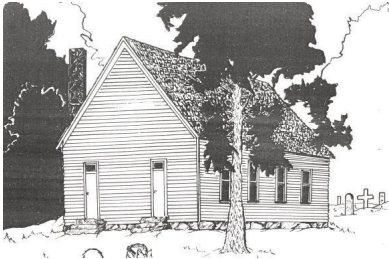


The Battle of Burnt Mill by J. Harold Utley

Written by Marion Miller
Thursday, 07 May 2009 09:21



Hopkins County, KY - 2011 will be the Sesquicentennial of the beginning of the American Civil War. By military definition no battles occurred in Hopkins County, only skirmishes. During the time from now until 2011 we will present the history of the skirmishes in this area. For the convenience of the Civil War "buffs" we will show the location of each event on a map of the area here on iSurfHopkinsCo shortly.

THE CIVIL WAR IN HOPKINS COUNTY (and adjoining counties)

By J Harold Utley

When Abraham Lincoln was elected President of the United States in November 1860, the southern people saw this as an end to their way of life. The state of South Carolina passed an Act of Secession on December 14, 1860, followed by Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas. At Montgomery, Alabama, on February 9, 1861, the Confederate States of America was formed and Jefferson Davis was elected President with Alexander H Stevens of Georgia as Vice-President.

The American Civil War began April 12, 1861 with the shots fired at Fort Sumter, South Carolina. On April 13, 1861 the fort was surrendered without any loss of life. The Confederate Army took possession of the fort.

After President Lincoln's proclamation of April 15, 1861, calling for seventy-five thousand troops, the states of Arkansas, North Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia quickly joined the Confederacy. Kentucky and Maryland attempted to remain neutral.

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Hopkins County, located in the central-western part of the state, was of no strategic importance. There were no railroads in the county and only about three miles of its northeast border joins Green River. The only means of travel were horses and stagecoach. The Ohio River, about 50 miles to the north, was about the dividing line between North and South.

Location 1

This skirmish took place in Webster County about one mile north of the Hopkins - Webster County Line. This area was a part of Hopkins County until the creation of Webster County in 1860. The Partisan Rangers involved were friends and neighbors of Captain Al Fowler; all were from the Madisonville KY area.

In "The Partisan Rangers of the Confederate States Army" by Brigadier-General Adam R "Stovepipe" Johnson (1904), he wrote "the first battle of the Civil War fought in Kentucky occurred at the Battle of Burnt Mill in Webster County on September 15, 1861".

The Union forces were twenty-five well-equipped and organized soldiers who were fleeing from Hopkinsville where General Simeon Bolivar Buckner had invaded the state and occupied Bowling Green. The soldiers had stopped for the night and camped in the Tirzah (pronounced Terzey) Church. The church had become known locally as the "Burnt Mill Church" because a mill located nearby had burned. This location of the church is about ½ mile west of the intersection of KY 630 and KY 120 and about ¼ mile north of KY 120. The church was a typical rural wood-frame building. The building sat in a low level area with hills and woods to the west and north and Deer Creek flowed by to the north and east.

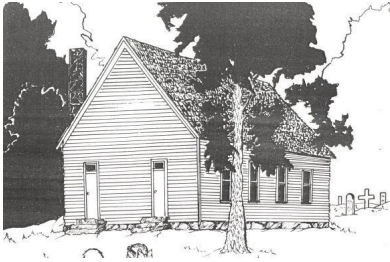
The Confederate forces were under the command of Captain Al Fowler of Madisonville. Fowler did not have soldiers or military equipment. He hastily summoned friends by night from the surrounding towns and county and overtook the enemy fourteen miles northwest of Madisonville, KY.

