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Dalton,

C. David

1982

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the Department of History
Western Kentucky University
Bowling Green, Kentucky

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by

C. David Dalton
July 1982

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CONFEDERATE OPERATIONS IN EASTERN KENTUCKY, 1861-1862

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	Kentucky: Confederate or Union
II.	Eastern Kentucky: The Initial 19 Struggle
III.	An Active Defense: The Battle
IV.	The Skirmish at Middle Creek 6
v.	A New Commander and Renewed Hope 79 for a Confederate Kentucky
VI.	Analysis
Criti	cal Bibliography

MAPS

Counties in Kentucky, 1860	•	•					3
Distribution of sentiment across Kentucky		•	•				11
Eastern Kentucky							22
Zollicoffer's camp at Mill Springs. and Beech Grove	•			•	•	•	38
Battle of Logan's Cross Roads							53
Skirmish at Middle Creek							72

C. David Dalton July 1982 99 pages

Directed by: Dr. M. B. Lucas

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As a border state, Kentucky occupied a unique position in the early days of the Civil War. Her neutral stance was observed by the belligerents for the first five months of the conflict, but in September 1861, troops entered the state. Confederate armies under the leadership of Brigadier Generals Humphrey Marshall and Felix Zollicoffer sought to drive the Federal forces from eastern Kentucky. Through a series of skirmishes, however, the Southern armies were repelled and placed on the defensive. Later defeats at Logan's Cross Roads and Middle Creek in early January 1862 cleared eastern Kentucky of Confederate forces. For the next several months, the Confederates regrouped out of the state and planned a major offensive to deliver Kentucky to the Confederacy. Under the guidance of Generals Braxton Bragg and E. Kirby Smith, the fateful invasion took shape in August 1862. But by then, possibly the best chance for a Confederate Kentucky had already passed.

I. KENTUCKY: CONFEDERATE OR UNION

The roots of civil conflict extend deep into United States history. Evidence of discord surfaced as early as 1787 when ratification of the Constitution was contingent upon further clarification of individual and state rights. Many Americans feared a strong Federal government and held firm in their belief of state rights, which as a theory was issued in 1798 by the Kentucky legislature. Known as the Kentucky Resolutions, they theorized that the Federal government had only certain restricted powers which were delegated to it by the Constitution, a compact among the various states composing the Union. Political sovereignty, therefore, resided exclusively with the state which had the right to judge the constitutionality of an issue, and even nullify Federal legislation. During the nineteenth century Southern leaders such as John C. Calhoun championed state rights and carried the concept one step further to secession, a tool which a state could use as its ultimate defense against an oppressive Federal government. With this political premise, the South during the 1830s, 1840s, and 1850s became increasingly conservative in domestic affairs, defensive of individual freedoms, including slavery, and steadfast in devotion to a political theorum: state rights.

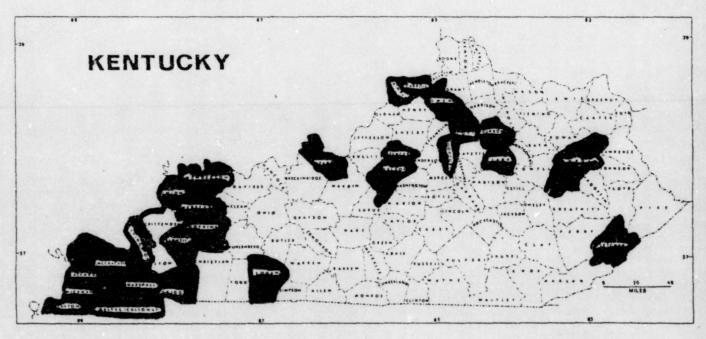
The collapse of old political parties during the midnineteenth century severed bonds between the North and South.

The newly formed Republican party catered strictly to the
North, while the once solid Democratic party split in 1860,
assuring Abraham Lincoln of the presidency. Lincoln, however,
polled only 1,064 votes in his native Kentucky, with Constitutional Union party candidate John Bell receiving 66,051
votes to 53,143 for National Democratic party candidate John
C. Breckinridge, and 25,638 for Democrat Stephen A. Douglas.

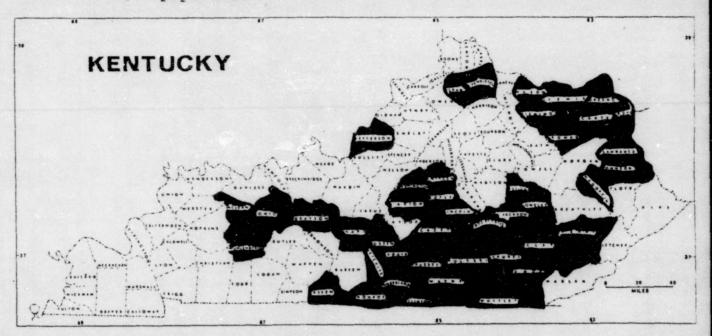
Kentucky's preference for Bell was not altogether surprising. The issues of slavery and secession had thoroughly divided the state, with Southern support most vocal in western and southern Kentucky, while Unionist sentiment prevailed in the northern and eastern portions of the state. The typical Kentuckian in 1860 was loyal to the Union, yet believed in state rights. He recognized the existence of slavery, yet owned no slaves. Many of the state's customs were founded in the traditional Southern lifestyle, although Kentucky's moderate climate and rolling terrain hindered the formation of a powerful plantation aristocracy. Consequently, the slave population remained relatively small. Kentucky was, thus, a mixture of North and South and chose to side with Bell, whose party committed itself only to preserve the Union. This narrow platform, noncommittal on the major

¹ James E. Copeland, "Where Were the Kentucky Unionists and Secessionists?" The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society, 71 (Oct. 1973), 357, 359-61. Hereafter cited as Register.

Counties with fewest white Union volunteers as a percentage of the 1860 population



Counties with most white Union volunteers as a percentage of the 1860 population



Copeland, "Kentucky Unionists and Secessionists?" Register, 71 (Oct. 1973), 359-60.

issues of the day, satisfied most Kentuckians and was characteristic of the state's political stance in the months ahead.

Since several Southern states had threatened secession if the presidency went to the Republican railsplitter from Illinois, the big question was which way would Kentucky go if the nation split? The Louisville Democrat chided Kentuckians who sought to use Lincoln's election as a stepping stone for leaving the Union. "Lincoln can do no harm to anybody. . . A little wisdom and statesmanship, instead of folly and sectional temper . . . will avert all the evils now." The Frankfort Commonwealth agreed, declaring that the country would endure his tenure and that of others after him. "Give Mr. Lincoln a chance." But the lower South did not give Lincoln a chance, as seven states seceded from the Union, precipitating a political crisis in Kentucky.

Responsibility for guiding Kentucky through this turbulent period fell to Governor Beriah Magoffin. A Democrat elected in 1859, Magoffin was an avowed Southern sympathizer who defended state rights, considered the institution of slavery as the ideal condition for blacks, yet opposed any immediate withdrawal from the Union by Kentucky. Southerners hoped that Magoffin, as the state's highest official,

²Frankfort <u>Tri-Weekly Yeoman</u>, Nov. 17, 1860. Even Magoffin conceded that Lincoln's election was no cause for secession. Louisville <u>Democrat</u>, Nov. 12, 1860; Frankfort <u>Commonwealth</u>, Nov. 12, 1860, quoted in New York <u>Times</u>, Nov. 13, 1860.

³House Journal, Dec. 6, 1859, 35.

could use his influence to sway opinion to their cause, and on January 17, 1861, Magoffin stated:

The people of Kentucky will never consent to remain in this Confederacy, now abandoned by a large portion of the slaveholding members. . . Kentucky will not and ought not to submit to the principles and policy avowed by the Republican party, but will resist, and resist to the death, if necessary.

The Governor's message was cheered by pro-Southern forces in the state but was by no means representative of the entire population of Kentucky. John Curd of Louisville wrote that Kentucky would never leave the Union because secession was "open rebellion and downright treason." Kentuckians continued to debate the issue of secession but were soon overshadowed by a fiery group of South Carolinians, who, on April 12, 1861, opened fire on Fort Sumter, the Federal gazrison in Charleston harbor. The Civil War had begun.

Lincoln wasted no time in gathering support for the Union. He issued a call to all states for troops to suppress the rebellion. Speaking for Kentucky, Magoffin responded:

". . . I say emphatically Kentucky will furnish no troops for the wicked purpose of subdoing [sic] her sister Southern states." Magoffin's blunt reply received support throughout

⁴Frankfort Tri-Weekly Yeoman, Jan. 18, 1861.

⁵John Curd to Mr. Cornell, Jan. 26, 1861, John Curd Papers (Manuscripts Division, The Filson Club, Louisville, Kentucky).

⁶House Journal, May 7, 1861, 12; The War of the Rebellion: A Complitation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (128 vols., Washington, 1880-1901), Ser. III, Vol. I, 70. Hereafter cited as OR.

Kentucky. The Frankfort <u>Tri-Weekly Yeoman</u> reported that with ". . . all quarters in the state heard from, Governor Magoffin's response . . . refusing to send troops for the invasion of the South is heartily endorsed." Another more pro-Southern newspaper carried a slightly different governor's reply: "Tell old Abe to go to Hell, and I'll go to my dinmer." 8

While the politicians debated union or secession, both sides saw the importance of the state from a military standpoint. A Confederate Kentucky could potentially control two vital rivers, the Ohio and Mississippi, which would afford the South a very defensible position against Union attack west of the Cumberland Mountains. For Lincoln, Kentucky was a must. He told Orville Browning, "I think to lose Kentucky is nearly the same as to lose the whole game." With both Lincoln and Confederate President Jefferson Davis making valiant efforts to swing the state's support for their respective cause, the Kentucky legislature chose instead a more reasonable alternative for a grossly divided state: neutrality.

As April drew to a close, Kentucky's neutral stance prompted the Louisville Journal to declare, "There can be

⁷Frankfort Tri-Weekly Yeoman, April 16, 1861.

⁸Benjamin F. Stevenson, <u>Kentucky Neutrality in 1861</u> (Cincinnati, [n.d.]), 9. This was a paper read before the Ohio Commandery of the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States, June 2, 1886.

⁹Roy P. Basler, ed., The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln (8 vols., New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1953), IV, 532.

no such thing as neutrality in a contest for the extinction of the Government. . . . They have the power of choosing, but not of evading a choice. "10 But John J. Crittenden, a leading Kentucky Congressman, reaffirmed his belief in the state as a neutral when he wrote a son,

Kentucky has not seceded, &, I believe never will. She loves the Union & will cling to it as long as possible. . . I trust it will continue to be her determination to keep out of the strife--and . . . to satisfy the position of a friendly neutral . . . between the belligerents."

With actual fighting between Northern and Southern armies already occurring in other areas, Kentuckians could only guess how long it would be before their neutrality would fall before the marching of troops and firing of guns. Increased public pressure prompted Magoffin, on May 20, to issue an executive proclamation which forbade the movement of armed forces upon the soil of Kentucky until authorized by the legislature or the governor. 12 Once again, Magoffin's actions evoked editorial rebuttal.

Governor Magoffin having failed to lead Kentucky into secession, has returned from his wanderings southward to the half-way house of neutrality, where he proposes for the present to remain. . . . The Governor talks as if Kentucky were an independent kingdom, of which he is at the head. . . "13

¹⁰ New York Times, April 26, 1861.

¹¹ John J. Crittenden to George B. Crittenden, April 30, 1861, John Jordan Crittenden Papers (Manuscript Division, The Filson Club).

¹²Thomas Speed, The Union Cause in Kentucky, 1860-65 (New York, 1907), 48.

¹³New York Times, May 22, 1861.

The Kentucky legislature, meeting in May, chose to continue the neutrality policy, alleging it was the surest guarantee of peace. 14 But most Kentuckians realized that neutrality in a war between states and families could not last, and as weeks passed, the chance of a successful secessionist movement grew less likely. If Kentucky was going to side with the Confederacy, Southern sentiment would have forced a move months earlier when her sister states did so. Such was not the case, and Kentucky, although a silent neutral, generally supported the Union cause. By the end of summer, this support became obvious.

Special Congressional elections were slated for June 20, with the outcome promising to be indicative of Kentucky's preference for the Union or Confederacy. As election day neared, Northern newspapers again broached the subject of neutrality. A New York <u>Times</u> editorial typified Union opinion. "In the confusion of these times, there is no utter fallacy as the idea which seems to have taken possession in Kentucky . . . of the neutrality of states." 15

Through intense propaganda efforts such as this, nine Unionist representatives were elected, with only one seat going to a Secessionist candidate. On August 5, election returns for Kentucky's General Assembly showed the Unionist

¹⁴J. Stoddard Johnston, Kentucky, in Clement A. Evans,
ed., Confederate Military History (13 vols., New York, 1962;
first published Atlanta, 1889), IX, 24.

¹⁵ New York Times, May 12, 1861.

candidates holding a decided edge in both the House (76-24) and Senate (27-11). 16 Also, before ending the May session, the state legislature created a five member military board, whose purpose was organizing and arming the "Home Guards," the local militia. 17 On the surface, this action seemed responsible, yet the military board was solidly pro-Union, and it armed many Union sympathizers, under the pretense of preserving Kentucky's neutrality. 18 Thus, with Union men controlling both the state legislature and military board, and with the rising tide of Unionist support across the state, as evidenced by the recent elections, Magoffin and secessionists were definitely in the minority.

Lincoln had been kept informed as to the developing events in Kentucky from the onset of war, and, riding the wave of Unionist sentiment, he decided the time right to bolster Kentucky's attachment to the Federal government. He selected Lieutenant William "Bull" Nelson to perform a "special service" within Kentucky. On July 1, 1861, Nelson received orders to muster three infantry regiments from

¹⁶Lowell H. Harrison, "Governor Magoffin and the Secession Crisis," Register, 72 (April 1974), 105.

¹⁷ Senate Journal, May 18, 1861, 96; House Journal, May 21, 1861, 153. Originally only three members, the Governor, Inspector-General, and Chief Engineer, were to sit on the Board, but after considerable debate Magoffin's name was removed and a five member Military Board was established on May 24, 1861.

