig. Gen. Forrest's attack failed, Maj. Gen. Wheeler rode to the east side of the Confederate line and coordinated a second assault on the federal lines. Forrest dismounted his men, moved them toward the river, and formed a line near the jail, which was close to the landing. The Confederates again set off with a yell and charged. They forced the Union sharpshooters out of buildings on the edge of town and pushed them back to the main Union position. As Forrest advanced uphill toward the town center, and into a position accessible to the Union artillery, the guns let loose a concentrated and deadly fire. The artillery and small-arms fire again pushed the Confederate cavalry back. Forrest lost another horse and he and his men took refuge in the buildings abandoned by the Union sharpshooters.⁵²⁴

As Forrest attacked for the second time Brig. Gen. John Wharton launched his assault on the Union right. Wharton, who had a much larger brigade than Forrest, put pressure on Lieut. Col. Smith's line. Col. Harding shifted his field artillery to the west to meet the new threat. All four guns on the ridge by the cemetery fired on Wharton's dismounted cavalry as they pressed steadily forward. The guns held the position until the vents on two became blocked. The artillerists attempted to move the four guns off the ridge but so many horses were killed by Confederate fire that they had to abandon the last one.⁵²⁵

Without the guns the Union line could not hold and was forced off the ridge. Wharton took the cemetery and forced Smith's line to a bluff closer to the river that provided some

⁵²¹ Cooling, "The Battle of Dover," 148; Wilson, "Against Such Powerful Odds," 266.

⁵²² *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. XXIII, Part I, 37.

⁵²³ Walsh, "After Donelson," 37; Cooling, "The Battle of Dover," 148; Wilson, "Against Such Powerful Odds," 266.

⁵²⁴ Wyeth, *That Devil Forrest*, 129-130; Wilson, "Against Such Powerful Odds," 266-267; *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. XXIII, Part I, 40.

⁵²⁵ Wyeth, *That Devil Forrest*, 130; Walsh, "After Donelson," 37; Wilson, "Against Such Powerful Odds," 267.

protection for the infantry. Wharton compressed the Union line but did not break it. Six of the nine companies of the 83rd Illinois fought desperately to hold the western portion of their line. The Union soldiers “lay there in breathless suspense, expecting a last and possibly a successful charge by the enemy.”⁵²⁶

As Brig. Gen. Forrest had feared the lack of ammunition began to tell on the Confederates. What he did not know was that the Union soldiers west of town were also almost out of ammunition. The fighting slowed, the shadows became longer, and the temperature lower. At the suggestion of Adjutant Casey, Col. Harding ordered the six companies on the west side of the Union position to charge to the earthworks in town where the garrison’s reserve ammunition was stored. The men took off on the double-quick. It was this rash movement by Harding’s men that turned the tide of the battle. Thinking it was an assault on the horses being held on the east side of the Confederate line, many of Forrest’s troopers ran to secure their mounts. Maj. Gen. Wheeler wrote in his after-action report: “But for this accident the garrison would have surrendered in a very few minutes.”⁵²⁷

Word of the attack on Dover had reached Col. William W. Lowe at Fort Heiman before the telegraph lines were cut and he sent reinforcements. Col. William P. Lyon and the 13th Wisconsin left Fort Henry first. It was getting dark and they were within six miles of Dover when Lyon’s advance came under fire. The Wisconsin troops suffered several casualties in the brief encounter. Lyon slowly pushed his men forward in line of battle to within two miles of Dover without any further resistance.⁵²⁸

Around 8:00 p.m. Maj. Gen. Wheeler sent in a second demand for surrender. Col. Harding again refused. At or about this time the gunboats *Lexington*, *Fairplay*, *Silver Lake*,

St. Clair, *Brilliant* and *Robb* arrived at Dover. The flotilla under the command of Lieutenant Commander LeRoy Fitch found Brig. Gen. John Wharton’s command in line of battle on the west side of town near the cemetery, with his left flank anchored on a ravine. Fitch opened fire. If Wheeler was looking for an out this was probably it. His men’s ammunition was depleted, Union gunboats had arrived, as had well-armed Union reinforcements—the 13th Wisconsin Infantry, a detachment of the 71st Ohio Infantry, part of the 5th Iowa Cavalry, and Captain Andrew Steinbeck’s Battery H, 2nd Illinois Light Artillery—were advancing on Dover from the west. Wheeler had no option—the Confederates disengaged and began to withdraw.⁵²⁹

Lieut. Com. Fitch sent his gunboats up the river, firing into the woods to slow the Confederate retreat. He continued firing until 10:00 p.m. when Col. Harding informed him that the Confederates had gone. Harding reported his losses as thirteen killed, fifty-one wounded, and twenty captured. The Confederates claimed to have captured eighty or so Union soldiers, as well as some wagons and horses and one brass gun. They also destroyed a boat loaded with supplies tied up at the landing. Maj. Gen. Wheeler lost nearly ten percent of his command—Wharton stated his losses as sixteen killed, sixty wounded and eight missing; Forrest lost about 200 killed, captured or wounded. Forrest blamed Wheeler for the debacle and refused to ever serve under him again.⁵³⁰

New Forts and Confederate Raids, 1863 Union Fort Donelson

In early March 1863, Col. William W. Lowe received orders from Maj. Gen. William S. Rosecrans to abandon forts Henry and Heiman and to relocate the troops to Fort Donelson. On March 8, Col. William P. Lyon,

⁵²⁶ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. XXIII, Part I, 38-39; Wilson, “Against Such Powerful Odds,” 267.

⁵²⁷ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. XXIII, Part I, 38, 40; Cooling, “The Battle of Dover,” 149.

⁵²⁸ Lyon, *Reminiscences of the Civil War*, 78.

⁵²⁹ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. XXIII, Part I, 38; *O.R.N.*, Vol. XXIV, 26; Walsh, “After Donelson,” 37.

⁵³⁰ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. XXIII, Part I, 41, 38; *O.R.N.*, Vol. XXIV, 26; Wyeth, *That Devil Forrest*, 131-132; Cooling, “The Battle of Dover,” 150; Wilson, “Against Such Powerful Odds,” 268.

13th Wisconsin, noted in his diary that high water was making it difficult to get the artillery and cavalry from Fort Heiman across the Tennessee River. The 5th Iowa Cavalry, which had troops at both forts Henry and Heiman, continued to scout the region and protect the telegraph line that ran along the Memphis and Louisville Railroad.⁵³¹

The combined forces brought Fort Donelson's garrison to just over 3,000 men and fourteen pieces of artillery. Soon after the garrisons were consolidated construction began on Union Fort Donelson east of the old Confederate fort, where the National Cemetery is today. Initially some of the work was undertaken by Union soldiers, Co. F of the 13th Wisconsin reported working on the new fort in March, but as time went on construction fell more and more to enslaved men hired from the area and freedom seekers who had come to Dover; at least some of whom were from Kentucky.⁵³² Kentuckian Daniel Hillman reported to Union authorities that he "found 14 of [his] Negroes—working on the Fort." A Union private referred to the African Americans working on the fort as the "Negro Brigade," which, he wrote, worked from "7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. with an hour off for lunch."⁵³³

In June Col. Lyon wrote in his diary: "The fort progressing finely. We have all four of those 32-pounders in position now."⁵³⁴ A week later he added: "The most pressing work now is to finish the fort, build the magazine,

build a guard-house inside the works."⁵³⁵ At the end of June he wrote: "Our magazine is now nearly done and shall very soon have all of our ammunition in it."⁵³⁶

The fort, an irregularly shaped redoubt, was completed in fall 1863. An inspection report written January 14, 1864 stated that it was well maintained and heavily armed—its armament consisting of four 32-pounder guns, two 12-pounder iron guns and an 8-inch howitzer. The magazine was reported to be in good order.⁵³⁷

A report filed May 25, 1865 by Brig. Gen. Zealous B. Tower, Inspector General of Fortifications Military Division of the Mississippi, described Union Fort Donelson:

*The fort is large and irregular, conforming to the ground. The gorge is flanked. Most of the line is broken into salient and re-entering angles. It has a good command, though in some parts the hill slopes are too steep to be swept by canister. The ditches were well excavated, so as to give steep scarps not readily scaled. Seven barbette guns constituted the armament at the date of my inspection. Twenty guns could readily be mounted in Fort Donelson, and the interior space is large enough for a regiment; besides, it is connected with the river by two lines of rifle-pits inclosing the buildings belonging to the post. The fort had a good magazine well covered.*⁵³⁸

Tower's rather technical analysis of Union Fort Donelson describes a well-sited, well-constructed and defensible fortification that would be difficult for an enemy to take (Figure 4.69).

There is little information concerning the Union fortification built at Fort Heiman. Company E, 5th Iowa Cavalry, referred to their station near Fort Heiman as Camp Lowe

⁵³¹ Lyon, *Reminiscences of the Civil War*, 85-86; Iowa Adjutant General's Office, *Report of the Adjutant General*, 991; Lenard E. Brown, *Construction History of Union Fort Donelson*, typescript dated August 1, 1982, National Cemetery Records, Box 6, Folder 8, Fort Donelson National Battlefield and Cemetery, Dover, Tennessee, 2.

⁵³² Brown, *Construction History of Union Fort Donelson*, 2.

⁵³³ *O.R. Supplement*, Part II, Vol. 75, Serial 87, 760; Susan Hawkins, "Forts Henry, Heiman, and Donelson: The African-American Experience," Master's thesis, Murray State University, 2005, 35.

⁵³⁴ Lyon, *Reminiscences of the Civil War*, 98.

⁵³⁵ *Ibid.*, 101.

⁵³⁶ *Ibid.*, 108-109.

⁵³⁷ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. XXXII, Part II, 90. The report in the *Official Records* states that the fort had "four 22-pounder sea-coast . . . guns," which is either a typographic error or simply an error; there is not nor has there ever been a 22-pounder gun.

⁵³⁸ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. XLIX, Part II, 898.



Figure 4.69. Union Fort Donelson, adapted from an 1867 map prepared for the sale of land that would become the Fort Donelson National Cemetery, Mudpuppy & Waterdog, Inc.

in March-April 1862 but there is no indication that it was fortified.⁵³⁹ The only reference to the construction of new fortifications at Fort Heiman was a year later. Alfred B. Brackett's Battalion Minnesota Cavalry, formerly Cos. A, B, and C., 5th Iowa Cavalry, reported in April 1863: "The duties preformed during the month have been the usual picket and interior guards and fatigue and in addition an extensive amount of earthworks have been thrown up and an abatis and a stockade entirely surrounding this post constructed."⁵⁴⁰

The Size of the Garrisons Reduced

On January 23, 1863, Fort Henry and Fort Donelson were transferred from the Department of the Tennessee to the

Department of the Cumberland; Fort Heiman followed on February 4. Brigadier General Alexander S. Asboth, commander at Columbus, Kentucky, which was in the Department of the Tennessee, complained that taking Fort Heiman out of his district deprived him of the cavalry support he needed to combat guerrillas in Kentucky and Tennessee. Sometime before the end of March, Maj. Gen. William S. Rosecrans, commander of the Department of the Cumberland, abandoned Fort Heiman, at which point Maj. Gen. Henry Halleck stepped in. On March 31, he transferred Fort Heiman to the Department of the Tennessee and put it under Maj. Gen. U.S. Grant's command.⁵⁴¹

⁵³⁹ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. XLIX, Part II, 898.

⁵⁴⁰ *O.R. Supplement*, Part II, Vol. 31, Serial 43, 747.

⁵⁴¹ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. XXIII, Part II, 195; Lyon, *Reminiscences of the Civil War*, 89; *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. XXIII, Part II, 34; *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. XXIV, Part III, 153.

In May 1863, with the push by Maj. Gen. U.S. Grant on Vicksburg, Fort Heiman was again ordered abandoned and the troops there, probably detachments of 111th Illinois and 3rd Minnesota infantries and two companies of 15th Kentucky Cavalry, were sent to different stations. However, Fort Heiman did not remain unoccupied for long. A June 30, 1863 report noted that companies A, B, C, and D of the 15th Kentucky Cavalry under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Albert P. Henry now held the fort. The garrison, however, was much reduced from the one that evacuated the fort in late May.⁵⁴²

It appears that Fort Henry was abandoned in early March 1863 due to high water. In a March 24 letter to his wife Col. William P. Lyon, then at Fort Henry, wrote: "The first intimation we had of it was a telegram from Major General Rosecrans to me, March 4th, ordering the force at Fort Henry over here [Fort Donelson]. We had, however, expected orders to go to some other point, for some time, as Fort Henry was all under water and there was no earthly use in keeping troops there any longer."⁵⁴³

In June 1863 the 5th Iowa was ordered from Fort Donelson to Murfreesboro, Tennessee. In August, the 13th Wisconsin also left Fort Donelson. In all, 3,000 troops left the fort in 1863; many were never replaced. By fall of that year a much smaller force held the new Union fort above Dover. A report of troops in the Department of the Cumberland dated October 20 listed 272 soldiers present for duty at Fort Donelson, now under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Elijah C. Brott—a detachment of the 83rd Illinois Infantry and Battery C, 2nd Illinois Light Artillery.⁵⁴⁴

By April 1864, Lieut. Col. Brott's garrison at Fort Donelson had fallen to sixty-one

officers and men. A weekly report for June 1864 showed two officers and 113 men but did not list a commander. By fall 1864 the garrison numbered 129 officers and men under the command of Captain James P. Flood. Those in charge of the Department of the Cumberland apparently did not feel that Fort Donelson required even a full regiment.⁵⁴⁵

Skirmish at Pine Bluff, Tennessee

On the morning of August 17, 1864, Captain William W. Turnbull and eleven men of the 83rd Illinois Infantry were ordered out of Fort Donelson to guard men repairing the telegraph line that connected Dover with Smithland, Kentucky. Three days later, when Turnbull's detachment reached the Great Western Furnace about fifteen miles from Fort Donelson, a local man reported to him that six guerrillas had been sighted ahead on the main road. Rather than taking a longer route to avoid them Turnbull decided to capture the guerrillas. They took off and Turnbull and his men, who were mounted, pursued.⁵⁴⁶

The Union soldiers got close enough to the Confederates to fire a volley. It is not clear if they inflicted any injuries but they did capture a horse and a gun. After the chase, as Capt. Turnbull was leading his men back to their camp, they came upon 110 men possibly of Col. Tom Woodward's command. The Confederates fired on the small party of Union soldiers, who returned fire. The Confederates then charged and overpowered the Union soldiers, killing Turnbull and seven of his men. One wounded man was taken to the house of a local family, but the Confederates discovered he was there and returned and killed him. Only two of the Union soldiers escaped and returned safely to the fort. Capt. James B. Flood, who found the bodies, reported that the guerillas had inflicted extreme physical cruelty on the Union soldiers, "horribly mutilating their bodies,

⁵⁴² *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. XXIV, Part III, 255, 364, 454.

⁵⁴³ Lyon, *Reminiscences of the Civil War*, 88-89.

⁵⁴⁴ Lyon, *Reminiscences of the Civil War*, 111-113; Iowa Adjutant General's Office, *Report of the Adjutant General*, 992; *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. XXXI, Part I, 684, 810.

⁵⁴⁵ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. XXXII, Part III, 550; *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. XXXVIII, Part IV, 629; *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. XXXIX, Part II, 408.

⁵⁴⁶ *O.R.*, Series I, XXXIX, Part I, 467.

their heads and faces terribly beaten, and from two to four bullets in each.”⁵⁴⁷

Skirmish near Fort Donelson

On October 11, 1864, a recruiting party left Pine Bluff, Tennessee, on the Tennessee River a few miles north of Fort Henry, for Fort Donelson. The party consisted of Cos. D and I, 4th United States Colored Heavy Artillery (USCHA), eighty-five men under the command of Lieutenant Colonel T.R. Weaver. When the 4th USCHA got within five miles of the fort they “were attacked by 250 Rebel cavalry” Weaver’s advance fired on the Confederates and he moved the main body of the detachment forward in line of battle on a “slightly elevated position.”⁵⁴⁸

The Confederates, under the command of Colonel James Q. Chenoweth (Figure 4.70), attacked the Union line. A volley from the 4th USCHA drove them back. They regrouped and charged again but were repelled a second time. The Confederates then dismounted detachments, which they sent at the Union right and left flanks while the main group attacked the Union line. With the new assault threatening his position, Weaver pulled his men back to the outbuildings of a farm behind them. The Confederates attacked again but failed to take the Union position. Chenoweth sent in a flag of truce, which the Union soldiers fired on, believing it to be a ruse and fearing what would happen if they, USCT and their white officers, were captured. Soon after the Confederates mounted up and departed, leaving a number of their dead and wounded

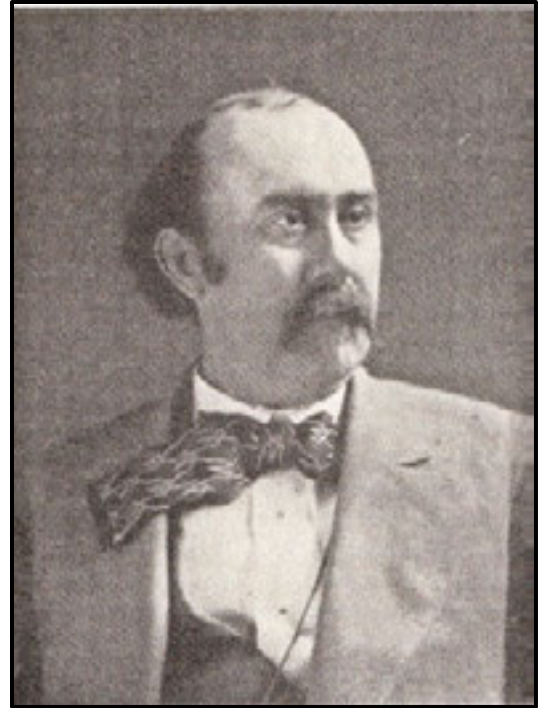


Figure 4.70. Col. James Q. Chenoweth, CS, A. Rankin Johnson and W. J. Davis, *The Partisan Rangers of the Confederate States Army*, Louisville, Ky.: G. G. Fetter Company, 1904, p. 177.

on the field. The Confederates lost seven killed, among them Lieutenant Colonel Robert B.L. Sorey, and four to eleven wounded; Weaver lost four killed, including Lieutenant Robert A. Johnson of Co. D, and nine wounded. His civilian guide was also killed.⁵⁴⁹

Confederate Maj. Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest’s 1864 West Tennessee Raid

From May to September 1864, Union Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman’s army pressed south from Tennessee toward Atlanta. In a series of battles, in which Sherman’s larger force consistently outflanked Gen. Joseph E. Johnston’s Confederate Army of Tennessee, the two sides inched closer to Atlanta, a vital railroad and industrial center. After a bloody summer of fighting Sherman’s troops occupied Atlanta on September 2, 1864.

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid. It is unclear if the men who attacked the Union detachment were Confederate soldiers or if they were citizens.

⁵⁴⁸ *O.R.*, Series 1, XXXIX, Part I, 467; *O.R. Supplement*, Part II, Vol. 77, Serial 89, 194. The Union army was recruiting freedmen in the entire region. In addition to those who joined in the twin river fort area, a great many were recruited at Clarksville. Many enslaved men left Kentucky and came to Tennessee to join the army. While outside of the scope of this project, research on the recruitment of freedmen in Tennessee and freedom seekers from Kentucky would aid in understanding African American Civil War history.

⁵⁴⁹ *O.R.*, Series 1, XXXIX, Part I, 857; *O.R. Supplement*, Part II, Vol. 77, Serial 89, 194-195.

During the assault on the city Confederate cavalry tried repeatedly but failed to disrupt Sherman's supply lines.⁵⁵⁰

With Maj. Gen. Sherman in Atlanta and poised to begin a march to the sea, the Confederacy desperately needed to damage or destroy his supply lines, which ran through Nashville. In mid-October, Maj. Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest set out to cut Sherman's lines of communication and supply in West Tennessee by striking at Johnsonville, a vast Union supply depot on the Tennessee River. If he succeeded, the steady stream of supplies flowing upriver to Johnsonville and on to Nashville via the railroad would be stopped, if only temporarily.

Capture of Fort Heiman

On October 28, Maj. Gen. Forrest's cavalry occupied abandoned Fort Heiman. The Confederates blockaded the Tennessee River by placing artillery in the fort, just north of the fort, and at Paris Landing. It proved effective; Forrest's troops and artillery disabled and captured the transport, *Mazeppa*. Forrest later wrote: "As she [*Mazeppa*] passed the battery at Fort Heiman, supported by Brigadier-General Lyon, she was fired upon by one section of [Captain John W.] Morton's Battery and two 20-pounder Parrott guns" (Figure 4.71).⁵⁵¹ The next day the *Anna* steamed into the Confederate trap but escaped and raced for Paducah. Hearing the artillery fire, the tinclad U.S.S. *Undine* steamed forward to investigate.⁵⁵²

The *Undine* had steamed past one battery when a man called to the boat from the shore. When Acting Master J.L. Bryant stopped his engines the Confederates opened fire. Bryant remembered: "At that instant was opened up from the west bank by a heavy artillery and infantry fire about 50 yards from shore." The lightly armored boat fought for an hour before



Figure 4.71. Capt. John W. Morton, CS, from John Watson Morton, *The Artillery of Nathan Bedford Forrest's Cavalry*, Nashville, TN: Publishing House of the M.E. Church, South, 1909, 207.

taking refuge out of range of the Confederate guns. In the initial exchange four men on the *Undine* were killed and the boat's boiler knocked out.⁵⁵³

In spite of frantic signals from the *Undine* two other steamboats loaded with supplies proceeded upriver. The *Venus* ran past the Paris Landing batteries only to take the brunt of the upriver guns. Her captain was killed and the *Venus* drifted back under the protection of the *Undine*. The *J.W. Cheeseman* also ignored the warnings and paid the price. Almost every Confederate shot hit its mark and the disabled *J.W. Cheeseman* surrendered.⁵⁵⁴

The Confederates moved their artillery and again fired on the *Undine*. The cannon and rifle fire proved too much; the *Undine's* crew fled. Forrest captured two boats intact—the *Venus*, which he armed with two 20-pounder Parrott rifled guns, and the tinclad *Undine*.⁵⁵⁵

⁵⁵⁰ McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 773-776, 858.

⁵⁵¹ *O.R.*, Series I, XXXIX, Part I, 870.

⁵⁵² Willis, *The Confederacy's Greatest Cavalryman*, 262-263; *O.R.*, Series I, XXXIX, Part I, 589.

⁵⁵³ *O.R.N.*, Series I, Vol. XXVI, 602.

⁵⁵⁴ Willis, *The Confederacy's Greatest Cavalryman*, 265; *O.R.N.*, Series I, Vol. XXVI, 603.

⁵⁵⁵ Wyeth, *That Devil Forrest*, 460-461; Willis, *The Confederacy's Greatest Cavalryman*, 265.

The gunboats remained near Fort Heiman for a day or two, allowing the aptly named “horse marines” to get a feel for handling them. On November 1 Forrest’s cavalry and his newly acquired navy set out for Johnsonville.⁵⁵⁶

Forrest did not command a navy for long; he lost the *Venus* on November 3 and the *Undine* the following day. The raid, however, was a success. Forrest placed his artillery above the depot at Johnsonville and shelled the wharf. The Confederates were inadvertently aided by the Union commander, who panicked and set the transports on fire to keep the supplies from being captured. After the raid Forrest wrote: “I captured and destroyed 4 gun-boats, 14 transports, 20 barges, 26 pieces of artillery, \$6,700,000 worth of property, and 150 prisoners. Brigadier-General Buford, after supplying his own command, turned over to my chief quartermaster about 9,000 pairs of shoes and 1,000 blankets.”⁵⁵⁷ Forrest successfully cut the supply line to Nashville; in response Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman informed Maj. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant: “I can make the march and make Georgia howl . . . we can forage the interior of the state.”⁵⁵⁸ His army would live off the land and the people of Georgia on its march to the sea.⁵⁵⁹

Confederate Brig. Gen. Hylan B. Lyon’s Raid into Kentucky

In late November 1864, Confederate Brig. Gen. Hylan B. Lyon (Figure 4.72) received orders from Lieut. Gen. John Bell Hood to capture Clarksville, Tennessee, destroy railroads and telegraph lines running to Nashville, and seize cornmeal from area mills.

⁵⁵⁶ Wyeth, *That Devil Forrest*, 461; *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. XXXIX, Part I, 870.

⁵⁵⁷ *O.R.*, Series I, XXXIX, Part I, 871.

⁵⁵⁸ Jean V. Berlin and Brooks D. Simpson, eds., *Sherman’s Civil War: Selected Correspondence of William T. Sherman, 1865*, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 731.

⁵⁵⁹ John F. Marszalek, *Sherman: A Soldier’s Passion for Order*, (New York: The Free Press, 1993), 296.

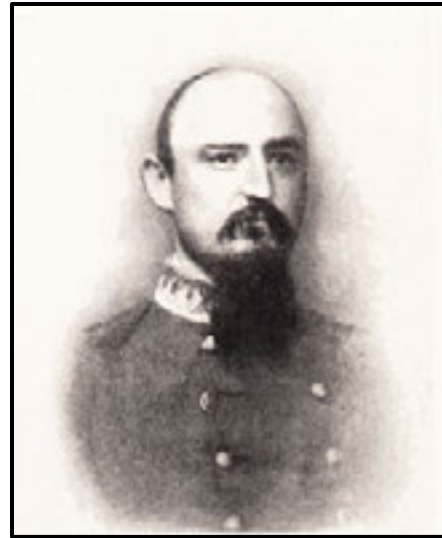


Figure 4.72. Brig. Gen. Hylan B. Lyon, CS, from Holland Thompson, editor, *The Photographic History of the Civil War complete and unabridged two volumes in one*, Vol. X, p. 269.

Lyon’s well-armed force numbered 800, all but 100 of them mounted. He also had two 12-pounder howitzers.⁵⁶⁰

Brig. Gen. Lyon left Paris, Tennessee, on December 6 and proceeded to Danville, where boats waited to take them across the Tennessee River. After crossing Lyon captured Cumberland City. There, on December 9, he captured the steamboat *Thomas E. Tutt*, which he used to transport his force over the Cumberland River. The commander at Fort Donelson, Colonel William Forbes, 42nd Missouri Infantry, reported to his commanding officer in Paducah that Lyon had crossed the Cumberland with 4,000 soldiers. Forbes, who had no cavalry, did not pursue but felt that Fort Donelson was strong enough to hold if Lyon attacked.⁵⁶¹

Before leaving Cumberland City, Brig. Gen. Lyon captured two additional steamboats and four barges, which he burned. The Confederates moved toward Clarksville, which Lyon determined was too strong to attack. They did, however, destroy railroad

⁵⁶⁰ *O.R.* Series I, Vol. XLV, Part I, 803-804.

⁵⁶¹ *O.R.* Series I, Vol. XLV, Part I, 804; *O.R.* Series I, Vol. XLV, Part II, 140.

track and telegraph wires “from the Red River bridge four miles from Clarksville to the junction or intersection of the Nashville and Clarksville [rail]road.” Lyon then took his command on to Hopkinsville, Kentucky.⁵⁶²

On December 14, near Cadiz, Kentucky, a detachment of 13th U.S. Colored Heavy Artillery out of Smithland, Kentucky, was attacked by part of Brig. Gen. Lyon’s column. The Union soldiers under the command of Captain William Botimer initially repulsed the attackers but when the Confederates brought up reinforcements the recruiting party retreated. Botimer lost one man killed, who he reported as being murdered by Lyon’s men, and five men missing. After the engagement the USCT made their way to Fort Donelson.⁵⁶³

Other Union garrisons of United States Colored Troops without artillery, approximately 200 men each at Cadiz, Eddyville, Hopkinsville, Princeton, and perhaps other locations, retreated before Lyon’s advance. Some went to Smithland, Kentucky; others sought the protection of Fort Donelson. Lieutenant Colonel S.F. Johnson, who commanded the Union garrison at Russellville—some 400 men of the 52nd Kentucky Mounted Infantry—confirmed that Lyon had gone to Hopkinsville. Johnson wrote Brig. Gen. Edward M. McCook, commander of the First Union Cavalry Division, saying that if another regiment could be sent to Russellville he would move against Lyon.⁵⁶⁴

Confederate Brig. Gen. Lyon left Col. Chenoweth at Hopkinsville with 400 men and one of his two howitzers. On December 15, Union Brig. Gen. McCook, with two brigades of cavalry—probably about 2,000 men—left Nashville and arrived at Russellville. Leaving their wagons and other baggage, they rode west with Col. Johnson’s detachment of the 52nd Kentucky Mounted Infantry. The Union cavalry arrived at Fairview, nine miles east of

Hopkinsville, about 1:00 a.m. on December 16. The column rested and fed the horses before moving on to Hopkinsville, which they attacked at daylight.⁵⁶⁵

Confederate Col. Chenoweth had placed his men on the high ground east of town, a good defensive position. Brig. Gen. McCook anticipated this deployment and devised a plan to attack the Confederate line and to effect the “capture and destruction of the whole force opposed to me.” McCook sent Brig. Gen. Louis D. Watkins’s brigade to the right with orders to get behind the Confederate position, to cover all the roads, and to capture the Confederates as they retreated. He sent Colonel Oscar H. LaGrange’s (Figure 4.73) brigade forward and the Confederate line opened up on it with small arms and artillery fire, driving LaGrange’s men back. After the initial assault the Union artillery opened up on the Confederate position, firing seventeen rounds. While the Confederate attention was focused on the artillery and the Union line east of their position, Brig. Gen. Watkin’s brigade struck from behind. The Confederates broke and ran, abandoning the gun and caisson. One of Watkin’s regimental commanders failed to attack the fleeing Confederates, thinking they were Union soldiers. Most escaped and later rejoined Lyon.⁵⁶⁶

⁵⁶² *O.R.* Series I, Vol. XLV, Part I, 804.

⁵⁶³ *O.R. Supplement*, Part II, Vol. 77, Serial 89, 252-253.

⁵⁶⁴ *O.R.* Series I, Vol. XLV, Part I, 804; *O.R. Supplement*, Part II, Vol. 77, Serial 89, 252-253; *O.R.* Series I, Vol. XLV, Part II, 175-176.

⁵⁶⁵ *O.R.* Series I, Vol. XLV, Part I, 804, 791-792; John W. Rowell, *Yankee Artillerymen: Through the Civil War with Eli Lilly’s Indiana Battery*, (Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1975), 238.

⁵⁶⁶ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. XLV, Part I, 804, 791-792; Rowell, *Yankee Artillerymen*, 239.



Figure 4.73. Colonel Oscar H. LaGrange, US, Wisconsin Veterans Museum.

McCook never caught Lyon's force. Before the raid was over Lyon burned eight Kentucky courthouses, which he said were being used to house Union soldiers. The raid did draw Union cavalry out of Nashville during and after the Battle of Nashville, which probably allowed much of Lieut. Gen. John Bell Hood's army to escape, but accomplished little else.⁵⁶⁷

The End of the War and Fort Donelson, 1865

By spring 1865 the major Union and Confederate armies had left the region. General Orders No. 12, dated February 28, 1865, placed the garrisons of Clarksville, Fort Donelson, and those along the Edgefield and Clarksville Railroad and adjacent country within the newly created Fifth Sub-District of Middle Tennessee under the command of Colonel Arthur A. Smith, 83rd Illinois, with his headquarters at Clarksville. The 3rd Independent Battery Ohio Artillery was sent to Fort Donelson in March 1865. Reports from the Fifth Sub-District for April 1865 show that Lieutenant Colonel Elijah C. Brott was in command of Fort Donelson, which was manned by two companies of the 83rd Illinois;

⁵⁶⁷ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. XLV, Part I, 806.

Battery C, 2nd Illinois Light Artillery; and the 3rd Independent Battery Ohio Artillery. Battery C, 2nd Illinois Light Artillery, and the 3rd Independent Battery Ohio Artillery remained at Fort Donelson until June 1865.⁵⁶⁸

Lieut. Col. Brott commanded Fort Donelson until his regiment, the 83rd Illinois, mustered out in late June 1865. Major General George H. Thomas, commander of the Department of the Cumberland, sent a letter to Brott's commanding officer, Col. Arthur Smith, praising the regiment. Thomas also directed his Assistant Adjutant-General Major B.H. Polk to relay the contents of his letter to Brott. Polk wrote, in part:

*In that letter he [Thomas] was pleased to say that at a time when he needed brave men and steady soldiers to drive Wheeler and Forrest out of the district, he was but too happy to avail himself of the services of as many of your regiment as could be spared for that duty, and that relying greatly upon them he was not disappointed in their deportment. You were in command of that part of the regiment which reported to him and he directs me to say to you that your duties and the duties of the officers and men under your command were efficiently, faithfully, and cheerfully performed. He also directs me to say, in addition to what he said of your regiment in the letter to Colonel Smith, that he feels grateful for the excellent manner in which you have managed affairs at Fort Donelson, and the adjacent country, and wishes you to be assured of his high regard and esteem for you as a soldier and a gentleman.*⁵⁶⁹

The above is from a letter from Union Maj. Gen. George H. Thomas, which praises the commander of the 83rd Illinois and his command. It must have meant a great deal to Lieut. Col. Brott, as it came from the departmental commander.

The 83rd Illinois Infantry was replaced by three companies of 143rd Indiana Infantry.

⁵⁶⁸ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. XLIX, Part I, 785; *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. XLIX, Part II, 53, 537; *O.R. Supplement*, Part II, Vol. 50, Serial 62, 384.

⁵⁶⁹ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. XLIX, Part II, 1006.

That regiment mustered out at Nashville in October 1865. There are no other post returns from Fort Donelson during that period. The fort was abandoned by Union troops in October, if not before, and stood vacant for perhaps a year. Then, in October 1866, a detachment of soldiers from the 34th U.S. Infantry arrived at Fort Donelson to protect government property, which may have been all or some of the eighteen structures built outside of Union Fort Donelson during the war. These included “a guardhouse, two stables, a bakery, barracks, three officers’ quarters, several offices and two warehouses.” It is not known how long the 34th stayed.⁵⁷⁰

Fort Donelson, which was constructed by the Confederates in 1861–1862, was captured by Brig. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant’s Union army on February 16, 1862. From that date until about October 1865 it was garrisoned by Union soldiers.

Significance of the Battles of Fort Henry and Fort Donelson

Strategic Repercussions

Confederate President Jefferson Davis hoped to have the Ohio River as his northern border. It is often quoted that Abraham Lincoln said, “I would like to have God on my side but I must have Kentucky.”⁵⁷¹ In a

⁵⁷⁰ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. XLIX, Part II, 1021; *O.R. Supplement*, Part II, Vol. 8, Serial 20, 395; Dyer, *Compendium of the War of the Rebellion: Volume III, Regimental Histories*, 1157; Brown, *Construction of Union Fort Donelson*, 3; The Jaeger Company, *Fort Donelson National Battlefield Cultural Landscape Report*, (Prepared under the direction of the National Park Service, Southeast Regional Offices, Cultural Resource Division, Atlanta, Georgia, 2015), 20.

⁵⁷¹ Lowell H. Harrison, *Lincoln of Kentucky*, (Lexington: KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2000), 135, 260. Harrison writes in his footnotes that the oft-quoted sentence may have actually been penned by an anonymous Kentucky minister who wrote: “Mr. Lincoln would like to have God on his side; he has to have Kentucky.”

September 22, 1861 letter the Union president wrote: “I think to lose Kentucky is nearly the same as to lose the whole game. Kentucky gone, we can not [sic] hold Missouri, nor, I think, Maryland. These all against us, and the job on our hands is too large for us. We would as well consent to separation at once, including the surrender of this capitol.”⁵⁷² The failure of the Commonwealth to secede dashed Davis’s hopes, aided the Union cause, and vastly increased the strategic value of the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers to the Confederacy.⁵⁷³

Governor Isham Harris recognized the rivers’ significance even before Tennessee seceded from the Union in June 1861. He pushed forward plans to fortify them in spring 1861, knowing they could provide avenues for the invasion of Tennessee and the Deep South. Gov. Harris’ and the Confederate government’s respect for Kentucky’s neutrality caused the forts to be constructed in Tennessee rather than more suitable sites in the Commonwealth.⁵⁷⁴

Holding Nashville and Middle Tennessee was vital if the Confederacy was to win the war. Factories in the Tennessee capital made artillery, small arms and ammunition, swords, blankets and saddles. The city had become a vast warehouse for military materials and commissary stores for the western Confederacy. Gunpowder mills dotted the banks of the Cumberland River and by July 1861, when the Battle of Manassas was fought, these mills were shipping gunpowder to Virginia. The counties near the capital—Robinson, Rutherford, Williamson and Wilson—produced corn and hogs. The forges and furnaces in the land between the Tennessee and the Cumberland rivers—part of Middle Tennessee’s Great Western Iron Belt—would be lost if the rivers fell into Union hands.⁵⁷⁵

⁵⁷² Roy P. Basler, editor, *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln, Volume IV*, (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1953), 532.

⁵⁷³ McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 284.

⁵⁷⁴ Connelly, *Civil War Tennessee*, 18-20.

⁵⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 14-15.

Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers Opened to the Union Navy

The fall of Fort Henry on February 6, 1862 opened the Tennessee River to Union gunboats. In short order three Union timberclads steamed upriver into Alabama, destroying boats and bridges, and capturing military supplies and a Confederate gunboat under construction. The Confederacy had no real defense against the Union vessels; its fledgling navy was underfunded and raw materials for the construction of armored gunboats difficult to obtain. Even when the materials could be found, the mills and machinery needed for manufacture were lacking (Figure 4.74).⁵⁷⁶

After the fall of Fort Henry, Confederate Brig. Gen. Gideon Pillow decided to fight the battle for Nashville at Fort Donelson and the strategic implications of the twin river forts became greater. If Fort Donelson fell the Cumberland River would be open to the Union navy, and Nashville's fall would soon follow. The city's loss would cost the Confederacy not only the capital of Tennessee but a major industrial asset and the agricultural output of the farms on the Cumberland Plateau. The loss of Middle Tennessee would put the entire Deep South in jeopardy.⁵⁷⁷

Confederates Abandon Kentucky

The immediate result of the fall of Fort Henry was the loss of Bowling Green, Kentucky. On February 7, the day after Union forces took Henry, Confederate Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston met with generals William J. Hardee and P.G.T. Beauregard at the latter's headquarters in Bowling Green. The easy victory of the Union gunboats led the Confederate generals to conclude that Fort Donelson could not withstand a similar attack. Earlier Confederate defeats at the battles of Middle Creek (January 10, 1862) and Mill Springs (January 19, 1862) had driven Confederate troops from east Kentucky. Johnston abandoned Bowling Green as the battle for Fort Donelson began. With Bowling Green

evacuated, Columbus was the only Confederate stronghold left in the state. By early March, it too had been abandoned.⁵⁷⁸

When the war began, the Confederacy formed a defensive line in southern Kentucky stretching from Cumberland Gap to the Mississippi River. During the Confederate occupation of the southern tier of the state, a Kentucky Confederate government was formed. When the last Confederate army marched south that government had no home and the Confederacy's northern defense line collapsed. Kentucky remained a Union state. Its abundant agricultural products—Kentucky ranked first in the production of horses, mules, barley and rye, second in sheep, corn, hemp, tobacco, corn and wheat; third in hogs, fourth in cattle—would supply Union armies, not Confederate. The Confederacy would feel the loss of Kentucky throughout the war.⁵⁷⁹

Confederates Abandon Nashville

After his February 7 meeting with Maj. Gen. William Hardee and Gen. P.G.T. Beauregard Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston withdrew Hardee's force of 14,000 troops out of Bowling Green and sent them to Nashville. It was vital that the Confederate army reach the protection of the southern bank of the Cumberland before the Union gunboats could intervene.⁵⁸⁰

Johnston also began removing supplies, military stores, and the sick and wounded to Nashville and Chattanooga. He planned to make a stand at Nashville, but when Johnston arrived he found that the defenses that he believed had been prepared did not exist. Confederate

⁵⁷⁶ Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson*, 113-115.

⁵⁷⁷ Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 140-142.

⁵⁷⁸ Johnston, *The Life of Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston*, 487, 493; Connelly, *Army of the Heartland*, 132; Harrison, *The Civil War in Kentucky*, 32; Stephen D. Engle, *Struggle for the Heartland: The Campaigns from Fort Henry to Corinth*, (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 82; Connelly, *Army of the Heartland*, 145.

⁵⁷⁹ Harrison and Klotter, *A New History of Kentucky*, 138, 192-194; Harrison, *The Civil War in Kentucky*, 8-13.

⁵⁸⁰ Connelly, *Civil War Tennessee*, 28.

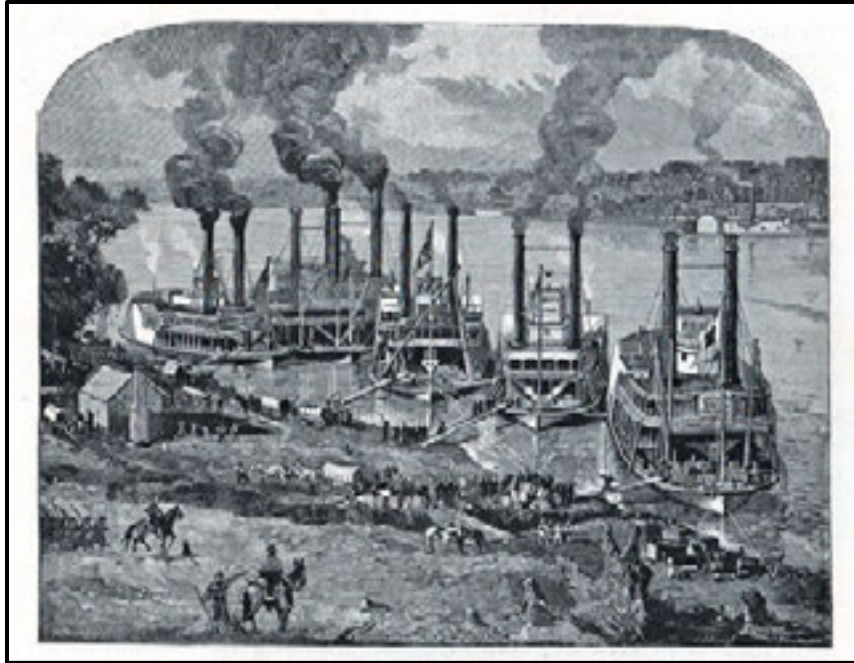


Figure 4.74. Union supply boats ply the waters of the Tennessee River now cleared of Confederate obstacles, Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buel, editors, *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, New York: Century Co., 1887, Vol. 1, p. 489.

engineer Maj. Jeremy Gilmer had lacked the labor to do so and had not pressed the issue. With Union Brig. Gen. Don Carlos Buell's force of 50,000 advancing from Louisville to Bowling Green Johnston had no choice but to abandon Nashville. He began moving his army to Murfreesboro.

Gen. Johnston inexplicably left the task of removing or destroying the vast store of Confederate military supplies in Nashville to Brig. Gen. John Floyd. As Floyd tried and failed to calm the frightened and increasingly agitated citizens of Nashville during what was later dubbed the "Great Panic," Lieut. Col. Nathan Bedford Forrest rode into the capital. Floyd quickly turned over the task of securing the supplies to Forrest and the former commander of Fort Donelson fled the city.⁵⁸¹

Forrest secured the warehouses and addressed what had become a mob. When appeals to their patriotism failed he used swords, rifle butts, and icy water sprayed from fire engines to quell the rioting and looting. Achieving some control of the city, Forrest

loaded vast quantities of supplies on trains and any other vehicle he could acquire. His efforts saved food, clothing, ammunition, and the rifling machinery in a local factory but even Forrest could not save everything. There were too few railroad cars and not enough time. He distributed a huge quantity of pork to the city's residents; other supplies he had burned or dumped in the river. On March 19, the gunboats tied up at the city's Broadway Landing were destroyed. The next day Confederate soldiers burned the suspension bridge across the river. Soon after, the railroad bridge and the ordnance works were put to the torch. On March 23, 1862, as the Confederate rearguard was moving out, the Union army marched into Nashville unopposed. The city—a rail center, an important hospital facility, the home of valuable industry, banking, and other services—was lost. It was a staggering blow for the Confederacy (Figure 4.75).⁵⁸²

⁵⁸¹ Connelly, *Army of the Heartland*, 132-133.

⁵⁸² Johnston, *The Life of Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston*, 499-500; Alfred Leland Crabb, "The Twilight of the Nashville Gods," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 15, no. 4 (1956): 297; Engle, *Struggle for the Heartland*, 89.



Figure 4.75. After capturing Nashville the Union army fortified the state capitol, Alfred H. Guernsey and Henry M. Alden, *Harper's Pictorial History of the Civil War*, Chicago, IL: The Puritan Press, 1894 Vol 1, p. 241.

The loss of Nashville to the Confederacy was stunning, but thanks to the efforts of Forrest and others much equipment was saved. Machinery from the powder works in Nashville was relocated to Augusta, Georgia, and Atlanta became the main depot for the Confederacy in the west. Forrest reported that on March 20, the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad Bridge “gave way.” Any remaining large munitions, ordnance or machinery in Nashville was lost at that point for want of transportation.⁵⁸³

The Confederates Retreat to Corinth, Mississippi

Even though Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston’s army in Murfreesboro had been reinforced by the survivors of the Battle of Mill Springs it soon became clear that Murfreesboro could not be held. Johnston contemplated moving his part of the army to Stevenson,

Alabama, and operating from the supply base at Chattanooga. Instead, at the suggestion of Gen. P.G.T. Beauregard, he moved to Decatur, Alabama, on the Tennessee River a little over 100 miles from Beauregard’s army.⁵⁸⁴ A short while later, Johnston set his sights on Corinth, Mississippi, an important railroad junction.

Gen. Johnston wrote Confederate Secretary of State Judah P. Benjamin and explained his reasons for wanting to concentrate his forces in Corinth. The general cited the “peculiar geography of the state” and Union access to the Cumberland and Tennessee rivers, which he said gave the enemy great power to move his forces. Johnston told Benjamin: “To me the defense of the [Mississippi] valley seems of paramount importance, and consequently I will move this corps of the army, of which I have command, to the left bank of the Tennessee . . . for the defense of Memphis and the Mississippi.”⁵⁸⁵

⁵⁸³ Richard D. Goff, *Confederate Supply*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1969), 58; *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. VII, 430.

⁵⁸⁴ Connelly, *Army of the Heartland*, 138.

⁵⁸⁵ Johnston, *The Life of Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston*, 504.

By late March, Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston's army was in Corinth and reinforcements continued to arrive. Gen. Braxton Bragg brought 10,000 men from the area around Pensacola, Florida. Five thousand arrived from New Orleans. Gen. P.G.T. Beauregard had abandoned Columbus, Kentucky, "the Gibraltar of the West," two weeks after Fort Donelson surrendered. His army, too, joined Johnston's in Corinth, as did 3,000 or so soldiers operating on the railroad near the city. By the beginning of April, Johnston commanded an army of nearly 42,000.⁵⁸⁶

When Gov. Isham Harris realized that the loss of Middle Tennessee was imminent, he moved the state capital to Memphis. It did not remain there long. The departure of Beauregard's army from Columbus opened the Mississippi River to the Union all the way to Fort Pillow, just north of Memphis. On March 20, as federal troops moved toward the city, the legislature adjourned and state officials fled to Mississippi. There were still Confederate troops and naval vessels at Memphis and Confederate troops in East Tennessee, but by the end of March 1862 the Confederate military had for all intents and purposes abandoned Middle Tennessee. West Tennessee soon followed.⁵⁸⁷

Union Army Advances to Pittsburg Landing, Tennessee

Before Brig. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant could move his army up the Tennessee River he was relieved of command. The action proved temporary; nine days later his command was reinstated. When the general was finally able to proceed he found his army scattered at Savannah, Crumps Landing and Pittsburg Landing. He concentrated his forces at Pittsburg Landing, a little over twenty miles north of the Confederate army at Corinth, Mississippi. Grant select Hamburg Landing a few miles upriver as the place where Brig Gen. Don Carlos Buell's Army of the Ohio, some

40,000 men, would land when it arrived from Nashville.⁵⁸⁸

Military Repercussions

After the fall of Fort Donelson Governor Joseph Brown of Georgia wrote: "We cannot rely another year, either on Kentucky or Tennessee for provisions. It would probably be very difficult for anyone to suggest a plan by which . . . our Army could have been subsisted this year [1862] without the production of these two States."⁵⁸⁹ A Confederate chaplain wrote: "We have backed far enough. If we yield this grain growing state to its foe, where will we get the bread for the army? If we yield this state with its important railroads and tributaries to the Ohio River, we only have built and surrendered the best avenues to the Confederacy."⁵⁹⁰ E.M. Bruce, a Confederate congressman from Kentucky, wrote Jefferson Davis: "We cannot survive the permanent loss of Tennessee and Kentucky for the War." He went on to tell Davis that their loss would cause the Confederacy "great suffering for provisions and forage."⁵⁹¹

Kentucky and Middle Tennessee contained vital industrial and agricultural resources that the Confederacy desperately needed. The fall of Fort Donelson precipitated their loss. Nashville was subsequently abandoned and within weeks the Confederate armies marched out of Tennessee. The Union army used Fort Henry as a base for further operations on the Tennessee River. Most of the troops engaged at the April 6–7, 1862 Battle of Shiloh, Tennessee, boarded steamboats from the former Confederate fort. Reinforcements and supplies for the subsequent October 1862 Corinth, Mississippi, campaign also staged at the fort. The Confederate government would feel the loss of Kentucky and Middle Tennessee for the rest of the war.⁵⁹²

⁵⁸⁶ Horn, *The Army of Tennessee*, 107-110, 114-115, 119; McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 406.

⁵⁸⁷ Connelly, *Army of the Heartland*, 141-142; Connelly, *Civil War Tennessee*, 30.

⁵⁸⁸ Woodworth, *Nothing But Victory*, 130; Long, *Personal Memoirs*, 167-170.

⁵⁸⁹ *O.R. Supplement*, Part III, Vol. 1, Serial 93, 710.

⁵⁹⁰ Cooling, *Fort Donelson's Legacy*, 15.

⁵⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁵⁹² Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 395, 404.



Figure 4.76. Columbus, Kentucky, Alfred H. Guernsey and Henry M. Alden, *Harper's Pictorial History of the Civil War*, Chicago, IL: The Puritan Press, 1894, Vol. 1, p. 241.

The loss of military supplies and equipment was staggering. In the aftermath of the battles of Mill Springs and Fort Donelson the Confederate army lost more than 21,000 small arms and seventy pieces of artillery. Many of the small arms were antiquated but their loss would be keenly felt by Gen. Johnston's army nonetheless. His hope of resupply by the Confederate Quartermaster department was complicated by the loss of the supply depots at Bowling Green and Columbus, Kentucky; Nashville, Clarksville and Columbia, Tennessee and New Madrid, Missouri (Figure 4.76).⁵⁹³

Historian Thomas L. Connelly wrote: "The debacles of Mill Springs and Fort Donelson wounded the pride of the individual soldiers, probably more than historians realize. Some thought their comrades had been sold out too cheaply at Fort Donelson; other believed they had not been given a real chance to show their fighting qualities." The parts of Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston's army that gathered at Corinth, Mississippi, became the Army of Tennessee. Connelly suggests that: "Tennessee remained, at least in spirit, the Army's home." While it never reclaimed Tennessee, this army, formed on the ruins of

the defeats at Fort Henry and Fort Donelson, fought with pride and spirit.⁵⁹⁴

Against all odds, Brig. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant won victory for the Union at Fort Donelson. He had to fight the Confederate army, the elements, and his commanding officer, who had no confidence or trust in him. Grant's army, which would become the Army of the Tennessee, learned as historian Steven Woodworth put it, "that hard fighting would bring success, that the lives of their fallen comrades had not been wasted, as theirs would not be should they fall in future battles." Grant's army was confident. It had distinguished itself at Fort Donelson; its officers had proved they could lead troops and the soldiers had confidence in that leadership.⁵⁹⁵

Brig. Gen. U.S. Grant Demonstrates Exceptional Ability

By March 1862, Brig. Gen. U.S. Grant had risen from an obscure brigadier general to the hero of the republic. "Unconditional Surrender" Grant captured Fort Donelson, and the imagination of a nation in need of a victory and a hero. His actions at Fort Donelson

⁵⁹³ Connelly, *Army of the Heartland*, 147.

