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Kirby Smith in Kentucky the Invasion of 1862

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KIRBY SMITH IN KENTUCKY
THE INVASION OF 1862

A Thesis

Presented to

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Western Kentucky University
Bowling Green, Kentucky

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements of the Degree
Master of Arts

by

Gary A. Donaldson

February 1977

KIRBY SMITH IN KENTUCKY
THE INVASION OF 1862

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KIRBY SMITH IN KENTUCKY; THE INVASION OF 1862

Gary A. Donaldson

February 1977

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Directed by: M.B. Lucas, Lowell H. Harrison, and J. Crawford Crowe

Department of History

Western Kentucky University

On September 25, 1861, Lieutenant General Edmund Kirby Smith reported to his new command at the Department of East Tennessee. It was a troubled command; Kirby Smith's insufficient army was pressed from the north by Brigadier General George Morgan, and from the west by Major General Don Carlos Buell. To save his command from certain defeat at the hands of the superior Union armies, Kirby Smith was able to convince General Braxton Bragg to move his army by rail to East Tennessee.

Through a series of political maneuvers, Kirby Smith obtained a portion of Bragg's army and entered Kentucky on August 14, 1862. Bragg, with the remainder of his army, was to follow. The plan was for the two Confederate armies to bring an indecisive Kentucky into the Confederacy, obtain Kentucky recruits, and combine to defeat Buell (who was of course obligated to defend Kentucky against the invading armies). At the same time, Major Generals Sterling Price and Earl Van Dorn were to move eastward from West Tennessee and capture Nashville--the South would be free of Union forces.

Kirby Smith moved rapidly northward, defeating a small Union force at Richmond Kentucky on August 30. He continued

on to capture Lexington and Frankfort on September 2 and 3. Bragg--with Buell closely behind--marched toward Bowling Green, and on to Munfordville, turning eastward off the Louisville road to Bardstown. Buell marched into Louisville on September 30 unopposed.

Not expecting Buell to leave Louisville for several weeks, Kirby Smith and Bragg delayed concentration to carry on the necessary administrative duties of occupying the state. But Buell was able to coordinate his forces and move out of Louisville in only three days. Buell's plan called for a feint to be sent toward Kirby Smith at Lexington to keep the two Confederate armies divided. The main Union army was to move in three parts, toward Bardstown. The plan was successful; the Confederate commanders were confused by the feint and remained divided. The Confederate main force at Bardstown retreated before the three pronged Union attack, taking a stand at Perryville on October 8. During the battle Bragg's army was able to push back a portion of the Union force, but--finding that they were severely outnumbered--the Confederates left the battlefield the next day. Kirby Smith remained in and around Frankfort, unable to coordinate his army with Bragg's.

Finding that Price and Van Dorn had been defeated at Corinth Mississippi, out of provisions, and unable to recruit, Bragg and Kirby Smith decided to abandon Kentucky. The two armies retreated from the state, arriving in East Tennessee the last of October.

CHAPTER ONE
IN EAST TENNESSEE

In July of 1861, during the Civil War's first major encounter, the arrival of a brigade of raw troops led by Brigadier General Edmund Kirby Smith aided in turning the tide at Manassas. His timely arrival led to presidential recognition and increased military status. Having recovered from a nearly fatal wound and recently married, Kirby Smith became a popular figure in Virginia; his wife was styled as the bride of the Confederacy as the couple ascended the Richmond social ranks.¹

While Kirby Smith was recovering from his wounds, he was being considered for a position in Jefferson Davis' reconstructed departmental system. The shift in structure, necessitated by a greater need for defensive planning, called for several new departments to be organized. Kirby Smith was, at first, considered to relieve General Braxton Bragg as defender of Pensacola Harbor, but the Unionist activities in eastern Tennessee demanded more immediate attention. On September 25, Lieutenant General Kirby Smith established his headquarters at Knoxville as commander of the Department of East Tennessee, the newest addition to Jefferson Davis' de-

1. Joseph H. Parks, General Edmund Kirby Smith, C.S.A. (Baton Rouge, 1954), 136-37; Dunbar Rowland, Jefferson Davis, Constitutionalist: His Letters, Papers and Speeches, (10 vols. Jackson, Miss., 1926), IV, 493. For an account of Kirby Smith's activities at Manassas, see Douglas Southall Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, A Study in Command, (3 vols. New York, 1942), I, 83-84.

partmental system.²

The Confederate departmental system was a complicated arrangement designed to organize the Confederacy into areas of defensive commands, with the eventual intention of localizing forces and logistics into a single area. The defense of the departmental areas was often accomplished through the use of districts or subdistricts to defend strategic locations, railroads or harbors. The theory yielded considerable autonomy to the various departmental commanders, making each commanding officer responsible for military planning and logistics within his department. Through such a system, the Richmond government hoped to be able to deal with the growing magnitude of the war.³

In the fall of 1861, General Albert Sydney Johnston replaced Major General Leonidas Polk as commander of the Department of the West. In January of the next year, Johnston's main focus of command was distributed along a line from Fort Donelson and Fort Henry in West Tennessee to Bowling Green, Kentucky, and on into eastern Kentucky. Outflanked by the Federal victories at Mill Springs, and Forts Henry and Donelson, the Confederates were forced to abandon this defensive line in order to deal more effectively with the advancing Federal armies.

Following the Shiloh defeat, Davis saw a need for reor-

2. The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (126 vols., Washington, 1880-1901), Ser. I, Vol. VII, 908. Hereafter cited as OR. Ibid., Vol. VI, 788-89; Parks, Kirby Smith, 155.

3. Thomas Lawrence Connelly and Archer Jones, The Politics of Command (Baton Rouge, 1973), 88-89.

ganization of the departmental system to accommodate the need for reinforcement and more efficient logistical planning. The Department of Alabama and West Florida was incorporated into the western department creating an extremely large command encompassing the states of Alabama, Mississippi, Middle and eastern Tennessee, in addition to parts of Georgia, Florida, and Louisiana. The new department retained its old name and was defended through its military organ, the Army of Tennessee. With Johnston's death at Shiloh, General P.G.T. Beauregard commanded the western department until June when he was removed for abandoning territory and replaced by Braxton Bragg.⁴

The attempt at consolidation in the West was somewhat reversed when Davis complicated the system by creating the Department of East Tennessee under Kirby Smith. The new department was to be independent in both command and logistics, but Davis suggested a certain amount of cooperation between Kirby Smith and the western department commanders. The East Tennessee command ranged along a defensive line from Cumberland Gap, through Knoxville and on to Chattanooga. The department was established to protect against a Federal advance into the Southeast, but restraint of Unionist activity and protection of the vital East Tennessee and Georgia Railroad were also to be given particular priority. The rail-

4. Ibid., 100-103; Stanley F. Horn, Army of Tennessee (Norman, Okla., 1955), 155; Kenneth P. Williams, Lincoln Finds a General; A Military Study of the Civil War (5 vols., New York, 1956), IV, 4-5.

road was a vital east-west link through the South, and had been repeatedly severed by the area's Unionist element. Richmond felt that a strong, gallant figure such as Kirby Smith could diminish such activity and organize the area for a cooperative military effort.⁵

The new commander had no desire to leave his command in Virginia, of which he later referred to as "the Halcyon days of my service." He was even more hesitant to take command of a weak defensive department in a disloyal region of the Confederacy. Although discontented in his new position, the strategic importance of the Department of East Tennessee soon became evident and he prepared to put his new command into order.⁶

Of the many problems to be dealt with in East Tennessee, the Unionist element was the most pressing. The new commander's initial impression was that they were "an ignorant, primitive people," dominated by the Federal army. Among the new commander's first acts were to force an oath upon the county officials, execute twenty bridge burners and declare martial law throughout the sector. Kirby Smith's first, seemingly

5. Thomas Lawrence Connelly, Army of the Heartland (Baton Rouge, 1967), 187; Connelly and Jones, Politics of Command, 55-56, 91-92, 106; OR., Ser. I, Vol. X, pt. 2, 303; Vol. VII, 257-58.

6. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XIV, pt. 3, 948; Parks, Kirby Smith, 156; Edmund Kirby Smith, "Kentucky Campaign Notes," Kirby Smith Papers (Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N.C.).

harsh, actions soon became more indulgent as many loyalists fled the area, and the new commander became more involved with the military activities of the department. In a proclamation of mid-April, Kirby Smith allowed those guilty of treasonable acts to take an oath to the Confederacy and, in having done so, be exonerated for past crimes. Kirby Smith later reported that his attempts to quell the treasonous activity in East Tennessee were greatly successful, citing the recruitment of at least two Confederate regiments from the region.⁷

With the local populace finally under a degree of control, the young commander could turn his attention to more pressing military responsibilities. In command of less than 8,600 troops, described by their commander as "a disorganized mob," Kirby Smith felt that the defense of his department was less than effective. In an attempt to hasten relief for his problem, Kirby Smith asked the War Department for an exchange of allegedly disloyal troops for men of unquestionable dependability. Men of disloyal character, it was felt, would be less active in pro-Confederate surroundings, and the request was sustained. The disloyal members of Kirby Smith's command were removed to the eastern theater, and in return, General Joseph E. Johnston forwarded three loyal regiments.⁸

7. OR., Ser. I, Vol. X, pt. 2, 385-86, 402; Ser. II, Vol. I, 881; Kirby Smith to wife, June 25, 1862, Kirby Smith Papers.

8. OR., Ser. I, Vol. X, pt. 2, 307-308, 385-86; pt. 1, 20-21; pt. 2, 397-98.

By mid-April, Kirby Smith's forces were still highly inadequate. The commander's April report listed Brigadier General Danville Leadbetter, commanding the Fifty-second Georgia brigade, with a total of 1,588 men. This force was listed as "unarmed," yet it was the major strength guarding Chattanooga. Brigadier General Carter Stevenson's Forty-second Georgia and Thirty-sixth Tennessee regiments were in occupation of Cumberland Gap with a force totaling 2,763, but were described as "badly armed." Listed in a similar manner were Brigadier General S.M. Barton's 1,618 Tennesseans, assigned to the defense of the headquarters at Knoxville. Other brigades were listed as "partly and badly armed," and were spread throughout the department engaged in various duties. The total present for duty was a meager 9,787.⁹

The Federal forces opposing Kirby Smith were not nearly as weak. In the western theater the Federal troops, under the command of Major General William Halleck, had concentrated at Corinth following the campaign which culminated in the battle of Shiloh. The Union forces were in control of Missouri, Middle Tennessee, northern Alabama, northern Mississippi and northern Arkansas. Also under Federal occupation were Memphis and the Mississippi River from St. Louis to Vicksburg. Halleck had taken advantage of activity in Virginia to divide his army, sending 24,000 men, under the command of Major General Don Carlos Buell, across northern

9. Ibid., pt. 2, 476.

Alabama into East Tennessee with the eventual objective of capturing Chattanooga, an obviously weak point in the Confederate defenses. In mid-June, Buell was issued orders that exhibited an intense Federal awareness of the weaknesses in the Confederate defensive line: "By moving on Chattanooga [you] are on a direct line to Atlanta. [Kirby] Smith must abandon East Tennessee or be captured."¹⁰ By June 29, the Federal army was at Huntsville, seriously threatening Chattanooga. Although Buell seemed an unstoppable threat to East Tennessee, Kirby Smith might not be forced to stand alone against such an army. Bragg, commanding 40,000 Confederates at Tupelo, might possibly be positioned to intercept Buell before the blue columns reached Chattanooga.¹¹

Kirby Smith's major concern was certainly for the overwhelming Federal force concentrating at Huntsville, but enemy activity in the northern sector of his department compelled the young commander to split the effective strength of his already inadequate force in the face of a two pronged attack. Under the command of Brigadier General George W. Morgan, a Federal attempt to outflank the Confederate stronghold at Cumberland Gap forced Kirby Smith to abandon the Chattanooga line temporarily to defend the northern extremity of his department. In an attempt to relieve pressure from Kirby

10. Ibid., Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 9. See also, pt. 1, 24, 30.

11. Ibid., pt. 1, 30-31.

Smith's advancing force, Morgan suggested to his superiors that a movement against Chattanooga would greatly aid his investment of Cumberland Gap.¹² Upon reaching the northern perimeter of his department, Kirby Smith was informed that a Federal detachment from Buell's column under the command of Major General O.M. Mitchell was seriously threatening Chattanooga. In a desperate attempt to hold the town, Kirby Smith sent reinforcements to the hardpressed Leadbetter, and informed Richmond of his perilous position. "The force from Middle Tennessee, acting in concert with that on the Kentucky line . . . places me in an unfavorable situation." Fearing for the loss of one of the two strategic points, the commander continued: "To concentrate at either . . . involves the abandonment of Cumberland Gap or Chattanooga."¹³

As nothing further developed on the Chattanooga line, Kirby Smith returned his troops to the defense of Cumberland Gap on June 2. Three days later, having received information that Mitchell was again striking at Chattanooga, he directed his forces southward, and en route received the encouraging news that reinforcements from Florida would soon join him. He arrived at Chattanooga in time to avert disaster, only to receive the disturbing news that Morgan had successfully outflanked the Cumberland Gap position. Disgruntled, Kirby Smith rushed aid to Stevenson, but before the reinforcements

12. Ibid., Vol. X, pt. 2, 204; Parks, Kirby Smith, 177-78.

13. OR., Ser. I, Vol. X, pt. 2, 596-97.

could produce an effect, Leadbetter hastily reported a third full scale threat before Chattanooga. Not sufficiently capable of defending both strategic ends of his line of defense, Kirby Smith resolved to abandon Cumberland Gap in favor of the more strategically important point at Chattanooga. To surrender Chattanooga was to abandon the only direct rail connection from the Southeast to the Department of the West and the Army of Northern Virginia. Federal control of Chattanooga would jeopardize Atlanta and much of the valuable Southeast. Cumberland Gap was important to the grand strategy of the Richmond authorities, but as the Confederate defensive line had been forced to move southward, Chattanooga possessed strategic priority.¹⁴

Although Morgan controlled the northern perimeter of the Department of East Tennessee, Kirby Smith felt more secure in the defense of Chattanooga. This, coupled with the arrival of the two Florida regiments, gave Kirby Smith the manpower and confidence needed to delay Buell's advance on Chattanooga.

During the difficult times in mid-July, Kirby Smith made several futile attempts to secure reinforcements. On July 12, he wired Brigadier General Humphrey Marshall--in command of the Department of Western Virginia--for aid in

¹⁴. Ibid., pt. 1, 905, 956-58; pt. 2, 597-98, 677-78, 682-84. For the importance of Chattanooga and the Southeast, see Frank Vandiver, Ploughshares Into Swords: Josiah Gorgas and Confederate Ordnance (Austin, 1952), 121-22; Robert C. Black III, Railroads of the Confederacy (Chapel Hill, 1952), 5-6, 181.

detering Morgan's investment of Cumberland Gap. The next day, Kirby Smith notified both the War Department and Beauregard of his needs. Richmond, though involved in more pressing affairs on the Virginia front, was sympathetic. Beauregard, expecting daily to meet superior forces in West Tennessee, answered that he could be of no significant assistance. On July 20, only five days following Kirby Smith's receipt of Beauregard's dispatch, Braxton Bragg was named as the new commander of the Department of the West.¹⁵ More sensitive than Beauregard to the importance of Chattanooga and East Tennessee, Bragg began specific plans to aid the Army of East Tennessee and its new commander.

One of Bragg's initial functions as commander of the western department was to dispatch Brigadier General Nathan B. Forrest to Kirby Smith's aid. Accompanied by only a small staff, Forrest's reassignment could not be considered an actual reinforcement but was intended to aid in the organization of an effective cavalry force in eastern Tennessee. In this endeavor, Forrest was eminently successful. Within one month, he had forged Kirby Smith's existing cavalry into an effective fighting force which struck silently and quickly at Buell's supply lines. Typifying the Confederate cavalry style, Forrest cut telegraph lines and rendered the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad nearly useless to Buell's advance. Forrest raided as far east as the outskirts of Nashville,

15. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 680-81, 695.

throwing the town and Governor Andrew Johnson into fits of panic. At the pinnacle of his successful ride, Forrest surprised the Federal garrison at Murfreesboro, capturing its 1,400 defenders on July 13.¹⁶ In his assignment to delay Buell's advance on Chattanooga, Forrest was characteristically successful.

Although somewhat confident in his defense against Mitchell's small force, Kirby Smith intensely feared the approach of Buell's entire army from Huntsville. Having only been delayed by Forrest, the Federals were again pushing forward, repairing the damaged Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad as they advanced. Kirby Smith frantically telegraphed Bragg that "an immediate re-enforcement of at least two brigades is necessary to insure" the defense of Chattanooga and East Tennessee.¹⁷

In further attempts to secure aid, Kirby Smith also notified the governor of Georgia, the War Department, and even President Davis of his needs. Joseph E. Brown, the governor of Georgia, was of some aid, sending two poorly armed regiments. Both Davis and the War Department were again sympathetic, but with the war focused in the East, they could do no more than ask Bragg to send relief if possible. To accommodate

16. J.R. Chumney, Jr., "Don Carlos Buell, Gentleman General," (doctoral dissertation, Rice University, 1964), 110; Robert Selph Henry, First With the Most: Forrest (Indianapolis, 1944), 87-91; OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 1, 35.

17. Black, Railroads, 180-81.

flanking strategy. This first attempt at mass movement of troops over a great distance by rail was not only successful but highly innovative. It led to more extended use of rail systems by both armies before the end of the war.¹⁹

Although not desiring the weak and defensive East Tennessee command, Kirby Smith, in his first few months in command, had proven himself successful. He was reasonably able to contain the pro-Union element within his department despite the delicacy of the situation. Although his position at Cumberland Gap had been turned, he was able to hold Chattanooga and the vital East Tennessee and Georgia Railroad against superior forces. With Bragg's rapid movement from Tupelo, Buell's advance had been halted, easing the continual strain on Chattanooga and the Southeast.

Beseiged by ambition and desire and having tired of defensive tactics, Kirby Smith was beginning to formulate additional plans. With Bragg at Chattanooga and his army considerably reinforced, Kirby Smith began offensive planning. In an exhibition of ambition and offensive desire, he wrote to his wife in early July of his coming reinforcements and his exaggerated ability to "carry the war into Africa."²⁰

19. Black, Railroads, 182.

20. Kirby Smith to wife, July 2, 1862, Kirby Smith Papers.

CHAPTER TWO

THE TRUE POLICY

In the early summer of 1862, the tide of the war appeared to be turning in favor of the southern cause. In the East, Union forces on the Peninsula were successfully out-maneuvered by Confederate forces under Robert E. Lee, who soon emerged as the outstanding military figure on the eastern front. "Stonewall" Jackson had ascended to prominence, as had the hard riding cavalymen under the command of J.E.B. Stuart. In the West, conditions were not as hopeful. The Confederate military effort at Shiloh had failed to halt continued Federal victories in the Mississippi Valley. With Union forces in occupation of parts of Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, Louisiana, Missouri, and Tennessee, the future of the Confederate cause in the West seemed dim. Of the many problems facing the Confederate western defenses, at that time, the problem of a strayed Kentucky was one of the most serious.

Kentucky had severely disappointed the Confederate government when it refused to secede in 1861. The state's failing attempt at neutrality and subsequent Unionist stand had denied the southern armies a defense line on the Ohio River, forcing them to take a stand farther to the south.¹ The former commander of the Kentucky state militia, Brigadier General Simon Bolivar Buckner, led in the opinion that the

1. E. Merton Coulter, The Civil War and Readjustment in Kentucky (Chapel Hill, 1926), 131.

Kentuckians were pro-southern and should be released from subjection. As Confederate commander of the Kentucky forces occupying Bowling Green in the fall of 1861, he issued an ineffectual proclamation asking for Confederate support from the state.² The commander in the West, Albert Sydney Johnston, issued a similar proclamation written by Jefferson Davis acknowledging Kentucky's proclaimed neutrality. With his army in occupation of the southern part of the state, Johnston reported that he had invaded Kentucky in self-defense and would drive the Federals from the state and retire himself. If, of course, the Kentuckians wished to "unite their fortunes with the Confederate states," they would be welcomed into the fold.³ In October, John C. Breckinridge, who had left his Senate seat to take up the Confederate cause, issued another proclamation comparing the state's position of neutrality to that of the "prostrate and bleeding Maryland."⁴ Invading from eastern Tennessee in December, 1861, General Felix Zollicoffer again offered Kentucky the opportunity to rally to the Confederate standard, to which there was little or no reaction.⁵ A fifth offer to join the rebellion was

2. OR., Ser. I, Vol. IV, 413-14; Arndt Stickles, Simon Bolivar Buckner; Borderland Knight (Chapel Hill, 1940), 70-91, 98.

