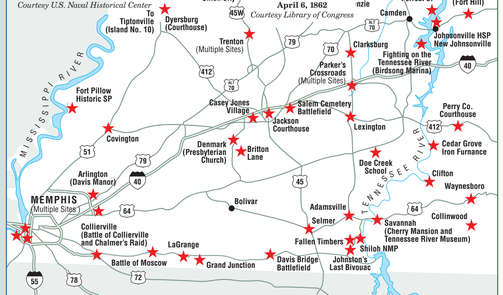
Confederate infantry and artillery firing on Union gunboats
Courtesy U.S. Naval Historical Center

Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston, killed at Battle of Shiloh, April 6, 1862
Courtesy Library of Congress



WAR IN MIDDLE AND WEST TENNESSEE

Much of the fighting in Middle and West Tennessee was focused not only on the railroads but also on the Mississippi, Tennessee, and Cumberland Rivers. They were watery avenues of invasion for Federal forces, the keys to splitting the Confederacy.

The first significant Union victories in Tennessee occurred on the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers in February 1862, when a Federal army-navy expedition under Gen. Ulysses S. Grant captured Forts Henry and Donelson. Henry, on the Tennessee, was the first to fall, on February 6. Donelson, on the Cumberland, surrendered on February 16, but several Confederate units escaped, including Col. Nathan Bedford Forrest and his cavalry.

The first large-scale battle occurred near Pittsburg Landing on the Tennessee River in West Tennessee. Better known as the Battle of Shiloh, the two-day fight on April 6–7, 1862, was almost a Confederate victory on the first day. Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston marched north from Corinth, Mississippi, and struck Grant's army, overrunning the camp and pushing the Federals almost into the river. Johnston, wounded while encouraging his troops, bled to death from a severed artery. The next day, Grant counterattacked, forcing the Confederates back to Corinth.

Federal forces captured New Orleans at the end of April 1862 and occupied Memphis in June, securing the lower and upper reaches of the Mississippi River. In October, Grant began an overland campaign to capture Vicksburg, Mississippi. He marched from La Grange in West Tennessee, down the Mississippi Central Railroad toward Vicksburg with trainloads of supplies following.

Battle of Stones River – *Courtesy Library of Congress*

Rosecrans held on and over the next two days seriously bloodied Bragg's army. Federal cannon fire decimated the final Confederate attack on the afternoon of January 2. The Battle of Stones River resulted in more than 23,000 casualties out of about 81,000 soldiers engaged. A few days later Bragg retreated south to Tullahoma, and Rosecrans occupied Murfreesboro. U.S. forces built the massive Fortress Rosecrans to guard the railroad and to serve as a supply station.

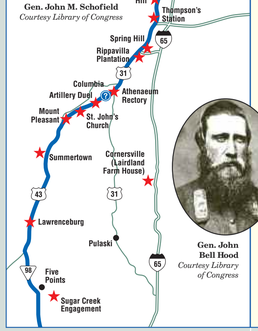
Middle and West Tennessee experienced U.S. military occupation, foraging expeditions by both sides, and Confederate cavalry raids on railroads and Union garrisons. Forrest and John Hunt Morgan, usually serving with the Army of Tennessee, attacked Federal supply lines and intimidated Tennessee Unionists. Forrest guarded the Confederate left flank early in 1863 while Morgan covered the right flank. Forrest fought in Mississippi and West Tennessee after a serious rupture with Bragg during the Chickamauga Campaign.

Because of the frequent and successful Confederate raids, the Federals correctly suspected collusion with the local population. Civilian spies and Confederate scouts—such as Confederate Sam Davis, who was captured and executed—provided valuable information. In addition, bushwhackers and guerrilla units on each side attacked military units and civilians, sometimes as a military tactic and sometimes to settle personal scores. Confederate Champ Ferguson was the most notorious of these raiders. The resulting resentments lingered for generations.

In December, however, Forrest launched a raid into West Tennessee, destroying railroads and severing Grant's supply line. Forrest fought victoriously at Lexington, captured Trenton and Union City, and ranged into Kentucky. He raided back through Tennessee, then evaded defeat at Parker's Crossroads. Grant changed his supply base to Memphis; he finally captured Vicksburg on July 4, 1863.