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid., 142.

⁵⁹⁵ Woodworth, *Nothing But Victory*, 120.

earned him a promotion to major general (Figure 4.77).⁵⁹⁶

Though still feeling his way, Grant proved to be the leader the Union army needed. At Fort Donelson, when the Confederates pushed his right wing back two miles, he calmly told his generals to recapture what they had lost. When the Confederates over-committed on February 15, 1862, he recognized the opportunity they had unknowingly presented. He attacked their right, which had been weakened in preparation for the assault on the Union right, and pushed the Confederates from the outer works.⁵⁹⁷

Brig. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant, unlike the overly cautious Brig. Gen. Don Carlos Buell, took the offensive. He did not wait for reinforcements; he felt he was better off moving decisively with the troops he had than waiting for 50,000 a month later. He used the Union navy to help defeat the Confederates at Fort Donelson. Even after the fort's guns turned back the main navy assault, he knew



Figure 4.77. Maj. Gen. U.S. Grant, Library of Congress.

that just the boats' presence was advantageous. Grant came into his own at Fort Donelson. He demonstrated an ability to lead an army and win battles; he remained calm while his enemies panicked or became distraught.⁵⁹⁸

Confederate Generals' Military Skills and Leadership Prove Inadequate

Because of the success enjoyed by Gen. Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia in the Eastern Theater, a popular myth about the superiority of Confederate generalship has always been part of the lore of the American Civil War. If the actions at Fort Donelson in February 1862 prove anything it is that the aforementioned myth is just that.

Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston, the Confederate commander in the West, visited all of the strong points under his command except Fort Henry and Fort Donelson. The construction of these vital defenses was not completed until after the Union army moved on them. The outer works at Fort Donelson was still under construction as late as February 13, 1862.⁵⁹⁹

Brig. Gen. Lloyd Tilghman commanded both forts until he was captured at Fort Henry on February 6, 1862. Tilghman, while competent, did not prove up to the task. Upon learning at the end of January that the works that would become Fort Heiman had not been constructed, Gen. A.S. Johnston wrote Tilghman: "It is most extraordinary. I ordered General Polk four months ago at once to construct those works. And now, with the enemy on us, nothing of importance has been done. It is most extraordinary."⁶⁰⁰ Johnston

⁵⁹⁸ Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 279; Engle, *Struggle for the Heartland*, 76-78.

⁵⁹⁹ Kendall D. Gott, "The Confederate Command During the Fort Henry-Fort Donelson Campaign, February 1862." Master's thesis, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1998, 45; Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson*, 147-148; Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 230-246.

⁶⁰⁰ Gott, "The Confederate Command," 56.

⁵⁹⁶ McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 402.

⁵⁹⁷ Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 278-279.

ordered Tilghman to occupy the heights and build the entrenchments but by then it was too late.

The ultimate Confederate failure at Fort Donelson was a group effort. On February 6, 1862, Brig. Gen. Bushrod Johnson, the forgotten general at Fort Donelson, was placed in command. He lost it less than two weeks later when Brig. Gen. Gideon Pillow superseded him. Pillow, the hero of the Battle of Belmont, who resigned from the Confederate army after a dispute with his commanding officer Maj. Gen. Leonidas Polk, came back to the army with a new assignment. He commanded Clarksville, yet saw the importance of Fort Donelson and began funneling supplies and men there.⁶⁰¹ After becoming commander the ever-bombastic Pillow telegraphed Tennessee Governor Isham Harris: "Upon one thing you may rest assured. I will never surrender the position and with God's help I mean to maintain it."⁶⁰² Sensing an opportunity for glory, Pillow worked feverishly to get "his fort" into fighting shape.

Brig. Gen. Simon Bolivar Buckner's troops arrived at Fort Donelson before he did and were assigned to the left wing of the fort's defenses. When Buckner arrived at Clarksville and found out that his men were at Fort Donelson working for his old enemy, Pillow, he was livid. The drama reached its crescendo when Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston gave command of Fort Donelson to Brig. Gen. John B. Floyd, a political general. Floyd proved a poor choice; he required detailed instructions, which Johnston had neither the time nor inclination to provide. Floyd arrived at Fort Donelson on February 13. His command surrendered three days later.⁶⁰³

In describing the aftermath of the failed Confederate breakout attempt of February 15, historian Steven Woodworth wrote: "It was a move of sublime stupidity that probably could

have been achieved only through the combined efforts of a Floyd and a Pillow."⁶⁰⁴ The roles of the other generals cannot go uncredited. Brig. Gen. Bushrod Johnson had almost a cameo role—he was there but was not part of the command structure and was not invited when Pillow, Buckner and Floyd conferred about battle plans or the fate of the fort. Brig. Gen. Simon Buckner, on the other hand, was a major player and his despondency after the failed breakout attempt led directly to the surrender of Fort Donelson. To his credit Buckner remained at his post and shared his men's fate while Floyd and Pillow boarded steamers and fled to Nashville. After the surrender Johnson quietly walked away and later turned up in Nashville.⁶⁰⁵

Of all of the Confederate players on the stage at Fort Donelson only Nathan Bedford Forrest would go on to military glory, though Forrest's story is not untainted. Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston died of his wounds at Shiloh in April 1862. Brig. Gen. John B. Floyd was stripped of command by Jefferson Davis. Brig. Gen. Gideon Pillow kept his rank but never held another field command. Brig. Gen. Bushrod Johnson violated his parole by leaving Fort Donelson but was never punished; he remained in the army and surrendered at Appomattox. Brig. Gen. Simon B. Buckner was imprisoned and exchanged and served in the Confederate army until the end of the war.⁶⁰⁶

Civilian Morale in the North Soars

Many in the north had expected the war to be won in three months. By the end of 1861 it was apparent that it would not be a short war.

⁶⁰⁴ Engle, *Struggle for the Heartland*, 77.

⁶⁰⁵ Jobe, "Forts Henry and Donelson," 49-50.

⁶⁰⁶ Ezra J. Warner, *Generals in Gray: Lives of the Confederate Commanders*, (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1987), 159-160, 241, 89-90, 157-158, 38-39; Brian S. Wills, "Nathan Bedford Forrest," in *The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*, edited by Carroll Van West, 321-322, (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1998), 321-322.

⁶⁰¹ Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 163; Johnston, *The Life of Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston*, 433-434; Connelly, *Army of the Heartland*, 104-105; Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 44, 65.

⁶⁰² Gott, *Where the South Lost the War*, 131.

⁶⁰³ Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson*, 128-133.

Union forces had suffered a number of defeats in the east and as 1862 dawned, northern morale was at its lowest ebb since the Union army was defeated at the Battle of Bull Run in July. The *London Times* correspondent in Washington reported: "The Union is broken forever, and the independence of the South virtually established."⁶⁰⁷

Victories in Kentucky at the Battle of Middle Creek and Mill Springs in January 1862 brought a glimmer of optimism but it was the victory at Fort Donelson that sparked hope and brought renewed optimism that the Union could and was now winning the war. The *National Republican* proclaimed "The rebel officers admit that if Nashville be taken the rebellion in Tennessee is broken up."⁶⁰⁸ An editorial in the same newspaper stated: "From all sides, with promptness and vigor, the enemy is to be attacked, rolled together like a scroll. Our army against him numbers nearly 80,000, and defeat is an impossibility."⁶⁰⁹ The *Chicago Daily Tribune* proclaimed, "This great victory gives us Tennessee, and within a week the old Star Spangled Banner will float over Memphis, Nashville, and Knoxville. The back bone of the rebellion is broken. The Union is saved, and the Illinois troops are entitled are entitle to the chief share of the glory."⁶¹⁰ The *New York Tribune* foretold of the beginning of the end of the war: "The cause of the Union now marches on in every section of the country. Every blow tells fearfully against the rebellion. The rebels themselves are panic-stricken, or despondent. It requires no very far-reaching profit to predict the end of the struggle."⁶¹¹

When the Confederate surrender of Fort Donelson was announced the U.S. Senate cheered and the Army of the Potomac's

cannon fired salutes.⁶¹² Spontaneous celebrations erupted in Northern cities. Newspapers described citizens wild with excitement and the mood as one of wild enthusiasm, indescribable joy and intense delight. In Pittsburgh, business was partially suspended, bells were rung and flags displayed. The *Dispatch* newspaper office, post office and customs house were brilliantly illuminated. In Detroit, 100 guns were fired and the people took to the streets in a grand procession to celebrate. In Springfield, Ohio, cannons were fired and martial music mingled with the ringing of bells and the blowing of steam whistles.⁶¹³

People in Cincinnati were so excited to read of the victory that the *Cincinnati Daily Press* issued 8,000 extra copies of the February 17 newspaper. Crowds of people thronged the streets, and "shout after shout and cheer after cheer, went up in honor of our gallant and glorious victory." At night buildings were illuminated and bonfires lit. Flaming red lights adorned many public buildings and private homes. The reports of cannons, pistols, revolvers and fireworks sounded and: "All in all, it was such a simultaneous celebration as has never before been witnessed in our city since the days of the first settlers."⁶¹⁴

In cities large and small cannons were fired and 100 gun salutes, buildings were illuminated, and people took to the streets in processions. Martial music, bells and whistles sounded and The Stars and Stripes immediately appeared on buildings.⁶¹⁵ At the Iowa state capitol in Des Moines, the legislators cheered the news brought into the building by a local newspaper editor. At

⁶⁰⁷ McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 367-368.

⁶⁰⁸ "Latest from the West," *The National Republican* (Washington, DC), February 19, 1862.

⁶⁰⁹ "The Situation," *The National Republican* (Washington, DC), February 19, 1862.

⁶¹⁰ "The Ft. Donelson Victory: Latest and Most Complete Particulars," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 18, 1862.

⁶¹¹ McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 403.

⁶¹² Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson*, 224.

⁶¹³ "News of the Week" *The Wyandot Pioneer* (Upper Sandusky, OH), February 21, 1862.

⁶¹⁴ "The Glorious News," *Cincinnati Daily Press*, February 18, 1862.

⁶¹⁵ "How the News Was Received," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 18, 1862; "Joyful Demonstrations," *The National Republican* (Washington, DC), February 19, 1862; "News of the Week" *The Wyandot Pioneer* (Upper Sandusky, OH), February 21, 1862.

Oxford, Ohio, students at Miami University paraded around town pounding on drums, pans, and other noise makers, serenading citizens as they celebrated the Union victory. In New England, flags were unfurled, bells rang and the people celebrated the glorious news of the western armies. The victory at Fort Donelson buoyed support for the war effort. People again believed that the Union would be victorious.⁶¹⁶

Confederate Morale Plummets

The fall of Fort Donelson coincided with the inauguration of Jefferson Davis as president of the Confederacy. The weather in Richmond was cold and rainy and the whole affair somber and gloomy. Davis called the defeats a test by Providence, stating, “we are taught the value of our liberties by the price we pay for them.” The *Richmond Enquirer* proclaimed the loss of Fort Henry and Fort Donelson was “for our own good! Days of adversity prove the worth of men and nations.”⁶¹⁷ Nashville became the first Confederate capital to fall. The city was a mob scene—panic, looting and fear prevailed.⁶¹⁸

A North Carolina soldier wrote his sister: “The fall of Fort Donelson, Roanoke and Newbern and the continued success of our foes have cast gloom over the whole Confederacy.”⁶¹⁹ The anger of the people, the government, and the press fell on Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston. Those who in the fall had sung his praises now demanded his head. From everywhere came calls for Jefferson Davis to travel to Tennessee and take command of the army.irate congressmen demanded Johnston’s removal. The stark reality of the losses in Middle Tennessee was left to the citizens of the region to deal with as the state government fled and the feared Union army and Andrew Johnson, the new military

governor, took their place.⁶²⁰ The Confederate Governor of Kentucky George W. Johnson lamented to his wife, “the time of our severest afflictions has now come—our state is about to be abandoned by our armies.”⁶²¹

Following the surrender of Fort Donelson the Confederate War Department issued a call for additional troops. The proclamations issued by each state’s governor appealed to citizens’ patriotism. Tennessee Gov. Isham Harris proclaimed: “Tennesseans, the soil of your state is polluted with the footsteps of the invader. Your brethren of the advance guard have fallen—nobly yielding life in the endeavor to secure for you and your children the priceless inheritance of Freedom.”⁶²² Most of the proclamations cited the Union army’s superior numbers and better arms. Georgia Gov. Joseph Brown suggested countering this by using the “Georgia Pike,” a six-foot wooden pole with a blade on the end. He also declared that Georgia’s troops should carry an eighteen-inch knife to cut down their foes after they had fled from the charging men wielding pikes. Florida offered a bounty of \$50.00 to each man that enlisted. General Orders issued by a number of state military authorities included threats that if volunteers were lacking to fill the regiments needed the difference would be made up with a draft.⁶²³

The loss of Fort Henry and Fort Donelson brought out the worst in the people and the press of the South. Newspapers that had just weeks before hailed Albert Sidney Johnston as the warrior general who would bring victories for the Confederacy now called for his resignation. The press, politicians, and even other Confederate generals called for Jefferson Davis to leave Richmond and to come to Tennessee and take command of the western armies. The chaos in Middle Tennessee only added to the misery of the local population. Gov. Isham Harris and his government abandoned Nashville and fled to Memphis.

⁶¹⁶ Smith, *Grant Invades Tennessee*, 376-377.

⁶¹⁷ McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 404.

⁶¹⁸ Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson*, 234-235; Engle, *Struggle for the Heartland*, 85-86.

⁶¹⁹ John Barrett, *The Civil War in North Carolina*, (Chapel Hill, NC: 1963), 148.

⁶²⁰ Horn, *The Army of Tennessee*, 104-106.

⁶²¹ Engle, *The Struggle for the Heartland*, 85.

⁶²² *O.R. Supplement*, Part III, Vol. 1, Serial 93, 689.

⁶²³ *O.R. Supplement*, Part III, Vol. 1, Serial 93, 682-684, 695-696, 699-701

Citizens in Clarksville and Nashville rioted, helping themselves to food and other supplies. Mobs attacked Confederate soldiers as they tried to save what they could before retreating south, leaving the civilian population to its fate.⁶²⁴

Overwhelmed by Confederate Prisoners

When hostilities began in spring 1861, few people expected the Civil War to be as long or as bloody as it became. In the early months of the war small numbers of men were captured on both sides. The prisoner count was inconsequential and caused no problems for either Washington or Richmond. The earliest prisoners were paroled soon after being captured. Officers took a verbal oath agreeing not to take up arms until they were formally exchanged for a prisoner on the other side. They were then free to return home if they wished. Enlisted men had to sign a “parole” and were then sent home or to a camp to await exchange.⁶²⁵

However, when Fort Donelson surrendered on February 16, 1862, the Union quartermaster department, which to its credit had been preparing for prisoners of war (POW), was overwhelmed by the numbers that now came into their hands. With almost no warning Lieutenant Colonel William Hoffman, commissary-general for prisoners, had to find facilities to house 15,000 officers and men.⁶²⁶

After Lieut. Col. Hoffman’s appointment in 1861, his first charge was to select a suitable location for a POW camp. He chose Johnson’s Island in Lake Erie just north of Sandusky, Ohio. The small island, some one-and-one-half miles long by one-half-mile

wide, seemed the perfect location. On his recommendation, the government rented the island, cleared 40 acres of land, and constructed a stockade, overlooked by two forts, to house prisoners. Given the plans Hoffman developed, it is unlikely that he or anyone else imagined that tens of thousands of POWs would suddenly require housing.⁶²⁷

When Fort Donelson surrendered it was apparent that Johnson’s Island was inadequate. The mass surrender set off a frantic call to the governors in the nearest Midwestern states to take prisoners. Former Union camps of instruction—Camp Butler and Camp Douglas in Illinois, Camp Chase in Ohio, and Camp Morton in Indiana—were retrofitted to house Confederate prisoners. Gratiot Street Prison and Myrtle Street Prison in St. Louis, which had been a medical college and a jail for enslaved people, respectively, were used to house Confederate prisoners. The camps and the Union army were ill-prepared to deal with the prisoners and many died that winter (Figure 4.78).⁶²⁸

Another result of the large number of soldiers captured in the Forts Henry, Heiman and Donelson Campaign was the development of the Dix-Hill Cartel. The framework for the agreement began shortly after the fall of Fort Donelson when Confederate Brig. Gen. Howell Cobb and Union Maj. Gen. John Wool met on February 23, 1862. At this meeting and a subsequent one on March 1 the two men hammered out the basic details of the agreement, which were based on a prisoner of war cartel used during the War of 1812. For various reasons the two sides would not iron out their differences until summer 1862. The agreement to exchange prisoners was signed on July 22, 1862 at Haxall’s Landing on the James River in Virginia. The cartel fell apart in 1863 when the Confederate government

⁶²⁴ Engle, *Struggle for the Heartland*, 85-89.

⁶²⁵ Holland Thompson, editor, *The Photographic History of the Civil War complete and unabridged two volumes in one, Volume 4: Part I - Prisons*, (Edison, NJ: Blue & Grey Press, N.D.), 28.

⁶²⁶ William B. Hesseltine, editor, *Civil War Prisons*, (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1972), 6; National Cemetery Administration, *Federal Stewardship of Confederate Dead*, 10-11.

⁶²⁷ Hesseltine, *Civil War Prisons*, 98-100; Thompson, *Prisons*, 64.

⁶²⁸ McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 796-799; National Cemetery Administration, *Federal Stewardship of Confederate Dead*, 11.

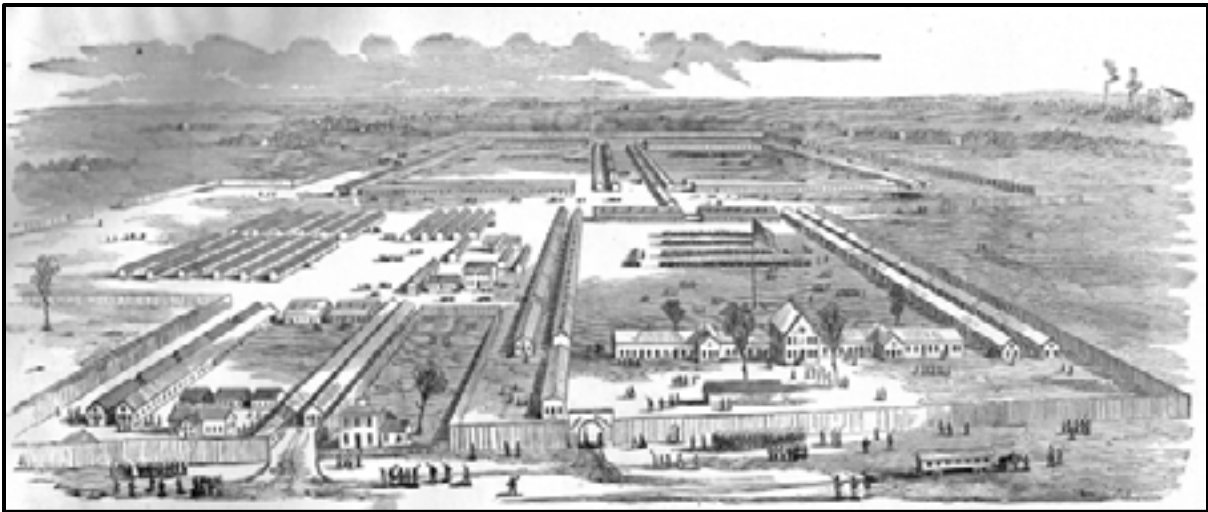


Figure 4.78. Camp Douglas, Paul F. Mottelay and T. Campbell-Copeland, editors, *The Soldier in Our Civil War: A Pictorial History of the Conflict, 1861-1865*, New York, 1886, Vol. 1, p.262.

refused to exchange United States Colored Troops.⁶²⁹

One of the legacies of the Battle of Fort Donelson was the hasty development of the Union POW system that would be used throughout the war. The system, which the Confederacy emulated, was never adequate and led to the deaths of thousands of men. Over the course of the war 214,865 Confederate soldiers were confined in Union prison camps; 193,743 Union prisoners were held by the Confederacy. Mortality rates on both sides were high—12 percent of those held in Union prisons and 15.5 percent of those held in Confederate prisons died. Over 26,000 Confederate and 30,000 Union soldiers died in captivity. It is not within the scope of this study to debate the merits or faults of the Union and Confederate prison systems, but only to note that the Union system began with the surrender of Fort Donelson.⁶³⁰

⁶²⁹ McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 791-792; see also *O.R.*, Series II, Vol. 3, 302-309, 338-340, 812-13; *O.R.*, Series II, Vol. 4, pp. 31-32, 48, 177, 190, 265-268, 807, 815-816, 830-831.

⁶³⁰ Hesseltine, *Civil War Prisons*, 6.

Freedom Seekers Come into Union Lines

In the terms agreed upon by Union Brig. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant and Confederate Brig. Gen. Simon B. Buckner, Confederate officers were allowed to retain their enslaved personal servants as well as their side arms, pistols and swords. Other enslaved individuals who had made their way to Dover were pressed into work gangs by the Union army (Figure 4.79).⁶³¹

Shortly after the surrender of Fort Donelson, a number of slave owners came within Union lines to take freedom seekers at the fort back into slavery. How to handle the increasing numbers of freedom seekers became an ongoing issue. Even though the *Chicago Tribune* wrote that if Union soldiers thought that the “war was against slavery, they would lay down their arms and go home” many soldiers at Fort Donelson, including Col. Richard J. Oglesby, refused to allow his men to turn freedom seekers over to their former enslavers. Other officers reported that the

⁶³¹ Cooling, *Fort Henry and Donelson*, 212.



Figure 4.79. Freedom seekers made their way into Union lines, Edwin Forbes, *Thirty Years After: An Artist's Memoir of the Civil War*, New York, Fords, Howard, & Hulbert, 1891, p. 290.

freedom seekers found work as cooks or orderlies. While Union troops near Dover may not have been abolitionists, most showed little interest in aiding the enslavers, who they believed were Confederate sympathizers.⁶³²

Well after the surrender, freedom seekers continued to come into the Union lines. Brig. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's commanding officer Maj. Gen. Henry Halleck believed that the question of what to do with fugitive slave should be left to the civil courts. Grant felt differently and on February 26, 1862, issued General Orders No. 14⁶³³, which read in part:

The number of citizens who are applying for permission to pass through the camps to look for their fugitive slaves proves the necessity of the order and its faithful observance. Such permits cannot be granted; therefore the great necessity of keeping out fugitives. Such slaves as were within the lines at the time of the capture of Fort Donelson and such as have been used by the enemy in building the fortifications or in any way hostile to the

*Government will not be released or permitted to return to their masters but will be employed in the quartermaster's department for the benefit of Government.*⁶³⁴

It is not known how many freedom seekers came to Fort Donelson following the surrender but they would continue arriving after Grant and his army left the fort and would prove to be a challenge for the Union garrison throughout the war.⁶³⁵

Events at Forts Henry and Donelson Foreshadow the War in the West

Historian Benjamin F. Cooling wrote: "As in February 1862, the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers became a synonym for defeat and humiliation in the battle for the Heartland. The Confederacy's failure to control these rivers reflected Sherman's appreciative comment from Georgia late in the war; 'I am never easy with a railroad which

⁶³² Cooling, *Fort Henry and Donelson*, 248; Cooling, *Fort Donelson's Legacy*, 18-19.

⁶³³ Hawkins, "The African American Experience," 25-26.

⁶³⁴ *O.R.*, Series II, Vol. I, 809.

⁶³⁵ Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson*, 248; Hawkins, "The African American Experience," 25-27.

takes a whole army to guard, each foot of rail being essential to the whole; whereas they can't stop the Tennessee, and each boat can make its own game.' Such was the curse of Henry's and Donelson's surrender upon the southern Confederacy."⁶³⁶

If the fight at the twin forts is a microcosm of the Civil War in the Western Theater it is as a result of the Confederate generals that led armies in that theater. Brig. Gen. John B. Floyd and Brig. Gen. Gideon Pillow may have been among the worst Confederate generals, but none of the Confederate commanders who faced Ulysses S. Grant or William T. Sherman, or for that matter Don Carlos Buell, William Starke Rosecrans or George Thomas, fared much better. There were successful cavalry raids but none had a major impact on the outcome of the war.

Confederate Gen. P.G.T. Beauregard took command of the Army of Mississippi after Albert Sidney Johnston died at Shiloh. Beauregard lost the second day at Shiloh and lost the battle. He retreated back to Corinth, which he abandoned on May 30, 1862. Gen. Braxton Bragg replaced Beauregard. His summer/fall invasion of Kentucky died at Perryville. Bragg retreated back to Tennessee where Maj. Gen. Rosecrans defeated him at the end of 1862 at Stones River near Murfreesboro. The one battle the Army of Tennessee won, Chickamauga in Georgia, was followed by the failed siege of Chattanooga.⁶³⁷

After being pushed out of Tennessee Gen. Joseph E. Johnston replaced Bragg, and in a matter of months Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman pushed Johnston to the gates of Atlanta. Lieut. Gen. John Bell Hood replaced Johnston and destroyed the army, losing thousands of men in trying to turn the tide in Atlanta. A war-weary northern population who watched the Union armies suffer defeat after defeat in the east was buoyed by Union

victories in the west. The Confederate defeat at Atlanta helped Abraham Lincoln win reelection and insured that the war would be pursued until the end. Hood retreated back into Tennessee hoping Sherman would follow. He did not. Hood then wasted the army in futile assaults at Franklin and a hopeless siege at Nashville. The Army of Tennessee suffered from poor leadership its entire existence.⁶³⁸

Brig. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant, the architect of so many of the victories that buoyed morale in the north, steadily rose in stature. After lifting the siege at Chattanooga he was promoted to Lieutenant General, the rank carrying with it the command of all the armies. Grant moved east, developed a coordinated plan to destroy the two major Confederate armies, and win the war. It took more than a year but the Confederacy was defeated and the Union restored.⁶³⁹

⁶³⁶ Cooling, *Forts Henry and Donelson*, 269.

⁶³⁷ Bruce Catton, *The Civil War*, (New York: American Heritage Press, 1971), 58-60, 93-96, 118-121; Connelly, *Civil War Tennessee*, 67-82. The Army of Tennessee did not receive that name until November 1862.

⁶³⁸ Horn, *The Army of Tennessee*, 305-341; Connelly, *Civil War Tennessee*, 86-98. See also McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, chapters 23 and 24.

⁶³⁹ Catton, *The Civil War*, 253-279.

Chapter 5. Reconstruction: Freedmen's Camp and Post-War African American Settlements

In 1860, twenty-four percent of the Stewart County population— 2,415 people—was enslaved. Unlike many Tennessee counties, most of the enslaved worked in the iron industry rather than in agriculture and the largest slaveholders were the local iron furnaces. On average, only one in seven families held slaves.⁶⁴⁰

When construction began on Fort Henry and Fort Donelson in spring 1861, Samuel Stacker, owner of Cumberland Iron Works “supplied hundreds of slaves to help build the fort.” By December 1861, with Fort Henry and Fort Donelson unfinished and signs of enemy movement ominous, Brig. Gen. Lloyd Tilghman desperately sought labor for fort construction. Maj. Gen. Leonidas Polk ordered him to exclude all laborers, black and white, at Cumberland Iron Works from militia and military duty and suggested he “cast a wider net,” widening the area from which he drew laborers.⁶⁴¹

In January 1862, 500 enslaved men arrived from Alabama to work on Fort Henry and begin construction of Fort Heiman. One source suggests that enslaved men also came from Kentucky but it is not clear if they were impressed or hired or how many came. It is also unclear how many enslaved individuals were captured or came into the lines immediately after the fall of Fort Donelson.⁶⁴²

On February 28, 1862, the Memphis Avalanche reported that some 1,000 freedmen seekers found their way to Fort Donelson. The total number of enslaved seeking freedom that came into the Union lines at the forts in winter

1862 will likely never be known. No census was ever taken. Some may have stayed in the area for only a short time; others may have remained for the protection offered by the Union army. Many found work with the army, some with steamboat companies. Those who remained, for whatever reason, would create an independent community that came to be known as Free State (Figures 5.1–5.2). Freedom seekers occupied the settlement throughout the Civil War and it eventually became the African American neighborhood of a segregated Dover.⁶⁴³

Freedom Seekers Come into Union Lines

In early 1865, the Western Freedmen's Aid Commission described the plight of the freedom seekers in the South to their members and contributors. The section entitled “The People for Whom We Labor” explained how freedom seekers came to be in camps behind Union lines.

*Wherever the South has been penetrated by our armies, many of the slaves have been found hopefully awaiting their coming. With a strange implicit faith in the success of the North, they have been ready to hazard even the fearful consequences of possible defeat; willing to trust in armed strangers for food and protection; anxious to be sent to any place within our advancing lines where they might be free. Sometimes they flock in, after a raiding party, by scores and by hundreds—men, women and children—on foot, and in every kind of vehicles to be found . . .*⁶⁴⁴

⁶⁴⁰ Hawkins, “The African American Experience,” 11.

⁶⁴¹ Saunders, “Black History in the County,” 80; *O.R.* Series I, Vol. VII, 737.

⁶⁴² Hawkins, “The African American Experience,” 24-25; Saunders, “Black History in the County,” 80; *O.R. Supplement*, Part III, Vol. 3, Serial 95, 226; Cooling, *Fort Donelson's Legacy*, 43.

⁶⁴³ Cooling, *Fort Donelson's Legacy*, 43.

⁶⁴⁴ Western Freedmen's Aid Commission, *Second Annual report of the Western Freedmen's Aid Commission*, (Cincinnati, OH: R.P. Thompson Printer, 1865), 6. Hereafter the Western Freedmen's Aid Commission will be referred to in the text as “the Commission.”

The report outlined the government's policy of placing people in camps, "where they are furnished with rations of food, and, when practicable, with condemned tents for shelter (Figure 5.3)." Able-bodied men either entered military service or found employment with the government, army officers, or private parties (Figure 5.4). Women worked for the government or individuals as cooks, seamstresses, cleaners, and laundresses. The shelter of the camps for the able bodied was temporary but the camps were necessary, often housing women with children, the sick, orphans, infirm and elderly. They also sheltered the families of soldiers. The Commission report stated: "A large proportion of those for whose relief we labor are in the camps where the helpless are congregated, among whom the greatest destitution and suffering is to be found."⁶⁴⁵

With the fall of the Forts Henry, Heiman and Donelson, freedom seekers came into the Union lines. Brig. Gen. Don Carlos Buell, the commander in Nashville, did not welcome them and allowed owners of enslaved people to reclaim those in the city who had escaped bondage. Brig. Gen. Grant at Fort Donelson took the opposite stance. Ten days after the surrender of Fort Donelson he issued General Orders No. 14. Grant, while not citing the First Confiscation Act, used its provisions to forbid slave owners from coming into his lines; he would not turn people over to their former enslavers.⁶⁴⁶

First Confiscation Act Used to Free Slaves

In spring 1861, Brig. Gen. Benjamin Butler refused to return to their legal owners freedom seekers who came within his lines near Fortress Monroe in Virginia. Partially as a result of Butler's argument supporting his actions, Congress enacted the First Confiscation Act of August 1861. The Act

⁶⁴⁵ Ibid., 6-7.

⁶⁴⁶ John Cimprich, *Slavery's End in Tennessee, 1861-1865*, (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1985), 34-35; *O.R. Series II*, Vol. I, 809.

provided for the confiscation of property, including enslaved individuals, employed in work that aided the rebellion against the United States Government.⁶⁴⁷ It specifically stated:

*... any property of whatsoever kind or description, with intent to use or employ the same, or suffer the same to be used or employed, in aiding, abetting, or promoting such insurrection or resistance to the laws, or any person or persons engaged therein; or if any person or persons, being the owner or owners of any such property, shall knowingly use or employ, or consent to the use or employment of the same as aforesaid, all such property is hereby declared to be lawful subject of prize and capture wherever found.*⁶⁴⁸

The act punished those who aided the rebellion, while also providing the justification for removing enslaved persons from bondage. While emancipation was not an official goal of the Union war effort at that point in time, taking property in the form of enslaved persons from those in rebellion aided the Union while harming those who took up arms against it (Figure 5.5).

The act further detailed the sort of work that would constitute aiding the rebellion "fort, navy yard, dock, armory, ship, entrenchment, or in any military or naval service." Consequently, the enslaved individuals at Fort Donelson who had helped construct the fort fell under the provisions of the act. Brig. Gen. Grant allowed them to stay and sought to provide employment for them with the United States government.⁶⁴⁹

⁶⁴⁷ Mark Grimsley, *The Hard Hand of War: Union Military Policy toward Southern Civilians, 1861-1865*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 52-53; McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 355-356.

⁶⁴⁸ *First Confiscation Act*, Freedmen & Southern Society Project, www.freedmen.umd.edu/conact1.htm (Accessed April 11, 2019).

⁶⁴⁹ Ibid.



Figure 5.3. This contraband camp at Harper's Ferry, Virginia shows a variety of tents used to house those who came into the Union lines. It is likely that similar accommodations were probably used in Dover, Library of Congress.



Figure 5.4. African American men often worked for Union officers as a paid servant. The role was that of a valet and waiter, Library of Congress.



Figure 5.5. Enslaved men who worked on Confederate fortification were freed under the First Confiscation Act, Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buel, editors, *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, New York: Century Co., 1887, Vol. 1, p. 577.

In early April 1862, the *Memphis Avalanche*, a pro-Confederate newspaper, boasted that enslaved labor built all of the fortifications in the region. The work on the Confederate forts described in the newspaper neatly fell within the provisions of the First Confiscation Act. Given the boasts of the local press it was not difficult to understand why many Union commanders and soldiers refused to return freedom seekers to their enslavers.⁶⁵⁰

In September 1862, an expedition led by Col. William W. Lowe captured Clarksville, Tennessee. It is not known if Lowe invoked the First Confiscation Act but according to the mayor of Clarksville he liberated 240 enslaved individuals and brought them back to Fort Donelson with him.⁶⁵¹

⁶⁵⁰ Cooling, *Fort Donelson's Legacy*, 41-42. The *Memphis Avalanche* was published in Memphis prior to the Civil War and supported secession. It continued publication and until the city was captured by the Union army and would not resume publishing until 1866.

⁶⁵¹ Cooling, *Fort Donelson's Legacy*, 106; *O.R.* Series I, Vol. XVII, Part II, 731.

Union Army Employs Freedom Seekers

The Union army that captured Forts Henry and Donelson left in March 1862, leaving a much smaller garrison to hold the forts and secure the rivers. It is not known how many freedom seekers were employed in the area and how many left with the army. With the continued presence of the Union army in the area, no matter how diminished, enslaved people continued coming to the forts for the freedom and safety they offered.⁶⁵²

As Fort Donelson Park Ranger Susan Hawkins wrote in her Master of Arts thesis, "Forts Henry, Heiman, and Donelson: The African-American Experience":

Perhaps the most significant aspect of the Union victory at forts Henry, Heiman, and Donelson for slaves in Kentucky and Tennessee was the opportunity to create new lives. For the first time, many slaves found themselves making their own decisions—finding places to live and

⁶⁵² *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. X, Part 2, 16-17.

*building homes, finding jobs to support their families, and caring for and educating their children. Fort Donelson and other Union camps served as transitions between an old way of life as a slave to a new way of life as a freedman or woman.*⁶⁵³

The freedom seekers who arrived at Dover settled outside of the city, creating a community that became known as Free State.

How many people worked for the Quartermaster Department or for individual soldiers as cooks, laundresses or servants is not known. Often, soldiers who hired freedom seekers would lose them to better-paying jobs. There are at least two known instances of men taking jobs on steamboats.⁶⁵⁴

The enslaved in the region near the twin river forts, like those everywhere in the South, left their homes for the promise of freedom and safety offered behind Union lines. With the withdrawal of Grant's army in March 1862, opportunities for work in the area greatly declined—the first garrison at Fort Donelson was only one regiment. However, the garrison steadily grew and by September 1862 two full regiments of infantry, a full regiment of cavalry, and two batteries of artillery garrisoned the three forts. With over 2,000 officers and men, jobs for cooks, laundresses and officers' personal servants were numerous. It is likely that jobs with the Quartermasters Department included not only general laborers but teamsters and stevedores who moved supplies from the docks to the soldier's camps.⁶⁵⁵

As Grant's army pushed further south the number of freedom seekers coming into the lines increased. In a letter to Gen Halleck he asked, "What will I do with them?" After

consulting with the secretary of war, Halleck replied on November 16, 1862, "employ the refugee negroes as teamsters, laborers, &c, so far as you have use for them in the quartermaster's department on forts, railroads, &c."⁶⁵⁶ Halleck's directive provided commanders in the Department of the Tennessee, which included Forts Henry, Heiman and Donelson, guidelines concerning freedom seekers coming into their lines (Figure 5.6).

Free State Established

The settlement of Free State was located southwest of Union Fort Donelson but it is unclear if it and the contraband camp at the fort were one and the same. An 1867 map shows Fort Donelson National Cemetery and clearly shows Free State. The map illustrates ten dwellings and indicates that the settlement is located on the Herford Tract. An 1868 deed recording the purchase of a half-acre parcel in the Hereford Tract for the construction of a "school for the benefit of colored people" also points to this location as that of Free State. The location just south of the Union fort would have helped protect residents from raids and attacks by Confederate soldiers and guerrillas but it also seems that the settlement/camp may well have been in this location before the new fort was constructed. It is unclear, but the buildings shown on the map of Free State are likely shanties constructed by the inhabitants or houses abandoned by Dover residents, who were probably Confederate sympathizers (Figure 5.7).⁶⁵⁷

⁶⁵³ Hawkins, "The African American Experience," 33.

⁶⁵⁴ Ibid., 30.

⁶⁵⁵ Amy Murrell Taylor, *Embattled Freedom: Journeys through the Civil War's Slave Refugee Camps*, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2018), 5-6; *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. X, Part 2, 108-109; *O.R.* Series I, Vol. XVII, Part II, 246, 250.

⁶⁵⁶ *O.R.*, Series I, Vol. XVII, Part I, 470-471.

⁶⁵⁷ Hawkins, "The African American Experience," 43; *Stewart County, Tennessee, Deed Book 23*, Stewart County Deed Books, Stewart County Historical Society, Dover, Tennessee, 273.



Figure 5.6. The contraband men who worked for the army often wore cast off uniforms, Library of Congress.



Figure 5.7. A detail of a larger map showing "Free State," just south of the national cemetery, (outlined in pink), National Archives and Records Administration.

Free State Grows as Employment Increases

In March 1863, Col. William Lowe, who was in command of the three forts, was ordered to bring all of his troops to Fort Donelson. By that time a contraband camp, which was probably the nucleus of Free State, had been established in Dover with Captain William Brunt of the 83rd Illinois detailed as superintendent. In June 1863, 120 men from the contraband camp were employed as laborers constructing Union Fort Donelson. In July it was reported that 275 men were employed as officers' servants and company cooks at Fort Donelson. The report does not give numbers for those working on the fort or for women and children.⁶⁵⁸

Apparently, African American men were working at Fort Heiman, and some of those were freedom seekers from Kentucky. Daniel Hillman, a slaveholder, farmer and industrialist in Trigg County, Kentucky, just across the Tennessee state line, met with Union Maj. Gen. William Starke Rosecrans in Murfreesboro where he obtained "a kind of protection paper" for his enslaved workers. Hillman then went to Fort Donelson and Fort Heiman to retrieve them and take them back to Kentucky. When he arrived at Fort Donelson Col. William Lowe told him to return in ten days. When Hillman returned, the new commander, Col. William P. Lyon, told him that he had received no instructions from his superiors regarding Hillman's enslaved laborers. Hillman found fourteen of the men he sought at Fort Donelson and two at Fort Heiman. Those at Fort Donelson had been hidden from him and the men at Fort Heiman had joined the army and were out on duty elsewhere; none returned to Kentucky with Hillman.⁶⁵⁹

Hillman wrote again to Rosecrans, frustrated that he could not secure his slaves, get a voucher (payment) for their labor, or have the men expelled from the Union lines. He learned from Rosecrans that Col. Lyon had been authorized to enroll the enslaved of loyal owners as laborers and to provide vouchers to the slave owners for their services. Finally, the frustrated and angry Kentuckian wrote to Brig. Gen. Jeremiah T. Boyle, commander of the District of Kentucky (Figure 5.8), hoping that Boyle could help him. If not, Hillman wrote, "I will sell my stock and prepare to close up and stop expenses as far as I can." He feared the situation would only worsen as perhaps thirty other enslaved men had left his farm, no doubt headed for Tennessee. Recruitment of enslaved men for the Union army began in Tennessee in August 1863; it would not begin in Kentucky until spring 1864.⁶⁶⁰

It is not known if the situation was ever resolved to Hillman's satisfaction. Brig. Gen. Boyle passed the letter to Rosecrans, who in turn sent it to Col. Lyon. The colonel reported that twelve of Hillman's enslaved men had

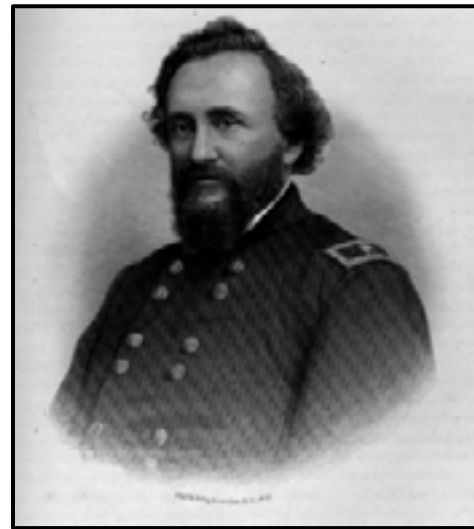


Figure 5.8. Brig. Gen. Jeremiah Boyle, US, Library of Congress.

⁶⁵⁸ Hawkins, "The African American Experience," 33; Cooling, *Fort Donelson's Legacy*, 313.

⁶⁵⁹ Ira Berlin, Steven F. Miller, Joseph P. Reidy and Leslie S. Rowland, editors, *Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861-1867, The Wartime Genesis of Free Labor: The Upper*

South, Series I, Volume II, (New York, Cambridge University Press, 1993), 650.

⁶⁶⁰ Berlin, *Freedom*, Series I, Volume II, 650-651; Hawkins, "The African American Experience," 35; Harrison, *The Civil War in Kentucky*, 91.

been employed in the construction of the new Union fort and one as a teamster. He further stated that Hillman had been given vouchers for their work. Lyon denied Hillman's claim that he had been "put off or trifled with." Eventually, Maj. Gen. Rosecrans forwarded Col. Lyon's report to Brig. Gen. Boyle; there is no record of any further correspondence between Boyle and Hillman.⁶⁶¹

The Union army sent laborers from Fort Donelson to Cumberland City in July 1863 to repair railroad track damaged by Confederate guerrillas. The Confederates also downed telegraph lines, which required new construction and repair. By 1864, new superintendent of the contraband camp Lieutenant James Moore reported that 395 people from his camp were working at Fort Donelson.⁶⁶²

Union Commanders Struggle with Freedom Seekers

Second Confiscation Act Guides Local Policy

Though Grant and other allowed freedom seekers within the lines, this action was expressly forbidden by orders issued in November 1861. These orders, which were purported to be a security measure, forbade the admission of freedom seekers within Union lines and any that were already within those lines were to be expelled. The First Confiscation Act provided willing commanders an out, but those who were less liberal in their thinking still returned fugitives or refused to allow them within the lines. However, in July 1862 two changes in the military district that included Fort Henry and Fort Heiman altered everything. First, Maj. Gen. Henry Halleck was promoted to General-in-Chief and recalled to Washington. Second was the passage of the Second Confiscation Act.⁶⁶³

Sections 9 and 10 of the Second Confiscation Act spell out clearly how freedom seekers were to be treated by the Union army:

SEC. 9. And be it further enacted, That all slaves of persons who shall hereafter be engaged in rebellion against the government of the United States, or who shall in any way give aid or comfort thereto, escaping from such persons and taking refuge within the lines of the army; and all slaves captured from such persons or deserted by them and coming under the control of the government of the United States; and all slaves of such person found on [or] being within any place occupied by rebel forces and afterwards occupied by the forces of the United States, shall be deemed captives of war, and shall be forever free of their servitude, and not again held as slaves.

SEC. 10. And be it further enacted, That no slave escaping into any State, Territory, or the District of Columbia, from any other State, shall be delivered up, or in any way impeded or hindered of his liberty, except for crime, or some offence against the laws, unless the person claiming said fugitive shall first make oath that the person to whom the labor or service of such fugitive is alleged to be due is his lawful owner, and has not borne arms against the United States in the present rebellion, nor in any way given aid and comfort thereto; and no person engaged in the military or naval service of the United States shall, under any pretense whatever, assume to decide on the validity of the claim of any person to the service or labor of any other person, or surrender up any such person to the claimant, on pain of being dismissed from the service.⁶⁶⁴

While the act did not end slavery it punished individuals who supported the rebellion by stripping them of valuable property, which appeased the Border States and Congressional Democrats.

⁶⁶¹ Berlin, *Freedom*, Series I, Volume II, 651

⁶⁶² Hawkins, "The African American Experience," 34; Cooling, *Fort Donelson's Legacy*, 166, 261.

⁶⁶³ *O.R.*, Series II, Vol. I, 778; Cimprich, *Slavery's End in Tennessee*, 37.

⁶⁶⁴ *Second Confiscation Act*, Freedmen & Southern Society Project, <http://www.freedmen.umd.edu/conact2.htm>. (Accessed April 11, 2019).

Emancipation Proclamation

Following the Union victory at the Battle of Antietam in September 1862 President Abraham Lincoln issued the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation. This document warned that the slaves in those states still in rebellion against the government as of January 1, 1863 would be free.⁶⁶⁵ The wording was very specific:

*That on the first day of January in the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as slaves within any State, or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free; and the executive government of the United States, including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons, and will do no act or acts to repress such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom.*⁶⁶⁶

The *Emancipation Proclamation* took effect January 1, 1863. The next day, at Murfreesboro, Tennessee, Union forces defeated the Confederate Army of Tennessee at the Battle of Stones River. In a letter to the Union commander Maj. Gen. William S. Rosecrans written months after the battle, Lincoln summed up the importance of the victory for the Union cause: "I can never forget, whilst I remember anything, that at the end of last year and the beginning of this, you gave us a hard-earned victory, which had there been defeat instead, the nation scarcely could have lived over."⁶⁶⁷ The victory came when Lincoln's government desperately needed one. The crushing Union losses at Fredericksburg, Virginia, and Chickasaw Bayou, near Vicksburg, Mississippi, had badly damaged Union morale. Stones River helped demonstrate

that Lincoln's proclamation was not the act of a desperate government (Figure 5.9).⁶⁶⁸

The final *Emancipation Proclamation* issued on January 1, 1863 spelled out exactly what states were in rebellion against the United States. The list did not include Tennessee. Though fighting continued in the state until the end of the war, it was firmly under Union control. The president appointed Andrew Johnson military governor shortly after the fall of Fort Donelson, and he remained so until he became Lincoln's vice-president in 1864. Thus, the *Emancipation Proclamation* did not free a single slave in Tennessee. Slaves in Tennessee would not officially be free until the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment in April 1865.⁶⁶⁹

However, the fact that the *Emancipation Proclamation* did not apply to Tennessee did not stop a celebration from taking place at Fort Donelson. Capt. William Brunt, superintendent of the contraband camp in January 1863, described the rejoicing at Fort Donelson in a letter to a friend. The fort's artillery fired a salute in honor of the proclamation. Many of the residents of the contraband camp gathered at Col. Abner Harding's headquarters and serenaded him with song. Harding, ignoring the reach of the proclamation, told the assembled that they were "all free to shout and sing and be happy for the day of deliverance had come."⁶⁷⁰

⁶⁶⁵ McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 557.

⁶⁶⁶ *Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, 1862*, National Archives and Records Administration, https://www.archives.gov/exhibits/american_origins_iv/sections/text_preliminary_emancipation.html (Accessed April 16, 2019).

⁶⁶⁷ Roy P. Basler, editor, *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, 8 Vols., (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1953), VI, 424.

⁶⁶⁸ James Lee McDonough, *Stones River: Bloody Winter in Tennessee*, (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1980), 213.

⁶⁶⁹ Roy P. Basler, editor, *Abraham Lincoln: His Speeches and Writings*, (New York: Da Capo Paperback, 1996), 689; McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 511, 840.

⁶⁷⁰ William Brunt to "Dear Friend Martha," Fort Donelson, January 4, 1863, Winn-Cook Family Papers, Filson Club Historical Society, Louisville, Kentucky.



Figure 5.9. The Union victory at the Battle of Stone's River helped show the world that the Emancipation Proclamation was not the act of a desperate government, Library of Congress.

Freedmen Build Union Fort Donelson

After the Battle of Dover in March 1863, the garrisons at Forts Heiman and Henry were ordered to Fort Donelson. When they arrived, soldiers of the 13th Wisconsin began constructing a new, smaller Union fort. However, the task soon fell to the men in the contraband camp. A “Negro Brigade” was established and worked regular hours building Union Fort Donelson (Figure 5.10).⁶⁷¹

Col. William Lowe was in command at Fort Donelson when the construction began. In June, 1863, he and the 5th Iowa Cavalry were ordered to Murfreesboro and Col. William P. Lyon, 13th Wisconsin Infantry, took command. Lyon continued to employ African-American refugees as laborers for the fort. Often, men came to Fort Donelson demanding that their enslaved be returned. Lyon refused, which brought more freedom seekers into the Union line. Over one hundred men found

employment building Union Fort Donelson before it was finished in October 1863.⁶⁷²

Freedmen Recruited into Union Army

The African American men who lived near Fort Donelson were eager to fight for their freedom. In February 1863, when Confederate forces attacked Dover, men from the contraband camp grabbed the weapons of dead or wounded Union soldiers and fought in the battle. Because Military Governor Andrew Johnson opposed the enlistment of African Americans it would be September 1863 before large scale recruitment got underway in Middle Tennessee.⁶⁷³

In 1863 Major George L. Stearns was appointed Commissioner for the Organization of Colored Troops in Tennessee and quickly began establishing recruiting stations across

⁶⁷¹ O.R. Series I, Vol. XXIII, Part II, 100; Iowa Adjutant General's Office, *Report of the Adjutant General*, 991; Hawkins, “The African American Experience,” 35

⁶⁷² Iowa Adjutant General's Office, *Report of the Adjutant General*, 991; Brown, *Construction History of Union Fort Donelson*, 2.

⁶⁷³ Cimprich, *Slavery's End in Tennessee*, 81-83.