¹⁸ Senate Journal, May 20, 1861.

southeastern Kentucky, a known stronghold of Unionist spirit, designated for service in eastern Kentucky. 19

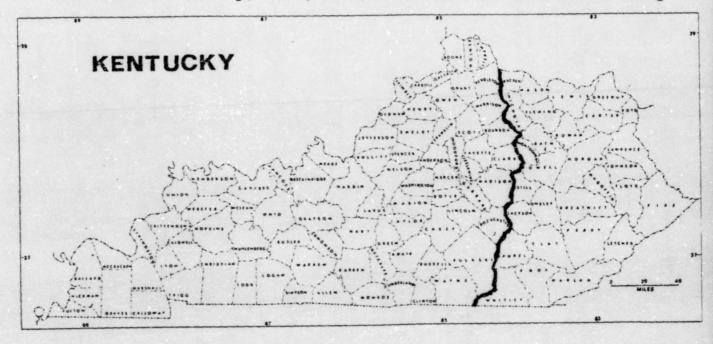
Eastern Kentucky is a geographic area from Bracken County southward to Whitley County and eastward to the state-line, consisting of 38 counties, which in 1860 had a population of 214,929, over 90% of whom were white. Only 18,079 slaves were located in this mountainous area, the majority in Bath, Fleming, Montgomery, and Mason counties, each with over 2,000 slaves. These counties were, however, the exception rather than the rule, for 17 counties in eastern Kentucky had fewer than 200 slaves each, and eastern Kentucky, by and large, supported the Union cause. 20

In the Crab Orchard area, Nelson, with the aid of
Thomas E. Bramlette and Frank L. Wolford, began raising
troops. By late August, four regiments of Union men, though
still categorized as "Home Guards," whose expressed purpose
was maintaining Kentucky's neutrality, were encamped and
armed on the farm of a staunch Unionist, Richard Robinson.
While denouncing Nelson's acts as a violation of the state's
neutrality, Southern leaders responded by recruiting men in
and around the Prestonburg area, in Floyd County. Their
leader was a portly politician, Humphrey Marshall, under
whose guidance several small pockets of secessionist
sentiment in eastern Kentucky sprang up. Regardless of

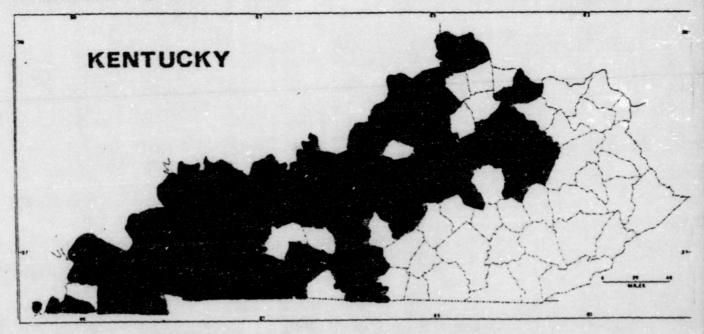
¹⁹OR., Ser. I, Vol. IV, 251-52.

²⁰Lewis and Richard Collins, History of Kentucky (2
vols., Covington, 1874), II, 258-61.

Counties in Kentucky, 1860, with a division of eastern Kentucky



Counties represented at the Russellville Convention, Nov., 1861



Copeland, "Kentucky Unionists and Secessionists?" Register, 71 (Oct. 1973), 356-57.

which side violated the state's neutrality first, Kentucky's days as a neutral were numbered.

In a last ditch effort to forestall bloodshed in the state, Magoffin telegraphed messages to Lincoln and Davis in late August, 1861. Magoffin cited the fact that armed men were then stationed in Kentucky, without the consent of state authorities, and he urged the removal of any and all military forces from Kentucky. Lincoln replied,

". . . I do not believe it is the popular wish of Kentucky that the force should be removed beyond her limits; and, with this impression, I must respectively decline to so remove it. Davis responded, ". . . the Government of the Confederate States of America neither intends nor desires to disturb the neutrality of Kentucky." But he contended that neutrality ". . must be strictly maintained between both parties. . . "23

News of the South's victory at Manassas Junction,
Virginia, spurred a renewed Southern hope for a Confederate
Kentucky. Numerous accounts told of Confederate troops
movements into the state from Tennessee as part of a massive
offensive. The National Union of Winchester, Kentucky, on

of American Events (12 vols., New York, 1861-68), III, Ser. I, Vol. IV, 378.

²²Basler, ed., Works of Lincoln, IV, 497; Senate Journal, Sept. 5, 1861, 42.

²³ Jefferson Davis, The Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government (2 vols., New York, 1958; first published 1881), I, 390; OR., Ser. I, Vol. IV, 396; Senate Journal, Sept. 5, 1861, 44.

August 10, 1861, reported that several hundred Confederates had already crossed into Kentucky, via Cumberland Gap, and were marching on Parboursville, and then possibly Richmond. 24 But the Confederate forces in east Tennessee had not yet entered Kentucky. They were, however, being assembled at Knoxville, Tennessee, under the leadership of a former Tennessee politician, Brigadier General Felix K. Zollicoffer.

Zollicoffer's appointment to command in the east Tennessee district was for the expressed purpose of countering the "Home Guards" at Camp Dick Robinson, who, Confederate authorities believed, could at any moment invade eastern Tennessee and control the strategic Cumberland Gap. On August 29, 1861, Zollicoffer telegraphed Confederate Adjutant-Inspector General Samuel Cooper in Richmond, Virginia, that Camp Dick Robinson had at least 4,000 well armed men, with new recruits arriving daily. He added that many Unionists from east Tennessee had been and were crossing over into Kentucky to get arms from the Union camp, all of which made for a potentially explosive situation. 25 However, the eastern Kentucky-Tennessee area was not the scene of the first clash in the state, for the western region along the Mississippi River was to claim that distinction. Movements by both Confederate and Union forces made that sector a powderkeg, with each side trying to outmaneuver the other

²⁴Winchester (Ky.) National Union, August 10, 1861, quoted in New York Times, August 11, 1861.

²⁵OR., Ser. I, Vol. IV, 397.

for locations of strategic importance. The result would be Kentucky's entrance into the Civil War.

II. EASTERN KENTUCKY: THE INITIAL STRUGGLE

With neutrality broken, both Union and Confederate forces sought to occupy key locations throughout the state. Zollicoffer immediately sent three regiments through Cumberland Gap into southeastern Kentucky, with a promise of others soon to follow. A native Tennessean, a journalist and politician, Zollicoffer was inexperienced with command. In fact, his only prior military duty was a brief and undistinguished stint in the

²⁶ Davis, Rise and Fall of Confederate Government, I, 396.

Woodford (Ky.) Pennant, quoted in Wilson P. Shortridge, "Kentucky Neutrality in 1861," The Mississippi Valley Historical Review, IX (March 1923), 287n.

²⁸OR., Ser. I, Vol. IV, 404.

Seminole War. With the outbreak of civil war, he declined the rank of Major General of the Tennessee militia, citing his lack of a formal military education. Yet surprisingly he shortly thereafter accepted the rank of Brigadier General in the Confederacy, with assignment in the east Tennessee district.²⁹

Zollicoffer's command, with headquarters at Knoxville, consisted of seven infantry regiments and four cavalry battalions, the majority of whom were Tennesseans. 30 Zollicoffer left two regiments at Knoxville and one at Cumberland Gap, while sending the remaining troops and a battery of guns 15 miles into southeastern Kentucky to Cumberland Ford, renamed Camp Buckner. By mid-September, Zollicoffer took up a northern trek towards Barboursville, in Knox County. When his advance force of 800 men entered the town at daylight on September 19, they found 300 Union soldiers, apparently unaware of the Confederate movement. A brief skirmish ensued with the Confederates driving the surprised Federals from the town. Casualty reports showed 12 Union soldiers killed and 2 prisoners taken, with the number of wounded unknown. Zollicoffer lost only 2 killed and 3 wounded. 31

At Camp Dick Robinson, Brigadier General George Thomas received reports of the Confederate advance, but the Union

²⁹ Dumas Malone, ed., Dictionary of American Biography (20 vols., New York, 1928-36), XX, 659-60; Ezra J. Warner, Generals in Grey (Baton Rouge, 1959), 349-50.

^{30&}lt;u>OR</u>., Ser. I, Vol. IV, 409.

³¹ Ibid., 199.

commander was not overly concerned with Zollicoffer's minute offensive overtones, confident that he would retreat to Cumberland Gap if confronted by a superior Union force. The lack of supplies in Barboursville suspended temporarily any thoughts Zollicoffer had for moving into the heartland of Kentucky, as on September 24 he noted that there was not 24 hours ration of bread in the entire camp. 32 When foraging parties returned with provisions for a week, Zollicoffer decided to continue his movement into Kentucky, theorizing that the best defense of east Tennessee was a forward movement toward Camp Dick Robinson, 75 miles to the north. 33 His actions were premature, though, as General Albert S. Johnston, Confederate Commanding General in the West, had written Zollicoffer the previous day, "A forward movement from your present position at this time cannot be made. "34 The message did not reach Zollicoffer until he was two days on the march. 35

At 4:00 a.m. on September 25, Colonel James Rains led his lith Tennessee regiment to Laurel Bridge, on the London road. Three cavalry companies and a section of artillery accompanied Rains, as well as a battalion of Colonel W. S. Statham's 15th Mississippi Infantry. A second wave of Zollicoffer's forces, Colonel D. H. Cumming's 19th Tennessee Infantry, two cavalry companies and several empty wagons were

³²Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid., 423.

³⁵ Ibid., 429.

sent to the Goose Creek salt mines in Clay County, 17 miles to the east. Designed to divert attention away from the move on the salt works, the Confederates planned to surprise the several hundred Union soldiers encamped at Laurel Bridge, 50 miles south of Camp Dick Robinson, and precipatate alarm for an attack on that bastion. The diversion was a marked success, as Federal pickets surrounding Laurel Bridge were quickly driven in and the Confederates captured three prisoners along with 8,000 cartridges, 25,000 caps, 3 kegs of powder, 6 barrels of salt, 2 wagons and teams, 3 other horses, 25 pairs of shoes, and several guns. The second wing sent to the salt works returned to Camp Buckner without incident, with 200 barrels of the badly needed food preservative.

Confederate activities in Kentucky were not wholly confined to the southeastern portions of the state. Small groups of secessionists had been organized in the northeast during the summer under the direction of Humphrey Marshall. Reports of his ardent recruiting speeches abounded, with Marshall even projected as combining forces with Zollicoffer in an attempt to overthrow the state legislature and establish a provisional government friendly to the Confederacy. During September, Marshall did lead an abortive march on Frankfort with 500

³⁶ Ibid., 202.

³⁷ Speed, Union Cause in Kentucky, 32; Edward Conrad Smith, The Borderland in the Civil War (New York, 1927), 292.

³⁸OR., Ser. I, Vol. IV, 273; William R. Balch, The Life of James Abram Garfield (Philadelphia, 1881), 127.

followers, but returned to the safety of the eastern Kentucky mountains when he learned that Unionists and "Home Guards" had been informed of the move. 39

A West Point graduate, Marshall had served as Minister to China in the Millard Fillmore administration, and was four times elected to Congress on the Whig and Know-Nothing tickets. 40 Standing 5'll" and weighing nearly 300 pounds, Marshall was physically unfit for active command in mountainous eastern Kentucky. 41 But as a politician, Marshall had developed strong ties with prominent Southern leaders, and during October he traveled to Richmond in an attempt to secure a personal command. Until his return, Marshall placed John Williams in charge of recruiting additional men in Floyd County.

Williams, one of Marshall's closest friends, early aligned himself with the Confederacy. Through his rigorous recruiting efforts, 1,000 men enlisted for the Southern cause, most of whom lacked arms and supplies, yet were

³⁹ OR., Ser. I, Vol. IV, 272; Mai Flournoy Van Deren, "Humphrey Marshall" (master's thesis, Louisiana State University, 1936), 34-35; Congressional Globe, 37 Congress, 2d session, Pt. 2, 1214.

⁴⁰Warner, Generals in Grey, 212; Malone, ed., Dictionary of American Biography, XII, 310-11.

⁴¹Basil W. Duke, Reminiscences of General Basil W. Duke (Garden City, New York, 1911), 143; Biographical Sketch of Humphrey Marshall, 1812-73, Charles Lanman Collection (Manuscripts Division, The Filson Club). Marshall's enormous size led to a jingle known throughout Confederate ranks: "Humphrey Marshall, he's our boss, big as hell, brave as a hoss." Carol Crowe-Carraco, The Big Sandy (Lexington, 1979), 36; Henry P. Scalf, Historic Floyd (Prestonburg, Kentucky, 1950), 33.

eager for a fight. They soon had their chance. Scouting reports placed 4,000 scattered Federals between West Liberty and Hazel Green, heading for Camp Dick Robinson, and Williams, realizing the opportunity to strike a divided foe, proceeded immediately to West Liberty. 42

In the early morning hours of October 23, the opposing forces met. Brigadier General William Green, U.S.A., reported that at four in the morning his men made a surprise attack on West Liberty which was resisted by several hundred men. were driven off easily, and the Union troops entered the town. 43 Major Richard Hawes, C.S.A., and a future Confederate governor of Kentucky, reported that an advance guard of Williams, 60 strong, attacked a large Federal force at West Liberty. The Southerners were hidden in the bushes on a hillside and killed 30 Federals, with no loss of Confederate life. 44 Leeland Hathaway, commanding a Confederate company, recorded his eyewitness account of the affair. Hathaway had positioned his men behind a dense thicket and had instructed them to await his signal before firing. The Federals advanced slowly up the road, until they discovered the hidden Confederates. The Yankees fired a volley, wounding two of Hathaway's men. But the gunfire was not returned until the "bluecoats" were no more than 50 yards away. Hathaway then called "ready, fire" and the small company of less than 20 men discharged a deadly volley. The Union line held together

⁴² OR., Ser. I, Vol. IV, 508.

⁴³ Ibid., 214.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 508.

momentarily, then retreated. Flush with an apparent victory, Hathaway's men charged the fleeing Federals but soon returned to camp. 45 Such was the skirmish at West Liberty, an inconsequential battle, fought by ill-prepared troops, but Williams' forces beamed with pride at the standoff and rejoiced even more when it was learned that Humphrey Marshall was returning from Richmond with an independent command in eastern Kentucky and the rank of Brigadier General.

By October, 1861, Lincoln had devised several plans of attack upon the South, one of which involved eastern Kentucky. Simultaneous with a coastal movement on the Carolinas, Lincoln proposed an attack on Cumberland Gap and western Virginia. He hoped to divide Zollicoffer and Marshall, while also forcing them to retreat southward. 47 In fact, on October 1, Zollicoffer received word that 2,500 "Lincolnites" assembled near Louisa, Lawrence County of northeastern Kentucky, were threatening to invade and control the vital Sandy Valley. 48 It was also

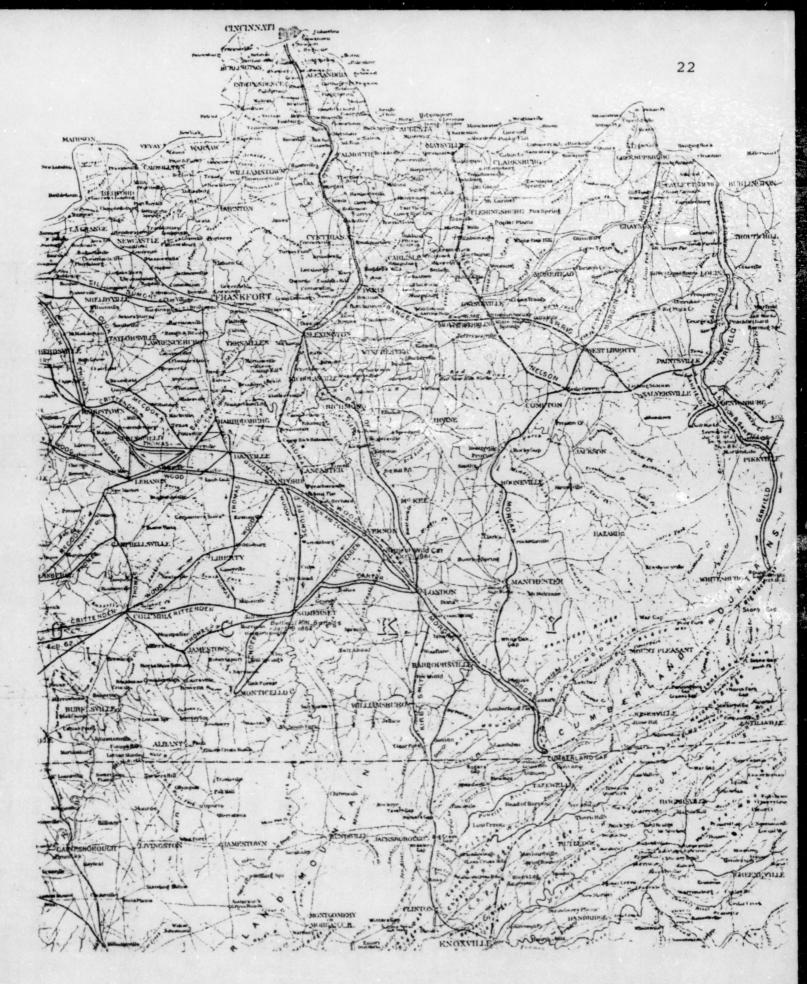
⁴⁵Leeland Hathaway Diary, Leeland Hathaway Recollections (The Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill, North Carolina), 26-32.

