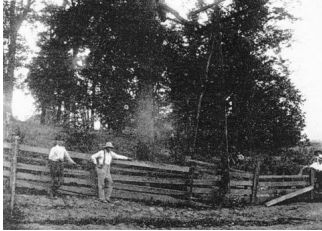


Battle of Browning Springs

Written by Marion Miller
Monday, 15 June 2009 11:26

Hopkins County, KY - The "Battle of Browning Springs" in Hopkins County, by J Harold Utley which occurred on June 13, 1862 fought by the "Army of Six";.



(Photo: Browning Springs – W Arch and N Spring Streets)

The next incident of Civil War activity in Hopkins County occurred on June 13, 1862 that is known as "The Battle of Browning Springs" fought by the "Army of Six".

The following are the words of Johnson in his book "**The Partisan Rangers of the Confederate States Army**".

The Union authorities in Louisville sent a cavalry regiment to Madisonville with the loose and unwarrantable instructions to destroy, by fire, the houses of all the citizens that were giving aid to the Confederates. Of course the giving of a piece of bread or a glass of milk to a passing soldier could easily be construed into giving aid and comfort to the enemy. And the fact is, it was not necessary to prove such a charge as this, flimsy and insignificant, as it was. All that was needed to have a comfortable home destroyed and its unfortunate inmates, old men, women and children, turned out into the street or woods, was for some Union foe to report such a charge, perhaps utterly false, against someone against whom he had either a political or private grudge; through envy, jealousy, or any base or petty motive, a Unionist could promote such incendiarism and cause great loss and suffering to Southern sympathizers.

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The names of many of the most prominent men in and around **Slaughtersville** were on the black list, and it was terrible for me to contemplate the misery to which these good people would be subjected. I had, at this moment, six men to depend on; the others were scattered far and wide. I got these men around me and told them that we must do something to prevent this great calamity or we must leave the country at once. They promised to do whatever I said; so we repaired to the old briar field near Madisonville, a place well suited for an ambush. It was full of gullies and small ravines thickly grown with blackberry vines and running back to the woods. We cut our way through the briars up to the road, divided the force into three little parties, Martin with two men on the right and Bennett with two men on the left, while I stood in the middle ravine and was to fire the first gun. Bennett and I were to keep up the fire, while Martin was to make a circuit to the rear as soon as he had emptied his first guns. This was a small force to fight over three hundred men, but the desperate conditions required desperate measures. I know from the looks of my men that they were sufficiently resolute, and their subsequent history proved that I was correct. Let me record their names: Robert M Martin, Jake Bennett, F A Owen, Tom Gooch, John Conelly and Marion Myers.

We lay in our trenches all day, but for some reason, the Federals did not come out. I told the boys at night we would try to play Gideon of old on the enemy, and we mounted our horses and rode through the woods to the rear of their encampment. Here was a woodlawn and a mile from Madisonville, from which a cornfield extended nearly to the enemy's camp. Tying our horses, we proceeded through the cornfield and got safe to the fence close to the camp. Each man was to take a corner of the fence, which was an old style rail or worm fence, and was to slip through and stand until I had disposed of the camp guard. There was a barn near where I was to cross the fence, and the beat of the guard was about thirty steps in front. Just as I dropped to the ground, the guard came walking hastily to the barn and sat down in the door, throwing his gun across his lap. I stepped out with my gun to my shoulder and cleared my throat so as to attract his attention, but doubtless he thought I was one of his comrades trying to frighten him for he sat still and I lowered my gun a little and fired. He pitched forward and then there was a mighty rush from the barn, which seemed to be full of sleeping soldiers. One of these fired a pistol so near me, the powder burnt my face, and I gave him a load of buckshot in the back as he ran. The rush of these men, followed by our yelling shooting, carried terror and dismay into the camp, and the Federals fled wildly into the woods, leaving us in possession of the camp. Knowing that there was a heavy picket force a short distance away, and bearing in mind the smallness of our force, we, at once, retreated to our horses and returned to our ambush on the road.

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