An especially bloody battle was fought in Middle Tennessee at Murfreesboro, December 31, 1862–January 2, 1863. Confederate Gen. Braxton Bragg's Army of Tennessee occupied the country around Murfreesboro after his invasion of Kentucky and the Battle of Perryville. Union Gen. William S. Rosecrans's Army of the Cumberland advanced from Nashville. During the first day's fighting, a surprise Confederate flank attack nearly swept the Federals from the field.

Gen. John M. Schofield
Courtesy Library of Congress

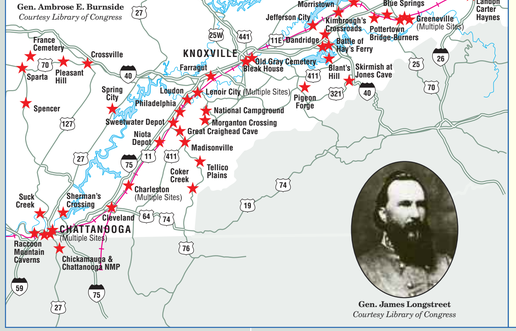


Gen. John Bell Hood
Courtesy Library of Congress

HOOD'S CAMPAIGN

Union Gen. William T. Sherman and his army occupied Atlanta, Georgia, on September 2, 1864, having defeated Confederate Gen. John Bell Hood and the Army of Tennessee. Sherman spent several weeks resting his army and planning his next moves. When Hood began ranging northwest against Sherman's supply lines, Sherman dispatched troops to Nashville under Gen. George H. Thomas. The line became less critical to Sherman on November 15, when he began the "March to the Sea" to open more secure lines and destroy Confederate resources. Rather than pursue Sherman, on November 22, Hood moved north from Alabama to Tennessee, hoping to draw Federal attention from the Deep South and perhaps invade Kentucky. The two largest armies in the region thus marched away from each other instead of fighting. In Tennessee, however, Thomas sent Union Gen. John M. Schofield's division to delay Hood's advance at Columbia and Spring Hill before falling back to Franklin. The bloodbath there on November 30 crippled Hood's force, but the Confederates followed Schofield to the outskirts of Nashville and Thomas's strong defenses. Hood besieged the city, and more than two weeks passed before he acted. On December 15–16, the Federals sallied forth from their defenses and crushed Hood's army, effectively ending his campaign as the remnants of the Army of Tennessee fled to Tupelo, Mississippi. Some of the army then joined Gen. Joseph E. Johnston in North Carolina.

Gen. Ambrose E. Burnside
Courtesy Library of Congress



Gen. James Longstreet
Courtesy Library of Congress

WAR IN EAST TENNESSEE

Largely Unionist East Tennessee was strategically important for Cumberland Gap (the gateway to Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee) and the rail lines that connected Bristol, Knoxville, Chattanooga, and Atlanta, as well as Memphis and Richmond. President Abraham Lincoln appointed Andrew Johnson, a native of the region, Tennessee's military governor. Gen. Samuel P. Carter, a U.S. Naval Academy graduate, gained fame in East Tennessee as a cavalry raider. Ironically, the Federals held most of the secessionist areas, while the Confederates dominated the Unionist parts. Many Unionists who burned railroad bridges in 1861 were quickly seized and executed.

Union Gen. Ambrose E. Burnside occupied Knoxville in September 1863, while Confederate Gen. Braxton Bragg occupied Chattanooga. Union Gen. William S. Rosecrans forced Bragg out. After the Battle of Chickamauga, Georgia, the Federals occupied Chattanooga, which Bragg then besieged, dispatching Gen. James Longstreet to attack Knoxville. The Federals broke Bragg's siege at the Battle of Missionary Ridge, compelling him to retreat, and Longstreet likewise suffered defeat at Knoxville. By the end of the year, East Tennessee was firmly in Union hands, and the rail line to Georgia was open. In May 1864, Gen. William T. Sherman used Chattanooga as the platform for his Atlanta campaign. No other large-scale battles occurred in the region for the rest of the war; although late in 1864, the Federals launched cavalry raids against the railroads from East Tennessee into Virginia and North Carolina.