⁴⁶ OR., Ser. I, Vol. IV, 495; J. Stoddard Johnston, Kentucky, 248. Johnston wrote that Marshall was given command of the "Army of Southwestern Virginia and Eastern Kentucky." This could have been Marshall's own terminology for his independent command. Mr. Withers to Colonel Stuart, July 21, 1861, William Dabney Stuart Papers (Virginia Military Institute, Lexington, Virginia). Special Orders No. 232 from the Acting Inspector General's Office in Richmond called for Stuart to proceed to Jeffersonville, Virginia, and report to Brigadier General Marshall. Once again, Marshall's rank could have been one of his own fixation.

⁴⁷ Basler, ed., Collected Works of Lincoln, IV, 542, 545.

⁴⁸OR., Ser. I, Vol. IV, 433-44.

Copies May Not Film Well!



Atlas to Accompany the Official Records, Plate XXIV.

reported that troops from Camp Dick Robinson were moving on Cumberland Gap, with two regiments already encamped between London and the Rockcastle River. 49

When Zollicoffer sought permission to go forth and meet the Union troops from Camp Dick Robinson, Johnston replied, "Exercise your own discretion in attacking the enemy."50 Obviously, the Confederate effort in eastern Kentucky could not afford a disastrous defeat and forfeiture of Cumberland Gap, but if Zollicoffer could check the Union offensive by active defensive maneuvers, additional time could be secured for the arrival of badly needed men and equipment. The lack of sufficient provisions and adequate transportation for 4,500 men delayed Zollicoffer's advance for several days, but at midnight on October 7, Union scouts informed Thomas that Zollicoffer had begun an advance towards central Kentucky. 51 Three days later, a forward party of Confederates established a temporary camp on a hill nine miles north of London. The hill, in Rockcastle County, would become a battlefield less than a week later.

As Zollicoffer passed through London, a small skirmish between pickets occurred, with only nominal casualties on each side. The fight, however, served notice to the Confederate commander that he was nearing Rockcastle Hills, where Brigadier General Albin Schoepf, Colonel Theophilus Garrard, and 4,000

⁴⁹ Ibid., 434, 201.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 435.

⁵¹ Ibid., 309, 462-63.

Union troops from Camp Dick Robinson were intrenched on Wildcat Mountain, awaiting the attack. Zollicoffer, upon a first glance at the Federal position, called it ". . . a natural fortification, almost inaccessible," but it did not deter his plan of attack. 52

On October 21, Zollicoffer cautiously approached Camp Wildcat, the Union position in the Rockcastle Hills. A dense forest encircling the Hills concealed, for the most part, his advance. Colonel Taz Newman's 17th Tennessee Infantry and Colonel Cumming's 19th Tennessee Infantry prepared for a frontal assault, while 10 companies of men moved to the left. Newman's men had closed to within 80 yards of the Federal position when their ranks were riddled by a heavy Union volley. They moved forward, albeit slower, without firing a shot, groping for protection from the galling rifle and musket fire. When they were within 50 yards of the Union lines, the Confederates fired a volley and intense gunfire continued for over half an hour.

With the battle raging furiously, Newman, showing no fear, led four companies gallantly up the steep hillside.

Some of the men reached the Federal works but, being destitute of cartridges and coming under increasing fire, were forced to fall back and regroup. 53

Intermittent firing continued throughout the day, but when Zollicoffer realized that the hilltop Federal position

⁵² Ibid., 210.

⁵³ Ibid., 213-14.

could not be taken without a heavy loss of Confederate life, he decided to retreat to Cumberland Ford. The Confederates lost 11 killed and 42 wounded, while Union casualties were listed at 4 killed and 18 wounded. He by October 25, Zollicoffer was back at Camp Buckner, having failed in his first battlefield effort, though the battle of Camp Wildcat or Rockcastle Hills was more of a reconnaisance in force than a pitched battle. Zollicoffer could only wait and see if his active defensive gestures would slow the Union advance. So

Zollicoffer's repluse at Rockcastle Hills demonstrated the difficulties of conducting operations in eastern Kentucky. With numerous mountains to traverse, some often insurmountable, the key to victory resided with obtaining and maintaining a defensive position, awaiting the attack, and replusing it. Furthermore, provisions in the area were scarce, and the farther north Zollicoffer tried to move, the longer his supply line became, with the entire route being in hostile Unionist territory. Yet, if Zollicoffer chose to remain in the Cumberland Gap area, he lost the advantage of surprise. As the Federals advanced southward through the state, they undoubtedly would increase their ranks, as evidenced by the dominant Unionist sentiment in Kentucky. 56

⁵⁴ Ibid., 205,210.

⁵⁵Moore, ed., Rebellion Record, III, 226-31. Various newspaper reports of the battle are also contained here.

⁵⁶Thomas L. Connelly, Army of the Heartland; The Army of Tennessee, 1861-62 (Baton Rouge, 1967), 88.

Following the Confederate retreat, rumors circulated that Zollicoffer would be replaced. Because of the immense importance that Cumberland Gap played in Southern strategy, only one name was mentioned repeatedly as his replacement—General Robert E. Lee. 57 Union leaders feared that Lee would be sent to Kentucky with a powerful army and sweep through the entire state, a view echoed by the New York Times. 58 However, if such a change was seriously contemplated, it did not materialize and Zollicoffer remained in command at Cumberland Gap.

Zollicoffer did, however, become alarmed that the Federals might counterattack before additional men could be sent forward to strengthen his army. To protect this vital area, Johnston ordered Brigadier Generals L. P. Walker and William Carroll with their respective troops to Knoxville to bolster the defenses of Cumberland Gap and the various mountain passes in the area. Zollicoffer also received additional munitions and several batteries of artillery. Johnston had correctly surmised the situation, as Schoepf had already decided to advance on Cumberland Gap. 59

With the arrival of additional men and supplies, Zollicoffer bolstered his defenses at the Gap, but there were far more mountain passes through which a Union force could penetrate into eastern Tennessee than he could adequately defend,

^{57&}lt;sub>OR.</sub>, Ser. I, Vol. IV, 206.

⁵⁸New York <u>Times</u>, Oct. 29, 1861.

⁵⁹OR., Ser. I, Vol. IV, 207.

most notably the roads from Williamsburg, Kentucky, to Jacksborough, Tennessee, and from Monticello, Kentucky, to Jamestown, Tennessee. The former was the most westerly route the Federals would use to invade the Volunteer State, for they would be edging precariously close to Johnston's range of coverage from Bowling Green. Zollicoffer thus concluded that the most desirable Federal route was the Williamsburg-Jacksborough Pike, and he scattered four cavalry companies to the west in an attempt to ascertain whether or not the Federals would try to outflank Cumberland Gap. 60 His efforts soon were rewarded when one of the cavalry companies captured a Federal spy who confessed that it was indeed the Federal plan to send two or three regiments against Cumberland Gap, hoping to draw Zollicoffer out for a fight, while the principal Union forces moved by both the roads Zollicoffer had suspected. The spy estimated the total Union force at 20,000.61 Upon receiving this information, Zollicoffer dispatched several regiments west to fortify the main passes. The scene of fighting, thus, was shifting from eastern Kentucky to eastern Tennessee.

Residents of the Volunteer State were genuinely concerned for the safety of their state. After Zollicoffer's advance into central Kentucky had been replused, they feared a massive Union counterattack upon the Confederate commander for the purpose of seizing the east Tennessee-Virginia railroad,

^{60&}lt;sub>Ibid.</sub>, 487.

⁶¹ Ibid., 490.

the vital communication key with the east. 62 Zollicoffer sent urgent appeals for additional men and artillery to strengthen his position in the mountains, while at the same time ordering four regiments of infantry to fortify the passes where he expected the Union assaults. 63 rapid and substantial movement of men westward resulted in Thomas receiving alarming reports that Zollicoffer had been reinforced to a present force of not less than 20,000 men. 64 Although regarding that report as an inaccurate count of the Southern force, Thomas displayed his conservative approach to warfare as he recalled his advanced troops to Camp Dick Robinson. Even if Zollicoffer had only half that number, Thomas could ill afford to be caught in a fight with several units of his men dispersed throughout eastern Kentucky. He would wait for a better opportunity to strike the Confederates.

Confederate scouting reports confirmed the Union with-drawal, and by November 4 Zollicoffer realized that the suspected Union attack had become a feint. He then proposed to Johnston that it would be in the best interest of the Confederacy if his force was more closely aligned with that of General Simon Bolivar Buckner at Bowling Green.

If therefore it should meet with your approval, I will as rapidly as possible, endeavor to so fortify the Cumberland Gap that the smallest possible force will

^{62&}lt;sub>Ibid</sub>., 496.

^{63&}lt;sub>Ibid.</sub>, 502.

^{64&}lt;sub>Ibid</sub>., 328.

be necessary there; will simultaneously endeavor to fortify or thoroughly blockade the passes near Jacksborough . . . and concentrate them [troops] upon some point in the open country near Jamestown, with the view of advancing towards Danville.65

Zollicoffer was once again considering an offensive into Kentucky.

Zollicoffer had left Cumberland Gap for Jamestown with five regiments, a battery of artillery and a small group of cavalry. By November 7, he was at Jacksborough, where he acquired four additional regiments, as well as news that a small force of 300-400 Federals were encamped just east of Monticello, the only known Yankees south of the Cumberland River. 66

and Rains at Cumberland Gap to complete the breastworks.

On November 10, Churchwell received information that General William Nelson was advancing on Piketon. Williams wrote Marshall that he had evacuated Prestonburg because his men were "unarmed and unorganized" for a fight, with not more than two rounds of ammunition per man. During the retreat, a fight ensued between Nelson and Williams which lasted over four hours. Both sides subsequently claimed victory.

As Nelson advanced along a narrow mountain road leading to Piketon, the banks of which were covered

^{65&}lt;sub>Ibid.</sub>, 516-17.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 527, 232-33.

^{67&}lt;sub>Ibid.</sub>, 254.

^{68&}lt;sub>Ibid., 227</sub>.

thickly with timber and undergrowth, Williams placed a portion of his men along a rocky ridge 100 feet above the road where they were completely hidden from the view of the advancing Federals. 69 Nearly all the Confederates were armed with double-barreled shotguns, and the order had been given not to fire until they heard the crack of an officer's pistol. The Federals continued the march, unaware of the ambush that lay ahead. Suddenly from the trees there came a crack, and the hidden enemy poured round after round of buckshot into the Union ranks. Caught completely by surprise, Nelson's men became panic stricken, yet, instinctively returned a volley, their shot chipping the rocks and trees above. The battle raged for over an hour with Nelson attempting to regroup his men and bring up an artillery battery to dislodge the pesky rebels. Finally, Nelson opened fire with his artillery and ordered a charge on the Confederate position atop the mountain. Because of their superior numbers, the Federals were able to outflank the rebels, who, their ammunition exhausted, fled down the backside of the mountain and continued their retreat to Piketon. The battle of Piketon or Ivy Mountain left 10 Confederates dead and 18 wounded. Marshall cited the clash as "a very decided success."70

⁶⁹W. T. Lafferty, ed., "Civil War Reminiscences of John Aker Lafferty," Register, 59 (Jan. 1961), 5; OR., Ser. I, Vol. IV, 229.

⁷⁰ OR., Ser. I, Vol. IV, 541.

Marshall, who had been establishing his new headquarters at Abingdon, Virginia, proceeded to Pound Gap to meet his retreating forces. Thus, by mid-November, Union troops within eastern Kentucky had succeeded in driving both Confederate units back, Zollicoffer into Tennessee and Marshall into Virginia. Williams, in a letter to Marshall, predicted that Nelson would move next on the Virginia-Tennessee railroad, but the Federals did not pursue Marshall and Williams. Two weeks later writing from Pound Gap, Marshall stated that the enemy had fallen back to Prestonburg.71

With Confederate forces in eastern Kentucky on the defensive, many secessionists in the western part of the state called for the establishment of a Confederate government of Kentucky. It would, in the words of an eminent historian,

. . . not only give a rallying point for Kentuckians, who could now join the Confederacy without being technically traitors to their state, but it would also solve many legal and administrative problems also confronting the Confederate commandoes. 72

Meeting in Russellville, 115 delegates from 68 counties came together, and because of the widespread belief throughout the South that Kentucky supported the Confederacy and was for secession, a Confederate government of Kentucky was established on November 19, 1861. The Confederate Congress later admitted Kentucky as the 13th state. Bowling Green

^{71&}lt;u>Ibid., 229-30</u>, Vol. VII, 722-23.

^{72&}lt;sub>E</sub>. Merton Coulter, <u>The Civil War and Readjustment in Kentucky</u> (Chapel Hill, <u>1926</u>), 136.

became the Confederate capital with George Johnson serving as Governor. 73

Yet if Southern enthusiasm was running high in the southcentral part of the state, Confederates in eastern Kentucky were disspirited. On November 30, Brigadier General Humphrey Marshall, as a matter of personal pride, tendered his resignation to Confederate Secretary of War, Judah Benjamin. While in Richmond a month earlier, Marshall had sought a guarantee from Davis that his command would be independent of any others in the area, with Marshall reporting only to Johnston. Then Marshall learned that Davis, unhappy with Zollicoffer's performance thus far, had appointed a Kentuckian, Major General George B. Crittenden, to supersede Zollicoffer, the latter still remaining with the army. Marshall's gesture, though extreme, typified many Southerners' reaction to the news of a new commander in the eastern Kentucky-Tennessee area. The appointment threatened to divide Confederate operations in the entire region. Davis' personal intervention was a crucial mistake, one made more vivid less than two months later on the battlefield of Logan's Cross Roads.