3. OR., Ser. I, Vol. VI, 411-12, 420.

4. Frank M. Moore, ed., Rebellion Record: A Diary of American Events With Documents, Narratives, Illustrative Incidents, Poetry, Etc. (11 vols., New York, 1861-68), III, 257.

5. OR., Ser. I, Vol. VII, 787.

presented by Major General George B. Crittenden one month later, but again results were negligible.⁶

Still, Richmond continued to believe that Kentucky was being held in bondage. In November, 1861, a provisional government was established at Russellville, Kentucky, George W. Johnston was appointed governor, and the Confederate state capital was established at Bowling Green.⁷ Although this government was admitted into the Confederacy, it was of little significance as the Frankfort government continued its existence in the Federal structure. Seemingly satisfied that Kentucky was a member of the Confederacy, Davis, throughout the war, looked upon the state as being occupied against the will of the people. He continued to view the Kentucky provisional government as similar to the deposed government of Isham G. Harris of Tennessee, the true representative of the people, whose hearts were with the South.⁸ Therefore, as Davis continually looked to depose Andrew Johnson from behind his personal fortifications at Nashville, he nearly always approved any means of liberating the people of Kentucky. When Kirby Smith asked for the opportunity, Davis was positive in his answer.

In hopes of testing both Federal strength and Kentucky sentiment, John Hunt Morgan was sent into Kentucky during the

6. Ibid., Vol. LII, pt. 2, 250-52.

7. Coulter, Civil War and Readjustment, 138.

8. Rowland, ed., Davis, V, 313. Davis refers to "the liberation of Tennessee and Kentucky."

summer of 1862. Commanding only 900 men, he initiated a spectacular raid, driving halfway across the state. In only ten days, he was able to capture ten cities, numerous stores, and effectually disrupt Buell's supply lines between Louisville and Nashville.⁹

Morgan's successes caused much anxiety within the Federal ranks. Buell was forced to abandon the offensive at Chattanooga, and fall back to protect his supply lines.¹⁰ The obvious evidence of the inadequate military strength in Kentucky compelled Buell to detach additional troops under one of his best subordinates--Major General William Nelson--to reorganize the existing forces against further assault.¹¹ On July 13, Lincoln wrote Halleck of his concern over the embarrassing raids: "They are having a stampede in Kentucky. Please see to it."¹² Brigadier General Jeremiah Boyle, the Federal commander at Louisville, exaggerated the problem to Secretary of War William Stanton six days later: "The state is in imminent danger of being overrun If [Morgan] should succeed in a fight with our forces there is danger of

9. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 1, 767-68. For an account of Morgan's first Kentucky raid, see Cecil Fletcher Holland, Morgan and His Raiders (New York, 1942), 117-31.

10. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 1, 110, 158. Buell was forced to retreat. His force was concentrated at Dehard. Ibid., pt. 2, 207.

11. Ibid., pt. 2, 357.

12. Ibid., 738.

an uprising"13

On July 16, with his force only fourteen miles from the state's capital, Morgan telegraphed a significant report to Kirby Smith in East Tennessee:

I am here with a force sufficient to hold all the country outside Lexington and Frankfort. These places are garrisoned chiefly with Home Guards. The whole country can be secured, and 25,000 or 30,000 men will join you at once.¹⁴

Morgan's invitation was somewhat premature. He had received no more than three hundred volunteers, and he had been forced to withdraw from the Bluegrass even before Kirby Smith received the dispatch.¹⁵ What Morgan mistook for southern sympathy among the state's people was actually romantic popularity for the dashing Kentuckian and his flamboyant horsemen. As Morgan continually eluded the much larger, and seemingly hapless Federal army, the popular attraction was strengthened.¹⁶ Of no less importance, the Federal forces had reached a low point in the public sentiment due to the oppressive activities of Boyle and other Federal commanders in the state.¹⁷

13. Ibid., 741.

14. Ibid., 733-34.

15. Holland, Morgan, 126-27.

16. Coulter, Civil War and Readjustment, 165.

17. Connelly and Jones, Politics of Command, 74. Boyle had arrested many southern sympathizers. Rumors of slavery emancipation in Kentucky caused much unfavorable feeling, even among Kentucky Unionists. Also, there was much discontent with Federal military interference in local elections. Coulter, Civil War and Readjustment, 151-52, 155, 156-65.

Morgan's report of an undefended Kentucky and his badly mistaken assumption of Confederate enlistment possibilities delighted Kirby Smith. Throughout most of July he had contemplated an offensive campaign, and Morgan's success in Kentucky would allow reality to evolve from speculation. As early as July 6, he notified Bragg that he was preparing to move against George Morgan at Cumberland Gap.¹⁸ The next day Kirby Smith notified Stevenson of the plan, adding that if the movement against the Gap was successful, there would be the possibility of a further advance into Kentucky.¹⁹ While making these plans to leave his department for an offensive campaign, Kirby Smith was facing 50,000 Federal troops threatening Chattanooga.²⁰ He knew the importance of his department and was obviously aware that Bragg would not allow it to be captured without resistance. As Bragg began sending reinforcements from Corinth on July 3, it became evident to Kirby Smith that Bragg would soon be in a position to halt Buell's advance. The distribution of Kirby Smith's forces exemplified his disregard for the Chattanooga defense line that he had displayed as so extremely important just one month before. Stevenson's well armed division of 9,000 was stationed at Cumberland Gap before George Morgan's force of 10,000. At Chattanooga, to face Buell, Kirby Smith positioned

18. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 723.

19. Ibid., 734.

20. Ibid., 120-21. Total effective force is given at 63,360. This total excludes George Morgan's force at Cumberland Gap.

another 9,000 troops. This force, led by Brigadier General Henry Heth and Major General J.P. McCown, was the most inadequate of Kirby Smith's entire command.²¹

With his major strength concentrated before Cumberland Gap, Kirby Smith campaigned to expedite Bragg's eventual movement to Chattanooga. On July 4, he wrote Bragg that Buell's entire force had crossed the Tennessee River.²² On July 14, he wired Davis that the Federal force before Chattanooga was "overwhelming . . . [and] cannot be resisted except by Bragg's cooperation."²³ Five days later, he notified Inspector General Samuel Cooper in Richmond that Buell's "whole force . . . [was] expected daily to attack Chattanooga," and that the safety of that city "depends upon [Bragg's] cooperation."²⁴ On July 24, unaware that the Army of the Mississippi was already en route to Chattanooga, Kirby Smith made a final attempt to accelerate Bragg's movement to the East Tennessee front. In a lengthy dispatch to Bragg covering a variety of topics, Kirby Smith pledged to "cheerfully place my command under your orders."²⁵ That day, with 50,000 Federals threatening the most important extremity of his department, and without knowledge of Bragg's initial movements to

21. Connelly, Army of the Heartland, 195-96.; OR. Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 726-27.

22. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 719.

23. Ibid., 726-27.

24. Ibid., 729.

25. Ibid., 734-35.

Chattanooga, Kirby Smith notified Stevenson to prepare for a possible invasion of Kentucky.²⁶ Although Kirby Smith may have possessed a genuine concern for the fate of East Tennessee, the evidence seems overwhelming that he intended to force Bragg to defend Chattanooga, and with Buell in check, free himself for an independent invasion of Kentucky.

Unaware of Kirby Smith's personal ambitions, Bragg, on August 1, met the East Tennessee commander at Chattanooga to discuss the possibility of a joint offensive into Middle Tennessee. Although no records of the meeting exist, there seems little doubt that a simple decision was easily reached. Kirby Smith was to invest Cumberland Gap either by siege assault or by a northerly movement against George Morgan's supply lines. If successful in this endeavor, Bragg desired the two armies to join against Buell in Middle Tennessee, with the major objective being to liberate Nashville. With that goal accomplished, the united Confederate forces might move into central Kentucky. In conjunction with this movement, Major General Sterling Price and Major General Earl Van Dorn were to combine to occupy the Federal forces in West Tennessee. It was hoped that this movement would reduce reinforcements to Buell from that area.²⁷

26. Ibid., 733-34.

27. Edmund Kirby Smith, "Kentucky Campaign Notes," manuscript, Kirby Smith Papers; Grady McWhiney, Braxton Bragg and the Confederate Defeat (New York, 1969), 272-73; Grady McWhiney, "Controversy in Kentucky: Braxton Bragg's Campaign of 1862," Civil War History, VI (March 1960), 10; OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 741.

The plan seemed viable, but problems soon developed. Bragg had entered Kirby Smith's department and had felt somewhat embarrassed and reluctant to order directly the activities of the Army of East Tennessee.²⁸ This, coupled with Kirby Smith's probable uncooperative attitude, induced Bragg to allow the question of command to pass unanswered. The problem of Bragg's personal inability to command the initiative, in conjunction with Kirby Smith's uncooperative attitude, effectively condemned the cooperative effort from the onset.

At the Chattanooga meeting, relations were cordial between the two generals, each referring to the cooperative intentions of the other.²⁹ Immediately following the meeting, Kirby Smith's attitude began to change. Through a captured dispatch, he had received information that the Federal forces at Cumberland Gap were collecting supplies in anticipation of an assault from the large Confederate force concentrating in East Tennessee. On August 9, Kirby Smith suggested to Bragg that if "a speedy reduction of the Gap was an impractical thing . . . a move direct to Lexington, Ky., would effectually invest Morgan, and would be attended with other

28. Bragg wrote Kirby Smith on August 8, 1862: "I find myself within the limits of your department . . . and should feel much embarrassed in my present position" OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 745-46.

29. Ibid., 741. Bragg wrote Inspector General Samuel Cooper on August 1, 1862: ". . . we have arranged measures for mutual support and effective co-operation." To his wife, Kirby Smith referred to Bragg as "a grim old fellow, but a true soldier." Kirby Smith to wife, August 1, 1862, Kirby Smith Papers.

most brilliant results"30

In a dispatch the next day, Bragg was seemingly in agreement as he contemplated moving into either Middle Tennessee, or Kentucky, though he confided that his inclination was "for the latter."³¹ But that was his only choice; he had reinforced the Army of East Tennessee with nearly one third of his effective force, intending to have it returned when the two armies combined against Buell, as had been planned at Chattanooga. Now facing Buell's 50,000, Bragg commanded a mere 27,000 men.³² Unable to move against Buell alone, Bragg had lost the initiative of command; he could only follow Kirby Smith's lead.

With his direction seemingly marked, Kirby Smith initiated one last political maneuver to insure his independent movement. In a letter to Jefferson Davis, he disclosed the revised Kentucky plan, revealing his intentions to move on Lexington if Cumberland Gap was too well supplied to allow for an effective investment. He labeled the plan a "true policy," stating that now "is the time to strike at Kentucky." Relay-

30. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 748.

31. Ibid., 748-49.

32. Ibid., 784, 246; McWhiney, Bragg, 278. The abstract for the Army of the Ohio for August 1, 1862, lists present for duty at 63,815. Excluding George Morgan's force of 9,000 to 10,000 men and various other brigades not concentrated at Huntsville, the estimated total was nearly 50,000. Bragg's forces are listed with an effective total of 27,320 at Chattanooga on August 27, 1862. Kirby Smith's forces numbered 9,787 during April of 1862. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 476. Although no official reports are given, Heth's and McCown's divisions, together with various other reinforcements, probably totaled nearly 10,000, giving Kirby Smith a command approaching 20,000.

ing Bragg's capitulation, he stated that the advance would be "made in hopes of permanently occupying Kentucky."³³ Of all the information conveyed in this lengthy dispatch, Kirby Smith seemed to have intentionally neglected to inform the President that Bragg was facing overwhelming odds and that a captured dispatch had confirmed that the Federals at Cumberland Gap had obtained subsistence for nearly thirty days.³⁴

Greatly desiring the liberation of Kentucky, Davis silently acquiesced, allowing Kirby Smith to initiate his personal campaign at his own discretion. With his attention turned to the eastern theater, where Lee's army was preparing to invade Maryland, Davis would later admit his ignorance of the situation in Kentucky: "The expectation that the Kentuckians would rise en masse . . . alone justified an advance into that State That expectation has been sadly disappointing."³⁵

Because of Kirby Smith's determination to advance into Kentucky, Bragg was compelled to revise his original plan. Instead of moving against Buell in Middle Tennessee as planned, Bragg was forced to enter Kentucky in support of Kirby Smith. Although large enough to expel George Morgan from Cumberland Gap, the Army of East Tennessee was too small to conduct a lone invasion of Kentucky. Should Buell advance swiftly northward ahead of Bragg, Kirby Smith's forces might

33. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 752-53.

34. Connelly, Army of the Heartland, 210.

35. Rowland, ed., Davis, V, 356.

be trapped between Buell's army and the state's home guards. Unable to defeat Buell alone, Bragg's only choice was to advance into Kentucky and attempt to coordinate a junction of the two Confederate armies. With only a suggestion that Kirby Smith not advance too deeply into Kentucky until the Army of the Mississippi could begin its northerly movement, Bragg again allowed Kirby Smith to control the command initiative.³⁶

The revised plan would force Buell to retreat in protection of his supply lines, based on the Ohio River. If the combined Confederate armies could defeat Buell, the rapidly advancing Federal forces in the Mississippi Valley would also be forced to retreat to protect the North from invasion. If successful, the South would be free of Federal troops. To enhance the revised plan, Price and Van Dorn were to advance into Middle Tennessee and defeat the Federal forces there. Brigadier General Humphrey Marshall was ordered to enter Kentucky from western Virginia in support of Kirby Smith, and a sixth element under the command of Major General John C. Breckinridge, then serving under Van Dorn in Mississippi, was to join Bragg's forces in Kentucky. The apex of the cooperative effort was to be a large Confederate force united on the Ohio River and Kentucky freed of Union control.³⁷

Although the revised plan seemed to promise great results,

36. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 748-49.

37. Ibid., 748-49; Kirby Smith, "Kentucky Campaign Notes," Kirby Smith Papers; Archer Jones, Confederate Strategy from Shiloh to Vicksburg (Baton Rouge, 1961), 74-75.

a major problem soon developed. Cooperation of the six separate armies proved impossible. As pride and personal ambition became factors, and as Bragg refused to command the situation, none of the cooperative elements completed its assignment.³⁸ Not until the main Confederate force was in retreat was a successful junction between any of the participating forces completed. Hampered by Bragg's inability to take the reins of command, the campaign was doomed to end in failure.

Possessing the command initiative and the President's approval, Kirby Smith began to prepare for his campaign into Kentucky, citing the Federal stronghold at Cumberland Gap as his first objective. His interest in seizing Cumberland Gap may have been overemphasized by some historians.³⁹ Although seemingly humiliated by being forced to surrender a portion of his department, the proposed maneuver against Cumberland Gap may also be viewed as a means for Kirby Smith to enter Kentucky. To illustrate this, as the Army of East Tennessee advanced toward Lexington, Kirby Smith ordered the area north of Cumberland Gap abandoned, allowing Morgan's forces to forage in that region.⁴⁰ If the major objective of the campaign was to invest Morgan by cutting his lines of

38. Jones, Confederate Strategy, 108.

39. Parks, Kirby Smith, 202, 204. The movement against Cumberland Gap is represented here as Kirby Smith's primary objective, and the movement toward Lexington as contingent upon Morgan's evacuation.

40. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 814.

supply, and, in doing so, cause him to evacuate the Gap due to lack of provisions, Kirby Smith would not have allowed the Federals to accumulate supplies from any of the surrounding areas. Yet, from another point of view, George Morgan may have been allowed to collect provisions to delay his evacuation, giving Kirby Smith the necessary time to carry on his planned activities in the Bluegrass. For whatever the reason, it is evident that Cumberland Gap was employed only as a means to invade Kentucky.

Because of the slow movement of his supply trains from Corinth, Bragg felt that he was unnecessarily delaying Kirby Smith's advance into Kentucky. Fearing that Buell might move northward by rail into Kirby Smith's front, Bragg conveyed to the East Tennessee commander, on August 12, that he no longer wished to hinder the initial thrust of the campaign.⁴¹

Having been preparing his forces for the movement since late July, Kirby Smith was able to complete preparations within just a few days, and in the early hours of August 14, his army left Knoxville as the Kentucky invasion began.⁴² Covered by the cavalry forces under Colonels J.J. Morrison and John S. Scott, Kirby Smith advanced northward at the head

41. Ibid., 754-55.

42. Ibid., 240. George Morgan reported to Buell on July 31 that a Federal spy had encountered "a formidable expedition . . . organizing [in Knoxville] to gain my rear"; Kirby Smith to wife, August 7, 1862, Kirby Smith Papers; Parks, Kirby Smith, 204.

of two divisions commanded by Brigadier Generals P.R. Cleburne and T.J. Churchill.⁴³ At a strength of 6,000, this force passed through Rogers Gap, as Heth led Brigadier General W.G.M. Davis' and Leadbetter's brigades through Big Creek Gap. At the head of 9,000 infantry, Carter Stevenson advanced with a third column to the Federal front at Cumberland Gap.⁴⁴ Following a victory over a small Federal force at London, Kentucky, Scott's cavalry entered Barbourville from the north on August 18, only hours ahead of Cleburne's and Churchill's divisions. Kirby Smith arrived two days later, and Heth's division entered the small Kentucky town on the twentieth.⁴⁵

To guard against a swift movement by all or part of Buell's force to Kirby Smith's front, John Hunt Morgan was sent to disable the Louisville and Nashville Railroad. Upon completion of this task, Morgan's force was to meet the Army of East Tennessee in Lexington, where Kirby Smith planned to rendezvous by early September.⁴⁶

Thus free from any counter movement from Buell's force, Kirby Smith could rest his exhausted forces at Barbourville until Bragg either defeated or outmarched Buell. The advance

43. Kirby Smith, "Kentucky Campaign Notes," Kirby Smith Papers. McCown was left with a skeleton force to administer affairs at Knoxville, but later joined the main force at Lexington. Connelly, Army of the Heartland, 213.

44. Kirby Smith, "Kentucky Campaign Notes," Kirby Smith Papers; OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 755.

45. Kirby Smith, "Kentucky Campaign Notes," Kirby Smith Papers; Parks, Kirby Smith, 206.

46. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 1, 878-79; Holland, Morgan, 136-38.

from Knoxville was highly successful, but the rugged mountains took their toll. The road was rough, and the marching was difficult. The men were ragged and footsore from hauling artillery over the rigorous terrain, although, as their commander later wrote, they successfully completed their task "without a murmur." Upon his arrival in Kentucky, Kirby Smith described his weary force as a "rough wild ragged looking assemblage . . . subordinate, cheerful and uncomplaining, with a strong religious element" ⁴⁷ Certainly, religion played a major role in preserving the morale of the forces of the Army of East Tennessee. One author describes the march from Knoxville as "almost a mass prayer meeting." ⁴⁸

Triumphant in his rigorous march through the mountains, Kirby Smith became somewhat overly enthusiastic. He described the advance as a "herculean undertaking" and "a task rivaling the passage of the Alps." Referring to the boldness of his move as similar to the accomplishments of Cortez, he wrote to his wife: "I have burnt my ships behind me and thrown myself boldly into the enemy's country. The results may be brilliant and if successful will be considered a stroke of inspiration and genius" He also found parallels in the accomplishments of Moses with the Army of East Tennessee, "like the

47. Paul F. Hammond, "Campaign of General E. Kirby Smith in Kentucky, in 1862," Southern Historical Society Papers, IX (1881), No. 2, 247. Published in five separate sections. Hereafter cited by section number. Kirby Smith to wife, August 20, 21, 1862, Kirby Smith Papers.

48. Connelly, Army of the Heartland, 212.

Egyptians of old," God had "hardened [the enemy's] hearts & blinded their eyes to make their destruction more complete." Obviously overstating his achievement, Kirby Smith found it necessary to defend his actions. "I care not what the world may say, I am not ambitious . . . I shall consciously do my duty."⁴⁹

Under the pretext of duty, Kirby Smith had, through various political maneuvers, achieved his goal of invading Kentucky. Basing his actions upon John Hunt Morgan's successes and misinterpretations of the state's political feelings, the East Tennessee commander had abandoned Bragg and the Army of the Mississippi in the face of overwhelming forces. Having allowed Kirby Smith to seize the initiative, Bragg, unsure of what action to take, meekly followed.

Although Kirby Smith's revised plan had some strategic merit, it was sparked by personal ambition and lacked sufficient planning and cooperation from the various forces involved. As the campaign continued, the problems of command, cooperation and desire for personal achievement would intensify, thus lessening the possibilities of success.

