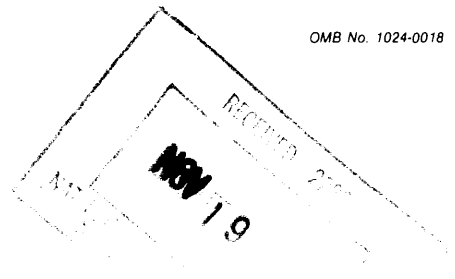


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Multiple Property Documentation Form



This form is for use in documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Type all entries.

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Historic and Archeological Resources Associated with the Little Rock Campaign of 1863

B. Associated Historic Contexts

Troop Movements and Strategies in the Little Rock Campaign of 1863

C. Geographical Data

State of Arkansas

☐ See continuation sheet

D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Planning and Evaluation.

Catherine Marcus

Signature of certifying official

11/15/02
Date

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

State or Federal agency and bureau

I, hereby, certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Edson H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper of the National Register

12/31/2002
Date

E. Statement of Historic Contexts

Discuss each historic context listed in Section B.

F. Associated Property Types

I. Name of Property Type _____

II. Description

III. Significance

IV. Registration Requirements

☒ See continuation sheet

☐ See continuation sheet for additional property types

G. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.

☒ See continuation sheet

H. Major Bibliographical References

☒ See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional documentation:

- ☒ State historic preservation office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency

- ☐ Local government
☐ University
☐ Other

Specify repository: Arkansas Historic Preservation Program

I. Form Prepared By

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section E Page 1

Historic and Archeological Resources of the Little Rock Campaign of 1863 Multiple-Property Submission

Background

On July 4, 1863, two events occurred that had a direct influence on the ultimate fate of the capital of Arkansas. In Vicksburg, Mississippi, the Confederate defenders of that beleaguered fortress surrendered to Union forces under General U.S. Grant, opening the Mississippi River to untrammelled Federal River traffic. At Helena, Arkansas, Confederate forces under Lt. Gen. Theophilus Holmes attacked the strongly entrenched federal garrison there, suffering serious losses.¹ This latter attack decimated Confederate forces in Arkansas, while the former event freed thousands of Union troops for use elsewhere. A little more than two months after the fall of Vicksburg, Federal soldiers occupied Little Rock.

Origins of the Little Rock Campaign

The chain of events that resulted in the Little Rock Campaign began with the capture of a Rebel lieutenant in Missouri in early July 1863 who reported an impending invasion of Missouri by nineteen thousand troops under Maj. Gen. Sterling Price. Brig. Gen. John Wynn Davidson, commanding Union cavalry in eastern Missouri, took the bait, reporting to Maj. Gen. John M. Schofield that "Price crossed from Jacksonport to Crowley's Ridge, by a good road, 40 miles,"² with the intent to attack Davidson's division at Bloomfield, Missouri. Schofield duly reported this phantom movement to General in Chief Henry W. Halleck, who saw an opportunity to crush the troublesome Price and his Confederate army. In a terse note to Maj. Gen. Benjamin Prentiss in Helena, Halleck reported Price's northern movement and ordered that "all available forces should immediately move on his rear so as to cut off his retreat. The forces

¹ On July 4, Lt. Gen. Theophilus Holmes had mounted a four-pronged attack on well-entrenched Union positions in that Mississippi River port. Holmes had issued vague orders for complicated coordinated attacks on the series of Union hilltop fortifications at Helena (Battery A, NR 8-18-92; Battery B, NR 8-18-92; Battery C, NR 12-1-78; Battery D, NR 9-17-74). From the attacking Confederate force of 7,646, 173 were killed, 687 wounded, and 776 missing or captured--a total loss of 1,636 or some 20 percent of the men involved--decimating some of Holmes's best infantry regiments. Conversely, Prentiss's defending force of about 4,000 effective troops lost only 57 killed, 146 wounded, and 36 missing, or 239 total casualties. The mauled Rebels slunk away from Helena by mid-morning. Thomas A. DeBlack, "1863: 'We Must Stand or Fall Alone,'" in *Rugged and Sublime: The Civil War in Arkansas*, ed. Mark K. Christ (Fayetteville, AR: University of Arkansas Press, 1994, 78-84.

² Kenneth P. Williams, *Lincoln Finds a General* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1959), 322.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section E Page 2

in Missouri will prevent his penetrating very far into that State and, if he is cut off in his rear, his forces must disperse or surrender.”³

Far from considering an invasion of Missouri, Holmes’s army was in sad shape in the wake of the Helena fiasco. A visiting officer reported that “a great number of desertions . . . have occurred and are daily taking place, particularly in the case of Fagan’s and McRae’s brigades,” two units composed primarily of Arkansians who had taken some of the heaviest casualties at Helena.⁴

Coupled with the disastrous losses at Helena, the Transmississippi Rebels were stunned, too, by the news of the Confederate defeats at Vicksburg (the relief of which was the reason for the assault on Helena); Port Hudson, Louisiana; and Gettysburg. Lt. Gen. Edmund Kirby Smith, overall commander of the region’s Southern troops, succinctly summed up the strategic situation in a letter to the Confederate governors of the Transmississippi states: “Vicksburg has fallen. The enemy posses[es] the key to this department.”⁵

Davidson’s Advance Down Crowley’s Ridge

Despite their knowledge of the hammering the Rebs had taken at Helena, the Yankees took the threatened invasion of Missouri extremely seriously.

“Price, I believe, is on the Ridge [Crowley’s Ridge, a towering loess ridge running from the Missouri bootheel to Helena],” Davidson wrote Schofield on July 15. “If you will give me some infantry I will be glad to go down on the Ridge or on Batesville.”⁶ Schofield, however, urged prudence, responding that any infantry would come from the now idle captors of Vicksburg, who would have to travel via the White or Arkansas rivers to threaten the Confederate host: “The most you can do at present is to be ready to move in concert with them.”⁷ Davidson told his commander that his supply train was loading “with all haste” and “the division will leave Bloomfield on the 17th and . . . will make good time.”⁸ The Union

³ *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 70 vols. In 128 books and index (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1890-1901) Ser. I, 22, pt. 2: 376, in *The Civil War CD-ROM* [CD-ROM] (Carmel, IN: Guild Press of Indiana, 1996), (hereafter referred to as *OR*; all references to Ser. I).

⁴ Albert Castel, *General Sterling Price and the Civil War in the West* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1968), 153.

⁵ *OR*, 935

⁶ *Ibid.*, 376.

⁷ *Ibid.* 377.

⁸ *Ibid.*

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section E Page 3

buildup was sufficient to lead Col. S.G. Kitchen of the Tenth Missouri Cavalry (C.S.) to bring most of his forces back to Gainesville, Arkansas, observing that "they are looking for Price to come into Missouri."⁹

Maj. Gen. U.S. Grant, with his characteristic overview of the region's strategic situation, pledged to immediately send a division of troops now idle at Vicksburg to Helena to release that stronghold's garrison to pursue Price, but bluntly told Maj. Gen. Stephen Hurlbut in Memphis that "I cannot believe any portion of your command is in any danger from anything more than a cavalry raid."¹⁰

Grant requested Frederick Steele, then under William Tecumseh Sherman's command, to lead operations in Arkansas. Steele, a West Point classmate of Grant's, was no stranger to the Transmississippi, having commanded troops at Wilson's Creek, Pea Ridge, and Arkansas Post.¹¹

The Union invasion of Arkansas began on July 19 when a reconnaissance force of fifty Missouri horsemen swam the St. Francis River at Chalk Bluff. The Yankee cavalymen captured a pair of Rebels and occupied the high ground at Chalk Bluff as Col. Lewis Merrill's First Brigade of Davidson's First Cavalry Division laid a pontoon bridge for the remaining troopers to cross over. Merrill sent the First Missouri Cavalry (U.S.) to Gainesville further down Crowley's Ridge on July 20, with plans to move the rest of his command in their support the next day.¹² Col. S.G. Kitchen retreated before them, reporting to Burbridge that "their entire force is estimated at 12,000, with some twenty pieces of artillery and 800 infantry."¹³

As the Yankee horsemen began descending Crowley's Ridge, Theophilus Holmes turned command of the Confederate army in Arkansas over to Sterling Price on July 22.

The new commander of Confederate troops in Arkansas, fearing that the movements on Crowley's Ridge presaged a move on Little Rock, immediately began shifting the limited forces he had at his disposal. Price ordered Brig. Gen. Daniel Frost to bring his artillery to Little Rock from Pine Bluff, Brig. Gen. James F. Fagan to move his infantry division from Searcy and Des Arc to Bayou Meto east of Little Rock, Marmaduke to set up base at Jacksonport and harass Davidson's column, and Brig. Gen. L.M. Walker to set up a screen of cavalry scouts outside of Helena. Price also commenced construction of strong earthworks on the north side of the Arkansas River about two and a half miles east of Little Rock, but reported "that while I should attempt to defend Little Rock, as the capital of the state and the key to the important valley

⁹ Ibid., 921.

¹⁰ Ibid., 384.

¹¹ Ibid., 385, 387, 389; DeBlack, 89; Ezra J. Warner, *Generals in Blue: Lives of the Union Commander* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1964), 474.

¹² OR, 382-3.

¹³ Ibid., 937.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section E Page 4

of the Arkansas, I did not believe it would be possible for me to hold it with the forces then under my command.”¹⁴

By late July, the Confederate horsemen in northeast Arkansas were certain that Davidson’s incursion was no mere feint. A paroled Rebel cavalryman of John Q. Burbridge’s command took advantage of his captive tour of Bloomfield, Missouri, and Chalk Bluff to count “not less than 10,000 Federals this side of Saint Francis, and about 2,000 infantry . . . 250 wagons and eighteen large field pieces . . . [with] 8 horses, and not under 24-pounders.” Davidson’s troops were in force at Gainesville by that time, leaving Burbridge “satisfied that this is no raid of the enemy, but that it is their intention this time to march to Little Rock.”¹⁵

By evening of July 24, a Union regiment had driven as far down the Ridge as Jonesboro, and the Yankee horde was “destroying all the corn and wheat, feeding it to their horses.”¹⁶

Much of Davidson’s division was encamped at Wittsburg by July 29, and the Yankee commander ordered fortifications dug on the bluffs commanding the small river town to guard against Rebel incursions.¹⁷ On July 30 the cavalymen received supplies as a small steamer from Helena pulled in at Wittsburg.¹⁸

Davidson left Wittsburg on August 1 and his advance elements arrived at the L’Anguille River near present-day Marianna on August 3, though some elements did not reach that point until August 6. The Yankee cavalry commander then sent his supply wagons on into Helena in search of supplies while the rest of his division headed west for Clarendon and, ultimately, the state capital.¹⁹

On August 6, the Third Missouri Cavalry (U.S.) was detached with the Tenth Illinois under Col. Dudley Wickersham, to “cut up” Marsh Walker’s Confederate cavalry brigade, which was reported to be at Cotton Plant north of Clarendon on the White River. The Yankees found, however, that Walker had already crossed the White River in search of more defensible ground without a river at his back.²⁰

¹⁴ Ibid., 520.

¹⁵ Ibid., 944.

¹⁶ *OR*, 947.

¹⁷ Ibid., July 29, 1863.

¹⁸ Henry Ellison Skaggs Diary, TD, August 1, 1863, Henry Ellison Skaggs Papers, University of Missouri Western Historical Manuscript Collection – Rolla.