⁷³Lowell H. Harrison, The Civil War in Kentucky (Lexington, 1975), 358.

III. AN ACTIVE DEFENSE: THE BATTLE OF LOGAN'S CROSS ROADS

On November 11, 1861, the Adjutant and Inspector General's Office in Richmond, Virginia, issued Special Orders No. 216, placing George B. Crittenden in command of the troops in the east Tennessee district. 74 A West Point graduate, Crittenden had served in both the Black Hawk and Mexican wars, and by 1856 held the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the United States Army. With the outbreak of civil war, however, he resigned his commission and accepted the rank of Brigadier and later was promoted to Major General in the Confederacy. 75

Crittenden's appointment to the east Tennessee district was a direct result of Jefferson Davis' dissatisfaction with Zollicoffer, who had failed to maintain an offensive posture in eastern Kentucky, and had been repulsed at Rockcastle Hills. Thus, in an effort to revive the state's waning support for the Confederacy, Davis offered Crittenden, a native Kentuckian whose name was widely recognized throughout the state, command of the rebel forces at Cumberland Gap for an advance into the Commonwealth. 76

⁷⁴ OR., Ser. I, Vol. IV, 538.

⁷⁵ Malone, ed., Dictionary of American Biography, IV, 545-6.

^{76&}lt;u>OR.</u>, Ser. I, Vol. LII, Pt. II, 185.

Zollicoffer, unaware of the changing circumstances in Richmond, previously had decided upon another advance into Kentucky and by mid-November was already moving northward with nine regiments from Jamestown, Tennessee. With Crittenden's appointment unknown in the West, Johnston approved a plan whereby Zollicoffer, with his 4,000 men, would establish a camp at Mill Springs, Kentucky, and, if not threatened by the enemy during the winter months ahead, launch a spring offensive into the central part of the state. On November 29, Zollicoffer arrived at Mill Springs, a small community on the southern bank of the Cumberland River. This vast and winding river was the key to the entire area. If controlled by the Confederates, it would be a vital supply line from Nashville, a faster alternative to poor overland roads. area also had an abundance of crops, forage, and even a large grist mill, hence the name Mill Springs. These elements, combined with the formidable bluffs edging the southern bank of the Cumberland, afforded Zollicoffer an excellent location for establishing winter quarters for his troops, while also presenting the Union command with an offensive threat to central Kentucky. 77

At Louisville, Brigadier General Don Carlos Buell,
Union Commander of the Ohio Department, doubted that Zollicoffer would cross the Cumberland in force. He expected,
rather, that Zollicoffer would attempt no more than a

⁷⁷ Ibid., Vol. IV, 243, Vol. VII, 687, 697, 713.

reconnaissance in force, hoping to force a Union retreat from the area without risking a major conflict. There were strong differences of opinion in Buell's camp relative to Zollicoffer's intentions, however, since he had already outsmarted the Union commanders by leaving Cumberland Gap and establishing a fortified position on the Cumberland River. His active defense would relieve pressure on Johnston in Bowling Green by occupying the full attention of the troops from Camp Dick Robinson, while he also secured additional time for men and supplies to be sent to Mill Springs from Nashville. The strong of the sent to Mill Springs from Nashville.

Zollicoffer's position at Mill Springs changed the entire nature of operations in central and eastern Kentucky. If his first plan of action was an attack on Camp Dick Robinson, his second plan was surely to hold his own position on the Cumberland, for Johnston desired Zollicoffer to remain in observation of the enemy until such time as he could reenforce his army. 80 Johnston's plan was to establish a strong Confederate line of defense across southern Kentucky, from the Mississippi River through Bowling Green to Mill Springs, ending at Cumberland Gap.

In early December, Brigadier General Albin Schoepf was sent to watch Zollicoffer and to prevent his crossing of the

⁷⁸ Ibid., Vol. VII, 458.

⁷⁹Connelly, Army of Heartland, 87, 89.

³⁰William P. Johnston, The Life of General Albert Sidney Johnston (New York, 1879), 395.

Cumberland. After reconnaissance, Schoepf wrote Brigadier General George Thomas, estimating the rebel army at 9,000 strong. Before he could finish the letter, Confederate artillery perched atop the southern bluffs of the Cumberland opened fire on the advanced Union forces, causing an abrupt end to the communication. 81 Zollicoffer also reported the clash to Johnston, the first of several offensive displays. Johnston was obviously pleased with Zollicoffer's actions as he wrote on December 4, "Every move is entirely approved."82 But he also stated that Zollicoffer should safeguard the Monticello-Somerset road, on the southern side of the Cumberland, as it was the most practical road the enemy would use to advance on Mill Springs. However, he acquiesced to Zollicoffer's more thorough knowledge of the country. This was vintage Johnston. Being unfamiliar with the area in question, he relied on his subordinate's decisions as to what was best for his army.

While Schoepf kept his vigil on Zollicoffer, rumors circulated of a Confederate attack on central Kentucky. A Negro man crossed over to the northern side of the Cumberland and informed Schoepf that the Confederates had constructed a large number of boats and were, at any moment, contemplating an attack. 83 The expected Confederate offensive did not materialize, and Buell, in an attempt to downplay

^{81&}lt;u>OR.</u>, Ser. I, Vol. VII, 7-8.

⁸² Ibid., 734.

⁸³ Ibid., 473.

the significance of the Southern force, wrote that Zollicoffer was making only harmless demonstrations. 84 But on
December 9, Confederate advance forces were thrown across
the Cumberland, much to the surprise and despair of the
retreating Yankees. Schoepf had been lulled into a false
sense of security by Zollicoffer's apparent defensive
gestures, and the Confederates easily put five infantry
regiments, seven cavalry companies, and four pieces of
artillery across the river. Zollicoffer's new position,
which he immediately fortified, was at Beech Grove, directly
across the Cumberland from Mill Springs. Zollicoffer termed
Beech Grove as a "naturally strong" defensive position.85

Following his bold move across the Cumberland to Beech Grove, Zollicoffer received Johnston's letter of December 4, regarding the improved of the Monticello-Somerset road, to which he made an immediate reply. Zollicoffer inferred that it was Johnston's wish that he should have remained at Mill Springs guarding the road. But with Schoepf receiving reenforcements from Camp Dick Robinson and his means transportation being somewhat limited for a rapid removal, Zollicoffer felt it impossible to recross the Cumberland at that particular time. He tried to bolster support for his move by citing the protection of both flanks and rear by the river—the camp resembling a horeshoe—as well as providing an excellent springboard for operations into

⁸⁴ Ibid., 477.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 12.

Map drawn by Confederate soldier J. H. Henson, Company D, 20th Tennessee Volunteers, December, 1861. (The Filson Club).

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But Zollicoffer perceived that his actions might not meet with Johnston's approval, and, in fact, the northern bank was not a better natural location. There was a marked difference in elevation between the two river banks, with the southern cliffs dominating the entire area, and having a river in the rear, in the view of several historians, trapped rather than protected the Confederates. However, Zollicoffer included in his reply the key word "defense," for by mid-December he had not received the necessary men and supplies for an immediate offensive into central Kentucky. As a consequence, he was seriously contemplating the second phase of his plan; a defensive stand in winter quarters at Beech Grove. With his successful forward movements of the past month, Zollicoffer had hoped for an opportunity to redeem himself to Richmond authorities who thought him unqualified for active command. Such was not to be the case. On December 15, Crittenden arrived in Knoxville and assumed overall command of the Confederate forces in the area.

Crittenden's appointment to the east Tennessee district was tinted with political favoritism, a charge sustained by Crittenden's first strategic decision on December 16.

⁸⁶Marcus J. Wright, "Sketch of General Felix K. Zollicoffer," The Southern Bivouac, II (July 1884), 490.

⁸⁷OR., Ser. I, Vol. VII, 753.

Without sufficient knowledge of the area in question and without communicating with Zollicoffer concerning the reasons for his crossing the Cumberland, Crittenden ordered Zollicoffer to recross the river to Mill Springs. 88 In an attempt to explain the order to Richmond, Crittenden cited scouting reports which placed superior numbers of Union forces moving in front and on the left flank of Beech Grove. 89 This fear was not reflected in Zollicoffer's correspondence, however, and he did not comply with the message. Instead he maintained his defensive stand at Beech Grove.

Why Zollicoffer chose to remain where he was, disobeying a superior's command, has been an object of controversy. Bennett Young wrote that Zollicoffer's move to the northern shore of the Cumberland was without Johnston's approval. 90 This is erronous, however, since Johnston had approved of all of Zollicoffer's actions preceeding his move to Beech Grove, and left the matter of guarding the Monticello-Somerset road to Zollicoffer's discretion. Later, when Zollicoffer informed Johnston on December 9 that he had crossed to the northern bank, Johnston did not countermand the move.

Second, Crittenden's order to recross the Cumberland seems to have been a verbal command, as no written record of the order has been found. Zollicoffer could not rely on

⁸⁸ Ibid., 769, Vol. LII, Pt. II, 239.

⁸⁹ Ibid., Vol. VII, 769.

⁹⁰ Bennett Young, "Zollicoffer's Oak," Southern Historical Society Papers (52 vols., Richmond, Virginia, 1914-1959), XXXI, 166.

the command without personally communicating with Crittenden which he had tried to do on several occasions. In his frustration, he wrote to Johnston, "I now receive no responses to communications addressed to Knoxville with the most important details." If the order had been telegraphed or written, Zollicoffer would have recrossed to avoid being in direct violation of a superior's command and leaving himself open for charges of insubordination and neglect of duty.

Third, Zollicoffer, aware that Crittenden was unfamiliar with the strength of the terrain around Mill Springs and Beech Grove, hoped to convince his superior of the wisdom of the move when he arrived at Mill Springs. Zollicoffer's constructed fortifications at Beech Grove complemented the defensive characteristics of the terrain on the northern shore of the Cumberland.

Fourth, Zollicoffer believed that his crossing of the Cumberland had created consternation among Union generals. This view was reflected by the New York <u>Tribune</u> which declared that Zollicoffer's move to Beech Grove

. . . showed an unusual enterprise and energy on his part, as our generals, whom he took completely by surprise were well disposed to admit. His subsequent selection of a position for intrenched encampments on both banks of the river . . . proved him to be possessed of a good strategical eye. 92

Fifth, by fortifying the northern bank sufficiently strong to dispel thoughts of attack, Zollicoffer was buying

^{91&}lt;sub>OR.</sub>, Ser. I, Vol. VII, 786.

⁹² New York Tribune, [n.d.], quoted in Raymond Myers, The Zollie Tree (Louisville, 1964), 72.

the additional time he needed. Only several months into the Civil War, the vast majority of his men, with no prior military experience, lacked the discipline, organization, and efficiency that only time and intense training could instill. By creating winter quarters on the northern bank, Zollicoffer could train his men during the months ahead and be ready by spring to make a determined move northward, if Johnston contemplated such.

Lastly, from his exposed position, Zollicoffer could, if the opportunity arose, strike at scattered Union columns, something that could not be done from south of the river.

Zollicoffer's strategy was, at last, becoming clear in his own mind. By moving from Mill Springs to Beech Grove, he presented an active threat to the Union forces in the area, as evidenced by the skirmishes of the past weeks. Would his next move be to send out advance guards or would it be the entire Confederate force? No one but Zollicoffer was sure, not Schoepf, Thomas, Johnston, and certainly not Crittenden. By fortifying the northern bank and controlling the area with artillery on the opposite shore, Zollicoffer chose to remain where he was located, Beech Grove. This active defense of Zollicoffer was not only the correct move to be made, but also it was justified, given the conditions that existed. 93

Rumors of Zollicoffer's advance into Kentucky continued to spread and Schoepf received orders to move forward with

⁹³Connelly, Army of Heartland, 90.

four regiments to check the Southern commander. If Schoepf hoped to lure Zollicoffer out for a battle, he was sorely disappointed. Zollicoffer's command remained divided on the banks of the Cumberland, with only five regiments at Beech Grove, and it was highly unlikely that he would venture out of his fortifications for an engagement at less than full strength. Zollicoffer wrote to Bowling Green for additional men and supplies, but Johnston, confronted with a Union advance on that city, could not spare any troops. Zollicoffer would have to maintain his defensive stand.

The success of Zollicoffer's plan can be seen in Buell's letter of December 17 that he was "letting him alone for the present." Meanwhile, Schoepf performed an extended reconnaissance of the rebel intrenchments and concluded that Zollicoffer's position could not be overrun without heavy loss of Union life. Beech Grove's terrain was broken and hilly, making it difficult to place artillery in a commanding position without being exposed to Confederate batteries on the heights across the Cumberland. "Under these circumstances," Schoepf concluded, "I hardly know what move is best to be made." 95

Zollicoffer remained in his fortified position at Beech Grove throughout December, inducing Schoepf and others to

^{94&}lt;sub>OR.</sub>, Ser. I, Vol. VII, 501.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 506.

believe that he was indeed going into winter quarters. 96 With the earthworks nearing completion, Zollicoffer felt confident that the Yankees would not attack his strong position, and, he allowed his men to protect themselves from the winter elements by occupying the 150 log and mud huts as Christmas approached. 97

January, 1862, brought with it not only a change in military events but in the weather as well. December had been most unseasonable, with warm days, cool nights, and only occasional blasts of cold air. A Lebanon, Kentucky, family journal listed adjectives such as warm, pleasant, Indian summer, and moderate to describe the weather, and recorded only four days of rainfall for the month. But in January the weather turned rapidly from moderate to seasonal as wind, rain, snow, and frigid temperatures engulfed the area. 98 Winh living quarters already erected at Beech Grove, Zollicoffer concluded to abstain from any further offensive intentions and remain within his fortifications for the winter. He did not expect a Federal attack during the

⁹⁶ Ibid., Vol LII, Pt. II, 243. Even Zollicoffer's regimental commanders believed they were going into winter quarters.

⁹⁷ Ibid., Vol VII, 797; Gerald R. McMurtry, "Zollicoffer and the Battle of Mill Springs, "The Filson Club History Quarterly, 29 (Oct. 1955), 306.

⁹⁸Diary of Maria I. Knott, Dec. 15, 1861 - Jan. 25, 1862, Knott Collection (Manuscripts Division, Kentucky Library, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, Kentucky).

inclement weather, and if one did occur, he considered his chances of success greater than those of the invaders. 99

With Zollicoffer's army divided on the banks of the Cumberland and in winter quarters, Buell decided to reenforce Schoepf with troops from Camp Dick Robinson, under the command of Brigadier General Thomas, and attack Beech Grove. Buell's decision to dislodge Zollicoffer was only part of his overall plan to secure Kentucky for the Union. However well conceived the offensive was, it did not meet with overwhelming support in Washington, as it assigned the Cumberland Gap area a relatively unimportant role. Lincoln preferred to control the Tennessee-Virginia railroad, which ran south of Cumberland Gap, rather than Nashville, 200 miles to the west. But he yielded to the advice of his military advisors and the Union offensive slowly materialized.

