

The Woodruff Gun

Annotations to the Margreiter Article

Woodruffs Captured after the Battle of Pilot Knob, Mo.

Official Records of the War of the Rebellion, Series I, Volume 41, Part 1, p. 710.

Operations in Louisiana and the Trans-Mississippi States and Territories, July 1-December 31. 1864.
Reports.

Price's Missouri Expedition –Record of the Price Court of Inquiry: Proceedings of a Court of Inquiry Convened at Shreveport, La., by Virtue of the Following Special Orders: Special Orders No. 58. Examination of Capt. T. J. Mackey, corps of engineers:

On page 710, Mackey states that armament captured after the Battle of Pilot Knob included “4 steel 2-pounder skirmish guns, together with many hundred rounds of fixed ammunition for these guns”.

The reference to “fixed ammunition” in this instance refers to the other types of captured artillery as well as to the Woodruff guns, and so should not be construed to indicate whether round or conical Woodruff shot was in use at the time of the Battle of Pilot Knob.

The reference to the town of “Moulton” is a transcription error; the town was Ironton.

Answer. The fight was not renewed, the enemy having evacuated the fort during the night. About 2.30 or 3 in the morning we were advised of his evacuation by the explosion of his magazine. The enemy retired by the Potosi road undisturbed.

Question. State at what time General Price's army was reformed and started in pursuit.

Answer. Very early in the morning of the 28th, some of the troops moving at daylight.

Question. State how the enemy were observed during the night, if at all, and what dispositions were then made to intercept the retreat on the following day, and with what result.

Answer. I have no personal knowledge of how they were observed by night. Until that time they were observed by Major-General Marmaduke's division and Colonel Dobbin's brigade. On the morning of the 28th our army was moved on the Potosi road in pursuit. I heard General Price ordering the pursuit to be vigorous; I know not with what result, as I was ordered to remain at Fort Davidson to destroy it and its armament.

Question. What fell into the hands of our army at Pilot Knob?

Answer. The fort, with its killed and wounded; its armament, consisting of 4 32-pounder guns, 4 24-pounder howitzers on garrison carriages, 4 6-inch Cohorn mortars, 4 steel 2-pounder skirmish guns, together with many hundred rounds of fixed ammunition for these guns; a large amount of ammunition for small-arms, and about eight or ten days' rations for 1,000 men; some 100 or 200 blankets; also the foundry, furnaces, and all the work-shops of the Pilot Knob Iron Company; the towns of Arcadia, Moulton, and Pilot Knob, and 2,000 pounds of coffee, with a large amount of supplies in those three towns.

The hour of 3 p. m. having arrived the Court adjourned to meet to-morrow, the 25th instant, at 9 a. m.

FOURTH DAY.

TUESDAY, *April 25, 1865—9 a. m.*

At a Court of Inquiry then held at Shreveport, La., pursuant to adjournment.

Present, Brig. Gen. Thomas F. Drayton, Provisional Army, C. S.; Brig. Gen. E. McNair, Provisional Army, C. S.; Col. P. N. Luckett, Third Texas Infantry; Maj. O. M. Watkins, assistant adjutant-general and judge-advocate.

Maj. Gen. S. Price appeared before the Court.

The proceedings of yesterday read.

The JUDGE-ADVOCATE then continued the examination of Capt. T. J. MACKEY, corps of engineers.

Question. You have stated that in crossing the Blue River our army encountered resistance. State the character of the resistance, what obstacles to our crossing were interposed by the enemy, and how the crossing of our army was effected.

Answer. The enemy had felled the timber around the ford on the road leading to Westport for 500 yards, making a very formidable entanglement. General Price in person designated a path up the bank, which was very bold, by which a part of his cavalry (Shelby's), after having dismounted, ascended the opposite bank, driving the enemy back. He then ordered me to cut a road through the entanglement without delay, so that his artillery could pass. This road was cut by 90 or 100 axmen in about one hour and a half. A portion of our troops then advanced under the immediate direction of General Price. The enemy fell back to the vicinity of Westport. Our loss very light; theirs not known to me.

Question. When the affair on the Marais des Cygnes prairie occurred (on the 25th of October) where was General Price during the engagement?

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