

ESSENTIAL CIVIL WAR CURRICULUM

The Battle of Rich Mountain

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Resources

If you can read only one book

Author	<i>Title</i> . City: Publisher, Year.
Poland Jr., Charles P.	<i>The Glories of War: Small Battles and Early Heroes of 1861</i> . Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2004.

Books and Articles

Author	<i>Title</i> . City: Publisher, Year.
Haselberger, Fritz	<i>Yanks from the South</i> . Chelsea, MI: Book Crafters, 1987.
Newell, Clayton R.	<i>Lee vs. McClellan</i> . Washington, D.C.: Regnery Publishing, 1996.
Zinn, Jack	<i>The Battle of Rich Mountain</i> . Parsons, WV: McLean Print Co, 1971.

Organizations

Organization Name	Description, Contact information including address, email
Rich Mountain Battlefield Foundation	The Rich Mountain Battlefield Foundation is working to preserve the Rich Mountain Battlefield and Camp Garnett. Their website is: http://www.richmountain.org/
Rich Mountain Battlefield Civil War Site & Visitor Center	The Rich Mountain Battlefield Civil War Site & Visitor Center is located west of Beverly WV and features interpretive

	<p>signs, walking tours and a picnic area. The Beverly Heritage Center is the interpretive center for the site and is located at 4 Court Street Beverly WV 26253, telephone 304 637 7424. Hours are seasonal. Their website is: http://www.beverlyheritagecenter.org/</p>
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Web Resources

URL	Name and description
www.richmountain.org/RMhistory.html	<i>The History of the Battle of Rich Mountain</i> is a useful overview of the battle produced by the Rich Mountain Battlefield Foundation.

Other Sources

Scholars

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Précis

In May 1861 Federal forces under Major General George B. McClellan invaded western Virginia to protect the B&O Railroad, a vital rail link between the Midwest and East. After a small Confederate force under Colonel George Porterfield was defeated at Philippi, Confederate authorities sent a force of 4,000 men under Brigadier General Robert Garnett to block the Federals advancing from Philippi and to attempt to cut the B&O. Garnett placed a force of 800 men under Colonel John Pegram blocking the pass at Rich Mountain to the south, 2,800 under his command blocking the pass at Laurel Hill twenty-three miles to the north and 400 men at his base of supply in the town of Beverly in the valley behind the passes. McClellan sent a 4,000-man force under Brigadier General Thomas Morris to pin Garnett at Laurel Hill while he led a 7,000-man force to attack Pegram at Rich Mountain. Morris and Garnett sparred ineffectively from July 7 to July 11. McClellan reached Rich Mountain on July 10 and deciding a frontal assault would be too costly, sent a force under Brigadier General William S. Rosecrans, guided by a local unionist sympathizer on a route through the mountains around the Confederate left. Simultaneous attacks by McClellan in front of Pegram's Confederates and Rosecrans in their rear were

planned. On the afternoon of July 11 Rosecrans attacked. Hearing cheering from Pegram's Confederates, McClellan did not attack as planned. Rosecrans pressed his attack successfully, but with darkness and not understanding the degree of his success, he did not pursue the Confederates. Pegram's men scattered during the night and the next morning Rosecrans captured the sick and wounded Confederates left behind at Rich Mountain. Learning of the defeat of Pegram at Rich Mountain, Garnett ordered a rearguard on the road between Rich Mountain and Beverly and began to retreat. By midday July 12 McClellan crossed Rich Mountain and occupied Beverly then moved south through Cheat Mountain to Huttonsville. Mistaking retreating Confederates for advancing Federals, Garnett chose to retreat north east through difficult terrain rather than south through Beverly and Cheat Mountain. The retreat in bad weather and on poor roads turned into a disaster with sick, hungry men separated or left behind. Finally, on July 19 the remnants of Garnett's command reached Monterey with stragglers arriving over the next week. The victory at Rich Mountain led to the creation of the state of West Virginia and the elevation of George McClellan to general-in-chief of all Union forces.