49. Kirby Smith to wife, August 21, 23, 24, 25, 1862, Kirby Smith Papers.

CHAPTER THREE

FROM BARBOURVILLE TO LEXINGTON

As Kirby Smith triumphantly entered Barbourville on August 18, the second segment of his pre-devised plan began to unfold. He had willfully placed himself in a precarious position. The country surrounding Barbourville lacked sufficient provisions to sustain his troops longer than George Morgan could maintain his own army at Cumberland Gap. With the area infested by surprisingly active bushwhackers, Kirby Smith had seemingly worsened his own position rather than having successfully turned the Cumberland Gap stronghold. Even Morgan recognized Kirby Smith's predicament, as he reported the situation to Buell: "Smith cannot possibly remain three weeks in my rear. I can hold this place five weeks with my present command."¹ If Morgan was aware of the destitute character of southeastern Kentucky, Kirby Smith also must have had knowledge of that fact. It soon became evident that Kirby Smith was more than aware of the inability of the area to support his army.

Two days following his arrival in Barbourville, Kirby Smith reported to Bragg his seemingly serious problem as his intentions began to develop. In a tone that suggested no previous knowledge of the situation, Kirby Smith informed Bragg of the stripped condition of the region and summed up

1. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 352.

his situation by offering two solutions to the problem. "I have but two courses left me--either to fall back for supplies to East Tennessee or to advance toward Lexington for them." He continued with the obvious solution: "The former course will be too disastrous to our cause in Kentucky for me to think of doing so for a moment. I have therefore decided to advance as soon as possible upon Lexington."² The next day, Kirby Smith informed Davis of his intentions in the same manner, designating his choice to advance toward Lexington as "unquestionably the lesser of two evils" He again portrayed his disregard for Bragg's overwhelming problems by asking for reinforcements and stating that he had "nothing to fear from Buell."³ By the same type of political and military maneuvering that he had employed to advance into Kentucky in mid-August, Kirby Smith, in the latter part of the month, began to disclose developments in his predetermined design for an independent movement into the heartland of Kentucky. Against Bragg's expressed orders of August 10, Kirby Smith began his advance toward Lexington before the Army of the Mississippi could begin moving northward from Chattanooga.

While in occupation of Barbourville, Kirby Smith was not entirely certain that Bragg had made a final decision concerning his intended destination from Chattanooga. Kirby

2. Ibid., 766-67.

3. Ibid., 768-69.

Smith seemed to have initiated a speedy departure from Barbourville to force Bragg into making a decision. Considering that Bragg moved into Kentucky immediately following Kirby Smith's departure from Barbourville, the strategy seemed to have been effective, but that may not have been the case. Bragg's decision to enter Kentucky came as early as August 8, when he confided his plan to J. Stoddard Johnston, a prominent Kentuckian and later editor of the Kentucky Yeoman.⁴ Prior to that date, Bragg intended to advance against Buell in Middle Tennessee, as he had pledged to Isham Harris in late July.⁵ But as Kirby Smith began forcing alterations in the proposed Middle Tennessee plan, Bragg, by August 8, was compelled to capitulate to the younger, more aggressive commander.

Although, according to Johnston, Bragg had decided that Kentucky rather than Middle Tennessee was to be the objective, he seemed skeptical in his correspondence to Kirby Smith. On August 10, Bragg appeared more inclined to an invasion of Kentucky, but two days later, he referred to his intentions to "push on Middle Tennessee," excluding any reference to Kentucky.⁶ In a dispatch of August 15, Bragg portrayed a desire to engage Buell before entering Kentucky.⁷ It is con-

4. J. Stoddard Johnston, "Bragg's Campaign in Kentucky," manuscript, J. Stoddard Johnston Papers (Manuscript Division, The Filson Club Historical Society, Louisville, Kentucky).

5. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 710-11, 739-40.

6. Ibid., 748-49, 754-55.

7. Ibid., 758-59.

ceivable that Bragg was not indecisive at this point in the campaign as is often thought, but was considering Kirby Smith's intentions for an ambitious advance on Lexington. Bragg may have felt that a show of indecision might have kept Kirby Smith in check until the Army of the Mississippi could have been positioned to protect against a swift Federal movement to Kirby Smith's rear.⁸ To add substance to this theory, it is highly unlikely that Bragg would have considered the possibility of advancing into Middle Tennessee while a substantial portion of his army was being included in a planned invasion of Kentucky under an uncooperative commander. Although Bragg mistakenly imagined that the Federal army was severely demoralized, he was aware that Buell was fortifying Nashville in anticipation of a full-scale Confederate attack.⁹ Exclusive of Federal numerical superiority, a direct attack upon a well provisioned stronghold would not only have been frivolous, but disastrous. By August 8, with no choice but to acquiesce to Kirby Smith's plan, Bragg made the decision to forgo the Middle Tennessee invasion and, in confidence to Stoddard Johnston, join in the invasion of Kentucky.

Stoddard Johnston's influence in the 1862 Kentucky campaign went beyond his being informed of Bragg's strategic decision to invade Kentucky. En route to Greensburg, Louisiana to

8. By placing his army between Buell and Kirby Smith, Bragg thwarted Buell's original plan to move against Kirby Smith's force in the Bluegrass. See *ibid.*, 40.

9. *Ibid.*, 782-83; Chumney, "Buell," 119.

serve under the command of John C. Breckinridge, Johnston deferred his journey at Bragg's headquarters in Chattanooga to lobby for a Kentucky invasion. Traveling along a line from Harrodsburg to Liberty, to Albany, Kentucky, and on to Sparta, Tennessee, to Chattanooga, Johnston entered Bragg's camp on August 7.¹⁰ With the decision to enter Kentucky in its final stages, Bragg was contemplating a possible route of invasion. Johnston's route from the Bluegrass most appealed to him. Buell's forces were positioned along an arc from Stevenson, Alabama, to McMinnville, Tennessee. By moving his entire force from Chattanooga, across the Tennessee River and up the Sequatchie Valley to Sparta, Bragg could outflank Buell's force before the Federals could concentrate at McMinnville. In this manner, Bragg planned to position his army between Buell and Kirby Smith. After serious delay-- due to the late arrival of the supply trains from Corinth-- the Army of the Mississippi, successfully initiating the flanking strategy, departed its Chattanooga camp on August 28.¹¹ In a desperate attempt to counter Bragg's movement, Buell made a furious attempt to concentrate at McMinnville. But confused as to Bragg's intentions, he withdrew behind the fortifications at Nashville.¹²

10. J. Stoddard Johnston Diary, August 14, 1862, J. Stoddard Johnston Papers.

11. Parks, Kirby Smith, 223; Chumney, "Buell," 121.

12. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 1, 712-13; pt. 2, 304; Chumney, "Buell," 119-23.

As the Confederate army advanced toward Kentucky, Bragg soon learned that Stoddard Johnston's proposed route to the Bluegrass was insufficient to support his advancing army. To contemplate an alternate route, he interrupted his army's advance at Sparta, on September 3.¹³ Here, Bragg decided to move his force toward Glasgow, Kentucky, an area represented to him as sufficiently productive to support his troops.¹⁴ At Glasgow, Bragg hoped to intersect the Bardstown Pike that would lead him directly to the Bluegrass and the planned merger with the elusive Army of East Tennessee.¹⁵

On September 7, Forrest reported that a large Federal force was rapidly withdrawing from Nashville. As the only Federal depot between Nashville and Louisville, Bowling Green would undoubtedly be Buell's immediate objective.¹⁶ Perceiving

13. Johnston, "Bragg's Campaign," J. Stoddard Johnston Papers; Connelly, Army of the Heartland, 224. Until recently, it was thought that Bragg delayed at Sparta to consider the possibility of attacking Nashville rather than enter Kentucky. See Parks, Kirby Smith, 223-24 and Horn, Army of Tennessee, 167. The only decision made at Sparta concerned the route to be taken into Kentucky. Bragg had decided at Chattanooga, on August 8, against attacking Buell. En Route to Sparta, Bragg received information that Buell was evacuating northern Alabama and concentrating at Murfreesboro. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 798. Also, fortification of Nashville was continuing. Connelly, Army of the Heartland, 225. Bragg had ordered Price to advance on Nashville as quickly as possible, assuming that Buell would withdraw into Kentucky in pursuit of the Confederate advance. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 798; Connelly, Army of the Heartland, 225.

14. Johnston, "Bragg's Campaign," J. Stoddard Johnston Papers.

15. Connelly, Army of the Heartland, 225.

16. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 799-800.

the Federal destination, Bragg informed his field commander, Major General Leonidas Polk: ". . . we must head him off from Kirby Smith."¹⁷ With a difference of less than forty-five miles separating each army from its Kentucky objective, the race to the Green River Valley promised a close contest.¹⁸

Although the Confederate campaign began in a manner that lacked cooperation and favored evasive tactics, its progression not only exhibited successes but a possibility of overall success that could severely retard Federal activity in the West. At this point in the Kentucky campaign of 1862, the strategy of the Confederate commanders looked promising; Bragg had successfully maneuvered his forces between those of Buell and Kirby Smith, and Van Dorn and Price had been directed to combine in a highly strategic movement into Middle Tennessee.¹⁹ Reinforcements under the command of John C. Breckinridge were momentarily expected at Bragg's headquarters.²⁰ From the east, Humphrey Marshall was entering Kentucky in support of the planned Confederate concentration in the Bluegrass; and, finally, the initial invasion force under Kirby Smith had advanced victoriously in its drive

17. James B. Fry, Operations of the Army under Buell from June 10th to October 30th, 1862, and the Buell Commission (New York, 1884), 45.

18. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 1, 45. Bragg marched fifty miles from the Cumberland River to Glasgow. Buell marched 95 miles from Nashville.

19. Ibid., pt. 2, 698, 782-83.

20. Ibid., 784.

from Barbourville. Truly, the campaign seemed filled with promising results.

Marching unopposed, the Army of East Tennessee had pushed northward from its temporary position at Barbourville on August 25. Kirby Smith's advance toward the Bluegrass was characteristically bold, but his ambitious nature seemed to be diminishing as he reported to Bragg the consequences that might lie ahead:

. . . should [the people of Kentucky] fail to [support me] . . . my position will be a very precarious one and . . . very soon I shall have to fall back; also if I should meet with a resistance too great to be overcome this side of the Kentucky [River] I shall have to [retreat] under the circumstances of great difficulty.

This show of reservation was, for the first time, coupled with a recognized need for support from the Army of the Mississippi: "The country along this route in being very poor will be exhausted of supplies, so that if I am compelled to fall back I shall endeavor to maneuver so as to bring myself into communication with your [forces]."²¹ Kirby Smith's reservations were unnecessary; he had little to fear from the events that were immediately ahead.

Reinforced by a brigade from his forces in surveillance of the enemy position at Cumberland Gap, Kirby Smith continued his rapid push into Central Kentucky.²² On August 23, Colonel

21. Ibid., 775-76.

22. Ibid., 778.

John Scott, commanding the First Louisiana Cavalry in advance of the invading force, successfully engaged and routed a small Federal force in occupation of a strong placement just south of Richmond at Big Hill.²³ Effectively opening the route to the Bluegrass, the small but significant victory also reaped various spoils, which included a captured Union dispatch relaying information of mounting Federal strength near Richmond, Kentucky.²⁴

Kirby Smith was encouraged upon learning that the Federals were intending to take a stand near Richmond. He had feared that they might withdraw to the naturally strong bluffs of the Kentucky River, where a small enemy army might easily force the advancing Confederates to postpone, or even abandon their advance.²⁵ Although relieved of that possibility, Kirby Smith had not expected to encounter Union resistance this soon. Forcibly marching his army ninety miles in just three days, the Confederate commander had left Heth far behind with 4,000 troops to guard the slow moving trains.²⁶

Taking into advisement Scott's information that the Home Guards "could be scattered to the winds by one third

23. Edmund Kirby Smith, "Kentucky Campaign Notes," Kirby Smith Papers.

24. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 1, 886; pt. 2, 775.

25. Hammond, "The Campaign of Kirby Smith," No. 2, 250.

26. James L. Morrison, Jr. "The Memoirs of Henry Heth," Civil War History, VII (Jan. 1962), 21; Thomas D. Clark, A History of Kentucky (New York, 1937), 457.

their numbers if the move is made at once,"²⁷ the Army of East Tennessee pushed on through the eastern Kentucky mountains, bypassing Crab Orchard, and successfully initiating the toilsome ascent of Big Hill. On August 29, Kirby Smith's force descended into the brim of the Bluegrass, a mere ten miles from Richmond. That afternoon, Scott's cavalry advance skirmished heavily with Federal pickets along the Richmond road, and at one point was driven back upon Cleburne's infantry.²⁸ On the night of August 29, Kirby Smith directed Cleburne, his most vigorous commander, to lead his division in advance of the next day's attack.²⁹ That night, Kirby Smith conveyed to his wife his knowledge and feelings of the situation before him: ". . . troops are rapidly collecting from Indiana, Ill[inois]--and Ohio, but they are new levies and we do not fear the result. We shall move tomorrow for Richmond."³⁰

Kirby Smith's swift advance had caught the Union forces entirely by surprise. Major General William Nelson, at his headquarters in Lexington, did not receive word of the approaching Confederate army until August 30 at 2:30 A.M. He quickly ordered his commander at Richmond, Brigadier General

27. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 1, 887.

28. Parks, Kirby Smith, 221.

29. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 1, 944-45.

30. Kirby Smith to wife, August 25, 1862, Kirby Smith Papers.

Mahon D. Manson, not to contest the advancing forces, but to retreat toward Lancaster.³¹ Expecting to engage the enemy the next day, Nelson raced to Lancaster to take command. Upon reaching the town and not finding his troops there, it was evident that his orders had not reached Manson in time. In hopes of locating his army before a battle could commence, Nelson hastened on to Richmond.³²

Manson, in command of less than 7,000 recruits "scarcely three weeks from the corn fields and thrashing floors of Indiana," has assumed that he had only two choices at his disposal: ". . . whether I should allow the enemy to attack me in my camp or whether I should advance and meet him." Not considering retreat, he chose the latter course.³³

The morning of August 30 was represented by an observer as "warm, clear and beautiful. No brighter sun ever scattered the mists of early day."³⁴ Many of the Federal pickets were not nearly as beholding of the morning's beauty, for when

31. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 467; Parks, Kirby Smith, 212-13.

32. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 467.

33. Ibid., pt. 1, 911; Nashville Dispatch, September 4, 1862. Manson reported that "the regiments had never had a batallion drill and knew not what a line of battle was." OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 1, 914. The Richmond, Virginia Dispatch, September 11, reported: ". . . the officers were as green as the men, and unable to give intelligent commands." The size of the Federal force is questionable, probably between six and seven thousand. Horn, Army of Tennessee, 164; Connelly, Army of the Heartland, 216; OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 1, 935.

34. Hammond, "The Campaign of Kirby Smith," No. 2, 250.

they awoke, they found themselves within the Confederate lines and were quickly captured.³⁵

When Kirby Smith reached the battlefield at 8:00 A.M., a heated artillery duel had commenced, checking the Federal advance. The Union army, with its artillery in the center, was formed in line across the Richmond pike. Cleburne, locating his forces to the right of the road with his artillery on the left, had come up to meet the enemy.³⁶ Cleburne was ordered to occupy the enemy until Churchill could maneuver his division to the left of the road.³⁷ Intense firing was followed by a Union attempt to turn the Confederate right flank. At the commencement of the attack, Cleburne was wounded, but was skillfully succeeded by Brigadier General Preston Smith, who not only thwarted the attack, but drove the enemy from the field.³⁸

The Federal forces retreated one mile and reformed on a high position near Rogersville. Hidden from view, the Union right surprised Churchill's division and the Confederate line wavered under the intense firing, but as Kirby Smith reported, "Churchill's voice rang out . . . steadying his men and order-

35. Ibid., 250; Kirby Smith, "Kentucky Campaign Notes," Kirby Smith Papers.

36. Kirby Smith, "Kentucky Campaign Notes," Kirby Smith Papers.

37. Ibid.

38. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 947.

ing the charge the enemy was broken"39 Manson reported that his forces were "compelled to fall back and retreat in confusion."⁴⁰

At 12:30 P.M., during the engagement, Manson finally received Nelson's order not to engage the advancing Confederates.⁴¹ Less than one hour later, highly disturbed at the condition of events, Nelson arrived on the battlefield. He made an exasperated attempt to rally his retreating forces, resorting to such awesome tactics as striking several horror-stricken soldiers over the head with his sword.⁴²

Fairly confident of the battle's outcome, Kirby Smith acted upon advice from a member of his staff and ordered Scott's cavalry to the rear of Richmond to intercept an anticipated Federal retreat in that direction.⁴³ At 3:30 P.M., to give Scott sufficient time to maneuver into position, Kirby Smith ordered a rest for his exhausted forces.⁴⁴

At 5:00 P.M. the Confederates advanced for the third

39. Kirby Smith, "Kentucky Campaign Notes," Kirby Smith Papers.

40. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 1, 913.

41. Ibid., 913.

42. J.B. McCullah to R.J. White, March 10, 1878, cited in the Richmond, Kentucky Daily Register, December 1, 1967, original in possession of James A. Riddle, Richmond, Ky. Nelson is often credited with using only the flat side of his sword. See Clark, History of Kentucky, 458.

43. William R. Boggs, Military Reminiscences of General William R. Boggs, C.S.A. (Durham, 1913), 38.

44. Nashville Dispatch, September 14, 1862; Kirby Smith, "Kentucky Campaign Notes," Kirby Smith Papers."

time, passing through the deserted enemy camp, and found the opposing forces reassembled on the outskirts of Richmond. A successful attempt to turn both the Federal right and left was followed by a general charge. Surprisingly, the Confederates were met with intense firing and heavy casualties, but the Federal lines were eventually pushed through the town, and, as the Nashville Dispatch reported, "great disorder ensued."⁴⁵ A feeble attempt was made to rally the terrorized Union army, but the realization of hopelessness and a few cannon volleys sent "the poor discomfited fugitives rush[ing] pell-mell into [the hands of Scott's cavalry]. The havoc was frightful. They threw down their arms and surrendered in crowds," with only a few escaping.⁴⁶

Kirby Smith and his invading force could claim an extensive victory, having captured over four thousand Federal soldiers, including both Manson and Nelson.⁴⁷ Although Nelson was severely wounded, he was soon able to escape, taking refuge in a corn field to avoid recapture. The casualty lists reported the Confederate loss at less than one half that of

45. Boggs, Military Reminiscences, 38; OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 1, 948; Nashville Dispatch, September 3, 1862; New York Tribune, September 3, 1862, reported: ". . . they were completely demoralized." Nashville Dispatch, September 4, 1862, reported: ". . . our army was utterly defeated . . . ending in a panic and disgraceful flight."

46. Nashville Dispatch, September 14, 1862; Kirby Smith, "Kentucky Campaign Notes," Kirby Smith Papers.

47. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 1, 909, 914.

the engaged Federal forces.⁴⁸ The victory was certainly substantial, but of greater importance to the Confederate commander was the fruit of the victory. He considered "all [of] Kentucky to the Ohio . . . at our feet."⁴⁹ Indeed, it seemed to be. Despite Federal insistence "that the rebels have prosecuted their raid upon our territory to the extent of their ability," Kirby Smith, at the head of his newly christened Army of Kentucky, marched triumphantly toward his objective at Lexington.⁵⁰

After a short rest to issue congratulatory orders, allow for the burial of the dead and care for the wounded, Kirby Smith directed his forces toward Lexington on September 1.⁵¹ The road to Lexington was short but dangerous, and another engagement seemed imminent. It was expected that the Army of Kentucky would be forced to repel the enemy troops that might assemble along the strategic bluffs of the Kentucky River. If the invaders were successful, the hazardous crossing of the river would leave the Confederate force divided and open to piecemeal attack. Should his army advance to the outskirts of Lexington, Kirby Smith was unsure of what to expect.

48. Ibid., 901, 936. The Confederate loss in wounded and killed was 450; Union casualties were 1,058. Nashville Dispatch, September 14, 1862.

49. Kirby Smith, "Kentucky Campaign Notes," Kirby Smith Papers.

50. Nashville Dispatch, September 3, 1862; Louisville Journal, September 1, 1862; OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 1, 913.