¹⁹ *OR*, 483-4.

²⁰ Ibid., 484.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section E Page 5

The Little Red River Expedition

On August 8, Davidson's division arrived at Clarendon where they met a small flotilla under Captain Bache, U.S. Navy. Here, too, they were met by the first foot soldiers to join the spearhead of the Union advance, Maj. G.A. Eberhardt's battalion of the Thirty-second Iowa Infantry, which Davidson reported was "attached to my division as the guard to my batteries."²¹

From Clarendon, Davidson mounted an amphibious expedition against some of Marmaduke's best cavalry along the Little Red River near Searcy in White County.

On August 12, the Union cavalry general sent three gunboats, the *Cricket*, *Marmora* and *Lexington*, under Bache, along with Eberhardt's contingent of the Thirty-second Iowa Infantry, up the Little Red River to ascertain the whereabouts of "the ubiquitous Marmaduke" and his horsemen.²² At 3 a.m., the expedition headed up the White River, pausing at Des Arc where the Yankees "took some citizens, and burned a large warehouse containing a quantity of Confederate States Army property."²³

At the mouth of the Little Red, the flotilla divided, with the *Cricket* heading up the Little Red in search of two Confederate steamers while the *Lexington* and *Marmora* continued up the White. The latter boats arrived at Augusta around noon, lingered for a half hour or so, then headed back down river. Leaving the *Marmora* at the mouth of the Little Red at 3 p.m., the *Lexington* steamed upriver in search of the *Cricket*, which had not yet returned.

The *Cricket* had been busy. After leaving the Augusta-bound troops, the *Cricket's* captain learned that one of the Rebel steamers had laid near the shore of the Little Red the night before and was about an hour and a half ahead of the pursuing bluecoats. Moving upriver forty miles, they "came in sight of the town of Searcy, the two boats, and a good pontoon bridge across the river" over which much of Marmaduke's force had crossed to the western shore. The Union infantrymen "piled up the bridge and burned it, leaving part of Marmaduke's force yet on the east side of the river." The Yankees seized the steamers *Tom Sugg* and *Kaskaskia*, and the infantrymen joined prize crews aboard the steamers for a triumphant journey back down the Little Red to meet their comrades.²⁴

Marmaduke's Confederate horsemen at Searcy, however, were not willing to let such Yankee audacity go unpunished. The Rebels were part of J.O. Shelby's Iron Brigade, now under the command of Col. G.W. Thompson following Shelby's wounding at Helena. The plan was for Thompson's troops and

²¹ Ibid., 483-4; Frederick H. Dyer, *A Compendium of the War of the Rebellion* (Des Moines, IA: Dyer Publishing Company, 1908; reprint, Wilmington, NC: Broadfoot Publishing Company, 1994), 1178 (page citations are in reprint edition).

²² *OR*, 483, 511.

²³ Ibid., 511.

²⁴ Ibid., 511, 483.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section E Page 6

Capt. R.A. Collins' battery to use a mixture of artillery and sharpshooter fire to bring the invaders to justice. The "horrible condition" of the roads, however, kept Collins from reaching the ambush point, leaving the assault in the hands of the Confederate cavalrymen.²⁵

About ten miles below Searcy near the West Point community, Marmaduke's men fired on the flotilla. The lead Confederate regiment under Lt. Col. Charles Gilkey rushed up to the riverbank, and a Rebel bullet wounded the *Kaskaskia*'s pilot in the arm and head, leaving the vessel swinging uncontrolled in the current. As the Missouri horsemen and Iowa infantry fired at each other from "a distance of about 30 yards," the *Cricket* succeeded in taking the *Kaskaskia* under tow while the Rebel cavalry was driven back. Six Iowans of Co. D were wounded, one mortally, but the Yankees reported that their attackers "had a great many more hurt, for they were seen to fall in a peculiar manner." Thompson reported "7 or 8 men wounded" and sourly noted that "we were unable to get our battery up If we had good horses in our battery we could have captured them easily."²⁶

Some of the Iron Brigade continued down river another fifteen miles and again attacked the little fleet, reunited now with the *Lexington*. "The *Cricket* opened with her howitzers; the old *Lexington* with her 8-inch guns, which must have given them such a scare as never before, for they left very suddenly," Eberhardt reported.²⁷

Davidson was "tickled wonderfully at the unexpected success of the expedition." The veteran cavalryman wrote a gleeful report to Steele in which he told not only of the capture of the hapless steamers but of intelligence gathered by the expedition. Davidson reported erroneously that Kirby Smith was at Little Rock, but correctly noted that the Rebels were concentrating at Bayou Meto twelve miles north of Little Rock with their left anchored at the hamlet of Brownsville on the prairies east of the capital. The Yankees now knew that Marmaduke was on the south side of the Little Red River. "I think, my dear general, every hour is precious to us now, and that you should have another brigade, at least, of infantry." Steele agreed, writing on August 16 that "the rebels know exactly what force I have, and if they make a stand, they will be well prepared for it."²⁸

Eberhardt's infantrymen, meanwhile, suffered the results of their success. Davidson "now thinks a great deal of the detachment, but gives us, in consequence, plenty to do," the Iowan wrote. Instead of waiting in the relative comfort of Clarendon for the arrival of Steele with the bulk of the army, the Thirty-second Iowa's troops were sent on August 17 with a detachment of Maj. Lothar Lippert's Thirteenth Illinois

²⁵ John N. Edwards, *Shelby and his Men: or, The War in the West* (Cincinnati: Miami, 1867; facsimile reprint, Waverly, MO: General Joseph Shelby Memorial Fund, 1993), 172 (page citations are to reprint edition).

²⁶ *OR*, 511-12, 528.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 512.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 512, 483.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section E Page 7

Cavalry to Harrison's Landing some eight miles below Clarendon. There they spent the next several days skirmishing with Confederate pickets as the Illinois horsemen scouted the area.²⁹

Steele's March to Clarendon

Steele took command of the overall expedition to take Little Rock on his arrival in Helena on July 31, as Davidson's horsemen headed west toward Clarendon. From Helena, Steele finished assembling the infantry and artillery column that would join the cavalry in the assault on the capital.

Steele held a "grand review" of his infantry on the morning of August 10 in which the troops "presented arms in our best style, and then marched in review in common time." He started his column of six thousand infantrymen and sixteen artillery pieces westward that evening. Charles Musser of the Twenty-ninth Iowa expressed the confidence of many of Steele's troops, writing: "We will find no enemy on our march worthy of notice, only the myriads of Nats and Mosquitoes" and that "we are all in good spirits and are ready for the tramp." The Yankees would soon discover that eastern Arkansas held foes deadlier than gnats, mosquitoes or Confederates as they faced the blistering heat of an Arkansas August and the debilitating malarial diseases that awaited them in the region's miasmic swamps.³⁰

The wretchedness of the March became apparent on August 10 to the men of the Twenty-eighth Wisconsin, whose Captain Thomas Stevens wrote that the regiment "got in motion . . . about dark. It was black as pitch & raining before we had gone a mile. . . . Marched a little further by the light of the candle ___ laid down in our wet clothes and tried to rest a little in the rain."³¹

The difficult conditions soon took their toll on the Union men. After marching fifteen to eighteen miles, the Twenty-eighth Wisconsin's Captain Stevens reported seven men sick. A day later, after a march of fifteen miles, he recorded that "this has been a terrible day for us who go on foot--the dust, the hot sun & sweltering heat--it was rough. The men fell out by scores. We are marched too far for men in our condition, & at this time of year in Arkansas, half the time without water." The next day was no better, with the Twenty-eighth trudging another fifteen or sixteen miles "in the hot sun & blinding, choking dust"³²

²⁹ Ibid., 512.

³⁰ Charles O. Musser, *Soldier Boy: The Civil War Letters of Charles O. Musser, 29th Iowa*, ed. Barry Popchok (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1995), 76-7; James M. Bowler to "My Dearest Libby," ALS, August 12, 1863, James M. Bowler Correspondence, Minnesota Historical Society Manuscript Collection, St. Paul.

³¹ Thomas N. Stevens, "Dear Carrie," . . . *The Civil War Letters of Thomas N. Stevens*, ed. George M. Blackburn (Mount Pleasant, MI: Clarke Historical Library, 1984), 148.

³² Stevens, 149-50.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section E Page 8

William Dinsmore Hale of the Third Minnesota echoed Stevens' assessment of the march, writing on August 19 that "the heat and the dust added to the debilitated state of the system in this climate is quite as much as humanity can stand [emphasis in original]."³³

Confederate delaying actions added to the Yankees' misery. The Twenty-ninth Iowa's Musser noted that on arriving at Big Creek some twelve miles from Helena "we found the bridge burned and had to build a new one. . . . the Guerrillas shot one of the ambulance drivers while crossing the river or creek. it was eight at night when we got into camp and had to be up and going before light again."³⁴

The unsanitary water the marchers were compelled to drink, coupled with the rigors of marching in an Arkansas summer and the fact that many of the Union units were unhealthy before they even started, caused an appalling rate of illness among the Yankee troops.³⁵

For the debilitated Yankee forces, Clarendon's low-lying location on the White River was not the best choice for the columns of Steele and Davidson to link up. As A.F. Sperry of the Thirty-third Iowa Infantry explained, "Clarendon was the very home and head-quarters of ague in bulk and quantity. The very air was thick with it. We could almost hew out blocks of it and splash them in the river."³⁶

Major General Steele, seeing a thousand of his troops ill, by August 22 turned Davidson's horsemen toward Little Rock while moving his foot soldiers to the higher and presumably healthier ground at DeValls Bluff. He reported to Hurlbut in Memphis on August 23, "The sick list is frightful, including many officers. One brigade is commanded by a lieutenant-colonel, two colonels having given up in the last three days. If you do not send re-enforcements I shall likely meet with disaster. This is the poorest command that I have ever seen, except the cavalry."³⁷

On arriving at DeValls Bluff, the marching Union troops found that their stricken comrades had been transported to the new location by boat. James B. Lockney of the Twenty-eighth Wisconsin wrote in his diary on August 24 that "this morning we found the sick of our Co. that we left at Clarendon had come up on the boats & they had to lie on the bank of the River. Very many of them are very weak exhausted & dispirited. There were many sick belonging to all the different Regts. And for some reason no preparation

³³ William Dinsmore Hale to "Dear Folks at Home," ALS, August 19, 1863, William D. Hale and Family Papers, Minnesota Historical Society Manuscript Collection, St. Paul.

³⁴ Musser, 79.

³⁵ Paul E. Steiner, *Disease in the Civil War: Natural Biological Warfare in 1861-1865* (Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas, Publisher, 1968), 223.

³⁶ A.F. Sperry, *History of the 33d Iowa Infantry Volunteer Regiment 1863-6* (Des Moines: Mills & Company, 1866), 40-1.

³⁷ OR, 472.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section E Page 9

was made for them, and all is hurry and bustle yet they are left to do the best they can for themselves, or go untended[.]”³⁸

In selecting DeValls Bluff as a base of operations, Steele had two gunboats to protect the river side of town, while “an intrenchment can be thrown up in rear that will make the place tolerably secure against any force that will be likely to annoy us while we are pushing the enemy to the front.”³⁹

The Union Advance Toward Little Rock

With a strong base established on the White River, the Yankee army now headed west toward its prize, moving through the flat, waterless prairies that separated Devalls Bluff and Little Rock.