On January 3 Crittenden arrived at Mill Springs. Surprised to find troops still at Beech Grove, Crittenden questioned Zollicoffer regarding his previous order to withdraw across the river. Zollicoffer explained to his superior that the messenger had lost several days in returning to camp, that he had expected Crittenden to arrive at any time, and that the recent bad weather had caused a substantial rise in the river, thus increasing the risk involved in recrossing. 101

⁹⁹OR., Ser. I, Vol. VII, 526-27.

¹⁰⁰Abraham Lincoln to General Don Carlos Buell, January 6, 1862, Miscellaneous Papers (Special Collections, University of Kentucky, Lexington).

¹⁰¹Davis, Rise and Fall, II, 20.

It was apparent, however, that Crittenden disagreed with Zollicoffer over his decision to remain at Beech Grove, as he immediately began raft construction, and four days later the stern-wheel steamer, Noble Ellis, arrived at Mill Springs to aid in transporting the army back across the river. But the weather remained bad and the work on the rafts progressed slowly.

Crittenden's arrival at Mill Springs heightened Union fears of a burgeoning Confederate force, and Schoepf, in a very detailed study of the Confederate position, vowed it would take a force of 10,000 men to dislodge the Southerners from Beech Grove. Zollicoffer had felled timber for nearly a mile in front of his intrenchments so that a surprise frontal attack was impossible, while the precipitous southern bluffs of the Cumberland rendered an infantry flanking movement impossible. 102 Schoepf concluded that only with a force of at least double that of the enemy could the Union troops entertain any hope of carrying Beech Grove and driving the Confederates into the Cumberland. Such an observation prompted Thomas to question if the Confederate position was impregnable. Schoepf would not say positively that such was the case, but he did say that an attack upon Beech Grove would result in heavy Union losses. 103

Apprehension was not confined to the Union ranks, however, as evidence of growing Confederate concern for their

^{102&}lt;sub>OR</sub>., Ser. I, Vol. VII, 536.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 542, 545.

position emerged when January entered the second week. On January 12, Assistant Adjutant General William Mackall replied to a transfer request made by Colonel W. S. Statham of the 15th Mississippi Volunteers. Statham had grown impatient of the defensive stand made by Zollicoffer. Eager for a fight, he applied for transfer to Bowling Green, an area Statham thought, had more potential for action. Mackall replied,

The position of General Zollicoffer is too important and too exposed to permit any reduction of force, particularly so great a reduction as the removal of your regiment would be. The General [Johnston] is satisfied that you will soon have an opportunity under General Zollicoffer of contributing to turn back the invaders of the South. 104

Johnston was correct in his assessment.

Tensions continued to grow in the Confederate ranks regarding the rumored Union offensive when scouts reported Federals advancing on Burkesville, to the west, in an attempt to cut off supplies sent up river to Mill Springs. However, Buell issued a counterorder and Thomas turned east toward Logan's Cross Roads where he arrived on January 17, ten miles north of the position held by the Confederates. Schoepf's brigade, moving from Somerset to join Thomas, encountered numerous delays caused by recent rains and was unable to reach the rendezvous before hostilities commenced.

The eighteenth day of January brought with it a steady drench of rain, increasing the possibility of floods on the

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 828.

Cumberland and its tributaries. The same day, Crittenden received advice from an area resident that two Federal regiments had been cut off by the flooding of Fishing Creek, to the east of Thomas. 105 This was Schoepf's force, and if Crittenden was looking for an opportunity to attack before the combination of Union armies could be achieved, the rain seemed a blessing in disguise. He sent the following message to Bowling Green:

I am threatened by a superior force of the enemy in front, and finding it impossible to cross the river, I will have to make the fight on the ground I now occupy. If you can do so, I would ask that a diversion be made in my favor. 106

Late that evening, Crittenden called a council of his subordinate officers and informed them that a Union army of superior strength was approaching. Their options, Crittenden informed his subordinates, were two. The recent rains had divided the enemies' army, providing an opportunity for the Confederates to leave their trenches and strike Thomas' forces, an attack he would surely not be expecting. The other alternative was to remain within their fortifications and await the Union attack. What followed at the meeting has remained highly controversial. Crittenden's personal account of the conference, made several years later, reflected a unanimous agreement to the offensive plan.

There was not one of them who did not concur with me in that Thomas must be attacked immediately, and, if

¹⁰⁵Wright, "Sketch of Zollicoffer," 491.

¹⁰⁶ OR., Ser. I, Vol. VII, 103.

possible, by surprise; that such an attack, if successful in merely repulsing him, would probably give us time to cross the Cumberland with artillery and wagons, by means of our boats, then being built.

Colonel William B. Wood, however, recalled that he alone had opposed the plan and that Zollicoffer did not vote.

Following the breakup of the meeting, Wood talked with Zollicoffer, who expressed doubt concerning the offensive. He "believed it to be contrary to the wishes and policy of the commander-in-chief, General Johnston." J. G. M. Ramsey, a prominent Tennessee politician, wrote to Johnston on January 24, 1862, that Zollicoffer's advance was "against his own earnest protest." Moreover, an offensive was not in keeping with Zollicoffer's plan of an active defense. The Tuscumbia, Alabama, Constitution reported that Zollicoffer protested against the offensive, as he thought the Federals should be forced to attack him within his own breastworks. It is true that during December, with the prospect of receiving men and supplies, Zollicoffer seriously

¹⁰⁷Davis, Rise and Fall, I, 210. A Louisville Courier correspondent also agreed that there was unanimous agreement. Moore, ed., Rebellion Record, IV, 45.

¹⁰⁸ James Edmonds Saunders, Recollections of the Early Settlers of North America (Baltimore, 1969), 186; Johnston, Life of Johnston, 400. General Johnston's instructions implied a defensive campaign. Nothing in its condition warranted an aggressive move.

¹⁰⁹ OR., Ser. I, Vol. LII, Pt. II, 257.

¹¹⁰ Moore, ed., Rebellion Record, IV, 47.

considered an advance, but by mid-January an offensive, in his mind, was out of the question. He had maintained a defensive stand at Beech Grove, with the exception of occasional forage raiding parties, since his arrival on the northern shore of the Cumberland. He had built winter quarters for his men and was satisfied to remain within his fortifications and await the Union attack.

Furthermore, Crittenden's letter of the 18th, excerpting the phase "impossible to cross the river," misrepresented the situation. Crittenden saw an advantage in attacking the Federals. It would secure time for transportation of the artillery and wagons across the Cumberland. Thus, his referral to the impossibility of crossing the river was with all his military apparatus, not that he could have crossed with only his men. Crittenden had the services of the Noble Ellis as well as several flatboats for the purpose of transporting men across the Cumberland, no matter how high the water level rose. The decision to attack therefore, cannot be attributed in whole or in part to Zollicoffer. It was Major General George B. Crittenden, commanding officer of the Confederate forces at Mill Springs and Beech Grove, who ordered the Southerners out of their strong defensive position to attack the Union forces at Logan's Cross Roads.

The Confederates were awakened at midnight, January 19, during a dreary, continuous rain to begin the march northward. Zollicoffer's brigade of four infantry regiments, two cavalry companies, and an artillery battery assumed the lead

position in the march to the field of battle. Brigadier General William Carroll followed close behind with three infantry regiments and a smaller battery of guns. Held in reserve were a regiment of infantry and two cavalry battalions.

Streaks of lightning blazed across the clouded sky, adding only momentary light to an otherwise dark night. The constant rainfall further impaired the vision of the soldiers as they trudged along an indivisible path, listening for the sound of mud choking the shoes of troops in front to guide them. After six hours the Confederates had covered only ten miles and as the gloom of dawn emerged on this sabbath morning, January 19, 1862, a crackle of gunfire was heard in the distance; advance cavalry had met Union pickets.

Skirmish lines were rapidly drawn as Zollicoffer's troops advanced along the Mill Springs road, expecting resistance to appear momentarily on the dim horizon. They were not disappointed. The soggy road had cost the Southerners valuable time. They had anticipated being in position for attack before dawn, but their arrival roughly corresponded with early breakfast for the Union troops, who, though surprised, were awake and soon ready to give battle.

After the Union pickets were driven in, Crittenden ordered three infantry regiments to lead the frontal attack:

¹¹¹ Knott Diary, January 20, 1862. On this date, the entry read, "Had another storm last night and considerable thunder and rain this morning. Cloudy all day."

the 19th Tennessee, under the command of Colonel D. H.

Cummings, the 25th Mississippi, commanded by Lieutenant

Colonel E. C. Walthall and the 20th Tennessee, led by

Colonel Joel A. Battle. Colonel Frank Wolford's First

Kentucky Cavalry was the only Federal unit to oppose the

early Confederate advance, and it presented only nominal

resistance. Colonel Mahlon D. Manson, commander of Thomas's

Second Brigade, sent the 10th Indiana Infantry, under the

command of Lieutenant Colonel William C. Kise, to contest

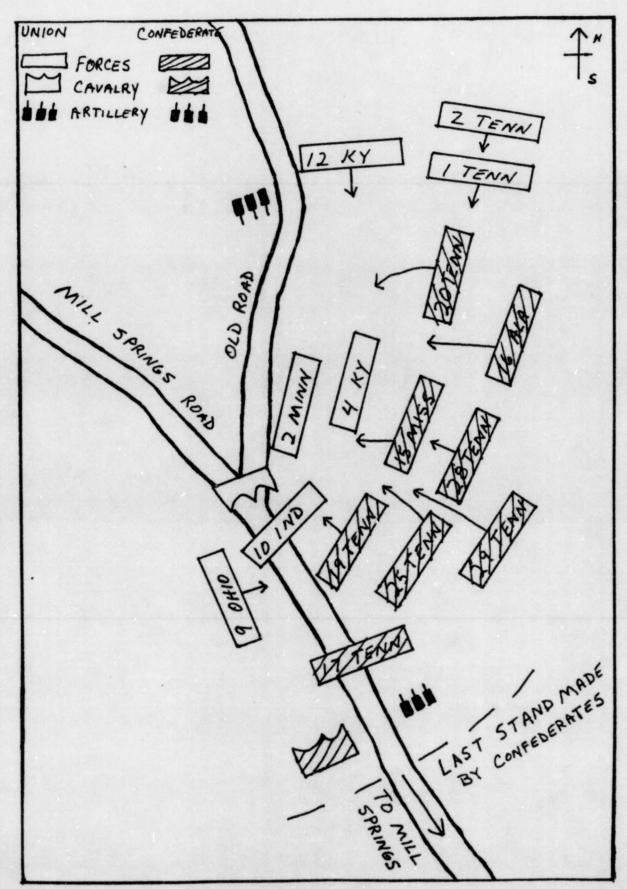
the left wing of Zollicoffer's advance along the Mill Springs

road and the 4th Kentucky Infantry, commanded by Colonel

Speed Fry to extend the Union line to the east. Manson then

called personally on Thomas to report the unexpected Confederate advance and his dispersion of troops.

The early intermittent gunfire quickened its pace as Zollicoffer's brigade had the best of the early fighting, but the Confederates were unable to break through the loosely constructed Union line. Crittenden placed Carroll's Second Brigade immediately behind Zollicoffer's frontline troops to act as reserve or to give the appearance of a concentrated attack on the center with more troops than actually engaged. To counter, Thomas hurried forward the 2d Minnesota Infantry, under the command of Colonel Horatio P. Van Cleve, to support the Union center. Colonel Fry's 4th Kentucky, upon arriving at the scene of battle, had no specific orders on placement, but Fry positioned his men along a rail fence in the edge of a wooded area on the extreme eastern sector of the battlefield. Battle's 20th



Battle of Logan's Cross Roads

Tennessee and Walthall's 15th Mississippi were leading a spirited advance along this flank, and, much to the chagrin of Fry, a deep ravine penetrated the field 250 yards in front of his position. From its cover, the Confederates were able to keep up a galling fire. Having thus been thwarted in his quest for an advantage, Fry climbed atop the rail fence and defied the enemy to stand up and fight like men. 112 For no apparent reason, Fry's futile gesture seemed to cause a lull in the fighting. During the lull, a most confusing event occurred.

The morning battle was being fought without the benefit of sunlight, as rain clouds still hovered overhead and patches of fog passed across the battlefield. With the added pollution of musket and artillery smoke, visibility was poor at best. Brigadier General Carroll commented that "the eye could distinguish objects only a short distance." 113 During this lull, Zollicoffer decided to ride over to the position of the 15th Mississippi on his left. At about the same time Fry rode to his right, along the rail fence behind which he had been fighting, to a gap between his 4th Kentucky and the 10th Indiana, to ascertain the course of the battle. As Fry neared the Mill Springs road, he encountered what seemed to be an officer, riding calmly toward his lines. The officer's uniform was concealed by a raincoat, but the placid manner of his approach and his proximity to the Union

¹¹² Harrison, Civil War in Kentucky, 26.

^{113&}lt;sub>OR.</sub>, Ser. I, Vol. VII, 112.

lines convinced Fry that he was a newly arrived Federal commander sent up by Thomas. Fry rode up to his side, so close that their knees touched. The unidentified officer, nodding his head to the left, spoke first: "We must not shoot our own men. Those are our men." Fry responded, "Of course not. I would not do so intentionally." The conversation ended, and Fry started back to his regiment. 114

As Fry approached his men, another mounted officer emerged from the trees where the brief meeting had just occurred, firing his pistol into the Union ranks and striking Fry's horse. Somewhat confused but acting on instinct, Fry returned the fire, as did his men. It suddenly dawned on Fry that his conversation only minutes earlier was not with a new Federal officer but with a displaced Confederate. As pistol and musket shots rang out, the second Confederate officer fled unharmed, but the one with whom Fry had just spoken, fell from his mount, killed instantly. Upon viewing the body, there was no doubt as to the identity; it was General Felix K. Zollicoffer.

The circumstances surrounding the death of Zollicoffer were as murky as the weather on that fateful day. Somehow in the confusion of battle and the poor visibility, Zollicoffer rode from the protection of his army into the Union ranks. His inability to detect Union soldiers has been attributed to the fact that many of Crittenden's men wore remants of blue uniforms, a common practice in the early

¹¹⁴ Myers, Zollie Tree, 122-23.

days of the Civil War. When Zollicoffer rode into the ranks of Fry's 4th Kentucky, he apparently thought it was Walthall's 15th Mississippi. Zollicoffer's remarks to Fry indicated that he believed the 4th Kentucky was a Confederate unit firing on another Confederate unit.

The second unidentified officer was Zollicoffer's aide, who belatedly realized that his general had ridden into the proverbial lion's den and tried brashly to correct the error. Assuming that Zollicoffer would realize his mistake and possibly escape unharmed, he chose to fire at Fry as he rode away, but it was Lieutenant H. R. M. Fogg who escaped, not his commanding general.