51. Hammond, "The Campaign of Kirby Smith," No. 3, 289.

In his rapid advance from Barbourville, all communication with Bragg had been lost, and if John Hunt Morgan had not been successful in destroying the Louisville and Nashville Railroad, Buell's entire force may have been able to advance swiftly into Kirby Smith's front.⁵²

As the march toward Lexington began, straggling became an immediate problem, reducing the army's effective strength. If the Confederates met strong resistance, Kirby Smith would have only been able to gather 2,500 men for battle.⁵³ To relieve his depleted force, Kirby Smith rushed orders to Heth at Richmond to unload the supply wagons and use them to transport both stragglers and members of his own division to the main advancing body. Skillfully initiating the order, Heth, by the next morning, was responsible for reinforcing the main body by 2,000 troops.⁵⁴

As the Confederates approached the Kentucky River, a small enemy force, staying just out of rifle range, retreated before them, combining with a larger force located on the river bluffs.⁵⁵ The Richmond Virginia Dispatch reported that it was unlikely that the invading army would "attempt to force their way across the river . . .," but the small Federal

52. Ibid., 293.

53. Ibid., 291; Parks, Kirby Smith, 218.

54. Boggs, Military Reminiscences, 40; Hammond, "The Campaign of Kirby Smith," No. 3, 291.

55. Hammond, "The Campaign of Kirby Smith," No. 3, 290.

force scattered at the approach of the Confederate army.⁵⁶

To demand the surrender of Lexington, Kirby Smith sent a member of his staff, Colonel Jonathan Pegram, who, to his surprise, marched into an undefended town. Following an extensive search, the mayor was finally located and Lexington was surrendered. The next day, September 2, Kirby Smith entered the town in triumph.⁵⁷

The Federals had overestimated the size of the Confederate force, and, unable to receive reinforcements from the states north of the Ohio, had retreated to fortify and defend Cincinnati and Louisville against an expected Rebel onslaught.⁵⁸ The state government at Frankfort was forced to evacuate, relocating its offices and treasury at Louisville.⁵⁹ The Federal defenders allowed the Bluegrass to fall into Confederate hands without a major engagement.

On September 3, Scott entered Frankfort and raised the flag of the First Louisiana Cavalry over the state's capitol.⁶⁰ Successful in his raid on the Louisville and Nashville Rail-

56. Richmond Virginia Dispatch, September 11, 1862; Hammond, "The Campaign of Kirby Smith," No. 3, 289.

57. Parks, Kirby Smith, 218; Hammond, "The Campaign of Kirby Smith," No. 3, 291.

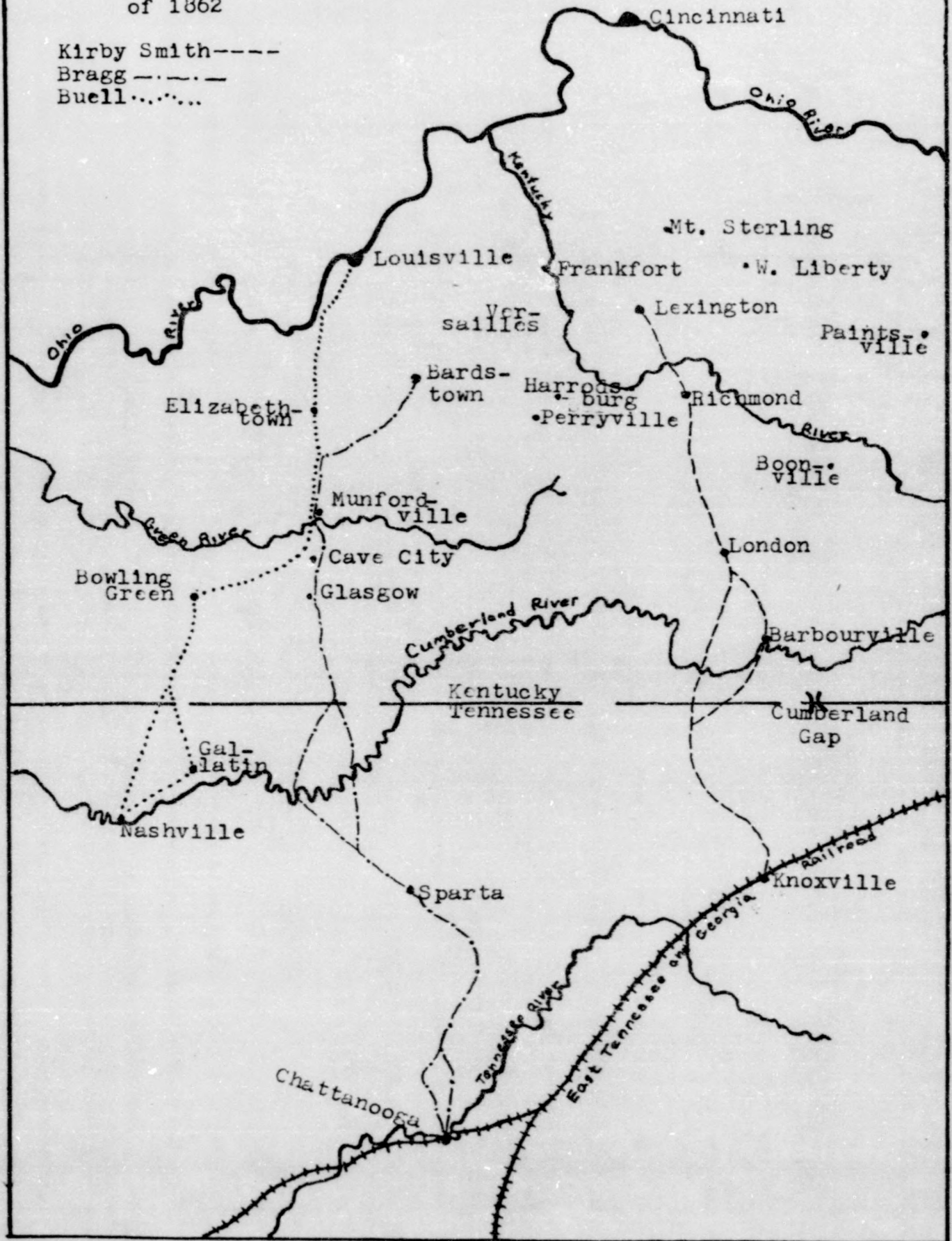
58. Connelly, Army of the Heartland, 216-17. Federal dispatches during the invasion exaggerated Kirby Smith's forces at up to 60,000. See OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 486, 488-89. The Nashville Dispatch, September 11, 1862, reported Kirby Smith's forces at 25,000.

59. New York Herald, September 3, 1862; Louisville Journal, September 4, 1862.

60. Parks, Kirby Smith, 217.

KENTUCKY INVASION
of 1862

Kirby Smith-----
Bragg-----
Buell.....



road, John Hunt Morgan had entered Lexington the day before, and Humphrey Marshall was thought to be in eastern Kentucky, uncontestedly advancing toward that city.⁶¹ The conquest of Central Kentucky was complete, and the Confederate capital dubiously proclaimed: "We think we may safely say that the day of Kentucky's deliverance from the hateful thrall of the abolition despotism has brightly dawned."⁶² Having completed his goal, Kirby Smith, to decentralize the need for supply and to occupy land, dispersed his army throughout the Bluegrass, and waited for the rendezvous with Bragg.

Meanwhile, to the southwest, Bragg and Buell were continuing toward their objectives in southern Kentucky. Correctly assuming that Buell would pursue him into Kentucky, Bragg directed Price to advance into Middle Tennessee and capture Nashville.⁶³ In response to the Confederate threat against Kentucky, and therefore his supply lines, Buell, under pressure from Washington to "find the enemy and fight him," left a substantial force to protect Nashville and fell back toward Bowling Green to intercept the Confederate advance.⁶⁴

On September 5, Bragg received Kirby Smith's report of the victory at Richmond, accompanied by an appeal for a speedy

61. Hammond, "The Campaign of Kirby Smith," No. 3, 293.

62. Richmond Virginia Dispatch, September 8, 1862.

63. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVII, pt. 2, 698; Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 314-15.

64. Ibid., Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 471. See also, ibid., 314-15.

rendezvous in the Bluegrass.⁶⁵ Hoping to add to the demoralizing effect that Kirby Smith's victory would have on Buell's forces, Bragg ordered Polk to concentrate at Glasgow, "for the purpose of striking a blow at Bowling Green."⁶⁶ By initiating this maneuver, Bragg hoped to capture the abundance of Federal supplies stored at Bowling Green, and, at the same time, deny Buell use of the only Federal storage depot between Nashville and Louisville.⁶⁷ Upon arriving at Glasgow on September 14, Bragg was forced to rescind his plan to capture the southern Kentucky town when he discovered that Buell had advanced more quickly than expected. Finding the area around Glasgow less productive than had been represented, Bragg planned to continue his advance to the Bluegrass as soon as possible.⁶⁸ There he could easily replenish his food supply, and join his outnumbered army with the Army of Kentucky. From that point, plans for an attack on Louisville could be

65. Ibid., pt. 1, 932.

66. Ibid., pt. 2, 806. See also, Federal opinion of Confederate destination and intentions, ibid., pt. 1, 112.

67. It has often been thought that Bragg planned to send Polk into action against Buell's army at Bowling Green; see Connelly, Army of the Heartland, 227, and Horn, Army of Tennessee, 170. Yet it does not seem likely that Bragg would have desired a battle at Bowling Green. Bragg was aware that he was outnumbered, out-supplied and out-fortified, and it would have been impracticable to lay siege to Bowling Green. Instead, Bragg first desired a junction with Kirby Smith.

68. Stoddard Johnston reported: ". . . instead of finding a region of plenty, he found a country desolated by the occupation of both armies . . . its resources entirely exhausted." Johnston, "Bragg's Campaign in Kentucky," J. Stoddard Johnston Papers. Only three counties surrounding Glasgow raised over one-half million bushels of corn per year; Warren, Simpson

made.

On September 13, Brigadier General James R. Chambers, varying from his orders to destroy the Louisville and Nashville Railroad at Cave City, unsuccessfully attacked a strongly fortified garrison at Munfordville.⁶⁹ Not eager to sustain his first defeat, and concerned for his troop's morale, Bragg decided to postpone the Bardstown rendezvous to turn the repulse at Munfordville into victory.⁷⁰ The jaunt to Munfordville seemed worthwhile; Bragg's army would only be detoured ten or twelve miles, and another route, although less serviceable than the Bardstown Pike, could be taken to the Bluegrass.

In the face of the larger and more experienced Confederate army, it would seem that the small Federal garrison, under the command of Colonel John T. Wilder, would have easily succumbed to the overwhelming Confederate strength. Yet, through a series of unusual delays and postponements, Wilder

and Barren. Buell occupied Warren and Simpson while Bragg occupied only Barren. All three had been desolated by foraging parties from Bowling Green since the beginning of the war. Connelly, Army of the Heartland, 227; Department of Interior, Bureau of Census, Ninth Census of the United States: 1870. Wealth and Industry (Washington, 1872), Vol. III, 159, 163. See also, J.K. Jackson to Braxton Bragg, September 21, 1862, Braxton Bragg Papers (William P. Palmer Collection, Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland).

69. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 816; Joseph Wheeler, "Bragg's Invasion of Kentucky," Robert U. Johnson and Clarence C. Buell, eds., Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, Being for the Most Part Contributed by Union and Confederate Officers, (4 vols. New York, 1884-88), III, 9; Chumney, "Buell," 158.

70. Johnston, "Bragg's Campaign," J. Stoddard Johnston Papers. Bragg was unwilling to "allow the impression of a disaster to rest on the minds" of his men. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 1, 1090.

succeeded in detaining the Confederate advance for two days. The Federals finally capitulated on September 17, and, with Buell pressing hard toward Munfordville in anticipation of battle, Bragg ordered the eighteenth to be spent in thanksgiving and prayer.⁷¹

Bragg was exuberant over the first victory of his command. Overstating his success, he announced on September 17: "My position must be exceedingly embarrassing to Buell and his army. My junction with Kirby Smith is complete. Buell is still at Bowling Green."⁷² With Kirby Smith nearly one hundred miles to the northeast, Bragg's first pretention might be attributed to exaggeration, or optimism, but in the second point, Bragg was dangerously wrong. Buell had long since left Bowling Green, and had moved to Cave City, only ten miles to the south. Although not certain of Bragg's exact location, Buell was pressing toward Munfordville intending to engage the invaders.⁷³

Finally becoming aware of the danger before him, Bragg ordered his army to take a strong position south of Green River, utilizing the captured Federal fortress as part of the defense line.⁷⁴ Unable to ascertain the Federal position or

71. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 841; John T. Wilder, "Siege of Munfordville," in Samuel Cole Williams, John T. Wilder, Commander of the Lightning Brigade, (Bloomington, 1936), 55-64; McWhiney, Bragg, 285-86.

72. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 1, 968.

73. Ibid., 48.

74. Wheeler, "Bragg's Invasion," 10.

intent, Bragg drew his forces into battle line to protect against an anticipated enemy flanking movement. This maneuver would later be misconstrued, by both soldiers and historians, as a tactic by Bragg in anticipation of a battle. To add to the misinterpretation, Bragg sent Buckner's division toward the Federal column in what appeared to be an attempt to draw the enemy into battle. More realistically, it was Bragg's intention in sending Buckner forward to discover the exact Federal location, and not to provoke a battle. Bragg desired to fight Buell, but not before effecting a junction with Kirby Smith, and, after some hesitation at Munfordville, he proceeded toward Bardstown on September 20 in pursuit of that goal.⁷⁵

Historians have severely condemned Bragg for not fighting at Munfordville, and thus allowing Buell to enter Louisville. In Stanley F. Horn's Army of Tennessee, Bragg's questioned competence has received the most negative attention. Horn views Bragg's failure to fight at Munfordville as "one of the great crises of the whole war." Horn continues his condemnation by designating the event as "probably [the war's] greatest moral crisis."⁷⁶ Horn's basis for such accusations is that Bragg was in a strategically superior position, that there

75. Connelly, Army of the Heartland, 232-33. Although Buell was not certain of the Confederate location, it was his intention to attack Bragg. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 1, 48; pt. 2, 849. Generally cited, Wheeler's article in Battles and Leaders has been instrumental in the misinterpretation of the activities at Munfordville. Wheeler, "Bragg's Invasion," 10.

76. Horn, Army of Tennessee, 171.

was not an overwhelming difference between the two forces involved, that Kirby Smith could have been ordered to reinforce Bragg's position, and that the question of supplies should not have been a factor.⁷⁷

In relation to the Confederate army's position, Bragg stated that he was reduced "to three day's rations, and in hostile country, utterly destitute of supplies" ⁷⁸ Had Bragg launched a successful attack, Buell could have merely retreated behind the well stocked fortifications at Bowling Green, and, as J. Stoddard Johnston witnessed, the situation "rendered a siege impracticable."⁷⁹ It was evident to Bragg that "a serious engagement [near Munfordville] could not fail (whatever the result) to materially cripple me."⁸⁰

Concerning Horn's estimation of troops involved, a slight discrepancy should be made clear. Horn cites Bragg's forces at 30,000, and Buell's at 38,000. The Confederate army, however, did not exceed 27,000 in effective strength.⁸¹ Buell's army, after being reinforced by Thomas' two divisions from Nashville prior to the proposed battle, easily exceeded 40,000

77. Ibid., 170-71.

78. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 1, 1090.

79. Johnston, "Bragg's Campaign in Kentucky," J. Stoddard Johnston Papers.

80. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 1, 1090.

81. The Federals estimated Bragg's force at 30,000; ibid., 14. McWhiney, Bragg, 292, offers 26,000. Connelly, Army of the Heartland, 227 estimates Bragg's forces at 27,000. Basil Duke, Reminiscence of Basil Duke (New York, 1911), 310, gives 27,320.

effectives.⁸² Although Horn's statement that "Confederate armies could rarely fight on a basis of superiority or even equality in numbers," is not disputed, a discrepancy of over 13,000 men might be considered an overwhelming difference.⁸³

Horn's insistence that Bragg could have ordered Kirby Smith to concentrate at Munfordville is resounded by Kirby Smith's biographer Joseph H. Parks. On this point, Parks states that "no amount of explaining can remove the guilt of incompetence."⁸⁴ As Bragg and Kirby Smith advanced into Kentucky, there was very little communication between the commanding generals. In light of the confused system of command, it would have been militarily improper for Bragg to have ordered Kirby Smith to assemble at Munfordville without knowledge of the situation in the Bluegrass or the events surrounding George Morgan's expected withdrawal from Cumberland Gap.⁸⁵ Also, in ordering a concentration at Munfordville, it would have been necessary for Bragg to have counterordered Kirby Smith's just wishes conveyed in a letter of September 15. In this correspondence, Kirby Smith expressed his desire not to concentrate below the Bluegrass: ". . . removing the large amount of

82. Buell rated his own force at 47,500. Don Carlos Buell, "East Tennessee and the Campaign of Perryville," Johnston and Buell, ed., Battles and Leaders, III, 42; McWhiney, Bragg, 219, cites 40,000; Chumney, "Buell," 161, is in agreement.

83. Horn, Army of Tennessee, 170.

84. Parks, Kirby Smith, 225, 229.

85. Williams, Lincoln Finds a General, IV, 108. Williams states that it "surely would have been the height of folly for Bragg to order Kirby Smith to join him" at Munfordville.

stores . . . accumulated here renders my falling back a measure to be avoided if possible, as in the event of such a move it would be necessary to destroy a large portion of them." Kirby Smith continued his point: ". . . by evacuating this section we would not only lose . . . unlimited supply . . . but recruiting would be stopped"86

Horn's statement that Bragg "invented the scarcity of supplies as a cloak for timidity," is most unjustifiable.⁸⁷ The author further states that the area was "a rich country which had not been subjected to the ravages of the armies of either side It was not impossible to arrange for subsistence"88 Prior to the war, only two counties of that area, Barren and Hardin, raised over one half million bushels of corn per year, hardly a sufficient supply to feed a large army for any extended period.⁸⁹ Stoddard Johnston, a member of Bragg's staff, reminisced about the situation. "The region around Munfordville is . . . moderately productive. For a year previous it had been foraged and exhausted of its surplus, first by the Confederates . . . and then by the Fed-

86. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 830.

87. Horn, Army of Tennessee, 171. For the same opinion, see Parks, Kirby Smith, 225.

88. Horn, Army of Tennessee, 171.

89. Department of Interior, Bureau of Census, Ninth Census of the United States: 1870. Wealth and Industry (Washington, 1872), III, 159, 163. As a Munfordville resident and eyewitness to the incident stated, Bragg's "men complained very much of hunger. Many of them told me they had not eaten a mouthful for three days." OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 1, 293.

erals"90

Also, Horn's contention that Bragg had access to Kirby Smith's trains as early as September 19 is unfounded. The first quantity of provisions to reach Bragg from Kirby Smith was not ordered to leave Danville until September 21.⁹¹

Bragg later reported that his rations had dwindled to three day's supply. Parks contests this statement by emphatically asking, "Did Bragg expect a battle to last more than three days!"⁹² Horn adds that ". . . three days' rations were enough to carry the army through any ordinary battle, leaving the question of further supplies to be considered after a battle was fought and won, or even lost."⁹³ Considering that a battle would probably have lasted only one day, but possibly two, it would have been impossible for Bragg to support his fatigued troops for a three or four day march to the nearest Confederate supply depot at Danville.

It seems evident that Bragg avoided a major military blunder at Munfordville, but further evidence can be presented. Despite the actual size of the opposing forces, Bragg was in possession of information that estimated the Federal army at

90. J. Stoddard Johnston, "Kentucky," Thomas Yoseloff ed., Confederate Military History (12 vols., New York, 1962; first published 1899), IX, 113. See also, Buell's opinion that the area was unproductive. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 1, 46. See also, J.K. Jackson to Braxton Bragg, September 21, 1862, Palmer Collection.

91. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 850.

92. Parks, Kirby Smith, 229.

93. Horn, Army of Tennessee, 171.

twice his own strength. Although the blame cannot be laid upon anyone but Bragg for not insisting upon accurate information, his knowledge of the events before him are what influenced his decision, not the actual numbers produced by hindsight.

The scope of the entire western theater must also be taken into account. President Davis had instructed Bragg not to expose his army to the possibility of defeat. It was quite apparent to both the general and the President that if Bragg's army was defeated the entire right flank of the Confederate western front would have been exposed to Union occupation.⁹⁴ Had Price and Van Dorn been overwhelmed by the Federal armies advancing down the Mississippi Valley--as was the case at Corinth less than a month following the Munfordville encounter--there would not have been an active Confederate force in the entire West to contest the Federal thrust into the deep South.