1861

- January 19 Battle of Mill Springs
- February 6 Grant captures Fort Henry
- February 16 Grant captures Fort Donelson
- February 25 Federal occupation of Nashville
- March 3 Lincoln appoints Andrew Johnson as Tenn. military governor
- April 6–7 Battle of Shiloh
- April 8 Battle of Island No. 10
- June 6 Battle and Federal occupation of Memphis
- July Forrest's First Tennessee Raid
- August–October Bragg's Kentucky invasion
- September 4–19 Aetietam Campaign, Va., Md.
- August 28–30 Second Battle of Manassas, Va.
- October 1–9 Wheeler's Sequatchie Valley Raid
- September 19–20 Battle of Chickamauga, Ga.
- November 24 Battle of Lookout Mountain
- November 25 Battle of Missionary Ridge, Chattanooga
- April 12 Forrest captures Fort Pillow
- June 15 Siege of Petersburg begins, Va.
- May 4—June 20 Overland Campaign, Va.
- September 2 Sherman captures Atlanta
- November 4 Battle of Johnsonville
- November 4—December 14 Knoxville Campaign
- November 15—December 10 Sherman's March to the Sea, Ga.
- November 22—December 25 Hood's Campaign
- November 30 Battle of Franklin
- December 15–16 Battle of Nashville
- February 1—April 26 Sherman's Carolinas Campaign, S.C. and N.C.
- April 2–3 Fall of Petersburg and Richmond, Va., Lee's Retreat begins, Va.
- April 9 Lee surrenders at Appomattox Court House, Va.
- April 14 John Wilkes Booth assassinates President Abraham Lincoln
- April 26 Johnston surrenders Army of Tennessee near Durham, N.C.
- May 9 Forrest's Cavalry Corps surrenders

1862

- November 13 Grant begins first Vicksburg Campaign from Tennessee
- October 17—November 1 Morgan's Second Kentucky Raid
- December 11—January 3, 1863 Forrest's West Tennessee Raid
- December 31 Battle of Parker's Crossroads
- December 31—January 2, 1863 Battle of Stones River
- March 4—5 Battle of Thompson's Station
- June 25—July 8 Tullahoma Campaign
- July 4 Grant captures Vicksburg, Miss.
- June 30—July 14 Gettysburg Campaign, Va., Md., Pa.
- July 1—3 Battle of Gettysburg, Pa.

1863

- April 12 Fall of Fort Sumter, Charleston, S.C.
- April 15 Lincoln calls for volunteers to suppress "insurrection"
- June 8 Tennessee secedes
- July 21 First Battle of Manassas, Va.
- September 29 Affair at Travisville, first military action in Tennessee

1864

1865

THE GREAT RAIDERS

At the beginning of the war, the cavalry gathered intelligence, screened the army from the enemy's cavalry, and served as mounted pickets. In the East, Confederate cavalry commander J.E.B. Stuart raised the routine reconnaissance mission to the level of art when his command rode completely around the Federal army in 1862. Legendary partisan cavalryman John S. Mosby (the Gray Ghost) later harried the Union army to distraction in Northern Virginia.

In the West, three cavalry commanders, John Hunt Morgan, Nathan Bedford Forrest, and Joseph Wheeler attained legendary status. Wheeler, a West Point graduate, had spent most of his life in the North. Morgan had served briefly in the Mexican War as a private. Forrest was self-taught. All of them, regardless of experience, were bold, imaginative, and determined men who could usually out-think and out-fight their opponents.

John Hunt Morgan seemed a natural cavalryman. Tall, dashing, impeccably dressed, and finely mounted, Morgan was born to a prominent Kentucky family. In a series of raids in Tennessee and Kentucky, he appeared invincible regardless of the Federal forces arrayed against him. He followed his July 1862 Kentucky raid with another in the winter in Middle Tennessee, destroying two railroad tunnels to disrupt Union supply lines for several weeks. Morgan led his most spectacular raid in July 1863, rampaging

Gen. John Hunt Morgan
Courtesy Library of Congress

Newspaper illustration, "General Forrest Driving the Federals out of Trenton, Tenn. General Forrest in the Foreground Giving Orders." – *Courtesy Tennessee State Library and Archives*

through Indiana and Ohio, was captured and confined in the Ohio State Penitentiary, and then escaped. A Federal cavalryman killed him in Greeneville, Tennessee, on September 4, 1864, when he tried to escape after being surrounded.