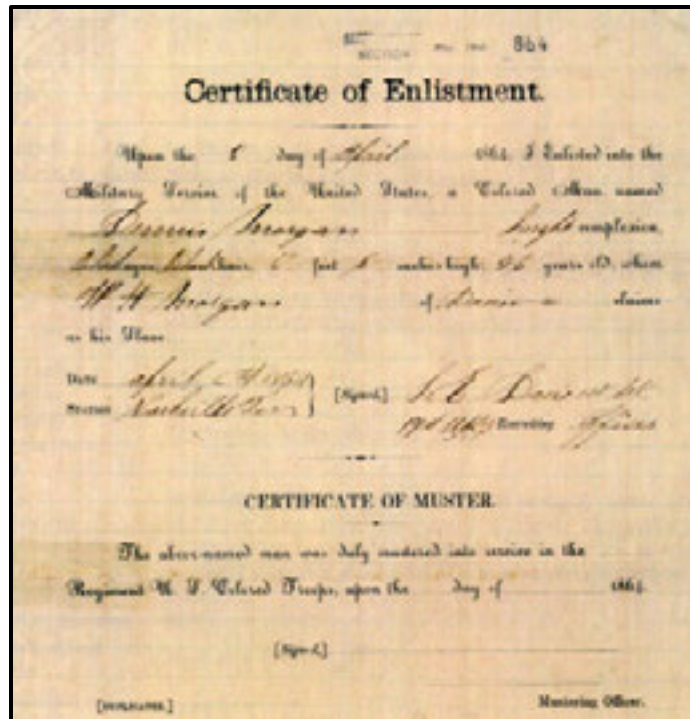


Figure 5.10. Certificate of Enlistment for D. Morgan, Tennessee State Library and Archives.

the state, including one at Fort Donelson. In March 1864, Jacob S. Willets, an agent with the Indiana Freedmen's Aid Commission, reported that there were only eighty men in the camp at Fort Donelson and those were old or infirm, writing: "The able bodied men are enlisting as fast as they come in."⁶⁷⁴ They had a powerful incentive to do so; those who enlisted were granted freedom (Figure 5.11).

It is not known exactly how many soldiers were recruited from the land between the rivers area; and finding that information would require extensive primary research. It is known that men from the area enlisted in the 13th, 15th, 16th and 17th United States Colored Infantries (USCI), and consequently many saw combat in December. The 13th, 16th and 17th USCI were part of Brigadier General James B. Steedman's Provisional Division at the Battle of Nashville. The 13th

USCI, which was part of the Union assault on Overton Hill, suffered forty percent casualties, the highest of any Union regiment engaged at Nashville. Union commander Major General George H. Thomas saw the dead African American soldiers as he rode across the battlefield, whereupon he turned to his aides and said: "Gentlemen, the question is settled; negroes will fight (Figure 5.12)."⁶⁷⁵

⁶⁷⁴ Cimprich, *Slavery's End in Tennessee*, 83; Jacob S. Willets, "Indiana Freedmen's Aid Commission," *Friends' Review*, June 25, 1864, 683. Hereafter the Indiana Freedmen's Aid Commission will be referred to in the text as the "Friends."

⁶⁷⁵ Hawkins, "The African American Experience," 38; Wiley Sword, *Embrace an Angry Wind: The Confederate Last Hurrah: Spring Hill, Franklin and Nashville*, (Columbus, OH: The General's Books, 1994), 450, 359-363; Anne J. Bailey, "The USCT in the Confederate Heartland," in John David Smith, ed., *Black Soldiers in Blue: African American Troops in the Civil War Era*, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 238-239



Figure 5.11. African American soldiers recruited from the Land Between the Rivers area fought and died in the December 1864, Battle of Nashville, Library of Congress.



Figure 5.12. Many African Americans attended school for the first time in Free State, Library of Congress.

The Free State Community, 1862–1935

It is not known when the area that came to be known as Free State was established; it may have begun at the contraband camp or at another location. The primary source on Free State suggests that the African Americans living in the Dover area may have relocated once the Union fort was completed. A Union soldier wrote in 1867 that Free State had been in the same place since 1862 or 1863.⁶⁷⁶

The Civil War African American settlement in the general vicinity of Fort Donelson and Dover was referred to as both Free State and the Fort Donelson contraband camp, but was most likely one and the same. Freedom seekers came to the area following the surrender of the fort and they continued coming to the area throughout the Civil War. The people who chose to remain near Dover created a community that lasted for decades and eventually became the African American neighborhood of Dover, Tennessee (see Figure 5.2).

Schools Established at Free State

The earliest documentation of a school or teachers at the contraband camp was reported by Lieut. James Moore, superintendent of the camp at Fort Donelson. He wrote in a letter printed in the June 25, 1864 Friends' Review: "Last spring we organized a Sabbath school and had from 80 to 100 scholars, and many of them learned so fast that they could read before the cold weather set in." At some point Ira B. Hutchens and two female teachers from Wayne County, Indiana, learned of the need for teachers at Fort Donelson and traveled to Tennessee to begin a new school. They arrived in March 1864 and were welcomed by Lieut. Moore and other officers at the post.⁶⁷⁷

⁶⁷⁶ Hawkins, "The African American Experience," 41-42.

⁶⁷⁷ Willets, "Indiana Freedmen's Aid Commission," 683.

While quarters were prepared for them the Indiana Quakers boarded and received rations at the hospital at Fort Donelson. Lieut. Moore assigned men from the camp to repair suitable rooms for the teachers. They were soon ready and provided with a stove, cookware, bedding and other furnishings. The teachers drew rations once a month, which they reported "more than supply our wants."⁶⁷⁸

By all accounts the teachers were well received and happy in their work. By May 1864, the school had 100 pupils. The three teachers each had a room in which they taught both children and adults. The report in the Friends' Review mentions both "Our school" and "The Sabbath school." It is likely that there was one building in which both secular and religious instruction took place. The report does make it very clear that those who attended were learning to read and some had progressed to learning to write.⁶⁷⁹

The second annual report of 1865 for Western Freedmen's Aid Commission states that the Commission operated a school at Fort Donelson. It had one teacher, William I. Hutchins, and the Commission furnished slates and school books.⁶⁸⁰ Hutchins was required to do more than teach reading and writing:

*The teachers who labor among them [freedmen], under the auspices of our Commission, are expected not only to teach reading, writing, and other useful branches, but also to give such instructions in ordinary domestic and industrial habits as will make them neat in their homes, economical in their customs, and thrifty in their pursuits.*⁶⁸¹

The Western Freedmen's Aid Commission taught the newly emancipated women not only reading and writing but also domestic skills that they believed would help them better run their households.

⁶⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁹ Hawkins, "The African American Experience," 43-44; *Friends' Review*, June 25, 1864, 683.

⁶⁸⁰ Western Freedmen's Aid Commission, *Second Annual Report*, 14-15.

⁶⁸¹ Ibid., 16.

The Commission, according to the Second Annual Report, also established night schools for employed individuals and formed regimental schools where soldiers were instructed but it is not known if Fort Donelson had any such schools.⁶⁸⁴ The Commission noted that the men and women who come to the South to teach freedmen were welcomed by the army and those they taught but among locals, “They found few who have any sympathy with, or a spirit of toleration for, their efforts in behalf of the freedmen—many who regard them with all the bitterness of Southern contempt.”⁶⁸⁵ Teacher Ira B. Hutchens, undaunted by unpleasantness,

In December 1868 the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States bought a house on one-half acre of land. According to the deed the house was to be used “for the public worship of God and the teaching of a school for the Colored people of Dover and its vicinity.”⁶⁸⁸ The wording implies that the school fell under the 1867 education law in Tennessee.⁶⁸⁹ The deed specified: “the District School Board of that Civil District of Tennessee shall have the right to the free use of said building whenever and for such periods as they establish and maintain

⁶⁸⁹ Lester C. Lamon, *Blacks in Tennessee 1791-1970*, (Knoxville, TN: Tennessee Three Star Books, 1996), 35.



Figure 5.13. The Dover Colored School as it appeared in the 1990s, Tennessee Historical Commission.

therein a free school under the state laws for the sole benefit of the Colored people.”⁶⁹⁰

It is unclear if this is the property on which the Freedmen’s Bureau school stood. However, E.H. Gurney, who taught at the school, was in some way associated with the Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States as he appears to have signed the deed. This deed spells out the location of the half-acre of land and a house in the Hereford tract:

*Beginning on a white oak stump in the mouth of Sandy road and in the line of the Hereford tracts thence East one hundred and forty-seven feet to a Rock thence South twenty degrees North one hundred and eleven feet to the mouth of Sandy road up said road one and thirty feet to the place of the beginning.*⁶⁹¹

An 1867 map that shows Free State also notes the Hereford Tract (see Figure 4.74). It is unclear if the Hereford Tract included all of Free State or just an area in the north of the African American settlement, labelled Free State on the map.

It is unclear what became of the building on the tract of land purchased by the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1868. It is possible that a frame structure, a 30-x-30-foot “box building,” was erected in the same place or on that tract in 1883. By 1885 Stewart County had fifty-four school districts, twenty of which had schools for African Americans. That year there were 3,770 white students and 884 African American students in the county schools. In 1907, the African American school building in Dover was replaced with a larger frame building. In 1935 the structure was moved to just off Wynn Ferry Road “to be more centrally located in the colored section of town (Figure 5.14).” Dr. Carroll Van West believes that the building now at 121 Dahlia Street was constructed in the 1930s; therefore, it cannot be the building moved to that location in 1907.⁶⁹²

⁶⁹² “History of Colored School Recalled,” Unidentified, undated newspaper clipping in the Black History Files at the Stewart County Historical Society, Dover, Tennessee; Saunders, “Black History in the County,” 80; *History of Tennessee: From Earliest Time to the Present; Together with Historical and Biographical Sketches of Montgomery, Robertson, Humphreys, Stewart, Dickson, Cheatham and Houston Counties*. (Nashville, TN: The Goodspeed Publishing Company, 1886), 917-918.

⁶⁹⁰ *Stewart County Deed Book 23*, 274.

⁶⁹¹ *Stewart County Deed Book 23*, 273.



Figure 5.14. Government-issued rations provided sustenance but little else. Freedom seekers planted gardens to supplement their diets and provide extra income, Library of Congress.

Life in Free State

Unlike some of the larger camps in the area, day-to-day life at Free State is not well documented. It is known that women and children lived together and it is likely that multiple generations or families shared the same shelters.⁶⁹³

Though freedmen received rations, their allotment was smaller than that of soldiers. The exact ration issued to the people in the camp was not found, however:

A Union soldier was entitled to receive daily twelve ounces of pork or bacon or one pound four ounces of fresh or salt beef; one pound six ounces of soft bread or flour, one pound of hard bread, or one pound four ounces of cornmeal. Per every 100 rations men shared one peck of beans or peas; ten pounds of rice or hominy; ten pounds of green coffee, eight pounds of roasted and ground coffee, or one pound

*eight ounces of tea; fifteen pounds of sugar; one pound four ounces of candles, four pounds of soap; one quart of molasses. In addition to or as substitutes for other items, desiccated vegetables, dried fruit, pickles, or pickled cabbage might be issued.*⁶⁹⁴

Soldiers' rations lacked fresh fruit and vegetables. Freedmen seeking to supplement their government rations is understandable, soldiers often bought fresh food when it was available.

In 1864, Ira B. Hutchens reported that there were "about fifty gardens" under cultivation in Free State. While it is not known if the Friends provided garden supplies to the freedmen at Fort Donelson, the Commission did. In 1863 and 1864 the Commission sent

⁶⁹³ Hawkins, "The African American Experience," 41.

⁶⁹⁴ J. Britt McCarley, "Feeding Billy Yank: Union Rations between 1861 and 1865," *Quartermaster Professional Bulletin*, December 1988, <https://www.qmfound.com/article/feeding-billy-yank-union-rations-between-1861-and-1865/> (Accessed April 17, 2019).

15,172 packages of garden seeds and over 898 plows, hoes and other garden implements to the camps in the South. Garden produce supplemented the government rations and provided a more nutritious diet. The vegetables also created an opportunity for extra income as any surplus could be sold to soldiers (Figure 5.15).⁶⁹⁵

Many contraband camps began as a haphazard collection of tents and shanties and later took on a more organized, formal appearance. For instance, the camp at Corinth, Mississippi, established in 1862 after the Confederates abandoned the city, began as a collection of mismatched shelters but by the winter of 1863–64 the camp was laid out in a grid. Each of the frame houses was numbered and the streets named for Union officers. The camp administration included wards, ward-masters who filed morning reports, and an internal police force. The Corinth camp, which housed 2,500 people, looked like a well-organized village. None of the documentation available for Free State indicates that its appearance was as formal as the Corinth camp.⁶⁹⁶

In 1866, a smallpox epidemic broke out among the African American population of Dover. According to various sources, there were few medical services available to freed people at that time. Fearing a more widespread plague, Stewart County officials undertook the care of the sick. The African American community was quarantined and food, medical supplies, and clothing provided for the ill. The county spent “hundreds of hard to come by dollars” on the care of the African American population, which was most likely those in Free State. The Stewart County Court later

sought reimbursement for the county’s expenses from Freedmen’s Bureau.⁶⁹⁷

Some freed people in Dover did not want to remain in Tennessee or the United States after the Civil War ended. The Reverend Fleming Crump, an African-American Baptist minister from Kentucky who came to Dover after the war, led a group of forty-nine people to Liberia. Many of those who left were members of the Crump, Woods, Outlaw, Smith and Blaine families. Most were farmers; one listed his occupation as blacksmith. The immigrants from Stewart County were part of a group of 312 African Americans who left the United States to travel to Liberia. It is not known how they travelled from Dover to Charleston, South Carolina, where on November 17, 1867 they boarded the *Golconda*, a packet ship owned by the American Colonialization Society. The group reached the African nation safely (Figure 5.16).⁶⁹⁸

There is no census data regarding the size of the Free State community. The 1880 Census records 433 African Americans in Dover (District 7). That number dropped to 298 in 1900 and to 179 in 1920. Several iron furnaces reopened after the Civil War but all but one had closed by 1890 and it is likely that many African Americans left the area seeking better opportunities for themselves and their families.⁶⁹⁹

⁶⁹⁵ Western Freedmen’s Aid Commission, *Second Annual Report*, 3, 12; Taylor, *Embattled Freedom*, 153.

⁶⁹⁶ Joseph E. Brent, *Occupied Corinth: The Contraband Camp and The First Alabama Regiment of African Descent*, Prepared by Mudpuppy & Waterdog, Inc. for the American Battlefield Protection Program, Washington, DC, 1995, 13.

⁶⁹⁷ Saunders, “Black History in the County,” 80; Hawkins, “The African American Experience,” 50.

⁶⁹⁸ “The African Repository,” Vol. XLIV, No. 12, December 1867, 371, 374-375.

⁶⁹⁹ Saunders, “Black History in the County,” 81.



Figure 5.15. Cape Mount, near where the group of immigrants from Dover landed in Liberia, Library of Congress.



Figure 5.16. As shown in this photograph taken at Cold Harbor, Virginia, African Americans gathered the remains of Union soldiers for reinterment in the national cemeteries, Library of Congress.

The Freedmen's Bureau in Stewart County

The Freedmen's Bureau grew out of the American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission, which was the arm of the War Department dedicated to finding a system for dealing with the newly emancipated slaves. The bill creating the Freedmen's Bureau, officially the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen and Abandoned Lands, was adopted in March 1865. Originally, the Freedmen's Bureau was intended to last only one year beyond the end of the war. Legislation in 1866 and 1868 extended the life of the Bureau and expanded its mandate to include leasing or conveying land to Freedmen, assisting with labor contracts, and education and equal protection under the law.⁷⁰⁰

Very little has been found regarding the Freedmen's Bureau in Stewart County. In 1865, George W. Stewart wrote Brig. Gen. C.B. Fisk, superintendent of the Freedmen's Bureau in Tennessee, requesting an appointment as agent for the Bureau in Stewart County. Stewart feared that without some sort of official to look after their interests the Freedmen in the county were in danger. He believed that much of the property that they had settled on, which was abandoned, could be taken from them. Stewart had the endorsement of the commander of the Union troops at Fort Donelson, Major John Phillips of 143rd Indiana. Fisk appointed Stewart the Freedmen's Bureau agent in Stewart County. He held that position until early 1867; there is no agent listed for the county after that date.⁷⁰¹

⁷⁰⁰ Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877*, (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1988), 68-69; Hans L. Trefousse, *Historical Dictionary of Reconstruction*, (New York: Greenwood Press, 1991), 84-85.

⁷⁰¹ Tennessee Freedmen's Bureau Field Office Records, 1865-1872. Assistant Commissioner: Letters received relating to appointments, 1865-1868. Roll 38 (T142). *NARA microfilm Publications*. M1911 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration.

African Americans and Fort Donelson National Cemetery

In April 1867, the U.S. Quartermaster Department bought a little over fifteen acres from James P. Flood, former commander of Battery C, 2nd Illinois Light Artillery. This plot of land, which included the old Union fort, was to become the national cemetery. In August 1867, work began at Cumberland River National Cemetery. The remains of Union soldiers were removed from graves on the Fort Donelson battlefield and other burial sites in the area and reinterred in the new national cemetery (Figure 5.17).⁷⁰²

Lieutenant S.J. Gurney hired 133 men as laborers and teamsters, 100 of them African American. Using government horses, mules, hand tools and wagons, the men under Gurney's command prepared the grounds. Temporary log structures were constructed to house "five or six men [the houses] of the same size, [and] filthy as a hog pen."⁷⁰³

The remains of 635 Union soldiers were moved from the battlefield and the vicinity of Dover to the new cemetery. A few others were brought from Hopkinsville and LaFayette, Kentucky. Records for other national cemeteries in the South show that African Americans were often assigned to locate and disinter remains from the battlefields and to

<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q5S-L9GF-55DB?i=154&wc=3M5L-82S%3A1555882802%2C1555907011&cc=2333777> (Accessed April 22, 2019).

⁷⁰² *O.R.* Series I, Vol. XXXII, Part II, 292; "Deed for sale of land between James P. Flood and Nathen Brandon to the United States, April 23, 1867, National Cemetery Operations, Box 1, Folder 3, Archives at Fort Donelson National Battlefield and Cemetery, Dover, Tennessee. Sometime before May 1868, the name of the cemetery was changed from Cumberland River National Cemetery to Fort Donelson National Cemetery.

⁷⁰³ "Report of Brvt. Col. C.W. Folsom, Assistant Quartermaster, Clarksville, Tennessee, August 27, 1867," National Cemetery Operations, Box 1, Folder 3, 1, 7, Archives at Fort Donelson National Battlefield and Cemetery, Dover, Tennessee.



Figure 5.17. Once the remains were gathered they were placed in coffins and reburied. This image from Fredericksburg, Virginia, shows the plain pine coffins used to bury soldiers, Library of Congress.

reinter them at the cemeteries. It is quite likely that African-American men from the Dover area filled the same role at Fort Donelson National Cemetery.⁷⁰⁴

Free State Becomes Part of Dover

Free State was established and probably named by freedom seekers who came into the Union lines after Fort Donelson surrendered

on February 16, 1862. By 1867 it was described as a “settlement of colored people, numbering in all about 300.” Free State covered a fairly large area—from what is today the southern portion of the national cemetery to the Confederate outer works, probably between present-day Cedar and Main streets (see Figure 4.69). Sometime after the end of the Civil War and the passage of the 13th Amendment in December 1865, the name Free State fell into disuse, although the community remained and became a distinct neighborhood that as Dover grew was incorporated into the city.⁷⁰⁵

In 1935, soon after Fort Donelson National Battlefield was established, the African American school built in Free State in 1907 was moved to its present location just off Wynn’s Ferry Road. The reason given was to

⁷⁰⁴ E.B. Whitman, *Report of E.B. Whitman, Supt. National Cemeteries, Dept. of the Cumberland, Louisville, KY May 10, 1869, Embracing Explorations of Battlefields, Cemeteries, and Places Where Union Dead were Interred; Selection, Establishment, and Completion of National Cemeteries; with Tables of Mortuary Statistics, Views, and Plans*, Military Division of the Tennessee, 1869, National Archives Microform Publication, 74; United States, Congress, Senate, *Letter of the Secretary of War Communicating, In obedience to the law, the report of the inspector of the national cemeteries of the United States for 1869*, Ex. Doc. No. 62, 41st Cong., 2d sess. U.S Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 1870, 68-69.

⁷⁰⁵ Jim Vaughan, *Fort Donelson National Cemetery, “Preserving Their Memory” Project Tour Notebook*, Fort Donelson National Battlefield and cemetery, Dover, Tennessee, 2018, 6; Saunders, “Black History in the County,” 81; McClain, *A History of Stewart County, Tennessee*, 23.



Figure 5.18. St. Paul United Methodist Church, Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area.

put it closer to the community that it served, indicating that most or all of the residents of Free State had relocated. Between 1880 and 1929 the African American community near Dover shifted the area surrounding the intersection of present-day Cedar Street and Natcor Drive and extending along Main Street north of its intersection with Natcor Drive.⁷⁰⁶

The 1934 Department of the Interior report that states: “In the southern portion of the park in the vicinity of the negro shacks and near French’s Battery, about 6 acres were harrowed, graded, fertilized and reharrowed.” The report indicates that the purchase of property by the U.S. government may well have displaced families living in the heart of Dover’s African American neighborhood.⁷⁰⁷

In the 1920s, the War Department acquired property in the area described

above—along the line of the Confederate outer works—for the creation of the national battlefield. This acquisition displaced a number of Dover’s African-American residents. In an interview, Don Wilson briefly discussed the area of Dover where he grew up, near the now-abandoned St. Paul’s United Methodist Church (Figure 5.18). He recalled: “You know it used to be houses on both sides of the church, this street was houses on both sides, you know it was public land, or you know people owned it and then when they passed on or sold out then Fort Donelson took over.”⁷⁰⁸

⁷⁰⁶ “History of Colored School Recalled,” Stewart County Historical Society.

⁷⁰⁷ Isidore Celber, *Fort Donelson National Military Park, Dover, Tennessee: Public Works Program, Final Progress Report*, Chattanooga, Tennessee: United States Department of the Interior, 1934, 2.

⁷⁰⁸ Fort Donelson National Park Commission, “Map 3: Tracts to Be Acquired (Owner Acreages and Boundaries of Tracts recommended for Purchase),” To Accompany Report of Commission, November 28, 1928; National Park Service Branch of Plans and Designs, “Battle Lines Positions Map,” Part of the Master Plan, Donelson National Military Park, United States Department of the Interior, 1940; Julia Caperton, transcript of interview held with Don Wilson at East Oak Grove Baptist Church, Dover, Tennessee, December 10, 2017, 2.

Since February 16, 1862, there have been many changes in Dover, Tennessee. The legacy of the freedom seekers that formed the community of Free State are an important part of the Civil War history of Dover and Fort Donelson. The population of Free State, which may have peaked at 1,000, had declined to about 300 in 1867. Census records show that the African American population in Dover has declined with every census since 1880, when 496 African Americans resided in Dover, which would have included those in Free State. Poor economic conditions in Stewart County, exasperated by the closing of the Bear Spring and Carlisle furnaces just after World War I, may have led many African Americans to seek jobs elsewhere. The African American population in Dover, which peaked in 1880, then declined steadily thereafter. This population loss, while greater than the national average, follows the norm as socio-economic forces in the South led to a demographic shift. By 1970, almost half of the nation's African American population lived outside of the South. People seeking better jobs and a better life moved to the north where conditions were generally more favorable. By 1920, the number of African Americans in Dover had fallen to 179; today fewer than thirty live in the city.⁷⁰⁹

⁷⁰⁹ Saunders, "Black History in the County," 81; Dover, Tennessee Population: Census 2000 and 2010, Interactive Map, Demographics, Statistics, Quick Map, censusviewer.com/city/TN/Dover (Accessed April 23, 2019); Charles Reagan Wilson and William Ferris, editors, *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 177.

Chapter 6. Commemoration

Development of Fort Donelson National Cemetery

The Civil War resulted in unprecedented loss of American life on American soil, requiring new procedures for the interment of fallen soldiers and the perpetual care of their graves. After the first summer of fighting, the War Department issued General Order No. 75, making commanding officers responsible for burying soldiers' remains and recording the locations of their burials, and requiring the Quartermaster to provide headboards marking their graves. The order did not, however, authorize the government to purchase land for such purposes. In July 1862, after over a year of hostilities and devastating losses at places like Fort Donelson, Congress passed Public Law 165 declaring "That the President of the United States shall have power whenever in his opinion it shall be expedient, to purchase cemetery grounds, and cause them to be securely enclosed, to be used as a national cemetery for the soldiers who shall die in the service of the country." The first fourteen national cemeteries were established in 1862 under this provision; dozens more were founded in the subsequent years of the war and its immediate aftermath.

Upon the conclusion of the war, the Quartermaster General's office undertook the grim task of identifying Union remains interred on battlefields and other temporary gravesites and relocating them to national cemeteries. General Orders No. 40, issued July 3, 1865, sought "special reports of the number of interments registered during the war," but the resulting documentation proved inadequate to the task. Subsequently, General Orders No. 65, issued October 30, 1865, sought reports from quartermaster officers on the "location and condition of cemeteries known to them and recommendations of the means necessary to provide for the preservation of the remains therein from desecration." A joint resolution of Congress passed April 13, 1866 provided more explicit instruction for protecting and honoring such graves, ordering "That the Secretary of War

be, and he is hereby, authorized and required to take immediate measures to preserve from desecration the graves of soldiers of the United States who fell in battle or died of disease in the field and in hospital during the war of the rebellion, to secure suitable burial places in which they may be properly interred; and to have the grounds enclosed, so that the resting places of the honored dead may be kept sacred forever."

National cemeteries were officially established by the Act to Establish and to Protect National Cemeteries, authorized on February 22, 1867. The act outlined many of the physical characteristics of national cemeteries that still define them today. Cemeteries were to be "enclosed with a good substantial stone or iron fence; and to cause each grave to be marked with a small headstone, or block," providing a more permanent marker than the wooden headboards typically placed upon initial interment. The act also called for the construction of a lodge to provide an office and living quarters for the cemetery superintendent and his family. A 1873 act established the white marble slab headstone design with curved top that came to define the typical national cemetery landscape.⁷¹⁰

Assistant Quartermaster Capt. Edmund B. Whitman made a tour of the Military Division of Tennessee in early 1866, visiting Dover in March to assess the current locations and conditions of Union remains in and around Fort Donelson. In his report to Bvt. Maj. Gen. J. L. Donaldson, Chief Quartermaster of the Military Division of Tennessee, dated March 8, Whitman expressed an urgent need to remove the bodies

⁷¹⁰ "General History," National Cemetery Administration, accessed 2/21/19, <https://www.cem.va.gov/history/history.asp#GeneralHistory>; National Cemetery Administration, *Federal Stewardship of Confederate Dead* (Washington D.C., History Program, National Cemetery Administration, 2016), 14-15, 273; Jaeger Company, *Fort Donelson National Battlefield Cultural Landscape Report* (Atlanta: Southeast Regional Office, National Park Service, 2015), 20-21.

from the battlefield while evidence of their locations still remained and encouraged creation of a national cemetery in Dover for this purpose. The village graveyard was found too small to absorb additional soldiers' graves, with those already buried there lacking order and meriting removal to a central location. Whitman recommended purchasing a tract "on a high and commanding knoll just east of the town of Dover and in front of the extreme right of McClernand's Division." He estimated that the site could accommodate approximately 5,000 bodies and suggested removing Union dead from Clarksville and Smithland to this location as well, citing the supreme historical interest of Fort Donelson, as well as the ease with which bodies could be transported by river to this location (Figure 6.1).⁷¹¹

In August 1866, the Quartermaster dispatched a Board of Survey to determine the value of the land proposed for purchase at Fort Donelson and other locations in the region. The Board found the location suggested by Whitman for the national cemetery to be suitable for the purpose, but impractical for purchase because it was owned by minor children and local citizens did not support establishment of a national cemetery at that location. Instead, they identified a 32.13-acre tract at the site of the Union fort, which they found to possess both physical and "poetic fitness unequalled by any other site in the vicinity."⁷¹² On April 23, 1867, Jas. P. Flood

conveyed 15.34 acres of this land to the United States government for \$470.⁷¹³

By the time of the legal transfer of property, work was already underway on improvements to the cemetery, although Bvt. Col. C.W. Folsom's inspection of August 1867 found progress wholly unsatisfactory. Operations began under the direction of Lt. Rosencrantz in November 1866, and transferred to Lt. S.J. Gurney in June 1867. Lt. Gurney's brother, E.H. Gurney, served as superintendent of the national cemetery, with Hugh White and T.M. White, the father and brother of Mrs. Gurney, serving as assistant superintendent and clerk, respectively. These familiar relations were blamed, at least in part, for the lack of urgency and discipline among the crew. Work had proceeded too slowly, too much money had been spent, and efforts had been inappropriately focused on moving earth to level the old fort and fill in a ravine. While sections of wall had been built, too much effort had been spent on dressing and polishing the stones, with undesirable results. As a result, no bodies had been reinterred to date. Folsom provided extensive recommendations for improvements to both the design and administration of the site. Despite his obvious disappointment, he concluded on a high note, reporting "the natural situation is beautiful and could not be spoilt."⁷¹⁴

By the time Bvt. Maj. Gen. Lorenzo Thomas inspected the cemetery in February 1869, much progress had been made. A 3' tall heavy stone wall enclosed the 3.5-acre burial grounds, with the remainder of the 15.75-acre tract enclosed with a paling fence. The cemetery gate featured columns composed of two large and two small cannons; through it passed a 30-foot wide avenue that encircled the burial grounds. The central high point of the burial grounds was defined by a 30-foot diameter circle, and pathways covered in broken stone

⁷¹¹ E. B. Whitman to J.L. Donaldson, March 8, 1866 (Fort Donelson National Battlefield Archival Collections, National Cemetery Records, Series 1: War Department, Recommendations and Reports on the Site Selection for the FODO National Cemetery, 1866, Box 1, Folder 1).

⁷¹² William Earnshaw, A.W. Wills, G. W. Marshall, "Extracts from the proceedings of a Board of Survey for determining the value of land at Fort Donelson and Pittsburg Landing, Tenn., and Corinth, Miss., August 31, 1866 (Fort Donelson National Battlefield Archival Collections, National Cemetery Records, Series 1: War Department, Recommendations and Reports on the Site Selection for the FODO National Cemetery, 1866, Box 1, Folder 1).

⁷¹³ Jaeger Company, *Fort Donelson National Battlefield Cultural Landscape Report*, 26.

⁷¹⁴ C. W. Folsom, "Report of an Inspection made of Cemeterial Operations at Ft. Donelson, Tenn.," August 27, 1867 (Fort Donelson National Battlefield Archival Collections, National Cemetery Records, Series 1: War Department, National Cemetery Operations [beginnings], Box 1, Folder 3).

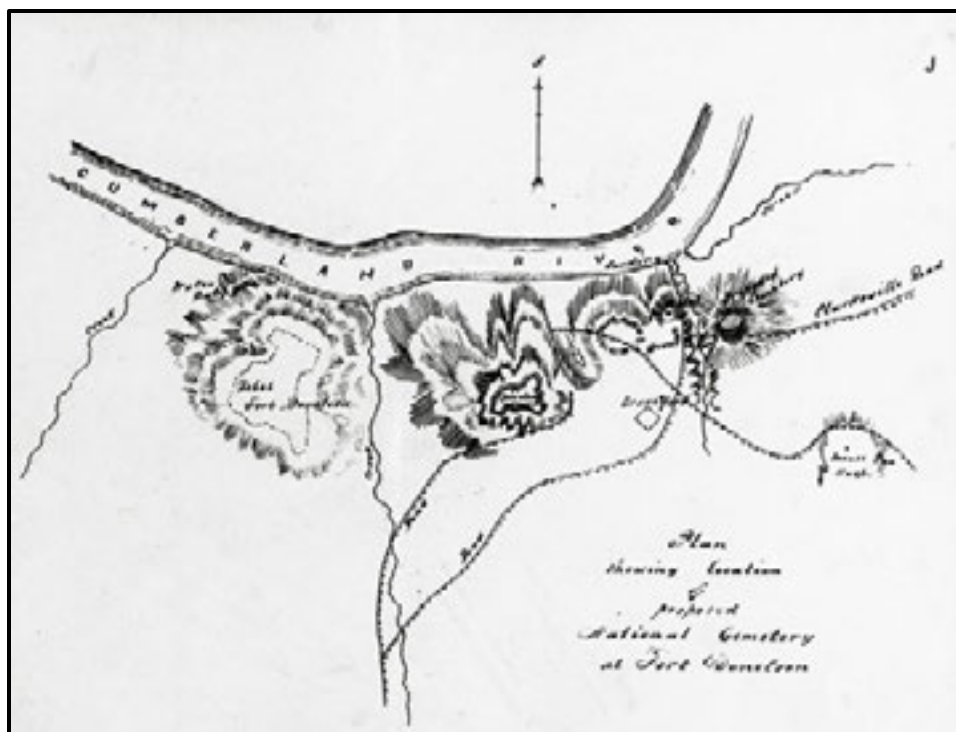


Figure 6.1. Plan showing location of proposed National Cemetery at Fort Donelson, as depicted in Brevt. Lt. Col. E.B. Whitman's 1869 report, National Archives and Records Administration.

divided the burial sections. The lodge, cistern, and flagstaff were complete. Six-hundred-seventy bodies had been reinterred at the cemetery, including 158 known and 512 unknown individuals. The majority came from the battlefield (379), field hospitals (40), and village cemetery (134) in Dover; others were from the Dover vicinity and other nearby locations along the Cumberland River, with 33 removed from the town cemetery in Hopkinsville, Kentucky. The property still required landscaping, as the graves were not sodded and trees and shrubbery were lacking.⁷¹⁵

⁷¹⁵ Lorenzo Thomas to E.D. Townsend, "Report of the Inspector of National Cemeteries," February 17, 1869 Fort Donelson National Battlefield Archival Collections, National Cemetery Records, Series 1: War Department, National Cemetery Operations [beginnings], Box 1, Folder 3); E.B. Whitman, Report of Lt. Col. E.B. Whitman, Superintendent of National Cemeteries, Department of the Cumberland, Louisville, Kentucky, May 1869, (National Archives and Records Administration, RG 92).

Brevt. Lt. Col. E.B. Whitman's 1869 report on the selection, establishment, and completion of national cemeteries in the Military Division of Tennessee well-illustrates the conditions described by Thomas and depicts the distinctive heart-shaped arrangement of burials surrounding the flagstaff, which Thomas did not mention. The burial grounds are enclosed by a simple coursed stone wall and surrounded by a wide drive with narrower avenues dividing the four main burial sections. The lodge depicted is a single-story, gable-roof, frame structure with ginger bread accents reflecting the first standard lodge design employed at early national cemeteries. Grave markers appear to be wooden headboards. A 32-pound gun on a barbette carriage sits at the center of the circle at the high point of the burial ground. The plot is generally devoid of trees and other vegetation⁷¹⁶ (Figure 6.2).

⁷¹⁶ E.B. Whitman, Report of Lt. Col. E.B. Whitman, May 1869, (National Archives and Records Administration, RG 92).

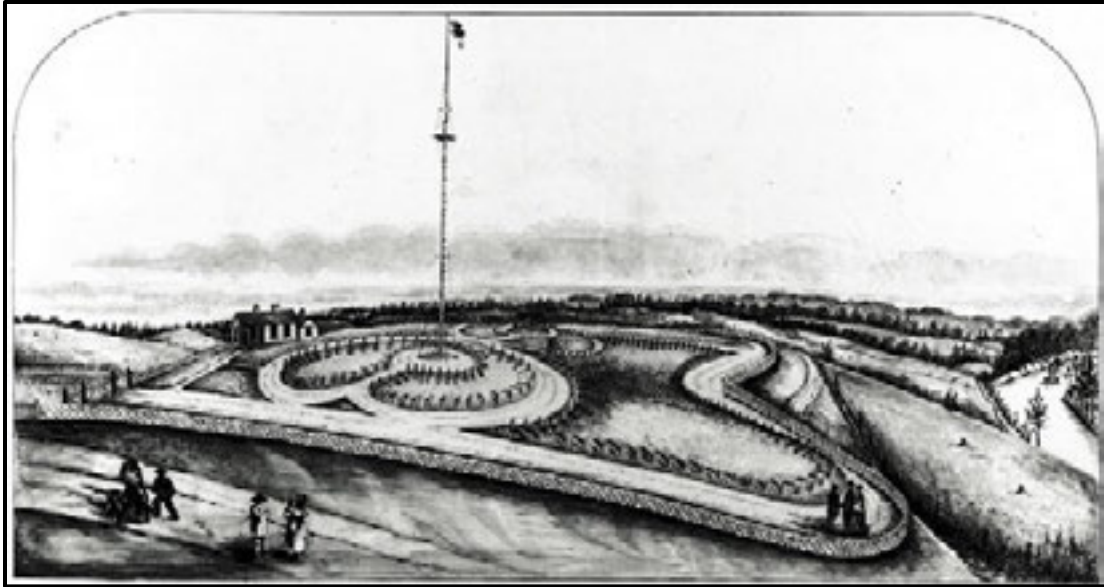


Figure 6.2. View of Fort Donelson National Cemetery near Dover, Tennessee as depicted in Brevt. Lt. Col. E.B. Whitman's 1869 report, National Archives and Records Administration.

The first lodge built at the cemetery was a wood frame structure described in the 1874 Report of the Inspector of National Cemeteries as “a wooden cottage, containing three rooms, with kitchen detached. It looks comfortable and is kept very neat; it is said to be very cold in winter. The position is high and much exposed to winds. A new lodge of stone or brick is much needed here now. A small cistern is attached to the lodge; it is too small to supply water through a dry summer.”⁷¹⁷ The recommendation to replace the lodge was acted upon in short order. The monthly report for July 1877 reports that the new lodge had been accepted and occupied by the superintendent; in January 1878, it was reported that the old lodge was to be remodeled into a tool house, fuel house, and privies.⁷¹⁸

The new lodge was described as a two-story [or one-and-one-half-story] brick building with six rooms and three rooms in the basement.⁷¹⁹ The lodge was built according to the standardized design developed by Quartermaster General Montgomery C. Meigs in 1871 and utilized for lodges constructed throughout the national cemetery system until the 1880s when a new Victorian model replaced it. The building served as both residence and office for the superintendent and featured a compact L-shaped plan with living room, kitchen, and office on the first floor and bedrooms on the second floor, referred to as the “attic.” The exterior featured a Second Empire-style design with mansard roof. The example at Fort Donelson was constructed of brick, while

⁷¹⁷ Oscar A. Mack to W.W. Belknap, “Report of the Inspector of National Cemeteries,” June 14, 1874, 98 (Fort Donelson National Battlefield Archival Collections, National Cemetery Records, Series 1: War Department)..

⁷¹⁸ Monthly Report of the Fort Donelson National Cemetery for the month of July 1877 (Fort Donelson National Battlefield Archival Collections, National Cemetery Records, Series 1: War Department, Monthly and Quarterly Reports 1873-1882, Box 2, Folder 3).

⁷¹⁹ Monthly Report of the Fort Donelson National Cemetery for the month of January 1878 (Fort Donelson National Battlefield—00095, National Cemetery Records, Series 1: War Department, Monthly and Quarterly Reports 1873-1882, Box 2, Folder 3).



Figure 6.3. Superintendent Hyde and family at the lodge in 1892, Fort Donelson National Battlefield Collections.

some others were ashlar stone. A wood porch occupied approximately half the width of the façade, between the branches of the “L,” providing direct access to both the private living quarters and the office (Figure 6.3).⁷²⁰

The construction of the new lodge was testament to the permanence of the national cemetery. In July 1872, Lieutenant Colonel James Ekin, Chief of the Quartermaster Corps Department of the South, recommended abandoning Fort Donelson National Cemetery and removing the remains to Nashville. However, Quartermaster Meigs denied the request, preferring to “let the men rest in peace. The cemetery is a public historical monument of an important battle, a leading event in the history of the United States. It has been established by proper authority, and it should be completed and maintained.”⁷²¹

⁷²⁰ Joseph K. Oppermann, *Cemetery Lodge, Fort Donelson National Battlefield, Historic Structure Report*, (Winston-Salem: Joseph K. Oppermann—Architect, P.A., October 2017), 20-21.

⁷²¹ Gloria Peterson, *Administrative History, Fort Donelson National Military Park*, Dover,

Further enhancing the permanence of this monument, by August 1877 the cemetery’s wooden grave markers were replaced by new marble headstones.⁷²² The standard design was adopted by the War Department following an act of March 3, 1873 for the erection of a headstone at each grave in the national military cemeteries. The specifications called for “a slab design of marble or durable stone four inches thick, 10 inches wide and 12 inches in height extending above the ground. The part above the ground was to be polished and the top slightly curved.” Unknown soldiers’ graves were marked by a six inches square extending four inches above the ground.

Improvements to the landscape also were pursued during this period. In the summer of 1870, Frederick Law Olmstead wrote Quartermaster General Montgomery C. Meigs with his recommendations “for the planting and cultivation of trees and shrubs in the National

Tennessee, (National Park Service, June 30, 1968), 14.

⁷²² Jaeger Company, *Fort Donelson National Battlefield Cultural Landscape Report*, 33.

Cemeteries.” He called for a landscape design that was “studiously simple” to define the cemetery as “A sacred grove, sacredness and [protection] being expressed in the enclosing wall and in the perfect tranquility of the trees within.” Anticipating the difficulty of maintaining good turf at the cemeteries, he recommended dense cover of trees and shrubs as a practical and economical solution. For economy, young specimens could be collected locally from the woods and transplanted in a cemetery nursery; alternatively, small saplings could be obtained from a local nursery at a small fraction of the cost of more mature trees. He advised against certain fast-growing, shorter-lived varieties, with the goal of developing a landscape of venerable old trees in time.⁷²³

A 1874 report for Fort Donelson National Cemetery states that the graves were “mounded up, but not sodded...very little grass is growing on them.”⁷²⁴ In 1876 Superintendent John Fitzgerald tried to remedy this by spreading topsoil and sowing bluegrass and red clover seed; such efforts were repeated in subsequent years. He also “transplanted and planted alders, catalpas, and willow trees in the places where these [evergreen and fruit] trees have died.”⁷²⁵ Monthly inspection reports from 1877 and 1878 mention an Osage orange hedge located inside the wooden fence enclosing the cemetery grounds; it was “growing very well.”⁷²⁶ The improvement of turf, planting of trees, and upkeep of fences was reported throughout the following decade. Tree species mentioned include maple, elm, apple, peach, pear, cherry, and cedar, among others.

⁷²³ Fred. Law Olmstead to M. C. Meigs, August 2, 1870.

⁷²⁴ Oscar A. Mack to W.W. Belknap, “Report of the Inspector of National Cemeteries,” June 14, 1874, 98 (Fort Donelson National Battlefield Archival Collections, National Cemetery Records, Series 1: War Department).

⁷²⁵ Fitzgerald superintendent report quoted in Jaeger Company, *Fort Donelson National Battlefield Cultural Landscape Report*, 33.

⁷²⁶ Monthly Reports of the Fort Donelson National Cemetery for the months of July 27 and January 1878 (Fort Donelson National Battlefield—00095, National Cemetery Records, Series 1: War Department, Monthly and Quarterly Reports 1873-1882, Box 2, Folder 3).

Arborvitae, which Olmstead warned against, was reportedly damaged by a hard freeze. Olmstead’s recommended practice of obtaining trees from local woods was followed by the cemetery’s superintendents, resulting in dense tree cover requiring thinning by the end of the nineteenth century.⁷²⁷

A plan of the national cemetery issued by the Office of the Quartermaster General on July 22, 1892 depicts the cemetery property, which is an irregular quadrilateral containing the kidney-shaped burial grounds. A wire fence enclosed the lot. The southern half of the property was largely undeveloped, featuring open land crossed by a dry ravine and dotted with deciduous trees. Deciduous trees also lined the southern property boundary and either side of the gravel road that ran along the eastern border. The road split at the southeast corner of the burial grounds to create a loop road surrounding the cemetery proper. The road continued in gravel, transitioning to an earth road near the northwest corner of the property. A stone wall encompassed the burial grounds, with deciduous trees lining the road outside of the wall, and evergreen trees bordering the grass drive that surrounded the burial grounds inside of the wall (Figure 6.4).

The cemetery was composed of five irregular sections defined by grass walks, the orientation of the burials, and the placement of trees. The southern section was devoid of burials and contained all of the cemetery buildings including the lodge, brick stable with attached pump house, three cisterns, a septic tank, and a rostrum. Cement walkways connected the lodge to the road and to the stables. North of the lodge were the two most distinctive sections of the cemetery. The eastern section featured a heart-shaped arrangement of graves with the flagstaff at the center. The central section contained a circular arrangement of graves with a gun monument at its center (Figure 6.5). The western section was defined by a right angle at its eastern corner and an arched boundary along its western edge. Two rows of graves lined the boundary of the area. The northern section displayed irregular curvilinear boundaries with a single row of graves lining its

⁷²⁷ Jaeger Company, *Fort Donelson National Battlefield Cultural Landscape Report*, 35-39.

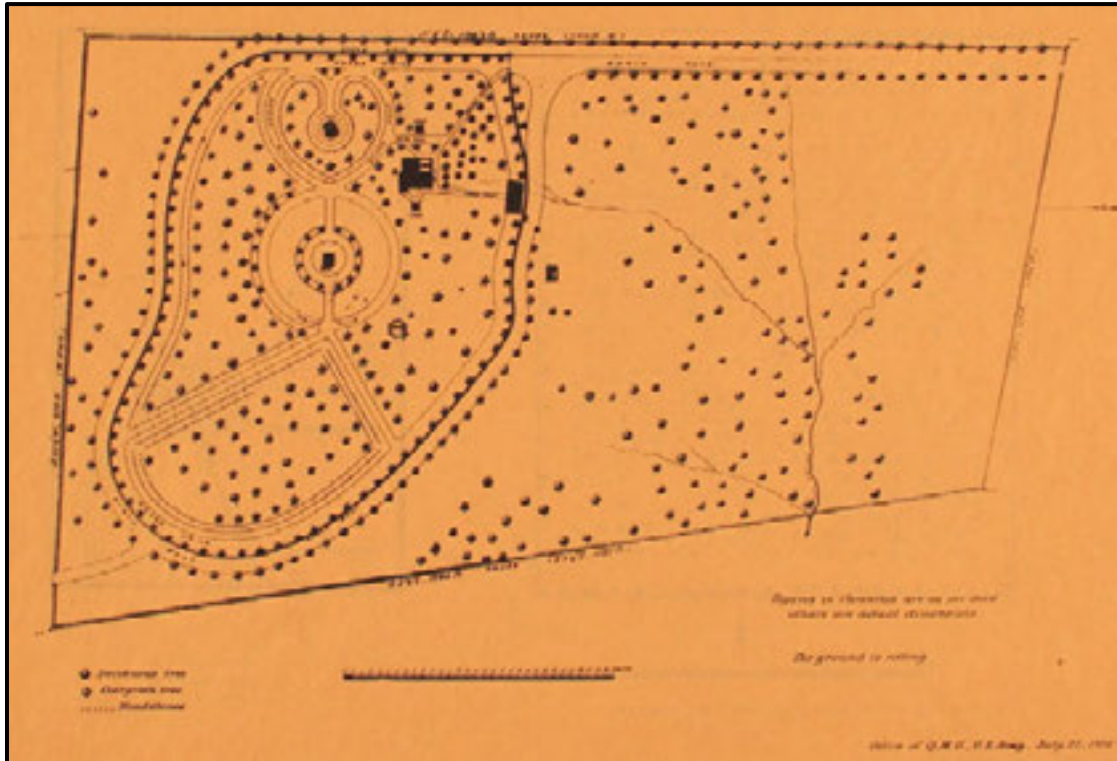


Figure 6.4. 1892 plan of Fort Donelson National Cemetery, National Archives and Records Administration.

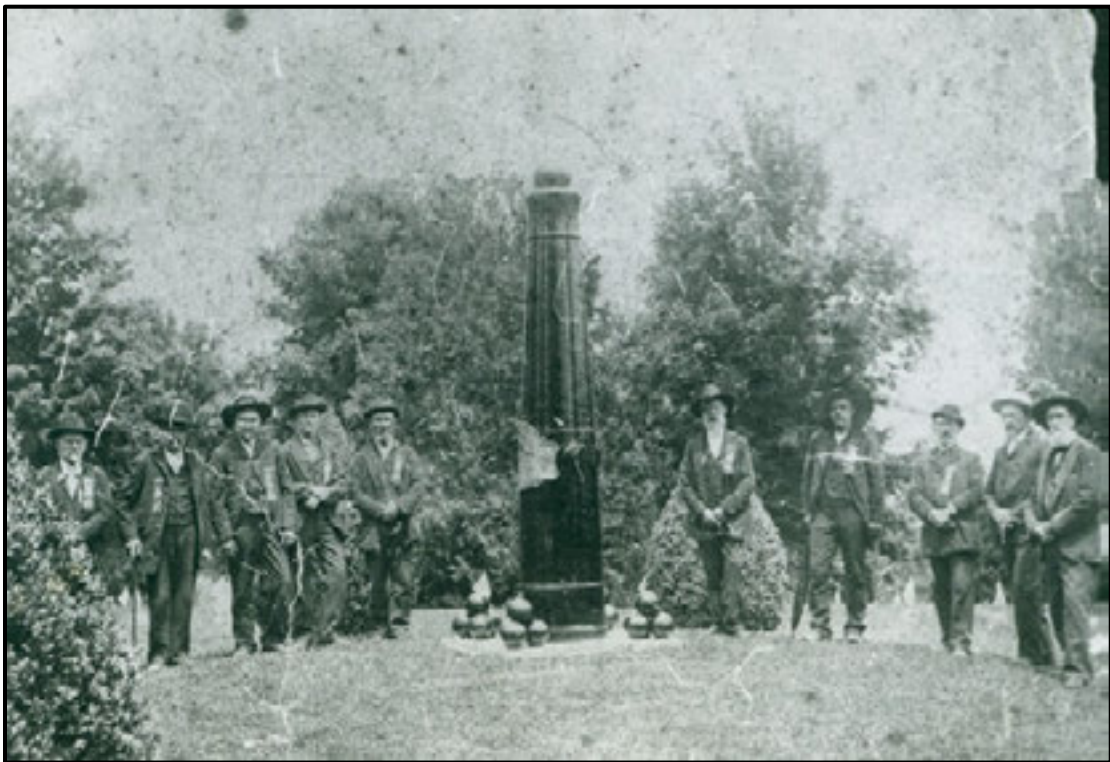


Figure 6.5. Central gun monument in Fort Donelson National Cemetery, late nineteenth century, Jaeger Company, *Fort Donelson National Battlefield Cultural Landscape Report*, Atlanta, Georgia, 2015, p. 29.

perimeter. Deciduous and evergreen trees heavily dotted the northern, western, and southern sections, providing dense cover in those areas in keeping with Olmstead's recommendations. A garden was indicated outside of the cemetery proper at the northeastern corner of the property.⁷²⁸

In 1893, a contract was awarded to the Champion Iron Co. of Kenton, Ohio for the manufacture and delivery of an iron rostrum. Later that year, a separate contract was issued to Messrs. Weaks & Allan, presumably local contractors, for construction of the rostrum's foundation and erection of the iron superstructure.⁷²⁹ It is not clear if the 1893 rostrum replaced that indicated on the 1892 map or if the map forecasted the intended location of the new structure. A new flagstaff was installed in 1907. It was described as a 75-foot steel structure with a plain iron base set in concrete further secured by four guy wires.⁷³⁰

In April 1911, the national cemetery accepted a proposal from Meers & Dayton of Chattanooga for construction of a new stable at the approximate location of the old building, to the south of the lodge. The building was a simple one-and-one-half-story, gable-roofed, rectangular, brick structure exhibiting a scale and material treatment compatible with the existing cemetery landscape. According to the historic structure report for the building, although the building was identified as a stable, it likely was

primarily utilized as a carriage house to store various vehicles used for the maintenance of the cemetery and in military funerals. Animals may have been stabled in the southeast portion of the building, or possibly in a separate building outside of the cemetery walls. Sometime in 1931, the basement of the building was lowered and the ceiling raised approximately one foot to create space for mules used to maintain the cemetery. Possibly at the same time, two restrooms were added to the west end of the building.⁷³¹ The building's use changed over time, particularly under the NPS's management of the property.