Obviously, Bragg should not have fought at Munfordville, and his reasons for not doing so are more than adequate:

Reduced at the end of four days to three day's rations, and in hostile country, utterly destitute of supplies, a serious engagement brought on anywhere in that direction could not fail (whatever the result) to materially cripple me. The loss of a battle would be eminently disastrous.⁹⁵

As Stoddard Johnston reported, even Bragg's rebellious divisional commanders agreed: "I remember none who deemed it

94. Connelly, Army of the Heartland, 233.

95. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 1, 1090.

necessary . . . that Buell should be attacked." Conversely, Bragg's subordinates "believed that [Buell's] army would be effectively disposed of without a battle."⁹⁶

Bragg's allowance of Buell's uncontested entrance into Louisville has also received extensive criticism.⁹⁷ The arguments in favor of this maneuver are parallel to the reasoning behind Bragg's decision at Munfordville. The invading army lacked provisions; they were severely outnumbered; and there was nothing to be gained by an engagement. Combined with these reasons was the consideration that a large Federal force was rapidly accumulating at Louisville. If Bragg had chosen to move on the city, his forces would have been trapped between Buell's army marching toward his rear and the force at Louisville. If Bragg's army was not successful in defeating the Louisville force before Buell attacked from the south, the Confederates would have been easily consumed. It does not seem likely that Bragg could have fought the two forces independently before the planned concentration with Kirby Smith could have been effected. But had he been able to do so, his army of 27,000, already exhausted from the march, would have possibly been compelled to fight two battles in as many days, defeating a total of nearly 84,000 Federals,

96. Johnston, "Bragg's Campaign in Kentucky," J. Stoddard Johnston Papers.

97. Frank E. Vandiver, Their Tattered Flags: The Epic of the Confederacy (New York, 1970), 161; Coulter, Civil War and Readjustment, 166; Horn, Army of the Heartland, 172.

an impossible task.⁹⁸ Although unknown to Bragg, a plan was being contrived by the Federal commanders to trap the Confederate army between the two opposing forces, and there was even some hope among the Federal officers that Bragg might attempt an attack.⁹⁹

Rather than contest Buell, Bragg was decidedly willing to abandon his dubious offensive strategy. His army did not obstruct Buell's continuance into Louisville; there were several routes, other than the Louisville Pike, by which the Federals could have entered the city without serious exposure to their right flank.¹⁰⁰ Rather than attempt a piecemeal attack of the larger Federal army, it was Bragg's plan to combine forces with both Kirby Smith and Marshall. The three armies, together with the recruits that had supposedly been enlisted and the force that would be acquired following the legalization of a conscript act, would gallantly march against Buell at Louisville in equalizing numbers. So strong is the evidence for this plan of assault that it seems difficult to believe that Bragg had ever planned to move on Louisville without first acquiring considerable reinforcements. There

98. Wheeler, "Bragg's Invasion," 11. Buell's total force at Louisville is listed here at 84,000. Buell had been reinforced by two divisions from Grant. Chumney, "Buell," 115.

99. Connelly, Army of the Heartland, 240.

100. Ibid., 223. See also, McWhiney, "Controversy in Kentucky," 19; OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 1, 48. Buell reflected that "I could have avoided the enemy by passing to either side of him."

is more than deductive evidence that points to this fact. At Glasgow, on September 15, Bragg received a report from his chief engineer concerning the road conditions and water supplies from Glasgow to Bardstown.¹⁰¹ From Munfordville, Bragg sent Stoddard Johnston to Lexington to direct Kirby Smith to assemble his force at Bardstown.¹⁰² It seems evident that Bragg intended to initiate the Bardstown maneuver at least as early as Munfordville, and probably as early as Glasgow. It is certainly not unreasonable to assume that Bragg's entire plan may have unfolded much earlier, possibly at Sparta.

Despite Buell's entrance into Louisville, the Confederate plan of invasion was still intact. Except for Rosecrans' Federal army, the advancing Rebel threat into Kentucky had forced the major northern armies to retreat to protect their own soil. It seems that Bragg's often criticized statement, "that this campaign must be won by marching, not by fighting," held some truth.¹⁰³

During mid-September, Federal forces throughout the country were being drawn to the defensive. Lee's similar

101. David B. Harris to Braxton Bragg, September 15, 1862, David Bullock Harris Papers (Manuscript Division, Duke University, Durham, N.C.). It was reported that the information was "relative to the pike road from Glasgow to Louisville via New Haven & Bardstown."

102. Johnston, "Bragg's Campaign in Kentucky," J. Stoddard Johnston Papers.

103. Colonel David Urquhart, "Bragg's Advance and Retreat," Johnston and Buell, eds., Battles and Leaders, III, 600.

strategy conducted into Maryland caused the Union to fear for the defense of such cities as Baltimore, Philadelphia and even Washington. Confederate morale and hope had certainly soared as Federal advances into the South had not only been halted but had been reversed. "Lord, what a scare they are having in the north!" wrote a southerner on the occasion of the events.¹⁰⁴ The outcome of the war seemed to hinge on the success or failure of the two border campaigns. One astute historian of the period states that "McClellan or Buell could lose the War. Lee or Bragg could win it."¹⁰⁵

104. John B. Jones, A Rebel War Clerk's Diary, Earl Schenck, ed., (New York, 1958; first published, 1935), September 9, 1962, 97.

105. Vandiver, Their Tattered Flags, 106.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE FIGHT FOR KENTUCKY

Upon entering Lexington on September 2, Kirby Smith's victorious army was met with an enthusiastic reception. But, as one southern soldier noticed, "the crowds . . . were composed for the most part of women and children. The men . . . held aloof . . . and closely in their homes."¹ Either Kirby Smith failed to notice this pronounced absence at the reception, or he was unconcerned by it, for immediately he announced to McCown at Knoxville: "Kentucky is rising en masse and arms are needed. If the arms were here we could arm 20,000 men in a few days."² Evidently, Kirby Smith took into consideration the characteristically slow accumulation and shipment of arms between departments, and, in announcing his expectations, hoped to counteract an expected delay. McCown immediately announced the news of Kirby Smith's seemingly massive acquisition of Kentucky troops and soon southern newspapers were reporting Kentucky's apparent insurgence. But, on September 16, just two days following an announcement in the Richmond Dispatch of Kentucky's aid to southern hopes, Kirby Smith wired Bragg of his disappointment in the Kentucky populace: "The Kentuckians are slow and backward in rallying to our standard. Their hearts are evidently with us, but

1. Hammond, "The Campaign of Kirby Smith," No. 3, 292.

2. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 797.

their blue grass and fat-grass [cattle] are against us."³ Attempting to explain the unanticipated recruiting problems, Kirby Smith wrote his wife on September 16: ". . . I see their magnificent estates their fat cattle & fine stock [and] I can understand their fears & hesitancy--they have so much to lose."⁴ This was certainly part of the reason for the lack of recruits, but the invading commander might also have considered that those who were of strong southern sympathy had already left the state to join the Confederate cause, and that those who still held allegiance to neutrality or were indecisive were keeping distant waiting for a Confederate victory before volunteering. Also, the Bluegrass was not nearly as pro-Confederate as Kirby Smith had been led to believe. Hoping to draw his home state out of the Union, John Hunt Morgan had greatly exaggerated Kentucky's recruiting possibilities when he lobbied for a Kentucky invasion by announcing to Kirby Smith in July that "25,000 or 30,000 men will join you at once."⁵ Both Kirby Smith and Bragg can be criticized for not being more knowledgeable of the situation in Kentucky. But the strength of this criticism lies in their need for Kentucky recruits to successfully execute the invasion. The consequences of this error in judgement

3. Richmond Dispatch, September 16, 1862; OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 846.

4. Kirby Smith to wife, September 16, 1862, Kirby Smith Papers.

5. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 733-34.

were the most severe of the disappointments to face the Confederate commanders.

In an attempt to decentralize the Lexington supply base and concurrently occupy the surrounding area, Kirby Smith dispersed his army throughout the Bluegrass. Leadbetter was to scatter the small Federal force at Lebanon and return to occupy the state capital. Captain Robert McFarland was ordered toward Somerset and farther south toward Cumberland Gap to survey George Morgan's activities. John Scott's excellent cavalry detachment was sent to watch the activities of Bragg and Buell. If it were deemed necessary, Scott was to destroy the Louisville and Nashville Railroad, but no other orders were given for further aid to Bragg. John Hunt Morgan and Preston Smith were placed under Heth's command for a daring move toward Cincinnati.⁶ In an attempt to weaken the Federal force in Bragg's front at Louisville, Kirby Smith hoped to divert Federal troops and attention toward Cincinnati.

Following an uncontested march to Newport--just across the river from Cincinnati--Heth's force of 2,000 encountered its first resistance. As Heth reported in his diary, the Confederates fired a dozen shots, scattering the blueclad defenders back to Cincinnati.⁷ It seemed that Cincinnati, or at least the Covington-Newport area, was to be a simple acquisition. But on September 11, the eve of Heth's initial

6. Ibid., 796, 799, 805, 807, 812, 813.

7. Morrison, "Heth," 22.

attack, Kirby Smith rescinded his order to move against the Federals at Covington, citing the necessity of "avoiding any reverse . . . at this critical juncture."⁸ Had he known the conditions in Cincinnati, Kirby Smith would surely have permitted the attack. The city was bordering on hysteria. On September 3, Major General Lew Wallace, commanding at Cincinnati, declared martial law in the face of "an active, daring and powerful army" Places of business were ordered closed and the citizens were impressed to begin fortifying the city. Everyone was expected to assist in the patriotic work: "The willing shall be promptly credited," the commander stated, and "the unwilling promptly visited." The New York Herald correctly observed that the Rebels would not venture to cross the Ohio in the face of Federal gunboats on the river. But the newspaper feared that Cincinnati, composed mostly of wooden frame structures, could be quickly destroyed by enemy shells from the river's southern banks; this was a possibility that Kirby Smith evidently did not consider.⁹

Kirby Smith's activities, once he possessed the prized Bluegrass, show an evident disregard for the troubled Bragg. In extensively dispersing his troops, Kirby Smith held a position that would not allow immediate concentrated action in Bragg's behalf. It was the younger commander's intent

8. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 807, 812.

9. New York Herald, September 3, 1862; Louisville Journal, September 13, 1862.

to accumulate provisions, disperse home guards, recruit, and, in compliance with Jefferson Davis' grand strategy, occupy land. These activities, inclusive of keeping a watchful eye on George Morgan, were what Kirby Smith felt to be of utmost importance. Once Bragg reached the Bluegrass, an immediate concentration of all Confederate forces was necessary. Kirby Smith was unable to initiate it.

Further disregard for Bragg's position may be seen in Kirby Smith's orders to Scott, which did not allow for any extensive assistance to Bragg. Also, the diversion toward Cincinnati could have extensively aided Bragg's advance had it been carried through. Major General H.G. Wright, Union commander of the Department of the Ohio, had seriously considered ordering his Louisville troops to Cincinnati for the defense of that city.¹⁰ Had Heth been allowed to initiate his attack on the enemy at Covington, the diversionary tactic might have been successful.

Kirby Smith's disregard for Bragg's situation was evidently caused by his complete confidence in Bragg's ability to capture Louisville and destroy Buell without aid. Indeed, Kirby Smith continually implored Bragg to turn against the Federal foe, who "has always been the great bugbear to these people."¹¹ Kirby Smith seemed more concerned with engaging and defeating George Morgan in his anticipated escape than

10. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 508.

11. Ibid., 866.

cooperating with Bragg. Seemingly fearful of a Federal advance from Cincinnati in cooperation with Morgan's retreat, Kirby Smith, in a letter to Bragg on September 19, again explained his view of cooperation south of Louisville: ". . . I would respectfully ask your attention to the exposed condition in which I should leave this valuable region, with a large force at Covington and Morgan approaching from the gap." Giving priority to the capture of George Morgan, Kirby Smith also stated: "A descent unexpectedly upon Richmond by the old troops of Morgan would at this time greatly embarrass me."¹²

Kirby Smith's evident reluctance to cooperate with Bragg has received extensive attention from historians of the campaign, yet there is still room for reevaluation. It is quite true that Kirby Smith's non-cooperative attitude proved to be one of several death blows to the campaign, but he is normally criticized for not cooperating merely to avoid being placed in a subordinate position under Bragg.¹³ Kirby Smith's letters, writings, and actions do not support this opinion. In his post-war reminiscence and in letters to both his wife and to Bragg, Kirby Smith often referred to his desire to cooperate and even to be a part of Bragg's command. On September 20, Kirby Smith wrote his wife of his intentions to cooperate:

12. Ibid., 850. See also, ibid., 861.

13. Connelly, Army of the Heartland, 193, 206. Williams, Lincoln Finds a General, IV, 112; Connelly and Jones, Politics of Command, 107; McWhiney, Bragg, 292.

". . . my little command is posted so as to cooperate with Bragg" He later wrote: "Gen[eral] Bragg is in command, and I am no longer at head of affairs, but have only to obey his orders."¹⁴ Following the war, he stated: ". . . all my movements are made under orders from Gen[eral] Bragg and in strict compliance with his instructions."¹⁵ These statements can, of course, be interpreted as self-serving; to place Bragg in command would release Kirby Smith from blame. Yet Kirby Smith's "non-cooperative attitude" can easily be seen in a different light.

Kirby Smith's objective of occupying the Bluegrass was complete. Beyond small scale diversionary movements, his force was too small to effectively initiate any further offensive activities. He realized this and therefore planned to junction with Bragg. The reason that the concentration of the two armies never materialized was not that Kirby Smith shunned loss of independence, but that he was in error concerning the priorities of the campaign. Kirby Smith felt that Bragg was in full command of the situation to the west and that a junction of the two armies was not necessary to the defeat of Buell. Kirby Smith viewed the Bluegrass as the primary objective of his portion of the campaign. He praised this centralized position; from Lexington he could move on

14. Kirby Smith to wife, September 20, 1862, Kirby Smith Papers.

15. Kirby Smith, "Kentucky Campaign Notes," Kirby Smith Papers.

Cincinnati, junction with Marshall, intercept George Morgan, or combine with Bragg as necessity commanded. He was positioned to accumulate vast amounts of needed supplies and solicit extremely essential enlistments. Kirby Smith was never aware of the high priority that should have been delegated to the concentration of Confederate forces below Louisville. When the order finally came for concentration, Kirby Smith shunned it, citing the importance of the Bluegrass to the campaign.¹⁶

Although in disagreement with Bragg's desire for a concentration near Bardstown, Kirby Smith, following orders, sent a division under Cleburne in that direction to "receive orders" and to "effect a junction" with Bragg's army. Supplies were also being accumulated at Frankfort for shipment to the rendezvous point at Bardstown.¹⁷ It seemed that the two forces were on the eve of concentration when, on September 16, George Morgan rallied his hungry and demoralized force for a desperate escape from Cumberland Gap. Correctly perceiving the Ohio River as Morgan's destination--and unwilling to accept the humiliation of a successful Federal escape--Kirby Smith withdrew his forces from the proposed junction with Bragg to intercept the fleeing Federals. Concentration would be delayed.

16. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 861. See also, Morrison, "Heth," 22.

17. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 845-46, 861.

Concentrating his entire army, Kirby Smith hoped to meet Morgan's retreating force near Mount Sterling. In a letter to Humphrey Marshall asking for assistance in capturing the fleeing Morgan, Kirby Smith again conveyed his disregard for the junction with Bragg and the extent of his confused priorities: "General Bragg writes me that he is marching upon Louisville, and that he wishes me to co-operate with him in an attack of that place. Of course if he wishes it I shall do so, but I have represented to him the exposed condition in which I shall have to leave this rich section, with an enemy toward Cincinnati and another toward the Gap."¹⁸ With his entire army concentrated at Mount Sterling, Kirby Smith had widened the gap between the two Confederate forces to one hundred miles.

George Morgan seemed trapped, but Marshall had been unwilling to cooperate with Kirby Smith. Marshall was a prominent Kentuckian and past Know-Nothing Congressman who had fled his home state under indictment for treason.¹⁹ Vastly unpopular with the loyal population of Kentucky, the grossly overweight Marshall was often the target of editorial ridicule. Upon learning that Marshall was entering Kentucky to join the invasion, the Louisville Journal began to prod: "It is said that Humphrey Marshall is coming this way. If any of our friends design drawing a bead upon him, . . . let them

18. Ibid., 846, 859.

19. Coulter, Civil War and Readjustment, 140-41.

practice beforehand at a barn door."²⁰

Marshall, in command of the separate Department of Western Virginia, agreed in early August to become part of the invasion of Kentucky. He was to enter into eastern Kentucky, and hold his command of 3,000 in readiness to cooperate with Bragg and Kirby Smith. But problems soon developed. On September 7, when it was necessary for Marshall to aid Heth in his advance toward Newport, Kirby Smith ordered Marshall to Heth's assistance.²¹ In obvious resentment, Marshall retorted: My orders "from the beginning were intended by the President to authorize me to raise a separate army to be commanded by myself. I shall cooperate with you very cordially in all my movements which in my judgement tend to the promotion of the good of our cause" Making sure that his point was clear, Marshall summarized: "I will command my own, under my orders, which are independent of those given you."²² Finally, after much coaxing by Kirby Smith, Bragg and Davis, Marshall was compelled to capitulate and move, though very slowly, toward Mount Sterling. He arrived there September 22.²³

As Kirby Smith's force arrived at Mount Sterling on

20. Louisville Journal, September 8, 1862.

21. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 751, 807. See also, Vol. X, pt. 2, 330.

22. Humphrey Marshall to Kirby Smith, Kirby Smith Papers (The Filson Club).

23. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 838, 845, 851, 859, 860, 861.

September 25, little was known of the condition of Morgan's army, yet an engagement was confidently expected. Unknown to the Confederates, Morgan's army was in no condition to fight. Cut off from the North by Kirby Smith's effective investment, the Federals at Cumberland Gap were on the verge of starvation. With options to surrender, starve, or evacuate, Morgan chose the latter, intending to escape farther to the east than Kirby Smith expected.²⁴

Morgan was thought to be planning his escape through Booneville toward Maysville, passing through Mount Sterling. Kirby Smith sent John Hunt Morgan's cavalry detachment to Irvine, near Booneville, to begin delaying tactics.²⁵ Aware of the trap that might be before him, George Morgan advanced along an old Indian trail to Manchester where he encountered John Hunt Morgan. The Confederate Morgan was an encumbrance to the Federal retreat, yet the larger Federal army managed to escape eastward to West Liberty and successfully cross the Ohio River at Greenup on October 3.²⁶ Kirby Smith remained concentrated at Mount Sterling; he was over sixty miles from the nearest point along Morgan's route of retreat and com-

24. Ibid., pt. 1, 993. Morgan later reported: "At this time September 12 we had gone six days without bread . . . and no more wheat could be obtained . . . we had only the alternatives of evacuation or surrender."

25. Ibid., pt. 2, 846, 849, 851.

26. George W. Morgan, "Cumberland Gap," Johnson and Buell, eds., Battles and Leaders, III, 68-69; OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 1, 994-95.

pletely out of touch with Bragg.

If no other criticisms of Kirby Smith are made, he is generally censured for allowing Morgan to escape. Even Joseph H. Parks, Kirby Smith's prestigious yet biased biographer, totally blames the young commander.²⁷ To his wife, Kirby Smith expressed his feelings on the expected events surrounding Morgan's retreat: It is "probable that Morgan will be forced westward through the Mountains to the Big Sandy and I shall finish with my command for the country west of Frankfort where after a junction with Bragg we will be in force to decide the fate of Kentucky."²⁸ Kirby Smith was correct in his feelings. The capture of Morgan was not necessary; forcing the Federal army out of the campaign relieved Kirby Smith of the fear of an attack from the south and allowed for the planned concentration with Bragg. Kirby Smith's fault lies in abandoning Bragg to move his entire army to Morgan's front. A more feasible plan would have been to dispatch a small force to cooperate with Marshall to drive Morgan to the east, out of the campaign.

On September 18, while at Munfordville, Bragg first received Kirby Smith's disappointing news of Kentucky's failure to rally to the Confederate cause. With this information, Bragg must have become aware that the campaign was beginning to deteriorate. He had based his plan of invasion upon two

27. Parks, Kirby Smith, 232.

28. Kirby Smith to wife, September 27, 1862, Kirby Smith Papers.

controlling factors. First, success depended upon cooperation from the various forces involved. Second, Kentucky had to rise and defend itself. Should either of the two contingencies fall short of Bragg's standards for success, the campaign could fail. Fearful that Kentucky might not reach enlistment expectations, Bragg felt that there was a need for more support from the commanders operating in Mississippi. On September 25, he telegraphed Van Dorn strong, precise instructions: "Push your columns to our support . . . push up to the Ohio."²⁹

Throughout the Kentucky invasion Price and Van Dorn had been severely negligent in their part of the campaign. Involved over a dispute of authority, the two commanders had allowed pride to supersede cooperation. Separated, the two armies were totally ineffective in the face of Grant and Rosecrans; but together, Price felt, the Confederates could defeat Rosecrans' inferior army at Corinth and march unopposed into Nashville. Van Dorn was not sure that Rosecrans' defeat was necessary and was content to remain idle and indecisive.³⁰

Finally, on September 9, when Price informed Van Dorn that he was initiating his plan alone, Van Dorn capitulated. On September 28, the two armies joined and advanced to their destruction at Corinth.³¹

29. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVII, pt. 2, 713.

30. Robert G. Hartje, Van Dorn, The Life and Times of a Confederate General (Nashville, 1967), 210-11.

31. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVII, pt. 2, 698; Hartje, Van Dorn, 212.