Who killed Zollicoffer? The most obvious answer would be to credit Fry with delivering the fatal blow since he was the closest to Zollicoffer and fired the first shot in that direction. Indeed, many of the official accounts of the battle as well as varying newspapers credited Fry. 115 Fry, himself, avoided taking the accolades and in his official report to Thomas did not even use Zollicoffer's name, supporting the fact that he was earlier duped by the Confederate officer as to his identity. In an 1887 history of Kentucky Fry supplied details concerning the death of Zollicoffer. In it he stated that he did fire the first shot, but he did not know if his was the fatal one. 116

¹¹⁵The New York Times, Cincinnati Commercial, and Louisville Journal credit Fry with Zollicoffer's death.

¹¹⁶W. H. Perrin, J. H. Battle, G. C. Kniffin, Kentucky, A History of the State (Louisville, 1888), 393.

Nevertheless, tradition attributes Zollicoffer's death to Fry. Regardless of who actually killed Zollicoffer, he died, as one chronicler put it, "under peculiar circumstances," and his loss was a staggering blow to the morale of the Confederate troops engaged in battle, a disaster from which they never recovered. 117

News of Zollicoffer's death spread like wildfire through the Confederate ranks. With the battle raging, Crittenden sought to rally his stunned men and break through the Union line. Walthall's and Battle's regiments charged across the field with bayonets fixed, but Fry's men stood their ground and poured volley after volley into the Southern ranks. The fence Fry used earlier to issue his oratorical decree became the only object that separated the Union and Confederate armies. Hand to hand combat was commonplace, as bayonets were thrust through the rail fence and arms were wrestled away on both sides.

Meanwhile on the left, Thomas arrived finally to direct the Federal troops, the delay being attributed by some at his inability to get into his new uniform. Thomas immediately regrouped the 10th Indiana and ordered a bayonet charge upon the Confederates stationed by the Mill Springs road. Thomas then sent forward the 9th Ohio, under the command of Major Gustavus Kammerling, to support the Indiana troops, in an attempt to neutralize the Confederate left

¹¹⁷ Mark M. Boatner, III, The Civil War Dictionary (New York, 1959), 319.

and possibly turn their flank. Thomas then rode over to Fry's troops in the center. Upon viewing the determined stand made by the 4th Kentucky, he sent Van Cleve's 2d Minnesota forward to occupy a gap between Fry and Kise. Thomas' last maneuver was the placement of a battery of guns and the bringing up of three additional units; the 12th Kentucky, under the command of Colonel W. A. Haskins, and the 1st and 2nd Tennessee regiments, under the commands of Colonels Robert Byrd and J. P. T. Carter, respectively. The newly arrived Union troops took up a position on the extreme eastern edge of the battlefield and applied pressure on the Confederate right flank. Crittenden tried to balance the use of Federal artillery by ordering Captain A. M. Rutledge forward with two guns along the road, but the use of artillery by both sides proved wholly ineffective.

Momentum shifted upon Thomas' arrival, and the Yankees started a spirited charge. The Confederate left wing, though reenforced by the 27th Tennessee, led by Lieutenant Colonel T. C. H. Miller, was unable to resist the 9th Ohio's push through the woods, and the Confederate left flank collapsed. Panic and confusion erupted throughout the entire Confederate line, which wavered and then fell back, unable to resist the Union troops any longer. It was ten o'clock.

Crittenden tried to regroup his men but confusion, disorder and chaos had engulfed the Southerners. Haversacks filled with corn and bacon, discarded by the panic-stricken Confederates, were found by Union troops along the Mill

Springs road. 118 One last valiant stand was made by the 28th Tennessee, under the command of Colonel Powell, but after he was wounded, that line collapsed as well, and the Yankees took up pursuit of the fleeing Southerners. Union casualties were 39 killed and 297 wounded, while Confederate losses were 125 killed, 309 wounded, and 99 missing. 119

The brunt of the Confederate offensive had been borne by Walthall's and Battle's regiments, which sustained 287 casualties, almost one-half of the Confederate total.

Although the Confederates actually engaged more men than the Federals in a concentrated attack upon the Union center, they were unable to break through the Federal ranks. One possible reason was the untimely fall of Zollicoffer, but perhaps the most telling factor was the armaments of the opposing sides. The great majority of Southern troops carried flintlock muskets, while others had only percussion squirrel rifles or double-barrel shotguns. In a continuous mist, these flintlocks were fired with increasing difficulty or could not be fired at all. On the other hand, Thomas' men for the most part were equipped with Enfield, Sharp, or Spencer rifles, more modern weapons which could carry shot

¹¹⁸ R. M. Kelley, "Holding Kentucky For the Union," in Robert U. Johnson and Clarence C. Buel, eds., Battles and Leaders of the Civil War (4 vols., New York, 1956; first published 1887-88), I, 390.

¹¹⁹ OR., Ser. I, Vol. VII, 82, 108.

¹²⁰ Young, "Zollicoffer's Oak," 166, 168; OR., Ser. I,
Vol. VII, 82, 108.

at least a half mile. 121 The superiority of arms proved to be a decided advantage for the Union side. Another element which contributed to the Union victory was the fact that Thomas commanded several Kentucky regiments, defending their own soil, while Crittenden's forces were composed of units from throughout the South. 122

Crittenden and the remnants of his army returned to Beech Grove late in the afternoon over the same muddy road they had trudged only hours earlier. Thomas followed close behind but was unable to reach the Confederate intrenchments and organize his men for a final assault before darkness fell. He did, however, establish a battery of artillery and opened fire, not on the enemy within their breastworks, but on the Noble Ellis, the small steamer used by the Confederates for transportation across the river.

Crittenden correctly sized up his situation. "With the morale of the army impaired by the action of the morning and the loss of what cooked rations had been carried to the field, I deemed an immediate crossing of the Cumberland necessary." 123 Under the cover of darkness, the Confederates withdrew to the southern bank in the span of six hours, midnight to dawn. It is well to remember that the preceeding day Crittenden wrote Johnston explaining the

¹²¹ Young "Zollicoffer's Oak," 167; McMurtury, "Zolli-coffer," 312; Myers, Zollie Tree, 73.

¹²² Speed, Union Cause in Kentucky, 195.

¹²³OR., Ser. I, Vol. VII, 109.

need for battle because the river could not be crossed.

But, in fact, he accomplished the task of transporting a defeated, demoralized force across the flooded Cumberland at night. Thus, it seems that the river was passable for men, and Crittenden could have moved back to Mill Springs whenever he wished, avoiding the resounding defeat.

As daylight neared, panic once again swept through the remaining Confederate forces at Beech Grove. Tents were left standing, blankets, clothes, cooking utensils, wagons, horses, artillery, and many of the wounded were abandoned. The Confederates were not even able to destroy their papers, some of which indicated the disagreement emerging from Crittenden's council of war. 124 Soldiers crammed onto the already overloaded flatboats while others tried to swim the flooded Cumberland. With the first light of January 20 emerging on the horizon, Thomas' Parrott guns opened fire on the Noble Ellis, making its last trip to Mill Springs, and Union infantry stormed Beech Grove. Crittenden watched from the southern bank as the remnants of his nine infantry regiments, four battalions and two companies of cavalry, and portions of two artillery companies retreated southward; the rest of his command was lost. 125

Although the Yankees had achieved a brilliant victory at Logan's Cross Roads, the most disasterous defeat the

¹²⁴Pirtle Journal, January 24, 1862; Cincinnati Commercial, January 20, 1862, quoted in Moore, ed., Rebellion Record, IV, 44; OR., Ser. I, Vol. VII, 76.

^{125&}lt;sub>OR.</sub>, Ser. I, Vol. VII, 110.

Confederacy had yet experienced, it was nevertheless, inconclusive, since Crittenden escaped with the majority of his force. Thomas, when asked by Fry why he did not demand a surrender from Crittenden the night before, replied, "Hang it Fry, I never once thought of it." Thomas reasoned that Kentucky's sentiments regarding Union or Confederacy were still somewhat divided, and the complete dispersion of Southern troops from Kentucky soil was the best method of securing the state for the Union. 127

Accounts of the battle of Mill Springs of Logan's Cross Roads soon filled newspapers across America, with the New York Times calling the engagement "The Most Brilliant Victory of the War." In fact, Johnston first learned of the disasterous defeat by reading a January 22 issue of the Louisville Courier. These varying newspaper accounts raised pertinent questions concerning Zollicoffer's position at Beech Grove and Crittenden's futile attack on Thomas. The Louisville Daily Journal published a letter from Colonel Green Clay, U. S. A., in which he declared Zollicoffer's camp a strong position, whose intrenchments could have held off 30,000 troops, and Beech Grove's winter

¹²⁶ Kelley, "Holding Kentucky," I, 391.

¹²⁷ Myers, Zollie Tree, 110.

¹²⁸ New York Times, January 22, 1861. Accounts of the battle from the Cincinnati Commercial, Louisville Courier, Nashville Banner and Tuscumbia Constitution are quoted in Moore, ed., Rebellion Record, IV, 34-49.

quarters sufficient for 15,000 men. 129 The New York Times reported that Beech Grove was "beautifully intrenched" with excellent winter quarters and asked the question, "Why then the attack? 130 Crittenden was commanding general, and in his opinion, an attack was not only in the best interests of his men, but if victorious, would thrust him into a very prominent position as well. For his actions, though, he became the object of sever criticism throughout the South.

After his defeat beyond Mill Springs, Crittenden was blasted by a torrent of scathing denunciations. The diary of Thomas R. R. Cobb, a prominent Georgia Congressman, contains the following entry on January 24, 1862;

We are all depressed this morning over the disaster at Somerset last Sunday. It is attributed entirely to a drunken, Godless General, who in a spree on Sunday morning led our troops to their destruction. Zollicoffer was a noble man and a fine officer. In the effort to redeem the day, I doubt not, he lost his life. 131

Letters poured into Richmond excoriating Crittenden.

J. G. M. Ramsey wrote President Davis on January 24 describing the Confederate force as "perfectly demoralized" and "refusing to serve under him." Ramsey redeemed Zollicoffer by focusing criticism on Crittenden, for "had Zollicoffer

¹²⁹Louisville Daily Journal, January 23, 1862; Frankfort Tri-Weekly Yeoman, January 25, 1862.

¹³⁰ New York Times, January 26, 1862.

¹³¹Diary of Thomas R. R. Cobb, January 24, 1862, Southern Historical Society Papers, XXVIII, 290. Numerous reports circulated that Crittenden was not sober on the day of the battle.

not been ordered to make that unwise advance all would now have been alright [sic]. The only salvation of the defeated army is to recall Crittenden and replace him.

..."132 Landon Hayes wrote Davis declaring that Crittenden's army was "utterly routed and demoralized....

Confidence is gone in the ranks and among the people. It must be restored. I am confident it cannot be done under Generals Crittenden and Carroll."133 Tennessee

Governor Isham Harris chided, "Crittenden can never rally troops [in] east Tennessee. Some other general must be sent there."134

In defense of his actions, Crittenden attributed the loss of the battle to the inferiority of arms and the untimely death of Zollicoffer, who was highly esteemed by his men. Crittenden reiterated the point that his actions were out of necessity, and "I ought not be held responsbile for that necessity. As to how I managed it, I have nothing further to say." Jefferson Davis, in his memoirs, for apparently self-serving reasons, supported Crittenden's explanation of the need for an attack. He further speculated that if all the troops had been in

¹³²OR., Ser. I, Vol. LII, Pt. II, 256.

¹³³ Ibid., Vol. VII, 849.

¹³⁴ Ibid.; Grady McWhiney, "Controversy in Kentucky: Braxton Bragg's Campaign of 1862," Civil War History, VI (March 1960), 7. Bragg specifically named Crittenden as unqualified for command.

¹³⁵ Davis, Rise and Fall, II, 21.

position at dawn, a concerted attack would have probably resulted in victory. He thought the strategy "not only defensible but commendable, and the affair to be ranked with one of the many brilliant conceptions of the war."

But Davis, seemingly unwilling to take a stand, also refrained from chastising Zollicoffers's decision to divide his forces along the Cumberland. "General Zollicoffer may have well believed that he could better resist the crossing of the Cumberland by removing to the right bank rather than removing to the left." 136

The myriad of acrimonous statements demanded action by Richmond officials, and Confederate Secretary of War Judah P. Benjamin inquired of Johnston his opinion on relieving Crittenden from command. Johnston thought this too harsh a punishment for losing a small battle in Kentucky, but the Confederate hierarchy censured Crittenden and kept him virtually under arrest for a year, at which time he resigned his commission.

Buell called the battle one of the most important that occurred during the war, the first large scale Union victory. 137 Johnston wrote that the defeat opened east Tennessee to Union invasion, or, if Buell desired, an

¹³⁶ Ibid., 21-23. Davis stated that he was dissatisfied with the outcome but could not fault Crittenden's motives.

^{137&}lt;sub>OR.</sub>, Ser. I, Vol. XVI, 25; "Statement of Major General Buell, May 5, 1862," in Review of the Evidence Before the Military Commission Appointed by the War Department (Washington, 1863), 3.

attack on Nashville. The Federal victory did indeed open a gap in the line of Confederate defense across Kentucky, but Thomas did not advance. He was ordered to concentrate next on Bowling Green. The Federals, satisfied with the victory they had achieved on Logan's farm, sought to secure other objectives, one of which was Bowling Green. They understood better than Crittenden the value of an active defense.

Two questions remain to be answered. If Zollicoffer had lived and the Confederates had defeated Thomas' forces, would his choice for an intrenched position at Beech Grove have been vindicated? Second, since the Confederate attack failed, was it Zollicoffer's or Crittenden't defeat?

IV. THE SKIRMISH AT MIDDLE CREEK

On November 24, 1861, Major General George B. Crittenden assumed command of what he labeled the "Eastern District of Kentucky." 138 Crittenden's use of this geographic terminology was only a matter of personal interpretation, but to Brigadier General Humphrey Marshall it was a slap in the face. With Crittenden being a superior officer, Marshall's independent command in eastern Kentucky was in jeopardy and as a matter of personal pride, he tendered his resignation.

The day following his letter of resignation, Marshall directed Colonel William Stuart, newly appointed to Marshall's command, not to report to him at Pound Gap. Stuart should wait for other instructions from Crittenden at Knoxville. 139 However, in early December Marshall received a letter from his old political ally, Confederate Vice President Alexander Stephens. Stephens wrote that it was not the intention of the Confederate War Department to assign Marshall's command to Crittenden, adding that he should still report only to General Albert S. Johnston. Stephens knew Marshall's

¹³⁸oR., Ser. I, Vol. LII, Pt. II, 219.

¹³⁹Humphrey Marshall to William Stuart, December 15, 1861, William Dabney Stuart Papers (Virginia Military Institute, Lexington, Virginia).

As part of the Federal advance in early December, 1861, to secure Kentucky for the Union, 3,000 troops occupied Louisa, 45 miles north of Prestonburg. Marshall saw the potential threat these troops posed and decided to move his force of 2,500 forward to meet them. Union leaders re-

wed reports of the Confederate advance, but once again ted that Marshall, having been previously defeated at fivy Mountain, would risk a major engagement with his small force. 142

The Federal commmander of the troops at Louisa was

Colonel James A. Garfield. A native of Ohio, Garfield had

served in the Ohio Senate where his fluent and persuasive

speeches had propelled him into political prominence. With

¹⁴⁰ Alexander Stephens to Humphrey Marshall, December 6, 1861, Humphrey Marshall Papers (The Filson Club).

