

The Red River Campaign

The Red River Campaign was a plan by the Union forces to occupy eastern Texas. One Union force was to move up the Red River in Louisiana and join another Union force marching south from Little Rock in the vicinity of Shreveport. Together, they would invade eastern Texas.

On March 23, 1864, General Steele left Little Rock to join General Banks in the Red River region of Louisiana, and begin the invasion of Texas.

Steele followed a route that roughly parallels today's Interstate 30. After meeting stiff resistance at the crossing of the Little Missouri River and on Prairie De Ann, near Prescott, Steele's forces had been slowed considerably. Their advance was further slowed by heavy spring rains that turned the dirt roads into a quagmire. General Steele decided to alter his plans and turn east toward Camden instead of proceeding directly to Shreveport.

His army camped at White Oak Creek, 18 miles west of Camden on the night of the April 12th; then after a two-hour skirmish, marched toward Camden. The Federals entered the city with little difficulty on April 13, 1864.

On April 17, 1864, Steele, running very low on rations, sent a foraging party to gather corn and other foodstuffs known to be located west of Camden. After filling 198 wagons with forage, the party camped about 18 miles west of Camden. On the morning of the 18th, while enroute back to Camden, the wagon train was attacked by Confederate forces near Poison Springs, about 10 miles west of Camden. The Confederates succeeded in capturing 170 of the wagons, the others being burned during the battle.

On April 20, 1864, a wagon train reached Camden from Pine Bluff with 10 days of half rations. As the heavily guarded train was returning to Pine Bluff to obtain more supplies the Confederates captured it at Marks Mills, about 12 miles east of Fordyce, resulting in the loss of 240 wagons.

Faced with low supplies, almost no hope of resupply, and learning the southern part of the campaign had been defeated in Louisiana, Steele decided to retreat to Little Rock. Leaving Camden on April 26th, Steele's forces reached the Saline river near the present town of Leola on the afternoon of the 29th. Finding the Saline swollen by rain, Steele erected a pontoon bridge at Jenkins Ferry and began to move his wagons across, one at a time. The task was made more difficult by the muddy roads leading to the site, leaving the wagons strung out for two miles. By 8 a.m. on the 30th, most of Steele's wagons had crossed. It was at that hour the Confederate forces caught up with the rear of the Federal forces. Steele sent his infantry toward the rear of the wagon train to engage the enemy. The fighting raged along the road, principally in three clearings; Jiles' field, Cooper's field and Kelley's field. None was more than 300 yards square. It was on Cooper's field that the flag on display was captured. Having repulsed two previous assaults by units of Churchill's

Arkansas Division (see Division organization below), the 9th Wisconsin was moved to a reserve position to resupply. The third attack by Churchill's forces drove the Union forces back and the 9th found itself in the front lines again. They succeeded in driving the attack back across Cooper's field, only to be driven back themselves by the fourth attack by Churchill's forces. In his official report on the battle, BG Samuel Rice reported that the 9th Wisconsin captured one set of colors. Since the only units they faced were units of Churchill's Arkansas Division, the colors must have been from an Arkansas unit, probably captured when they pushed back the third attack or fell back under the fourth attack.

By the evening of the 30th, the Union forces had succeeded in crossing the Saline. They destroyed the pontoon bridge and struggled back to Little Rock. The Confederate forces were unable to cross the Saline to continue the pursuit.

Organization of Churchill's Division:

Tappan's Brigade

- 19th Regiment (consolidated with the 24th)
- 27th Regiment (consolidated with the 38th)
- 33rd Regiment

Hawthorne's Brigade (our best guess)

- 22nd Regiment (formerly 35th)
- 34th Regiment
- 37th Regiment (formerly 29th)
- 39th Regiment

Gause's Brigade

- 26th Regiment
- 32nd Regiment
- 36th Regiment

The Arkansas Regiment of Mounted Volunteers consisted of the following companies, with the county from which raised, the commander and the date mustered into Federal service:

Company	County	Captain	Date
A	Pope	James S. Moffett	July 1, 1846
B	Pulaski	Solon Borland	July 2, 1846
C	Johnson	George W. Patrick	June 30, 1846
D	Independence	Andrew R. Porter	July 3, 1846
E	Pulaski	Albert Pike	July 2, 1846
F	Crawford	John S. Roane	June 29, 1846
G	Sevier	Edward Hunter	July 1, 1846
H	Franklin	William C. Preston	June 30, 1846
I	Hot Springs & Saline	William K. English	July 1, 1846
K	Phillips	John Preston, Jr.	July 10, 1846

The Arkansas Battalion of Infantry and Mounted Rifles consisted of the following companies, included are the towns that raised them, and the dates mustered into and out of federal service were:

Company A - Clarksville

Mustered in July 1, 1846 Mustered out April 20, 1847 at Fort Gibson, Indian Territory

Company B - Dover & Fort Smith

Mustered In July 1, 1846 Mustered out April 20, 1847 at Fort Gibson, Indian Territory

Company C - Smithville, Lawrence County

Mustered In July 6, 1846 Mustered out April 20, 1847 at Fort Gibson, Indian Territory

Company D - Fort Smith

Mustered In July 18, 1846 Mustered out April 15, 1847 near Fort Smith, Arkansas

Company E - Dover

Mustered In July 21, 1846 Mustered out February 28, 1847 at Fort Wayne, Creek Territory

Three additional Companies from Arkansas were raised and saw service with the 12th United States Infantry. Information on these companies is being researched.

1st Arkansas Volunteer Infantry

Company A	Formerly Company A, 3 rd Regiment, Arkansas State Guards (ASG), Hot Springs
Company B	(Jefferson Fencibles) Formerly Company E, 3 rd Regiment, ASG, Pine Bluff
Company C	Formerly Battery B, ASG - volunteered to serve as infantry, Fort Smith
Company D	Formerly Company D, 3 rd Regiment, ASG, Fort Smith
Company E	Formerly Company E, 1 st Regiment, and Company G, 3 rd Regiment, ASG Hope (Co E) and DeQueen (Co G)
Company F	Formerly Company I, 4 th Regiment, ASG, Springdale
Company G	(Helena Light Guards) Formerly attached to 4 th Regiment, ASG, Helena
Company H	Organized for service in the Spanish-American War
Company I	Formerly Company I, 3 rd Regiment, ASG. Reorganized for SAW, Van Buren
Company K	Formerly Company I, 3 rd Regiment, ASG, Paris
Company L	(Chicot Rifles) Formerly Company L, 1 st Regiment, ASG, Lake Village
Company M	Organized for service in the Spanish-American War

2nd Arkansas Volunteer Infantry

Company A	(McCarthy Light Guards) Formerly Company C, 1 st Regiment, ASG, Little Rock
Company B	(V.Y. Cook Rifles) Formerly Company A, 4 th Regiment, ASG, Batesville
Company C	Formerly Company G, 4 th Regiment, ASG, Walnut Ridge
Company D	Formerly Company D, 2 nd Regiment, ASG, Paragould
Company E	(Fletcher Rifles) Formerly Company D, 1 st Regiment, ASG, Little Rock
Company F	(Hurley Rifles) Reorganized for service in Spanish-American War from Former Company F, 2 nd Infantry (voluntarily disbanded in 1895), Newport
Company G	(Cabot Guards) Formerly Company D, 4 th Regiment, ASG, Cabot
Company H	Formerly Company I, 1 st Regiment, ASG, Forrest City
Company I	(Crockett Rifles) Consolidated from former Companies F, G & H, 4 th Regiment, ASG Stuttgart (Co F), Gillett (Co G) and DeWitt (Co H)
Company K	(Clendenin Rifles) Formerly Company A, 4 th Regiment, ASG, Harrison
Company L	Formerly Company C, 2 nd Regiment, ASG, Conway
Company M	(Highland Sharpshooters) Formerly Company ?, 4 th Regiment, ASG Melbourne (Consolidated with volunteer company from Mountain Home)