Early Commemorative Efforts

While the national cemetery provided suitable commemoration of the Union sacrifice at Fort Donelson, the battle's Confederate dead were little acknowledged. During the war, the Confederate Army lacked a systematic method for burying fallen soldiers and marking gravesites, and after the war they lacked the resources to identify and reinter their dead in the manner pursued by the War Department.⁷³² In the decades immediately following the war, Ladies' Memorial Associations (LMAs) were established throughout the South to pursue the work of establishing Confederate cemeteries and erecting monuments to the Confederate dead, but there is no evidence that such a group ever existed in Dover. It was not until the early 1900s that a dedicated group of Tennessee women began a concerted campaign to ensure that the Confederate sacrifices at Dover were recognized.

The United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) was founded in Nashville on September 10, 1894, with the organization's

⁷²⁸ Office of Quartermaster General, US Army, National Cemetery Fort Donelson Tenn., July 22, 1892 (National Archives and Records Administration).

⁷²⁹ Jno. L. Clem, Capt. & A.Q.M U.S. Army, letters to the Superintendent of Fort Donelson National Cemetery dated May 26, 1893 and August 1, 1893 (Fort Donelson National Battlefield—00095, National Cemetery Records, Series 1: War Department, Quartermaster's Correspondence 1893, Box 1, Folder 8).

⁷³⁰ Monthly Report of the Fort Donelson National Cemetery for the month of October 1924 (Fort Donelson National Battlefield Archival Collections, National Cemetery Records, Series 1: War Department).

⁷³¹ Joseph K. Opperman, *Fort Donelson Cemetery Carriage House/Stable & Pump House, Fort Donelson National Battlefield, Historic Structure Report*, (Winston-Salem: Joseph K. Oppermann—Architect, P.A., May 2011), 19, 29, 34.

⁷³² Sean M. Styles, *Stones River National Battlefield Historic Resource Study*, (Atlanta: National Park Service, 2004), 58.

first chapter, Nashville No. 1, established that year as the “mother chapter.”⁷³³ The Tennessee Division was established in 1895, with five additional chapters established across the state by that time.⁷³⁴ Like the Ladies’ Memorial Associations that preceded it, one of the principal concerns of the UDC was honoring those who had fought and died for the South’s “Lost Cause” through the erection of monuments and other public commemorations.

The UDC’s involvement in Dover is well-documented in Gloria Peterson’s 1968 *Administrative History*. Strong interest in the site began in 1914 after Mrs. H. N. Leech, then President of the Tennessee Division of the UDC, visited Dover with her husband and reported that, over 50 years after the battle, more than 500 Union soldiers laid buried in the national cemetery, while most of the Confederate dead remained in unmarked graves located near the original fort. In response, the Tennessee Division of the UDC began a campaign to acquire land and raise a monument at the Confederate grave site. The women of a newly-formed chapter of the UDC in Dover became ardent supporters of the idea, and Mrs. Bennett Bell of Clarksville was appointed Chairman of the Fort Donelson Monument Committee, taking a lead role along with Mrs. Leech in promoting and raising funds for the cause.

At the annual statewide convention held on May 12, 1915, Mrs. Bell reported disappointment in the amount collected for the monument to date, and used powerful language to call on the women of Tennessee to

respond: “Daughters of the Confederacy, the blood of these heroes of Fort Donelson cries out to us after 53 years for some memorial to show that their sacrifice was not in vain. Let us build this monument and let us hasten with the work.”⁷³⁵ Later that day, in her closing remarks, Mrs. Leech introduced a resolution “That the Tennessee Division, UDC request the United States Government to buy the park and wonderfully preserved battlefield at Fort Donelson, while it can be secured for such a small price.”⁷³⁶ By 1916, Mrs. Leech reported that their lobbying efforts had won significant support in Congress, but timing was not right to introduce a bill due to the war raging in Europe. When the United States entered the war the following year, plans were further delayed. Meanwhile, fundraising efforts for the monument also lagged. By 1921, the UDC had raised only \$1,202, \$803 of which was held in Liberty Bonds.⁷³⁷ However, as the United States entered a period of prosperity following World War I, hopes were high that Congress would take action on the establishment of a national park at Fort Donelson.

In the decades preceding creation of the park, the government continued to recognize that Fort Donelson National Cemetery was not only the final resting place of hundreds of Union soldiers, but also an important historic monument to the pivotal battle itself. A 1889 report from the House Committee on Military Affairs reported that “This historic spot, having been the scene of one of the most decisive battles of the war, is annually visited by hundreds of travelers drawn thither no less by the desire to view this memorable battlefield than to do honor to the nation’s dead.” Because of this, the Quartermaster General’s Office recognized the importance of providing safe and comfortable public access to the site, and recommended that the federal government

⁷³³ John A. Simpson, “Nashville No. 1, United Daughters of the Confederacy,” *Tennessee Encyclopedia*, October 8, 2017, accessed April 22, 2019, <https://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entries/nashville-no-1-united-daughters-of-the-confederacy/>.

⁷³⁴ “A Brief History: Tennessee Division,” United Daughters of the Confederacy Tennessee Division, accessed April 22, 2019, <http://www.tnudec.org/about-us.html>.

⁷³⁵ *Minutes of the Nineteenth Annual Convention of the Tennessee UDC*, Fort Donelson Monument Committee Report, May, 1915, cited in Peterson, *Administrative History*, 18.

⁷³⁶ *The Nashville Banner*, May 13, 1915, 3, cited in Peterson, *Administrative History*, 20.

⁷³⁷ Peterson, *Administrative History*, 23.

construct an improved roadway connecting the Cumberland River landing in Dover to the national cemetery and provide provision for its continued upkeep. As proposed in 1888, the road would be 30 feet wide and 12 inches deep, constructed one-half of stone and one-half of gravel, with a curb and graveled sidewalk along one side. Stone-paved gutters were suggested as a recommended option.⁷³⁸ While Stewart County granted the federal government the right-of-way easement needed to construct the road in 1889, negotiations stalled progress, and construction did not begin until 1905. The Federal Road, as it became known, followed the alignment of the old Eddyville Road and provided the first improved roadway in Dover.⁷³⁹ The 1903 specifications issued to bidders called for a roadway similar to that described in 1888, featuring 32 feet of roadbed with 9 feet reserved on each side for sidewalks, a macadam surface laid on a bed of gravel, and limestone curbing and gutters. A rubble stone box culvert, terra cotta pipe culverts, and sections of rubble stone retaining wall also were specified.⁷⁴⁰

The year 1913 marked the beginning of another period of federal investment in Dover when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers purchased land immediately adjacent to the earthworks and water batteries at Fort Donelson for construction of Lock D on the Cumberland River. Upon inspecting the site on April 9 of that year, the District Engineer from Nashville reported that "The earthworks of Fort Donelson (45 acres) are in good state of preservation," and recommended investing

\$5,000 to purchase the land and provide stone markers and fencing. He also recommended extending the Federal Road from the cemetery to the lock reservation and fort.⁷⁴¹

While these recommendations did not lead to federal purchase of the fort site, the investment at Lock D was encouraging to those who wished to see a national park established at Dover. Work began in 1913 with the issuing of a contract to the Foster-Creighton-Gould Company. As the project was not yet fully funded, the initial contract included building the lock walls, upper and lower guide walls, guard wall, and removing about 6,000 cubic yards of rock from the lower approach.⁷⁴² A second contract was issued in 1915 to Mason & Hanger Co. for constructing, back filling, and rip rapping the abutment; grading and protecting the river banks above and below the abutment and below the lock; paving the esplanade behind the lock and guide walls; constructing the dam; and installing the steel lock gates.⁷⁴³ The lock was in operation by the end of 1917. A frame house for the lockmaster was constructed on a cleared 8.5-acre lot overlooking the lock site, southeast of the Confederate fort.⁷⁴⁴

It was during the construction of the lock and dam that the UDC began petitioning Congress to establish a national military park at Fort Donelson. They found a champion in Rep. Joseph W. Byrns of Nashville, known to

⁷³⁸ Mr. Maish, Committee on Military Affairs, "Road to the National Cemetery at Dover, Tenn," Report to accompany bill H.R. 11694, January 29, 1889 (Fort Donelson National Battlefield Archival Collections, National Cemetery Records, Series 6: Roads, Road to the National Cemetery at Dover 1889, Box 9, Folder 8).

⁷³⁹ Jaeger Company, *Fort Donelson National Battlefield Cultural Landscape Report*, 39-40.

⁷⁴⁰ "Specifications," July 1903 (Fort Donelson National Battlefield Archival Collections, National Cemetery Records, Series 1: War Department, Monthly and Quarterly Reports 1901-1904, Box 2, Folder 9)

⁷⁴¹ "Report on National Monuments," District Engineer Office to Chief of Engineers, US Army, Nashville, August 9, 1913, National Archives and Records Administration, RG 79, cited in Peterson, *Administrative History*, 15.

⁷⁴² Rufus W. Pafford, "Construction of Lock D, Cumberland River," *The Military Engineer*, Vol. XII, No. 61, January-February 1920, 13.

⁷⁴³ Annual Report of the Chief of Engineers, 1915, cited in Joe E. and Maria Campbell Brent, "Subduing the Cumberland: History of the 'Old' Locks and Dams on the Cumberland River," Duvall and Associates and Nashville District Corps of Engineers, 2002, 62.

⁷⁴⁴ Annual Report of the Chief of Engineers, 1918, cited in Brent and Brent, "Subduing the Cumberland," 69.

locals as “Jo” Byrns, who visited Dover frequently and built strong relationships with his constituents who supported federal investment in a park (Figure 6.6).⁷⁴⁵ While Byrns expressed his support for the project as early as 1915, he judged it inexpedient to introduce a bill at that time given the war raging in Europe and the national priorities of the day. By the mid-1920s, however, the climate had changed.

On April 15, 1926, Rep. Byrns introduced a bill appropriating \$100,000 for the establishment of Fort Donelson National Military Park. The House Committee on Military Affairs amended the bill on May 8, reducing the appropriation to \$50,000, but issuing a report in favor of the legislation:

“There are various national monuments in the form of trenches, breastworks, and gun pits which were dug and thrown up by both armies, many of which are being gradually effaced by time. We are advised that what ever amount of land which may be desired for enclosure within the proposed national military park can be acquired at a very reasonable price. Attention is called to the fact that

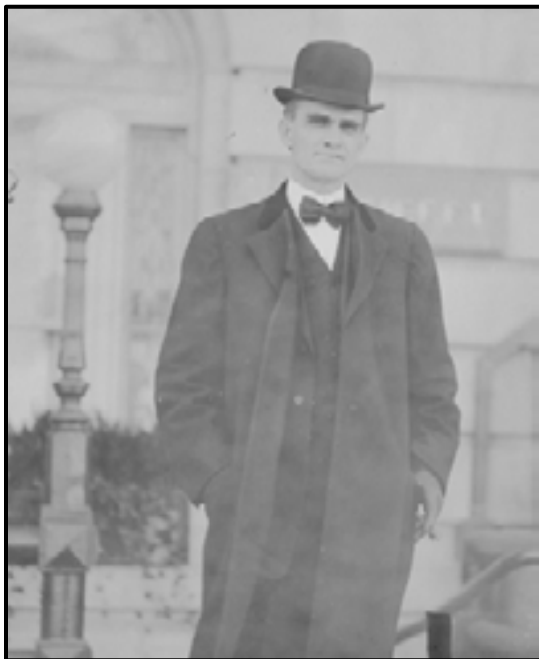


Figure 6.6. Rep. Joseph W. Byrns, 1910, Library of Congress.

⁷⁴⁵ Peterson, *Administrative History*, 25-26.

adjoining this battlefield there is already located the beautiful and well-cared for Fort Donelson National Cemetery, comprising 15.34 acres...

“Owing to the importance of this battle and the results which followed, your committee deems that it is clearly in line for favorable consideration for commemoration by the preservation and marking with appropriate tablets of the positions of the various commands engaged in the battle and the acquisition of the land necessary therefor.”⁷⁴⁶

The bill was passed by the House on February 28, 1927, but was not advanced by the Senate Committee on Military Affairs. A second bill introduced by Byrns in May 1926 calling for the inspection of the battlefield at Fort Donelson by the War Department also passed the House but was not advanced in the Senate.⁷⁴⁷

One of the impediments to the bills’ passage was the large number of appropriation requests related to the study, acquisition, and commemoration of battlefield sites presented to Congress at that time. As a result, the Secretary of War recommended a nationwide survey of battlefields by the War Department to provide a standardized means of evaluating the significance such sites and determining appropriate levels of federal investment in commemoration and preservation. Legislation authorizing such a study, the first broad historic sites survey funded by the federal government, was passed by Congress and signed by President Calvin Coolidge on June 11, 1926. The resulting study found that Fort Donelson was one of 15 Civil War battlefields deserving a Class IIa designation indicating “Battles of such great military and historic interest as to warrant locating and including the battle lines of the forces engaged by a series of markers or tablets, but not necessarily

⁷⁴⁶ Report on H.R. 11324, House Committee on Military Affairs, *House Reports (Public)* Vol. 4, May 10, 1926, cited in Peterson, *Administrative History*, 27.

⁷⁴⁷ Peterson, *Administrative History*, 27-28.

by memorial monuments.”⁷⁴⁸ This designation did not carry with it any automatic allocation of funding, and the Secretary of War indicated preference for establishing park sites at locations where land would be donated to the federal government free of charge.⁷⁴⁹ It did, however, encourage Rep. Byrns to continue seeking approval for a national military park at Fort Donelson and laid the foundation for the successful passage of such a bill in 1928.

While the national discussion about the preservation and commemoration of Fort Donelson focused on the battlefield, a local initiative made important strides towards the preservation of the Dover Hotel, the circa 1851–1853 building located at the corner of Petty and Water Streets that served as Gen. Buckner’s headquarters, a Union hospital, and the site where Buckner and Grant met to work out the terms of surrender. In the years following the Civil War, the building served as a hotel and various other businesses, including a dentist’s office and millinery, passing through the hands of several owners in the postwar period. In 1870 it was known as the Dover Hotel under the ownership of W.M. Cooley, in 1877 it was operated as the Commercial Hotel by Mrs. Amelia Yates, and beginning in 1882 it was known as the Hobing Hotel under the proprietorship of John Hobing. Hobing, and later his wife and heir Elizabeth, owned the property until 1928.⁷⁵⁰ Mrs. Hobing continued to run the hotel following her husband’s death in the

1890s, and, at age 89, was reportedly the oldest innkeeper in the nation when she finally closed the doors in 1925. By that time, the building had fallen into a state of disrepair, which would only worsen when the building was vacated. Mrs. Hobing and her daughter Lizzie saw few options but to demolish the old tavern (Figure 6.7).⁷⁵¹

In spring of 1927, Louise Runyon of Clarksville visited Dover and learned of Mrs. Hobing’s plans to demolish the Dover Hotel. Educated at the University of Michigan, Mrs. Runyon was a motivated and independent woman, as demonstrated by her work in Dover. Recognizing the historic significance of the building, Mrs. Runyon persuaded Mrs. Hobing to delay her plans for demolition and agree to sell the building if Mrs. Runyon could help identify an appropriate purchaser. As a first step, Mrs. Runyon solicited the help of a local contractor, A.F. Speight and Son, to evaluate the hotel and provide an estimate for its restoration. They recommended that \$3,150 would be needed to appropriately secure and restore the building’s envelope, which should be of highest priority, and an additional \$2,500 or more to restore the interior, which could be completed at a later date as funds became available.⁷⁵² With this information in hand, Mrs. Runyon began the task of raising funds to purchase the building and undertake such work. While groups such as the United Daughters of the Confederacy expressed support for the project, they were unable to provide any funding. She received encouragement, however, from Mr. John Trotwood Moore, Tennessee state historian and member of the State Monument and Memorial Commission, which administered a fund of \$50,000 to assist in preserving historic sites and erecting historic markers throughout the state. He recommended establishment of an association to raise funds to preserve the hotel, indicating that the state would match such funds to advance the project, and vocalized such support in the press.⁷⁵³

⁷⁴⁸ Ronald F. Lee, “The 1926 Act for the Study and Investigation of Battlefields,” *The Origin and Evolution of the National Military Park Idea*, (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1973), accessed April 22, 2019 https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/history_military/nmpidea6c.htm.

Lary M. Dilsaver, Editor, “Study of Potential National Battlefields,” *America’s National Park System: The Critical Documents* (Rowman & Littlefield, 1994), accessed April 22, 2019 https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/anps/anps_2d.htm.

⁷⁴⁹ Peterson, *Administrative History*, 28.

⁷⁵⁰ Edwin C. Bearss and Russell Jones, *Historic Structure Report, Dover Hotel, Fort Donelson National Historic Site, Stewart County, Tennessee*, (Denver: National Park Service, 1972), 13-18.

⁷⁵¹ Bearss and Jones, *Historic Structure Report*, 34.

⁷⁵² *The Nashville Tennessean*, July 3, 1927, in Bearss and Jones, *Historic Structure Report*, 35.

⁷⁵³ Bearss and Jones, *Historic Structure Report*, 35-36.



Figure 6.7. Dover Hotel, circa 1927, Jaeger Company, *Fort Donelson National Battlefield Cultural Landscape Report*, Atlanta, Georgia, 2015, p. 45.

Consequently, in July 1927 Mrs. Runyon and her supporters in Clarksville established the Fort Donelson House Historical Association and began the work of soliciting funds. The residents of Stewart County showed initial enthusiasm for the project, donating or pledging \$361 by the end of July, but the pace of donations quickly slackened, with only \$531.50 collected or promised by early November. Mrs. Runyon had some success raising money in nearby Montgomery County, but results statewide were unimpressive.⁷⁵⁴ Nevertheless, by November 8 the Fort Donelson House Historical Association felt that they had raised sufficient capital to contact the State Monument and Memorial Commission seeking matching funds for the project. Before the request could be presented at the next Commission meeting, Miss Lizzie Hobing reported that she was getting restless to see progress, or else move

ahead with their original plan for demolition. Such set off a flurry of correspondence among Judge Newell A. Link of Stewart County, the Hobings, Mrs. Runyon, and Secretary of State Ernest N. Haston to ensure that the Hobings were committed to selling the property and to secure the necessary commitment from the state to ensure that the project could move forward. Judge Link succeeded in getting the Hobings to sign “a proposal of sale” setting the price at \$1,000 and guaranteeing them a salary of \$25 per month to serve as caretakers of the hotel. Shortly thereafter, on February 25, 1928, the State Monument and Memorial Commission committed to matching up to \$5,000 for the preservation of the property. Such provided the Fort Donelson House Historical Association with the assurance needed to move forward with the purchase, and, despite some minor delays caused by the untimely death of Miss Lizzie Hobing, the sale was completed by March 15, 1928.⁷⁵⁵

⁷⁵⁴ Bearss and Jones, *Historic Structure Report*, 37-38.

⁷⁵⁵ Bearss and Jones, *Historic Structure Report*, 43.

Restoration activities began shortly thereafter. Initial work included shoring the foundation and structure; securing the building envelope with new weatherboard and paint, a new roof, and new windows and doors; reconstruction of the porch; repartitioning of the upstairs rooms based on physical and oral evidence of their original arrangement; installation of new flooring and plaster; installation of new gutters and drains; regrading of the yard; and erection of an iron fence. The interior was painted, papered, and furnished, with display cases installed to house historic artifacts. The “Fort Donelson House” was officially dedicated and opened as a historic site on September 1, 1930.⁷⁵⁶

Establishment and Development of Fort Donelson National Military Park by the War Department, 1928–1933

The first five national military parks were established in the 1890s, commemorating five major battles of the Civil War: Chickamauga and Chattanooga (1890), Antietam (1890), Shiloh (1894), Gettysburg (1895), and Vicksburg (1899). These sites were not chosen at random, but carefully selected to, as a group, commemorate some of the most significant contributions of the great armies of both the Union and the Confederacy. The movement to establish these parks stemmed from growing historical interest in the battlefields as the nation recognized the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Civil War and a growing conservation movement that also saw the establishment of the first four scenic national parks in the West. Further, interest in establishing Civil War battlefield parks reflected a push to reestablish national unity while remembering the conflict, emerging out of the end of Reconstruction and a focus on common values fostered by national celebrations of the American centennial. This

⁷⁵⁶ Bearss and Jones, *Historic Structure Report*, 43-55.

spirit of unity was fostered by Civil War veterans and exemplified by the increasing number of joint encampments and reunions at battlefield sites attended by both Union and Confederate soldiers, one of the first of which occurred at Bunker Bill in 1875.⁷⁵⁷

The precedents set by the establishment of the first four national military parks would have important implications for future preservation efforts. Perhaps most importantly, they established the power of Congress to acquire nationally significant historic sites from private landowners, through purchase or eminent domain, for preservation in perpetuity – a power that was upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court. Once each park was authorized, the Secretary of War appointed a three-person park commission including both Union and Confederate veterans of the battle, assisted as needed by professional military historians, for marking battle lines and setting preservation priorities, a practice that would continue in to the twentieth century. Based on the commissions’ recommendations, the federal government established a battlefield preservation philosophy that stressed maintaining conditions as closely as possible to those at the time of the battle, which included the continued agricultural use of the land, sometimes through lease-back arrangements. Federal investment in each property typically included acquiring land, surveying the battle lines, constructing access roads, marking positions occupied by the Regular Army, and preserving the battlefield. Beyond this, the government then looked to the states as important partners who were given responsibility for marking and memorializing the positions of their troops. Veterans played essential roles in the preservation of Civil War battlefields at every level – grassroots veterans groups promoted

⁷⁵⁷ Lee, “III. The First Battlefield Parks, 1890-1899,” *The Origin and Evolution of the National Military Park Idea*, accessed April 23, 2019: https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/history_military/nmpidea5.htm; Timothy Smith, *The Golden Age of Battlefield Preservation*, (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2008), 32-34.

the establishment of parks, veterans in Congress pushed for their authorization and funding, veterans provided the first-hand expertise to advise the War Department in delineating the parks and telling the stories of the battles, and veterans administered the parks for the public.⁷⁵⁸

Calls for the preservation of additional battlefield sites associated with the Civil War as well as earlier conflicts accelerated in the early twentieth century. In recognition of the costs and other practical considerations involved in acquiring and managing large tracts of land, an alternative preservation model emerged in the early 1900s. Advanced at Antietam by Brig. Gen. George Breckinridge Davis, the approach, which became known as the Antietam Plan, called for acquiring narrow strips of land along the battle lines with the surrounding agricultural lands left in private ownership. In more urban settings, such as Atlanta, Brig. Gen. Davis recommended that sufficient marking and commemoration could be achieved largely through the erection of tablets along public roads. The approach was embraced by the House Military Affairs Committee, whose chairman Richard Wayne Parker reported on May 14, 1902, “it is not desirable that all those battlefields should be turned into great military parks, adorned with monuments, and so changed as to be utterly unlike the country at the time of the battle...The farm land, the woods, the pastures, and in some cases, the buildings should be left as they were...”⁷⁵⁹

These developments of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries would strongly

influence the development of Fort Donelson National Military Park when it was finally authorized a quarter-century later. On December 5, 1927, Rep. Joseph Byrns again introduced a bill to appropriate \$100,000 for the establishment of Fort Donelson National Park. The bill was amended to reduce funding to \$50,000 and passed by the House on January 16, 1928, but again faced opposition in the Senate. Senator Kellar of Tennessee, who sponsored the bill in the Senate, reported that it received inadequate support from the War Department, which made the Senate Committee on Military Affairs reluctant to support it. After receiving reassurance that the Secretary of War and the President supported the bill, it eventually made it out of committee by a single vote, and was passed by the Senate that same day, March 19, 1928. President Calvin Coolidge signed Public Law 187 officially authorizing the park on April 14, 1928.⁷⁶⁰

The bill called for the Secretary of War to appoint a commission of three individuals familiar with the terrain and events associated with Fort Donelson, to include: (1) a commissioned officer of the Corps of Engineers, United States Army; (2) a veteran of the Civil War who served honorably in the military forces of the United States; and (3) a veteran of the Civil War who served honorably in the military forces of the Confederate States of America. The charge of the commission was to:

*“inspect the battle field of Fort Donelson, Tennessee, and to carefully study the available records and historical data with respect to the location and movement of all troops which engaged in the Battle of Fort Donelson, and the important events connected therewith, with a view of preserving and marking such field for historical and professional military study.”*⁷⁶¹

⁷⁵⁸ Lee, “III. The First Battlefield Parks, 1890-1899: Conclusion,” *The Origin and Evolution of the National Military Park Idea*, accessed April 23, 2019:

https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/history_military/nmpidea5i.htm; Smith, *The Golden Age of Battlefield Preservation*, 34-35.

⁷⁵⁹ Lee, “IV. Later Evolution of the National Military Park Idea, 1900-1933: ‘The Antietam Plan,’” *The Origin and Evolution of the National Military Park Idea*, accessed April 23, 2019: https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/history_military/nmpidea6a.htm

⁷⁶⁰ Peterson, *Administrative History*, 28-29.

⁷⁶¹ E.P. Martin, Chas. G. Mathews, John F. Conklin, to the Secretary of War, *Report on Inspection of Battle Field of Fort Donelson, Tennessee*, (Nashville: War Department, United States Engineer Office, November 28, 1928), 2

The committee's report, due to the Secretary of War by December 1, 1928, was to include recommendations regarding land to be acquired for the national park, including the price at which land could be purchased; maps depicting battle lines and troop locations; and the suggested locations of historical tablets to mark the positions and movements of troops and other important events associated with the battle. Upon receipt of the report, the Secretary of War was authorized to purchase or condemn land for the park, mark its boundaries, and erect tablets in accordance with the commission's recommendations. States that had troops engaged in the Battle of Fort Donelson were authorized to erect monuments, tablets, or other markers within the park if approved by the Secretary of War. Fort Donelson National Cemetery was made part of Fort Donelson National Park, and the superintendent of the cemetery was to serve as superintendent of the park.⁷⁶²

The Secretary of War appointed E.P. Martin of Big Rock, Tennessee as the commission member from the Confederate Army; Chas. G. Matthews of Nashville, Tennessee, as the member from the Union Army, and Major John F. Conklin from the U.S. Corps of Engineers in Nashville, Tennessee, as the member from the Corps of Engineers. Mr. Martin was elected chairman, and Maj. Conklin served as secretary. They met in Dover on September 14, 1928 and again in early October to inspect the battlefield. The commission found that the trenches comprising Fort Donelson, the associated water batteries, and the trenches of the outer Confederate line were remarkably intact and could be easily restored. Land recommended for purchase included a 28-acre tract encompassing Fort Donelson and the water batteries and a strip of land approximately 2.75-mile-long by 150 feet wide (53.24 acres) along the outer line of Confederate entrenchments. The commission

also recommended buying eight one-eighth-acre tracts outside of the park proper for erection of tablets interpreting the fighting of February 15. The trenches of the eastern portion of the Confederate outer line east of Forge Road were found to be largely obliterated and not recommended for purchase or restoration. Both the national cemetery and the Lock and Dam D reservation were recommended for incorporation into the park.⁷⁶³

The commission's report went on to make specific recommendations regarding initial improvements to the park. They noted that the State of Tennessee was in the process of building Highway 76 through the vicinity, which would provide much improved tourist access to the area. The State agreed to also improve the existing poor stretch of road connecting Fort Donelson and the water batteries to Highway 76. Where the new highway crossed the outer entrenchments, the commission recommended that the government construct a 6-foot wide graveled walk in either direction along the entrenchments, to be replaced, once additional funds became available, with a proper road. The commission also called for improving the existing road to the Lock and Dam D reservation and constructing approximately .75 mile of gravel walks within Fort Donelson.⁷⁶⁴

These improvements would allow visitors to access the recommended 10 tablets and 2 pointers at Fort Donelson and the water batteries and 42 tablets and 4 pointers along the Confederate outer line of entrenchments. Eight tablets and 4 pointers also were recommended for outside of the park proper. The tablets proposed by the commission were of cast iron construction, measuring 3 feet by 4 feet, while the recommended pointers were 8 inches by 24 inches. To further interpret the site, they also recommended obtaining from the Ordnance Department or other sources

(Fort Donelson National Battlefield Archival Collections, War Department Records Collection, Series 1: Establishment of National Military Park).

⁷⁶² Martin, Mathews, Conklin, *Report on Inspection of Battle Field*, 2-3.

⁷⁶³ Martin, Mathews, Conklin, *Report on Inspection of Battle Field*, 5-8, 18.

⁷⁶⁴ Martin, Mathews, Conklin, *Report on Inspection of Battle Field*, 10-12.

Civil War cannon for installation in the water batteries and additional field artillery for installation at other key batteries throughout the park.⁷⁶⁵

The commission recommended restoring the water batteries, the trenches of Fort Donelson, and the trenches of the Confederate outer line to their supposed condition at the time of the battle. Such could be accomplished, they believed, with “a comparatively small amount of excavating at various localities along the batteries and trenches, and a considerable amount of clearing of trees, limbs and underbrush along the batteries and trenches.”⁷⁶⁶ Besides such clearing, no other landscaping activities were proposed for the Confederate outer line. The commission recommended that the tract containing Fort Donelson and the water batteries be planted with trees and shrubbery “to make this tract of the conventional military park type.”⁷⁶⁷ The entire park property, they suggested, should be fenced once the land was secured.

The commission’s \$50,000 budget included \$9,855 for purchasing land; \$4,800 for constructing roads and walkways; \$4,600 for tablets, pointers, cannon, and guns; \$8,300 for restoration and clearing; \$9,400 for fencing, trees, and shrubs, \$1,500 for surveys and maps; \$7,000 for studies, planning, and supervision of construction, and \$4,545 for contingencies. They also recommended a \$8,600 annual operating budget to cover the salaries of the superintendent, clerk, and laborers; materials and supplies; upkeep of buildings and grounds; miscellaneous expenses; and contingencies. The superintendent would continue to be housed in the building at the national cemetery.⁷⁶⁸

⁷⁶⁵ Martin, Mathews, Conklin, *Report on Inspection of Battle Field*, 12-13.

⁷⁶⁶ Martin, Mathews, Conklin, *Report on Inspection of Battle Field*, 13-14.

⁷⁶⁷ Martin, Mathews, Conklin, *Report on Inspection of Battle Field*, 14.

⁷⁶⁸ Martin, Mathews, Conklin, *Report on Inspection of Battle Field*, 16.

The Assistant Secretary of War approved the commission’s report on April 11, 1929, with some minor amendments. The lock and dam reservation would not be incorporated into the park, but, following amendment to the original bill, the portions of the fort and water batteries located on the reservation could be restored and interpreted as part of the park and made accessible to the public. He also identified several areas for cost savings and recommended that such funds be applied to construction of a boulevard type road along the outer line of trenches.⁷⁶⁹

Much of 1929 was spent surveying and appraising the lands recommended for purchase, and much of 1930 was spent acquiring these lands. Progress was slow, but by December 4, 1930, Capt. H.J. Conner, Officer in Charge at Fort Donelson, reported that options has been obtained on 20 tracts, with condemnations ordered on an additional 8 tracts.⁷⁷⁰ By the following spring, 92.76 acres had been acquired.⁷⁷¹ In late 1930 and early 1931, significant progress was made clearing and grubbing the property. In December 1930, Capt. Conner reported that “the entire line of trenches (approximately 11,000 feet) for the full width of the property has been thoroughly underbrushed, dead trees and limbs removed.”⁷⁷² The crew was making a second pass through the property to thin dense vegetation, remove diseased trees and stumps, and generally clean up the grounds. Reports for January and February 1931 mentioned continued clearing, removal of rocks, and preparing the grounds for seeding.

⁷⁶⁹ B.F. Cheatham, Major General, to E.P. Martin, Chairman, “Establishment of the Fort Donelson National Military Park,” April 22, 1929 (Fort Donelson National Battlefield Archival Collections, War Department Records Collection, Series 1: Establishment of National Military Park).

⁷⁷⁰ H. J. Conner, Captain Q. M. Corps, Officer in Charge, to the Quartermaster General, “Progress Report, Fort Donelson National Military Park,” December 4, 1930 (Fort Donelson National Battlefield Archival Collections, War Department Records, Series 1: Establishment of National Military Park).

⁷⁷¹ Peterson, *Administrative History*, 43.

⁷⁷² Conner, “Progress Report,” December 4, 1930.

Trenches were reconstructed in Tracts 1, 2, and 3, which required significant effort to remove tree stumps. A contract was issued to Keith Simmons Company of Nashville to provide fencing for the property.⁷⁷³ The work of clearing land, reconstructing trenches, seeding, and fencing continued in to the spring. In March, a contract was issued to Z.W. Vaughn to construct a kitchen addition to the lodge at Fort Donelson National Cemetery.⁷⁷⁴

Also in March 1931, L.H. Hood was relieved of his duties as superintendent and asked to vacate the lodge no later than April 12. He was to be replaced by Superintendent Murray. A special report on the national cemetery dated April 15, 1931 found several deficiencies in its care and upkeep, and expressed urgency to have these matters remedied before Memorial Day. Several features, including the benches, rostrum, cannon and shot, flag staff guy ropes, and arbors were in need of painting. The lodge required a new roof over the porch, replastering of the office, papering of the stairway and three bedrooms, and painting inside and out. Capt. Conner's final evaluation of Mr. Hood was uncompromising: of the 30 to 35 national cemetery superintendents he knew, Mr. Hood was "the poorest."⁷⁷⁵ Capt.

Conner had high hopes for his replacement, Mr. Walter T. Murray, described as "a young energetic man who is not afraid to work."⁷⁷⁶ Mr. Murray would prove fit for the job and become the first superintendent of the national military park after its dedication in 1932.⁷⁷⁷

Capt. H. J. Conner's Report on the Construction of Fort Donelson National Military Park, Dover, Tennessee, issued June 14, 1932, describes a park ready to welcome the public (Figure 6.8). Roadways and walkways were constructed to access the park's key points of interest. A new road was constructed from Highway 76 to the fort and water batteries. In total, the park included 2.52 miles of U.S. roadways measuring 15 feet wide, .15 mile of county road, and 1.56 miles of gravel walkways following the trenches. A total of 1.0625 miles of park road was tarred to prevent dust, as was the portion of Highway 76 along and to 300 feet on either side of the park border.⁷⁷⁸

A series of formal entryways defined visitors' progression through the property. The drive accessing the property from Highway 76 was lined by a rubble masonry wall of light Tennessee limestone that culminated, at the crest of a hill, at two stone columns measuring 5 feet square by 12 feet tall and topped by pyramids of 55 shot. Nearby, similar pyramids

⁷⁷³ H. J. Conner, Captain Q. M. Corps, Officer in Charge, to the Quartermaster General, "Progress Report, Fort Donelson National Military Park," January 1, 1931; H. J. Conner, Captain Q. M. Corps, Officer in Charge, to the Quartermaster General, "Progress Report, Fort Donelson National Military Park," February 5, 1931 (Fort Donelson National Battlefield Archival Collections, War Department Records Collection, Series 1: Establishment of National Military Park).

⁷⁷⁴ H. J. Conner, Captain Q. M. Corps, Officer in Charge, to the Quartermaster General, "Progress Report, Fort Donelson National Military Park," April 1, 1931 (Fort Donelson National Battlefield Archival Collections, War Department Records Collection, Series 1: Establishment of National Military Park).

⁷⁷⁵ H. J. Conner, Captain Q. M. Corps, Officer in Charge, to the Quartermaster General, "Special Report, Fort Donelson National Cemetery," April 15, 1931 (Fort Donelson National Battlefield

Archival Collections, War Department Records Collection, Series 1: Establishment of National Military Park).

⁷⁷⁶ H. J. Conner, Captain Q. M. Corps, Officer in Charge, to the Quartermaster General, "Progress Report, Fort Donelson National Military Park," May 7, 1931 (Fort Donelson National Battlefield Archival Collection, War Department Records Collection, Series 1: Establishment of National Military Park).

⁷⁷⁷ H. J. Conner, Captain Q. M. Corps, Officer in Charge, to the Quartermaster General, "Report on the Construction of Fort Donelson National Military Park, Dover, Tennessee," (Murfreesboro: War Department, Stones River National Military Park, June 14, 1932), 4 (Fort Donelson National Battlefield Archival Collections, War Department Records Collection, Series 1: Establishment of National Military Park).

⁷⁷⁸ Conner, "Report on the Construction of Fort Donelson National Military Park," 2-3.

of shot were placed at the corners of a 50-foot square area surrounding a 75-foot tall flagpole. The hills leading up to the entrance were “tastefully landscaped” with trees, shrubs, and grass. Similar stone columns marked the entrance to the fort proper and a section of Forge Road at the eastern end of the outer trenches; such were marked with bronze tablets reading “FORT” and “DONELSON” and “U.S. FORT DONELSON NATIONAL MILITARY PARK,” respectively. The entrance to the Graves Battery area opposite the main entrance was more simply marked “U.S.”⁷⁷⁹

The process of landscaping the park was one of both substantial clearing and planting. Conner reports over 5,000 wagon loads were removed, including stumps, rock, and other debris, in the process of removing underbrush and thinning trees to leave a desirable mix of medium-sized oaks, tuliptrees, hickory, gum, and red cedar with an understory of dogwood, persimmon, redbud, and high-bush blueberries. Meanwhile, 1,500 to 2,000 pounds of grass seed and approximately 5,000 trees, shrubs, and flowers were planted throughout the park. The effect was to create “a potential garden spot of a once desolate waste of rock strewn hills.”⁷⁸⁰ The plantings also served to stabilize the earthworks and prevent further erosion

While the earthworks were found to be remarkably intact, Conner reported that “it was found necessary to throw the trenches back up again for long stretches, and to cut through them and put drains in the lower places to prevent further washing, then to reseed with grass.”⁷⁸¹ Interpretation of the fort, batteries, other battlefield features, and troop movements was provided by 50 historical tablets, 32 within the park proper and 18 outside park boundaries. The content and location of the markers were developed

based on a field reconnaissance by an officer of the Historical Branch of the Army War College, and a contract for their manufacture was issued to the Newman Manufacturing Company in Cincinnati, Ohio.⁷⁸² However, the Newman Manufacturing Company failed to provide the tablets on schedule, so the Quartermaster allowed the contract to expire and placed a new order with Ross-Meehan Foundries of Chattanooga. They provided the 50 tablets as requested in fall 1932.⁷⁸³

Fort Donelson National Military Park was formally dedicated on July 4, 1932 (Figure 6.9). Ceremonies were scheduled to begin at 10:00 a.m. at the national cemetery and continue at the park entrance that afternoon, but they were relocated to the school auditorium due to rain. The Hopkinsville Band provided patriotic music throughout the day, and the program included addresses by local dignitaries and those who played important roles in the establishment of the park, including Stewart County Judge John DeWitt, Senator Cordell Hull, and Mrs. H.N. Leech of the UDC. Joseph Byrns, Jr., presented on behalf of his father, the Congressman who was ill.⁷⁸⁴

Also in July 1932, the UDC finally entered a contract with the Muldoon Monument Co. of Louisville, Kentucky for erection of the Confederate Monument at Fort Donelson. The passage of the bill establishing the park in 1928 had bolstered the UDC’s cause, and in October 1928 their monument fund received a matching grant of \$5,000 from the State of Tennessee. While it would take a few years for the UDC to achieve their match, Mrs. Bell coordinated with the Quartermaster

⁷⁷⁹ Conner, “Report on the Construction of Fort Donelson National Military Park,” 4.

⁷⁸⁰ Conner, “Report on the Construction of Fort Donelson National Military Park,” 3.

⁷⁸¹ Conner, “Report on the Construction of Fort Donelson National Military Park,” 3.

⁷⁸² Conner, “Report on the Construction of Fort Donelson National Military Park,” 4.

⁷⁸³ Jaeger Company, *Fort Donelson National Battlefield Cultural Landscape Report*, 57.

⁷⁸⁴ Program, Formal Dedication of the Fort Donelson National Military Park, Dover, Tennessee, beginning at 10:00 a.m., July 4th, 1932 (Fort Donelson National Battlefield Archival Collections, War Department Records Collection, Series 1: Establishment of National Military Park); Peterson, *Administrative History*, 61-62.

PROGRAM

Formal dedication of the Fort Donelson National Military
Park, Dover, Tennessee, beginning at 10:00 A. M.

JULY 4th, 1932

Part of the exercises are to be held at the National Cemetery and the
other part in the Fort Donelson National Military Park.

At the National Cemetery:—

Assembly	Brandon Lewis
Music	Hopkinsville Band
Introduction of Honorable Morris Brandon	Gen. J. W. Rice
Presiding	Hon. Morris Brandon
Invocation	Rev. D. W. Pickelsimer
America the Beautiful	Hopkinsville Band
Welcoming address	Judge John H. DeWitt
Selection	Hopkinsville Band
Address	Senator Cordell Hull
Music	Hopkinsville Band

LUNCH HOUR

"Spirit of '76"	Washington and Army
Chorus	"Father of the Land We Love"
Song, "America"	Audience
Formation of the Colonial Flag	
Address	Congressman Joseph W. Byrns
"Columbia, Gem of the Ocean"	Hopkinsville Band
Goddess of Liberty	Vivian Page

Program Continued at main entrance, National Military Park.

Opening of the Park	Master John Kenneth Murray
Music	Hopkinsville Band
Address	Mrs. H. N. Leech
Medley, "Yankee Doodle—Dixie"	Hopkinsville Band
Reunited—"The Blue and Gray"	
Address of Acceptance	Hon. Scott Fitzhugh
National Anthem	Hopkinsville Band
Benediction	Rev. R. D. Angel

The public is cordially invited.

Figure 6.9. Program, dedication of Fort Donelson National Military Park, 1932, Fort Donelson National Battlefield Collections.

General to receive permission to erect the monument in the park at “a selected high point where the Fort Henry Road comes into the Park.”⁷⁸⁵ Completed on May 27, 1933, the monument was a marble shaft measuring 32.5 feet high, 3 feet 10 inches wide at the base and 2 feet 2 inches wide at the top. The shaft was topped by an urn and fronted by a bronze statue of a Confederate soldier standing on a pedestal inscribed:

*This shaft is dedicated as an
altar of remembrance to the
Confederate soldiers who
fought at Fort Donelson
February, 1862
By the
Daughters of the Confederacy
of Tennessee
There is no holier spot than
where defeated valor lies.*

The monument was dedicated at a ceremony held June 3, 1933. Mrs. Bell made the formal presentation of the monument and Mrs. Leech placed an ivy wreath after its unveiling. A Confederate flag was raised over Fort Donelson for the first time since 1862 (Figure 6.10).⁷⁸⁶

Development of Park under the NPS during the New Deal

Section 16 of Public Law No. 428, signed March 3, 1933, aimed to achieve efficiencies in the federal government by authorizing the President to issue executive orders for the

purpose of regrouping, consolidating, transferring, and abolishing agencies of the executive branch. Executive Order No. 6166 issued June 10, 1933, ordered that “All functions of administration of public buildings, reservations, national parks, national monuments, and national cemeteries are consolidated in an Office of National Parks, Buildings, and Reservations in the Department of the Interior.” Such was specifically noted to include “the National Cemeteries and Parks of the War Department which are located within the continental limits of the United States.” Executive Order No. 6228, issued by the President on July 28, 1933, provided further clarification and a list of specific properties to be transferred, including Fort Donelson among 10 other national military parks. Fort Donelson National Military Park and National Cemetery were officially transferred to the Department of the Interior on August 10, 1933.⁷⁸⁷

Improvements to Fort Donelson continued under the NPS, taking advantage of the many public works programs instituted under the New Deal. Programs such as the short-lived CWA, the PWA, and, most significantly for the NPS as a whole, the CCC, put millions of young men to work constructing new roads and infrastructure, building new park structures, and improving park landscapes.

From December 15, 1933 through April 26, 1934, 398 CWA laborers (including African Americans and three women), worked on seven projects throughout the park, including planting, improving and graveling park roads, erosion control inside and outside the park, and roadside cleanup. The projects contributed 9,210 man-days and \$26,729.22

⁷⁸⁵ Letter of Approval, Quartermaster General to Conner, March 18, 1932, RG 79, as cited in Peterson, *Administrative History*, 55.

⁷⁸⁶ Peterson, *Administrative History*, 54-56; Program, Dedication of the Confederate Monument, Fort Donelson National Military Park, Dover, Tennessee, June 3, 1933 (Fort Donelson National Battlefield Archival Collections, War Department Records Collection, Series 1: Establishment of National Military Park).

⁷⁸⁷ Dilsaver, “Excerpts from Executive Order No. 6166 of June 10, 1933 and Executive Order No. 6228 of July 28, 1933 (5 U.S.C. Secs. 124-132),” *America’s National Park System: The Critical Documents*, Accessed April 11, 2019: https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/anps/anps_3b.htm.

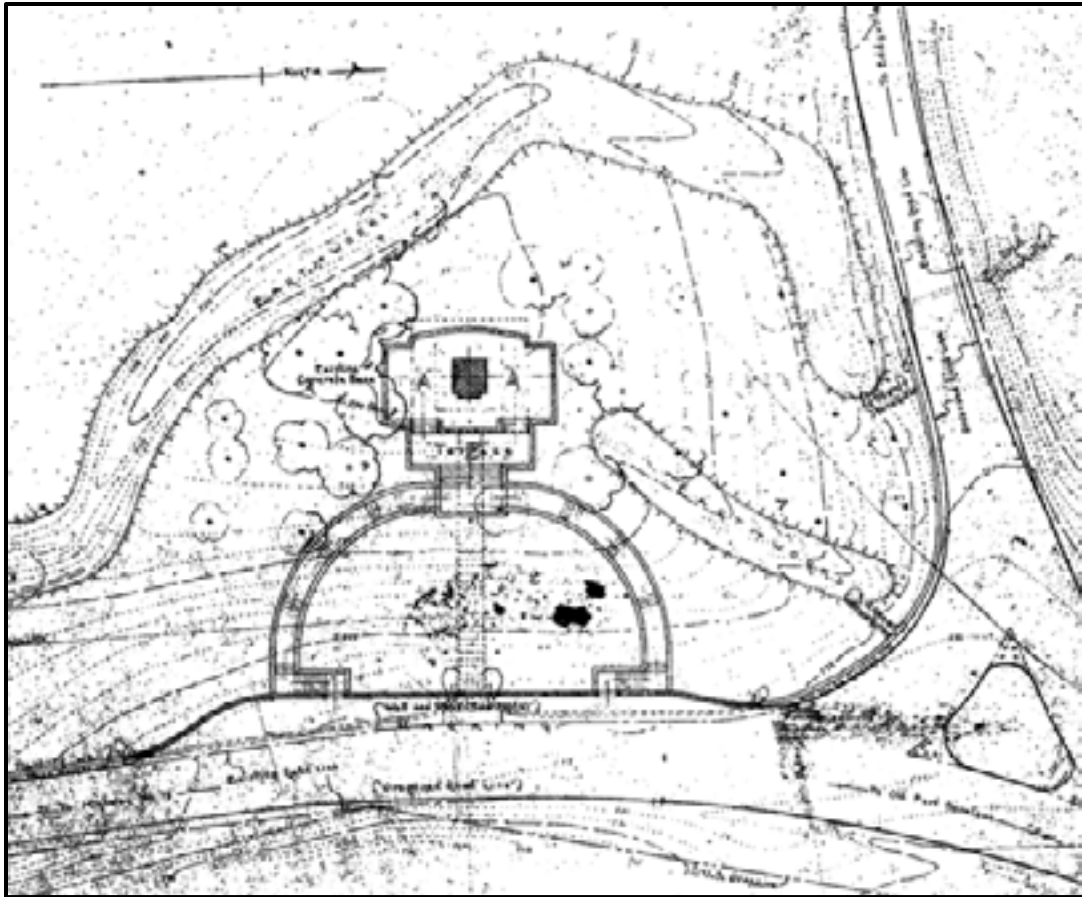


Figure 6.10. Plan showing Proposed UDC Monument Treatment, 1934, NPS.

in labor to improvement of the park's facilities and landscape. A total of 10,404 native trees, shrubs, and vines were planted, including 4,934 inside the park and 5,470 outside the park. A large portion of these plantings were black locust, honeysuckle, and coral berry planted to prevent erosion.⁷⁸⁸

Shortly following the conclusion of the CWA projects, a series of landscape improvement projects were undertaken under the auspices of the PWA and the supervision of Isidore Calber, landscape foreman. Work included repairing and stabilizing areas of erosion along the Fort Donelson earthworks through the planting of Bermuda grass sod and honeysuckle vines. Erosion problems in open

areas along the entrance drive and near French's Battery also were addressed via grading, harrowing, fertilizing, and top-dressing, with honeysuckle planted along the steep hillsides. Additional plantings were limited by the dry conditions experienced in summer 1934, but some of the formal planting schemes installed by the War Department were removed or regrouped in favor of a more natural appearance. Species were selected for their aesthetic qualities or utility in preventing erosion, including 300 redbuds, 411 dogwoods, 106 hollies, 300 locusts, 40 coralberries, 20 sassafras, and 20 mountain laurel.⁷⁸⁹

⁷⁸⁸ "Final Report of Civil Work Program, Fort Donelson National Military Park, Dover, Tennessee," April 26, 1934 (Fort Donelson National Battlefield Archival Collections).

⁷⁸⁹ Isidore Calber, "Fort Donelson National Military Park, Dover, Tennessee, Public Works Program Final Progress Report," August 15, 1934 (Fort Donelson National Battlefield Archival Collections).

PWA Federal Project 467A included construction of the pump house at Fort Donelson National Cemetery (Figure 6.11). Completed June 15, 1935, the single-story, single-room building measured 168 square feet and featured brick construction with a concrete foundation and sheet metal roof. The building contained water system equipment including deep well pumping equipment, shallow well pumping equipment, chlorinating equipment, and dechlorinating equipment. In 1955, the building was converted to a public restroom.⁷⁹⁰

Beginning in the summer of 1935, the roads of Fort Donelson National Military Park were reconstructed under project 1A1 of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Public Roads. The project encompassed 2.767 miles of roadway along Lock Road, Lock Master's Spur, the road on the south side of Highway 76, Wynn's Ferry Road, Eddyville Road, Cemetery Road, and Stewart County Road. The project called for the grading, draining, and surfacing of the roads using 2 inches of mixed-in-place bituminous surface upon an 8-inch thick gravel base course. The contract was awarded to the lower bidder, Carey-Reed Company of Lexington, Kentucky, for a fee of \$91,681.70. Extra work orders and overages brought the total project cost to \$93,210.82. The work was inspected and accepted on August 4, 1936. The final report concluded that "the completion of this contract provides in the Park 2.767 miles of dustless roadway pleasing in grade and alignment and affording the visitors to the Park greater comfort and pleasure in seeking the points of natural beauty and historical significance" (Figure 6.12).⁷⁹¹

⁷⁹⁰ Pump House building record, Sept. 17, 1949
Fort Donelson National Battlefield Archival
Collections, National Cemetery Records, Series 4.

