

# ESSENTIAL CIVIL WAR CURRICULUM

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## The Battle of Parkers Crossroads

By Michael R. Bradley

### Resources

If you can read only one book

Author	<i>Title</i> . City: Publisher, Year.
Wyeth, John Allan	<i>That Devil Forrest</i> . Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989, 107-15.

### Books and Articles

Author	<i>Title</i> . City: Publisher, Year.   “Title,” in <i>Journal</i> ##, no. # (Date): #.
Bradley, Michael R.	<i>The Raiding Winter</i> . Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing, 2013, 125-39.
Hurst, Jack	<i>Nathan Bedford Forrest: A Biography</i> . New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993.
Maness, Lonnie E.	<i>Lightning Warfare: Forrest’s First West Tennessee Campaign December 1862</i> . Jackson, TN: Main Street Publishing, 2007, 135-57.
Bearss, Ed	“The Battle of Parker’s Crossroads,” in <i>Blue&amp;Gray Magazine</i> 20, no. 6 (Fall 2003).

## Organizations

Organization Name	Description, Contact information including address, email
Parker's Crossroads Battlefield Association	<p>The primary focus of the Parker's Crossroads Battlefield Association is the preservation and interpretation of the Parker's Crossroads battlefield.</p> <p>The Parker's Crossroads Battlefield Visitor's Center is located just off Interstate 40 West (I-40) and Tennessee Highway 22 at Exit 108. The battlefield is midway between Memphis and Nashville.</p> <p>Their website is:  <a href="https://parkerscrossroads.org/">https://parkerscrossroads.org/</a></p> <p>Their contact information is:                      20945 Highway 22 North                      Parker's Crossroads, TN 38388                      (731) 968-1191</p>

## Web Resources

URL	Name and description
<a href="https://www.battlefields.org/learn/civil-war/battles/parkers-cross-roads">https://www.battlefields.org/learn/civil-war/battles/parkers-cross-roads</a>	The American Battlefield Trust's Article on Parker's Cross Roads is published here.

## Other Sources

## Scholars

Name	Email
Michael R. Bradley	<a href="mailto:michaelrbradley@lighttube.net">michaelrbradley@lighttube.net</a>

## Topic Précis

The engagement at Parkers Crossroads, fought on December 31, 1862, was a pivotal encounter during a raid led by Confederate Brigadier General Nathan Bedford Forrest. This raid targeted the Mobile & Ohio Railroad, critical for supplying Major General Ulysses S. Grant's army in Mississippi. Forrest's mission was part of a broader Confederate strategy to disrupt Union supply lines, with simultaneous raids conducted by Brigadier General John Hunt Morgan and Major General Earl Van Dorn. Forrest's command, consisting of approximately 1,800 men from various cavalry regiments and a small artillery battery, began their campaign on December 10, 1862. Despite being inadequately armed, Forrest's forces moved swiftly, crossing the Tennessee River by December 13. After achieving initial successes, including capturing Lexington, Tennessee, Forrest split his forces to destroy key rail infrastructure, significantly hindering Union supply capabilities. By December 29, Union forces under Colonels Cyrus L. Dunham and John W. Fuller were in pursuit. As Forrest moved southeast, he paused at Flake's Store near Parkers Crossroads, choosing to make a stand against the advancing Union brigades. On December 31, Dunham's brigade reached the Crossroads and engaged Forrest's forces. Despite being pushed back initially, Dunham's men held their ground behind a split-rail fence. Forrest concentrated his attack on Dunham's right flank, gradually forcing the Union line to pivot and face north. Throughout the morning and early afternoon, Confederate artillery played a significant role, while Union attempts to capture Confederate guns failed. By early afternoon, Forrest's men had enveloped Dunham's position on three sides, leading to significant Union casualties and isolation of small groups of Union soldiers. As the battle progressed, Fuller's brigade arrived from the north, engaging the Confederate rear and causing a temporary setback for Forrest. Demonstrating his aggressive tactics, famously, Forrest ordered a simultaneous attack on both Union forces to his front and rear, momentarily halting Fuller's advance and allowing many of his men to escape. The battle concluded with Forrest's forces retreating across the Tennessee River by January 2, 1863. Although Forrest lost 60 men and had 300 captured, he managed to evade complete destruction, while Union forces suffered 273 killed and wounded and 83 captured. This engagement underscored Forrest's tactical acumen and the critical role of Confederate cavalry in disrupting Union operations.

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