¹⁴¹Humphrey Marshall to George Crittenden, December 14, 1861, Humphrey Marshall Papers (The Filson Club).

¹⁴¹ Archibald Means to John Means, December 10, 12, 1861, Means Family Papers (Special Collections, University of Kentucky).

the outbreak of war, Garfield enlisted, and, due to his oratorical ability, was sent south to recruit men for Buell's army. His penchant for reading books on military tactics somewhat compensated for his lack of a formal military education, and he soon found himself in charge of troops battling for control of the Sandy Valley. 143

Continuing to move forward towards Garfield, Marshall stopped and in late December fortified Paintsville, only 60 miles south of the Ohio River. Marshall reasoned that Garfield would have to march on this small eastern Kentucky town before moving any further south or risk having a Confederate army in his rear which could strike central Kentucky or even Cincinnati. 144 Garfield chose to confront Marshall, and as December closed he moved his troops to George's Creek, only ten miles north of the Confederate position.

Marshall, continuing to fortify Paintsville, grew alarmed that he might soon have to face a Union army nearly double that of his 2,500 Confederates. Scouting reports placed another large Union force moving eastward from Mount Sterling to Paintsville. Although he wanted to achieve a great victory in eastern Kentucky, Marshall could hardly afford to battle a vastly superior army, and his options were few. He could either move out of his intrenchments and attack Garfield before the combination occurred and then

¹⁴³warner, Generals in Grey, 166-67; Malone, ed., Dictionary of American Biography, VII, 145.

^{144&}lt;sub>OR.</sub>, Ser. I, Vol. V, 1009.

face the other force, or withdraw to the defensive confines of the Cumberland Mountains and wait for a better opportunity to strike. Garfield made Marshall's decision for him.

On January 7, the Union commander sent small detachments of infantry forward to confront and outflank Marshall, hoping to lure the Confederates out for a fight. But Marshall opted for an immediate withdrawal southward. He needed a better defensive position to battle the Federal troops. If Garfield chose to follow the Confederates, rather than wait for the junction of Union troops, Marshall thought that he could possibly catch Garfield in an ambush.

Garfield did not wait for the additional men. Instead he pressed his troops southward through Paintsville to the mouth of Abbott Creek. He suspected Marshall had intrenched another mile up this small stream. Therefore, the Union army crossed over to Middle Creek to attack Marshall from the flank and rear, while Union cavalry attacked the Confederate front. However, as Garfield's forces crept up the narrow and winding road by Middle Creek, gunfire came from the mountains above. Marshall's men were not across Abbott Creek, but had fortified a position in the ridges above Middle Creek. Marshall had set a deadly trap for Garfield, but the Confederates were overly anxious to spring it and premature gunfire disclosed the ambush. Garfield withdrew immediately and regrouped his men. It was ten o'clock in the morning.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., Vol. VII, 30.

Middle Creek was a narrow yet rapid mountain stream. Recent rains had caused a substantial rise in its elevation and made the surrounding terrain a quagmire. The only passable road in the area was the one which Garfield's troops used to advance. It was rocky, only ten feet wide with abrupt edges, one falling off into the creek, the other cutting into the steep and rocky mountainside. 147

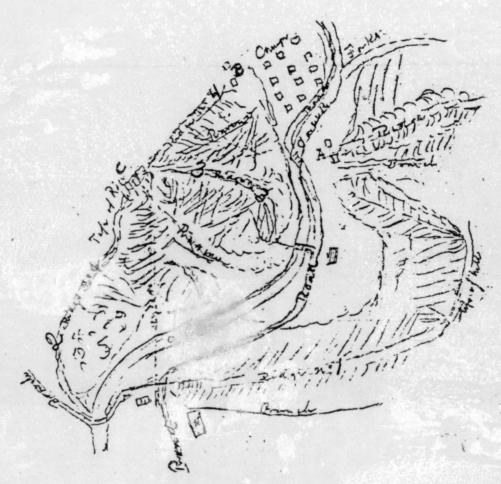
By noon, intense gunfire had engulfed the field. Marshall fired on the Union forces from two guns positioned in a gorge of the left fork of the creek, supported by two dismounted cavalry companies. This battery commanded the road up which the Federals had advanced. Across the creek, nestled in a hillside ridge, was the 5th Kentucky Infantry, commanded by Colonel John Williams, and the 29th Virginia Infantry, led by Colonel A. C. Moore. Directly above them, on another ridge which formed an acute angle, was the 54th Virginia Infantry, under the command of Colonel Robert Trigg, and two cavalry companies. Another battery of two guns located on this ridge was also able to sweep the entire field.

Garfield positioned his men on a long ridge opposite Middle Creek. To ascertain the location and strength of Marshall's men, Garfield ordered a cavalry charge. 148 But the Federals were quickly driven off by the artillery and

¹⁴⁶Crowe-Carraco, The Big Sandy, 39; OR., Ser. I, Vol. VII, 47.

¹⁴⁷ Balch, Life of Garfield, 157.

^{148&}lt;sub>OR.</sub>, Ser. I, Vol. VII, 30-31.



Ridge No. 1---Where Garfield positioned his men

Ridge No. 2---Point up which Union troops advanced late in the day

Ridge No. 3---Point up which first Union advance was made

Ridge No. 4---Point behind which Marshall made his camp

Point A------Confederate battery of two guns, bearing on road

Point B------Confederate battery of two guns, bearing on road

Point C------The highest point of ridges 2,3,4

Archibald Means to John Means, January 14, 1862, Means Family Papers (Special Collections, University of Kentucky).

fought the rest of the day on foot. With the Confederates intrenched on different ridges and firing at will, Garfield sent several infantry regiments across the road and up the steep ascent to establish better position. But the numerous trees and rocks afforded the Confederates excellent defensive cover and Marshall's men poured several volleys into the Union ranks, forcing them to retreat.

As more Union troops were brought up and the firing increased, Marshall deployed a piece of his reserve artillery to fire on Garfield's exposed right flank. Although only one piece, it caused Garfield to send 120 men across the creek to silence it. But Marshall withdrew the gun before the Federals could seize it, and the Union troops were forced to seek shelter from Confederate volleys.

In the late afternoon Garfield sent another cavalry charge up the road to draw the fire of the 5th Kentucky and 29th Virginia. At generally the same time, he sent 400 men around the base of the hills to the left, hoping to encircle the Confederate position. But darkness fell before the move was completed, with its success of failure remaining in coubt.

Before nightfall, Marshall observed a movement of men to the north. Their starred and striped banner revealed that they were the earlier anticipated Union reinforcements for Garfield coming from Mount Sterling. Not knowing their strength, Marshall decided not to risk another engagement

and he withdrew to Piketon that night. 149 Garfield did not pursue Marshall, for his troops were fatigued, hungry and suffered from exposure. He returned to Prestonburg to await supplies and further reinforcements before following. 150

Both Union and Confederate forces suffered few casualties in the skirmish at Middle Creek. Official reports indicate that the Confederates lost 11 killed and 15 wounded in the fight, while Union casualties were 2 killed and 25 wounded. The outcome of the skirmish was indecisive. The entire fight had been a standoff, with both sides retreating at day's end, yet each claiming victory. The result was perhaps summed up best by a Bath County resident: "The South claims victory, the North admits no defeats." 152

Marshall had good defensive position in the ridges of the mountain, with a crossfire of artillery and infantry on the road below. The relative lack of Union casualties was once again due to the inferiority of arms with which the Confederates were equipped. Garfield

¹⁴⁹Balch, Life of Garfield, 166.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 167; Archibald Means to John Means, January 14, 1862, Means Family Papers (Special Collections, University of Kentucky). This letter contains an excellent description of Middle Creek and the dispersion of troops.

^{151&}lt;sub>OR.</sub>, Ser. I, Vol. VII, 29, 31, 56.

¹⁵²J. and Sallie Arnold to Lee McGinnis, January 25, 1862, Miscellaneous Papers (Special Collections, University of Kentucky).

knew that if he could hold Marshall in check, the additional men coming from Mount Sterling would give him a greater number of troops, and an increased chance of success. During the fighting, therefore, he attempted no major offensive moves, unwilling to senselessly risk losing men against an intrenched foe. A Union soldier in Garfield's army, Archibald Means, wrote that the Federals were extremely lucky to have escaped Marshall's deadly trap. 153

After a three day march southward, covering only 16 miles, the Confederates arrived at Martin's Mill on Beaver Creek. The Mill was the nearest point where Marshall's weary soldiers could obtain badly needed provisions. As they continued to retreat, Marshall tried to present a promising outlook to Richmond officials. He asked for additional men to increase his infantry to 5,000 and cavalry to 1,500 for the purpose of driving to Lexington. His request was denied, and he was ordered to fall back to Pound Gap and await further instructions. 154 His lack of effectiveness in eastern Kentucky obviously had tempered the support he once had in the War Department.

By February, 1862, Garfield was once again ready to take the offensive against Marshall's forces encamped at Pound Gap. But a six inch snowfall fell, covering the

¹⁵³Archibald Means to John Means, January 24, 1862, Means Family Papers (Special Collections, University of Kentucky).

^{154&}lt;sub>OR.</sub>, Ser. I, Vol. VII, 57.

already almost impassable roads and causing Garfield to halt at Piketon. The minute provisions found in the Sandy Valley during winter could not sustain an army of any size, and the inclement weather only made the situation worse. The circumstances were so bad at Pound Gap that Marshall's men had already exhausted their bread supply and had little else to eat. Moreover, they were not equipped with adequate clothing for the winter, such as gloves, blankets, or overcoats. They had, instead, received cotton clothing from the Confederate commissary in western Virginia. In a stirring speech to his men, Marshall said the cotton pants were woven out of the finest quality "Southern wool," with which many Kentuckians were obviously not acquainted. Privately, Marshall said "the lie stuck in my throat" while he spoke to his troops. 157

By early March, a break in the winter storms allowed Garfield to ready his men for the move. Pound Gap was an irregular opening in the Cumberland Mountains, 45 miles southeast of Piketon. Major J. B. Thompson, the Confederate commander at this mountain pass, had erected a large breastwork across the narrow road leading through the gap. 158

Upon viewing the Confederate defenses, Garfield decided to

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 898.

¹⁵⁶Edward O. Guerrant, "Marshall and Garfield in Eastern Kentucky," in Johnson and Buel, eds. <u>Battles and Leaders</u>, I, 394.

¹⁵⁷ Humphrey Marshall to Alexander Stephens, February 22, 1862, Humphrey Marshall Papers (The Filson Club).

¹⁵⁸ Balch, Life of Garfield, 173.

send a cavalry force of 200 up the road as a demonstration, while 600 infantry crept along a steep mountainside path, on the right of the Confederates.

Marshall's scouts reported the Union advance on March 15, adding that they were still a good day's march from the Confederate position. Another snow fell on the morning of the March 16, inducing the Confederates to believe that the Federal attack would be postponed. But at nine o'clock in the morning, Garfield ordered his cavalry to attack up the road. The snow did not hinder the cavalry, but it did slow the infantry who were travelling over treacherous ground. They were not in position for the combined attack before the Union cavalry drew fire. After a brief but intense skirmish, the Confederates forced the Union cavalry to fall back. The action in front, however, had succeeded in diverting the Southerners' attention away from their right flank, and the Federal infantry moved within firing range before being detected. Thompson removed his front line troops from behind the breastwork to meet the advancing Yankees. After several volleys, the Confederate line broke and the whole force fled into the ravines and undergrowth of the mountains behind them into western Virginia. The entire action took less than an hour. Garfield lost no men in the rout, while the Confederates lost 7 killed and wounded. 159

^{159&}lt;sub>OR.</sub>, Ser. I, Vol. X, Pt. I, 33.

Marshall's forces had suffered another humiliating defeat in eastern Kentucky at Pound Gap. Several months earlier Marshall's appointment to command an army in eastern Kentucky had been greeted with wild enthusiasm. But the Confederate commander had not led his troops to victory. Marshall commented that the loss of Pound Gap was not as important to the overall Confederate strategy in eastern Kentcuky as he had earlier thought. He considered Pound Gap indefensible and the entire area unfit for an army: no shelter from the winter elements, no food, no forage, and most of all, no sympathy for the Southern cause. 160 But he longed for another invasion of eastern Kentucky.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 35.

V. A NEW COMMANDER AND RENEWED HOPE FOR A CONFEDERATE KENTUCKY

By the end of March, 1862, both Confederate armies in eastern Kentucky had been forced to withdraw from the state. Crittenden's troops had marched into northeastern Tennessee, and Marshall's men had retreated into southwestern Virginia. The submission of Forts Henry and Donaldson in western Kentucky and the evacuation of Bowling Green in southcentral Kentucky left Union forces in complete control of the state. Johnston's Confederate line of defense across southern Kentucky had collapsed.

The debacle on Logan's farm was a staggering blow to the Confederacy. Jefferson Davis even contemplated breaking up the Army of Eastern Tennessee for morale purposes. Instead, he decided to leave the unit intact, but to replace Crittenden. On March 8, 1862, Major General Edmund Kirby Smith received orders to proceed to Knoxville and assume command of the Confederate troops there. 161 A West Point graduate, Smith had served with distinction in the Mexican war, earning two brevets. Resigning his commission in March, 1861, he served as General J. E. Johnson's Chief

¹⁶¹ OR., Ser. I, Vol. X, Pt. II, 303.

of Staff and was also a brigade commander at First Bull Run^{162}

Smith's arrival in east Tennessee could not have come at a more crucial time. Union Generals Thomas and Schoepf, after combining their armies, were threatening Cumberland Gap. Buell was also moving southward into middle Tennessee with his main army. By the end of March, Thomas and Schoepf had reached Cumberland Ford. They sent Colonel Samuel P. Carter forward with skirmishers to drive in the Confederate pickets. Union artillery also opened fire on the Southerners. Colonel James Rains, Confederate commander at Cumberland Gap, vowed to "resist to the last," and with his intrenched rifleman and artillery batteries, returned the fire. The fight for Cumberland Gap began. 163

From his headquarters in Abington, Virginia, in March, Humphrey Marshall wrote General Robert E. Lee and Confederate President Jefferson Davis concerning the possibility of another advance into Kentucky. Both men agreed that a successful advance would bring about very desirable results, but added that Marshall would have to recruit his own men. None could be spared from Virginia. 164 Marshall began implementing his plan by issuing a call for militia from the counties of western Virginia. Several weeks of recruiting,

^{162&}lt;sub>Malone</sub>, ed., <u>Dictionary of American</u> <u>Biography</u>, X, 424; Boatner, <u>Civil War Dictionary</u>, 769-70.

¹⁶³ OR., Ser. I, Vol. X, Pt. II, 357.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 321-22.

however, enlisted only 500 men, far short of the number he needed to combat Garfield. Combining the new recruits with Marshall's entire command, the Army of Eastern Kentucky numbered less than 2,000 men.

