



# BLUE AND GRAY DISPATCH

## Croxtton's Raid and the Last CSA Casualty

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Gen. John T. Croxtton by Mathew Brady, 1862 | National Archives



Maj. Gen. James Wilson | LOC

In March and April of 1865, Gen. John T. Croxtton and his Union cavalry brigade were one part of a 15,000-man cavalry force raiding through Alabama from Florence south to present-day Birmingham, Selma, Montgomery, and Columbus, Georgia. Commanded by 27-year-old Maj. Gen. James H. Wilson, it was the largest cavalry force ever assembled in North America at the time.

On March 30, 1865, near present-day Birmingham, Wilson ordered Croxtton to take his 1,500-man brigade and detach from the main force. Croxtton was ordered west to Tuscaloosa to burn the university and the military cadet school located there, and then to head east across central Alabama, burning any suitable targets including iron works, railroad stations, factories, post offices, homes, and mills.

On April 24, Croxtton conducted a brief skirmish against a small Confederate force at Munford, Alabama, where the last Confederate casualty east of the Mississippi River occurred. Later that same day, he destroyed the Oxford Iron Works near present-day Anniston. On the morning of the 24th, the Yankees burned all the railroad box cars and the station at Blue Mountain and started east toward present-day Heflin. This Union force included men from Iowa, Michigan, and Kentucky, and many were armed with repeating rifles.

As his command meandered in east Alabama, Croxtton's ultimate goal became a reunion with Wilson's main column. On the 25th, Croxtton arrived in Carrollton, Georgia, and rejoined Wilson on May 1 in Macon, Georgia. His men arrived just in time to help capture Confederate President Jefferson Davis.



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