As Steele’s men decamped for DeValls Bluff on August 23, Price consolidated the Confederate cavalry opposing them, placing Marmaduke under Marsh Walker’s command. This created a situation that would exacerbate, with tragic results, the bad blood that had existed between Marmaduke and Walker since the Battle of Helena. The Confederate commander also received desperately needed reinforcements as Lt. Gen. Edmund Kirby Smith released Brig. Gen. James C. Tappan’s brigade of infantry from Louisiana. Price placed Brig. Gen. Daniel M. Frost in command of all infantry north of the river, keeping Tappan’s brigade on the south side in reserve. “Seeing that the position at Bayou Meto could be easily turned, and that it was otherwise untenable, I ordered General Frost . . . to withdraw his entire command within the line of defenses” being prepared near Little Rock. The Confederate cavalry would face the Union host alone.⁴⁰

Davidson’s troops, leading the Union spearhead west of the White River, began encountering Confederate skirmishers with increasing frequency. For the first time since leaving Missouri, Rebel bullets became a bigger hazard than thirst, dust and disease for the Union horsemen.

The Battle of Brownsville

The first sizable encounter between the two armies occurred on August 25 near the hamlet of Brownsville, “a small town situated on a broad, flat and extensive prairie, about thirty miles distance in an easterly direction from Little Rock.” It was here that the Rebel rear guard under Marmaduke, outnumbered four-to-one in men and eight-to-one in artillery, attempted to slow the Union advance.⁴¹

³⁸ James B. Lockney, *Civil War Journal of James B. Lockney*, ed. James R. Shirey [diary on-line], August 24, 1863; available from <http://userdata.acd.net/jshirey/cw186308.html>; Internet; accessed December 22, 1999.

³⁹ *OR*, 472.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 526, 520-1.

⁴¹ Charles H. Lothrop, *A History of the First Regiment Iowa Cavalry Veteran Volunteers* (Lyons, IA: Beers & Eaton, 1890), 126; DeBlack, 91.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section E Page 10

Lt. Col. B. Frank Gordon commanded seven hundred or so men of Shelby's Iron Brigade when the order came on the morning of the 25th, "ere the men had partaken of their scanty meal," to form line of battle at Bayou Two Prairie and block the Little Rock Road. One section of Bledsoe's battery was placed on the road while Maj. Benjamin Elliott's battalion moved a mile and a half ahead on the prairie to act as the Confederate advance and skirmish line. Marmaduke's six hundred men under Col. William L. Jeffers formed on the edge of Brownsville, with Charlie Bell's battery in place on the right and elements of Burbridge's and Jeffers' regiments and Young's battalion on the left.⁴²

"The enemy's lines, extending across the prairie, could be plainly seen advancing, supported by a large body of cavalry with artillery, and when within about 200 yards of our lines Major Elliott, from his entire line, opened fire upon them, which was immediately returned, and the charge sounded by the bugles of the enemy brought their columns sweeping across the prairie and down upon our retiring column like a whirlwind." Bledsoe's cannon opened on the Yankee horsemen "as soon as our men had approached sufficiently near to distinguish them from the enemy." "A few shots from the artillery drove the enemy's advance back." Gordon's troops lost one man killed and four captured "by their horses and mules falling with them" in this first contact with Davidson's troops.⁴³

Union participants remembered the battle in less grandiose terms. Trooper Petty of the Third Missouri Cavalry (U.S.) dismissed the entire action with a sentence: "When getting within two miles of Brownsville we encountered rebel pickets; they were charged and driven in; we soon shelled the rebs out of the place and occupied it."⁴⁴

The Rebels fell back through Brownsville to a position on a second prairie some six miles west of their original position. The Yankees approached cautiously, pausing to shell the initial Confederate position and then a band of timber on the eastern border of the prairie where the Southern horsemen reformed. Captain DeMuth of the Eighth Missouri Cavalry (U.S.) remembers that "we shelled him for an hour probably, when our regiment prepared to fight on foot. We went into the brush and searched all round for him, but could not find him, he gave us the slip."⁴⁵

On seeing the Rebel cavalry, the Union troops again moved to the attack. "'Here they come!' is again passed up the lines, and, as one column filed right and another left, in the most perfect order, with their banners gaily streaming in the wind, we could but admire their perfect discipline and soldierly

⁴² OR, 530, 532.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Petty, 35.

⁴⁵ OR, 530; Whitelaw Reid, *Ohio in the War: Her Statesmen Generals and Soldiers* (Cincinnati: The Robert Clarke Company, 1895), 885-6; Albert Demuth, *The Civil War Letters of Albert Demuth and Roster Eighth Missouri Volunteer Cavalry*, ed. Leo Huff (Springfield, MO: Independent Printing Company, 1997) 33, 35.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section E Page 11

bearing," Gordon wrote. When the Union cavalry was about half way across the two-mile-wide prairie, Bell's battery "mischievously ambushed" the Second Missouri Cavalry (U.S.), also known as the Merrill Horse, a regiment mounted on white horses. This "was the signal for Captain Bledsoe, who sent crushing through their lines shell after shell, throwing them into the most beautiful confusion."⁴⁶

Davidson ordered up a pair of batteries that then proceeded to throw "a shower of shells" into the Rebel lines, which Gordon claimed "fell harmless." DeMuth remembers this action thus: "We proceeded some farther, shelled him again, but cannot catch him." This ended the battle of Brownsville, with the Rebels falling back to their works at Bayou Meto and the Yankees holding at Brownsville, "very well satisfied with our days work." Nevertheless, Marmaduke's delaying action succeeded in slowing the Union advance as Davidson halted to wait on the infantry column.⁴⁷

The next morning the Confederates sent out scouts to warn of Union incursions against their lines at Bayou Meto. Col. Robert C. Newton's Fifth Arkansas Cavalry was ordered to Shallow Ford south of the Rebel cavalry's main lines on Bayou Meto, from which he "sent out small scouts upon all the roads on the east side of the bayou leading to the ford." One party, consisting of Lt. J.C. Barnes and eight men of Company A, encountered a Federal patrol on the Wire Road some two miles past the bayou "who fled precipitously at his approach. He pursued them some distance, but was unable to overtake them." Beyond this encounter, none of Newton's parties located any curious Yankees and they spent the rest of the 26th picketing the area around Brownsville. Col. William L. Jeffers also reported skirmishing with Union scouts along the Confederate right as Davidson probed the Rebel positions.⁴⁸

While Newton was chasing Yankee patrols from his position at Shallow Ford, a force of the First Iowa Cavalry and Third Missouri Cavalry (U.S.) and sections of Lovejoy's and Clarkson's batteries drove up the Little Rock Road to feel out the Rebel positions at Bayou Meto. "The enemy were found posted in force at a position about 9 miles beyond Brownsville, estimated by Colonel Glover, commanding, at 6,000 strong," Davidson reported. Glover's advance skirmishers made first contact, locating Rebel pickets about six miles from Brownsville and driving them back some two miles to entrenched positions about two miles east of Bayou Meto. "After a considerable artillery duel, I ordered Lovejoy to advance his section, in doing of which he had one cannoneer pierced through with solid shot and killed instantly, so well did the enemy have the range of the road," Glover reported. A swift reconnaissance by Glover led him to conclude that the Confederate position was more than he wanted to tackle with the force at hand, and the Yankees fell back to Brownsville. In addition to the hapless Yankee artilleryman, the engagement claimed the lives of three Confederates.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ *OR*, 530.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*; DeMuth, 33, 35; Edwards, 174.

⁴⁸ *OR*, 535, 533.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 484, 501; Petty, 36.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section E Page 12

The Battle of Bayou Meto

On August 27, Davidson returned in force to confront the Confederate horsemen at Bayou Meto. John Edwards of Shelby's command succinctly described the bayou and its importance: "The Bayou Metre [sic] was a low, sluggish stream, with a miry bed, abrupt banks, and its sides fringed with a heavy growth of timber. It was difficult to cross, and presented the only water at which a command could conveniently camp after leaving Bayou Two Prairie." It was here that Marsh Walker's horsemen would make a stand and here that Davidson's thirsty troops would face their first serious combat of the campaign.⁵⁰

Col. J.M. Glover's troops again had the advance, and with a battalion of the Tenth Illinois Cavalry leading as skirmishers they began to move forward on the road to the Bayou Meto bridge. They first encountered Marmaduke's horsemen some five miles east of the bridge, and after "a brisk fire" the Rebels fell back about two miles. The Tenth Illinois again hit the Confederate lines at this new position, losing a lieutenant to Southern marksmen. Davidson then ordered Glover's entire brigade into action.⁵¹

Glover placed his artillery in the center, on the road. Two battalions of the Third Missouri Cavalry (U.S.) climbed from their horses to the right of the road to fight as infantry; six squadrons of the Tenth Illinois covered their right flank. A third battalion of the Third Missouri, joined by foot soldiers of the Thirty-second Iowa infantry, comprised Glover's left. "In this order, with a heavy line of skirmishers in front, the brigade moved forward," the Union commander reported.⁵²

Facing the approaching Yankee cavalry, Marmaduke placed Shelby's Iron Brigade under B. Frank Gordon as his forward line of troops above Reed's Bridge north of Bayou Meto. Marmaduke's Brigade, under Col. William L. Jeffers, was formed below the bridge, along with Dobbin's regiment. The Confederates would contest the advancing Unionists above the bridge, but braced for a heated defense from behind the natural rampart of Bayou Meto.⁵³

The Rebels' first line of defense consisted of some 125 dismounted troopers of Shelby's Brigade under Gordon, detailed to Marmaduke that morning to serve as skirmishers and accompanied by the "little teaser" prairie guns of Bell's battery. These troops watched the approaching Yankees as "they pushed forward their columns impetuously until, coming upon the main body of our skirmishers, a roar of musketry sent death crippling through their ranks, completely breaking up their lines for the time in dismay and confusion."⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Edwards, 175.

⁵¹ *OR*, 501.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 501-2.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 527.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 530.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section E Page 13

The “dismay and confusion” did not last long as the advancing Yankees drove Marmaduke back to a fixed line of defenses above Bayou Meto, which Glover described as “a very strong and elevated position, covered by extended rifle-pits on the left, where he made a more obstinate stand.”⁵⁵

A charge by the dismounted Third Missouri troopers on Glover’s right drove back the Rebels facing them and flanked the remaining Southerners out of their rifle pits, sending the entire force “in greatest disorder and confusion toward the Bayou Meto.” Other Third Missouri troopers and infantry of the Thirty-second Iowa drove back the Confederates facing them on the Union left. Davidson assisted them with a subterfuge by ordering drums beaten to convince the Confederates that they were facing concentrations of Yankee infantry in addition to Federal cavalry. “The rebs made a charge on our battery and when this was done a regt. of Cav Stood ready with pistol and carbine,” Francis Marion Emmons of the Seventh Missouri Cavalry (U.S.) wrote. “When they charged near enough these men with drums beat the charge and the rebs thought ten thousand infantry was on them when they turned and run our men fireing volley after volley and the Artillery using grape and canister piling them in heaps After this the Genl Sat on his horse and laughed to see them run at the trick he played on them.” The Union troops on the left were “then thrown forward to the bayou, where we remained about three hours, getting an occasional shot at the enemy concealed on the other side.” The artillery was ordered up to shell the retreating Rebels, a bombardment that lasted around thirty minutes.⁵⁶

Having foreseen the probability of falling back across Bayou Meto, Capt. John Mhoon, a Rebel engineer, had given Reed’s Bridge “a thorough coating of tar and other inflammable material,” John Edwards remembered, “and as the last of the rear-guard crossed it, the torch was applied.”⁵⁷

The Union horsemen suddenly noticed the smoke in the distance and realized that the Rebels were burning the only crossing of the steep-banked stream. Davidson ordered Lt. Col. Daniel Anderson and the First Iowa Cavalry, comprising Glover’s reserve, to charge “in the face of a terrible fire of artillery and small-arms.” Confederate Colonel Gordon watched as the Iowans, “perhaps thinking the ‘frightened rebels in terror fled,’ charged down the road in splendid style, as if to save the bridge; but it were better had many of them never been born. The dense cloud of smoke from the crackling, burning bridge, like sorrow’s veil, hung between them and Bledsoe’s battery, and when the head of their long lines had nearly reached the bridge, these noble old guns sent shell and shot, winged with fury, screaming and hissing up their lines, scattering the mangled fragments of men and horses like chaff before the wind.”⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Ibid., 502.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 502, 513, 530; Francis M. Emmons to “To All at Home,” September 16, 1863, Francis Marion Emmons Papers, University of Missouri Western Historical Collection—Columbia.