⁷⁹¹ United States Department of Agriculture,
Bureau of Public Roads, *Final Construction
Report, Fort Donelson National Military Park,
Reconstruction of Fort Donelson Roads, Project
1A1, Stewart County, Tennessee, August 1936*
(Fort Donelson National Battlefield Archival
Collections, Resource Management Records
Collection, Series 6: Facility Management

In addition to these physical improvements to the park, early initiatives under the NPS included enhancing visitor experience and historical appreciation of the battlefield. In October 1933, Ronald F. Lee submitted a Historical-Educational Report on Fort Donelson National Military Park that provided an overview of the physical and historical features of the park and recommendations for public outreach and educational programming. The greatest challenges identified in the report were the lack of general public knowledge of Fort Donelson and the lack of well-paved roads accessing the site. To address the former, it recommended "Efforts should be made through state historical societies, through the schools, through patriotic and other organizations, to make the public aware of the interest and importance of Fort Donelson."⁷⁹²

It also recommended coordinating with other battlefield sites, namely Shiloh and Vicksburg, to encourage visitors to make a tour of the three sites that capture much of the essential story of the Civil War's western theater. To address the latter, it recommended soliciting the support of organizations such as the UDC and Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), prominent citizens, and political representatives to attempt to gain public works funding to pave the principal roads approaching Dover from Paris and Nashville.

To service the needs of visitors once they arrived in Dover, the report recommended the need for a more conveniently located park office near the principal intersection in Dover and a small entrance station near the western edge of the park to provide visitors with easier access to information about the park. Literature was recommended to be developed for distribution at these points, including a map with a tourist route and a popular account

Operations, SS 2: Roads, Reconstruction of Fort Donelson Roads, August 1936, Box 2, Folder 7).

⁷⁹² Ronald F. Lee, *Historical- Educational Report on Fort Donelson National Military Park*, (National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior, October 17, 1933), 3.

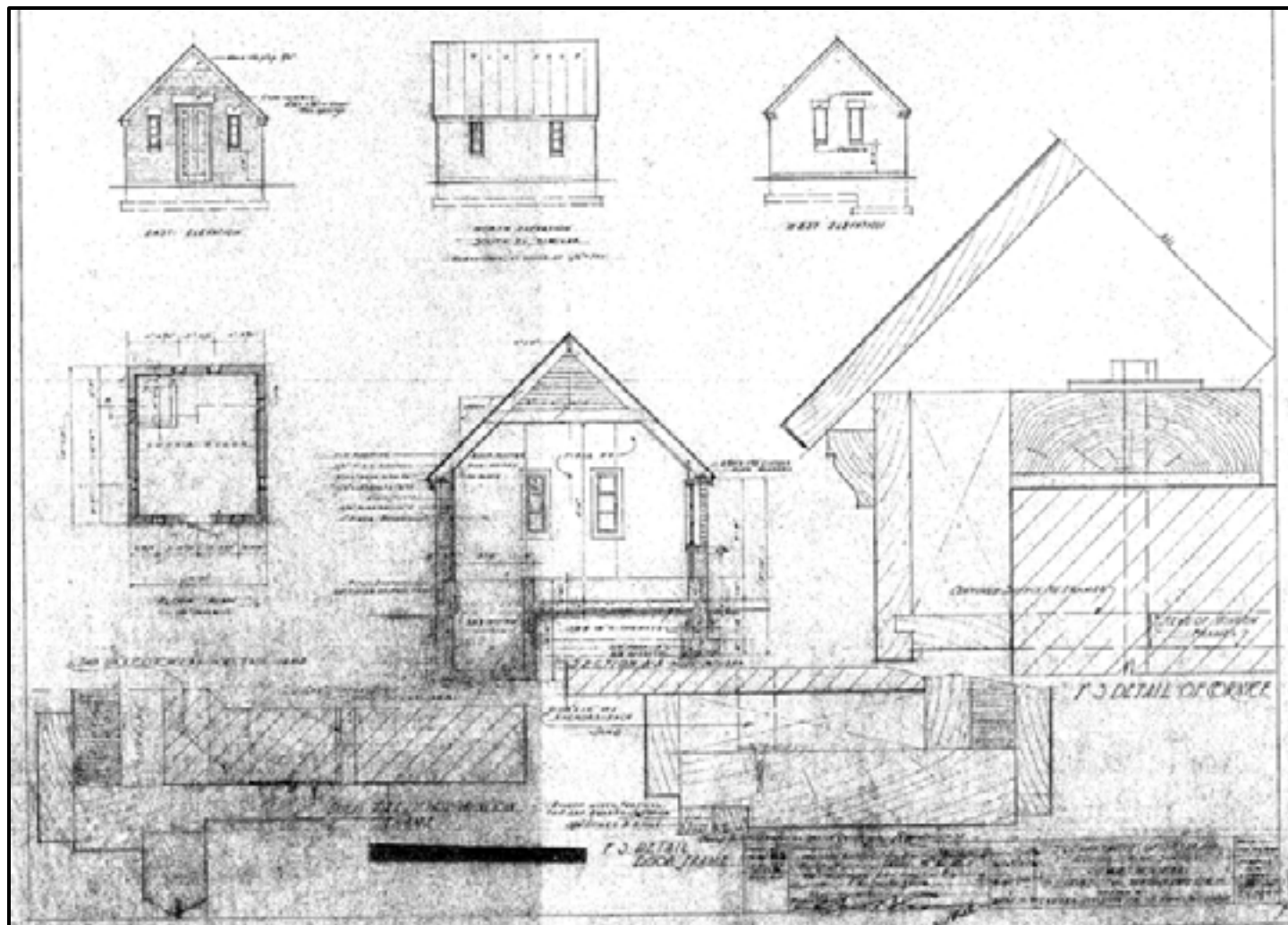


Figure 6.11. Plans for the pump house, 1934, NPS.

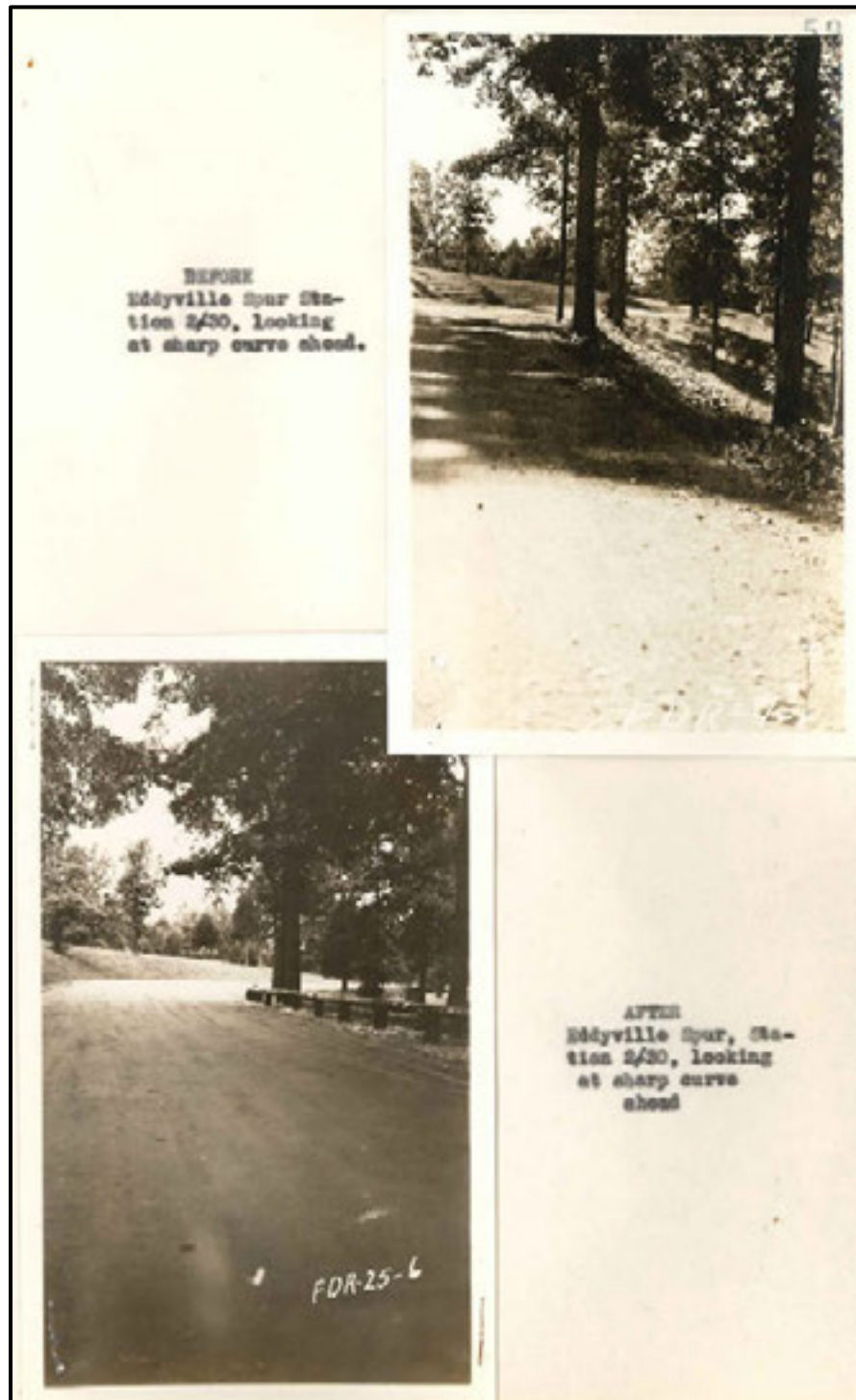


Figure 6.12. Before and after views of Eddyville Spur Road, Final Construction Report Ft. Donelson National Military Park Reconstruction of Ft. Donelson Roads, Project 1A1, 1936, USDA.

of the battle. Guide service and historical talks should be offered. The markers installed throughout the park and the Confederate monument were highly regarded, and the report recommended no need for additional interpretive or commemorative features on the park landscape. The Hobin House (Dover Hotel) was operated by the UDC and provided a suitable museum for Fort Donelson; the addition of a small library was recommended to enhance the park's educational features.⁷⁹³

Following this report, in April 1934, the Office of the Park Historian issued the first Official Guide to Fort Donelson National Military Park. The guide included brief written histories of the park, the battle of Fort Donelson, the national cemetery, the village of Dover, and historic buildings and sites of interest in and around Dover. It also provides directions and a map for a 10.1-mile driving tour of the battlefield. As described in the document, the park offered free guide service seven days a week between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Visitors would find these guides "trained to explain the Fort Donelson campaign and to interpret the historical sites" at the historical office located in the park superintendent's lodge in the national cemetery, where they were also invited to review maps, pictures, and other materials of interest pertaining to the history of the site.⁷⁹⁴

On June 28, 1937, the Senate passed a bill introduced by Sen. Nathan Bachman for the expansion of Fort Donelson National Military Park. It was passed by the House on July 19 and signed by President Roosevelt on August 30, 1937. The bill added 9.18 acres to the park boundary, including the water batteries located on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' property at Lock D. It also authorized the Secretary of the Interior to accept donations of land within 1 mile of the park boundaries, as

well as donations of funds for the purchase and maintenance of park property.⁷⁹⁵

Before the bill was even signed, W.W. Luckett, Junior Historian with Shiloh National Military Park, undertook archaeological investigations of the water battery magazines in anticipation of their restoration. The water battery earthworks were reported to be "in a fine state of preservation," but the magazines were "caved in and now resemble a couple of miniature volcanoes with craters."⁷⁹⁶ Luckett was assigned a crew of four CCC enrollees to study the magazines' original design and construction. The excavated magazine was discovered to be a square room with large base logs located 10 feet 10 inches apart, upon which rested outer timber walls located 12 feet 4 inches in apart. With the timber walls removed, the earthen walls defining the void measured 12 feet 11 inches apart. Luckett recommended restoring the magazine to its original dimensions with concrete walls and ceiling covered by timbers to resemble the original construction.⁷⁹⁷ Work was completed in 1940.

Fort Donelson National Military Park's first master plan was completed by the NPS Branch of Plans and Design in 1940 (Figure 6.13). The plan included several recommendations for land acquisition to protect the park and its viewshed from encroaching development and to incorporate additional land associated with significant troop positions. The plan also proposed several road projects to improve access to and between the park's scattered resources. Significant changes were recommended for the cemetery, including removal of the superintendent's lodge and construction of new staff residences near the intersection of the entrance road and Eddyville Road. This plan never came to fruition; the recommendations regarding land acquisition and road construction also were largely

⁷⁹³ Lee, *Historical- Educational Report*, 4-6.

⁷⁹⁴ Office of the Park Historian, *Official Guide to Fort Donelson National Military Park, Dover, Tennessee*, (United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, April 1934), 1.

⁷⁹⁵ Peterson, *Administrative History*, 67.

⁷⁹⁶ W.W. Luckett, "Water Battery Magazines, Fort Donelson National Military Park," August 21, 1937, 1.

⁷⁹⁷ Luckett, "Water Battery Magazines," 3.

unfulfilled, although some were accomplished in part in later decades. NPS did implement the 1940 cemetery planting plan, adding several native trees in a scheme recalling the plan depicted on the 1892 map of the cemetery.⁷⁹⁸ However, after a decade of significant federal investment in public works and conservation under the New Deal, investment in national parks abruptly halted in late 1941 following the United States' entry in to World War II.

Mission 66 Era Expansion

While investment in national parks and their ongoing maintenance decreased substantially during World War II and remained at unsustainably low levels in the immediate postwar years, park visitorship exploded after the war, placing new strains on the fragile natural and cultural resources under the care of the NPS. As parks became increasingly crowded, littered, and rundown, the public took notice and began to demand action; social critic Bernard DeVoto even suggested closing the parks to the public until funds were appropriate for their proper care. In response, in the mid-1950s NPS Director Conrad Wirth conceived a ten-year program to bring the NPS in to the modern age. Known as Mission 66 in recognition of the park service's upcoming 50-year anniversary in 1966, it "was touted as a program to elevate the parks to modern standards of comfort and efficiency, as well as an attempt to conserve natural resources."⁷⁹⁹ Public surveys indicated that more overnight accommodations and increased interpretive services were high priorities. Investments also would include improvements and new construction of roads, bridges and trails, employee housing, and other public and administrative facilities;

hiring of additional employees; and acquisition of land for future parks.

For both practical and philosophical reasons, Mission 66 embraced a modern architectural aesthetic. Lacking the large pool of inexpensive labor providing the hand craftsmanship necessary to produce the rustic style buildings that proliferated during the New Deal era, the park service developed an architectural vocabulary using economical materials such as steel, concrete, and glass to stretch their limited budget. In designing with these materials, NPS sought to create buildings that were simple and functional, blending in to the park landscape by not drawing attention to themselves. Wirth openly encouraged new approaches to park building design, recognizing that "modern architecture expressed progress, efficiency, health, and innovation – values the park service hoped to embody over the next decade."⁸⁰⁰ As one might expect, the modern architecture promoted under Mission 66 found many critics who were nostalgic for the rustic architecture they had come to expect in national parks and found the new modern structures shocking rather than sympathetic to the park landscape. Nevertheless, the NPS remained committed to a modern architectural aesthetic and widely employed it in the design of a new distinctive building type developed under the Mission 66 program – the visitor center.

The visitor center was a response to the need to more efficiently direct visitor circulation throughout parks, providing a hub where visitors could receive vital information and interpretation at a centralized location that minimized impacts to park resources. Generally including both public services and administrative offices, the buildings typically were designed to blend in to the park landscape through low, horizontal massing defined by flat roofs and projecting flat

⁷⁹⁸ Jaeger Company, *Fort Donelson National Battlefield Cultural Landscape Report*, 78-79.

⁷⁹⁹ Sarah Allaback, "The Origins of Mission 66," *Mission 66 Visitor Centers*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, 2000), accessed April 24, 2019: https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/allaback/vc0.htm.

⁸⁰⁰ Allaback, "Modern Architecture in the Parks," *Mission 66 Visitor Centers*, accessed April 24, 2019: https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/allaback/vc0b.htm.

terraces and material palettes often employing earth-toned stone veneer and textured concrete. While sharing many common features, each visitor center was custom designed by or under the direction of the eastern or western office of design and construction for its specific site. NPS proposed to construct 109 visitor centers under the Mission 66 program, representing not only a significant building campaign but also a major undertaking by NPS historians and interpretive staff to develop new museum displays, audio-visual presentations, and other interpretive programs to occupy these buildings. Such required close coordination among project planners, architects, and interpreters to ensure that the space appropriately met the interpretive goals of the park. Even decisions regarding building location had substantial implications for the interpretive program. At cultural sites and battlefields, historians Roy Appleman and Ronald Lee, for example, “favored siting visitor centers ‘right on top of the resource’ so that visitors could ‘see virtually everything from the visitor center.’”⁸⁰¹

Many Civil War battlefield sites, including Fort Donelson, received new visitor centers during this period. In 1957, Congress passed a joint resolution to commemorate the centennial of the Civil War, authorizing the Secretary of the Interior to “undertake as part of the Mission 66 program the further preservation and development of such battlefield and sites [commemorating the Civil War] at such a time and in such a manner as will insure that a fitting observance may be held at each such battlefield or site as its centennial occurs during the period 1961-1965.”⁸⁰²

Each unit of the NPS, including the Civil War parks and battlefields, developed its own recommendations and plans for needed investments under the Mission 66 program. In

consideration of the demands posed by a growing number of visitors, expected to reach 300,000 annually by 1970,⁸⁰³ proposals for improvements to Fort Donelson included land acquisition to allow NPS to better protect their existing resources and resist encroachment, improvement of the road system to provide a more cohesive driving tour through the park, and – one of the key tenants of the Mission 66 program – construction of a visitor center and additional interpretive exhibits to enhance visitor experience and appreciation of the site and its important role in the history of the Civil War.

This issue of interpretation was central to the discussion. While the park’s original interpretive scheme focused largely on the events of the battle, as described on the War Department tablets, the interpretive plan advanced under Mission 66 placed more emphasis on its causes and the consequences of Union victory, and making the story meaningful and relatable to modern visitors. As stated in the Mission 66 Edition of the Master Plan for the Preservation and Use of Fort Donelson National Military Park, the mission of the park was “to develop among its visitors a realization of the important part Fort Donelson played in shaping the nation’s history, and help him better appreciate the role his ancestors played during the great struggle between Americans, whose only difference was their viewpoint.”⁸⁰⁴

Several tools were proposed to facilitate a self-guided, day-use experience of the park to achieve the stated mission: image- and object-based interpretation in the new visitor center museum, an audio-visual presentation at the visitor center presenting “a clear, interesting, and fast moving narrative of the action,” dissemination of printed materials at the

⁸⁰¹ Allaback, “The Visitor Center,” *Mission 66 Visitor Centers*, accessed April 24, 2019: https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/allaback/vc0e.htm.

⁸⁰² Peterson, *Administrative History*, 86.

⁸⁰³ *Master Plan for the Preservation and Use of Fort Donelson National Military Park, Mission 66 Edition* (work copy), National Park Service, n.d., 5 (Fort Donelson National Battlefield Archival Collections, Resource Management Record Collection, Series 1: Administrative Records, Subseries 1: Planning Documents, Box 1).

⁸⁰⁴ *Master Plan, Mission 66 Edition* (work copy), National Park Service, n.d.,.

visitor center, increased staffing including at least one historian and one information receptionist available at all times, carefully-selected placement of new trailside and roadside markers to enhance the information presented in the tablets and provide a more cohesive story, and acquisition and operation of the Dover Hotel as a historic house museum.⁸⁰⁵ While major developments at the park in the late 1950s and early 1960s enabled significant advancements in several of these areas, the reexamination and improvements of interpretive programs at the park was ongoing (Figure 6.14).

Following an unsuccessful effort to pass legislation authorizing the expansion of the park in 1953, the new enthusiasm behind the Mission 66 program and preparations for the Civil War Centennial provided a more favorable political environment for passage of such a bill in 1960. Introduced by Senators Albert Gore and Estes Kefauver, the bill allowed for the expansion of the park through land purchase or donation of up to 500 acres; authorized the park to accept donation of the Dover Hotel and restore it for public interpretation; and, upon acquisition of the additional acreage, changed the name of the park from Fort Donelson National Military Park to Fort Donelson National Battlefield. Support for land acquisition was bolstered by the Army Corps of Engineers plans to acquire land in the vicinity associated with the Barkley Dam project on the Cumberland River. The government felt it could benefit from a cooperative purchase of lands by the two agencies, with the Army controlling lands below the 369 contour elevation and the Department of the Interior controlling lands above that mark. A House amendment to the

bill appropriated \$226,000 for the purchase and improvement of land. It was passed by Congress in late August 1960 and signed by President Eisenhower on September 8, 1960. Transfer of the Dover Hotel, a longtime goal of many, was formalized during a short ceremony on April 6, 1961, when the deed was passed from the Fort Donelson Historical Association to the NPS. The Barkley Dam project was authorized by Congress in 1954 and construction began in 1958. Lock D was demolished in 1965 and a year later, Barkley Dam was completed, submerging the remains of the lock. The developed areas of the Lock D property were transferred from the Army to the park in 1967.⁸⁰⁶

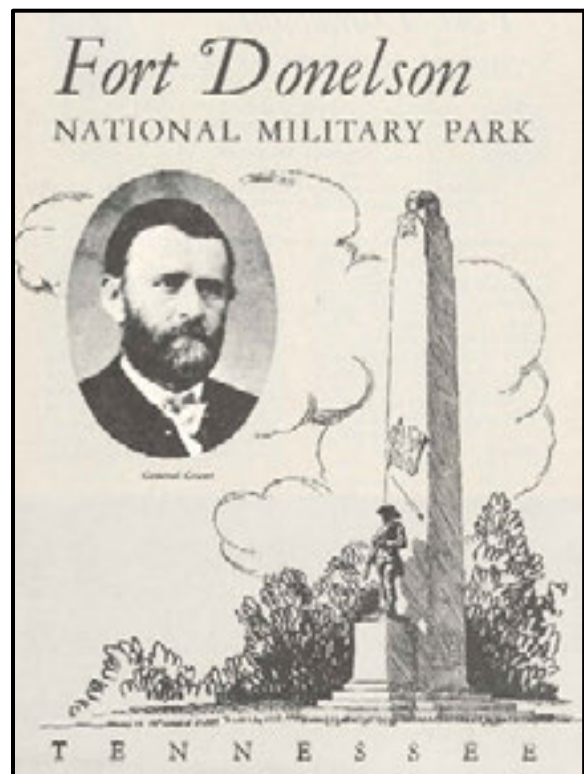


Figure 6.14. Brochure for Fort Donelson National Military Park, 1962, Fort Donelson National Battlefield Collections.

⁸⁰⁵ Peterson, *Administrative History*, 86-88; Benjamin Franklin Cooling, III, Park Historian, "Amendment to Interpretive Prospectus for Fort Donelson National Military Park," (U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1963), 9, 12 (Fort Donelson National Battlefield Archival Collections, Resource Management Record Collection, Series 2: Interpretation Subseries 1: Documents/Planning, Interpretive Prospectus 1963, Box 1, Folder 1).

⁸⁰⁶ Peterson, *Administrative History*, 89-95; R.G. Hopper, Superintendent, Monthly Narrative Report, April 1961, (Fort Donelson National Military Park, May 6, 1961) (Fort Donelson National Battlefield Archival Collections.).

Meanwhile, physical improvements to the park under the auspices of the Mission 66 program began in 1958. Such included upgrades to park utilities and infrastructure, as well as improvements to visitor facilities. The first major construction project authorized was the construction of a new utility building at the national cemetery. In June, the NPS let a contract to Brigham Hardware of Dover for \$17,732.05. Work began in July, and following some delays caused by difficulty obtaining the needed materials, the building was completed on March 3, 1959.⁸⁰⁷

During this period, NPS made other changes to the national cemetery aimed at improving the visitor experience. In 1955 the public restrooms were removed from the carriage house and installed in the nearby pump house. This move allowed park staff to consider how to best utilize the carriage house building. Given the park's long-recognized need for better interpretive services, in 1959 the building was converted in to a new office for park staff and a visitor contact station for both the cemetery and battlefield, with the center section of the building containing a relief model of the battlefield and other exhibits previously housed in the cramped lodge. When the new park visitor center opened a few years later, assuming the primary role of historical interpretation for the park, the carriage house became a visitor shelter with displays specific to the cemetery.⁸⁰⁸

The visitor center was the most visible and significant addition to Fort Donelson National Military Park under Mission 66. Work began in the late 1950s, with the goal of completing the building before the battle's centennial in 1962. As approved by the director of the NPS on October 2, 1958, the building was located on a rise above the main park entrance. The Eastern Office of Design and Construction (EODC) designed the visitor center using the contemporary materials and design aesthetic that were hallmarks of Mission 66 buildings.

Like other visitor centers of the period, it included space for visitor contact, interpretive displays, audio visual presentations, an observation deck, and public restrooms, as well as administrative offices. Revisions to the original design, based largely on the recommendations of Acting Regional Director E.M. Lisle, broke from the typical Mission 66 model. The historian's office was moved from the basement (administrative level) to the main lobby (visitor services level), and the restrooms were moved downstairs. An exterior ramp to the observation deck was replaced by an interior staircase (Figure 6.15). The resulting design was less visitor-friendly, particularly for older patrons, leaving some dissatisfied, and proving an accessibility and safety risk for visitors and staff for decades to follow. Nevertheless, in a push to complete work by the centennial, the design was approved and in spring 1960 NPS issued a contract for \$133,224 for the building's construction to Frank Barrett of Paris, Tennessee. Construction began August 19, 1960 and ended October 28, 1961. Landscaping surrounding the building incorporated an existing stand of oak trees to the south and east; a variety of new native canopy and ornamental trees including oaks, redbuds, dogwoods, serviceberry, and hornbeam along the walkways and parking lot to the west; and foundation plantings including native winterberry, St. Johnswort, and blueberry, as well as Korean boxwood (Figure 6.16). The visitor center formally opened to the public during the ceremonies marking the centennial of the Battle of Fort Donelson on February 16, 1962.⁸⁰⁹

Recent Changes and Additions

The NPS pursued an "adaptive restoration" of the Dover Hotel in 1977. The goal of the project was to provide "a building

⁸⁰⁷ Peterson, *Administrative History*, 1968, 95-96.

⁸⁰⁸ Opperman, *Fort Donelson Cemetery Carriage House/Stable & Pump House*, 25-26.

⁸⁰⁹ Peterson, *Administrative History*, 96-97; Cynthia Walton, Historian, Fort Donelson National Battlefield Visitor Center National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, March 12, 2010, Section 8, 11-14.

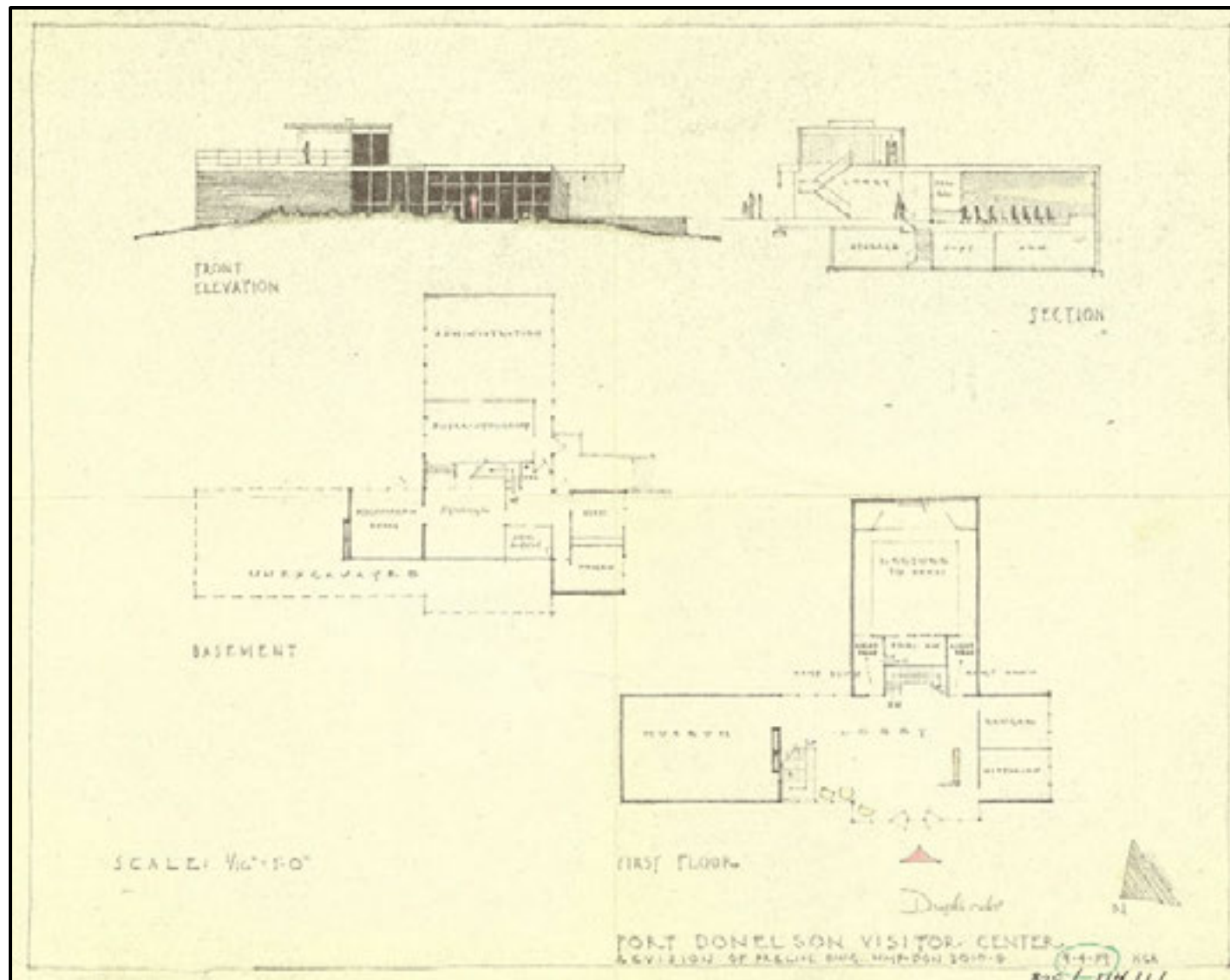


Figure 6.15. Revised plans for the Fort Donelson Visitor Center, 1959, NPS.

suitable for employee quarters, storage areas and contact for visitors to Fort Donelson National Military Park that wish to visit the site of the Confederate's first surrender to Gen. U.S. Grant."⁸¹⁰ Work included removing additions and changes made during the 1928–1930 restoration; removing the stone foundation and replacing it with reinforced concrete footings and foundation walls veneered with the original stone; excavating for a mechanical room in the basement; rebuilding the chimneys with reinforced concrete cores; reinforcing the existing wood framing; installing a new cedar shake roof; putting in new electrical, HVAC, plumbing, security, and fire protection systems; and painting and plastering the interior.⁸¹¹ Progress was slow, with the contractor, Moretti Construction, Inc., complaining of severe winter weather and lack of qualified local craftsmen. The project was completed in 1979. An inspection of the building in 1991 found that it retained only 10–20 percent historic materials, including those dating to the 1928–1930 restoration.⁸¹² The 2015 cultural landscape report for Fort Donelson found that none of the remaining historic fabric conveys the building's historical and cultural importance associated with its use during the Civil War.⁸¹³ Subsequent work around the Dover Hotel included acquisition and removal of two adjacent properties to provide additional room for parking, circulation, and wayside exhibits.⁸¹⁴ In 2000, the park secured

approval for operation of an Eastern National store in the Dover Hotel to sell interpretive items related to the fort and its history.⁸¹⁵ New interpretive exhibits were installed in 2011. The exhibits employ interactive audio-visual aids and first person accounts to explore the events preceding the Battle of Fort Donelson, the battle itself, and its aftermath.⁸¹⁶ A film documenting the history of the building and the 1862 Confederate surrender at Fort Donelson is the latest addition to the interpretive facilities at the Dover Hotel. The film premiered in 2016, replacing the original film that remains a topical "cult classic."⁸¹⁷

Land acquisition initiatives begun during the 1960s continued through the late twentieth century. With several sections of the historic battlefield still held by private owners and, in some instances, developed for residential use, the acquisition of adjacent properties was one of the park's primary objectives of the period. Management Objectives reports and Master Plans from the 1970s and 1980s cite the purchase and restoration of these lands as a means of preventing intrusive future development, enhancing interpretive efforts, and preserving the historic continuity of the park.⁸¹⁸ Between 1960 and 1978, the NPS purchased and added 384 acres of land to the park and during the late 1970s and early 1980s, they turned their attention to eleven adjacent properties along the north side of Cedar Street between Highway 76/Highway

⁸¹⁰ Completion Report, Adaptive Restoration of the Dover Hotel, Fort Donelson National Military Park, (Dover, Tennessee: National Park Service, 1977), 2.

⁸¹¹ Fact Sheet for Completion Report, Adaptive Restoration of the Dover Hotel, Fort Donelson National Military Park, (Dover, Tennessee: National Park Service, 1977).

⁸¹² Center for Architectural Conservation, *Historic Structure Assessment Report, Dover Hotel Building HS-10/86, Fort Donelson National Battlefield*, (Atlanta: Georgia Institute of Technology, 1991), 6.

⁸¹³ Jaeger Company, *Fort Donelson National Battlefield Cultural Landscape Report*, 4.

⁸¹⁴ Jaeger Company, *Fort Donelson National Battlefield Cultural Landscape Report*, 92.

⁸¹⁵ *Fort Donelson National Battlefield Superintendent's Annual Narrative Report FY 2000*, (Dover: National Park Service, 2000), 3.

⁸¹⁶ Pacific Studio, Inc., *Dover Hotel Exhibits, Fort Donelson National Battlefield, Schematic Design* (Seattle: Pacific Studio, Inc. 2010); Pacific Studio, Inc., *Dover Hotel Exhibit Installation Schedule, January 7, 2011* (Seattle: Pacific Studio, Inc., 2011).

⁸¹⁷ Aperture Films, Ltd., *Dover Hotel Production: Technical Proposal* (Newport Beach, California: Aperture Films, Ltd., 2012).

⁸¹⁸ E.J. Pratt, *Management Objectives: Fort Donelson National Military Park and Cemetery* (Dover: National Park Service, 1974.), 9; *Master Plan for the Preservation and Use of Fort Donelson National Military Park: Mission 66 Edition* (Dover: National Park Service, n.d.), 1-8.

79 and Main Street. A restaurant located in a converted gas station near the main entrance to the park on Highway 79, a long-standing interruption to the park's visual landscape, and two houses near the Dover Hotel were also acquired from private owners. The houses were later demolished and over the next few years, the NPS systematically sold and removed all of the remaining residences located on park-owned property with the intent of restoring each lot to its historic appearance.⁸¹⁹

Through a project initiated by the Tennessee Department of Transportation in the early 1970s and completed in the 1980s, the state realigned Highway 76/Highway 79 in the vicinity of the park. Near the cemetery, the new alignment departed from the historic road connecting the cemetery to Dover, carrying traffic to the south and bypassing the cemetery entrance. At the main park entrance, the alignment also moved south, requiring reconfiguration of that intersection and burial of a portion of the east section of limestone wall installed by the War Department in this area.⁸²⁰ The project required the right-of-way acquisition of park-owned land near the existing entrance and, in exchange, the state agreed to purchase and donate matching acreage adjacent to the park. The realignment project also resulted in the construction of a new entrance to connect the park to the improved highway.⁸²¹

In 2003, the NPS completed a Boundary Adjustment Study for Fort Donelson National Battlefield as part of a larger initiative focused on the management, preservation, and interpretation of historic resources along the Vicksburg Campaign Trail. The study stemmed from the ongoing concern that land

acquisition was needed not only to protect additional resources associated with the battle of Fort Donelson, but also to tell the larger story of the three forts – Henry, Heiman, and Donelson – that each played a role in the Union's penetration up the Cumberland and Tennessee Rivers, opening corridors for attacking Confederate strongholds. At Fort Donelson, the park protected only approximately 20 percent of the land associated with the battle, and most of this was made up of Confederate earthworks, focusing interpretation on Confederate military operations at Fort Donelson. At Fort Henry, the key lands were already federally owned by the USDA Forest Service, but additional coordination was needed between the USFS and the NPS to improve interpretation of the site and highlight its relationship to Fort Donelson. At Fort Heiman, the land was unprotected, leaving fragile resources vulnerable and missing out on the opportunity to tell a more complete story of the Civil War, including the battles of Fort Henry (1862), Fort Donelson (1862), and Johnsonville (1864).⁸²²

The preferred alternative identified by the study recommended acquiring ten properties located in the core area at Fort Donelson and key lands at Fort Heiman, while leaving Fort Henry under USDA Forest Service management. At Fort Donelson, property was judged eligible for acquisition if it was located within the core area of the battlefield, as defined by the American Battlefield Protection Program; retained a high degree of integrity; and owned by a willing seller. The study identified ten properties grouped in five distinct areas meeting these criteria:

- the Smith's Attack Parcel, located west of the main park entrance, where Union forces took the Confederate earthworks and gained control of their right flank;
- the Freedman's Camp parcel, located south of the national cemetery, where formerly enslaved African Americans came seeking the

⁸¹⁹ Jaeger Company, *Fort Donelson National Battlefield Cultural Landscape Report*, 93–94.

⁸²⁰ Jaeger Company, *Fort Donelson National Battlefield Cultural Landscape Report*, 93.

⁸²¹ Tennessee Department of Transportation and the United States Department of the Interior, *Environmental Assessment: State Route 76 (U.S. 79) Improvement in the Vicinity of Fort Donelson National Military Park, Dover (Stewart County), Tennessee* (n.p., 1980), 3.

⁸²² *Fort Donelson National Battlefield, Boundary Adjustment Study and Environmental Assessment*, (National Park Service, 2003), 1-1.

protection of the Union Army following the battle;

- the Wynns Ferry Road Parcel (Union Reorganization Unit), located south of said road, from which Grant rallied the troops and Wallace's men were deployed to stop a Confederate offensive, ultimately leading to Union victory;
- the French's Battery and Erin Hollow Parcel, located south of the outer Confederate earthworks, which was the scene of the Confederate charge at Wallace's position and subsequent withdrawal of Confederate forces; and
- the Forge Road Parcel (Confederate Breakout Unit), located south and east of said road, which saw some of the heaviest fighting and most significant casualties of the battle.⁸²³

Acquisition of these parcels, the study concluded, would significantly increase the park's protection of significant historic resources within the core area of the battlefield and enhance visitor experience by allowing for the telling of a more complete account of the battle. In 2004, the Fort Donelson National Battlefield Boundary Expansion Act (Public Law 108-367) revised the park boundary to include the existing footprint of Fort Donelson and any associated lands purchased for administration by the NPS, including the National Cemetery and Fort Heiman. The act includes provision for the continued protection and interpretation of Fort Henry and other resources associated with Fort Donelson located in the Land Between the Lakes National Recreational Area and authorized the acquisition, by purchase from "willing sellers, by donation, or by exchange," of land within the current boundaries of Fort Donelson National Battlefield, as well as property outside the park determined to be associated with the battlefield in order protect "critical resources associated with the Battle of Fort Donelson in 1862 and the Union campaign

that resulted in the capture of the Fort."⁸²⁴ Further, the act allowed for the acquisition of lands for public benefit and enjoyment, including the protection of viewsheds. It also increased the limits to the total area of the park to 2,000 acres.⁸²⁵

Efforts to preserve Fort Heiman began in the early 2000s with the intent to purchase the site and the associated earthworks for incorporation into Fort Donelson National Battlefield. In September 2003, the Commonwealth of Kentucky and the Calloway County Fiscal Court acquired approximately 180 acres at the Fort Heiman site with funds from the Office of Kentucky Nature Preserves' Heritage Land Conservation Fund and a federal grant from the Transportation Enhancement Fund administered through the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet.⁸²⁶ Over the next few years, 43 additional properties were purchased from private owners and as of 2012, only four parcels associated with the fort remain in private ownership.⁸²⁷ The Fort Heiman site

⁸²⁴ *Fort Donelson National Boundary Expansion Act*, Public Law 108-367, October 25, 2004, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/108th-congress/senate-bill/524/titles> (accessed May 5, 2019).

⁸²⁵ *Fort Donelson National Boundary Expansion Act*, Public Law 108-367, October 25, 2004, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/108th-congress/senate-bill/524/titles> (accessed May 5, 2019).

⁸²⁶ Subcommittee on National Parks of the Senate Committee on Energy and National Resources, *Boundaries of Fort Donelson Battlefield; Establish the Congaree Swamp National Park, Harry S. Truman Statue; And Boundaries of Harpers Ferry National Park*, 108th Congress, 1st sess., October 2, 2003, 6–15, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-108shrg90951/html/CHRG-108shrg90951.htm> (accessed May 8, 2019); National Park Service, *Cultural Landscapes Inventory: Fort Heiman, Fort Donelson National Battlefield* (Dover: National Park Service, 2012) 26.

⁸²⁷ Jaeger Company, *Fort Donelson National Battlefield Cultural Landscape Report*, 95; National Park Service, *Cultural Landscapes Inventory: Fort Heiman, Fort Donelson National Battlefield*, 45.

⁸²³ *Fort Donelson National Battlefield, Boundary Adjustment Study and Environmental Assessment*, 1-23 to 1-28.

was donated to the NPS for inclusion in the battlefield in 2006, an act enabled by the 2004 boundary expansion. Since its inclusion in the park, a limestone entrance sign, a split rail fence, and interpretive signs and exhibits have been added to the site.⁸²⁸ The Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation completed a rehabilitation in 2010, including tree removal and the introduction of turf grass, in an effort to stabilize the earthworks.⁸²⁹ Three non-historic structures, consisting of two concrete block buildings and a poured concrete pad, were removed from the site in 2012.⁸³⁰

Following the preservation of Fort Heiman, the NPS and other interested parties continued to pursue the acquisition of properties associated with the battlefield. In 2008, Calloway County transferred 12.71 additional acres on the north side of Klein Trail near Fort Heiman to the NPS.⁸³¹ A 2005 Superintendent's Narrative Report notes that the Civil War Trust acquired and was holding in trust approximately 100 acres contiguous to the park boundary and was in the process of purchasing 115 acres of "prime battlefield."⁸³² Between 2010 and 2012, NPS utilized transportation enhancement funding to purchase from the Trust approximately 305 acres of battlefield for inclusion in Fort Donelson. The properties, located south and east of the main fortifications, include the Forge Road (173 acres), Wynn's Ferry Road (60.48 acres), French Battery and Erin Hollow (53 acres), and Smith's Attack (16.8 acres)

parcels. These tracts contain the locations of battles associated with Fort Donelson and other cultural resources, including remnants of the Forge Road and potential archaeological sites.⁸³³ The Pulley tract, comprising the northeastern-most corner of the Union Reorganization Unit, was added in 2014, and the Jones tract, completing acquisition of Dudley Hill and adding more of the historic Forge Road, was acquired circa 2017.⁸³⁴ In 2017, the Tennessee Historical Commission and the Civil War Trust received Battlefield Land Acquisition grants, funded through the American Battlefield Protection Program of the Land and Water Conservation Fund, to purchase a 4.25-acre and a 38.97-acre property to add to the battlefield. More recently, in April 2018, the Trust and the Tennessee Historical Commission received a similar grant to acquire 11.18 acres of land for inclusion in Fort Donelson National Battlefield.⁸³⁵

⁸²⁸ Jaeger Company, *Fort Donelson National Battlefield Cultural Landscape Report*, 95–96.

⁸²⁹ National Park Service, *Cultural Landscapes Inventory: Fort Heiman, Fort Donelson National Battlefield*, 2.

⁸³⁰ Jaeger Company, *Fort Donelson National Battlefield Cultural Landscape Report*, 96.

⁸³¹ Chief of the Land Resources Program Center, Southeast Region to Superintendent of Fort Donelson National Battlefield and Cemetery, "Memorandum," June 30, 2008 (Fort Donelson National Battlefield Archival Collections).

⁸³² Chief of the Land Resources Program Center, Southeast Region to Superintendent of Fort Donelson National Battlefield and Cemetery, "Memorandum," June 30, 2008 ((Fort Donelson National Battlefield Archival Collections).

⁸³³ Jaeger Company, *Fort Donelson National Battlefield Cultural Landscape Report*, 182–188.

⁸³⁴ Personal communication, Fort Donelson National Battlefield Superintendent Brian K. McCutchen, March 2, 2020.

⁸³⁵ National Park Service, "President Trump's Salary and Matching Funds to Restore Antietam National Battlefield," Press release, (July 5, 2017), <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1207/07-05-2017-abpp-grants.htm> (accessed May 9, 2019); "14 Acres of Civil War Battlefields in Tennessee Protected by NPS Grants," WRCB, April 27, 2018, <https://www.wrcbtv.com/story/38061101/14-acres-of-civil-war-battlefields-in-tennessee-protected-by-nps-grants> (accessed May 9, 2019).

Chapter 7. Historic Resources

Civil War-Era Resources

1. Fort Donelson and Associated Resources

Fort Donelson and all of the resources described below: Fort Donelson, Upper River Battery, reconstructed Lower River Battery, the three extant gun platforms of the 1862 Lower River Battery, Outer Defenses, Maney's battery, French's battery, the Reconstructed Powder Magazine and the Federal Defenses, are listed with national significance in the 1976 Fort Donelson National Military Park and Cemetery NRHP Nomination or the 1996 Fort Donelson National Battlefield (Additional Documentation) NRHP Nomination (Figure 7.1).

The extant earthworks are listed under Criterion A for their association with the American Civil War, specifically the Union victory at the Battle of Fort Donelson; Criterion B for their association with Brig. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant; and Criterion C as excellent examples of Civil War earthworks. The Reconstructed Powder Magazine is also listed under these criteria as an outstanding example of Civil War magazine construction.

The Union victory at the Battle of Fort Donelson opened the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers to the Union navy, precipitated the fall of Nashville and, ultimately, the Confederate retreat from Middle and West Tennessee. Brig. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant won promotion and recognition for his military ability, launching his career as the most successful Union general of the Civil War.

1a. Fort Donelson

CRIS-HS Resource ID: 007166

Construction date: 1861–1862

Current NRHP Status: Contributing

Recommended NRHP Status: Contributing

Figures: 7.3–7.5

The State of Tennessee began constructing Fort Donelson in late spring 1861 and the Confederate army finished it in early 1862. Constructed of earth, the fort is irregularly shaped with bastions on the northeast and south sides. When finished, the walls of the fort were over 3,900 feet long, ten feet high, ten feet wide at their base, and enclosed approximately fifteen acres. The interior of Fort Donelson is a ravine or “bowl. The fortification enclosed 400 canvas-covered log huts capable of housing three regiments of infantry. The earthwork served as a secondary defensive position and never came under attack by Union forces during the February 11–16, 1862 battle. The only shells to strike the fort were unintentional over-shots from Union ironclad gunboats. The main armament for the defense of the Cumberland River was not mounted on the walls of this fort; it mounted field artillery but no fixed heavy guns. Fort Donelson was abandoned after the surrender; Fort Donelson was abandoned after the surrender. Union forces never used the position, and burned the log huts during the abandonment. The only documented work undertaken at the fort after the battle was in 1934, when the walls were repaired as part of a public works project.

The earthen fort is in good condition and is an excellent example of a Civil War earthwork. The ditches in front and back of the parapet and several gun emplacements are clearly visible. As with almost all of the earthworks at Fort Donelson National Battlefield, the ditches outside of the earthen walls on the downslope portion of the fort are being eroded by water as they serve as

conduits for runoff. There are blowouts caused by tree falls in several places along the parapet (top of the wall). Some of the larger trees growing on the earthwork could and probably should be removed. Some animal burrows were also noted along the walls of the fort. However, overall the earthen fortification retains excellent integrity and are recommended as contributing resources to Fort Donelson National Battlefield.

1b. Upper River Battery

CRIS-HS Resource ID: 007165

Construction date: 1861–1862

Current NRHP Status: Contributing

Recommended NRHP Status: Contributing

Figures: 7.6–7.8

The Upper River Battery was a semi-circular, seventy-yard-long earthwork with embrasures mounting three guns: A 6.5-inch rifle and two 32-pounder carronades. Sandbags around the embrasures protected the artillery and gunners. The battery also had a powder magazine. The Union fleet, four ironclad and two timberclad gunboats, attacked both Confederate river batteries on February 14, 1862. The Confederate artillery here and at the Lower River Battery defeated the Union fleet, severely damaging two vessels and forcing all six to retreat. Unlike Fort Henry, which fell to the Union fleet, Fort Donelson's heavy guns proved that ironclad boats could be defeated by shore batteries.

The Upper River Battery was damaged some time ago by the construction of the parking area and road, impacting some 20 feet of the river battery's west wall. The appearance of the reconstructed Upper Water Battery is marred by the stone stairs that provide access to it from the river side; though these are necessary to get visitors back to the road and parking area. Like all of the features on slopes at the park, this one is subject to erosion from water runoff. Water from the road flowing across the battery area has caused some damage. The powder magazine, though collapsed and eroded, is still visible between the battery and the road. Three guns

on seacoast mounts interpret the battery's original function. Though somewhat eroded, the Upper River Battery retains good integrity and is clearly identifiable as a Civil War gun battery. The Upper River Battery continues to be recommended as a contributing resource to Fort Donelson National Battlefield.

1c. Lower River Battery

CRIS-HS Resource ID: 090301

Construction date: 1861–1862

Current NRHP Status: Contributing

Recommended NRHP Status: Contributing

Figures: 7.9–7.11

The Lower River Battery was originally constructed of earth, sod and logs. Near the time of the February 14, 1862 engagement sandbags were added to further protect the guns and artillerists. The bottom of the parapet was originally about sixteen feet thick. The approximately 150-yard long battery was constructed in a straight line. In February 1862, the Lower Battery mounted nine guns: one Columbiad and eight 32-pounder smooth-bore cannons on seacoast mounts. There were no embrasures—notches cut in the wall for the gun to shoot through. The guns in the battery were en barbette, meaning exposed on top of the fort's walls. Each gun was separated by a traverse (an earthen barrier perpendicular to the battery). The Lower River Battery engaged Union gunboats twice. The U.S.S. *Carondelet* attacked the batteries on February 13 and the next day the Union fleet—four ironclad and two timberclad gunboats—attacked both river batteries. On each occasion Confederate artillery here and at the Upper River Battery defeated the Union gunboats. During the February 14 attack the batteries severely damaged two vessels and forced all six gunboats to retreat.

In 1983 an archaeological investigation was undertaken to determine the depth of the original floor and parapet of the battery below the current ground surface. The reconstruction would restore the gun position to its 1862 elevation. To accomplish this, any overburden would have to be removed.