Although the elimination of Rosecrans' army would have greatly promoted Bragg's advance, a quick capture of Nashville was of greater importance. Prior to Buell's entrance into Louisville, the Federal supply lines extended to Nashville. Its capture would have severely retarded Buell's activities. The recapture of Nashville and Middle Tennessee would have cast the Confederacy in a favorable light internationally, leading to possible foreign recognition. From the standpoint of troop and civilian morale, the reinstatement of the Tennessee state government could have had an important effect. Nashville was a centrally located southern capital; it was a point of control of the lower Cumberland and a center for agricultural trade. The strategic importance of Corinth as a rail center should not be underestimated, but its importance should have been considered secondary to that of Nashville. The defeat of Van Dorn and Price at Corinth would have no small effect upon Bragg's decision to leave Kentucky.

As Kirby Smith moved out of supporting distance, as Price and Van Dorn failed in their mission, and as the expected 30,000 Kentucky recruits had barely amounted to a brigade, the beginnings of failure must have been evident to Bragg. Indeed, just after arriving in Bardstown, Bragg conveyed his pessimism to the Adjutant General at Richmond on September 25:

We have so far received no accession to this army. General Smith has secured about a brigade--not half our losses by casualties of different kinds. Had the forces in North Mississippi moved as ordered . . . we might have made some headway. Unless a change occurs soon

we must abandon the garden spot of Kentucky to its cupidity.³²

Bragg's despondency must have reached its limits when, on October 3, he discovered that Breckinridge had just reached Knoxville. Having "encountered every difficulty a man could meet,"³³ Breckinridge had been detained in Mississippi by Van Dorn. Feeling the necessity to retain the Kentuckian for his own campaigns, Van Dorn was finally forced to release him, but only under direct orders from Richmond. With only one-third of his division, "all that General Van Dorn would let me have," Breckinridge traveled by rail to Knoxville, via Mobile, Alabama.³⁴ Arriving in Knoxville on October 3, Breckinridge was again delayed by the lack of transportation. But he was soon able to organize his army, now reinforced to 8,000, and move toward Kentucky.³⁵ Before he was able to cross into his home state, the Kentucky campaign had ended.

Frustrated by the failure of his subordinate commanders to cooperate, Bragg concentrated his energy toward filling his empty ranks with Kentuckians in hopes of saving the campaign. Upon entering Kentucky, both Bragg and Kirby Smith

32. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 876.

33. Ibid., 999.

34. William C. Davis, Breckinridge; Statesman, Soldier, Symbol (Baton Rouge, 1974), 326; OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 852, 997.

35. Davis, Breckinridge, 327-28; OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 997.

issued proclamations to the people of the state.³⁶ In both cases the invading commanders asked that the citizens rise and drive the Federals from Kentucky soil. But the citizens of Kentucky, as in the past, did not respond. Following the campaign, Bragg displayed to his wife his feelings on Kentucky's failure to support his army: "Why then should I stay with my brave southern men to fight for cowards who skulked about in the dark to say to us 'we are with you,' 'only whip these fellows out of our country, and let us see you can protect us, and we will join you.'"³⁷

Many prospective Kentucky recruits feared that if they joined or supported the Confederate columns, they might later be punished by the Federals should the Confederates be unable to defend the state. To offer these Union-fearing, southern sympathizers a strong argument for joining his army, Bragg hoped to force them into service through conscription. The plan, Bragg thought, might be aided by an officially installed Confederate governor at Frankfort. Richard Hawes, upon having been named Lieutenant Governor at the Russellville convention in 1861, was the successor to the office of Confederate Governor of Kentucky following George W. Johnson's death at Shiloh. The inaugural ceremony was merely intended to add

36. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 822-23. Copy titled, "Address to the Kentuckians when the Confederate Army Entered the State," Kirby Smith Papers. Bragg and Kirby Smith were each armed with a proclamation written by Davis, but neither commander distributed it widely. Rowland, ed., Jefferson Davis, V, 338-39. See also, Vandiver, Their Tattered Flags, 158-60.

37. Bragg to wife, November 9, 1862, Special Collections (University of Kentucky, Lexington, Ky.).

a necessary degree of convincing legality to Bragg's plans for conscription.

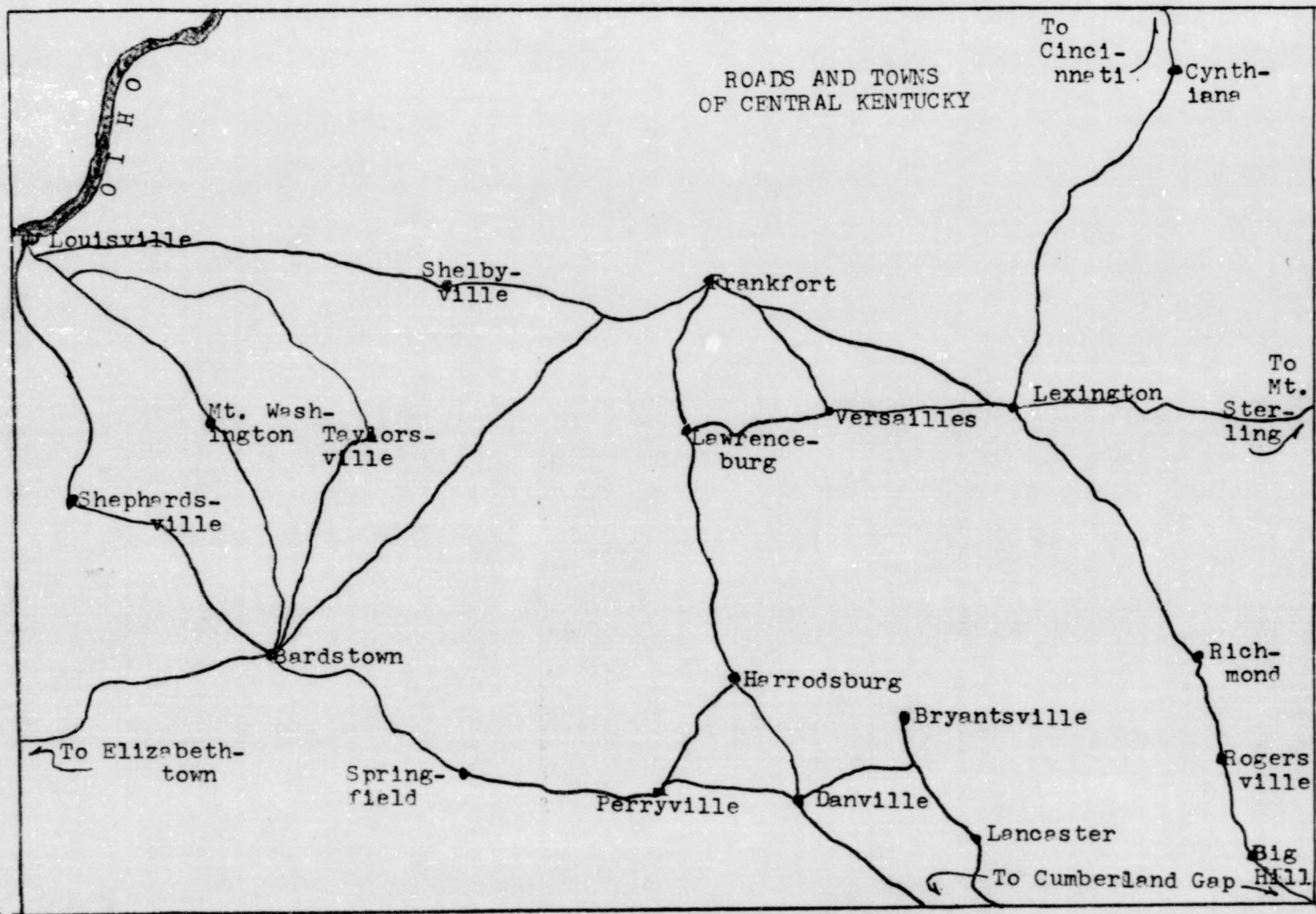
Failing to learn from past experience and assuming that Buell's army was demoralized and cumbersome, Bragg postponed decisions for the defense of central Kentucky to officiate personally at the inaugural ceremony.³⁸ Polk was left in command of the main force at Bardstown while Bragg leisurely toured the Bluegrass toward the state capital. At Frankfort, Bragg and Buckner, in conjunction with Kirby Smith (recently back from Mount Sterling), planned a gala inaugural celebration that was to become one of the campaign's most embarrassing events.

In order to receive a possible--yet unexpected--advance from Louisville, Bragg suggested to Polk that a defensive arc might be constructed from Elizabethtown to Shelbyville. If a retreat became necessary, Polk was to fall back upon Harrodsburg, via Perryville and Mackville.³⁹ Assuming that Polk could control the situation, Bragg began his excursion to Frankfort upon the assumption that Buell would not venture from his Louisville stronghold for several weeks.

On October 2, Bragg relayed to Polk information that the Federals were active near Shelbyville. Bragg assumed that it was merely a reconnaissance force, "but should it be a

38. Polk had informed Bragg on September 30 of the "great demoralization of Buell's army, arising from Lincoln's proclamation" OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 892.

39. Ibid., 291-92; pt. 1, 1109; Joseph H. Parks, General Leonidas Polk, The Fighting Bishop (Baton Rouge, 1962), 262.



ROADS AND TOWNS
OF CENTRAL KENTUCKY

To Cincinnati

Cynthiana

Louisville

Shelbyville

Frankfort

Mt. Washington
Taylorsville

Shepherdsville

Lawrenceburg

Versailles

Lexington

To Mt. Sterling

Bardstown

Harrodsburg

Bryantsville

Richmond

To Elizabethtown

Springfield

Perryville

Danville

Rogersville

Lancaster

To Cumberland Gap

Big Hill

real attack," he wrote, "we have them." On the afternoon of the same day, Bragg was more positive. "The enemy is certainly advancing on Frankfort," he informed Polk. "Put your whole available force in motion . . . and strike him in flank and rear."⁴⁰ Before he received Bragg's order, Polk reported that the Federals were advancing toward Bardstown in three columns. The Federal right was located near Shephardsville, the left was at Taylorsville, and the center was advancing near Mount Washington. Polk informed his commander that if the opportunity presented itself, he would strike, but if a retreat became necessary, "I will according to your suggestion, fall back on Harrodsburg and Danville . . . with the view of concentrating with [Kirby] Smith."⁴¹

Following the war, Kirby Smith claimed that he and Buckner attempted to persuade Bragg to abandon the inaugural plans in favor of an immediate concentration of the divided Confederate forces. Bragg was said to have retorted that his force at Bardstown was sufficiently strong to repel any advance upon that position.⁴² If Kirby Smith's recollection can be accepted, it is evident that Bragg was not at all aware of the situation facing him.

The Federal advance continued on the Bardstown position. By October 3, Taylorsville and Shephardsville had fallen to

40. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 896-97.

41. Ibid., 898.

42. Kirby Smith to J. Stoddard Johnston, October 31, 1866, J. Stoddard Johnston Papers.

the oncoming Federals, and the advance from Mount Washington had developed to within twelve miles of Bardstown. On the afternoon of October 3, Polk received Bragg's order to move directly to the right of the oncoming force, striking the enemy's right near Shelbyville. Polk called a council of his corps and divisional commanders to decide what should be done in light of the recently received information. That afternoon, he informed Bragg of their unanimous decision. "The last twenty-four hours have developed a condition of things on my front and left flank . . . which makes compliance with this order not only eminently inexpedient but impracticable." Polk continued, "I shall therefore pursue a different course, assured that when facts are submitted to you you will justify my decision."⁴³

Polk felt that Buell's entire force was converging on Bardstown and that a movement toward Shelbyville or Frankfort would expose his left and rear to inescapable attack. Polk and his subordinate commanders elected to follow Bragg's original order and fall back toward Harrodsburg and Danville.

For defying Bragg's order, Polk has been severely criticized, especially by Bragg's most recent biographer Grady McWhiney. It is McWhiney's contention that had Polk followed orders, he could have effectively initiated the advance to-

43. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 900-901. Brigadier General Patton Anderson--present at the council--later claimed that he was in favor of Bragg's plan; he feared for the safety of Kirby Smith's army at Frankfort. Patton Anderson to Bragg, April 15, 1863, Palmer Collection; OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 1, 1099-1100.

ward Shelbyville by screening his force from a flank attack through skillful use of his cavalry.⁴⁴ Although McWhiney completely discards that Bragg was ignorant of the Federal force moving on Bardstown, this theory should not be rejected. McWhiney's argument that Polk could have completed the march to Shelbyville without engaging the Federal left is weak. However, in stating that Polk's army would have been in no danger of being defeated had an engagement occurred, McWhiney's argument merits scrutiny. In pointing out that the Federal left--commanded by Major General Alexander McCook--wavered from an attack by the same Confederate force several days later at Perryville, McWhiney assumes that McCook could not have obstructed Polk's advance around the Federal left. Bragg's biographer continues his argument by adding that the dispersed Confederate force would have been in a better position for support had a battle occurred near Taylorsville, rather than Danville.⁴⁵ McWhiney's argument is not without value, but other possibilities should also be considered. The only cavalry forces under Polk's command were led by Wheeler and Colonel Jonathan A. Wharton. Although Wheeler commanded an excellent brigade, Wharton did not, and both forces were divided and spent in the face of the onrushing Federals. It is doubtful that any effective screening could have occurred. Also, McWhiney does not explore the possibility

44. McWhiney, Bragg, 303.

45. Ibid., 303-06; McWhiney, "Controversy," 26.

that the Federal center--commanded by Major General C.C. Gilbert--could have joined McCook by moving only twelve miles from Mount Washington. Colonel Joshua Sill, commanding the Federal feint near Shelbyville, was less than eighteen miles from Taylorsville and might have joined forces with McCook. Other conjectural factors on both sides of the argument might also be added, such as the time and length of battle, Polk's ability to move swiftly, and the ability of Gilbert and Sill to initiate flanking movements. Kirby Smith's possible entrance into the projected battle might also be considered. Had Polk carried out Bragg's orders, the Confederates might have been able to establish an advantage over their enemy, but even McWhiney agrees that retreat toward Danville was the safest course to follow.⁴⁶

Polk may not be easily criticized for disregarding Bragg's order, but he obviously declined to inform Bragg of his knowledge of the strength or movement of the enemy, and for this he can be severely criticized. It was evident to Polk that Bragg was in the dark concerning the situation, but the only information that Polk offered was that conditions had changed on the Bardstown front and that his army was in an easterly route.⁴⁷ Although Polk was certainly unaware of much of the Federal activity, his negligence in relaying any available information to his commander was inexcusable.

46. McWhiney, Bragg, 306; McWhiney, "Controversy," 28.

47. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 901; Connelly, Army of the Heartland, 248.

In the evening of October 3, Bragg finally became aware that the Federal force advancing on Frankfort was a feint, but he was mistaken when he reported that it had ceased. Again, the commander exhibited that he was not fully knowledgeable of the situation when he suggested that Polk establish a flank at Taylorsville, a position already occupied by the Federals.⁴⁸

Bragg was thoroughly confused. Cleburne--a capable officer--warned that the principal Federal advance was moving via Shepardsville toward Frankfort. William Hardee, under Polk's command at Harrodsburg, was in agreement.⁴⁹ In the face of confusion and necessity for decisive action, Bragg was determined to continue the inaugural festivities. Confusing his priorities, the commander announced that he would first inaugurate Hawes, "then I propose to seek out the enemy."⁵⁰

The ceremony proceeded as planned, but as the crowd roared upon the completion of the new governor's speech, so did Federal cannon from across the Kentucky River. Now even more confused, Bragg assumed that the force before Frankfort was too strong to be resisted and he quickly departed for Harrodsburg. Kirby Smith was ordered to retreat to Versailles to ready his forces for a momentary junction with Polk's army.⁵¹

48. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 903.

49. Ibid., 898; Hardee to Bragg, October 2, 1862, Palmer Collection.

50. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 905.

51. Kirby Smith, "Kentucky Campaign Notes," Kirby Smith Papers; Hammond, "The Campaign of Kirby Smith," No. 4, 458-59; OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 1, 1091.

Although temporarily distracted, Bragg finally began to see the necessity of a speedy junction with Kirby Smith in the face of Buell's deceptive advance. Exhibiting a recurrent military shortcoming, Bragg had again underestimated the ability of his foe.

Buell's strategy was both aggressive and tactically shrewd. Upon entering Louisville on September 30, he was able to supply and reorganize his army within three days for a sudden and startling advance on the Bluegrass. Aware that the Confederate forces had still neglected to combine, Buell, at the head of 60,000 men, marched toward Bardstown on three converging roads. In command of the Federal left, McCook moved via Taylorsville. Advancing through Mount Washington, Gilbert commanded the Federal center. The right, led by Major General T.L. Crittenden, advanced along the Shephardsville road. The brilliance of Buell's strategy was in sending Sill and Colonel Ebenezer Dumont toward Frankfort to keep Kirby Smith's army from effecting a junction with the Confederates at Bardstown. The feint was surely more successful than Buell had anticipated. Not only were the two forces kept from joining, but the Confederate command was left in a state of perplexity.⁵²

Following the war, Kirby Smith severely criticized Bragg for not anticipating Buell's movements. But not only was Kirby Smith equally confused, he complicated matters.

52. Chumney, "Buell," 161, 167-68; OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 1, 372, 1024, 1028.

Through inadequate surveillance, he received information that the Federal left was advancing on Frankfort. Reporting this to Bragg, Kirby Smith implied that he might soon be overwhelmed. To confuse the situation further, Kirby Smith sent several other urgent messages to Bragg that were described by a member of Bragg's staff as "announcing the concentration of enemy forces, evidently with a design on Frankfort and Lexington and begging for help."⁵³

Acting only on Kirby Smith's urgent reply, Bragg devised a new plan; he decided to move his army north from Harrodsburg to attack the enemy at Frankfort. To aid Kirby Smith as quickly as possible, Bragg sent Major General Jones M. Withers' division from Polk's command to Kirby Smith's support.⁵⁴

Lacking credible information contrary to Kirby Smith's communications, Bragg again planned to concentrate his forces before the Federal advance near Frankfort. Bragg arrived at Harrodsburg on October 6 and conferred with Polk on the situation. Bragg would not allow his position to be changed, and the next day he ordered concentration at Versailles, where he expected the battle for Kentucky to take place. However,

53. Kirby Smith, "Kentucky Campaign Notes," Kirby Smith Papers. Kirby Smith reported Rouseau and McCook before Frankfort as the main Federal advance. Brent Diary, October 5-6, 1862, Palmer Collection. See also, June I. Gow, "The Johnston and Brent Diaries: A Problem of Authorship," Civil War History, XIV (March, 1968), 46-50.

54. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 1, 1092; Bragg to Kirby Smith, October 5, 1862, Palmer Collection.

before the orders could be distributed, Bragg received word that Hardee was being pressed at Perryville. Bragg immediately ordered the Confederate forces in that area to converge on the Federals. Having routed them, Polk was to move to Kirby Smith's aid at Versailles.⁵⁵ Bragg was still confused.

To add to the quandry, Scott reported that the main Federal force was en route to Frankfort. Bragg certainly felt that his plan was sound: eliminate the annoying force before Perryville and turn his combined force toward the Federal army near Frankfort. From the information that Bragg had received, destruction of the divided Federal army seemed certain.

On October 7, Bragg received a less than urgent message from Hardee stating that the enemy was pressing him hard and that a concentration on the Perryville front would be advised. Battle could be expected the next day, but all other information indicated that the major advance was still toward the Frankfort-Versailles front.⁵⁶

Still confused on the evening of October 7, Bragg ordered Polk to dispose of the force before Perryville, "then move to our support at Versailles."⁵⁷ That night, in reply to Bragg's order to dispatch Wither's division to Kirby Smith's aid, Hardee briefly impressed upon Bragg his knowledge of

55. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 1, 1091-92; pt. 2, 919-924.

56. Ibid., pt. 1, 1092, 1120.

57. Ibid., 1096.

military science: "Do not scatter your forces. There is one rule in our profession which should never be forgotten; it is to throw the masses of your troops on the fractions of the enemy. The movement last proposed will divide your army and each may be defeated, whereas by keeping them united success is certain." Hardee continued his lecture on tactics. "If it be your policy to strike the enemy at Versailles, take your whole force with you and make the blow effective; if, on the contrary, you should decide to strike in front of me, first let that be done with a force which will make success certain."⁵⁸

As a student, author, and teacher of military tactics, Hardee was certainly qualified to offer suggestions to Bragg on the topic, but the information was condescendingly elementary and certainly embarrassing to Bragg. The real fault with Hardee's letter--as with Polk's--was its lack of information. Hardee offered no account of his situation, or of the size of the Federal force before him. Still in the dark, Bragg did not employ Hardee's advice, as Withers pushed on to Versailles.