⁵⁷ Edwards, 176.

⁵⁸ *OR*, 502, 531.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section E Page 14

“In making this charge, the regiment was exposed to a terrible fire from the enemy’s artillery and sharpshooters,” Lieutenant Colonel Anderson of the First Iowa, whose horse was shot from under him during the charge, wrote in his official report. “We reached the bridge, but not in time to save it; it was already enveloped in flames. . . . I then dismounted the command and went forward on foot. Never have I seen a greater coolness of courage displayed. Not a man flinched from performing his whole duty as a brave and loyal soldier. When I had ascertained the position of the enemy by severe skirmishing half an hour, I withdrew under cover of the hill and out of range of their guns.”⁵⁹

Glover’s men would attempt several more advances against the entrenched Rebels at Bayou Meto, most likely in an effort to recover the dozens of wounded Iowa horsemen of Anderson’s regiment, but the remainder of the day’s fighting would be done primarily by the artillery. Glover selected a position from which his artillery could relieve the now-dismounted First Iowa. “They opened with twelve or sixteen guns,” according to John Edwards. “Marmaduke’s artillery, though inferior in strength, replied as promptly and as vigorously. For nearly an hour the ring of musketry along the line was incessant, and the deep-toned artillery lent its voice to swell the diapason of harmonious discord.” The Yankee “shot and shell ripped and roared through the forest, tearing the trees around the battery into fragments, and plowing up the earth in the most approved demoniac style but all without avail,” Gordon wrote. “The long, rakish-looking pirate rifles [of Bledsoe’s Battery] seemed to shout in proud defiance, as with great precision they sent tearing through their ranks their iron missiles, driving them from position to position.”⁶⁰

Marmaduke ordered Lt. Charlie Bell’s small battery of prairie guns to a position near the bridge, “in open view of the enemy, and in point-blank range of their guns.” The Union artillery did not miss the opportunity, shattering Bell’s battery, killing Bell and seriously wounding one of Marmaduke’s aides before the battery was withdrawn to safety.⁶¹

In retaliation, Marmaduke determined to punish the Yankee artillery “and for that purpose massed his six guns in a commanding position and opened a vigorous fire upon them.” Lt. R.A. Collins, who commanded an artillery battery in Shelby’s brigade, had “crossed the bayou and worked his way from point to point, despite the fire of their sharpshooters, until he had thoroughly reconnoitered their position.” An artillery duel ensued, and “by a natural impulse the men along the entire line on both sides, in a great measure, ceased operations, and employed themselves in watching the progress and results of the duel.” The Rebel artillery used Collins’ reconnaissance to deadly effect, firing with precision on the more numerous Union guns. As the disconcerted Yankee cannoners took accurate fire from the batteries of Collins and Bledsoe “they entirely lost their coolness and precision, and sent their shells recklessly through the tops of the trees, destroying much foliage and frightening the wild birds terribly.”⁶²

⁵⁹ *OR*, 508.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 502, 531; Edwards, 176.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 178.

⁶² *Ibid.*

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section E Page 15

Perhaps the best hope for a Union victory was on their left, where one hundred men of Young's Battalion of Marmaduke's brigade held the extreme right of the Confederate line, covering a crossing of Bayou Meto that "entirely turned the position." These men, under a Major Bennett, resisted repeated attempts by Squadrons D and F of the First Iowa Cavalry to effect a crossing. Bennett "informed Marmaduke . . . that he was heavily pressed, and feared he could not hold his ground," John Edwards recalled. "Marmaduke replied that he could spare him no men, and that he must beat back the enemy and make good his position. Bennett replied that he would do it, and did do it." Had Davidson or Glover ordered some of the Iowans or Missourians idly pot-shotting at Rebels across the bayou on the Union left to join in a concerted attack against Young's troops, they may have been able to turn Marmaduke's flank and drive the Rebels from the field. However, this was not to be and the best opportunity that day for a Union victory passed them by.⁶³

As the combatant artillerists hammered away at each other, Glover discovered "a strong force of the enemy on this side of the bayou, on the right of our line." The Tenth Illinois was given the task of forcing this rump remnant of Marmaduke's force--inadvertently cut off when the rest of the Rebels fell back across Reed's Bridge--from their position, which they did, "putting them across the bayou after a very hot contest." After skirmishing until late in the evening, Glover's exhausted troops were ordered back to Brownsville, "getting into camp at midnight." "The sun went down smoke-begrimed, red-faced, and furious," Gordon concluded. Despite their tactical victory at Bayou Meto, the Confederates were ordered that night to retreat to within five miles of Little Rock, giving up the last substantial line of defenses east of the considerable works built northeast of the capital.⁶⁴

Federal casualties totaled seven killed and thirty-eight wounded, most from the ill-fated charge of the First Iowa Cavalry. Confederate losses were undisclosed, but at least two officers were killed and numerous soldiers wounded.

Skirmishes on Shallow Ford Road

For the next several days, the two armies restricted their activities primarily to scouting operations. On August 29, Davidson sent Colonel Geiger commanding a battalion each of the Merrill Horse and Eighth Missouri Cavalry (U.S.) and a section of Lovejoy's battery on an uneventful trip down Shallow Ford Road to the left of the Union forces. The next day, August 30, Ritter's Brigade and Capt. Gustave Stange's mountain howitzers took the same road beyond Bayou Meto, encountering Robert C. Newton's Fifth Arkansas Cavalry. After driving back the Union advance, about forty Rebels under Major John Bull encountered the bulk of Ritter's force concealed behind the embankment of the Memphis-Little Rock

⁶³ OR, 533; Edwards, 177.

⁶⁴ OR, 502, 527, 532; Petty, 37.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section E Page 16

railroad tracks. "In short time, being reinforced from Shallow Ford by cavalry and artillery, the enemy commenced advancing from his position behind the railroad," Newton reported. "Bull resisted his advance almost at every step, his men behaving with admirable courage and steadiness."⁶⁵

Ordering all of his men with long-range rifles to snipe at the advancing Union cavalry, Newton began a fighting withdrawal in the face of Stange's cannon and Ritter's larger force. Around 2 p.m., after five hours of fighting, Newton requested reinforcements from Walker. About one mile from Ashley's Mills and a river crossing at Terry's Ferry, Newton set an ambush with shotgun-wielding Southerners under Capt. P.J. Rollow. Advance Federal scouts obligingly rode into the trap and "the enemy, not willing to run onto the ambushade a second time, although my men had been withdrawn from there, commenced sending heavy bodies of dismounted cavalry to my right and left."⁶⁶

Fearing an envelopment, Newton fell back another three-quarters of a mile to Hicks' plantation to again contest the Union pursuit "but he advanced upon me no further." Ritter fell back to Shallow Ford and established a heavy picket there. Davidson's report only briefly mentioned the day-long combat with the Fifth Arkansas. "They were driven, with sharp skirmishing, by Colonel Ritter, 8 miles, and until the ground became totally unsuitable for the action of cavalry; the enemy leaving 9 of their killed upon the field. Ritter's loss was 1 captain and 4 men wounded."⁶⁷

Newton continued skirmishing and scouting between Shallow Ford and Hicks' plantation for several days, clashing with Federal scouts at Mrs. Ewell's place on August 31. On September 1 he was ordered to move his regiment to Ashley's Mills, which he did the next day, leaving a skeleton force at Hicks'. He remained at Ashley's Mills for the next two days.⁶⁸

Back at DeValls Bluff, the arrival of Col. James M. True's reserve brigade on August 30 allowed Steele to advance his infantry west in support of Davidson's horsemen on September 1, leaving DeValls Bluff "in such a state of defense that the convalescents and a small detail left there were deemed sufficient to hold it against any force the enemy would be likely send against it."⁶⁹

The bulk of Steele's foot soldiers arrived at Brownsville on September 2 and the commander of the Arkansas Expedition began making his final plans for the capture of the capital city. With True's reserve brigade, Steele's aggregate strength stood at between 14,500 and 15,000 men, including 49 cannon. Price's

⁶⁵ *OR*, 485, 536.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 537.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 485, 537.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 537.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 476.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section E Page 17

total effective command consisted of some 7,749 men, most of whom manned the trenches on the high ground north of the Arkansas River.⁷⁰

The Union commander spent the next two days scouting out the best approach to Little Rock. The road on the south side of Bayou Meto "passed through a section impracticable for any military operations--swamp, timber, and entanglements of vines and undergrowth--and was commanded by the enemy's works."⁷¹

Steele ordered Davidson to swing around the Confederate left and scout the roads there, while Brig. Gen. Samuel Rice's Third Division diverted Confederate attention with a demonstration against Rebel pickets along Bayou Meto. The Union infantry passed through Marmaduke's advance positions of August 27, but after a night in the former Confederate positions, they were ordered back to Brownsville at the culmination of Davidson's expedition.

Davidson's scouts revealed that "the great length to which it would increase our line of communication with our base rendered it impracticable for us to attack the enemy on his left flank." Steele ultimately decided to take the Shallow Ford Road via Ashley's Mills to the Arkansas River and Little Rock.⁷²

The Marmaduke-Walker Duel

As Steele's army crossed Bayou Meto at Shallow Ford on September 6, Confederate cavalry commanders Lucius M. Walker and John S. Marmaduke culminated their long-simmering feud with the last duel fought in Arkansas. The bad blood between the two generals originated at the July 4 attack on Helena, where Marmaduke contended that Walker's failure to support him adequately on his left caused the failure of his assault on Battery A, the northern lynchpin of the Union defenses at the Mississippi River town. Marmaduke's ire was exacerbated during the fighting at Brownsville on September 25, when he felt Walker again had failed to come to his support. The Missourian's patience was exhausted during the battle at Bayou Meto, where he felt his superior officer had ignored repeated requests to leave his headquarters in the rear of the Confederate positions for conferences on the firing line. Following the action at Reed's Bridge, Marmaduke asked to either be removed from under Walker's command or that his resignation from the Confederate forces be accepted. Price approved the transfer.⁷³

⁷⁰ OR, 476; Leo E. Huff, "The Union Expedition Against Little Rock," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 22, (Fall, 1963): 231; DeBlack, 92.