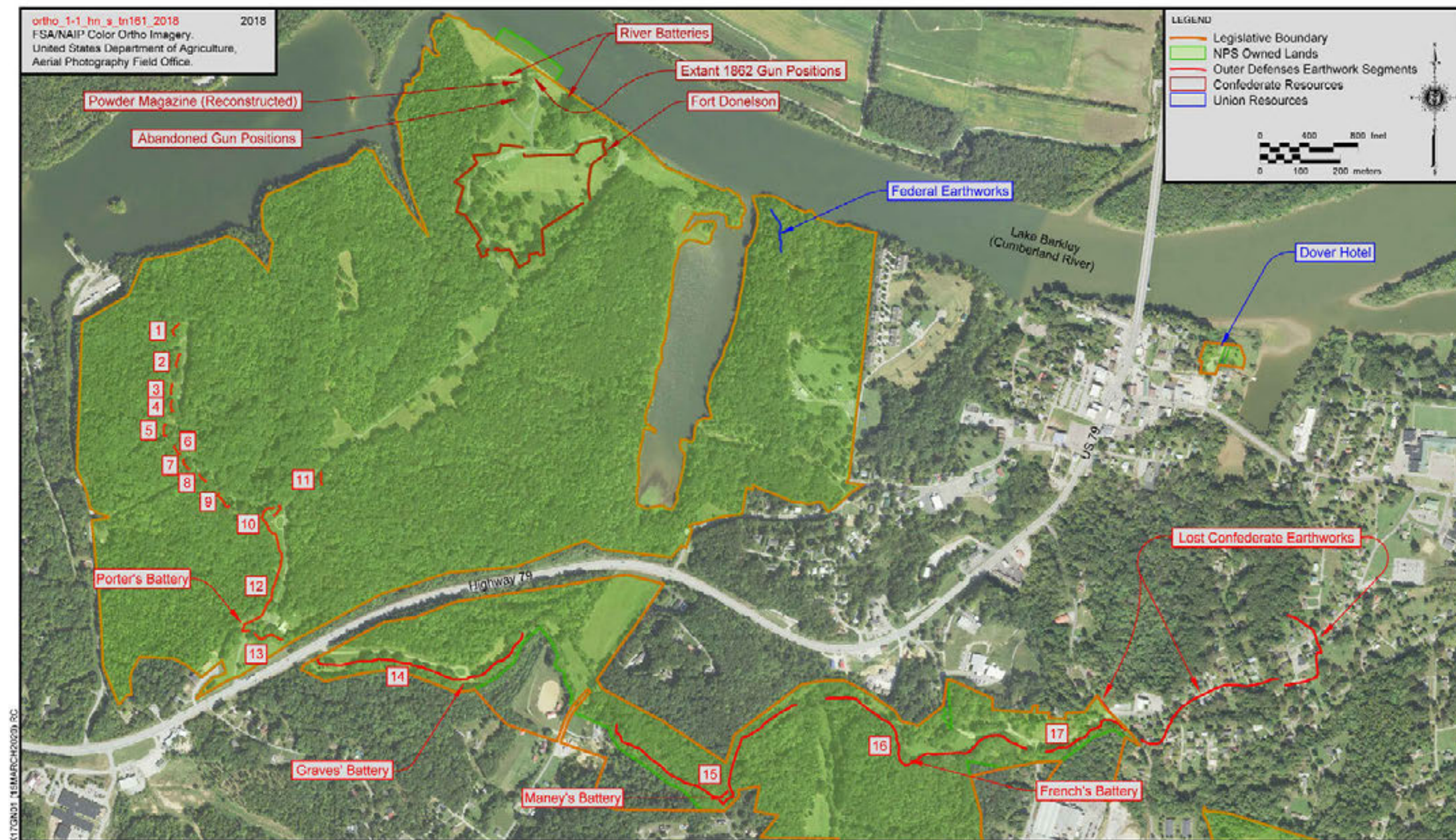


Figure 7.1. Aerial photograph showing Civil War-era resources associated with Fort Donelson and the community of Dover.

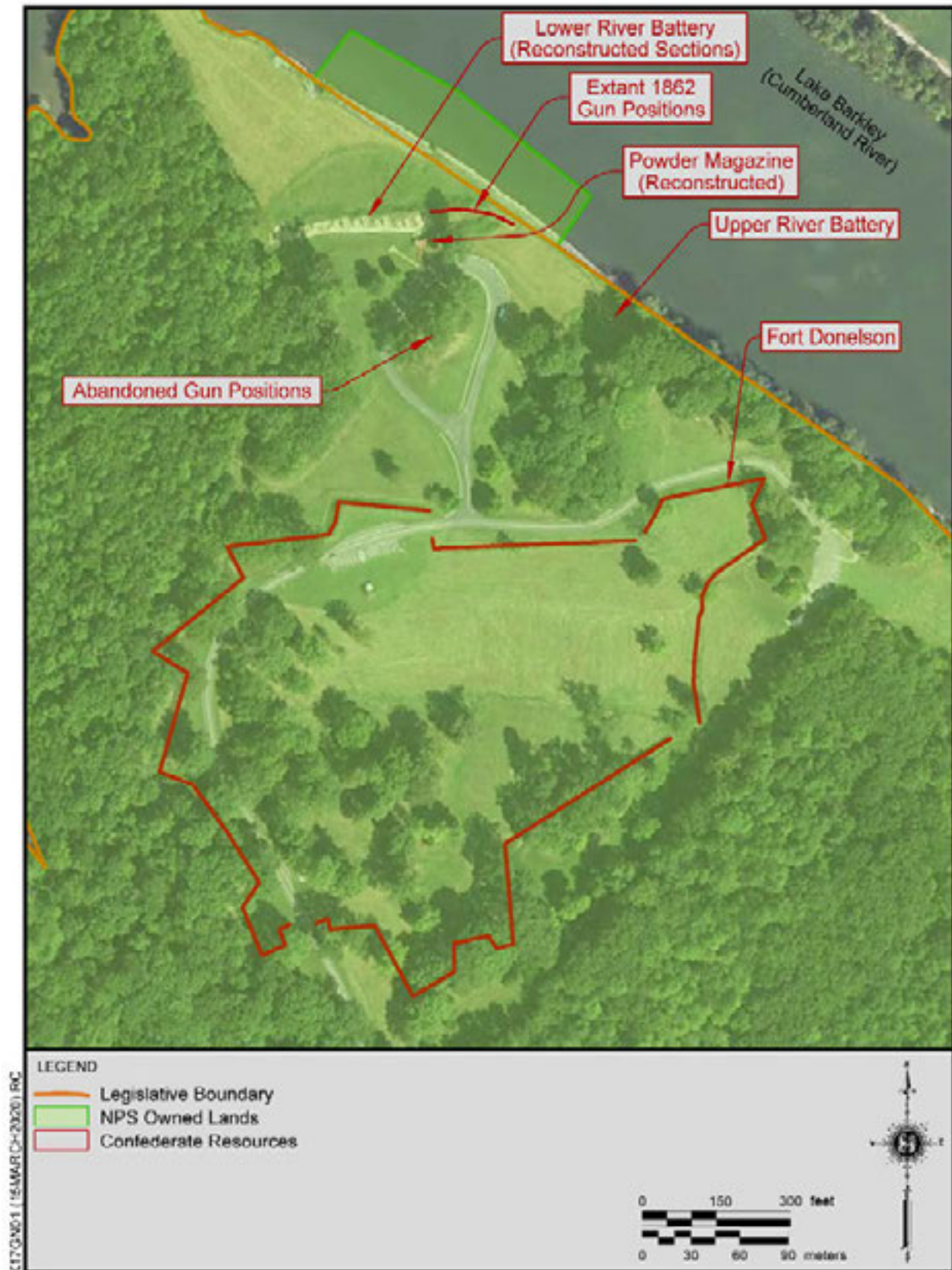


Figure 7.2. Aerial photograph providing a detailed view of Fort Donelson and the River Batteries.



Figure 7.3. Fort Donelson parapet on downward slope showing depth of ditch and trees on berm.



Figure 7.4. Gun emplacement on main fortification.



Figure 7.5. Wall of Fort Donelson near Fort Donelson Park Road at the top of the ridge.



Figure 7.6. Upper River Battery with interpretive elements.



Figure 7.7. The limestone steps in the earthwork of the Upper River battery.



Figure 7.8. The collapsed powder magazine; erosion caused by runoff is clearly visible.



Figure 7.9. Lower River Battery showing ditch behind the retaining wall created by runoff.

Archaeological testing of gun position No. 7 revealed that the floor of the gun position was 42 inches below ground surface. A second test to locate the parapet found that it was also approximately 42 inches below ground surface. According to the archaeological report, the soil covering the gun position was the result of natural erosion and the NPS bringing in soil to fill eroded areas.⁸³⁶

The archaeologist determined “that reconstruction and interpretation would best be served if the gun position were not excavated to its original level but were reconstructed on the present ground surface. By so doing, the archeological remains would be preserved, and erosion would be more easily controlled since adjoining positions would not be at a higher elevation.”⁸³⁷

⁸³⁶ Judy L. Hellmich, *Archeological Testing of Gun Position #7, Lower Water Battery, Fort Donelson National Battlefield Dover, Tennessee*, National Park Service Southeast Archeological Center Tallahassee, Florida, 1983, 4-5.

⁸³⁷ *Ibid.*, 8.

Several months after the archaeological investigation was finished reconstruction of gun position No. 7 was completed. In 1992, the reconstruction of seven additional gun positions was proposed, the reconstruction would use the 1984 reconstruction of gun platform No. 7 as a model. The proposal was reviewed by the Advisory Council On Historic Preservation, United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service Southeast Regional Office and the Tennessee Historical Commission (SHPO) and it was determined that the work would have no adverse effect on the site.⁸³⁸

Initially the reconstruction incorrectly utilized a wicker basket construction method for the interior walls that was later corrected to timber plank walls, which was the documented construction method. The top of the reconstructed parapet was covered with concrete-filled sandbags. A plank retaining wall behind the gun

⁸³⁸ XXX Form, Assessment of Actions Having An Effect on Cultural Resources, Prepared by Robert Wallace, Chief Ranger and signed by Walter L. Mayer, Park Superintendent, Fort National Battlefield, January 30, 1992, FODO-92-01.



Figure 7.10. View from pedestrian access to guns; note damage from runoff.

positions allows access to the battery, guns, and reconstructed powder magazine. The reconstructed battery has drainage issues. Water uses the area behind the guns as a conduit, causing erosion along the banks on both ends of the battery and allowing mud to accumulate in the gun platforms.

Extending from the northeastern end of the reconstructed Lower River Battery are the remains of three of the original gun emplacements constructed by the Confederates in 1861–1862. The traverse of each gun platform is present and slanted at a slight angle to the river, allowing the guns to fire on the approaching Union gunboats as they cleared the river bend in the distance. The ditch behind the 1861-62 gun platforms is also extant.

It is likely that the archaeological remains of a covered way are present in the area between the River Batteries. The reports in the Official Records mention this feature and it is very probable that an archaeological investigation would confirm its existence. This “covered way” was an enclosed ditch that ran from the east side of powder magazine downward at an angle toward the Lower River Battery. The concealed

ditch allowed ammunition to be transported from the magazine to the lower guns without the movement being detected by the enemy.⁸³⁹

The river side of the battery provides an excellent view of the feature. The battery is interpreted with six guns on concrete or steel seacoast mounts, two War Department plaques, and four waysides. The Confederate War Department plaque above the battery is present. The Union plaque below is missing; only the stand remains. The reconstructed portions of the battery help visitors better understand what a Civil War fortification looked like when built and contrasts nicely with the less-altered Upper River Battery. The Lower River Battery continues to be recommended as a contributing resource to Fort Donelson National Battlefield.

⁸³⁹ Hellmich, *Archeological Testing of Gun Position #7, Lower Water Battery, Fort Donelson National Battlefield Dover, Tennessee*, 9. Note Hellmich excavated a small text pit but found no evidence of the covered way.



Figure 7.11. View of two of the three extant 1861–62 Confederate gun platforms.

1d. Outer Defenses (Segments 1–17)

CRIS-HS Resource ID: 007167

Construction date: 1862

Current NRHP Status: Contributing

Recommended NRHP Status: Contributing

Figures: 7.12–7.36

Construction of Fort Donelson's outer works did not begin until February 1862 and continued until after the fighting at Fort Donelson had begun. The works were designed by Confederate engineer Major Jeremy Gilmer, probably during his visit to the fort on February 3–4, 1862 just before the Battle of Fort Henry. Documentation shows that the work continued as late as February 13–14, 1862. The outer works stretched in a semi-circle approximately two-and-a-half During this study the west to Charlotte Road (present-day Spring Street) on the east. The outer works was not a single, continuous line. The line on the Confederate right was, and still is, nine individual segments. The remaining line was two larger segments. The westernmost segment extends from the

entrance to the park to the west side of Erin Hollow. The easternmost segment begins on the east side of Erin Hollow and terminates at Main Street. The line of earthworks that stretched from Main Street to 200 feet west of the intersection of Natcor Drive and East Church Street is no longer extant. In addition to the main line of earthworks, GIS data from a 1934 survey provided by Fort Donelson National Battlefield shows a segment of earthworks some 200 feet long on the east side of Main Street between Cedar Street and Natcor Drive that have also been lost. The infantry trenches were broken up with four redans—artillery positions—manned by Porter's, Graves' Maney's, and French's artillery. The outer works defended the landward approaches to Fort Donelson and Dover, Tennessee.

The Confederate artillery in the outer works exchanged fire with Union troops as they marched into the vicinity of Fort Donelson on the afternoon of February 12, 1862. The next day Brig. Gen. C.F. Smith pushed part of his Second Division at the Confederate right in what was largely a

reconnaissance in force. The two sides exchanged fire but no ground was gained or lost. Brig. Gen. John A. McClernand's First Division came under fire from Graves' Battery as it moved to the east. After taking fire from Maney's Battery, McClernand attacked that position with four regiments but failed to take it.

On February 15, artillery fire from the outer works aided the Confederate troops in their breakout attempt. After the Confederate soldiers were recalled, Union troops under Brig. Gen. C.F. Smith attacked and captured a portion of the outer works on the Confederate right. This was the only part of Fort Donelson to fall to Union troops before the surrender. About the same time, Union soldiers under the command of Brig. Gen. Lew Wallace attacked the Confederate outer works between Forge Road and Erin Hollow. Though they did not capture the works, they constricted the Confederate line.

During this study CRA walked all of the extant earthworks and took GPS readings. Seventeen segments of earthworks were mapped. These earthworks, stretching some 10,091 feet, are scattered across the Fort Donelson battlefield. Though fragmented by post-battle construction in and around Dover, the outer works are for the most part well preserved and retain integrity. The Outer Defenses (Segments 1–17) continue to be recommended as contributing resources to Fort Donelson National Battlefield, and are discussed below as segments numbered 1 through 17 from west to east.

Segment 1: This segment of the outer works, near a cul-de-sac at the end of Eddyville Loop Road, is the end of the fortified line on the Confederate right above Hickman Creek. The segment is crescent-shaped, approximately 114 feet in length, and is in very good condition. The shape bends the trench around the end of the line, which would have made it difficult to flank it.

Segment 2: This well-preserved segment of the outer works is on the Confederate right. The earthwork is 134 feet long and is located near the cul-de-sac at the end of

Eddyville Loop Road and some 135 feet southeast of Segment 1. Two small War Department plaques adjacent to the earthwork read: Confederate Trenches Right Wing of Outer Defenses.

Segment 3: This segment of the line of works is located approximately 135 feet southwest of Segment 2. The eighty-eight-foot segment is eroded but well defined and is clearly a Civil War-era field fortification.

Segment 4: This earthwork, a backward L-shaped feature approximately ninety-four feet long, is located about sixty-five feet southeast of Segment 3. Segment 4 is in good condition. The earthwork is Tour Stop 5 (Smith's Attack); interpretive elements include a bronze artillery piece, two War Department plaques, and a wayside mounted on a concrete brick platform. The War Department plaque states that Jackson's Battery was in this location on February 13, 1862; Bearss' 1959 map shows that battery at Segment 2.

Segment 5: This crescent-shaped earthwork some 150 feet southwest of Segment 4 is approximately 101 feet long. Its shape suggests that it may have been redan designed for use with artillery but there is no evidence that there was artillery in this location.

Segment 6: This linear earthwork is some 150 feet southeast of Segment 5. It is about eighty feet long and is in good condition. The segment is Tour Stop 6 (Union Camp) and features a bronze artillery piece.

Segment 7: This crescent-shaped earthwork some 102 feet long is less than sixty feet southeast of Segment 6. It is in good condition.

Segment 8: This low, somewhat eroded linear earthwork is approximately sixty-two feet long and located approximately 103 feet southeast of Segment 7. Damage caused by runoff was observed behind (on the road side) of the earthwork.



Figure 7.12. Segment 1, at the north end of the Confederate right.



Figure 7.13. Segment 2.



Figure 7.14. Segment 3 from the road side.



Figure 7.15. Segment 4 and interpretive elements.



Figure 7.16. Segment 5.



Figure 7.17. Segment 6.



Figure 7.18. Segment 7.



Figure 7.19. Segment 8.

Segment 9: This linear earthwork is approximately 150 feet long. It is some 160 feet southeast of Segment 8 and 384 feet northwest of the Confederate Monument. The ditch is visible on the road (east) side of the berm; this is where a soldier would have stood or knelt to fire over the trench. The berm is eroded but the earthwork is otherwise in excellent condition.

Segment 10: This isolated segment is approximately 112 feet long and is in very good condition. The earthwork is immediately south of the Confederate Monument and it is possible that construction of the monument may have destroyed additional earthworks associated with it. Segment 10 may be associated with Confederate Brig. Gen. Simon B. Buckner's final defense.

Segment 11: This earthwork is east of Fort Donelson Park Road and approximately 300 feet northeast of the triangle created by the intersection of Fort Donelson Park Road and Eddyville Loop Road. The segment is approximately ninety-two feet long and terminates east of Fort Donelson Park Road just inside the tree cover. The earthwork is in good condition with a ditch visible on the front (west) side. It may be associated with Confederate Brig. Gen. Simon B. Buckner's final position the evening of February 15, 1865, after Union forces captured the outer works west of the earthwork.

Segment 12: This earthwork begins at the Confederate Monument and extends some 1,365 feet along Fort Donelson Park Road, almost to the gate leading to the visitor center. It is in good condition though the berm has been eroded in places and ranges from two-feet to six-feet high. For most of its length the ditches on both sides of the berm are clearly visible. The earthwork closest to the visitor center has a more pronounced outer ditch, which is being used by water as a conduit. The earthwork decreases in height as it nears the gate. Just before it terminates near Fort Donelson Park Road the earthwork forms a triangular bulge, which was the site of Porter's Battery. Though eroded it is still clearly visible. The battery is interpreted with a War Department plaque, a metal informational sign, and a 6-pounder bronze gun and caisson.

Segment 13: This earthwork is approximately 277 feet long. It begins on the east side of Fort Donelson Park Road, runs southeast along a ridge, and terminates in the wooded area south of the visitor center. The section near the road is higher and in better condition than that on the west side of the road. It is likely, though uncertain, that this segment was truncated when Highway 79/Highway 76 was constructed in the 1920s. A portion of the line may have been destroyed in 1972 when Highway 79 was realigned. However, a 1934 map shows a gap in the line between the entrance to the park at Fort Donelson Road and Graves Battery Loop; see Jaeger Company, *Fort Donelson National Battlefield Cultural Landscape Report*, Prepared under the direction of the National Park Service, Southeast Regional Offices, Cultural Resource Division, Atlanta, Georgia, 2015, pages 69 and 93.

Segment 14: This segment of the outer works is one of the longest, being some 2,244 feet long. It begins near the intersection of Highway 79 and Graves' Battery Loop, extends beyond the cul-de-sac at the end of Graves Battery Loop and from there down the hill almost to Indian Creek. Maintenance employee Rube Folks stated during a 1965 interview that the earthwork was cut in two by the construction of Highway 79/Highway 76 in the 1920s. He also said that the earthwork in the area of Graves' Battery Loop was reconstructed in the 1930s (transcript in the archives at Fort Donelson National Battlefield and Cemetery). There are large trees on the berm on the west end of the earthwork near US 79 and a blowout on the slope below the cul-de-sac at the end of Graves Battery Loop. Beyond this area, where the hill falls down toward Indian Creek, damage to the resource caused by water draining off the high ground is extensive. Near the bottom of the hill, both the ditch associated with the earthwork and the adjacent trail are eroded. It appears that rocks were placed in the ditch in the past to try to mitigate the damage caused by runoff. Graves' Battery (Tour Stop 7) is located on Graves' Battery Loop, which is east of Highway 79/Highway 76. The battery is interpreted with two War Department plaques, a wayside and an artillery piece.



Figure 7.20. Segment 9; Eddyville Loop Road is to the east.



Figure 7.21. Segment 10.



Figure 7.22. Segment 11.



Figure 7.23. Segment 12, where it begins behind the 1933 Confederate Monument.



Figure 7.24. Segment 12 near the visitor center; this portion of the berm is more eroded and lower.



Figure 7.25. Segment 12, Porter's Battery.



Figure 7.26. Segment 13 east of Fort Donelson Park Road.



Figure 7.27. Segment 14, a large tree on the berm at the east end of the earthwork.



Figure 7.28. Segment 14, some of the elements interpreting Graves' Battery.



Figure 7.29. Segment 14, erosional damage in the earthwork's ditch.

Segment 15: This earthwork is 2,308 feet long and extends east from Sandy Road, up the hill to Maney's Battery, and then down the hill into Erin Hollow. This line of earthworks can only be accessed via a pedestrian trail. These are the most inaccessible earthworks within the park and are, as former NPS ranger Jim Jobe reported and CRA agrees, probably the least altered/improved and best preserved at Fort Donelson. The westernmost portion of the earthworks, along the trail leading up to Maney's Battery, is extremely eroded. The flow of the water down the hill is cutting a very deep channel, making the ditch much deeper than it was originally. The earthwork was damaged when a galvanized culvert was placed through it near the top of the hill in an attempt to control the flow of water. An access trail that crosses the earthwork truncated it downslope from the battery. However, Maney's Battery at top of the hill is intact. The earthwork on the east slope is somewhat eroded but is in good condition.

Segment 16: This earthwork extends some 2,075 feet, from Erin Hollow to Natcor Drive. The earthwork from Erin Hollow to the top of the hill

exhibits the same erosional pattern as that on the Maney's Battery trail. Water running off of the hill uses the ditch associated with the earthwork as a conduit. To make matters worse, there are at least two drains on the gun platform, French's Battery, at the top of the hill that send water from the paved parking area downhill toward Erin Hollow. French's Battery (Tour Stop 8), is described in a separate section.

Segment 17: The section of earthwork located at Forge Road (Tour Stop 9) is 693 feet long, though there is a gap of forty feet in the work near Natcor Drive. These earthworks are in poor condition. They are badly eroded and in one place a concrete culvert was placed through the earthwork to aid drainage. It is uncertain, but it seems likely that a portion of the earthwork had to be leveled to install the drainage and was then reconstructed. On the average, the berm is much lower here than at French's Battery. Forge Road, which the Confederates needed to secure in order to escape, is interpreted with five War Department plaques, a wayside, a bronze artillery piece, and the marble Texas Monument.



Figure 7.30. Segment 15, water damage in the ditch and rocks placed to slow runoff.



Figure 7.31. Segment 15, earthworks on the western slope of the trail.



Figure 7.32. Erin Hollow near the beginning of Segment 16.



Figure 7.33. Segment 16, water damage to ditch on western slope of hill.



Figure 7.34. Segment 16, drain below parking area at French's Battery.



Figure 7.35. Segment 17 with some of the elements interpreting Forge Road.



Figure 7.36. Segment 17, concrete culvert installed to aid drainage.

1e. Federal Earthworks

CRIS-HS Resource ID: 090298

Construction date: 1863

Current NRHP Status: Contributing

Recommended NRHP Status: Contributing

Figure: 7.37

This relatively straight section of earthwork is approximately 380 feet long. It begins just north of the Fort Donelson National Cemetery and terminates near the confluence of Indian Creek and Lake Barkley. This work was probably constructed as part of Union Fort Donelson, built in 1863. This badly eroded earthwork and those associated with Fort Heiman are the only extant Union earthworks within Fort Donelson National Battlefield boundary. Although exhibiting erosion, the Federal Earthworks are recommended as contributing resources to Fort Donelson National Battlefield. Please note that Bearss shows an earthwork in this area shaped like an “M” rotated 90 degrees to the left. The earthwork CRA located, while slightly irregular in shape, does not match the Bearss drawing. More research may be necessary to

determine which army constructed this earthwork. See Edwin C. Bearss, *Historical Base Map, Part of the Master Plan of Fort Donelson National Military Park, Dover, Tennessee*. Washington, D.C: United States Government Printing Office, 1959.

1f. Abandoned Gun Positions

CRIS-HS Resource ID: 090302

Construction date: 1861–1862

NRHP Status: unknown

Recommended NRHP Status: contributing

Figure: 7.38

In the cul-de-sac of Fort Donelson Park Road between the Upper and Lower River batteries is a line of four earthworks. These gun positions were among the first works built to defend the river approach to what became Fort Donelson. The Confederates mounted three 32-pounder guns on this battery. Taken together, the three earthworks are a little over 190 feet long. There is a well-defined ditch in their front and gun platforms behind. At some



Figure 7.37. North end of the Federal Earthworks above Lake Barkley.



Figure 7.38. Abandoned Confederate gun positions.

point it was discovered that the battery was incorrectly sited—guns in the battery were not well-positioned to fire on boats in the river. The gun positions were abandoned and the guns removed. They were never used in defense of the fort. They were replaced with the Upper and Lower River batteries. The gun positions are interpreted with a metal informational sign. The Gun Positions are not indicated in the National Register nomination, but are recommended as contributing resources to Fort Donelson National Battlefield,

1g. Maney's Battery

CRIS-HS Resource ID: 090303

Construction date: 1861–1862

Current NRHP Status: contributing

Recommended NRHP Status: contributing

Figure: 7.39

Maney's Battery is a well-preserved three-sided redan that is part of the 2,308-foot long line of earthworks described as Outer Works Segment 15. The redan extends out from the line of earthworks onto a ridge between Indian Creek and Erin Hollow that overlooks Sandy

and Wynn's Ferry roads. The gun platform is well defined and the earthworks on top of the ridge are the best preserved of those along Segment 15. Maney's Battery (Tour Stop 7) is interpreted with four War Department plaques. This very important feature can only be reached via a pedestrian trail. Maney's Battery is recommended as a contributing resource to Fort Donelson National Battlefield.

1h. French's Battery

CRIS-HS Resource ID: 091393

Construction date: 1861–1862

Current NRHP Status: contributing

Recommended NRHP Status: contributing

Figure: 7.40

French's Battery is well-preserved three-sided redan that is part of the 2,075-foot long line of earthworks described as Outer Works Segment 16. It is located at the top of the hill that separates Erin Hollow to the west from Natcor Drive on the east. The gun platform is well defined and the earthworks on top of the ridge are the best preserved of those along Segment 16.



Figure 7.39. Maney's Battery and three of the War Department plaques interpreting the site.



Figure 7.40. French's Battery, artillery piece and War Department plaque.

However, a drain on the gun platform at the top of the hill that directs water down the hill toward Erin Hollow has caused and will continue to cause damage to the earthworks downslope if not corrected. French's Battery (Tour Stop 8) is interpreted with six War Department plaques, at least two waysides and two artillery pieces. It is accessed via a paved road and parking area. French's Battery continues to be recommended as a contributing resource to Fort Donelson National Battlefield.

1i. Powder Magazine (Reconstructed)

CRIS-HS Resource ID: 007168

Construction date: 1861–1862

Reconstruction date: 1937–1940

Current NRHP Status: contributing

Recommended NRHP Status: contributing

Figure: 7.41

The Confederates built the original powder magazine in 1861–62 to serve the

Lower River Battery. The structure was designed to hold 1,000 rounds of ammunition and the corresponding amount of black powder needed to fire the projectiles. Most magazines at the battlefield, such as that at the Upper River Battery, have collapsed. The Powder Magazine (Reconstructed) allows visitors to see what the exterior of a Civil War-era powder magazine looked like.

Archeological investigations were conducted at the original powder magazine in 1937 and the reconstruction finished around 1940. The Confederate magazine was approximately twelve feet square and had a nine-foot ceiling. There was a three-foot-wide, twenty-four-foot long passageway leading from the entrance to the large chamber where the ammunition was stored. The entire structure was covered by three feet of dirt. The Confederate magazine was constructed of logs; the reconstruction is poured concrete. Care was taken to insure that the footprint and dimensions of the reconstruction matched those of the original magazine. A viewing platform was recently constructed behind the magazine. The



Figure 7.41. Powder Magazine (Reconstructed).

overlook/walkway (see Figure 7.41) constructed in 2000 was probably built to allow visitors an unobstructed view of the Lower River Battery and/or the river. Its construction has had an adverse effect on the site's viewshed and the area associated with the two river batteries, which are very significant resources at Fort Donelson National Battlefield. The Power Magazine (Reconstructed) continues to be recommended as a contributing resource to Fort Donelson National Battlefield.

1j. Dover Hotel

CRIS-HS Resource ID: 000310

Construction date: 1851–1853

Current NRHP Status: contributing

Recommended NRHP Status: contributing

Figures: 7.42–7.44

The Dover Hotel building was constructed sometime between 1851 and 1853 to accommodate steamboat travelers. All of the Confederate generals who served at Fort Donelson before its surrender on February 16, 1862 used the structure as their headquarters at some point. The building, also known as the Surrender House, was the site of the formal surrender of Confederate Brig. Gen. Simon B. Buckner to Union Brig. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant following the Battle of Fort Donelson. From the end of the Civil War until 1925 the building again served as a hotel. The Fort Donelson Historical Association purchased the building in 1928 and opened it to the public as a museum in 1930. The state of Tennessee provided funding for the building's upkeep until 1958. The National Park Service bought the building in 1959 and rehabilitated the structure in 1978. Today it houses an interpretive center on the first floor; park housing occupies the second floor, consisting of three bedrooms and a shared bathroom, kitchen, and living room.

The Dover Hotel is one of the few remaining structures in Dover that dates to the Civil War. It is a two-story, frame clapboard-clad structure. A two-story porch spans the width of the façade (east elevation). The

building's foundation is cut-limestone. The asymmetrical façade has six bays on the first floor—four windows and two doors. An open stairway set left of center leads to the second floor porch. There are eight bays on the second floor façade—four windows and four doors. The windows on all four elevations of the building are six-over-six. The house has an end-gabled roof clad with wooden shakes. There are two brick chimneys on the south elevation and one cut-limestone chimney on the north elevation.

The Dover Hotel is listed with national significance in the National Register of Historic Places under the 1976 Fort Donelson National Military Park and Cemetery National Register of Historic Places Nomination. It is listed under Criterion A for its association with the American Civil War, specifically the Union victory at the Battle of Fort Donelson; Criterion B for its association with Brig. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant; and Criterion C as excellent as example of antebellum frame construction.

The Union victory at Fort Donelson opened the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers to the Union, precipitated the fall of Nashville and, ultimately, the Confederate retreat from Middle and West Tennessee. Brig. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant won promotion and recognition for his military ability, launching his career as the most successful Union general of the Civil War. The Dover Hotel continues to be recommended as a contributing resource to Fort Donelson National Battlefield.



Figure 7.42. Dover Hotel, east elevation.



Figure 7.43. Dover Hotel, north and east elevations.



Figure 7.44. Dover Hotel, west and south elevations.

2. Fort Henry

CRIS-HS Resource ID: none

Construction date: 1861–1862

Current NRHP Status: Listed

Recommended NRHP Status: Remain Listed

Figures: 7.45–7.50

Fort Henry was constructed between spring 1861 and January 1862. On February 6, 1862, the Fort was captured by the Union fleet under the command of Commander Andrew H. Foote, opening the Tennessee River to the Union navy as far south as northern Alabama. The victory also provided a staging area for the army under the command of Brig. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant. Six days later, Grant moved his forces east across the land between the rivers and on February 16 captured Fort Donelson.

The construction of Kentucky Lake in the 1940s inundated Fort Henry proper and it is now underwater. Photographs prior to the fort's inundation reflect the exceptional condition of the structure. What remains are

three segments of outer works totaling approximately 2,589 feet. These segments are what are left of the fort's outer works. The outer works are east of the submerged fort on property under the jurisdiction of the USDA National Forest Service and are part of the Land Between the Lakes National Recreation Area. The NPS is legislatively partnered with both the USDA National Forest Service and Land Between the Lakes National Recreation Area in the preservation and interpretation of the resources associated with Fort Henry. The outer works were listed in the National Register of Historic Places under the Fort Henry Site National Register of Historic Places Nomination in 1975. The level of significance—national, state or local—was not checked on the form.

There are essentially three sets of outer works. David Lowe, NPS historian and GIS specialist, recorded six segments in his 2002 survey but described the earthworks in the text as three segments, which historically is, perhaps, more accurate. Following Mr. Lowe's example, CRA is treating the works as three segments.

2a–c. Outer Works Segment 1: This segment is a combination of Lowe’s segments F25 (CRIS-HS Resource ID: 791641), F26 (CRIS-HS Resource ID: 792992) and F27 (CRIS-HS Resource ID: 792999). The earthwork is what Lowe labeled “Left Flank” on his map. It is west of a sharp curve in Boswell Landing Road two-tens of a mile south of its intersection with CR 233A. This earthwork is anchored on the lake and extends some 1,279 feet in a southeasterly direction back toward Boswell Landing Road. The west portion of the segment is in fairly good condition. The last 200 feet descends into a low area and is in poor condition. Periodic inundation has damaged the feature. Trees have fallen across the berm and blowouts are visible where trees growing on the earthworks have fallen, leaving holes. In general, these earthworks are neglected and for the most part not interpreted. When visited in late 2018 the area was in heavy undergrowth, which made accessing this earthwork very difficult even in winter. While we could observe a portion of this earthwork, we were not able to traverse the entire segment. CRA recommends the Fort Henry earthworks retain integrity to remain listed in the National Register.

2d–e. Outer Works Segment 2: This earthwork is the left or northern half of what Lowe called the “Right Flank.” On his map is labeled F28 (CRIS-HS Resource ID: 793006) and F29 (CRIS-HS Resource ID: 793013), which total some 968 feet long. The segment varies in condition from good to poor. The portion of the line that parallels the road is in good condition with well-defined ditches on both sides. Leaving the road, the line goes up the slope and the steeper the slope the more the earthwork is eroded. As the land levels out the earthwork’s condition improves. The berm here is often higher than some of the earthworks observed at Fort Donelson.

2e–f. Outer Works Segment 3: David Lowe believed, and CRA concurs, that the right flank (F29 [CRIS-HS Resource ID: 793013] and F30 [CRIS-HS Resource ID: 793020]) was bisected by the construction of CR 232. What remains is a segment of earthworks some 709 feet long. The line is eroded and in

only fair-to-poor condition but is clearly a Civil War earthwork and it, like the other two Fort Henry segments, are significant as they are all that remains visible of the fort.

David Lowe wrote on page four of his 2002 report: “Taken together with the Fort Heiman complex on the west bank of the river [lake], these resources provide an opportunity for interpreting Confederate river defenses of the early war period and the battle at Fort Henry.” He is correct. Many historians would argue that the capture of Fort Henry and the control of the Tennessee River were more strategically important than the capture of Fort Donelson. Be that as it may, the two forts are historically linked and if well interpreted Fort Henry would help tell the story of the February 1862 battles.

3. Fort Heiman

Construction date: 1862

Current NRHP Status: Listed

Recommended NRHP Status: Remain Listed and expanded to include contributing resources

Figures: 7.51–7.58

Fort Heiman is located on the west bank of what was the Tennessee River, now Kentucky Lake, in Calloway County, Kentucky. Lowe’s team enumerated ten segments of earthworks in the main Fort Heiman area. Because CRA was unable to locate one of Lowe’s segments during the 2018 fieldwork this report describes only nine segments.

Construction began in early January 1862 when 500 enslaved men sent from Alabama arrived and were set to work building Confederate fortifications. Upon completion in late January, infantry, cavalry and a battery of field artillery were sent to the fort.

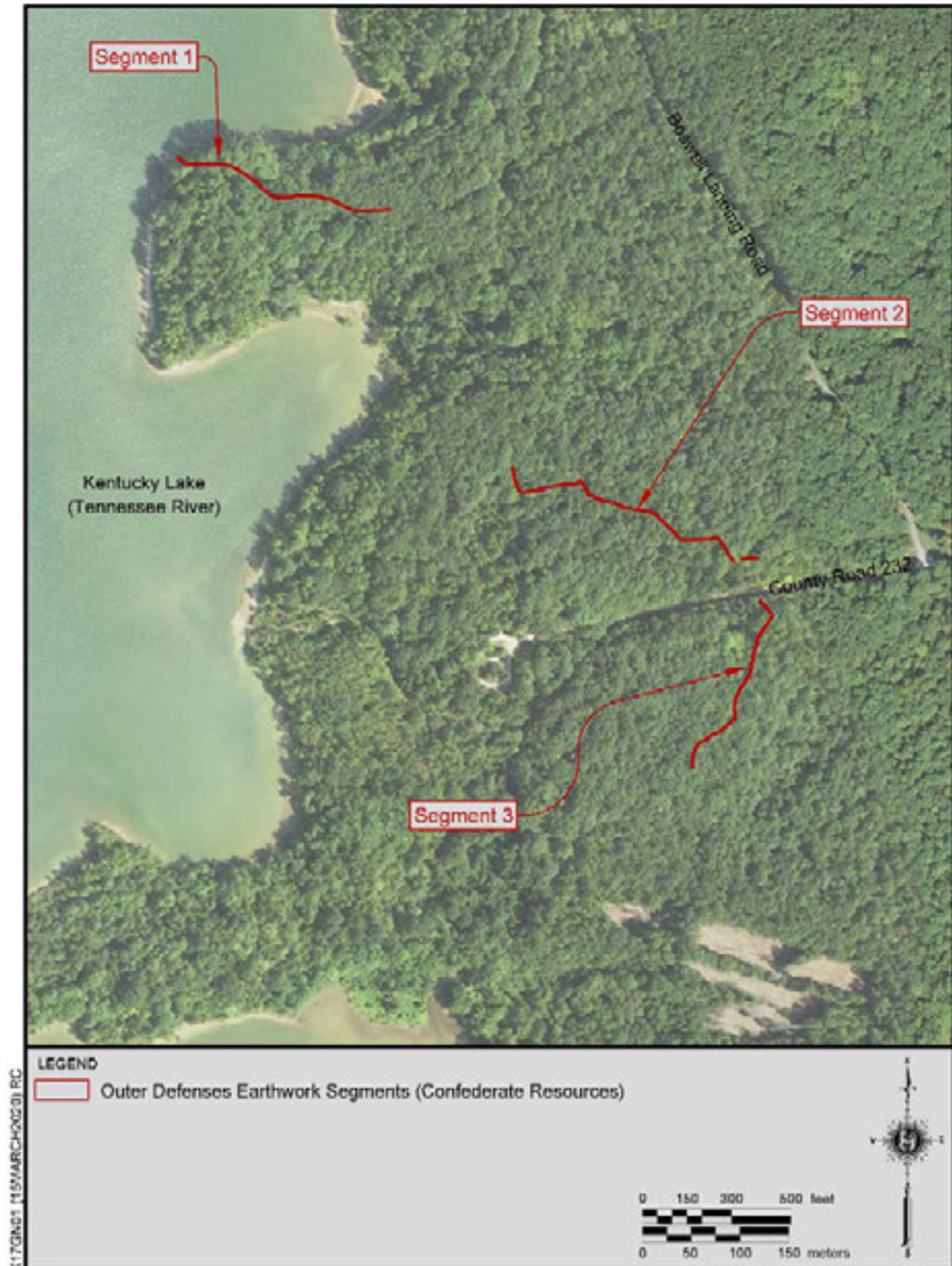


Figure 7.45. Aerial photograph depicting the outer works of Fort Henry.



Figure 7.46. Portion of the Segment 1 near the lake.



Figure 7.47. Earthwork covered in fallen trees; a root ball is visible in the background.



Figure 7.48. Segment 2 parallel to the road; there are well-defined ditches on both sides.



Figure 7.49. Segment 2 on sloping ground; erosion is evident.



Figure 7.50. Segment 3.

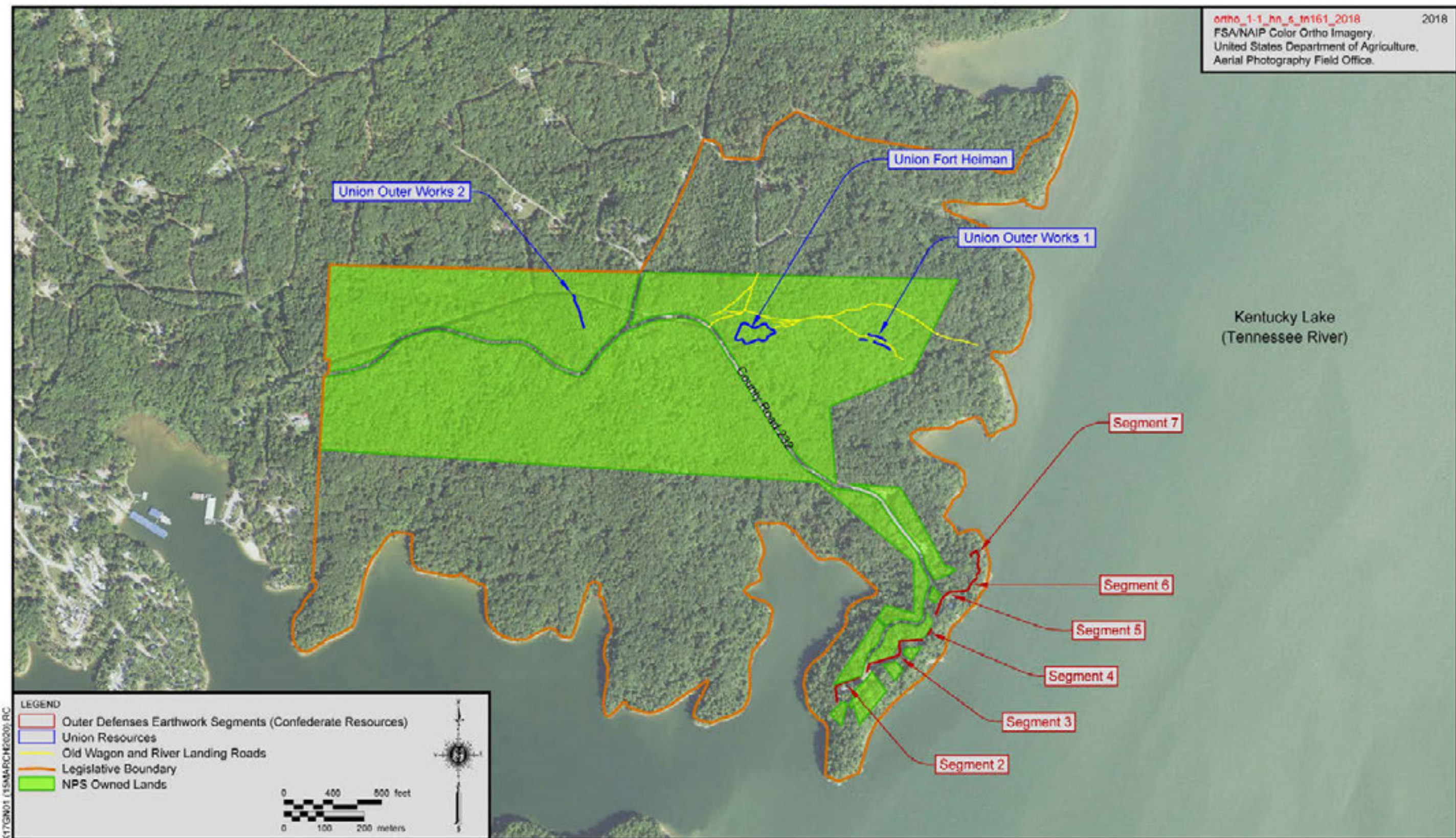


Figure 7.51. Aerial photograph depicting Civil War-era resources at Fort Heiman.

The Confederates abandoned Fort Heiman on February 5, 1862. The small detachment of cavalry left at the fort fled before Union troops under Brig. Gen. C.F. Smith captured it on February 6, 1862. After the surrender of Fort Donelson on February 16, 1862, Union troops occupied Fort Heiman. Federal troops razed much of the Confederate fort and built their own defensive works. They maintained a garrison at the fort on and off until late in the war. Confederates under the command of Maj. Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest occupied the fort briefly in October 1864. It was from Fort Heiman that Forrest captured Union supply boats and launched his Johnsonville Campaign. It is unclear if Union troops reoccupied Fort Heiman after Forrest captured it. What is known is that Union troops built a new fort and outer works at Fort Heiman. Very little has been found regarding the new Union fort; it is not known who built it nor when and why it was constructed.

Twenty acres, which encompasses the earthworks nearest the lake, Segments 1–10, was listed with national significance in the Fort Heiman Site National Register of Historic Places Nomination in 1976. The Union fort, associated earthworks and archaeological sites are not listed. CRA recommends the National Register boundary be expanded to include all of the earthworks associated with Fort Heiman. Additionally, there are several historic traces associated with Fort Heiman which are also recommended as contributing resources to the property.

There were two construction periods at Fort Heiman: the Confederate construction in January 1862 and the Union construction and/or repurposing of the Confederate earthworks in 1862–1864. Segments 1 through 9 (designated F10–F19 in Lowe, “Fort Heiman and Fort Henry GPS Survey, June 2002”) are on a peninsula approximately one-half mile northwest of the Union fort and are oriented toward it. This set of earthworks seems to have been designed to cover an assault on forces arriving on the roads from Kentucky or Tennessee. They were probably constructed by the Union army or hired Freedmen but, as the shape and size of Confederate Fort Heiman

is unknown and the remaining earthworks may represent only a portion of the fort, it is possible that Segments 1–9 were built by the Confederates and repurposed by the Union army.

3a. Segment 1 (Lowe F10 Not Mapped)

CRIS-HS Resource ID: 716731

Mr. Lowe’s team mapped this short segment, which he designated F10, in 2002. It was near what he referred to as “the unfinished house.” The NPS has identified the now-completed structure as the Milton house at 998 Fort Heiman Road. Lowe’s map indicates that the segment is less substantial than Segment 2 (F11 [CRIS-HS Resource ID: 792042]), but does not describe either segment. When CRA visited the site in winter 2018 the team could not locate this segment; it is possible that it was damaged or destroyed by the construction of the house.

3b. Segment 2 (Lowe F11)

CRIS-HS Resource ID: 792042

The earthwork is approximately 340 feet long and is in good condition. It forms a right angle as it passes around the Seyer house (ca. 2003). A well-defined ditch is visible along the outside of the earthwork. There are blowouts along the berm behind the house, probably the result of a drainage issue. The line of earthworks is more eroded east of the house as it nears Fort Heiman Road. The construction of the road, probably in the 1990s when the property was subdivided, truncated this segment from Segment 1. Because the construction of the house disturbed a portion of this area it is not known if a gun platform was constructed in the angle.

3c. Segment 3 (Lowe F12)

CRIS-HS Resource ID: 792018

This segment of the earthwork is some 610 feet in length. It has been disturbed by road and other construction. Where the segment begins, north of Fort Heiman Road, it has been cut into six pieces, either deliberately

or as a result of erosion. This appears to have taken place since 2002 as Lowe makes no mention of it. In spite of this disturbance, the earthwork is still in good to fair condition. The rest of the earthwork described by Lowe survives, including the gun platform and associated earthwork. Generally, this portion of the outer works at Fort Heiman has a good ditch in front and is mostly well preserved. The NPS has removed several large trees that posed a danger to the earthwork.

3e. Segment 5 (Lowe F17 Not Mapped)

CRIS-HS Resource ID: 792958

This section of the earthwork is on gated private property to which CRA did not have access and was therefore unable to walk to ascertain its length. Observations made from the public road confirmed Lowe's documentation for this part of the earthwork. The ditch on the back side of the earthwork was large and the line of works on this property are some of the best preserved in the Fort Heiman area.

3d. Segment 4 (Lowe F16)

CRIS-HS Resource ID: 792052

This short section of earthwork is located on Fort Heiman Road between Segments 3 and 5 (F12 [CRIS-HS Resource ID: 792018] and F17 [CRIS-HS Resource ID: 792958]). Approximately forty-seven feet long, the small earthwork is well preserved and was probably at one time connected to Segment 5.

3f. Segment 6 (Lowe F19 Not Mapped)

CRIS-HS Resource ID: 792967

This section of the earthwork (Lowe F19 [CRIS-HS Resource ID: 792967]) is on the north side of the gated private property and CRA was unable to examine the earthwork or determine its length. It was also more difficult to see this portion of the earthwork from the public road. This segment is also one of the best preserved in the Fort Heiman area.



Figure 7.52. Segment 2 and the Seyer house.



Figure 7.53. Area where Segment 3 has been cut into pieces.



Figure 7.54. Segment 3.



Figure 7.55. Segment 4.



Figure 7.56. Segment 5.



Figure 7.57. Segment 6.

3g. Segment 7 (Lowe F20)

CRIS-HS Resource ID: 792975

As noted above, Union soldiers destroyed most of Confederate Fort Heiman. This is the only earthwork observed in the Fort Heiman area that was constructed to overlook the Tennessee River and Fort Henry. This 285-foot segment is isolated on the northeast end of the peninsula, which would have been high ground commanding Fort Henry in 1862. Because the earthwork was built on sloping ground it has eroded in places but does retain elements of the original construction. There are two interpretations of the earthworks at the site of Confederate Fort Heiman. Lowe stated in his report that Segment 7 is “probably oldest in the complex and may well represent the surviving portion of the original Confederate fort.” Former members of Fort Donelson staff hold that a portion of the Confederate fort was pushed off the bluff and toward the river and that Segments 2–7 comprise the backside of the Confederate fort,

which guarded the reverse approach via the creek and ravine to the south and west.

3h. Union Fort Heiman (Not Mapped)

CRIS-HS Resource ID: 716728

Construction date: 1862–1864

Current NRHP Status: Not Listed

Figures: 7.59–7.61

Recommended NRHP Status: Eligible for NRHP as contributing resource with expanded boundary

It is not known when the Union fort was constructed. Union soldiers occupied this area after the surrender of Fort Donelson and remained until 1864 or 1865. It is known that a Union encampment was here and there is a report of work on fortifications in April 1863. Other information may be available but locating it will require primary research.

The Union fort sits on a knoll approximately one-half mile west of Kentucky Lake. Historically it was at the intersection of



Figure 7.58. Segment 7.

two roads, which are still visible but are not in use or maintained. It is an irregularly shaped redoubt with the sally port (entrance) on the northeast side. Its design allowed three or four guns to be mounted, though there is no evidence that artillery was ever mounted. For a month or so in 1863, Battery C, 2nd Illinois Light Artillery, was stationed in the area near Confederate Fort Heiman but it is not clear if the Union fort had been completed at that time. The fort's design is typical of Union earthworks built along rivers and railroads in Tennessee and Kentucky. The forts at Johnsonville, Tennessee, and on Muldraugh's Hill on the Louisville and Nashville Railroad in Kentucky are similar in design. Historic documentation indicates that Camp Lowe was in this area, though where has not been determined. The 2011 archaeological survey discovered hut pad sites that may be the location of the Union encampment.

The earthwork is approximately 846 feet long and encloses 0.7 acres. The exterior ditch is clearly visible. When visited in winter 2018 it was very overgrown; in the summer months

it would be almost invisible. There were numerous large trees growing on the parapet and animal burrows were also observed. In spite of the issues with vegetation, and maybe because of them, the fort is well preserved. Lowe noted: "purposeful destruction, evidently by vacating Federal troops. The protective breastwork has been partially leveled with earth thrown back into the fort and down into the ditch."

Union Fort Heiman Outer Works 1

Construction date: 1862–1864

Current NRHP Status: Not Listed

Recommended NRHP Status: Eligible for NRHP as contributing resource with expanded boundary

These earthworks are east of the fort and are on either side of and parallel to the old road leading to the river landing. The earthwork north of the road is approximately 150 long; that south of the road is some 250 feet long.



Figure 7.59. Wall and ditch of Union Fort.



Figure 7.60. Earthworks east of Union Fort.

Union Fort Heiman Outer Works 2

Construction date: 1862–1864

Current NRHP Status: Not Listed

Recommended NRHP Status: Eligible for NRHP as contributing resource with expanded boundary

This earthwork is located about 1,400 feet east of the Union Fort. The position of this line might have provided a front line for troops defending the fort and would have allowed a detachment of soldiers to hold this position, meeting an attack and then falling back to the main fort if necessary. The earthwork is approximately 275 feet long; it is eroded and varies in height from one foot to about four feet.