Nathan Bedford Forrest was the antithesis of the gentlemanly Morgan. A self-made man, Forrest was a successful planter and slave trader before the war. Whereas Morgan was an officer from the start, Forrest enlisted as a private and then rose to the rank of brigadier general in little more than a year. Forrest's personality, like that of Mosby, had a ruthless edge—unlike the charm and gaiety that Morgan and Stuart exhibited. Forrest's intuitive grasp of cavalry tactics and his ferocious fighting ability made him the most feared of Confederate cavalry commanders. His reputation was built on a series of stunning raids against Union supply lines in Middle and West Tennessee. He also fought his way out of a Federal envelopment at Parker's Crossroads, adding to his legend. The apparent massacre of black Federal troops at Fort Pillow, Tennessee, on April 12, 1864, however, tarnished Forrest's legacy. After the war, Forrest returned to farming and pursued business interests. He died in Memphis on October 29, 1877. William T. Sherman, assessing Forrest's military career, pronounced him "the most remarkable man our Civil War produced on either side."

Joseph Wheeler began the war as a lieutenant but became commander of the Army of Tennessee's cavalry by the fall of 1862. His successful raid behind Union lines before the Battle of Stones River made his reputation. In February 1863, he unsuccessfully attacked Dover to block Cumberland River shipping to Federals in Nashville. After the Battle of Chickamauga in the fall of 1863, Wheeler launched another spectacular raid against Union supply lines, riding up the Sequatchie Valley and then into occupied Middle Tennessee before returning to Alabama. After the war, Wheeler served in Congress and returned to U.S. Army service as a major general during the Spanish-American War and in the Philippines.

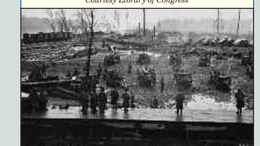
Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest
Courtesy Library of Congress

Gen. Joseph Wheeler
Courtesy Library of Congress

TENNESSEE USCTs

The Emancipation Proclamation issued on January 1, 1863, authorized the enlistment of black soldiers. By June, in Tennessee, Gen. Lorenzo Thomas had recruited 3,000 men. By the end of the war, he had enlisted 24,000 soldiers for 22 infantry regiments and 8 artillery units. Nationwide, 200,000 men served in black units known as U.S. Colored Troops (USCTs) and in the Navy.

White officers at first restricted USCTs to support functions such as guarding wagon trains, supply depots, and prisoners. They also constructed forts and railroads, then were posted as guards. Eager to prove their worth in combat, the USCTs soon had their chance. In December 1863, at Moscow, the 61st USCT repulsed Confederate Gen. Stephen D. Lee's cavalry as it tore up railroad track. At Fort Pillow, on the Mississippi River, USCTs fought Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest's command on April 12, 1864, then were overrun and killed after surrendering. For the remainder of the year, USCTs engaged Forrest at Brice's Crossroads and Tupelo, Mississippi, at Athens, Alabama, and at Pulaski, Tennessee. They also fought with distinction in the Battle of Nashville in December. The Tennessee USCTs mustered out of service between April 1865 and April 1866, having suffered about 4,500 casualties.



Johnsonville, Tennessee Colored Battery camp, 1864
Courtesy Library of Congress

THE CIVIL WAR REVISITED

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This map-guide identifies nearly 200 Civil War sites throughout Tennessee. Each site is interpreted and accessible and encourages you to explore diverse settings where America's destiny was forged. Tennessee Civil War Trails sites can be explored at your own pace, and many offer other historical and recreational opportunities. Enjoy one of the numerous walking tours available in many communities. Shop at one of hundreds of antique and specialty shops, dine at a historically-themed tavern, or simply walk amid the serenity of a preserved battlefield. Let the stories you've discovered ignite your imagination as you envision how now-peaceful landscapes were once the scenes of the deadliest battles known to man.

The Tennessee Civil War Trails program is part of a five-state trails system that invites you to explore both well-known and less-familiar sites associated with America's greatest drama.

Together, more than 1,000 places tell the epic and heartfelt stories of civilians and soldiers who experienced tri-umph and tragedy during the war.

For more detailed travel information, contact any of the organizations listed in this guide or visit any Tennessee Welcome Center or local Visitor Center. For additional Civil War Trails information, visit **www.civilwartrails.org.**

Granville
Courtesy Peggy Clemons

Follow these signs to more than 1,000 Civil War sites.

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