⁷¹ OR, 476.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Edwin C. Bearss, "The Battle of Helena, July 4, 1863," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 20, (Autumn 1961): 290; Leo Huff, "The Last Duel in Arkansas: The Marmaduke-Walker Duel," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 23, (Spring, 1964): 37-8; John C. Moore, *Confederate Military History of Missouri* in vol. 12 of *Confederate Military History Extended*

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section E Page 18

On hearing that his actions had been censured, Walker at first “only laughed.” The laughter turned to anger when he heard that his courage was called into question. A flurry of letters between the generals led on September 5 to a formal challenge to a duel. Around midnight on the 5th, Price learned of the impending duel and sent orders to both generals “to remain closely at his headquarters for the next twenty-four hours.” Walker never received the order and Marmaduke ignored it.⁷⁴

They met at the Godfrey LeFevre Plantation, about seven miles below Little Rock on the north side of the Arkansas River, arriving before dawn, and their seconds selected the location for the ritual combat, pacing off the distance and ensuring that neither general would have the advantage of the rising sun at his back. Each held a six-shot, regulation-model 1851 Navy Colt revolver. At the command to fire, both loosed a single shot with no effect. Marmaduke immediately fired again, striking Walker in the side. As the Tennessean fell backward, his pistol fired harmlessly.⁷⁵

Using Marmaduke’s wagon, they transported Walker to the Cates residence in Little Rock, where the general lingered until the next evening. As he lay dying, Walker asked an aide to “see General Marmaduke and tell him that before taking the sacrament I forgive him with all my heart, and I want my friends to forgive him and neither prosecute nor persecute him.” He was buried in Little Rock’s Mount Holly Cemetery with full military honors on September 8.⁷⁶

On hearing that the duel had proceeded, an angry Price ordered Marmaduke placed under arrest. However, on the appeal of Marmaduke and the generals of his division and “feeling . . . the great inconvenience and danger of an entire change of cavalry commanders in the very presence of the enemy, and when a general engagement was imminent,” he released the Missourian and restored him to command of the Confederate cavalry.⁷⁷

On September 6, Col. Archibald Dobbin assumed command of Walker’s cavalry division, consisting of Dobbin’s Arkansas brigade (now under Col. Robert C. Newton and including Newton’s Fifth Arkansas), Carter’s Texas brigade, Alf Johnson’s spy company and a squadron of Louisiana horsemen

Edition, ed. Clement A. Evans (Atlanta: Confederate Publishing Company, 1899; reprint with new material, Wilmington, NC: Broadfoot Publishing Company, 1988), 137; Edwards, 177-81.

⁷⁴ John M. Harrell, *Confederate Military History of Arkansas* in vol. 14 of *Confederate Military History Extended Edition*, ed. Clement A. Evans (Atlanta: Confederate Publishing Company, 1899; reprint with new material, Wilmington, NC: Broadfoot Publishing Company, 1988), 220; Huff, “Last Duel,” 39-40; *OR*, 525.

⁷⁵ Huff, “Last Duel,” 44.

⁷⁶ (Little Rock) *Arkansas Democrat*, November 11, 1928; Huff, “Last Duel,” 45.

⁷⁷ *OR*, 525.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section E Page 19

under W.B. Denson. The bulk of the Texans, however, were on picket duty and scattered across southeast Arkansas.⁷⁸

Steele began his advance the next day, hitting Newton's cavalry at Ashley's Mills by way of Shallow Ford Road. The Confederates gave ground stubbornly, but were forced steadily back by the overwhelming numbers of Union horsemen. By 10 a.m. on September 7, the Rebel cavalry was forced across the Arkansas River some eight miles below Little Rock "without molestation from the enemy, who ceased the pursuit as soon as they reached the river." The Confederates lost one killed, three wounded and two captured, including Dobbin's brigade adjutant.⁷⁹

Steele spent the next two days reconnoitering the area, repairing the road to Bayou Meto and consolidating his forces. He still suffered from a lengthy sick list, with more than seven hundred men and officers too ill to fight. Two brigades—True's infantry and Ritter's cavalry—were detailed to guard the supplies and the sick at Brownsville. Dobbin reported "continual skirmishing between my scouts and the enemy, and also constant firing across the river" during this period.⁸⁰

Crossing the Arkansas River

By September 9, Steele had determined his strategy. Rather than go head to head with Price's strongly entrenched infantry on the high ground on the north side of the river, he would divide his army in the face of the enemy, sending Davidson's cavalry across the river to flank the Rebels out of their works while the Yankee infantry moved west on the north bank of the Arkansas. It was a bold plan by a clever general, and it hinged on a swift and successful crossing of the Arkansas River by Davidson's horsemen.⁸¹

Dobbin, holding the south bank of the Arkansas, was not in an enviable situation. His thin screen of horsemen was "very much scattered" in trying to cover the area between Little Rock and Buck's Ford, a twelve-mile stretch of river with a dozen fords. On the evening of the 9th, a local citizen reported to the Rebel cavalryman that he had seen Steele and Davidson's force "to be 30,000 strong," an inflated estimate, to be sure, but far outnumbering the 1,200-odd Confederate horsemen holding the area south of the river.⁸²

Steele backed his force with guile as he prepared for the river crossing. Though he intended to cross closer to Little Rock, he sent a force down to Buck's Ford "and built up camp-fires within sight of the ford." Dobbin hastily ordered some two hundred bales of cotton rushed to the ford to create impromptu

⁷⁸ Ibid., 524, 538.

⁷⁹ Ibid.; Stevens, 168.

⁸⁰ *OR*, 476, 524, 528.

⁸¹ Ibid., 476.

⁸² Ibid., 523-4.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section E Page 20

fortifications and planted J.H. Pratt's artillery battery to cover the crossing. The First Missouri Cavalry (U.S.) under John Ritter, supported by Lt. K.S. Clarkson's battery, saw the cotton bales "two deep, so as to have a raking fire of the ford," on the morning of the 10th, and sent a company of horsemen out to draw Rebel fire and ascertain whether they faced infantry or cavalry. As the Confederates opened on Company E, Clarkson's battery fired on the cotton-bale fort, "setting the cotton on fire and driving the enemy from the place." This delaying action, which lasted about two hours, held up part of the thin gray line on the south side of the Arkansas as Steele effected his main crossing three miles upstream.⁸³

The Union general had selected his crossing point well. Though there were a dozen fordable locations below Little Rock, Steele chose to build a pontoon bridge at a point where the Arkansas River made a horseshoe bend, allowing the Union general to place his batteries in positions that would enable them to concentrate converging fire on any Rebels who tried to contest the crossing.⁸⁴

Late on the evening of September 9, Davidson gathered his cavalry commanders at his headquarters at Ashley's Mills and gave them their orders. "It was announced by him that early the next morning the whole available force of the army would move; the infantry, under General Steele, to assault the enemy's strong works on the north side of the river, while our cavalry division was to cross the Arkansas River 8 miles below, and move to the capture of Little Rock," Col. J.M. Glover reported. "He stated that no ordinary obstacle was to be allowed to defeat the purpose of the division; that we were to make a dash upon the city and capture it, and either hold or destroy the enemy's bridges, though it cost us one of our regiments."⁸⁵

Infantry troops silently filed into positions on the north side of the Arkansas as army engineers began to slap together a pontoon bridge across the river. The Fifth, Eleventh and Twenty-fifth Ohio batteries and a section of the Second Missouri Light Artillery (U.S.) took up positions covering the laboring pioneers and the wooded salient south of the Arkansas. Yankee horsemen under Glover and Merrill massed out of sight, ready to rush across the river and exploit the bridgehead once established. Col. C.C. Andrews of the Third Minnesota, emplaced to the right of the Eleventh Ohio Battery, ordered the best sharpshooters from each of his companies "to get into position under cover, and well secluded from the enemy. This arrangement met the cordial approval of the division commander."⁸⁶

At 3 a.m., the harried Dobbin, "the reports from scouts having been very unsatisfactory and conflicting," rode from Buck's Ford to "ascertain, if possible, what movement the enemy was making." On seeing construction of a pontoon bridge under way, the Confederate commander ordered C.B. Etter's battery "to occupy the point opposite to where the enemy was engaged in cutting down the bank, and to

⁸³ Ibid., 524, 489, 510.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 476.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 503.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 486, 517.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section E Page 21

open fire on it, which it did.” Maj. John Bull and a party of Rebel sharpshooters were sent to support the artillery.⁸⁷

Etter opened fire shortly after daylight and “his second shot took effect, clearing the bridge of workmen.” The Rebel fire was answered with a maelstrom of artillery fire from the waiting Union batteries. “Before the smoke of the first discharge of their guns had scarcely reached the tops of the trees, which concealed their movements, twenty guns belched forth from their Concealment on the north side of the river a stream of shell into the midst of their battery,” Capt. Julius Hadley, commanding Davidson’s artillery, reported. One battery, the Eleventh Ohio, reported firing about one hundred rounds during the “short but decisive engagement.”⁸⁸

Dobbin ordered a piece of Pratt’s battery to assist Etter’s hard-pressed cannoneers, “but the fire from the enemy’s batteries was so terrific that they were unable to hold their position, and, after being engaged about two hours, were compelled to retire, leaving one piece of Etter’s battery, which I had brought off afterwards by the cavalry.”⁸⁹

The pontoon bridge was completed about 10 a.m. As the Fortieth Iowa and the Forty-third Illinois infantry regiments prepared to dash across the bridge and sandbar into the screen of trees across the river, Second Division commander Col. Adolph Engelmann ordered the Eleventh Ohio Battery and two rifled pieces of the Fifth Ohio Battery to shell the wooded area. With the Fortieth Iowa in the lead, the two regiments “advanced with alacrity across the half mile of sand” to the tree line.⁹⁰

Capt. Gustave Stange, with eight howitzers, including Lovejoy’s battery, was next across the river, sent to support the infantry and afterward accompany Glover’s horsemen on their advance up the south bank of the Arkansas. J.M. Glover, commanding Davidson’s Second Brigade of cavalry, sent two squadrons of the First Iowa Cavalry across the pontoon bridge as the infantry troops spread out along the levee commanding the Union beachhead. As the rest of the Second Brigade clattered across the bridge, Col. Lewis Merrill received permission to cross the First Brigade at a ford above the bridge.⁹¹

With the successful crossing of the Arkansas River, Davidson’s division began approaching Little Rock from the river’s southern side while Steele ordered his foot soldiers toward the formidable Rebel fortifications on the north side of the river. At this point in the campaign Price reported 7,749 men of all

⁸⁷ Ibid., 524, 539.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 529,489; Reid, 857.

⁸⁹ OR, 525.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 514; A.A. Stuart, *Iowa Colonels and Regiments: Being a History of Iowa Regiments in the War of the Rebellion: and Containing a Description of the Battles in Which TheyFought* (Des Moines: Mills & Company, 1865), 535.

