



BLUE AND GRAY DISPATCH

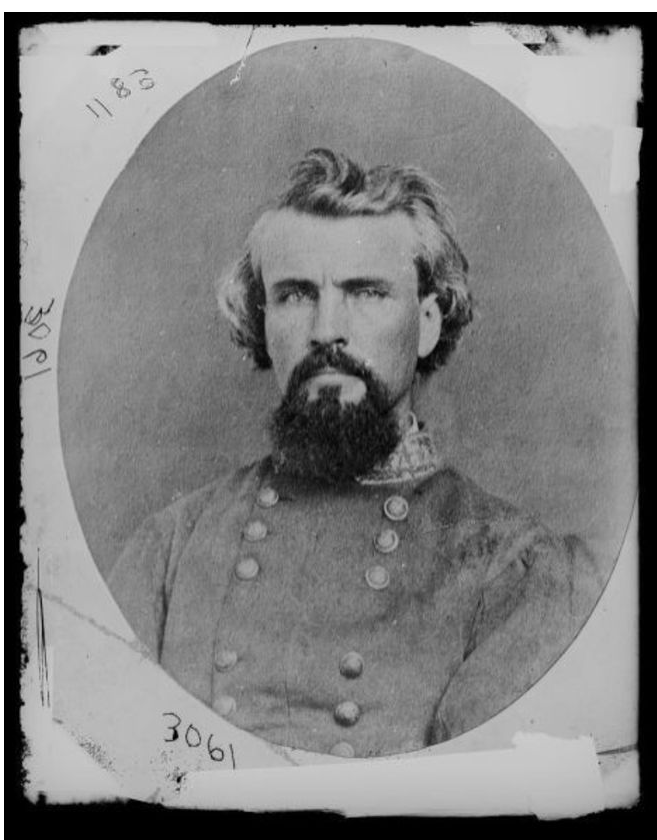
Forrest Captures All of the Yankees

Norm Dasinger, Jr., September 18, 2020

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Abel Streight | LOC



Nathan Bedford Forrest | LOC

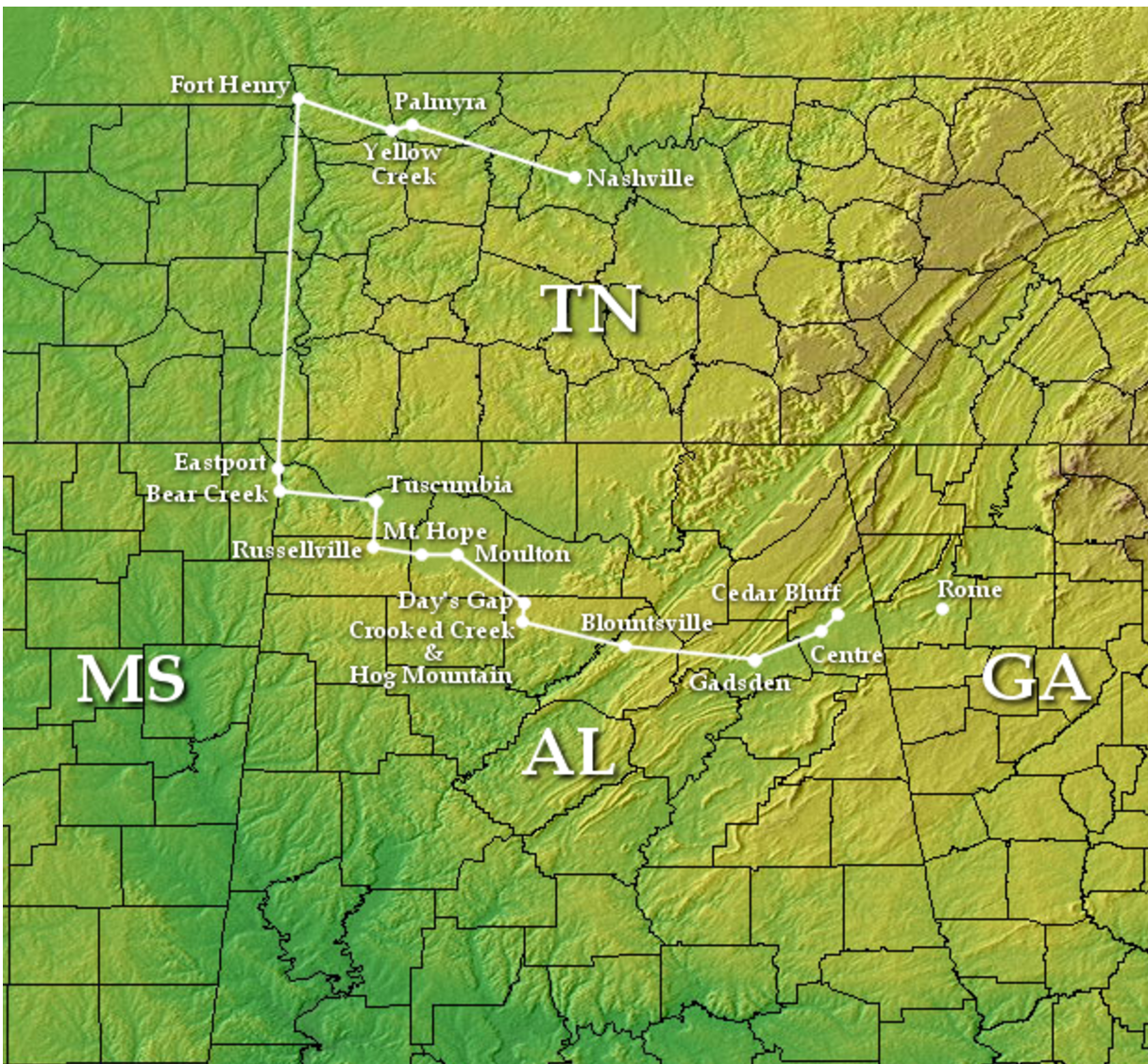
On May 3, 1863, Confederate Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest and fewer than 500 cavalymen captured Union Col. Abel Streight and all of his 1,500-plus mounted infantry (many on mules) at the Lawrence Farm, Cherokee County, Alabama, not far from Rome, Georgia.

Forrest began his pursuit of Streight on April 28 as the Yankees started off just outside the town of Tuscumbia in the state's northwestern corner. Streight's goal was to invade Alabama, traveling across the entire breadth of the state from west to east, and then capture Rome, Georgia, in order to destroy its rail connections, the Noble cannon foundry, and other military warehouses located in that city.

By the morning of May 3, Streight's forces had been relentlessly harassed by Confederate cavalry across all of Alabama for several days. With a lack of sleep and the realization that capturing Rome could not be accomplished, Streight met with Forrest near the Lawrence Farm outside Cedar Bluff and there negotiated a surrender of his entire force.