3i. Historic Road/Old Wagon Road

CRIS-HS Resource ID: 716732

Construction date: unknown

Current NRHP Status: Not Listed

Figure: 7.62

Recommended NRHP Status: Eligible for NRHP as contributing resource with expanded boundary

What remains of this road begins at or near the sally port on the northeast side of Union Fort Heiman fort and extends approximately 1,650 feet to the lake's edge. The road is narrow and clearly not designed for automobiles. Lowe describes it as a wagon road used to bring supplies from the river landing to the fort. Soldiers might have also used the road to get to the steamboats that carried them on up or downriver. The road is fairly well preserved and is more evidence of a large Civil War-era presence in the area.



Figure 7.61. Union Fort Heiman Outer Works 2.



Figure 7.62. Historic Road, also known as the “old wagon road.”

3j. Historic River Road Landing

CRIS-HS Resource ID: 716737

Construction date: unknown

Current NRHP Status: Not Listed

Recommended NRHP Status: Not Eligible

The Historic Road/Old Wagon Road extended from the Union Fort to a historic river landing. The landing itself was inundated when the Tennessee River was impounded to create Kentucky Lake. The historic name of the landing is unknown.

Commemorative Resources

Many of the Commemorative Resources constructed by the War Department and the NPS are listed as contributing resources in the current NRHP nomination for Fort Donelson National Battlefield. The period of significance included in the nomination ends in 1942. As reflected below, CRA recommends the period of significance be extended to 1963 to include the Mission 66 additions to the property and the Texas Monument within the period of significance.

1. National Cemetery

At the conclusion of the Civil War, the Quartermaster General’s office was tasked with locating interments of Union soldiers who perished in battle, of disease, or in hospitals. Soldiers were often buried near the spot they died or possibly moved to a central location or existing cemetery. Congress authorized the Act to Establish and to Protect National Cemeteries on February 22, 1867 that included many elements of national cemeteries that continue to today.

Slightly over 15 acres were purchased in April 1867 for the Fort Donelson National Cemetery. The cemetery is located on the site of the former Union fort at Dover. Initially reinterments came from the Fort Donelson battlefield, field hospitals, and Dover’s cemetery. A stone wall encloses three acres of the cemetery including interments, Cemetery Lodge, carriage house, pump house, flagstaff, and monuments. The cemetery is closed to new burials, except for spouses and family members of persons currently interred on the grounds.

1a. Cemetery Lodge

Construction date: 1878

CRIS-HS Resource ID: 007169

Current NRHP Status: Contributing

Recommended NRHP Status: Contributing

Figures: 7.64–7.66

The Cemetery Lodge, also referred to as the Superintendent's Lodge, was historically utilized as an office and single-family dwelling for the superintendent's family. The Cemetery Lodge is an example of the standardized plan developed by Quartermaster General Montgomery C. Meigs to house superintendents of national cemeteries. Originally constructed with an L-shaped footprint, the building is a two-story, three-bay (w/d/w), brick Second Empire-style dwelling. The low-pitched hip roof is sheathed in standing-seam metal. The second story features a Mansard roof clad in slate shingles. The masonry dwelling features brick laid in modified five to seven-course common bond and rests on a raised mortared stone basement foundation. Oriented to the south, the lodge's façade features a low-pitched, hip-roof porch supported by chamfered wood posts and a poured concrete deck. Two brick chimneys pierce the roof of the main block. The corners of the building feature brick quoins. Windows are filled with six-over-six, double-hung wood sashes. A one-story kitchen addition with a brick exterior and associated porch were constructed circa 1931. The kitchen addition features brick quoins and a raised poured concrete foundation.

Situated in the southeast section of the cemetery and currently utilized as park offices, the Cemetery Lodge is listed in the NRHP as a contributing resource. The Cemetery Lodge is in excellent condition and retains its integrity; therefore, it is recommended that the lodge continues to contribute to the NRHP-listed Fort Donelson National Cemetery.

1b. Carriage House

Construction date: 1911

CRIS-HS Resource ID: 007170

Current NRHP Status: Contributing

Recommended NRHP Status: Contributing

Figures: 7.67–7.69

The carriage house is situated on the southern edge of the stone walled enclosed cemetery. The building, first referred to as a stable, was initially employed for storage of horse-drawn conveyances such as wagons, caissons, and carriages utilized for military funerals. Animals may also have been housed in the building. The carriage house is a one-and-one-half-story, three-bay (w/dd/w), side-gable, brick building with a partially exposed poured concrete basement. Oriented to the north, the building has a high-pitched roof sheathed in standing-seam metal and the exterior is laid in a modified common bond. The exterior doors and windows feature segmental arches. The windows are filled with six-over-six, double-hung, wood sashes. The façade features a pedestrian entry filled with paired, wood sliding doors. The basement features a wide, single-leaf entry along its rear (south) elevation that accesses the cemetery's drive through a break in the encompassing stone wall. The rear basement door is behind an iron, half-arc gate. This gate is reportedly one of the side gates to the original circa 1869 main entrance to the National Cemetery. The gate would have originally been mounted to vertical iron cannon tubes. One pedestrian entry is found on the southeast elevation and two on the west elevation that were added possibly circa 1930s as visitor's restrooms. The carriage house is currently utilized as interpretive exhibit space for the cemetery. A small water fountain is located at the southwest corner inside the building. Along the outside wall, adjacent to the façade entry, is a large bronze plaque attached to the wall. The plaque, visible in early photographs, celebrates the Gettysburg Address. The date of the plaque is unknown, although it first appears mounted on the east elevation of the Cemetery Lodge in early twentieth-century



Figure 7.63. Aerial photograph depicting resources at Fort Donelson National Cemetery.



Figure 7.64. Cemetery Lodge, façade (south) and east elevations.



Figure 7.65. Cemetery Lodge, north elevation.



Figure 7.66. Cemetery Lodge, rear (west) elevation.

photographs, near the southeast corner of the building. The plaque is not attached to the Cemetery Lodge in similar photographs dating to the 1890s.

The carriage house, listed in the NRHP as a contributing resource, continues to retain integrity and is recommended as continuing to contribute to the NRHP-listed Fort Donelson National Cemetery.

1c. Pump House

Construction date: 1935

CRIS-HS Resource ID: 000066

Current NRHP Status: Non-contributing

Recommended NRHP Status: Contributing

Figures: 7.70–7.71

Erected in 1935, approximately two years after the transfer of the cemetery from the War Department to the NPS, the pump house was built over an existing well that was drilled in 1902. The pump house, located approximately 70 feet west of the Cemetery Lodge, provided water to the Cemetery Lodge and to visitors. In 1953, the cemetery was connected to municipal water and

the pump house was converted for use as public restrooms in 1955. During this time the restrooms were removed from the carriage house. The pump house is a one-story, front-gable, brick building resting on a poured concrete foundation. The roof is sheathed in standing-seam metal. Single-leaf pedestrian entries are centered on the east and west gable ends. Two narrow windows flank the east gable end's entry and similar window openings are found on the north and south elevations. The windows are filled with three-light wood sashes. A L-shaped, wood, privacy fence is located in front of each entry. The pump house continues to serve as visitors' restrooms.

The pump house is indicated as a non-contributing building in the 1996 additional documentation nomination because of diminished integrity after its conversion to restroom facilities. The primary floorplan modifications took place over 50 years ago and the exterior of the building retains integrity embodied from the pump house's construction in 1935. The pump house is recommended as a contributing resource to the Fort Donelson National Cemetery as it retains integrity and is associated with the historic development of the cemetery.



Figure 7.67. Carriage house, east and façade (north) elevations.



Figure 7.68. Carriage house, façade (north) and west elevations.



Figure 7.69. Carriage house, rear (south) elevation.



Figure 7.70. Pump House, south and east elevations.



Figure 7.71. Pump House, north and west elevations.

1d. Headstones

Construction date: 1867–Present

CRIS-HS Resource ID: 007164

Current NRHP Status: Contributing

Recommended NRHP Status: Contributing

Figures: 7.72–7.74

Two different headstone types reflective of different periods of interment are present in the Fort Donelson National Cemetery. The first type of headstone dates to the decades following the Civil War and marks the graves of known individuals. These arched, upright marble headstones feature the deceased's name and home state, as well as an identifying number, inscribed in bas relief within a recessed shield. The design of these headstones dates to the 1873 adoption of standardized designs for headstones erected in national cemeteries. The second type of headstone was introduced circa 1902 and is a slightly larger version of the arched headstones previously used to denote Civil War burials. The headstones are inscribed with

the name, religious affiliation, branch of service, date of birth, and date of death of the deceased. Religious symbols, such as a cross or Star of David, is often inscribed above the name of the interred to further indicate religious affiliation. Later examples of the second headstone type include the conflicts in which an individual served, including the two world wars, Korea, and Vietnam. More recent examples feature carved, black lettering rather than the uncolored inscriptions found on earlier headstones. The majority of the headstones in Fort Donelson National Cemetery are arranged in linear or curvilinear rows. In the central and eastern portion of the cemetery, headstones are organized into concentric circles and a heart-shaped design.

The headstones are listed as a contributing feature in the 1996 update to the Fort Donelson National Battlefield NRHP nomination. Although some headstones display damage due to continued landscape maintenance, overall, the headstones retain integrity. It is recommended the headstones continue to be contributing resources to the Fort Donelson National Cemetery.



Figure 7.72. Overview of headstones in National Cemetery.



Figure 7.73. View of circular design feature in central section of National Cemetery.



Figure 7.74. View of heart-shaped design feature in eastern section of National Cemetery.

1e. Unknown Soldier Headstones

Construction date: 1867–1903

CRIS-HS Resource ID: 408902

Current NRHP Status: Contributing

Recommended NRHP Status: Contributing

The headstones for unknown Civil War soldiers consist of a simple, square, marble pillar inscribed with a number and contain no additional identifying information. This headstone type was used to denote the graves of unknown individuals in national cemeteries until 1903 when it was discontinued in favor of the same headstone design utilized to indicate the burials of known military personnel. The majority of these markers are arranged within the linear or curvilinear rows of the cemetery. However, several examples are scattered throughout the concentric circles and heart-shaped designs displayed in the central and eastern section of the cemetery.

The unknown soldier headstones are listed as contributing features in the 1996 update to the Fort Donelson National Battlefield NRHP

nomination. The headstones are in good condition and retain integrity. As such, it is recommended that they remain contributing features within the Fort Donelson National Cemetery.

1f. Flagstaff

Construction date: 1907

CRIS-HS Resource ID: 090296

Current NRHP Status: Contributing

Recommended NRHP Status: Contributing

Figure: 7.75

The cast-iron flagstaff was installed in 1907 after the original wooden flag pole was struck by lightning. The flagstaff is constructed of four telescoping sections topped by an iron ball finial and is 75 feet in height. It is mounted on a poured concrete base and is anchored with four metal guy wires. The flagstaff is centered within a ring of marble headstones and markers at the center point of the heart-shaped design feature within the east side of the cemetery.



Figure 7.75. Overview of flagstaff.

The flagstaff is listed as a contributing feature in the Fort Donelson National Battlefield NRHP nomination. The flagstaff is recommended to remain a contributing feature to the Fort Donelson National Cemetery.

1g. Cannon Monument

Construction date: circa 1860s–1870s; 2013

Current NRHP Status: Cannon Mound Is Contributing

Recommended NRHP Status: Contributing

Figures: 7.76–7.78

In the center of the circular pattern of interments in the cemetery is a monument comprised of an upright cannon with a bronze plaque. The cannon is, a 32-pound seacoast gun that is said to have been a Confederate gun utilized during the battle of Fort Donelson. The Union moved the gun and its barbette carriage to the Union Fort Donelson. The gun was originally utilized in the

cemetery in the circular pattern of interments as a monument but rested on its barbette carriage. The cannon was later placed vertically with an attached bronze plaque in its current location on a slightly raised mound. The cannon monument was removed circa 1959 at the same time as the cemetery's original entry gate. The cannon was moved to the river battery and bronze plaque placed in storage. The cannon monument was restored to its original location in 2013 utilizing the original cannon and bronze plaque.

The cannon monument is a contributing feature to the Fort Donelson National Cemetery. The mound on which the monument is located was previously recommended a contributing feature. Although removed circa 1959, the monument has been restored in its original location with the same cannon and brass plaque and is recommended as a contributing feature to the National Cemetery.



Figure 7.76. Overview of the Cannon Monument within the circle of interments.



Figure 7.77. Cannon Monument on concrete base resting on raised mound.



Figure 7.78. Detail of Cannon Monument's plaque.

1h. Cemetery Wall

Construction date: 1867

CRIS-HS Resource ID: 090289

Current NRHP Status: Contributing

Recommended NRHP Status: Contributing

Figures: 7.79–7.84

The 1,665-foot long cemetery wall is constructed of worked, mortared limestone blocks of irregular size and is topped by a limestone coping course. The wall measures between three and eight courses in height, with the tallest sections located along the northwest portion of the cemetery where the ground slopes sharply. The main entrance to the cemetery features wrought iron gates and is framed by two limestone piers comprised of worked, mortared stone blocks of varying size. Each pier is topped by pyramidal stacks of cannon balls and adorned with a metal “U.S. National Cemetery” plaque. The original cemetery gates were comprised of cannon and wrought iron gates which were removed in 1959. In that same year the current entrance

was erected using the original gates and placing cannon balls atop the stone gateposts. The rear vehicular and pedestrian entrances along the northwest section of the cemetery are framed by poured concrete piers. The rear entrances contain wrought iron gates and are much older than the 1959 alterations to the main entrance although their date of construction could not be determined. Four sets of stone stiles were built along the wall in 1941 with limestone blocks from the cemetery’s rostrum. Consisting of a set of stairs along either side of the wall, two stiles are located west of the carriage house and east of the maintenance building, and two are situated along the northeast section of the wall.

The cemetery wall is listed as a contributing feature of the National Cemetery in the 1996 update to the Fort Donelson NRHP nomination. Although it has been repointed and repaired, the cemetery wall and its associated features retain integrity and continues to be a contributing feature within the cemetery.



Figure 7.79. Overview of cemetery wall.



Figure 7.80. Overview of cemetery wall.



Figure 7.81. Overview of cemetery wall.



Figure 7.82. View of main entrance to cemetery.



Figure 7.83. View of rear vehicular and pedestrian entrances to cemetery.



Figure 7.84. View of stile along cemetery wall.

1i. Cemetery Entrance Road, Parking Area, and Walls

Construction date: 1867; circa 1934–1935

CRIS-HS Resource ID: 090293

Current NRHP Status: Contributing

Recommended NRHP Status: Contributing

Figures: 7.85–7.88

Constructed by the War Department in 1867, the two-lane, currently paved asphalt road is approximately 18 feet to 20 feet in width and extends approximately 600 feet from Church Street to a small parking area near the main cemetery entrance. From the parking lot, the road extends along the cemetery's south and west walled boundary and terminates in a modern cul-de-sac near the rear cemetery entrance. The southern end of the cemetery entrance road originally terminated at Eddyville Road. Eddyville Road continued west-northwest before curving to the southwest. This portion of Eddyville Road is no longer extant. The cemetery entrance road was lengthened to the south past the former Eddyville Road intersection to Church Street in the late twentieth century. The entrance and service roads were paved during park-wide road improvements completed by the NPS circa 1934–1935. The adjacent parking lot was constructed and the retaining walls and parking lot walls built during this period by the NPS. The stone retaining walls flank the entrance drive while the parking lot stone walls are adjacent to the parking area at the northern terminus of the entrance road at the cemetery. The retaining and parking lot walls are constructed of stone similar to the cemetery walls but the construction method is comparable to walls at the River Batteries, indicating their construction by the NPS. The cemetery entrance road retaining and parking lot walls exhibits fine craftsmanship. A limestone curb along the southeast edge of the parking lot's north side dates to the construction of the "Mourning Trail," the improved federally owned and built road that extended from Dover Landing near Dover Hotel, through downtown Dover, along Church Street/Eddyville Road, and on to the cemetery. According to NPS staff, hundreds of

linear feet of the stone curbing is visible along the former federal road.

From the west edge of the parking area the access road extends to the west, south of the carriage house, to a "Y" in the road that continues to the west to the former maintenance building's parking lot or to the northwest as a service road that terminates at the cul-de-sac near the northwest edge of the cemetery. A dry-laid stone retaining wall is situated on the south side of the access road between the cemetery parking lot and the ranger station utility court. This retaining wall, which may have originally been longer, appears on historic maps and may date to the late 1870s. Portions of the retaining wall may have been removed for access to the maintenance area.

The utility court adjacent to the ranger station was added in the late 1950s. A section of dry-laid stone retaining wall is located between the ranger station and the service road that terminates at the cul-de-sac. This stone retaining wall is indicated on early maps and may date to the same period as the retaining wall on the south side of the access road between the cemetery parking lot and the ranger station utility court. This portion of the original stone retaining wall may have been removed and reconstructed at the time the ranger station was built in the late 1950s or for a previous metal building at this location, as mortar has been applied at various times to this stone retaining wall.

In 2009, split rail fences were installed along the entrance road. A security gate was installed at the cemetery road entrance in 2010 and two limestone piers, similar to those at the cemetery entrance, were added in 2011.

The entrance road and parking lot were developed during the period of significance for the Fort Donelson National Cemetery and are considered contributing features within the cemetery. Despite some minor alterations, the entrance road and parking area retain integrity and CRA recommends they continue as contributing features to the National Cemetery.



Figure 7.85. Overview of entrance drive and parking lot.



Figure 7.86. Overview of entrance drive from main parking lot.



Figure 7.87. View of limestone curbing associated with the Mourning Trail along northwest edge of parking lot.



Figure 7.88. Overview of main gate, entrance drive, and fencing.

1j. Bivouac of the Dead Tablets

Construction date: circa 1911–1913

CRIS-HS Resource ID: 090295

Current NRHP Status: Contributing

Recommended NRHP Status: Contributing

Figures: 7.89–7.90

In the center of the cemetery, three cast iron Bivouac of the Dead tablets set on wood posts are arranged around the headstones comprising the outer ring of the circular feature. Each tablet contains a portion of the poem “The Bivouac of the Dead” by Theodore O’Hara. The tablets are painted white and feature black lettering.

The Bivouac of the Dead Tablets are contributing features to the Fort Donelson National Cemetery. The tablets continue to be recommended as contributing features to the National Cemetery.

1k. Ranger Station

Construction date: 1956–1958

Current NRHP Status: Not Listed

Recommended NRHP Status: Not Eligible

Figures: 7.91–7.93

The ranger station was constructed during the Mission 66 era as a maintenance building and garage. Oriented southwest, the ranger station is a single-story, six-bay (dd/w/d/w/dd/w), flat-roof building. Located at the base of a slope, it rests on a poured concrete foundation, is clad in a brick veneer and wood composite panel siding, and is sheltered by a rolled asphalt roof. The windows contain one-over-one, double-hung vinyl sashes with false grids. The garage bays along the façade are enclosed and the façade and rear (northeast) elevations are clad in replacement composite wood panel siding. Replacement doors and windows have also been installed. A circa 1878 mortared stone retaining wall measuring eight courses in height extends along the base of the slope to the rear (northeast) of the building.



Figure 7.89. Overview of Bivouac of the Dead tablets.



Figure 7.90. Detail of Bivouac of the Dead tablet.



Figure 7.91. northwest and façade elevations of ranger station.



Figure 7.92. Façade (southwest) and southeast elevations of ranger station.



Figure 7.93. Rear (northeast) elevation of ranger station.

The former maintenance building is not addressed in the Fort Donelson NRHP nomination and was constructed after the current period of significance. However, even if the period of significance is extended to 1963, alterations to the building such as the replacement cladding, doors, and windows, and the modification to the façade's fenestration, have diminished the building's integrity of design and materials. Although retaining its form and integrity of location and association, the ranger station does not retain sufficient integrity and is not recommended as a contributing resource to the Fort Donelson National Cemetery.

11. Vegetation, Views and Vistas, and Circulation Features

Construction date: various

Current NRHP Status: Portions Listed and Not Listed

Recommended NRHP Status: see below

Vegetation: The War Department added numerous plantings during its management of the Fort Donelson National Cemetery from the late 1860s through the early 1930s. Evidence indicates the vegetation coverage of the cemetery is currently much less than during the War Department's operation of the facility. A planting plan from 1940 created by the NPS indicates that many of the trees in the Fort Donelson National Cemetery were in place at that time or were replanted in guidance with the 1940 planting plan. The 1940 planting plan incorporated the mature landscape created during the War Department tenure. The tree species and placement adhere to the planting plan although the current tree canopy is less than what existed in 1940. Trees, primarily cedars, are situated on the inner fringes of the stone Cemetery Wall and sugar maples flank the Entrance Road. Park staff planted evergreen trees encircling the Bivouac of the Dead Tablets in the first part of this decade. Forested areas are situated to the north, west, and south of the Fort Donelson National Cemetery. Contributing elements of the Fort Donelson National Cemetery's vegetation include the allée of trees flanking the Entrance Road, the

grassed avenues along the interior of the Cemetery Wall and the interior of the cemetery delineating the rows of interments, the trees aligned along the Cemetery Wall, and a few mature trees within the cemetery.

Views and Vistas: The views from the interior of the Fort Donelson National Cemetery have changed somewhat since the end of the current period of significance in the early 1940s. While evergreens and hardwoods still align the Cemetery Wall, sections are missing trees and therefore views from inside the cemetery are more open to areas outside the cemetery than they would have been during the period of significance. The Cannon Mound within the cemetery is currently a contributing resource and the cannon monument is recommended as a contributing resource. The Mound and Cannon Monument are focal points within the circular arrangement of interments, similar to the Flagstaff within the heart-shaped arrangement of burials. The allée of trees along the Entrance Drive are another vista experienced entering and exiting the cemetery. Park staff continue replanting efforts to adhere more closely to the cemetery's period of significance while also continuing the open clearing with in the Cemetery Wall. The integrity of the views and vistas within the Fort Donelson National Cemetery has been diminished by the loss of trees associated with the cemetery and Entrance Drive, as the views and vistas are more open presently than in the past. Although diminished, the views from within the cemetery remain contributing characteristics to the Fort Donelson National Cemetery and will improve as recent plantings mature.

Circulation Features: The interior circulation patterns within the Cemetery Wall include the grass avenues that were originally gravel but changed to grass by the mid-1870s. These are primarily for pedestrian use and are contributing elements as they provide spatial patterns to the cemetery. The brick walkways within the cemetery were constructed after the current period of significance. If the period of significance is expanded to the early 1960s, the brick walkways may be contributing elements depending on their construction date. Vehicular circulation patterns outside the Cemetery Wall

include the Entrance Road, Parking Area, and the Service Road. All three are contributing elements to the circulation pattern outside the Cemetery Walls as the Entrance Road dates to the establishment of the Fort Donelson National Cemetery and the Service Road predates the cemetery. Both roads have been paved numerous times although the current paving shares similarities with macadam paving utilized during the current period of significance. The Parking Area was constructed in the 1930s to accommodate the burgeoning vehicular traffic to the cemetery and has become historic by its introduction during the current period of significance.

2. Battlefield Park

Fort Donelson National Battlefield was created through an act of the United States Congress in 1928. It was administered by the War Department, who constructed roads, entrances, drainage systems, and fencing, landscaped the park, added interpretive signs, and stabilized the earthworks and other features. Improvements to the park continued after it was transferred to the NPS in 1933. The NPS upgraded existing roadways, built new walkways, installed additional interpretive signs and displays, increased the boundaries of the park, rehabilitated and restored historic buildings and cultural landscape features, and constructed new buildings, including the Visitor Center, to facilitate the administration of the park.

The park's Legislative Area, designated by legislation through Congress, is approximately 1,200 acres for all units. The Legislative Area includes lands currently owned and not owned by the NPS. The NPS owns approximately 800 acres in Tennessee and 179 acres in Kentucky. The Legislative Area contains remnants of Fort Heiman and Fort Donelson, the Dover Hotel, and other resources associated with the Battle of Fort Donelson and the 1862 Confederate surrender. Many of the features associated with the War Department and early NPS administration remain. The roadways, fences and walls, interpretive elements, and buildings from both eras are important elements within the park enhancing the visitor experience. These elements also contribute to the historic narrative

represented within the landscape and the built environment.

2a. Main Park Entrance

Construction date: circa 1931–1933; 1980s

CRIS-HS Resource ID: 090286

Current NRHP Status: Contributing

Recommended NRHP Status: Contributing

Figures 7.95–7.99

The main entrance to Fort Donelson National Battlefield was constructed by the War Department in the 1930s. The entrance is framed by a pair of mortared fieldstone columns topped with a pyramidal stack of single shot cannon balls. The columns are constructed of stones of varying shapes and sizes and are finished with two stacked capstone courses of rusticated limestone blocks. A bronze plaque is affixed to each column. The plaques are inscribed “U.S. Fort Donelson National Military Park.” The columns were completed between 1931 and 1933, but moved to their current location in the early 1960s during construction of the Visitor Center. A low stone retaining wall consisting of mortared fieldstone finished with a flat limestone coping extends along either side of the entrance drive. A low stone column is located at both ends of the retaining wall. The upper columns located at the northeast terminus of the retaining and closest to the stone columns, are topped with a single cannon ball. The lower columns, situated at the southwest portion of the retaining wall which curves away from the entrance drive, are slightly larger than the columns at the northeast terminus of the retaining wall. The lower columns feature a pyramidal stack of single shot cannon balls and a metal plaque inscribed “US.” A secondary stone retaining wall extends from the lower column on the northwest (left) side of the entrance drive along the base of the adjacent slope. A small stone column is located at the southwest terminus of this retaining wall. Highway 79 was realigned in the 1980s, moving the roadway from close proximity to approximately 235 feet downslope of the main entrance. This resulted in the lengthening of the main entrance drive to intersect the new Highway 79 alignment and buried a secondary retaining wall northeast of the entrance

drive that originally continued to the northeast. A new entrance sign, featuring a limestone base and column topped by a pyramidal stack of single shot cannon balls, was recently installed along Highway 79 near the park entrance drive.

The elements of the main park entrance, considered as a group, is recommended as a contributing feature within the NRHP-listed park. The sign near Highway 79, because of its recent addition, is considered a non-contributing element to the main park entrance. Although the improvements to Highway 79 resulted in distancing the roadway from the original main park entrance, overall, the main park entrance maintains integrity and it remains recommended as a contributing feature within the Fort Donelson National Battlefield.

2b. Fort Donelson Entrance

Construction date: circa 1931–1932

CRIS-HS Resource ID: 090288

Current NRHP Status: Contributing

Recommended NRHP Status: Contributing

Figure: 7.100

The entrance to Fort Donelson is marked by a pair of stone columns framing the entrance road. The columns are constructed of mortared fieldstone of varying shapes and sizes and are finished with two capstone courses of rusticated limestone blocks. The columns are topped with a pyramidal stack of single shot cannon balls. A bronze plaque is affixed to each column. The plaque on the southwest (left) column is inscribed “Fort” and the plaque on the northeast (right) column reads “Donelson.” A War Department interpretive tablet is located near the northeast (right) entrance column.

The entrance to Fort Donelson is a contributing feature within the NRHP-listed park. The columns are in good condition and retain their integrity. It is recommended that the entrance retains its contributing status within Fort Donelson National Battlefield.

2c. Fort Donelson Park Road and Extensions

Construction date: 1913–1920; 1970s

CRIS-HS Resource ID: 090294

Current NRHP Status: Contributing

Recommended NRHP Status: Contributing

Figures: 7.101–7.103

Fort Donelson Park Road provides the primary means of visitor circulation in the park. The approximately one-mile long, two-lane, paved road extends in a general northeast direction from Highway 79 and terminates at the River Battery Loop. From Highway 79 the Fort Donelson Park Road passes to the northwest of the Visitor Center and continues in a northerly route to the intersection with Eddyville Loop Road. A steel entrance gate was installed in 2009 along Fort Donelson Park Road just north of the Visitor Center. A section of earthworks is adjacent to the northwest side of Fort Donelson Park Road between the Visitor Center and Eddyville Loop Road. Several cannons are placed adjacent to the roadway between the Visitor Center and the Confederate Monument to indicate the locations of Confederate batteries. The Confederate Monument is approximately .12-miles north of the Visitor Center parking lot.

South of the intersection of Fort Donelson Road and Eddyville Loop Road, to the west of Fort Donelson Park Road, is the Confederate Monument. Fort Donelson Park Road continues to the northeast from its intersection with Eddyville Loop Road for approximately .40-miles through a heavily wooded landscape, although an open field is found along a portion of the road to its southeast. Fort Donelson Park Road then curves to the north-northwest and enters Confederate Fort Donelson as the roadway passes through the stone columns marking the entrance through the walls of Fort Donelson. Fort Donelson Park Road continues to the north-northwest for approximately 400 feet within the fort walls, before curving to the northeast. A 12-space paved parking lot is located on the south side of the road near the river battery loop. The NPS added the parking in 1936. Approximately 150 feet east of the parking lot Fort Donelson Park Road intersects the River Battery Loop.

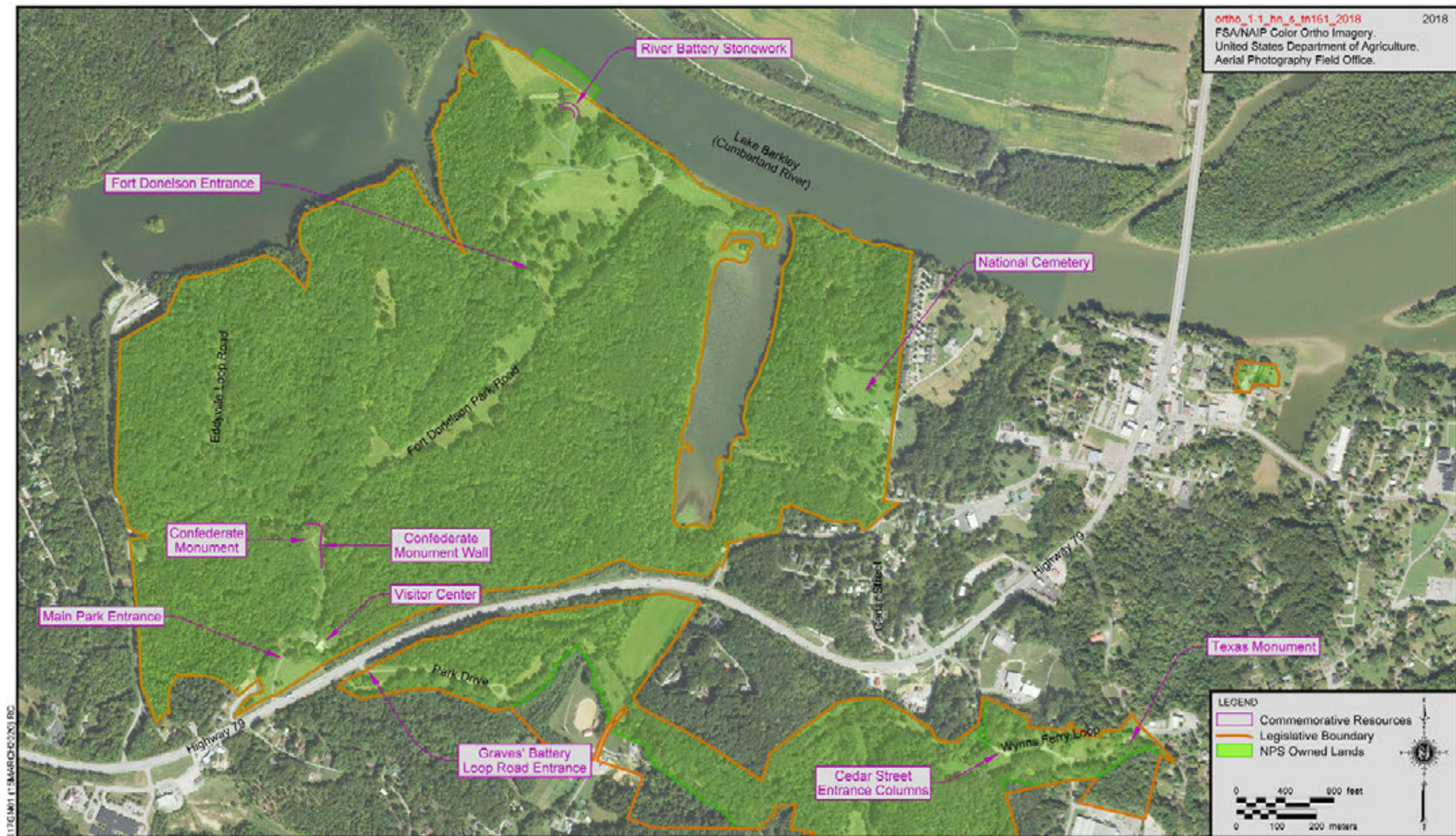


Figure 7.94. Aerial photograph depicting commemorative resources at Fort Donelson National Battlefield.



Figure 7.95. Overview of main park entrance.



Figure 7.96. Detail of upper column.



Figure 7.97. Detail of lower column.



Figure 7.98. View of secondary retaining wall.



Figure 7.99. View of new entrance sign.



Figure 7.100. Overview of entrance columns.



Figure 7.101. Overview of Fort Donelson Park Road.



Figure 7.102. Overview of Fort Donelson Park Road.



Figure 7.103. Overview of Fort Donelson Park Road.

The **River Battery Loop** extends north from the terminus of Fort Donelson Park Road for approximately 175 feet to a “Y” in the roadway which comprises the loop. The paved River Battery Loop, which is approximately .20-miles in length, provides access and parking for viewing the river batteries. The driving loop has one-way traffic traveling to the north before curving back to the southwest and then southeast to the “Y.” The north side of the road contains seven parallel parking spaces. Pedestrian walkways lead to the upper and lower river batteries. The River Battery Loop was constructed between 1931 and 1933.

The **Fort Donelson Park Road Extension** extends in an eastward direction from the terminus of Fort Donelson Park Road and curves to the southeast to a paved 12-space parking lot. The Fort Donelson Park Road Extension to the parking lot is approximately 0.15-miles in length. The parking lot is adjacent to a picnic area and restroom facility. Purportedly completed during the 1970s, the Fort Donelson Park Road Extension is in the general vicinity of the old road to Lock D. A portion of the Fort Donelson Park Road Extension may therefore

predate the purported 1970s construction of the roadway extension.

Fort Donelson Park Road is listed as a contributing feature in the NRHP nomination for Fort Donelson National Battlefield. Although a few alterations have been made, including the construction of the 1970s extension and additional parking spaces, overall, Park Road maintains its historic route and features and retains its integrity. CRA recommends the road continues to contribute to the NRHP-listed park.

2d. Eddyville Loop Road

Construction date: circa 1931–1933

CRIS-HS Resource ID: 090299

Current NRHP Status: Contributing

Recommended NRHP Status: Contributing

Figure: 7.104

Constructed during the War Department era, Eddyville Loop Road extends northwest from Fort Donelson Park Road north of the Confederate Monument and follows a ridgeline for approximately .5 mile before terminating in a loop. The 1.5 mile, two-lane,

paved road is the primary means of vehicular circulation for this section of the park. Four unlined parking spaces are located on the north side of the loop and a pull-off with an interpretive sign and two parking spaces are located just south of the loop. Several Confederate earthworks are adjacent to the southwest side of the roadway. Two cannons indicating the location of a battery, as well as War Department interpretive tablets and other wayside exhibits are located along Eddyville Loop Road.

A gravel road approximately .25 mile west-northwest of the intersection of Fort Donelson Park Road and Eddyville Loop Road connects to Fort Donelson Shores Road. The gravel road dates to after the Civil War but was constructed before 1932 and the Eddyville Loop Road. This gravel road is gated and primarily used by park staff.

The Eddyville Loop Road is the historic Eddyville Road from the road intersection with Fort Donelson Park Road westward. The original trace is a deep depression that exits the current loop road directly behind earthwork Segments 4 and 5 and between Segments 3 and 2, heading westward down the approximate 150-foot slope to Hickman Creek for a linear distance of over 800 feet.

Eddyville Loop Road is listed as a contributing feature within Battlefield Park. Apart from paving and the addition of parking spaces, the road remains relatively unchanged since its construction in the 1930s. CRA recommends both the Eddyville Loop Road and the historic Eddyville Road trace continues to contribute to the overall significance of Fort Donelson National Battlefield.

2e. Culverts

Construction date: circa 1930s

CRIS-HS Resource ID: 090291

Current NRHP Status: Contributing

Recommended NRHP Status: Contributing

Figures: 7.105–7.106

As part of road improvements conducted by the NPS during the 1930s, culverts were installed to address storm water and drainage issues. These culverts are typically constructed of mortared, shaped limestone blocks with a stone headwall and a round or arched barrel containing a corrugated metal pipe. Some examples also display limestone wing walls.



Figure 7.104. Overview of Eddyville Loop Road.

Historic stone culverts line many of the roadways throughout the park, including Fort Donelson Park, Eddyville Loop, and Wynn's Ferry Roads. Two additional examples are located near the Dover Hotel and along the entrance drive leading to the National Cemetery.

The culverts at Fort Donelson are listed as contributing features in the Fort Donelson National Battlefield NRHP nomination. Although some examples, particularly those located near the Dover Hotel, show signs of deterioration, overall, the culverts retain integrity. Thus, CRA recommends the culverts remain contributing features within the Fort Donelson.

2f. Paved Waterways

Construction date: circa 1930s

CRIS-HS Resource ID: 090292

Current NRHP Status: Contributing

Recommended NRHP Status: Contributing

Figures: 7.107–7.108

Like the culverts in the park, the paved waterways, or swales, at Fort Donelson were installed by the NPS in the 1930s. These drainage swales consist of shallow trenches lined with limestone pavers and are found along roadways and adjacent to stone walls throughout the park, such as those near the main park entrance and along the River Battery Loop and Wynn's Ferry Loop. Swales often facilitate the channeling of storm water into culverts and other drainage features.

The swales are listed as contributing features in the NRHP nomination for the park. The swales retain integrity and it is recommended they remain contributing features to the NRHP-listed Fort Donelson National Battlefield.



Figure 7.105. View of culvert along Fort Donelson Park Road.



Figure 7.106. View of culvert near intersection of Fort Donelson Park Road and Eddyville Loop Road.



Figure 7.107. View of swale near upper water batteries.



Figure 7.108. View of swale along Wynn's Ferry Loop.

2g. War Department Tablets

Construction date: 1932

CRIS-HS Resource ID: 090300

Current NRHP Status: Contributing

Recommended NRHP Status: Contributing

Figures: 7.109–7.111

The 38 cast iron tablets installed by the War Department are the oldest battle specific interpretation in the park, with an additional 10 cast iron tablets located outside the park property along roadways on perpetual easements. Previous tablets placed in the park are located in the national cemetery and include the Gettysburg Address and the Bivouac of the Dead tablets. The War Department tablets are located along roadways and commemorate various historic features and sites in the park and the local community, including earthworks, batteries, battle sites, the fort, the National Cemetery, and other locations associated with Fort Donelson (Table 7.1). The tablets are color coded, with red and white denoting information about

Confederate history and blue and white denoting information about Union historical facts. The War Department tablets are often accompanied by modern interpretive signs and wayside exhibits. According to the 2012 Cultural Landscape Report, several of the tablets are rusting and two, located near the Visitor Center, have been repaired.

The War Department Tablets are listed as contributing features in the NRHP nomination for Fort Donelson National Battlefield. Although some tablets display minor deterioration, overall, the tablets are in very good condition and retain integrity. It is recommended the War Department Tablets retain their contributing NRHP status.

Table 7.1. Listing of War Department Tablets.

Sign #	Military Affiliation	Title
1	CSA	Fort Donelson
2	CSA	The River Batteries: Captain Joseph Dixon (Killed), Captain Jacob Culbertson, Commander
3	CSA	The Upper Water Battery: Captain Reuben R. Ross, Commander
4	CSA	Brigadier General Simon B. Buckner's Division
5	CSA	Brigadier General Simon B. Buckner's Division, Jackson's Virginia Battery
6	USA	Brigadier General Charles F. Smith's Division, Colonel Jacob G. Lauman's Brigade
7	CSA	Confederate Troops and Casualties at Fort Donelson
8	USA	Federal Troops and Casualties at Fort Donelson
9	CSA	Brigadier General Simon B. Buckner's Division, Colonel John C. Brown's Brigade, Porter's Battery
10	CSA	Brigadier General Simon B. Buckner's Division, Colonel John C. Brown's Brigade, Grave's Battery
11	CSA	Colonel Nathan Bedford Forrest's Cavalry
12	USA	Brigadier General John A. McClelland's Division, Colonel William R. Morrison's Brigade
13	CSA	Brigadier General Bushrod R. Johnson's Division, Colonel Adolphus Heiman's Brigade, Maney's Battery
14	CSA	Brigadier General Bushrod R. Johnson's Division, Colonel Adolphus Heiman's Brigade
15	CSA	Brigadier General Simon B. Buckner's Division, Colonel John C. Brown's Brigade
16	CSA	Brigadier General Bushrod R. Johnson's Division, Colonel Joseph Drake's Brigade
17	CSA	Brigadier General Bushrod R. Johnson's Division, Colonel Joseph Drake's Brigade, French's Battery
18	CSA	Brigadier General Gideon J. Pillow's Division, Colonel Gabriel C. Wharton's Brigade
19	CSA	Brigadier General Gideon J. Pillow's Division, Colonel William E. Baldwin's Brigade
20	CSA	Original Position of a Four Gun Section of Greene's Battery, Bushrod Johnson's Division
21	CSA	Colonel Nathan Bedford Forrest's Cavalry
22	CSA	Brigadier General Gideon Pillow's Division, Colonel John McCausland's Brigade
23	CSA	Brigadier General Bushrod R. Johnson's Division, Colonel Thomas J. Davidson's Brigade, Greene's Battery
24	CSA	Brigadier General Simon B. Buckner's Division, Colonel John C. Brown's Brigade
25	USA	Brigadier General Charles F. Smith's Division, Colonel John McArthur's Brigade
26	USA	Brigadier General Charles F. Smith's Division, Colonel John McArthur's Brigade
27	USA	Brigadier General John A. McClelland's Division, Colonel William R. Morrison's Brigade
28	USA	Brigadier General Lew Wallace's Division, Colonel Charles Cruft's Brigade
29	USA	Brigadier General Lew Wallace's Division, Colonel John M. Thayer's Brigade
30	USA	Brigadier General John A. McClelland's Division, Colonel William H.L. Wallace's Brigade
31	USA	Brigadier General John. A. McClelland's Division, Colonel Richard J. OClesby's Brigade

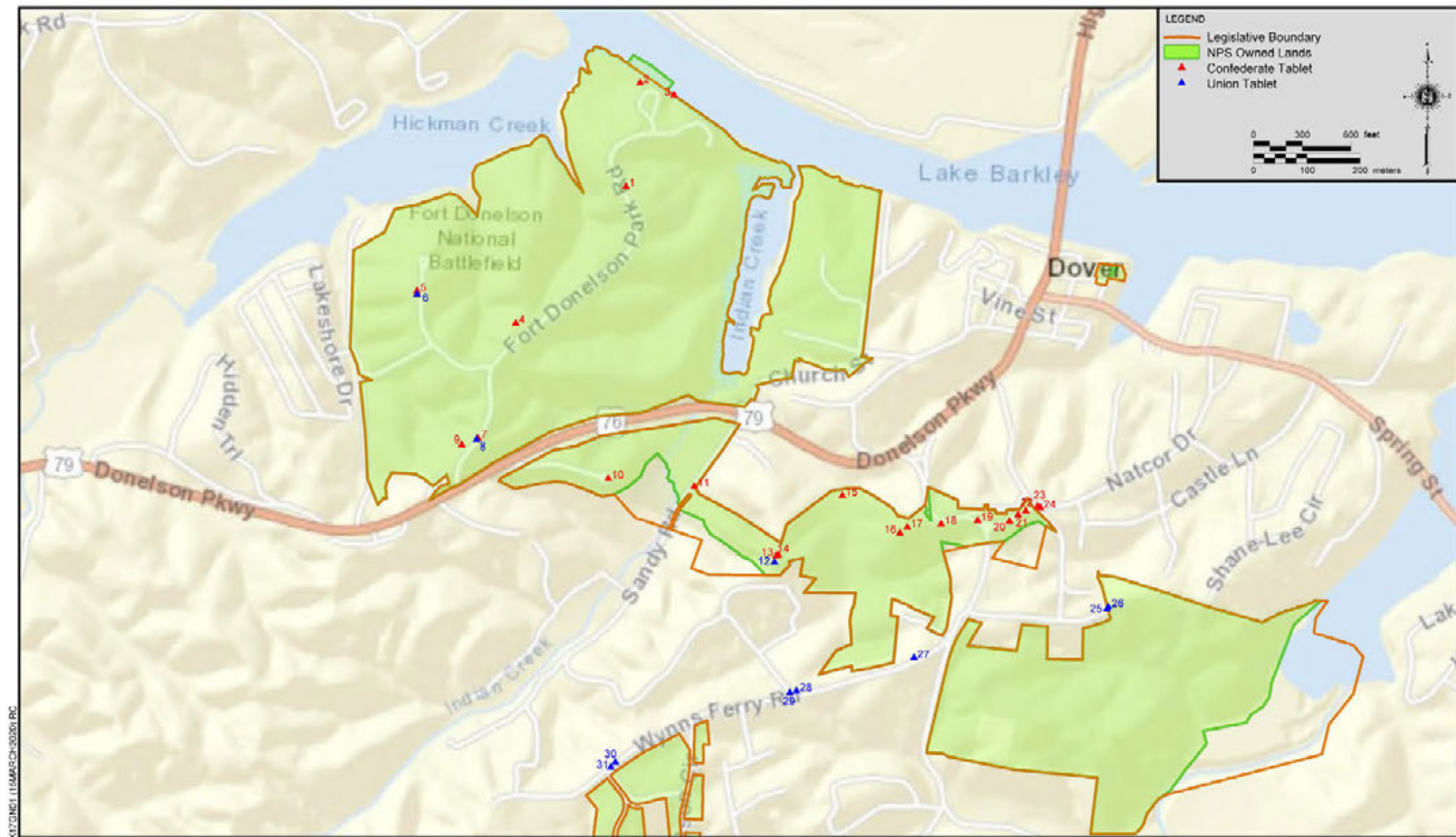


Figure 7.109. Map showing location of War Department Tablets.



Figure 7.110. View of tablet near Fort Donelson entrance.



Figure 7.111. View of tablet along Wynn's Ferry Road.

2h. Confederate Monument

Construction date: 1933

CRIS-HS Resource ID: 007171

Current NRHP Status: Contributing

Recommended NRHP Status: Contributing

Figures: 7.112–7.114

Located at the intersection of Fort Donelson Park Road and Eddyville Loop Road, the Confederate Monument commemorates 500 Confederate soldiers buried in a mass grave near the site. There is some debate as to the number of burials as the total number of casualties in this area would have been minimal compared to overall areas of combat, unless deaths were attributed to disease. Remote sensing of the area conducted circa 2011 revealed no evidence of interments near the monument.

The site consists of three acres containing a marble and bronze monument, a bronze cannon, a stone retaining wall, and a paved parking area and walkway. Situated on a slight rise over the adjacent roadway, the monument includes a 25-foot marble obelisk and a life-sized bronze statue of a Confederate soldier set on a marble base. The obelisk is inscribed with the “CSA” emblem and a dedication to the Confederate soldiers. The Confederate States of America (CSA) emblem and the Confederate battle flag are typical designs utilized by the UDC during the first half of the twentieth century. The Confederate battle flag did not exist in February 1862 during the battle at Fort Donelson. A tiered approach, which was reconstructed in 1936, extends along the front of the monument and a poured concrete border outlines the area around the monument base. A series of semi-circular, tiered pebble aggregate walkway and steps lead from the adjacent parking area to the monument and were installed during a 2012 rehabilitation project. A limestone wall extends along the front of the site and curves along the north side of Eddyville Loop Road. A bronze field gun is located west of the monument.

The Confederate Monument, along with the tiered approach and walkways, is considered a contributing feature within the NRHP-listed park. Despite the recent installation of a new walkway, the Confederate Monument and associated improvements remain relatively unchanged since its construction. Therefore, the Confederate Monument and tiered approach and walkways remain a contributing object to the NRHP-listed park.

2i. Confederate Monument Wall

Construction date: 1933

CRIS-HS Resource ID: 090287

Current NRHP Status: Contributing

Recommended NRHP Status: Contributing

Figures: 7.115–7.116

A limestone retaining wall extends along the east and north side of the Confederate Monument site adjacent to Fort Donelson Park Road and Eddyville Loop Road. The wall measures four courses in height and is constructed of mortared, shaped limestone blocks of varying sizes. Two sets of stone stairs are built into the center portion of the wall and connect to the tiered walkway leading to the monument. A paved pull-off is incorporated into the center section of the wall. A swale extends along the west side of the wall.

The wall adjacent to the Confederate Monument is listed as a contributing feature in the NRHP nomination for Fort Donelson National Battlefield. The wall is in good condition and retains integrity. Thus, it is recommended that the wall remains a contributing feature within the NRHP-listed park.



Figure 7.112. Overview of Confederate Monument site.



Figure 7.113. Detail of monument.



Figure 7.114. View of tiered approach and concrete border.



Figure 7.115. Overview of south side of retaining wall.



Figure 7.116. Overview of north side of retaining wall.

2j. Texas Monument

Construction date: 1963

CRIS-HS Resource ID: 007172

Current NRHP Status: Non-contributing

Recommended NRHP Status: Contributing, with expansion of the period of significance

Figures: 7.117–7.118

The Texas Monument, erected in commemoration of the Texas soldiers who fought at Fort Donelson, is located near the intersection of Natcor Drive and Main Street. It is adjacent to a series of earthworks that extends from the intersection of Natcor Drive and Main Street and beyond Wynn's Ferry Loop. The monument consists of a six-foot granite marker set on a granite base. It is engraved with a brief description of the battle and a dedication to the fallen soldiers. A War Department tablet and a modern interpretive sign are located near the monument.

The Texas Monument is currently a non-contributing feature as it was installed after the current NRHP period of significance for Fort Donelson National Battlefield. If the period of significance is expanded to 1963, the

monument would be recommended as a contributing feature to the NRHP-listed park for its high degree of integrity and association as a commemorative object within the park.

2k. River Battery Stonework

Construction date: 1936; 1993

CRIS-HS Resource ID: 090290

Current NRHP Status: Contributing

Recommended NRHP Status: Contributing

Figures: 7.119–7.122

A stone retaining wall constructed by the NPS extends along either side of the northeast curve of the driveway loop leading to the Upper and Lower River Batteries. Both sections of the wall are constructed of mortared, shaped limestone blocks of varying sizes. The retaining wall along the southwest side of the loop measures three courses in height and is adjacent to a limestone-lined swale. The northeast section of the retaining wall extends below grade and measures seven courses in height. It is topped by a three-course stone guardrail finished with a narrow, flat capstone course. A narrow, flat band of stone, similar to the capstone course,



Figure 7.117. Overview of Texas Monument site.



Figure 7.118. Detail of Texas Monument.



Figure 7.119. View of stone swale and retaining wall at Upper River Battery.



Figure 7.120. Portion of retaining wall facing river constructed below grade.



Figure 7.121. View of stone stairs and walkway near Upper River Battery.