⁹¹ OR, 489, 503, 492.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section E Page 22

arms present for duty; however, only about 1,250 faced the Yankee cavalry while the remaining 6,500 or so men held the trenches against Steele's infantry. Steele fielded 10,477 men "present for duty" and 57 pieces of artillery for the final assault on Little Rock.⁹²

On hearing that Union troops were crossing the Arkansas, Confederate commander Sterling Price ordered James Tappan's infantry brigade to Dobbin's support and sent Marmaduke's division south of the river, with Marmaduke to take command of all cavalry forces.⁹³

The Battle of Bayou Fourche

Glover's Second Brigade, as in earlier actions, led the Union advance beyond the beachhead, fronted by skirmishers of the First Iowa. They were followed by more Iowans, Stange's battery of Missouri artillery, the Tenth Illinois Cavalry and the Third Missouri Cavalry (U.S.). At about noon, "the enemy opened a heavy volley of musketry, soon repeated, accompanied with artillery." Dobbin's Confederates contested the Union advance but were driven back five miles, "fighting all the time." When within a mile of Bayou Fourche, Dobbin ordered Newton and about five hundred men of his brigade to form along the bayou "while I remained and held the enemy in check." He also ordered the troops facing the Union feint at Buck's Ford to join him at Bayou Fourche in a last-ditch effort to defend the capital.⁹⁴

The ill-considered duel of September 6 now claimed yet another Confederate cavalry commander. When Marmaduke arrived to take command of the Rebel defenses, Dobbin refused to take orders from the man who had killed his commander, Marsh Walker. Marmaduke placed the Arkansian under arrest, making Col. Robert C. Newton the third officer to command Walker's division in four days. As with Marmaduke before him, Dobbin was soon released from arrest and returned to command of his troops.⁹⁵

Glover continued to push forward, driving Maj. John Bull's screen of Rebels before him until reaching the point where Fourche Bayou feeds into the Arkansas River, about six miles below Little Rock near the present-day site of the Little Rock airport. The road forked there, with one road going northwest and the other southwest, separated by the bayou. The area to the north of the bayou was heavily wooded, while that to the south was planted in corn. The cornfield was bordered at its western terminus by a sharp

⁹² Ibid., 522; Thomas L. Snead, "The Conquest of Arkansas" in *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, Vol. 3, ed. Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buel. (New York: The Century Company, 1888), 457; Huff, "Union Expedition," 236.

⁹³ OR, 522.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 504, 525.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 539, 526.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section E Page 23

southward turn of the bayou, with a levee located on the bayou's far bank through which the southern road passed. "The ground," Colonel Merrill reported later, "was very difficult to reconnoiter."⁹⁶

Rising dust clouds to the southwest indicated the presence of a heavy Rebel force, and Glover sent the First Iowa Cavalry with a section of howitzers to the left along the levee road while the Tenth Illinois with Lovejoy's battery were deployed to the right. Glover warned his Iowans to watch their left flank, which was unsupported; he held the Third Missouri Cavalry (U.S.) to support the First Iowa. Forming against Glover was Marmaduke's division, commanded by Col. William Jeffers of the Eighth Missouri Cavalry (C.S.). Jeffers placed Colton Greene's regiment on his right, the Eighth Missouri and Burbridge's regiment in the center, and Young's battalion on the left, anchored on the Arkansas River.⁹⁷

Meanwhile, Lewis Merrill, heading the First Brigade, proceeded up the bank of the Arkansas to Glover's right. As he heard firing from Glover's troops before him, Merrill sent the Seventh Missouri Cavalry (U.S.) in support of four pieces of the Twenty-fifth Ohio Battery, which was firing unsupported on the Rebels from the Arkansas River's sandy beach; this effectively removed the Seventh Missouri from the remainder of the day's action. Merrill was ordered to take the southern road across Fourche Fourche. He dismounted the Eighth Missouri Cavalry (U.S.), supported by a section of the Twenty-fifth Ohio Battery, and ordered them to feel out the enemy on the road ahead. He held the Second Missouri Cavalry (U.S.), his own Merrill Horse, in reserve. This road was the same taken by the First Iowa, and the Eighth Missouri, under Col. W.F. Geiger, soon found the Iowans skirmishing briskly with the enemy. Part of the First Iowa, formed in line of battle in a cornfield to the right of the road, had "one of their guidons . . . incautiously exposed near the road, and a hot fire of shells and spherical case was drawn upon them from the enemy's battery, posted at the dam across the bayou."⁹⁸

Newton placed most of his troops facing Merrill along the levee on the west side of the bayou. The Confederate colonel placed Maj. Sam Corley's regiment of dismounted Arkansas cavalry (Dobbin's regiment) and Etter's battery to the left of the levee road, with Pratt's battery commanding the road and Bull's regiment, Denson's Louisiana squadron and Morgan's Texas cavalry on the right to protect the artillery and guard against a flanking movement. They were later bolstered by the arrival of Tappan's infantry brigade.⁹⁹

Glover was actively engaged on the Union right. The Tenth Illinois, under Lt. Col. James Stuart, had barely entered the dense woods along the northern road when he encountered Jeffers' mounted Rebel skirmishers. His advance companies charged "to a point where a deadly fire was poured in upon him from

⁹⁶ Ibid., 492.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 504, 534.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 492.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 539.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section E Page 24

an overwhelming force of the enemy, dismounted and in ambush." The Union squadrons fell back in confusion, breaking up the balance of the regiment, which was moving up in support.¹⁰⁰

The Second Brigade commander had ordered Lovejoy's Missouri battery to support the Tenth Illinois from its right, but discovered the cannon had become the targets of the Rebels as the Illinois horsemen tried to straighten their lines. "I repeatedly ordered them back, and, by the assistance of Lieutenant-Colonel Stuart, who here received a severe contusion on the top of the head by a bullet, held the cavalry as long as possible to save the section, but in vain, as no one at the howitzers would obey orders."¹⁰¹

Gustave Stange, who had arrived with his battery, was ordered to fire on the Rebels threatening Lovejoy, but "instead of obeying orders, he fell back, and even failed to fire from where he was, which was an excellent range for grape and canister." Stuart of the Tenth Illinois Cavalry ordered Stange's artillerists "to run [the guns] out by hand, but they all got under the gun carriages and did not obey." Jeffers' and Burbridge's horsemen rushed upon Lovejoy's hapless battery, "which we captured, on the field."¹⁰²

The loss of Lovejoy's Battery led Glover to change his tactics as he faced the Confederate troops massed between Bayou Fourche and the Arkansas River. "I now determined to fight him in his own way, and brought up the Tenth Illinois and Third Missouri, and dismounted them to fight on foot, in three lines," with skirmishers fronting his line of battle, and a second line following in a solid row between the bayou and the river. Needing "to combine all my forces to vanquish a vaunting and defiant foe," Glover brought the First Iowa from its position with Merrill's troops to provide mounted support and to exploit any breaks in the enemy lines.¹⁰³

Glover believed he saw an opportunity to bag the entire Confederate force facing him. The Second Brigade commander wrote in his after-action report that he met with Merrill and "explained . . . the nature and connections of the road, and suggested to him to send up his brigade . . . and fall on the rear of the enemy by way of the levee, and I would drive back and capture his whole force. The result seemed to me inevitable, if this movement on the left should be made." Merrill reported no such meeting, writing after the battle that he learned that the First Iowa had moved to the right only after sending for the horsemen and being "informed that they had been ordered out and had moved to the rear, by whose orders I could not learn, as the order was not given by me." In any case, the First Brigade's leader soon found himself far too busy to participate in any neat encirclement actions.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 539, 504.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 504-5.

¹⁰² Ibid., 505, 507, 534; Edwards, 183.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 505.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 505, 492.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section E Page 25

After learning that the First Iowa was gone, Merrill was further confounded by a burst of artillery fire to his left rear. Fearing an enemy battery had slipped in behind him, the Missourian was relieved to discover "a section of Stange's howitzers, of whose presence on my line of attack I now learned for the first time."¹⁰⁵

Merrill's thin line of skirmishers pushed forward and soon discovered Pratt's Rebel twelve-pounder howitzers behind the levee across the bayou, commanding the road. An additional field piece was firing across the bayou from his right. "These guns were supported by a strong line of skirmishers on the west side of the bayou, and a weak line in the same cornfield in which my line was advancing." "The enemy in small parties came up in my front so as to be distinctly visible . . . but I directed Pratt to reserve his fire until they advanced in some force and came into easy range, when he was to ply them vigorously with grape and canister," Newton reported.¹⁰⁶

On the Union right, the Second Brigade advanced "and in a few moments a terrific and deadly fire prevailed along the whole line from friend and foe" as the Tenth Illinois and the Third Missouri (U.S.) advanced on foot. As they moved forward, Bayou Fourche meandered to the left, leading Glover to bring up part of the First Iowa to fill out the Union center and left, and prevent a possible flanking movement.¹⁰⁷

Merrill's skirmishers also moved forward and the Union colonel ordered a section of the Twenty-fifth Ohio Battery in support of Geiger's Eighth Missouri Cavalry (U.S.) to the left of the road, as two squadrons of the Merrill Horse regiment filled out his line to the right. However, Captain Hadley, Davidson's artillery chief, ordered the cannon withdrawn to the left and began a long-range fire on the Rebel battery behind the levee. "No apparent effect was produced by his fire except to explode one shell among our own skirmishers," Merrill reported later. He ordered the cannon to the rear "where I could use it in case what seemed to be an effort to turn my right flank should prove successful."¹⁰⁸

Newton and his defenders watched as the First Brigade advance through the cornfield. "Pratt opened with his two guns and quickly drove them back," Newton wrote. "Moving to our right, they attempted to force a crossing of the bayou, but were met and handsomely driven back by Bull's command, assisted by Pratt's trusty guns, which continued to rake them with canister and grape until Fletcher's field, which was immediately in my front, was cleared of them."¹⁰⁹

The terrain, marked by tall corn, heavy timber, and a deep bayou separating the two Union brigades, caused the battle at Bayou Fourche to be confusing one for the Yankees. Knowing there was a

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 492.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 484, 539.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 505.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 494.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 539.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section E Page 26

heavy Confederate force facing Glover to his right, Merrill sent "all that I could spare of Merrill's Horse" toward Glover to ascertain the location of the Second Division's left. He soon heard a heavy fire to his right rear and was informed that the right flank of his skirmishers "was flanked by the enemy on the right, and that they were pouring in a heavy discharge of grape and canister from the gun on his right and of musketry from his right rear." Simultaneously, Geiger reported that the Rebel artillery had found the range of the Eighth Missouri (U.S.) and was cannonading them. The harried First Brigade commander ordered the last three squadrons of his reserve to the right to prevent a flanking maneuver. "Already [having sent] a staff officer and then an orderly, and having no staff left, I gave Colonel Geiger orders to hold everything as it was, and went myself to examine the bayou on the other side, and find, if possible, what Glover's position was with reference to mine."¹¹⁰

Merrill's first-hand reconnaissance was enlightening, but his report does not reflect whether he was angry or relieved by what he found. The Union colonel discovered that Fourche Bayou was full of water, not dry as he had been led to believe, thus eliminating much chance of a flanking movement from his right. He also found that "the left of Glover's line of skirmishers was very considerably in rear of my right, and was overshooting the enemy into my line." What Merrill had feared was an effort to turn his right was actually friendly fire. With his flanks secured, Merrill "immediately sent an order to the whole of my line to move forward and drive the enemy from his position. . . . The line moved forward as directed, driving the enemy from the corn-field and across the bayou."¹¹¹

At about 1 p.m., Shelby's Iron Brigade, under Col. G.W. Thompson, belatedly arrived on the field, and one of the benefits of Steele's risky plan to split his command was realized. Thompson "formed in line of battle in an open field [behind Jeffers' embattled Rebels on the Confederate left]; but the enemy, running up their batteries on the opposite side of the river, opened an enfilading fire, which swept up and through our lines in a most unsatisfactory manner, compelling us to change our positions every few moments, and without being able to go return the fire with any effect."¹¹²

On the north side of the Bayou, Glover's Second Brigade advanced steadily through the timber against stiff Confederate resistance. "We failed of any co-operation of Colonel Merrill's brigade on the north side of the bayou," Glover reported later. "With small-arms alone did we contend with an enemy four times our number, supported and encouraged by a battery of artillery, which sent a steady hail of solid shot, grape, and canister among our ranks."¹¹³

On reaching the point where the north and south roads met, Glover found no sign of Merrill's troops. He immediately sent three squadrons to the left through a cornfield, which "unmasked Colonel

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 494-5.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 495.