Both Polk and Hardee were also confused as to the situation. The often made contention that the two subordinate commanders were engaged in a type of malicious conspiracy against Bragg seems improbable. Although both later organized against their commander, neither Polk nor Hardee re-

58. Ibid., 1099.

requested reinforcements or relayed any information concerning the size of the Federal force on the Perryville front. From the Confederate cavalry, information was sparse and sketchy, offering no perception of the Federal intent. The plans for the next day's battle were constructed against an unseen, uncalculated enemy by three nearly sightless Confederate commanders.⁵⁹

Bragg had previously planned to direct the activities on the Frankfort-Versailles front, but, feeling that his presence might be needed at Perryville, he rode there on the morning of October 8. Upon arriving, he received information that Wheeler's cavalry had fought desperately late the night before for an essential waterhole on Doctor's Creek, and that the cavalry commander had represented the enemy force as larger than expected. Despite that information, Bragg was determined to carry out his plans. Angry that Polk had not commenced with the ordered battle, Bragg made some troop adjustments and, in the early afternoon, ordered his gray columns forward.⁶⁰

Cheatham was to lead the attack of the Confederate right into the Union left, located, Bragg thought, to the north of the Mackville road. This attack was to be followed by Hardee's corps, led by Cleburne's brigade, into the Federal center, which Bragg assumed was located between the Mackville

59. McWhiney, "Controversy," 30.

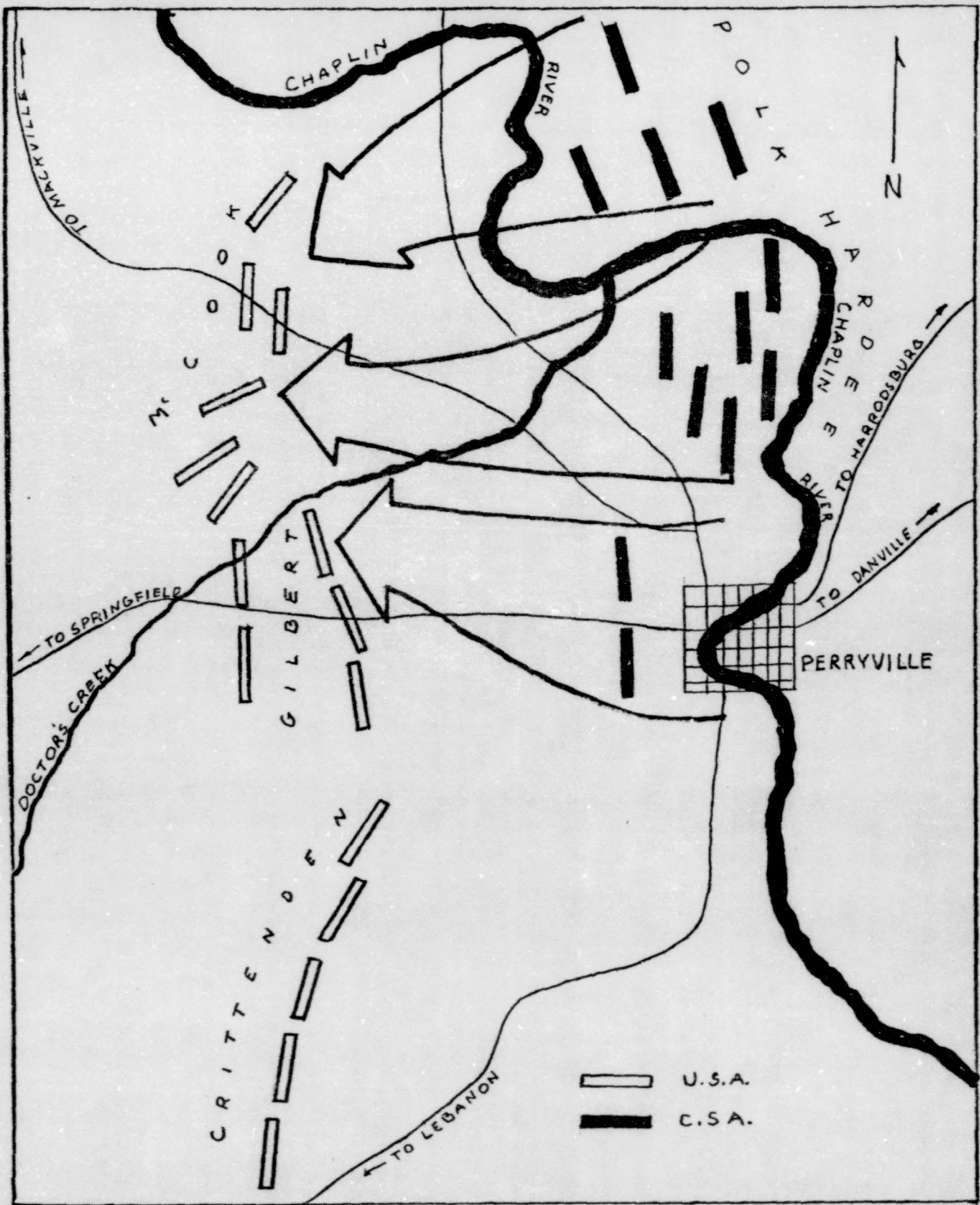
60. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 1, 1092-93, 896-97; Wheeler, "Bragg's Invasion," 15.

road and Doctor's Creek. The Confederate left, commanded by Brigadier General Patton Anderson, was merely to occupy those Federal forces south of Doctor's Creek--presumably the Federal right--until the enemy's left could be crushed.⁶¹ What Bragg did not realize was that the Federal right, an entire corps under Crittenden, had not yet reached the battlefield. Attacking the Federal left and center under the erroneous assumption that Buell's entire army was before him, Bragg's army would have been subjected to a crushing flank attack from the Federal right except that the Union commanders were even more confused than were the Confederates.⁶²

After some disturbing delays, the two forces implemented their planned strategies. Cheatham's corps at first faltered, but scrambled viciously and pushed the Union left back nearly two miles. Aiming at the Federal position to the left of Mackville road, Cleburne's ferocious attack shattered the Union position, driving them back several miles. In the late evening, Brigadier General St. John Liddell's brigade was released into the last remnants of the Federal center.

61. Johnston, "Bragg's Campaign," Johnston Papers; McWhiney, Bragg, 216; OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 1, 1025.

62. Connelly, Army of the Heartland, 260; McWhiney, "Controversy," 34. In his official report, Crittenden, in command of the Federal right, stated that he "reached Perryville . . . about 10 or 11 o'clock" A.M. on October 8. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 1, 527. Hardee, in his report of December 1, 1862, gives no indication that he was aware of the Federal corps on the right. Ibid., 1120-21. Polk later stated that there was "good reason to believe" that Crittenden was in the vicinity, but an extensive distance from the battlefield. Ibid., 1110.



THE BATTLE OF PERRYVILLE

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The result was a disintegration of the enemy position.⁶³

The Federal left, commanded by McCook, was so roughly handled, that Buell later described it as "very much crippled"; a portion of it "almost entirely disappeared as a body." Strategically, the Federals had fought poorly. Due to a flagrant deficiency in the Federal communications, Buell's corps commanders neglected to report the engagement until four o'clock on the day of the battle.⁶⁴ Sending less than two-thirds of his 60,000 man army into the engagement, Buell allowed victory to slip from his grasp as the hands of 16,000 Confederates.

Through the benefit of captured enemy information, the night of October 8 brought Bragg the startling news of the odds against which his army had been fighting. As Wheeler later stated: ". . . Perryville was not a proper place for sixteen thousand men to form and wait the choice of time and manner of attack by Buell" ⁶⁵ The only alternative

63. Connelly, Army of the Heartland, 265; Wheeler, "Bragg's Invasion," 16-17; OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 1, 1121, 1110-11, 1157-59; Hambleton Tapp, "The Battle of Perryville, 1862" The Filson Club Historical Quarterly, IX (July, 1935), 158-81; Ralph A. Wooster, "Confederate Success at Perryville," Register of the Kentucky Historical Society, LIX (October, 1961), 318-23.

64. Due to what Buell later referred to as "configuration of the ground," the sounds of the battle did not reach his headquarters, ten miles to the west of the battlefield. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 1, 51, 1027.

65. Wheeler, "Bragg's Invasion," 15. Bragg received the information of Federal strength from captured prisoners and the accidental discovery of McCook's papers and baggage. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 1, 1121; Johnston Diary, October 8, 1862, Johnston Papers.

to destruction was retreat. Bragg, Polk and Hardee concurred; junction with Kirby Smith had too long been delayed.

Early on October 9, Buell, expecting the battle to resume, ordered Thomas to attack with the Federal right that had been denied action the day before. At daybreak, and with victory in sight, the blue columns moved upon the battlefield only to discover the Rebels en route to Harrodsburg, their point of concentration.⁶⁶

During the days prior to the Perryville battle, Kirby Smith was concentrating his forces near Lawrenceburg for a projected encounter with the enemy force in that direction. On October 7 he was informed that an enemy force of 20,000 was crossing the river at Frankfort. To meet this threat he informed Bragg that he planned to send two brigades under Churchill and Withers around to the enemy's rear. The commander then planned to move with the remainder of his force upon the enemy's front. If the Federals retreated before the ninth, the Army of Kentucky would move toward Buell's rear or flank. Hoping for a decisive victory, Kirby Smith advanced toward Lawrenceburg on October 9 and unsuccessfully engaged Sill at Dry Ridge. In reporting the situation to Bragg, Kirby Smith displayed his degree of confusion by informing his commander that McCook might be moving toward Buell's support at Perryville.⁶⁷ Kirby Smith must have been

66. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 1, 1027.

67. Ibid., 920, 925, 927; Hammond, "The Campaign of Kirby Smith," No. 5, 70-71.

astonished to learn, upon receiving orders to concentrate at Harrodsburg, that "the battle for Kentucky" had been fought without his knowledge.

Kirby Smith's army reached Harrodsburg on October 10 only to find the rear of the Confederate main force in departure for Bryantsville. At Harrodsburg, Kirby Smith and Bragg conferred for the third time during the campaign. During the conference, Bragg received information that the enemy was approaching from the south along the Perryville road. To avoid a flank attack, Bragg ordered Polk to halt and form into line of battle along the Bryantsville road. Kirby Smith was ordered to take position west of Harrodsburg across the Salt River.⁶⁸

Kirby Smith later reported that it was through his insistence that Bragg formed into battle line. "For God's sake, General," Kirby Smith was to have implored, "let us fight here. I believe that without a command even, our men would run over Buell's army" Bragg was to have replied, "I will do it sir. Select your position, put your men in line of battle and I will countermarch my column."⁶⁹ Although most unlikely, this dramatization has led to the mistaken contention that Bragg, upon leaving the Harrodsburg defense line, cowered in the face of certain victory. By

68. Hammond, "The Campaign of Kirby Smith," No. 5, 70-1.

69. Kirby Smith, "Kentucky Campaign Notes," Kirby Smith Papers.

ordering Kirby Smith to evacuate the Frankfort-Versailles line, Bragg had uncovered the supply depot at Lexington. His obvious move was toward Bryantsville, the last remaining Confederate supply depot in Kentucky. By moving from Perryville, through Danville, to Bryantsville, the most direct route, Bragg would have allowed the enemy to move northward from Perryville toward Harrodsburg, thus cutting the Confederate forces in two. By moving toward Harrodsburg, Bragg proposed to prevent this. He had not planned to give battle at Harrodsburg, and probably did not even intend to stop there. His only intentions were to avoid the splitting of his forces and to join with Kirby Smith. Once these objectives were attained, Bragg planned to move the entire Confederate force to the base at Bryantsville where battle plans could be made. At Harrodsburg, Bragg was forced to set his army into line of battle to avoid a flank attack from the approaching Federal columns. The battle position at Harrodsburg, despite Kirby Smith's insistence to the contrary, was not advantageous. The Confederates would have been forced to fight with the Kentucky River at their backs and to surrender the vital supplies at Bryantsville. Bragg also received information that Dumont's force was advancing from Frankfort and threatening to cross the Kentucky River in his rear. Once Bragg received information that Buell had turned southwardly of the Perryville road toward Danville, he immediately--and wisely--put his army into motion toward Bryantsville. The contention that Bragg lost his

nerve at Harrodsburg is without basis.⁷⁰

The situation at Bryantsville was grim indeed; it offered one of the greatest disappointments of the campaign. On September 27, Bragg had ordered all supplies at Danville and Lexington to be concentrated at Bryantsville and Camp Dick Robinson, but the quartermaster corps had failed to carry out the orders. Only four day's rations were stored at the Bryantsville depot when the Confederate army arrived.⁷¹

Lacking sufficient supplies to take the offensive and with Buell's army reported in nearly every direction, Bragg decided to retreat from the uncooperative state when he received the discouraging information that Price and Van Dorn had been defeated at Corinth.⁷²

With this defeat, Bragg commanded the only effective Confederate military force between the Appalachians and the Mississippi. He remembered Davis' order not to risk the loss

70. Connelly, Army of the Heartland, 268-69. For the more popular opinion that Bragg cowered at Harrodsburg, see Parks, Kirby Smith, 237; Horn, Army of Tennessee, 187; Parks, Polk, 373-74; Hammond, "The Campaign of Kirby Smith," No. 5, 71-2; Chumney, "Buell," 177; Williams, Lincoln Finds a General, IV, 136-37; Nathaniel Cheairs Hughes, Jr. General William J. Hardee, Old Reliable (Baton Rouge, 1965), 133. For an account of these activities from a Federal viewpoint, see, OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 1, 52-4. Bragg may have also considered the possibility of a Federal advance from Cincinnati, which was being organized. Ibid., pt. 2, 603; Ibid., pt. 1, 1093.

71. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 833; Hammond, "The Campaign of Kirby Smith," No. 5, 74.

72. The Corinth defeat was reported in the Cincinnati Enquirer on October 6, but it is generally assumed that Bragg did not receive the information until October 12 at Bryantsville. See, McWhiney, Bragg, 321.

of his army; retreat from Kentucky seemed the only alternative to such disaster.

Following some deliberation, Bragg's subordinate officers delivered a unanimous vote to retreat from Kentucky, and plans were initiated at once.⁷³ With Cumberland Gap as the objective, Kirby Smith marched via Big Hill while Bragg retreated along the Crab Orchard-Mount Vernon route.

Although Buell did not effectively press the demoralized Confederates, the retreat for Kirby Smith was long and hard. The ascent of Big Hill was extremely difficult for the wagon trains. Throughout the trip, most of the Army of Kentucky was employed foraging for food.⁷⁴ Kirby Smith arrived in Knoxville on October 26, tired and discouraged. With the failure of the Kentucky campaign behind him, he concentrated on his departmental duties.

73. Although, at first, Kirby Smith disagreed, he later reported to J. Stoddard Johnston: ". . . under these circumstances I should no longer oppose [Bragg's] determination." Kirby Smith to J. Stoddard Johnston, October 31, 1862, Johnston Papers.

74. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 975.

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS

The campaign ended in nearly complete failure. Having entered Kentucky with the hopes of capturing the state and driving the invading Federals from the deep South, Bragg and Kirby Smith were forced to suffer a seemingly humiliating retreat. In a last desperate attempt to seize triumph from disgrace, Kirby Smith, on October 17, asked Polk: "Cannot we unite and end this disastrous retreat by a glorious victory?"¹ But the troops were jaded, divided, and demoralized.

The Confederate commanders rationalized the campaign as a success by citing the fear that was struck in the North, the southern initiative in the campaign, the importance of delaying Federal advancements into the South, and the amount of supplies captured; but the direct results were negative. The Federal army was still undaunted, the pro-Confederate government was forced to flee Kentucky, and recruiting was scant.²

The rationalization that Bragg and Kirby Smith left Kentucky with enough supplies to make the campaign a worthwhile effort is a standard myth. As late as the end of October, Bragg's superiors were asking why he had left Ken-

1. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 959.

2. Ibid., pt. 1, 1094. Kirby Smith, "Kentucky Campaign Notes," Kirby Smith Papers; Vandiver, Their Tattered Flags, 162.

tucky with his army so well supplied. Actually, the Confederate soldiers were nearer to starvation. Although Bragg's trains were reported to be forty-five miles long, a large number were filled with guns to arm the expected 20,000 Kentucky recruits. Kirby Smith reported that "not less than 10,000 [of his men were] scattered through the country trying to find something upon which to live." The next day, he informed Bragg that his men were "worn down from exposure and lack of food." This is hardly the report of a commander at the head of extensive supply trains.³

As the columns reached their destinations in Middle Tennessee, a critical clamor began that, within a year, would upset the entire organization of the western department. As each officer attempted to lead the finger of blame away from himself, Bragg became the center of censure and the chief scapegoat of the campaign; Polk and Hardee became the leading critics. They openly exhibited their discontent over the outcome of the campaign and their dislike for Bragg.

Polk stated that Bragg had lost the respect of his men, and, concerning Bragg's attempt to prove that Polk had disobeyed orders at Bardstown, Polk informed Hardee that the "implied censure . . . lacks foundation and fails." Not accepting Hardee's offer to "rip up the campaign [and] tear Bragg to tatters,"⁴ Polk would wait for another time to

3. Connelly and Jones, Politics of Command, 77; OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 975.

4. Ibid., Vol. XVIII, pt. 2, 632-33; William Polk, Leonidas Polk, Bishop and General (2 vols., New York, 1915), II, 165; OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 1, 1103, 1098.

assist in pressuring Bragg from command.

The most serious outcome of the Kentucky campaign was the formation of an anti-Bragg coalition. This dissident association was led by Polk and Hardee, but was reinforced by disenchanting Kentuckians. They felt that their home state would offer more to the Confederate cause if again invaded under a more aggressive commander, General Joseph E. Johnston in particular. Breckinridge led the influential Kentuckians in this opinion, followed by Buckner, Morgan, Marshall, Hawes, and various other persuasive personalities.⁵

The anti-Bragg group grew numerically and became more vocal following the Murfreesboro campaign. But Davis' faith in Bragg, coupled with a relocation of several of the more vocal members, quelled the opposition throughout the summer of 1863. Despite Bragg's September victory at Chickamauga, the opposition faction rose again, adding another influential commander to its ranks, Major General James Longstreet. In an attempt to throw their entire influence into a single demand for Bragg's removal, the anti-Bragg dissidents destroyed themselves. Davis sided with Bragg on the heated issue. The opposition commanders were relocated or demoted, and much of

5. The anti-Bragg faction is used here as a collective term to include three anti-Bragg coalitions: the Kentucky bloc, composed of influential Kentuckians, both military and political, basically concerned with gaining Kentucky for the Confederacy; the Albion-Colombia bloc, composed of the members of the William Preston family; and the anti-Bragg bloc, composed of Bragg's corps commanders. Connelly and Jones, Politics of Command, 55-72; McWhiney, Bragg, 374-392; Davis, Breckinridge, 350-362.

the western department was reorganized.⁶

Because of his transfer to the Trans-Mississippi, Kirby Smith was not an active participant in the anti-Bragg movements, but he certainly sympathized with its objective. Possessing a somewhat restrained personality, it is surprising that the initial and some of the most severe bits of criticism came from Kirby Smith. Following the campaign, Heth wrote of Kirby Smith's opinion that Bragg "had lost his mind" and that Kirby Smith intended to "so state in his report to Mr. Davis."⁷ Although never published, Kirby Smith's report evidently did not contain the extreme accusation, owing apparently to a cooled temper and a reconciliatory meeting in Richmond with Bragg, Polk, and Davis. Kirby Smith was content to enter into his personal notes his various disagreements and objections to Bragg's conduct at particular points during the campaign. The criticisms are of no surprise. Kirby Smith censured Bragg for not fighting at Cave City, Munfordville, and Harrodsburg. He also found Bragg guilty of allowing Buell to enter Louisville, for being misinformed as to the enemy's location prior to the Perryville battle, and for leaving Kentucky in the face of an "inferior force largely made up of new levies." Kirby Smith refused to cooperate with Bragg in the Murfreesboro campaign until strongly persuaded by Davis and even then cooperation was indifferent at best. As Kirby Smith was

6. Connelly and Jones, Politics of Command, 71-72; Parks, Polk, 343-44.

7. Morrison, "Heth," 23-24.

rapidly progressing toward a leadership position in the informal anti-Bragg coalition, he was transferred to the Trans-Mississippi on March 7, 1863.⁸

The importance of the anti-Bragg coalition was that it arose from the controversies of the Kentucky campaign, and that it hampered Bragg's activities throughout 1863. Bragg attacked his opposition in a near-neurotic manner; at times he became totally obsessed with the delegation of blame to his subordinates. Following the Kentucky campaign, Polk and Breckinridge became Bragg's most frequent scapegoats. This censure intensified following Murfreesboro, as both generals failed to meet Bragg's prescribed commands. These fiery criticisms led to frequent accusatory letters to Davis by both Bragg and his opponents. These correspondences caused many to believe that Bragg was more concerned with winning a battle in Richmond than on the battlefield, and the commander became increasingly unpopular.⁹

Despite his victory at Chickamauga, Bragg was again branded as a loser for not pursuing the defeated enemy. Having been victorious over his subordinate generals, he resigned his command shortly afterward, evidently satisfied that he had effectively vindicated himself. However, the

8. Kirby Smith, "Kentucky Campaign Notes," Kirby Smith Papers. See also, Kirby Smith to J. Stoddard Johnston, October 31, 1866, Johnston Papers; OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 975; Jefferson Davis to Kirby Smith, October 29, 1862, Kirby Smith Papers; OR., Ser. I, Vol. XXII, pt. 2, 787.