Figure 7.122. View of stone stairs near Lower River Battery.

distinguishes the guardrail from the retaining wall. Narrow vertical voids along the guardrail, which is constructed above grade, allow drainage. A set of stone stairs just south of the retaining wall connects to a stone walkway leading to the Lower River Battery. A set of stone steps constructed in 1993 extends from the Lower River Battery site towards the river.

The stone retaining wall near the River Batteries is listed in the NRHP nomination as a contributing feature to the park. CRA recommends the retaining wall remains a contributing feature to the NRHP-listed Fort Donelson National Battlefield.

2l. Visitor Center

Construction date: 1960–1962

Current NRHP Status: Not Listed

Recommended NRHP Status: Contributing, with expansion of the period of significance

Figures: 7.123–7.127

Constructed during the Mission 66 era, the Visitor Center is located on the southeast side of Fort Donelson Park Road northeast of the main entrance to the park. The Visitor Center is a two-story, seven-bay (w/w/w/w/dd/w/w), flat-roof, mid-century building with side wings and a rear projection. The building rests on an exposed poured concrete basement foundation and is clad in a brick veneer featuring Roman bricks laid in running bond. The roof is sheathed in a rubber membrane. Windows contain large two-, three-, and four-light fixed metal sashes and single-light wood awning sashes. An interior brick chimney pierces the roof of the main block of the building. Full-height and two-story windows covered by metal louvers are a defining feature of the façade. The southwest portion of the façade is recessed and contains the main entry, which opens into the building lobby. Single-story, flat-roof wings extend from the northeast and southwest elevations of the building. The interior of the Visitor Center features a split-level design, with the exhibition space located a half-level down from the lobby and administrative offices located another half-level below the exhibit area. The east corner of the

building features a glass-enclosed stairwell. A second-story doorway accessible from the stairwell leads to the former observation deck, which is no longer accessible to the public. A two-story, flat-roof projection built partially below grade is attached to the rear elevation of the Visitor Center. The Visitor Center is currently undergoing renovations and is closed to the public.

An amphitheater, pavilion/picnic shelter, and two War Department interpretive tablets are located in the vicinity of the Visitor Center. The amphitheater was constructed in 2007 and the pavilion/picnic shelter was added to the property in 2008.

Exterior circulation for the Visitor Center includes the vehicular parking lot and pedestrian sidewalks. The original sidewalks dating to the early 1960s include those in front of the Visitor Center and accessing the parking lot. Sidewalks were constructed in the first decade of the twenty-first century to access the amphitheater and pavilion/picnic shelter.

A significant update to the rehabilitation plans for the Visitor Center was completed in 2019. When completed, in addition to being a safe and accessible facility, the Visitor Center will have many representative features original to its design but removed over the years during its use.

The Visitor Center is not addressed in the Fort Donelson NRHP nomination since it was constructed outside the park's current NRHP period of significance. A Determination of Eligibility (DOE) for the Visitor Center was completed by the NPS in 2010 and signed by the Tennessee State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) in 2011. The Visitor Center was recommended eligible for listing in the NHHP under Criterion A for its association with the Mission 66 program of the NPS and also under Criterion C as an example of mid-twentieth century NPS architecture. Although 48 years old at the time, the Visitor Center was recommended eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion Consideration G under the NPS theme study completed by Sarah Allaback entitled *Mission 66 Visitor Centers: The History of a Building Type*.



Figure 7.123. Façade of Visitor Center.



Figure 7.124. Façade and southwest elevation of Visitor Center.



Figure 7.125. Northeast and rear elevation of Visitor Center.



Figure 7.126. View of amphitheater.



Figure 7.127. View of pavilion/picnic shelter.

The building, constructed as part of Mission 66 initiatives, is associated with an important period of development in the history of the NPS and remains relatively unaltered since its construction. While the Visitor Center has been determined eligible for listing in the NRHP, it is not actually listed and is not currently included as a contributing resource to Fort Donelson National Battlefield. As such, were the NRHP period of significance to be expanded to 1963, the Visitor Center would be recommended as a contributing resource to the NRHP-listed Fort Donelson National Battlefield. The amphitheater and pavilion/picnic shelter are non-contributing resources because of their recent construction dates while the two War Department interpretive tablets are contributing objects to the NRHP-listed Fort Donelson National Battlefield. The parking lot and sidewalks associated with the original construction of the Mission 66 Visitor Center would be recommended contributing resources if the period of significance were expanded to 1963.

2m. Graves' Battery Loop Road Entrance Columns

Construction date: 2012

Current NRHP Status: Not Listed

Recommended NRHP Status: Non-contributing

Figure: 7.128

The entrance Graves' Battery Loop Road is flanked by square columns that appear to be constructed of mortared cut limestone with a flat concrete cap. Pyramidal stacked cannon balls top each column. Metal gates, added in 2012, flank the roadway and are situated inside the two columns. A NPS sign, also built in 2012, is located to the northeast of the columns. The entrance columns, built in 2012, are approximately 80 feet southeast of the intersection with Highway 79. The paved roadway terminates in a loop at Grave's Battery approximately 980 feet from the entrance columns.

The entrance columns, gates, and signage denoting the entrance to Graves' Battery Loop Road are not included in the NRHP nomination for the park. CRA recommends the entrance columns, gates, and signage for Grave's Battery Loop Road are non-contributing features to the NRHP-listed Fort Donelson National Battlefield because of their recent construction.



Figure 7.128. Graves' Battery Loop Road Entrance Columns and sign, view to the east-northeast.

2n. Cedar Street Entrance Columns

Construction date: circa 1930; rebuilt 1995

Current NRHP Status: Not Listed

Recommended NRHP Status: Contributing

Figure: 7.129

The Cedar Street entrance columns flank Cedar Street approximately 550 feet west of its intersection with Natcor Drive. The columns are located near the former intersection with Wynn's Ferry Loop which was removed in 1986. The square, mortared limestone columns have flat stone caps and are topped by pyramidal stacks of cannon balls. The northeast elevation of each column have bronze plaques stating "U.S. Fort-Donelson National Military Park." The original columns probably date to the War Department's management of the park as they are similar in construction to other columns built during that period. The columns were rebuilt slightly further from Cedar Street in 1995 after a truck damaged one of the columns.

The entrance columns, gates, and signage denoting the entrance to Grave's Battery Loop

Road are not included in the NRHP nomination for the park. CRA recommends the Cedar Street entrance columns, while rebuilt, are contributing features to the NRHP-listed Fort Donelson National Battlefield. Although rebuilt in 1995, the columns are very close to their original location and were reconstructed in the same manner and materials as their original appearance.

2o. Vegetation, Views and Vistas, Small Scale Features, and Circulation Features

Construction date: various

Current NRHP Status: Portions Listed and Not Listed

Recommended NRHP Status: see below

Vegetation: The type and quantity of vegetation varies throughout Fort Donelson National Battlefield. Within Fort Donelson the area is primarily open fields with hardwoods near some sections of earthworks, with many of these plantings dating to the War Department and early NPS management. In recent years many of the trees in and in close



Figure 7.129. View of Cedar Street Entrance Columns, looking northeast.

proximity to the earthworks have been removed. Areas flanking the park roads and nearby earthworks are also cleared of trees although the majority of the park north of Highway 79 is heavily wooded, including areas outside the Fort Donelson National Cemetery. South of Highway 79 the vegetation pattern is similar. Area's near the park's roadways are cleared, such as along Graves' Battery Loop Road and Cedar Street, with heavily wooded areas beyond. The Confederate Breakout Unit east of Leatherwood Road is heavily wooded, primarily with hardwoods but also groupings of evergreens. South of Wynn's Ferry Road, the Union Reorganization Unit parcels are also heavily forested with hardwoods. War Department and NPS plantings associated with landscaping plans for the park executed during the period of significance are recommended by CRA as contributing to the historic landscape.

Views and Vistas: Views inside the fort are contributing to Fort Donelson National

Battlefield, as the area in the fort remains open although much changed than during the battle period. As the forested areas would have been open, views from inside the fort to the surrounding area no longer reflect the open character that would have been experienced during the battle and are therefore considered non-contributing. Views to the river have also been modified through the widening of the channel with the creation of Lake Barkley. Although altered, CRA considers the views to the Cumberland River from the fort and River Battery are contributing to Fort Donelson National Battlefield. Views and vistas from other sections of the core of Fort Donelson National Battlefield have been altered usually through the secondary and third growth reforestation of the area and are considered non-contributing. Certain sections, such as along Eddyville Loop, remain contributing long the road corridor.

Small Scale Features: Within Fort Donelson National Battlefield, small-scale features include the log cabin dating to the 1970s and

an observation deck that was replaced in the early 2000s at the fort, field guns and interpretive signs, and benches and trash receptacles throughout the park. Amenities at the park, if constructed after the period of significance, such as the log cabin and observation deck, are considered non-contributing features. Field guns, if in place during the period of significance, although not the actual field guns utilized during the battle, are also recommended as contributing resources. Contemporary interpretive signs are considered non-contributing while War Department Tablets are contributing features. Modern trash receptacles and benches are non-contributing features.

Circulation Features: Pedestrian circulation patterns are comprised of walking trails and concrete walkways, including over five miles of trails in the park. Concrete walkways usually connect parking areas to buildings and were usually constructed after the period of significance and therefore are non-contributing, except for the walkway associated with the Confederate Memorial. While the walking trail between Fort Donelson Road and Indian Creek follows the trace of the Eddyville Road and is contributing, the other examples of walking trails were constructed after the period of significance and are non-contributing to Fort Donelson National Battlefield.

Much of the current vehicular circulation patterns within Fort Donelson National Cemetery were developed prior to and during the current period of significance. The Service Road was extended to the paved turnaround in the 1950s and thus this portion post-dates the current period of significance. The Parking Area at the cemetery was constructed during the period of significance. The roadways at the Fort Donelson National Cemetery retain integrity although they have been modified through widening and paving during the period of significance. The vehicular roadways associated with the Fort Donelson National Cemetery contribute to the landscape of the cemetery except for the extension of the Service Road.

Vehicular circulation patterns throughout the remainder of the core of Fort Donelson National Battlefield are comprised of loop roads, overlooks, and parking areas. A number of streets and portions of others were in place prior to the establishment of the park, such as Fort Donelson Road, Main Street, Cedar Street, and Church Street. Loop roads were constructed by the War Department, including Eddyville Loop Road, River Battery Loop Road, Graves' Battery Loop Road, and Wynn's Ferry Loop Road. Wynn's Ferry Loop Road extending to French's Battery was removed by the NPS in 1986. During the 1930s the NPS added parking and "pull outs" for vehicular traffic along with turning loops, and the addition of stone guardrails and drainages. All of the loop roads and road improvements constructed during the period of significance are contributing features to Fort Donelson National Battlefield. The portion of Wynn's Ferry Loop Road that was removed and modern improvements such as new guardrails, parking lots, and "pull outs" dating to after the period of significance are non-contributing features.

Other Associated Resources

The resources described in this section consist of a recently acquired property in the Confederate Breakout Unit area and several privately owned properties associated with the Free State community and local African American history (Figure 7.130). The private properties are located in the vicinity of the Erin Hollow Area.

Federal legislation allows for the acquisition of lands associated with the Battle of Fort Donelson but does not address acquisition of lands specifically for other purposes. However, the Free State related properties are in the landscape of the Confederate Breakout Union area, a key landscape to protect. Interpretation of both the Free State associated properties and the Confederate Breakout Unit can be accommodated in this vicinity. Partnership with other organizations could allow for the acquisition and interpretation of the Free State properties.

1. Confederate Breakout Unit

1a. Cherry Farm

Construction date: circa 1875–1925

Current NRHP Status: Not Listed

Recommended NRHP Status: Not Eligible as a farmstead; may be eligible for association with the battle

Figures: 7.131–7.145

Located along segments of modern Forge Road, the former Cherry Farm consists of a residence, three barns, and several outbuildings, all of which are in deteriorated condition. The majority of the parcel's eastern boundary is along the center of the historic Forge Road trace utilized during the battle as an escape route to Nashville by Confederate forces. The property was acquired by the NPS in August 2012. The buildings are set back from the road on an unmaintained driveway surrounded by dense tree cover. According to an interview with Don Wilson, whose grandfather worked on the farm, conducted by Julia Caperton, the property was owned by Eddie Cherry and operated as a hog farm for many years. Eddie Cherry most likely refers to Charles Edward Cherry II (1918–2003), the son of Charles E. and Birdie Cherry. According to the interview with Wilson, Cherry and his family did not live on the property, but owned a large house just outside of Dover. Although it is unclear when the property came into his possession, Cherry appears to have operated the hog farm during the mid-to-late twentieth century. Informants have related that the hog farm used scraps from Fort Campbell to feed the hogs. Metal detectors have indicated many metal utensils in the area from the military post's kitchens. Son Don Cherry, who sold the land, had a real estate company.

The residence (Resource A) is situated within a stand of trees on the east side of the driveway. Oriented west, the house presents a single-story, three-bay (w/d/w), single-pile, side-gable form. Apparently of box frame construction, the residence rests on a wood and concrete block pier foundation, features exposed vertical board exterior siding, and is

sheltered by a metal panel roof. Portions of the roofing and exterior siding are either missing or in a state of decay. Most of the window sashes are missing glass and muntins, but remaining materials suggest they contained double-hung wood sashes with a six-light upper sash. An enclosed shed-roof porch spans the façade's central portion, sheltering the front entry. Based on its age and form, the dwelling most likely served as a tenant house.

A circa 1950–1971 gable-oriented tobacco barn (Resource B) converted to a feed shed is located approximately 50 feet south of the dwelling (Resource A). The barn features a general north–south orientation. Of nailed frame construction, the barn rests on a poured concrete foundation and is sheltered by a metal paneled roof. Most of the exterior siding has been removed, but vertical board siding is visible underneath the north and south gables. A portion of the south elevation is clad in corrugated metal siding.

A circa 1973–1999 single-story, shed-roof, frame outbuilding (Resource C) clad in vertical board siding and sheltered by a metal panel roof is located approximately 150 feet south of the residence (Resource A). The outbuilding is partially collapsed and missing sections of siding along its side and rear elevations. The façade features a single-leaf entry filled by a vertical board door.

A circa 1973–1999 single-story, shed-roof, frame outbuilding (Resource D) clad in vertical board siding and sheltered by a metal panel roof is located approximately 160 feet south of the residence (Resource A). The outbuilding is supported by narrow, stripped tree trunks. It is in deteriorated condition and several sections of exterior siding are missing. The façade and rear elevations are unclad.

A circa 1936–1950 collapsing, frame barn (Resource E) is located approximately 160 feet south of the residence (Resource A). The majority of the barn is in severely deteriorated condition, but based on remaining materials and historic aerial photographs, the barn featured a gable-oriented form with shed-roof side additions, was clad in board and batten siding, and sheltered by a metal panel roof.



Figure 7.130. Aerial photograph depicting other associated resources in the Dover area.

A circa 1950–1971 gable-oriented, frame, multi-use barn (Resource F) is located approximately 305 feet south-southwest of the residence. The barn rests on a concrete block foundation, is clad in vertical board siding, and is sheltered by a metal paneled roof. Several sections of siding are missing along the exterior of the barn. Shed-roof additions are attached to the barn’s northeast and southwest elevations. The interior contains an off-center center aisle flanked to the southwest (right) by stalls.

A circa 1950–1973 concrete block outbuilding (Resource G) is located approximately 380 feet south-southwest of the residence (Resource A). The outbuilding is set on a concrete block foundation and features an exposed concrete block exterior. According to a local resident who worked on the hog farm, this outbuilding was used to hold food scraps collected from Fort Campbell, which were cooked down before being fed to the hogs. The outbuilding is in deteriorated condition and only two of the exterior walls remain extant. A concrete block projection extends from the rear elevation. Both walls feature window openings. A large metal bin is located to the rear of the outbuilding.

The former Cherry Farm in the Confederate Breakout Unit area was recently acquired and as such, is not addressed in the NRHP nomination for Fort Donelson National Battlefield. Although the farm dates to the late nineteenth to early twentieth-century, research did not reveal the farmstead buildings to be associated with events of historic significance and therefore the farmstead is recommended not eligible under Criterion A for listing in the NRHP. The farmstead is associated with a well-known local family, but research did not reveal the family rises to the level of significance for listing in the NRHP under Criterion B. The residence and outbuildings associated with the farm are in deteriorated condition and the buildings are in various states of decay or collapse. The farm’s current condition diminishes its integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. Lacking integrity and significance, the buildings associated with the Cherry Farm are not eligible under Criterion C. CRA recommends the Cherry farm is not individually eligible for listing in the NRHP of Historic Places under

Criterion A, B, or C. The farmstead is not associated with the core historic themes of the park, as the buildings of the farmstead do not date to the period of the Fort Donelson battle.

Although the Cherry Farm is not eligible for listing in the NRHP, current research indicates the property is eligible for the NRHP as a contributing resource to Fort Donelson National Battlefield for its association to the Confederate Breakout during the battle at Fort Donelson. As National Register Bulletin 40: Guidelines for Identifying, Evaluating, and Registering America’s Historic Battlefields states: “The impact of noncontributing properties on a battlefield as a whole depends not only on their number, but also their nature and location and the size and topography of the battlefield. While this is a subjective judgement there are some general principles for assessing integrity. If the type of noncontributing property reflects a continuing later development of traditional land use, then the impact of these properties may not be as great as that of modern properties that do not reflect the historic use of the land.” While the parcel currently includes the dilapidated twentieth-century farm structures and is overgrown with small trees and vegetation, this does not preclude the property from conveying its association with the events related to the Confederate Breakout during the Battle of Fort Donelson. As with other areas of the battlefield, the Cherry Farm’s landscape has been altered through use during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, including farming activities and later allowing the land to be overgrown with vegetation. It is likely that if there was no farm associated with this parcel during the period of significance, it was probably used for that purpose soon thereafter. As Bulletin 40 notes the number of non-contributing resources on the property would not diminish the property’s integrity for its association to the battle. It is the landscape of the parcel that is significant for its association with the February 1862 battle. Research should be conducted to replicate the farm to its historic Civil War-period landscape, if possible. CRA recommends that if previous research proves accurate, the land comprising the Cherry Farm should be included in a NRHP boundary increase nomination for its association to Fort Donelson National Battlefield.



Figure 7.131. Façade of residence (Resource A).



Figure 7.132. East and rear elevation of residence (Resource A).



Figure 7.133. West and rear elevation of residence (Resource A).



Figure 7.134. North elevation of barn (Resource B).



Figure 7.135. South and east elevation of barn (Resource B).



Figure 7.136. Interior view of barn (Resource B).



Figure 7.137. View of shed (Resource C).



Figure 7.138. View of shed (Resource D).



Figure 7.139. South elevation of collapsing barn (Resource E).



Figure 7.140. North elevation of collapsing barn (Resource E).



Figure 7.141. Southwest elevation of barn (Resource F).



Figure 7.142. Northeast elevation of barn (Resource F).



Figure 7.143. Interior view of barn (Resource F).



Figure 7.144. View of outbuilding (Resource G).



Figure 7.145. View of outbuilding (Resource G).

2. Fort Heiman

2a. Moody Cemetery

Constructed: 1929

Current NRHP Status: Not listed

Recommended NRHP Status: Non-contributing

Figures: 7.146–7.147

The Moody Cemetery is located on the Fort Heiman property northeast of the intersection of Fort Heiman Road and Kline Trail, approximately 125 feet west of Kline Trail. The cemetery is encompassed by a wire fence with metal posts. A single headstone is located in the cemetery marking the interment of Sarah Moody, born 1842 and died in 1929 (Figure 7.146). No other depressions were identified during the field survey.

The cemetery was created after the period of significance for Fort Donelson National Battlefield. Additionally, the interment is not related to the significant events associated with Fort Heiman. Therefore, CRA recommends the cemetery is a non-contributing resource.

3. Private Property

3a. Dover Colored School

Constructed: post 1935

Current NRHP Status: Not listed

Recommended NRHP Status: Eligible

Figures: 7.148–7.149

A school building for African American students appears to have been constructed in the Free State area in 1907 to replace a smaller structure built in 1883. According to an unidentified newspaper article the 1907 building, which was located on “Mouth Sandy Road,” was moved in 1935 to a location closer to the community. According to the article, the building was used until 1953 when it was replaced by a new structure. It is now a residence. Dr. Carroll Van West believes that this building was constructed in the 1930s. If that is the case, the building at 121 Dahlia Street could not be the same as that moved in 1907. More research will be necessary to determine the construction date of this building. Regardless, the Dover Colored School is eligible for listing in the NRHP.

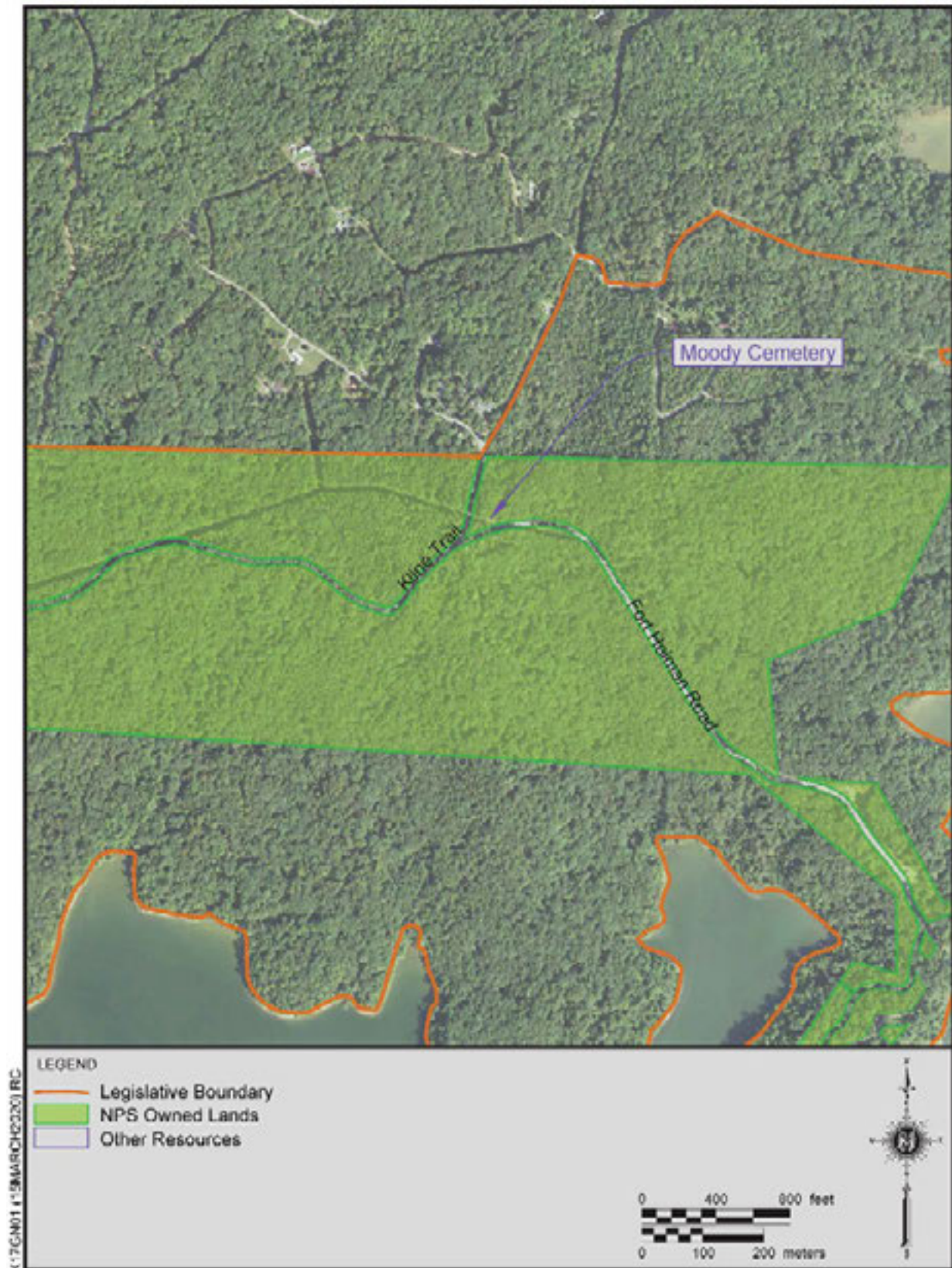


Figure 7.146. Aerial photograph depicting the Moody Cemetery near Fort Heiman.



Figure 7.147. Moody Cemetery.

The Dover Colored School (TN survey #SW-295), located at 121 Dahlia Street, is a single-story, two-bay (w/d), front-gable, frame building with an asymmetrical façade (south elevation). The building sits on a concrete block foundation and is clad in aluminum siding. The roof is covered with asphalt shingles. The windows contain six-over-six and two-over-two, double-hung wood sashes and single-light wood sashes. The front door is centered along the façade and opens onto a shed-roof porch. The porch extends the width of the façade. The east elevation features a ribbon of windows. The rear elevation of the building (north elevation) features a porch set on concrete block piers and covered by a shed roof.

While the Dover Colored School building may have been constructed in the 1930s and therefore does not date to the immediate post-Civil War period, the building is still directly associated with Free State through the African American community in Dover. The Dover Colored School building is one of the few public structures remaining related to the

African American community and as such continues the history of this community into the twentieth century. The Dover Colored School retains integrity and significance for its association with the Free State community and the continuing African American presence in Dover and as such, is eligible for consideration as a contributing resource to Fort Donelson National Battlefield.

3b. Hughes Property Buildings

Figures: 7.150–7.151

Very little is known about the two structures related to this property except that one or both is said to have been associated with Free State. The buildings are on private property to which staff did not have permission to access. The description of Building 1 is based on photographs taken from Nactor Drive. The description of Building 2, which is not visible from the road, is based on information and a 2012 photograph in the archives at Fort Donelson National Battlefield and Cemetery.



Figure 7.148. Former Dover Colored School, south and west elevations.



Figure 7.149. Former Dover Colored School, south and east elevations.

Hughes Property Building 1

Constructed: possibly circa 1875–1920

Current NRHP Status: Not listed

Recommended NRHP Status: Additional research required

Building 1 is located at 731 Natcor Drive, on the west side of the street and 425 feet south of St. Paul's Methodist Church. The dwelling is a single-story, four-bay (ww/d/d/ww), single-pile, frame residence with a side-gable roof and a symmetrical façade (east) elevation. The dwelling rests on a pier foundation, is clad in weatherboard siding, and is sheltered by a metal panel roof. The windows present four-over-four, double-hung wood sashes and may to date from the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. Two small, parged chimneys pierce the roof north and south of the ridgeline. Two single-leaf entries pierce the façade. The north (right) entry contains a three-light wood door and the south (left) entry features a half-light wood door. A shed-roof front porch, supported by square wood columns, extends across the façade. A single-story, shed-roof addition is attached to the rear elevation. The rear (west) and north elevations of the residence was not visible from the road.

Since it is currently under private ownership and little information is available concerning its association with the Free State community,

additional investigations are necessary to determine if the property is eligible for NRHP listing as a contributing structure within Fort Donelson National Battlefield.

Hughes Property Building 2

Constructed: circa 1875–1925

Current NRHP Status: Not listed

Recommended NRHP Status: Additional research required

Building 2 is located on the interior of the Hughes property, about 276 feet west-northwest of Nactor Drive. It is a single-story, four-bay (w/d/d/w), single-pile, side-gable, frame structure. The roof is covered with deteriorated rolled asphalt and the exterior is clad in rolled asphalt with a faux brick pattern. The windows were not discernable from the photograph. An interior brick chimney pierces the center of the ridgeline. The façade (east) elevation features two entries which open onto a three-quarter-width shed-roof porch supported by square, chamfered wood posts.

Since it is currently under private ownership and little information is available concerning its association with the Free State community, additional investigations are necessary to determine if the property is eligible for listing as a NRHP contributing building within Fort Donelson National Battlefield.



Figure 7.150. Hughes Property, Building 1.



Figure 7.151. Hughes Property, Building 2.

3c. St. Paul United Methodist Church

Constructed: circa 1944

Current NRHP Status: Not listed

Recommended NRHP Status: Additional research required

Figures: 7.152–7.155

The St. Paul United Methodist Church building is located at 702 Nactor Drive, on the east side of the street. Although the exact construction date of the church is unknown, the congregation was established in 1944. A church is represented in the vicinity on the 1936 Dover, Tennessee, 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle, but based on the form and materials, the current structure most likely replaced an earlier building. The church is no longer active and the building is vacant. It was vandalized in 2016 and the damage caused by the fire is evident.

The building presents a simple single-story, front-gable, rectangular form with a pyramidal steeple clad in wood shingles centered on the peak of the front (west) gable. Of concrete block construction, the church rests on a concrete block foundation and the roof is

covered with asphalt shingles. The façade and rear gable fields are clad in asphalt shingles. The windows contain paired five-light metal casement sashes and two-light, fixed metal sashes. An exterior brick chimney extends from the north elevation. The façade contains a single-story, front-gable, concrete block vestibule addition. The recessed, double-leaf façade entry contains a pair of three-light wood doors. Shed-roof additions, containing the restrooms, extend from the side elevations of the vestibule addition. The restrooms replaced the outhouse that still stands behind the church. A single-story, side-gable addition extends from the south elevation of the church. The casement sashes are missing from a window along the west elevation of the addition. An entry along the south elevation of the addition provides access to a possible basement. A window is also located on the rear (east) elevation of the south elevation's addition.

Since it is currently under private ownership and little is known about the history of the church and its congregation, additional investigations are necessary to determine whether the property is eligible for listing as a NRHP contributing structure within Fort Donelson National Battlefield.



Figure 7.152. St. Paul United Methodist Church, façade (west elevation).



Figure 7.153. St. Paul United Methodist Church, north elevation.



Figure 7.154. St. Paul United Methodist Church, south elevation.



Figure 7.155. St. Paul United Methodist Church, rear (east elevation).

3d. East Oak Grove Baptist Church

Constructed: circa 1900–1925

Current NRHP Status: Not Listed

Recommended NRHP Status: Additional research required

Figures: 7.156–7.158

This active church is located at 418 Cedar Street near Tour Stop 8. Local tradition holds that this congregation relocated to Dover from the land between the rivers in the 1920s, after threats were made to those who worshipped there. Since the building's façade is set below street level, a 2.5-foot-high concrete-block retaining wall was constructed between the street and the church, leaving a narrow strip where a sidewalk was installed. A sidewalk extends from the street to the walkway in front of the church. Two dilapidated outhouses stand behind the church.

Built on a slope, the single-story, front-gable, frame church features two additions; one spans the façade (south elevation) and the other the rear (north) elevation of the building. The building rests on a concrete block basement foundation and is clad in vinyl siding. The roof is sheathed in metal panels. The windows contain four-over-four, eight-over-eight, and two-over-two, double-hung wood sashes. The basement windows feature

four-light wood sashes. The pyramidal steeple at the peak of the front gable has a roof covered with metal panels.

A single-story, front-gable, frame addition with a central double-leaf entry spans nearly the entire width of the façade (south) elevation. The front entry contains a pair of single-light replacement doors. The addition is sheltered by an asphalt shingle roof. A single-story, gable-oriented addition extends from the rear of the building.

Since it is currently under private ownership and little is known of the history of the church and its congregation, additional investigations are necessary to determine whether the property is eligible for listing as a NRHP contributing structure within the Fort Donelson National Battlefield.

3e. Other privately owned properties

There is no doubt that other privately owned properties outside the current boundary of Fort Donelson National Battlefield may be NRHP contributing resources. These properties, such as a small cemetery at Fort Heiman outside the current NPS boundary and perhaps the 1900–1920 Shamwell House near St. Paul Methodist Church, will likely be venues for future research. These possibly contributing resources are outside the current scope of this project.



Figure 7.156. East Oak Grove Baptist Church, south and west elevations.



Figure 7.157. East Oak Grove Baptist Church, south and east elevations.



Figure 7.158. East Oak Grove Baptist Church, east and north elevations.

Chapter 8. Management Recommendations

Management of Fort Donelson National Battlefield requires prioritizing available resources to focus on the most pressing issues. Often monetary constraints necessitate prioritizing immediate demands over long term goals. As funding becomes available, the following management recommendations are offered as suggestions to maintain and improve the physical resources of the park while also expanding interpretive programs. Fort Donelson National Battlefield is comprised of unique resources including the buildings, monuments, earthworks, collections, and landscape that convey not only the narrative of the battle but also its aftermath including the founding of the African American community of Free State and the legacy of this community in Dover, early efforts of the War Department and private citizens to commemorate the battle, and the commemorative and interpretive activities of the NPS at Fort Donelson from the 1930s through the Civil War Centennial.

Fort Donelson National Battlefield is comprised of resources dating to the Civil War, the decades of War Department management of the cemetery and later the battlefield following the war, and the New Deal and Mission 66 periods of development under the management of NPS. The park's resources offer the potential of expanded programing and interpretive opportunities. The management recommendations are categorized as follows: NRHP, additional studies, interpretation, and resource management. The recommendations are provided as guidance for possible short and long term initiatives to enhance the visitors' experience while also maintaining the park's significant cultural resources.

National Register of Historic Places

Fort Donelson National Military Park and National Cemetery was administratively listed in the NRHP on October 15, 1966, with

enactment of the National Historic Preservation Act. The first Fort Donelson National Battlefield NRHP nomination was accepted by the Keeper of the National Register in 1977, while a NRHP nomination containing additional documentation was accepted in 1996, updating the earlier documentation. Additional updates are now merited to address additions to Fort Donelson National Battlefield since 1996, an expanded period of significance, additional areas of significance, and the larger narrative encompassing Forts Henry, Heiman, and Donelson. The updated NRHP documentation should reference NPS Directors Order 28, Appendix Q: Preparing National Register Forms. In accordance with one option presented in this guidance, CRA recommends the development of a Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) as a cover document to address the interrelated history of Forts Henry, Heiman, and Donelson with each fort individually listed under the MPDF. The MPDF can comprise multiple contexts to include not only the battle and commemorative period but also Free State and resources related to the development of the local African American community. The MPDF will allow additional properties to be listed at a later date as new research reveals additional resources related to its context. Because nominations have previously been submitted for the three forts, the new NRHP nominations submitted under the MPDF will provide additional information and boundary increases for each property, as appropriate.

Fort Henry and Fort Heiman's NRHP nominations were completed in the mid-1970s. The very brief Fort Henry Site NRHP nomination was listed in 1975. Although the Fort Henry earthworks above the Tennessee River are owned by the USDA Forest Service, the common significance and close geography of the site lends itself to be included in the recommended MPDF. An updated nomination for Fort Henry would entail coordination between NPS and the USDA Forest Service,

which would have to agree to an updated nomination of their property. An updated nomination is recommended to provide a more detailed examination of the remaining earthworks. The USDA Forest Service/Land Between the Lakes National Recreation Area is interested in listing and working with NPS on resource research according to Fort Donelson National Battlefield staff. Future research can include shared projects such as an underwater survey to determine possible additional evidence of Fort Henry. The description of the earthworks and significance of Fort Henry can be developed more thoroughly utilizing recent and future research.

Only 20 acres associated with Fort Heiman adjacent to Kentucky Lake is listed in the NRHP. The Union fort and associated earthworks at Fort Heiman are not listed in the NRHP. Since the initial listing, the NPS has acquired additional property associated with Fort Heiman. The Southeast Archaeological Center (SEAC) has been conducting two separate studies of the Fort Heiman resources. In 2017 a survey was conducted to determine if evidence from the first freedman community could be located at Fort Heiman. A second study for Fort Heiman is expected to occur during fiscal year 2020 to assess the eligibility of Union resources. A historic research project should be initiated documenting the Union occupation of Fort Heiman. This research will aid in updating the NRHP nomination. The research project will also prove useful in the development of future interpretive programs for Fort Heiman. The boundary expansion and significance should be addressed in an updated NRHP nomination for Fort Heiman under the recommended MPDF. The proposed boundary expansion should include, at minimum, all NPS land at Fort Heiman and can include privately held property, dependent on property owner's approval, if additional property is found to have integrity relating to the significance of Fort Heiman.

Fort Donelson's updated nomination under the MPDF should expand the park's period of significance which currently ends in 1942. The period of significance should be

expanded with an updated nomination to at least 1963 to encompass the construction of the visitor's center and the addition of the Texas Monument to the park. This also includes improvements made to the park during the Mission 66 era and the Civil War Centennial, nationally significant periods of NPS enhancements.

An updated nomination for Fort Donelson National Battlefield should also reevaluate the criteria under which the reconstructed Magazine is listed. The current nomination lists the Magazine as though it is an original feature rather than an interpretive structure constructed by the CCC for the NPS. The Magazine should be recommended eligible as a reconstruction built through a federal works program in the 1930s. The Lower River Battery was also improved by the CCC and should be evaluated in an updated nomination as to whether it is eligible as an original feature or for its improvements through the CCC's efforts.

The recommended nomination for Fort Donelson should address the significance of land within the expanded nominated boundary. The current NRHP boundary for Fort Donelson National Military Park and National Cemetery is comprised of 554.2 acres. Additional property has been added to Fort Donelson National Battlefield over ensuing years since 1996, expanding the park's boundary. The significance of these newly acquired properties, along with an expanded NRHP boundary, should be incorporated into a revised nomination. This revised nomination can include property within its boundary owned by the NPS and other federal entities, along with privately held property, dependent on property owner permission. The nomination's proposed NRHP boundary can also include lands with the ability to be restored while excluding properties that have been developed to the point that integrity no longer exists. Criteria will need to be established and thorough parcel by parcel research required to determine tracts to be included in an expanded NRHP boundary. The updated nomination should list Fort Donelson as a dis-contiguous

district, as not all parcels and significant properties within the recommended period of significance are contiguous to one another, such as the Confederate Breakout Unit and the Union Reorganization Unit. Additional research would be needed to determine if privately-owned resources associated with Free State and the African American community in Dover, such as the Dover Colored School and St. Paul United Methodist Church, should be listed as part of the Fort Donelson National Battlefield nomination or individually listed under the recommended MPDF.

The Dover Colored School is privately owned. Fort Donelson National Battlefield staff states the school has been moved at least once and possibly as many as three times, always within the acknowledged boundary of Free State. A conversation can be initiated with the owner of the property to individually nominate the school building to the NRHP or as a contributing resource to the proposed historic district under a MPDF. The building may have significance if its association with Free State can be substantiated.

Initiating a conversation with the owner of the St. Paul United Methodist Church building is recommended for possibly listing the property in the NRHP. The St. Paul United Methodist Church building post-dates the Civil War and it is unclear if the former congregation came from Free State. Further research is recommended to better determine the National Register eligibility of the St. Paul United Methodist Church as a contributing resource to the proposed historic district in regards to its association with Free State. However, the building is a tangible link to Dover's once thriving African American community. Both the St. Paul United Methodist Church and the East Oak Grove Baptist Church are potentially eligible for listing in the NRHP under Ethnic Identity, African American settlement patterns. The two churches may meet the registration requirements under the Historic Rural African-American Churches in Tennessee, 1850–1970 Multiple Property nomination.

Additional Studies

Consultation with a landscape architect will prove advantageous in the formulation of a long-term plan for the preservation of the outer earthworks. As addressed in Chapter VII Section 1d, the damage to this important feature by water is extensive and will continue to cause deterioration unless the problem is addressed.

Continued research into Fort Donelson National Battlefield's historic landscape and resources is encouraged. This research should utilize and reassess previously known documentation and new technology, such as Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR), archaeology, and newly found documentation and resources. An example of this continuing research is a 1934 survey map, once geo-referenced, provided an indication of the actual location of the end of the lost Left Flank of the Confederate entrenchments. This newly recovered information reinforces that the location is slightly incorrect on the 1932 War Department survey and further removed from the location indicated on the Bearss maps.

Utilize a combined team of NPS and Fort Donelson National Battlefield staff, along with outside historians to assess multiple maps, archival resources, and multiple other resources to create a new "official" Historic Base Map that will include the locations of known resources. This research will enable staff to replace the 1959 Bearss Base Map through updating information from recent research, which reveals the 1959 map has several inaccuracies.

A future study of the existing traces and road remnants is recommended for Fort Donelson National Battlefield to assist in the interpretation of overland transportation routes in the immediate area. At the present time no detailed survey of these traces/road remnants has been initiated, although the location of the historic Eddyville Road is known. Locating these traces/road remnants will provide a fuller background to the existing conditions during the battles while also offering a better

interpretation of the battlefield's historic landscape.

The Historic Structure Report (HSR) of the Dover Hotel should be revisited since it is over 20 years old. HSR for buildings at the National Cemetery, such as the carriage house and pump house (2011) and the cemetery lodge (2015), are recent and do not need to be revisited in the near future.

A HSR was not completed for the Visitor Center renovation, although thorough documentation of the original construction to current rehabilitation exists. It is recommended that a stage 4 HSR report, including documentation of the building's history and resources, be initiated in the near future.

A study to research the development of Free State is recommended to further the interpretation of the African American experience immediately after and the years following the Union victory at Fort Donelson. The Long Range Interpretive Plan is to be completed in Fall 2019 and this plan will prove invaluable in the future interpretation of the battlefield and its many resources. The Long Range Interpretive Plan and future studies should inform possibilities to future interpretation of the African American experience along with identifying extant resources and locations associated with Free State. Opportunities may exist in the future for the purchase of extant resources associated with local African American/Free State history for future interpretation. If the purchase of these properties proves not feasible, engagement with the local community to recognize the significance of these properties should be commenced. Working with groups and entities, including possible partnering with non-profit organizations, could lead to the possible utilization of the St. Paul United Methodist Church as an interpretation center for the Free State community. Such an enterprise could be operated by partners, not necessarily NPS acquisition, with stipulations that the property must remain in use for non-profit and public purposes. The acquisition of properties in the "Triangle Area" could also tie

in with the park's future goal of restoring the Confederate Breakout landscape while also providing a landscape more closely accurate to the Free State period.

Interpretation

Additional interpretation of Forts Henry, Heiman, and Donelson, is recommended as funding becomes available to more fully engage visitors in conveying the significance of events and participants associated with these fortifications. Additional interpretive signs throughout Fort Donelson and at specific locations at Forts Henry and Heiman should utilize maps, portraits, images and descriptions from historic publications and personal letters to communicate significant events and general descriptions of the time and landscape. Specific recommendations include:

Fort Donelson

- Utilize the Carriage House situated in Fort Donelson National Cemetery for interpretive displays to convey the history of the cemetery including its continued use as the final resting place for veterans and their families through the present day.
- Develop more robust interpretation for the February 1863 Battle of Dover.
- The outer works are the key to understanding the Battle of Fort Donelson. Development of interpretation is recommended that assists visitors in understanding the role the outer works played in the defense of Fort Donelson or the difficulty Union troops faced with assaulting these positions.
- Use recently acquired property to better interpret the Confederate breakout attempt and the Union counterattack. It is understood that interpretation of these two actions are in the process of being developed for formal tour and infrastructure improvement.
- Install additional signage to indicate features such as historic road traces and foundations or the former locations of historic buildings/structures to assist visitors in better understanding the site's historic landscape.
- Conduct additional research to aid in interpretation of medical staff, nurses, and medical treatment of wounded and ill soldiers

during the battles of Fort Henry, Heiman, and Donelson.

- Initiate additional studies for interpretation of the effects the battles and ensuing Union victories had on the local population, such as personal stories, financial impacts, and the effects on river traffic. The loss of enslaved labor could be interpreted through impacts to farm values, agricultural production, and the local iron industry.

Fort Henry

- Engage the USDA Forest Service to develop and implement an interpretive plan for Fort Henry. At present there is little interpretation of the earthworks or the history of Fort Henry at the site. Only one interpretive sign in poor condition could be located along one of the earthworks. Waysides were developed through a partnership of Fort Donelson National Battlefield and the USDA Forest Service, although existing signage identified during the survey is inadequate to convey the site's significance. Although Fort Donelson National Battlefield staff and that of the Homeplace 1850s Working Farm and Living History Museum situated in the Land Between the Lakes National Recreation Area provide special tours of Fort Henry, additional interpretive signage and development of an interpretive plan for Fort Henry will prove beneficial to both the casual and more knowledgeable visitors to the location of fortifications.

Fort Heiman

- Because the extant features seem to relate more to Union forces than Confederate, highlight the story of the Union occupation of the area:
 - o Clashes between Union forces and Confederate raiders and guerillas
 - o Recruitment of United States Colored Troops
 - o Small-scale engagements that characterized the region after 1863
 - o The thwarting of Confederate river traffic along with the capture of boats and cargo
 - o Use of Fort Heiman by Maj. Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest in initiating the Johnsonville Campaign.

- Interpret the freedman community at Fort Heiman, which may be one of the earliest known such communities of the Civil War.

Along with the above recommendations, archaeological studies should be undertaken at the former Cherry Farm property. This is the location of the Confederate Breakout Unit, and such studies may reveal important data concerning activities on the property during the battle. Fort Donelson National Battlefield staff have indicated archaeological studies have been identified for the Confederate Breakout Unit (including the former Cherry Farm property) and the Erin Hollow Area. The archaeological studies will provide information to be utilized in future interpretation plans for the February 15, 1862, Confederate Breakout, particularly in this location.

At present, the interpretive sign for Freedmen's Camp at the entrance to the National Cemetery is the only easily accessible interpretation for the general public focused on the aftermath of the battle and its effects on the nearby African American population. Additional interpretation is recommended for the African American experience at Fort Donelson and Free State. NPS Rangers have conducted interpretation since 2003 of freedom seekers, United States Colored Troops, Underground Railroad, and Free State for students ranging from third to eighth grades. The park also provides a curriculum-based traveling trunk to loan to local schools to assist in teaching students about United States Colored Troops and the Underground Railroad. While these subjects are emphasized to elementary and middle school-aged students, less information is available to the general public when visiting the park. The Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area is another resource that may be able to assist with interpretive efforts, especially in regards to Free State and the local African American community. A local partner, such as the Stewart County Visitor Center, could engage the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area for funding options and expertise in research and public interpretation materials.

It is understood park staff is taking steps to re-introduce Wynn's Ferry Loop Road which was removed in the 1980s. Until the potential for interpretation in the Triangle Area is realized, the Wynn's Ferry Loop Road will provide the best location for interpreting Free State and the following local African American community.

The upcoming completion of the Long Range Interpretive Plan will no doubt provide additional subjects of investigation and pathways of providing this information to the public. Such informational pathways include those utilized in the past, such as brochures, waysides (interpretive signage), and videos, and more recent modes of communicating information to the public such as websites, apps for mobile phones, and social media.

With the reopening of Fort Donelson's Visitor Center, rotating exhibits can be used to emphasize certain aspects of the park's history or of its former inhabitants that are not addressed in fixed interpretive installations. Exhibits could also display archaeological artifacts relating to Native American occupation of the park along with those associated with the Civil War era. The Visitor Center's exhibit space can be utilized to convey the war's impact on the local African American population and creation of the Free State community. In the meantime, one or more interpretative signs conveying the story of Free State and the African American community in Dover during the Civil War can be added near Tour Stop 8.

Resource Management

Maintenance

The maintenance and preservation of the earthworks at Forts Heiman and Donelson is vital to the sustainability of these resources. These significant features are the most tangible link to the Civil War in the area and are essential if visitors are to understand what took place. While NPS provides general guidance for earthworks management in documents such as the Earthworks Landscape Management Manual, a specific, updated

management plan for the earthworks at Forts Heiman and Donelson is needed. The park has recently completed a Long Range Interpretive Plan, will soon complete a Foundation Document Overview, and the Cultural Landscape Report was completed in 2015. The HRS is to be finalized in 2020 and the Fire Management Plan, which will be utilized as a prescription for landscape re-opening, will be completed in the near future. With the completion of these reports, Fort Donelson National Battlefield staff will begin a total re-assessment of its present Earthworks Management Plan dating to 2012. The Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was not completed for the 2012 Earthworks Landscape Management Plan. A review of the 2012 Earthworks Management Plan along the previously mentioned reports will reveal how many recommendations have been implemented, and if the actions taken have proven effective in addressing issues with the earthworks within the NPS boundary. The development of a new long-term resource management plan for all earthworks owned by Fort Donelson National Battlefield and Cemetery is recommended and park staff have indicated this will be initiated in the near future along with examining maintenance concerns for the historic road depressions/traces.

Vegetation

The viewshed from portions of the battlefield have changed since the Civil War era with the widening of the Cumberland and Tennessee Rivers through the creation of Lake Barkley and Kentucky Lake. The impoundment of the rivers has widened the waterways from the historic watercourses and created inlets where once there were gullies and ravines. These alterations can be addressed through interpretive literature and signage.

At present, efforts are underway to selectively clear vegetation and trees to restore certain historic viewsheds experienced by participants of the battles at Fort Donelson. Significant viewshed clearing occurred between 2016 and 2018 with opening of

understory in the heart of Erin Hollow, from Maney's Battery eastward. Current plans are to continue to clear existing understory. It is recommended that these efforts continue on a carefully selective basis, rooted in research, and prioritizing the removal of non-indigenous species when possible. Research material identified by park staff along with the use of Arc Map viewshed analysis are allowing staff to create initial prescription areas. The recently completed Environmental Assessment for Fort Donelson National Battlefield's Wildland Fire Management Plan and related Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)/FONSI will provide steps to reopen vistas and conduct prescribed burns to systematically work at reopening/restoring known landscapes.

Interpretation

Additional efforts to address interpretation of artillery positions during the battle are expected to materialize during 2020 through 2021. Steel silhouettes of artillery are to be placed to identify unmarked artillery positions on NPS property and possibly on private property.

As previously stated, additional interpretation of Free State and the African American community in Dover during and following the Civil War could greatly enhance the visitors' experience and add depth to the context of the local effects of the war. Engagement with the owners of these associated private properties, after comprehensive research, could lead to possible NRHP listing and/or transfer of ownership of the properties to the park or non-profit entities. Until such time as this may occur, it is recommended that staff continue to monitor these properties for possible further deterioration or abandonment. If current circumstances with these properties change, staff should contact other public preservation groups that may be able to positively interact with the owners to determine a means to stabilize the resources associated with Free State and the local African American community. These efforts could lead to a cooperative agreement between Fort Donelson National Battlefield and Cemetery and these

groups, providing additional research and interpretation potential for the visiting public.

Fort Donelson National Battlefield staff intend to improve signage of historic road traces with non-adverse signage. An example of the proposed signage will be to identify the Historic Forge Road located in the Confederate Breakout Unit.

Exhibits and Archival Collection

The majority of Fort Donelson National Battlefield and Cemetery's exhibits, artifacts, and archival materials are currently located in the Ranger Station, a converted former maintenance building situated adjacent to the grounds of the National Cemetery. This storage location has been necessitated with the ongoing renovation of the Visitor Center. While this temporary location is not ideal, it meets NPS/Department of Interior Museum Standards including security, environmental, shelving, and curatorial/archival storage. With the closure of the Visitor Center, professional NPS curators assisted park staff in proper packaging, documentation, and placement in the official storage facility. The collection will be reinstalled upon completion of the Visitor Center renovations, although storage facilities will remain in the Ranger Station. It is understood the renovated Visitor Center will incorporate climate controlled exhibition space.

As Fort Donelson National Battlefield and Cemetery's collection increases with the addition of documents and artifacts, appropriate studies should be initiated to provide additional storage areas with environmentally stable facilities for archival materials while remaining accessible for research purposes. Additionally, it is recommended that all of Fort Donelson National Battlefield and Cemetery's historical files be digitized to assist in the management of these files and in their use by researchers.

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As the nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering sound use of our land and water resources; protecting our fish, wildlife, and biological diversity; preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historic places; and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to ensure that their development is in the best interests of all our people by encouraging stewardship and citizen participation in their care. The department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under US administration.

HISTORIC RESOURCE STUDY
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KENTUCKY, TENNESSEE