¹¹² Ibid., 529.

¹¹³ Ibid., 505.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section E Page 27

Merrill's brigade by driving the enemy in disorder and capturing a caisson filled with ammunition, and 6 mules." Like Glover, Union artillery chief Julius Hadley faulted Merrill's cautious approach. "I am of the firm conviction that had the advance of the left of our line been as vigorous as that of the right, this battery and a large portion of its support could not have escaped capture."¹¹⁴

Merrill blamed ignorance of the "topography of the battle-ground" for his failure to support Glover's advance, especially when the First Brigade could have poured a flanking fire into Jeffers' defenders. "The weakness of my force prevented me from learning earlier in the action that the bayou was impracticable below as well as above the dam, a knowledge that would have freed me from apprehension in regard to the heavy firing on my right rear, and left me free to push the right of the line boldly instead of with the caution with which it was advanced."¹¹⁵

The Fall of Little Rock

The stubborn Confederate resistance was for naught, for Price had decided to abandon the capital as soon as he learned that Davidson was south of the Arkansas. "On being informed that his flank was turned, he replied that the Yankees were not going to entrap him like they did Pemberton [at Vicksburg], and immediately gave the order to retreat," Steele reported later. The rotund Missourian, in dispatching Marmaduke to face the blueclad cavalry, ordered him "to hold the enemy in check until I could withdraw my infantry and artillery from the north side of the river, and, when this had been accomplished, to cover the retreat, the orders for which were at once given. The infantry began to leave the intrenchments at about 11 o'clock in the morning."¹¹⁶

All of the fighting took place south of the Arkansas River. With the exception of a few shells lobbed by Rebel cannon, the Union infantry faced no hostile fire as it marched west. The only Union casualties on the north bank occurred when two men of Vaughn's Illinois Battery were "dangerously wounded by a premature explosion of a howitzer shell from a battery in action near by."¹¹⁷

The scene in Little Rock was chaotic. Price ordered pontoon bridges, railroad cars, and a partially built ironclad gunboat--the Missouri--burned to keep them out of Union hands.

Davidson sent Glover's brigade in pursuit of the Rebels retreating from Bayou Fourche, but the tired Yankee cavalrymen played out two miles short of the city. The general then ordered up his Reserve Brigade under Col. John F. Ritter, who sauntered toward the city facing only light skirmishing. The brigade, accompanied by some of Stange's howitzers and troopers from the ubiquitous First Iowa, charged into the

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 505, 490.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 495.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 480, 522.

¹¹⁷ *OR*, 518-9.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section E Page 28

city, facing no opposition until the First Missouri Cavalry (U.S.) approached the U.S. arsenal, "when a sharp fire was opened from the enemy's batteries in the timber, doing no damage, however, except the killing of 1 horse."¹¹⁸

The Confederates formed defensive lines at the fairgrounds on the southern outskirts of Little Rock "but the enemy's cavalry did not deem it advisable to accept the challenge that was thus offered. They might well be content with the capital of the State and the rich valley of the Arkansas, gained so cheaply and with such inconsiderable loss." By 5 p.m. the last Confederate defenders were out of town and "at 7 p.m. the capital of Arkansas was formally surrendered by the acting civil authorities, and the United States arsenal, uninjured, with what stores remained in it, was repossessed."¹¹⁹

At the arsenal, which Price had ordered destroyed, the Union forces captured three thousand pounds of gunpowder and "a considerable quantity of cartridges," as well as several siege guns the Rebels had salvaged from the destruction of Arkansas Post earlier that year. Two locomotives were set afire but rescued by Union troops and parts of the pontoon bridges were salvaged for use by Little Rock's captors. Indeed, "most of the ordnance, quartermaster, and commissary stores housed in the capital were left for the enemy."¹²⁰

Pursuing Price

The next morning, Merrill took up the pursuit of Price's retreating army, a pursuit Steele later characterized as "not as vigorous as it should have been." Merrill left Little Rock with a makeshift division of cavalry consisting of the Second, Seventh and Eighth Missouri Cavalry Regiments (U.S.), the Fifth Kansas Cavalry, the First Indiana Cavalry and the Tenth and Thirteenth Illinois Cavalry supported by six mountain howitzers of Stange's Second Missouri Artillery (U.S.) and Lovejoy's Merrill Horse artillery, the First Indiana's six-pounder rifled guns, and two three-inch rifled guns and two twelve-pounder howitzers of Clarkson's Second Missouri Artillery Battery (U.S.). By 6 a.m., they were heading down the Arkadelphia Road after the beaten Confederates. "We had scarcely left the suburbs of the town before we began to find the debris of a retreating and demoralized army--broken wagons, arms and equipment, partly destroyed, ammunition upset into small streams and mud-holes, and deserters and fagged-out soldiers in numbers continually brought in by our advance and flankers."¹²¹

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 487, 510.

¹¹⁹ Edwards, 185; DeBlack, 94; *OR*, 487.

¹²⁰ David Y. Thomas, *Arkansas in War and Reconstruction 1861-1874* (Little Rock: Central Printing Company, 1926), 218; *OR*, 477; Robert L. Kerby, *Kirby Smith's Confederacy: The Trans-Mississippi South, 1863-1865* (Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 1972), 230.

¹²¹ *OR* 479, 496, 479.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section E Page 29

About four miles into the pursuit, the advance Union elements ran into Confederate pickets, and two miles further the Eighth Missouri Cavalry (U.S.) dismounted to engage the Rebel rear guard. The Eighth, under Colonel Geiger, then engaged in a running skirmish with the slowly retreating Southerners. The Rebels, Colton Greene's regiment under Major L.A. Campbell, retreated slowly "by company, making successive formations, for 7 miles."¹²²

Merrill ordered up the Merrill Horse and Stange's howitzers, which engaged a Rebel battery posted up the road. The Confederate defenders consisted of Thompson's Sixth Missouri Cavalry (C.S.) and Jeans' regiment of Shelby's brigade, accompanied by Ruffner's four-gun battery. "Captain Ruffner . . . in quick succession sent shot, shell, and grape roaring and whizzing through the woods in such a demoralizing manner as to drive the enemy out of sight and hearing for the time."¹²³

Bayou Fourche meanders through the area, and a civilian told Merrill he had been shoed from his house by the Confederates because "their determined stand would be made at that point." Pushing cautiously forward and making a wrong turn he blamed on his guide, he moved the Seventh Missouri (U.S.) and Tenth Illinois to the front, with the Thirteenth Illinois serving as flankers. Clarkson received permission to do some long-range shelling of the dust cloud marking the Rebel retreat.¹²⁴

"The day was now well worn away, and my troops, weary from the previous day, were worn out with 16 miles of skirmishing through thickets and heavy timber," remarked Merrill, but he sent Powell Clayton, later Arkansas's Reconstruction governor, and the First Indiana Cavalry and its field guns forward as the main Union column stopped for the night. The pugnacious Clayton rushed forward two miles and engaged the Confederates, leading Merrill to send the Merrill Horse and Clarkson's rifled guns to his support and drive off the Rebel defenders. The Union commander then ordered Clayton's troops to join their comrades at Bayou Fourche.¹²⁵

Clayton again took up the pursuit the next morning, but found that the Rebel rear guard had rejoined the Confederate main column. "He had been ordered to return when he found pursuit useless, and accordingly returned about 12 o'clock." The Little Rock campaign was over.¹²⁶

Results of the Little Rock Campaign

¹²² Ibid., 533.

¹²³ Ibid., 497, 529.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 498.

¹²⁵ *OR*, 498.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 499.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section E Page 30

For the Yankees, the relatively bloodless campaign was a major morale booster, delivering a Confederate capital into U.S. hands and setting the stage for installation of a loyal state government. More importantly to the men, health conditions improved almost immediately on occupying Little Rock.

For the Confederates, particularly those from Arkansas, the loss of Little Rock with only minimal resistance was a crushing blow, and desertions were common. So high was the rate of desertion that Arkansas's Confederate Gov. Harris Flanagin declared that a pitched battle would have been less costly to the Southern army. One Rebel who did not desert nevertheless felt despair at the loss of the Arkansas capital. W.W. Garner, a soldier from Quitman, Arkansas, perhaps expressed Confederate morale best in a letter to his wife two months after the city's capture: "In bygone days I thought that I felt sting of being deprived of my family; but I acknowledge that I have never until the fall of Little Rock felt the sting of being an exile."¹²⁷

Little Rock would remain firmly in Union hands for the remainder of the war, and with the simultaneous occupation of Fort Smith in September 1863 the Arkansas River was largely controlled by Federal forces. Confederate troops would not make any serious incursions north of the river until Price mounted his Missouri expedition in 1864. For all intents and purposes, after the capture of Little Rock all of north Arkansas was Union controlled.

Significance of the Little Rock Campaign

The Little Rock Campaign of 1863 was nationally significant by virtue of its ramifications. From a strategic viewpoint, it effectively restricted Confederate Arkansas to the southern half of the state. This "dashed the hopes of the Confederacy to use Northern Arkansas as a base of operations against Missouri and the Middle-Mississippi Valley" while also causing "the loss of Missouri and Indian Territory as Confederate recruiting grounds." By thus confining the majority of organized Confederate troops south of the Arkansas River, the campaign also made the Trans-Mississippi Department even more isolated from the rest of the Confederacy.¹²⁸ Politically, and perhaps more importantly, it placed Arkansas and its capital under Union control, the fourth belligerent capital to "come under some degree of federal control" following the captures of Nashville, Baton Rouge and Jackson. The fall of Little Rock had a direct effect on President Abraham Lincoln's decision to issue a "Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction" on December 8, 1863, under which 10 percent of the 1860 voters in a rebellious state could take a loyalty oath and then establish a Unionist government. That happened in Arkansas in January 1864, with Isaac Murphy sworn in as governor on January 4, 1864. This gentle policy of bringing Confederate states back into the fold would be in effect

¹²⁷ Castel, *General Sterling Price*, 158; DeBlack, 95.

¹²⁸ Huff, "Union Expedition," 236-237.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section E Page 31

for the next four years and reflected Lincoln's desire to welcome rather than punish the erstwhile Rebels.¹²⁹ Though light in casualties and lacking in the drama of contemporary actions east of the Mississippi, the Little Rock Campaign had an immediate and lasting effect on Union military and political efforts in the Trans-Mississippi. The few extant properties associated with the Little Rock Campaign are the historic resources most closely linked with this nationally significant event and, as with the buildings, battlefields and forts recognized through the Camden Expedition National Historic Landmark (NHL 4/19/94) should be appreciated for their collective connection with the campaign.

¹²⁹ Timothy P. Donovan, Willard B. Gatewood Jr. and Jeannie M. Whayne, eds. *The Governors of Arkansas: Essays in Political Biography*, 2nd ed. (Fayetteville, AR: The University of Arkansas Press, 1995) 42-3; McPherson, 698-9..