When morning dawned, the Union forces, under the command of Colonel James F Buckner

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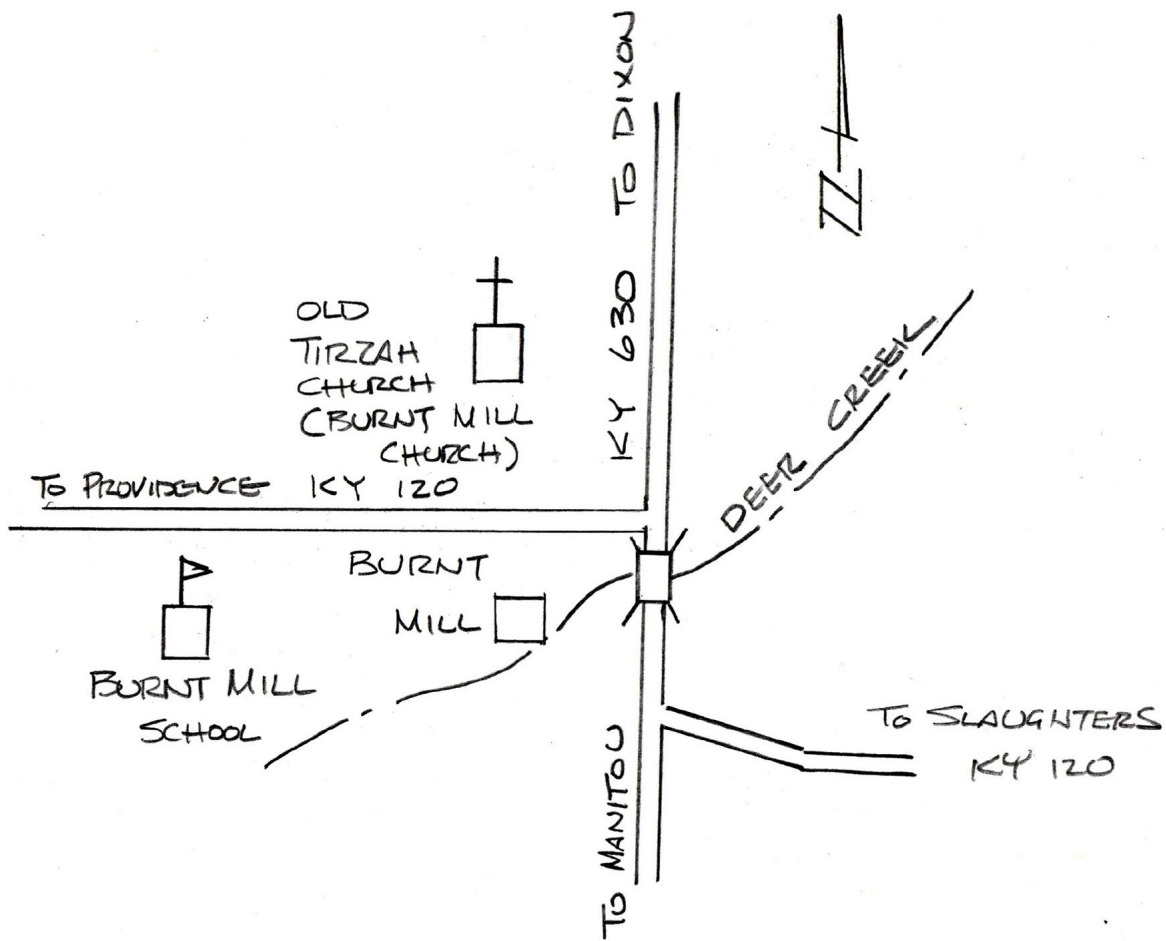
and Captain William Buckner, found themselves surrounded. After a battle of about one hour, the enemy surrendered. The Union prisoners were probably paroled and told to go home and stay out of the war. The captured arms and supplies were brought to and stored in Madisonville. The only casualty of Fowler's forces was a wound to Buck Madison.



Sketch by Gene Brooks 1974
Tirzah (Terzy) Church (Burnt Mill Church)

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Prepared by J Harold Utley, Hopkins County Historian

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Historical Society of Hopkins County located at 107 South Union Street in Madisonville Kentucky with hours of operation of Monday thru Fridays (1pm-5pm). Call the Historical Society of Hopkins County Kentucky for any additional information at 270-821-3986. ©
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