Garfield was still in the Sandy Valley, keeping a watchful eye on Marshall. In March, however, he received orders to move his army to Bardstown where it would become the Seventh Division of the Army of the Ohio, commanded by Brigadier General George W. Morgan. 165 Garfield and Morgan would then combine with the other Federal forces at Cumberland Ford, with Morgan being the ranking Union officer, and overrun the Confederates at Cumberland Gap.

With the arrival of the additional Union forces in April, a large scale attack on Cumberland Gap appeared imminent. However, Morgan delayed in advancing his troops when he viewed Cumberland Gap. He called the Confederate defenses "the strongest position I have ever seen except Gilbrator [sic]." Only after he was absolutely sure all troops were in place, would he implement his plan of attack. By assaulting the front and left flank of the Gap, encircling Rains' position, Morgan hoped to force a Confederate retreat.

General Kirby Smith realized the gravity of the situation. Not only did the Federals outnumber his forces almost two to one, but also he believed that Rains could not hold his

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 360.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 157.

position against a Union flanking movement. Smith needed additional men. His best hope for reinforcements lay in the Confederate army under Humphrey Marshall in western Virginia. But on May 3, Smith received a telegram from Marshall saying his effective force was less than 1,000 men, whose condition was "deplorable." Smith could not, therefore, expect any help from Marshall. 167

Not only did Marshall balk at joining Smith's command, but his preoccupation with an independent army dictated his own maneuvers. Less than a week after his telegram to Smith, Marshall marched his "deplorable" men northward from Abington to meet an advancing Union column in western Virginia. The Federals were led by Brigadier General Jacob D. Cox, who was sent to seize the Lynchburg-Knoxville rail-road. The opposing forces met at Princeton, Virginia, on May 13. In a small but intense skirmish, the Confederates forced a Union retreat at day's end, the first clear cut victory for Marshall. 168

Smith's Army of East Tennessee consisted of less than 7,000 men, as compared to 11,000 Federals with Morgan. 169
Under these circumstances, Smith's options were few. He could stand and fight against overwhelming odds and risk being cut off, or he could withdraw and hope that additional

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 77.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., Vol. XII, Pt. 3, 200; Leeland Hathaway Diary, Leeland Hathaway Recollections (The Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina), 58.

¹⁶⁹ OR., Ser. I, Vol. X, Pt. II, 556.

men and equipment would arrive to check the Federal advance. On May 29, Archibald Means, in Garfield's army stationed at Cumberland Ford, reported that none of the Confederate tents could be seen atop Cumberland Gap. He continued, "We have pickets in a high mountain who could see the enemy's tents and camp up till last night. But today neither men or [sic] tents can be seen." 170

Morgan had been cautious in his advance on Cumberland Gap. Although it seemed the Southerners had retreated,
Morgan reasoned that it could be a ploy to draw the Federals into another ambush, the tactic that had become so popular in the eastern Kentucky mountains. He waited for several days before advancing. On June 13, when a dense cloud of smoke rose above Cumberland Gap, Morgan suspected that Smith had burned new timber for a smoke screen to prevent any rapid Union movement to overtake the fleeing Confederates. After delaying two days, Morgan readied his men for the attack, and they charged up the steep sides of Cumberland Gap to whatever fate awaited them.

When the Federals reached the outskirts of the Confederate defenses, they found no opposition. The Confederates had begun their retreat several days earlier and the last of their force escaped only hours before the Union assault troops scaled the mountainside. Morgan later boasted that "after two weeks of maneuvering, we have

¹⁷⁰ Archibald Means to John Means, May 29, 1862, Means Family Papers (Special Collections, University of Kentucky).

taken the American Gilbrator [\underline{sic}] without the loss of a single life."

As Smith fell back to Knoxville, he learned that Humph-rey Marshall had submitted his resignation once again. This time it was accepted. On June 19, 1862, Marshall announced to his troops that circumstances beyond his control compelled the resignation. 173

The circumstances surrounding Marshall's second resignation undoubtedly stemmed from the same reasons as his first—his obsessions with an independent army and an invasion of Kentucky. With Smith falling back to Knoxville and in desperate need of additional men, Marshall realized that his army would probably be sent to join Smith. Marshall's independent army and plans for another invasion would be lost. This Marshall could not accept, and he submitted his resignation.

Marshall had expected to be the dominate Confederate leader in eastern Kentucky. Following his retreat into Virginia, however, Marshall's small independent army simply did not figure prominently in Confederate strategy. Marshall was, in the eyes of many Richmond officials, an obese, egotistical politician, whose value lay in securing eastern Kentucky for the Confederacy at the outbreak of war. In

¹⁷¹OR., Ser. I, Vol. X, Pt. II, 556.

¹⁷² Ibid., Vol. X, Pt. II, 604.

¹⁷³Humphrey Marshall Proclamation, June 19, 1862, Humphrey Marshall Papers (The Filson Club).

that he had failed. By the summer of 1862, Marshall's lengthy letters requesting additional men and equipment had grown intolerable. His resignation was gladly accepted.

By the end of June, Morgan had not advanced any farther south than Cumberland Gap. Smith requested and received several additional infantry regiments to bolster his force to 15,000 men. 174 But Buell's army was moving slowly across middle Tenness towards Chattanooga and Smith needed still more men to check Buell's advance, regain the initiative, and retake Cumberland Gap. The army Smith needed was in Tupelo, Mississippi, under the command of General Braxton Bragg. On July 24, Smith asked for Bragg's cooperation in a "brilliant sommer campaign." Smith added, "I will not only co-operate

by you, but will cheerfully place my command under you,

and ject to your order. 175 After consulting with Davis,

Bragg soon moved his army to Chattanooga.

Smith's ultimate goal was an invasion of Kentucky.

Jefferson Davis supported Smith's plan and suggested that
to produce the "greatest effect" on the people of Kentucky
another Confederate force should move westward from Virginia.

He asked, "Where is Marshall? Now is the time for him to
go in."

¹⁷⁴ OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, Pt. II, 715.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 734.

¹⁷⁶Douglas Southall Freeman, ed., Lee's Dispatches:
Unpublished Letters of General Robert E. Lee, to Jefferson
Davis and the War Department of the Confederate States of
America, 1862-65 (New York, 1957), 39.

Marshall had resigned on June 19 when he thought his independent army and plans for an invasion were lost.

However, when Davis informed Marshall of Smith's plan for an offensive, Marshall applied for and received reinstatement on June 23. The only stipulation with the reassignment was that Marshall's army would be subject to Smith's orders when they combined in Kentucky. Marshall accepted the command and by the end of July was ready for another chance to control eastern Kentucky.

Bragg arrived at Chattanooga on July 30, and met with Smith the following day. After the meeting, Bragg said they agreed to "measures for mutual support and effective cooperation." Within two weeks the offensive began. The plan called for Smith to move on Cumberland Gap and force a Union retreat, then combine with Bragg to cut off Buell in middle Tennessee. 178

Whether or not Smith ever intended to cooperate with Bragg has been an object of controversy. On August 9, as he advanced on Cumberland Gap, Smith wrote Bragg that Morgan had at least one month's provisions, which would be much longer than they had anticipated for retaking the Gap. Smith suggested, therefore, that he bypass Cumberland Gap and continue his march towards Lexington. Morgan

¹⁷⁷William Preston Johnston to wife, July 22, 1862, Johnston Family Papers (The Filson Club).

¹⁷⁸ OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, Pt. II, 741.

would then be forced to retreat. 179 Bragg approved of the plan, adding that he favored a move on Lexington rather than Nashville, as had been previously discussed. However, it would be at least two weeks before his army would be supplied for the move northward. Bragg also suggested that Marshall should move immediately to join Smith. 180

By the second week of August, Smith was at Cumberland Ford, with Marshall moving toward Piketon. However, the freedom Marshall had enjoyed in maneuvering his men in eastern Kentucky no longer existed. Smith ordered Marshall to halt at Piketon, giving him responsibility in the early days of the offensive to intercept Morgan's retreat from Cumberland Gap. Smith's goal was Lexington.

By the end of August, Smith neared the heart of the bluegrass region. Marshall was again in eastern Kentucky, and Bragg was moving northward from Chattanooga. The Confederate invasion of Kentucky had begun.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 748.

^{180&}lt;sub>Ibid., 749.</sub>

VI. ANALYSIS

With the outbreak of civil war in April, 1861, Kentucky occupied the precarious position of a neutral in the conflict. For the next five months Kentucky eschewed the appeals to join the fighting. But by September, movements by Confederate and Union armies forced a divided state to take to arms.

Secessionists in eastern Kentucky were hopeful that the armies of Humphrey Marshall and Felix Zollicoffer would control the area. But the counties of eastern Kentucky were largely Unionist in sentiment and offered little support for the South. From the opening skirmishes at West Liberty, Barboursville, and Ivy Mountain the Confederates were stopped in their advance. Following the defeats at Logan's Cross Roads and Middle Creek, the Confederate armies were forced to vacate eastern Kentucky.

Logan's Cross Roads was the major battle between Union and Confederate armies in eastern Kentucky during 1861-62. Zollicoffer's occupation of Mill Springs and his subsequent choice for an intrenched position across the Cumberland at Beech Grove were justified. In light of Schoepf's view that Beech Grove was an excellent defensive position, a valid question is why did Crittenden abandon Zollicoffer's defensive strategy?

The answer seems to lie in Crittenden's desire to develop his own strategy. Since Zollicoffer had already intrenched at Beech Grove, if Crittenden chose to remain there, it would only be a continuation of Zollicoffer's plan—not Crittenden's plan. This was important to Crittenden, who felt that he should immediately be in control of the situation. By ordering a withdrawal to Mill Springs, he countered Zollicoffer's previous actions. He would then proceed with a strategy of his own.

The overriding factor in Crittenden's need for a confrontation with Thomas was the extra time an attack would secure for transporting his men, supplies, and equipment across the Cumberland River. onceivable that Crittenden was uncertain as to what actually be done. Although the weather was season would have also hampered any operations Thomas would have ventured. At no time during early January, 1862, were the Union troops any closer to the Confederate army than ten miles, that being the distance from Beech Grove to Logan's Cross Roads. Since Crittenden was able to transport his men across the Cumberland in six hours after the battle, it is, therefore, conceivable that his entire army could have crossed the river. By moving his supplies and equipment across the Cumberland in late afternoon, and men at night, the entire Confederate army probably could have withdrawn to Mill Springs before Thomas arrived at Beech Grove. The Union army would have to travel over roads that the recent rains

had made a quagmire. Only a slow movement could have been made, if they would have attempted it at all.

If the Confederates had won the battle at Logan's Cross Roads, Zollicoffer's decision for a stand at Beech Grove probably would have been vindicated by historians. A principal reason for his move across the river was his hope that he could strike a scattered column of Union troops. In light of his desire for a stand in winter quarters, his nearly impregnable position at Beech Grove, his active defensive plans, and specifically Crittenden's tenuous excuse for the need of battle, the responsibility for the defeat falls to Major General George B. Crittenden.

Confederates in extreme eastern Kentucky were under the guidance of Humphrey Marshall. Marshall, also deeply involved in Confederate politics, threatened resignation when affairs conflicted with his plans. His obsession with an independent command no doubt created numerous headaches in Richmond. Marshall considered himself to be the leader of a Confederate eastern Kentucky, and he envisioned his army marching into Lexington, Frankfort, and Louisville. Always the politician, Marshall would not only use his advance to enhance his wartime reputation, but also to garner support for future elections in Kentucky.

From the beginning his command was a farce. Weighing over 300 pounds, Marshall proved incapable of a rigorous field campaign in the eastern Kentucky mountains. He did not win a single victory in Kentucky, and when his army

retreated into western Virginia in 1862, eastern Kentucky was cleared of Confederate forces.

Marshall hoped to play a large role in Bragg's invasion of Kentucky. However, when Smith ordered him to stop at Piketon to cut off Morgan's retreat, Marshall did not comply. Reasoning that Smith had no authority to issue orders since a combination of armies had not yet occurred, Marshall continued his march towards Lexington. When Morgan did indeed retreat from Cumberland Gap, Marshall did not intercept the Union army, which escaped north of the Ohio River.

It would have been very difficult to put together a trio of Confederate commanders less likely to cooperate then Bragg, Smith, and Marshall. A major characteristic they shared was their unwillingness to serve under anyone else. To deliver Kentucky to the Confederacy, a concerted movement on their part was crucial, yet each went his own separate way, following self-serving plans, dooming the invasion. The banner of personal glory was their ultimate reward. The failure of the Confederate invasion of 1862 forced Bragg, Smith, and Marshall to withdraw from Kentucky and, with the exception of a few minor skirmishes and raids into the state, left Unionists in firm control of Kentucky for the duration of the Civil War.

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1880-1901), 128 vols. No serious work on Civil War operations can be done without consulting this vast wealth of material. Although occasional gaps of information were evident, it is by far the greatest research tool for the Civil War historian. Relative to this project, the majority of information was found in Series I, Volumes IV and VII.

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Material relating to Marshall was also found in the William Dabney Stuart Papers (Virginia Military Institute Archives, Lexington, Virginia), and in the Charles Lanman Collection (The Filson Club). The Lanman Collection was an assemblage of autobiographical information of prominent Kentuckians.

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The fact that the Times often reprinted stories found in
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in this source. The New York <u>Tribune</u> and Woodford, Kentucky, <u>Pennant</u> were also documented from other sources. Kentucky newspapers which countered one another and were most helpful in this project were the pro-Southern Frankfort <u>Tri-Weekly Yeoman</u> and the pro-Union Louisville <u>Daily Journal</u>. As it might be expected with contemporary newspapers, they were filled with inaccuracies.

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Sources specifically dealing with eastern Kentucky for this period were rare. But information was obtained from Henry P. Scalf, Historic Floyd (Prestonburg, Kentucky, 1950). Carol Crowe-Carraco, The Big Sandy (Lexington, 1979), was also of considerable use. The most beneficial source was, however, Edward O. Guerrant, "Marshall and Garfield in Eastern Kentucky," in Battles and Leaders, I, 393-397, which detailed the struggles of Marshall and Garfield in the eastern Kentucky mountains.

Comprehensive works on the Civil War period of Kentucky history were also few. The best military study was Lowell H. Harrison, The Civil War in Kentucky (Lexington, 1975).

This work complements E. Merton Coulter, The Civil War and Reconstruction in Kentucky (Chapel Hill, 1926), which is a social, economic and political sutdy of the war in Kentucky. Also of help was Thomas Speed, The Union Cause in Kentucky,

1860-65 (New York, 1907), though definately biased.

Balance this with William Preston Johnston, The Life of

General Albert Sidney Johnston. For information related
to the struggle of Kentucky as a border state in the war,

Edward Conrad Smith, The Borderland in the Civil War (New
York, 1927), proved helpful.

General histories of Kentucky which contained useful information for this study were: W. H. Perrin, J. H. Battle, G. C. Kniffin, Kentucky, A History of the State (Louisville, 1888); Lewis and Richard Collins, History of Kentucky (Covington, 1874), 2 vols.; and Thomas D. Clark, A History of Kentucky (Lexington, 1960).