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section F Page 1

F. Associated Property Types

I. Name of Property Type: Battlefields

II. Description: Battlefields are those areas that were the site of fighting between Union and Confederate forces during the Little Rock Campaign, fought July-September 1863. These activities included encounters classified as skirmishes, such as those fought at Ashley's Mills and along the Lower Little Rock Road; actions, such as that fought at Bayou Meto; and engagements, such as those fought at Brownsville and Fourche Bayou. Much of the area through which the rival armies marched and skirmished retains the same rural character that defined it during the campaign. Other areas, such as those around Little Rock, Jacksonville and Jonesboro have been developed during the 140 years since the campaign. Of three battlefields examined during this study, those at Bayou Meto and Brownsville appear to have sufficient integrity of their core areas to meet National Register criteria for listing. The Fourche Bayou Battlefield, having suffered from channelization efforts at the bayou and the construction of the nearby Little Rock National Airport, does not appear to meet National Register standards. Skirmish sites will be studied and evaluated as they are identified and documented.

III. Significance: Battlefields may be nominated under Criteria A and/or D for their significance in relation to military history or archeology and must be associated with the Little Rock Campaign of 1863. Battlefields may be significant primarily under Criterion A for their association with combat activities during the Little Rock Campaign. One action, two engagements and numerous skirmishes were fought during the Little Rock Campaign. They may be eligible under Criterion D for their ability to reveal important information on troop movements, tactics, location and duration of the battles fought during the Little Rock Campaign. While none of the sites examined during this study included extensive archeological fieldwork, the sites associated with the Little Rock Campaign would nonetheless benefit from such study, which should be conducted when manpower and funding sources are available.

IV. Registration Requirements:

Battlefields may meet registration requirements if they possess sufficient character and integrity to retain their sense of time and place from their period of significance. The core area of a battlefield must be intact and must retain sufficient elements of its historic landscape to be considered eligible for National Register recognition. The battlefield will retain integrity of location if it is the place where the combat took place as determined

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section F Page 2

through documentary and/or archeological investigation. The battlefield will retain integrity of association if it is the place where the battle took place. The battlefield will retain integrity of setting if the physical environment of the core area of the battle is largely intact and traditional land uses are retained in the majority of the core area. Battlefields will retain their integrity of feeling if they can convey their sense of time and place from when the combat took place; modern intrusions can be present provided they do not overwhelm the core area of the battlefield. Design, materials and workmanship do not generally apply to battlefields.

To be eligible under Criterion A, the battlefield must be directly associated with the Little Rock Campaign of 1863 and must retain sufficient integrity of its core area to meet most of the National Register registration requirements. To be eligible under Criterion D, the battlefield must be directly associated with the Little Rock Campaign of 1863, must retain sufficient integrity of its core area to meet the National Register registration requirements, and must have surface or potential subsurface cultural or archeological deposits that, if studied, are likely to yield information important to understanding the engagement or battle.

I. Name of Property Type: Earthworks/Fortifications

II. Description: Earthworks/fortifications were constructed in association with offensive and defensive operations during the Little Rock Campaign of 1863. Soldiers used picks and shovels to build earthen walls to protect against enemy fire, and the works associated with the Little Rock campaign were built primarily of earth. While Sterling Price's Confederates constructed impressive earthworks on the heights above the Arkansas River north of Little Rock, none of those fortifications are known to survive. An earthen fortification at Wittsburg, associated with Davidson's advance down Crowley's Ridge, is the only known earthwork to survive. Other earthworks associated with the Federal advance down Crowley's Ridge or Confederate efforts to slow the Union advance conceivably could be identified in the future.

III. Significance: Earthworks/fortifications may be nominated under Criterion A, C and/or D in the areas of military history, engineering and archeology. They may be significant primarily under Criterion A for their association with the offensive and defensive planning of the Little Rock Campaign. They may be eligible under Criterion C if they are notable and intact examples or a specific earthwork/fortification type or are a rare or unusual example of a fortification. They may be eligible under Criterion D for their ability to reveal important

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section F Page 3

information on earthwork/fortification construction and offensive and defensive planning and tactics during the Little Rock Campaign. While none of the sites examined during this study included extensive archeological fieldwork, the sites associated with the Little Rock Campaign would nonetheless benefit from such study, which should be conducted when manpower and funding sources are available.

IV. Registration requirements:

Earthworks/fortifications may meet registration requirements if they possess sufficient character and integrity to retain their sense of time and place from their period of significance. The earthworks/fortifications and their immediate area must be intact and must retain sufficient elements of their historic landscape elements to be considered eligible for National Register recognition. The earthwork/fortification will retain integrity of location if it is the place where it originally was constructed during the Little Rock Campaign as determined through documentary and/or archeological investigation. The earthwork/fortification will retain integrity of association if it is in the place where it was built. The earthwork/fortification will retain integrity of setting if the physical environment where it was built is largely intact and traditional land uses are retained in the area. Earthworks/fortifications will retain their integrity of feeling if they can convey their sense of time and place from when the combat took place; modern intrusions can be present provided they do not overwhelm the earthwork. Earthworks/fortifications will have integrity of design if their essential outline and design are present. Earthworks/fortifications will retain integrity of materials if they still display their original construction elements, such as earth, stone or brick. Earthworks/fortifications will retain integrity of workmanship if they display much of their construction techniques and overall form and plan.

To be eligible under Criterion A, the earthwork/fortification must be directly associated with the Little Rock Campaign of 1863, must have a strong association with planning and tactics during the campaign, and must retain sufficient integrity to meet the associated National Register registration requirements. To be eligible under Criterion C, the earthwork/fortification must be directly associated with the Little Rock Campaign of 1863, must be a notable example of an earthwork/fortification erected during the campaign, and must have a high degree of integrity of setting, location, feeling and association of its physical remains and surrounding historic landscape features to convey a sense of time and place from the Civil War era. To be eligible under Criterion D, the earthwork/fortification must be directly associated with the Little Rock Campaign of 1863, must retain sufficient integrity to meet the National Register registration requirements, and must have surface or

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section F Page 4

potential subsurface cultural or archeological deposits that, if studied, are likely to yield information.

- I. Name of Property Type: Historic Road Remnants.
- II. Description: Historic road remnants are those areas along which the Union armies of Frederick Steele and John Wynne Davidson advanced on Little Rock, and along which Confederate cavalymen sought to harass and slow the Federal advance during the Little Rock Campaign of July-September 1863.
- III. Significance: Given the relatively small amount of fighting during the Little Rock Campaign, much of the history of the campaign is reflected in the roads along which the armies marched and rode during the struggle for the Arkansas capital. Intact segments of historic roadbeds must be directly associated with the movement of the combatants during the Little Rock Campaign.
- IV. Registration Requirements:

Historic road remnants may meet registration requirements if they possess sufficient character and integrity to retain their sense of time and place from their period of significance. The Historic road remnants must be intact and must retain sufficient elements of its historic landscape elements to be considered eligible for National Register recognition. The historic road remnant will retain integrity of location and association if remains in the same place as where it was located during the Little Rock Campaign as determined through documentary and/or archeological investigation. The historic road remnant will retain integrity of setting if the physical environment surrounding the road is largely intact and traditional land uses are retained in the majority of the area. Historic road remnants will retain their integrity of feeling if they can convey their sense of time and place from the period of the Little Rock Campaign; modern intrusions can be present provided they do not overwhelm the road. Additionally, the historic road remnant must be of sufficient length to evoke a sense of historic feeling and setting. Historic road remnants will retain their integrity of design if they retain the physical characteristics of a mid-nineteenth century roadbed, which generally should not be much wider than 18 feet. Historic road remnants will retain their integrity of materials and workmanship if its roadbed is made of the same type of materials as during its period of significance, such as earth or naturally occurring chert or gravel.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section F Page 5

To be eligible under Criterion A, the historic road remnant must be directly associated with troop movements during the Little Rock Campaign of 1863 and must retain sufficient integrity and length to meet most of the associated National Register registration requirements.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section G Page 1

G. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods:

This project originated in several different studies. The first was the American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP) survey of Civil War battlefields, in which the AHPP participated during the early 1990s and through which the Fourche Bayou battlefield was studied. The second is the ongoing efforts of the Central Arkansas Civil War Heritage Trail (CACWHT), part of a network of private regional partnerships around the state that is seeking to identify, protect, interpret and promote the state's Civil War-related resources. The CACWHT, using partnership funding from the AHPP and ABPP, developed a driving tour of the Little Rock Campaign of 1863, working with local historians and relic hunters in order to identify relevant sites in Lonoke and Pulaski counties. This effort helped foster establishment of the Reed's Bridge Battlefield Preservation Society – a group that is actively acquiring portions of the core area of the Bayou Meto Battlefield in Jacksonville – and an ongoing effort by the AHPP and the Lonoke County Historical Society to establish core area boundaries for the Brownsville Battlefield in Lonoke County. The third and final study was AHPP Community Outreach Director Mark Christ's survey of the Little Rock campaign to complete his master's thesis at the University of Oklahoma, which focused on an interpretive treatment for the Little Rock Campaign and followed Davidson's advance down Crowley's Ridge, Steele's advance from Helena, and the final drive from DeValls Bluff to Little Rock. A separate study of the Bell Route of the Cherokee Trail of Tears also helped to identify the exact location of the Military Road, which played an important part in much of the campaign. Through all of these studies, it was hoped that by emphasizing the importance of these properties to the understanding and appreciation of the Little Rock Campaign in Arkansas and Civil War history, the AHPP could encourage their continued preservation, protection, use, and adaptive re-use.

The project involved significant interaction and cooperation between the AHPP's program areas. The AHPP Special Projects staff coordinated with the National Register of Historic

Places/Historic Site Survey staff to conduct field surveys and evaluate which Little Rock Campaign-related properties were eligible for National Register recognition.

The multiple-property listing of properties associated with the Little Rock Campaign of 1863 is based on the findings of the above-mentioned studies, and further fieldwork will be conducted to identify and evaluate skirmish sites and historic road remnants with a direct association with the campaign. Mark Christ, community outreach director for the AHPP, conducted the bulk of the survey with assistance by members of the AHPP staff and local historian contacts. Christ holds

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section G Page 2

an MLS from the University of Oklahoma and a BA in journalism and liberal arts from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

All of the routes followed by the Union armies were followed from their points of origin using antebellum maps and the Official Records of the War of the Rebellion to ascertain the roads they followed. Surveys have been conducted of the Bayou Meto and Fourche Bayou battle sites and survey work is underway at the Brownsville Battlefield. In addition, the fortification at Wittsburg has been surveyed and evaluated for National Register potential. The Bayou Meto battlefield and Wittsburg fortification were deemed eligible under the above-mentioned registration requirements. All properties to be nominated were determined eligible by the professional historians and architectural historians of the AHPP's Survey and National Register staffs. Integrity requirements were based on knowledge of other Arkansas battlefields and fortifications listed on the National Register or designated as National Historic Landmarks and on the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards of Eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places*. For each recorded property, locations were noted on USGS topographical and city maps; photographs, both black and white prints and color slides, were taken of site features. Computerized inventory forms, complete with site drawings, were completed; and research, utilizing primary, secondary and oral history sources was conducted. Any information on research, events or issues not adequately covered in this study should be directed to the AHPP's community outreach director.

These properties represent significant physical reminders of an important period in Arkansas and United States history. By publicly recognizing the importance of these resources to the understanding and appreciation of Arkansas history through this project and the accompanying media campaign, the AHPP hopes to encourage the preservation, protection, continued use and adaptive reuse of these properties.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section H Page 1

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Section H Page 2

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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