During these negotiations, in order to make his small command appear larger, Forrest adeptly used local geography and some psychological trickery to force Streight to agree to surrender. A nearby round knoll, now occupied by the Lawrence family cemetery, allowed Forrest to alternately bring forward portions of his command from concealment. Then he had those same soldiers, including some of his very limited supply of cannon, move around to the back of the knoll, change uniforms, and return. Forrest also directed hidden officers to yell verbal commands and unseen buglers to sound their horns, directing nonexistent units into line. Forrest later wrote, "I seen him all the time he was talking, looking over my shoulder and counting the guns. Presently he said, 'Name of God. How many guns do you have?'" In addition, Forrest threatened Streight with annihilation if his force did not surrender. "I've got enough men to whip you out of your boots," remarked Forrest. The ruse worked!

The Yankees were disarmed and escorted into Rome as prisoners of war, and Forrest was hailed as hero by the Roman citizens. Forrest's last words to Streight, as he realized he had been duped, were, "Ah, Colonel, all is fair in love and war, you know."



Map of Streight's raid | cc

Norm Dasinger, a southern and Alabama historian, will be leading the BGES tour "All's Fair in Love and War, Streight's Raid, and Forrest's Bluff" with Forrest biographer Brian Steel Wills on February 26-28, 2021, from Gadsden, Alabama. Find more info [here](http://blueandgrayeducation.org).



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