9. Connelly and Jones, Politics of Command, 63-64; Davis, Breckinridge, 351-54; OR., Ser. I, Vol. XXX, pt. 4, 705-706; ibid., Vol. LII, pt. 2, 426.

various historical works and reminiscences that followed the war tended to portray Bragg as a cowardly harlequin, or, at best, an overly cautious misfit. The anti-Bragg idea has continued on through the works of Stanley F. Horn, Joseph H. Parks and others with relentless censure and pungent criticism.¹⁰

Bragg is certainly open to criticism, yet more modern research has tended to exonerate him to a great degree. With increased historical emphasis on command organization and logistical planning, Bragg has emerged as a more competent commander than previously credited. Extended study of his decisions and decision making processes has developed a second opinion of Bragg, and projected the Confederate commander into a more favorable light. Although still portrayed as cautious and non-aggressive, Bragg is no longer isolated as the South's supreme example of ignorance and cowardice.¹¹

As one of Bragg's chief critics, Kirby Smith has recently been delegated the role of villain and disrupter of the Kentucky scheme. Although this may be partially correct, there seems to be a necessity among historians to place the entire blame upon the shoulders of one participant.¹² Although both Bragg and Kirby Smith exhibited various command

10. See particularly, Duke, Reminiscences; Parks, Kirby Smith; Parks, Polk; Polk, Polk.

11. Among these works are: McWhiney, Bragg; Connelly, Army of the Heartland; Jones, Confederate Strategy; Connelly and Jones, Politics of Command; Williams, Lincoln Finds a General, IV; McWhiney, "Controversy."

12. Among Kirby Smith's critics are: McWhiney, Bragg; McWhiney, "Controversy;" Connelly, Army of the Heartland.

weaknesses, neither can be held totally responsible for the failure of the campaign. Beyond the common generalization that the commanders are the bearers of responsibility despite the outcome of the operation, the failures in Kentucky can be attributed to several reasons.

It is difficult to isolate one major cause of the Kentucky failure, but insufficient cooperation and lack of Kentucky recruits are certainly the two most important factors. The outcome of the campaign was contingent upon the success of these two elements, and from Bragg's attempts to initiate accomplishments in both recruitment and cooperation, it is apparent that he was fully aware of the consequences of failure in both of these areas.

The Confederate defeat at Corinth can be viewed as the conclusive aspects of Bragg's decision to forego the Kentucky scheme. Without an effective force to occupy the Federal armies in northern Mississippi and Alabama, Kentucky occupation could not produce any lasting effect. As commander of the only Confederate army in the West with any semblance of strength, and faced with sundry other disappointing problems, Bragg took the President's advice not to risk his army and retreated from Kentucky.

On the question of confused priorities, the campaign suffered immensely. At several junctures throughout the campaign, a joining of the two forces was postponed to pursue lesser activities. Most of the diversions from the basic plan were not of small importance such as the pursuit of

George Morgan, the proposed attack in Cincinnati, and the inauguration of Hawes; but in allowing their importance to outweigh the necessary combination of armies, the commanding generals made several errors.

Serious confusion developed between the Confederate field commanders and the Richmond hierarchy. Chief among these problems was the weakness of Jefferson Davis' command system. In designating the invasion as a "cordial cooperation" between the two Confederate forces, the President gave Kirby Smith the power to dictate the early movements of the campaign. Without the authority to directly order Kirby Smith's moves, Bragg was, several times, subjected to compromise. True, Kirby Smith succumbed to Bragg's orders once the two forces came to within supporting distance in the Bluegrass, but prior to that, Bragg was faced with the responsibility of placing his force between Buell and Kirby Smith. Although the first movements of the invasion were generally successful, a more harmonious advance might have been initiated had Bragg received full command over both armies.

Throughout the campaign, the Richmond authorities continually meddled in the affairs of the Department of the Mississippi without Bragg's knowledge. Bragg placed Major General Sam Jones in command of Chattanooga during the Kentucky invasion. Kirby Smith left McCown in command at the East Tennessee headquarters at Knoxville, but on September 20, McCown was ordered to Kirby Smith's aid at Lexington. Without notifying Bragg, the Richmond authorities ordered Jones

to take command in East Tennessee. Ignorant of the changes, Bragg ordered Jones to take command in Middle Tennessee. In an attempt to satisfy both of his superiors, Jones asked Richmond to combine both Middle and East Tennessee into one department under his command. The request was granted, and-- despite Bragg's elimination from the decision--the reorganization seemed a sound compromise until Jones received visions of grandure. With an evident desire to lead his own army, Jones delayed or detained various reinforcements en route to Kentucky. The most astounding aspect of this arrangement is that required approval from Richmond was granted beyond Bragg's knowledge.¹³

Further reorganization of Department Number Two was deemed necessary when on October 1--again without Bragg's knowledge--Davis created the Department of Mississippi and Eastern Louisiana. Lieutenant General John C. Pemberton was given the command with the objective of liberating New Orleans.¹⁴ The failure of these nearly autonomous commanders to support Bragg was instrumental in his decision to abandon Kentucky.

In light of many of Bragg's actions it is evident that he did not understand Kentuckians. Bragg certainly understood the reasons for the failure of the Kentucky campaign, including the necessity of a sizable Kentucky enlistment, but he could never quite understand why the men of the state

13. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 852, 866, 916, 920-30.

14. Ibid., Vol. XVII, pt. 2, 716-17.

would not flock to his side. Kentucky was unique among the other states of the Union. Not only was Kentucky a border state, but it had recently evolved into a situation that owed economic reliance to both sections of the country. Prior to 1830, Kentucky was basically southern in nearly all aspects: politics, history, economics, geography and population. As best explained by one of the state's most noted historians, Kentucky was "forced to look southward through the course of the Mississippi River"15 After 1850, with the advent of the Erie Canal and the railroad, Kentucky began to expand northward economically. Northern investors began to tap the rich Bluegrass, as Kentucky became more and more linked to both the North and the South with much to lose by abandoning either section.16

Politically, Kentucky mixed a strong state rights sentiment with an intense regard for Federal authority without the problems of contradiction. In voting for John Bell in 1860, Kentucky portrayed little political similarity with the North beyond a desire to preserve the Union.17

Many Confederate sympathizers in Kentucky wisely feared a massive blue invasion from Illinois, Indiana and Ohio should the state secede.18

15. Coulter, Civil War and Readjustment, 9.

16. Ibid., 8-11.

17. Ibid., 7-8, 24.

18. Ibid., 11. This suspicion was particularly strong in the Bluegrass, quelling much of the southern sympathy there.

With the economy in a northerly shift and with a basic desire by the majority to preserve the Union, Kentuckians, by 1862, needed more than the presence of a Confederate column to convince them of the necessity to come to the aid of the southern cause. Unable to determine this, both Bragg and Kirby Smith expected the Kentuckians to rise up against the occupying Federal columns. Kentuckians conversely expected a show of force; they wanted an exhibition of permanency of the invasion before aid and recruits would be delivered. In attempting to install Hawes as the Confederate governor of Kentucky, Bragg was evidently attempting to display this bit of necessary permanency, although he was certainly more concerned with implementing a conscription act. Indecisive Kentuckians might have succumbed to conscription, but before a sizable number of recruits would have come forward, a Federal defeat would have been necessary, and even then Kentucky may not have been as willing to rise as the Confederate generals had expected.

Although Bragg was unable to understand Kentucky's position, Kirby Smith exhibited more of an insight to the question when he implored Bragg to attack Buell below Louisville on the premise that the Federal commander "has always been the great bugbear to these people and until defeated we cannot hope for much addition to our ranks from Kentucky."¹⁹ Conceivably merely an attempt to coerce Bragg into attacking Buell

19. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 866.

below Louisville, Kirby Smith left no other account that he considered Buell's defeat a necessity to the success of the Kentucky campaign.

Just as lack of Kentucky support can be listed as a cause for the failure of the campaign, reliance upon this support can be named as a significant command error that caused Bragg's eventual retreat. As early as April 1861 when John Hunt Morgan informed Davis that "twenty thousand men can be raised [in Kentucky] to defend Southern liberty against northern conquest," Kentucky had been regarded by the South as an untapped reservoir of recruits. It is of course difficult to determine that this particular statement misled Davis' concept of Kentucky's sentiment, but the President was certainly in error on the subject. Following the campaign, Davis wrote: "The expectation that the Kentuckians would rise en masse with the coming of a force which would allow them to do so . . . has been sadly disappoint[ing]."²⁰

Following the summer raid of his home state in 1862, Morgan penned a similar message to Kirby Smith in Knoxville. Morgan's insistence that "25,000 or 30,000 men will join you at once," was a definite factor in the decision for a major invasion of Kentucky.²¹ Beyond Morgan's prejudiced invitations, Davis, Bragg, and Kirby Smith were basically ignorant of what to expect in Kentucky. Yet they were willing to

20. Ibid., Vol. LII, pt. 2, 46; Rowland Davis, V, 256.

21. OR., Ser. I, Vol. XVI, pt. 2, 733-34.

base the contingent factor of Kentucky enlistments upon the receptions given to a hometown hero in an undefended region. This proved to be the gravest error of the invading commanders and led to one of the major reasons for the Confederate retreat.

The Kentucky campaign had great promise, but it is often only cited as a Confederate diversionary tactic in favor of Lee's more spectacular invasion of Maryland. Had Bragg and Kirby Smith defeated the Federal army, their offensive possibilities would have been virtually limitless. Penetration beyond the Ohio River might have been feasible in some form. This accomplishment might easily have generated foreign recognition. If, as is becoming more popularly believed, the war was lost in the West, the Kentucky campaign was certainly a major part of the Confederate defeat.

Kirby Smith's part of the campaign is generally viewed as supportive, but he was also the spearhead and was a major force behind the intelligence of the grand strategy. Although proving to serve no lasting military value, his swift penetration into the Kentucky heartland struck fear into the hearts and minds of the North. Yet his exertion of independence often forced Bragg to readjust his plans to protect the younger commander.

Through better efforts to cooperate and more efficient communications and logistics planning a united Confederate force certainly might have been more successful. However, without Kentucky's favorable sentiment and numerous enlist-

ments, victory would only have been temporary.

Exhibiting a ferociously ambitious attitude, Kirby Smith rose from his mediocre position in East Tennessee in an attempt to gain personal glory and recognition only to come to an early and embarrassing downfall due partially to a surprisingly timid attitude. No longer displaying his fervor for enthusiasm and ambition, he allowed himself to become, by early October, a sideline figure in the wake of Bragg's attempt to consolidate interests and armies. Mised and confused, Kirby Smith found himself not only absent from the campaign's major battle, but adding to the confusion that sent three misinformed commanders and 16,000 Confederate troops against 60,000 Federals at Perryville.

CRITICAL ESSAY ON SOURCES

It is difficult to pinpoint the most important source for this study. Yet The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (Washington, 1880-1901), 126 vols., should be mentioned above all others. Without this vast amount of original material a study of this nature would have been considerably more difficult, if not impossible.

Also important were three secondary sources that devote considerable space to Kirby Smith, and the campaign of 1862. The only modern biography of Kirby Smith is Joseph H. Parks, General Edmund Kirby Smith, C.S.A. (Baton Rouge, 1954). Parks sees Kirby Smith as nearly incapable of error while he relentlessly condemns Bragg at every turn. Despite this and other shortcomings, the work provided an excellent starting point for this study. To balance Park's one-sided interpretation there is Grady McWhiney, Braxton Bragg and the Confederate Defeat (New York, 1969). On the often argued question of who was to blame for the failure of the campaign, McWhiney points his finger at Kirby Smith. Somewhere in-between is Thomas Lawrence Connelly, Army of the Heartland (Baton Rouge, 1967). Connelly is more concerned with the other factors that contributed to the failure of the campaign, and less insistent upon placing the blame on either Kirby Smith or Bragg. This solid work offers the best interpretation of the Kentucky campaign.

Several manuscript collections were instrumental in the completion of this study. Of foremost importance was the collection of Kirby Smith Papers (Southern Collection, University of North Carolina). Included in this collection are many important personal letters, and an unpublished manuscript of Kirby Smith's account of the Kentucky campaign. Also of considerable use were the J. Stoddard Johnston Papers (Manuscript Division, The Filson Club Historical Society). Johnston served on Bragg's staff throughout the Kentucky campaign and collected considerable information in his diary. Several important letters are also included in the collection. Also at The Filson Club is the collection of Humphrey Marshall Papers, and a small Kirby Smith collection. Two important collections of Braxton Bragg papers aided in the study. They are: The David Bullock Harris Collection (Manuscript Division, Duke University) and the William P. Palmer Collection (Western Reserve Historical Society). Together these collections contain most of Bragg's correspondences dealing with the Kentucky campaign. Other manuscript material on the Kentucky invasion can be found in Special Collections at the University of Kentucky.

Of the published primary sources used in this study, Paul F. Hammon, "General Kirby Smith's Campaign in Kentucky in 1862," Southern Historical Society Papers, IX-X (1881), 225-33, 246-54, 289-97, 455-62, (vol. X) 70-76, was of considerable importance. This is the only eyewitness account of Kirby Smith's campaign in published form. It is less than authoritative, but the

source proved to be very useful. In Robert U. Johnson and Clarence C. Buell, ed., Battles and Leaders of the Civil War: Being for the Most Part Contributed by Union and Confederate Officers (New York, 1884-88), 4 vols., several writings by participants in the campaign make for an important and readily available primary source. The accounts of Joseph Wheeler, Don Carlos Buell, George Morgan, and David Urquhart were useful, but they are the cause of the development of the standard myths that dot the pages of the works of Stanley F. Horn and Joseph H. Parks. Caution is the word of advice here. The often overlooked career of a capable commander is brought to light by James L. Morrison, "The Civil War Letters of Henry Heth," Civil War History, VII (Jan. 1962), 5-24. Several other printed primary sources proved to be of less importance. They are: James B. Fry, Operations of the Army Under Buell from June 10th to October 30th, 1862, and the Buell Commission (New York, 1884); William R. Boggs, Military Reminiscences of General William R. Boggs, C.S.A. (Durham, 1913); John P. Jones, A Rebel War Clerk's Diary, Earl Schenck, ed. (New York, 1958); Basil Duke, Reminiscences of Basil Duke (New York, 1931); Frank M. Moore, ed., Rebellion Record: A Diary of American Events with Documents, Narratives, Illustrative Incidents, Poetry, Etc. (New York, 1861-68), 11 vols.; Department of the Interior, Bureau of Census, Ninth Census of the United States: 1870. Wealth and Industry (Washington, 1872); Dunbar Rowland, Jefferson Davis, Constitutionalist; His Letters, Papers and Speeches (Jackson, Miss., 1926), 10 vols.; John T. Wilder, "Siege of

Munfordville," in Samual Cole Williams, John T. Wilder, Commander of the Lightning Brigade (Bloomington, 1936). Also in this category is the aforementioned The War of the Rebellion.

Several newspapers proved useful. As the major organ of the Confederacy, the Richmond Dispatch should be mentioned above all others. Other newspapers used were the Nashville Dispatch, New York Tribune, New York Herald, Louisville Journal, Cincinnati Enquirer, and the Richmond Kentucky Register. The latter is a modern newspaper in which an important letter dealing with the battle of Richmond was published in 1967. As might be expected the newspapers of the period often copied from one another, and were filled with inaccuracies, but they stayed well informed on the Kentucky invasion and were often quite perceptive as to its importance.

Several participants in the Kentucky campaign were to become topics of biographical study. Already mentioned are Joseph H. Parks, Kirby Smith, and Grady McWhiney, Braxton Bragg. The only modern biography of Buell is J.R. Chumney, Jr., "Don Carlos Buell, Gentleman General," (doctoral dissertation, Rice University, 1964). Although Chumney makes little effort to interpret the Kentucky campaign--and in fact devotes little time to it--the work is significant for a Union look at the events. On Leonidas Polk, there is Joseph H. Parks, General Leonidas Polk, The Fighting Bishop (Baton Rouge, 1962). Parks, in the tradition of his volume on Kirby Smith, is highly critical of Bragg and exalts Kirby Smith, Polk, and Hardee to nearly

unbelievable heights. Also on Polk is the general's son, William Polk, Leonidas Polk; Bishop and General (New York, 1915), 2 vols. On John Hunt Morgan there is the important work by Cecil Fletcher Holland, Morgan and His Raiders (New York, 1942). Also in the cavalier category is Robert Selph Henry, First With the Most: Forrest (Indianapolis, 1944). Although somewhat out of date, this work is still useful. Several other authoritative biographies are: Robert G. Hartje, Van Dorn; The Life and Times of a Confederate General (Nashville, 1967); William C. Davis, Breckinridge; Statesman, Soldier, Symbol (Baton Rouge, 1974); Arndt Stickles, Simon Bolivar Buckner; Borderland Knight (Chapel Hill, 1940); and Nathaniel Cheairs Hughes, Jr., General William J. Hardee; Old Reliable (Baton Rouge, 1965).

Several works were helpful in dealing with specific topics of the campaign. On the Confederate system of departmental organization there is the innovative Thomas Lawrence Connelly and Archer Jones, Politics of Command (Baton Rouge, 1973). This work, together with Davis' excellent biography of John Breckinridge, was instrumental in analyzing the movement that formed following the campaign to oust Bragg from his military position. On the somewhat neglected topic of the Corinth campaign, and the movements of Price and Van Dorn in the Southwest, there is only the above-mentioned biography of Van Dorn by Robert G. Hartje. The Confederate railroad system and its importance is skillfully explored in Robert C. Black III, Railroads of the Confederacy (Chapel Hill, 1952). Grady

McWhiney discusses some specific aspects of command in "Controversy in Kentucky," Civil War History, VI (Mar. 1960), 5-42. On the questioned authorship of the J. Stoddard Johnston Diary (there are two, one at The Filson Club and one in the Palmer Collection) there is June I. Gow, "The Johnston and Brent Diaries: A Problem of Authorship," Civil War History, XIV (Mar. 1968), 46-50. Miss Gow, a student of McWhiney, concludes that the Johnston Diary at The Filson Club is the authentic of the two. She correctly criticizes Thomas Lawrence Connelly for using both diaries (they cover the same period of time and are contradictory) in his Army of the Heartland.

Of the several works that look at the campaign as part of a larger work on military history, there are two that stand out: Archer Jones, Confederate Strategy from Shiloh to Vicksburg (Baton Rouge, 1961); and Kenneth P. Williams, Lincoln Finds a General; A Military Study of the Civil War (New York, 1956), 5 vols. Also in this category is Stanley F. Horn, Army of Tennessee (Norman, Okla., 1955). Horn might be considered the modern founder of the anti-Bragg school. He was the first to give historical credit to the myths that were expounded in the post-Civil War years by Basil Duke, William Polk, and others. Two others to be considered are: Douglas Southall Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants; A Study in Command (New York, 1942); and Frank E. Vandiver, Their Tattered Flags; The Epic of the Confederacy (New York, 1970). The above-mentioned Thomas Lawrence Connelly and Archer Jones, Politics of Command is also to be included in this category.

On Perryville there is Hambleton Tapp, "The Battle of Perryville, 1862," The Filson Club History Quarterly, IX (July, 1935), 158-81; Ralph A. Wooster, "Confederate Success at Perryville," Register of the Kentucky Historical Society, LIX (Oct. 1961), 318-23.

The most important work on Kentucky during the Civil War is E. Merton Coulter, Civil War and Readjustment in Kentucky (Chapel Hill, 1926). Coulter is particularly useful on the politics of the campaign, but offers little on its military aspects. J. Stoddard Johnston, "Kentucky," as part of the greater Thomas Yoseloff, ed., Confederate Military History (New York, 1962; first published, 1899), 12 vols., is out of date, bias, and consequently neglected, but offers an interpretation that is not far removed from the more modern writings of Connelly and McWhiney. The standard history of Kentucky is Thomas D. Clark, A History of Kentucky (Lexington, 1937). Clark does little more than rewrite Coulter, although some useful information is available.