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Chapter 1 : River Hill Soliloquy by Clarence Mitchell (, Paperback) | eBay

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With the main Union army in the region occupying northern Mississippi, General Braxton Bragg ordered Forrest to cut the Federal supply lines in Tennessee. Most of the troops were raw recruits with no combat experience. He then concentrated the bulk of his force along Old Stage Road. Forrest pulled his force up to Lexington, but did not attack until December. In the morning, Forrest advanced along Lower Road. The Yankees swung around to stop the attack, but it was too late. The rest of the Union force scattered into the countryside. Forrest also captured two artillery pieces, 70 horses, many rifles, and supplies. Forrest continued to Jackson, but found the city well defended. He continued his raid into Kentucky, destroying bridges and hampering supplies to the Union armies in Mississippi. Representatives from Nashville will attend. The City of Lexington was very fortunate to receive a grant from the State of Tennessee to historically mark this epic battle," said Mayor Bobby Dyer. The Historical marker unveiling on December 18 marks the 150th anniversary to the day, of the Battle of Lexington. There will be a brief ceremony at the unveiling led by John Casselberry, Lexington alderman and Civil buff who was instrumental in obtaining the marker. The ceremony will include a Civil War cannon firing. Further development of the Civil War Trails program is funded in West Virginia and Tennessee with plans for an additional sites in those two states. Nathan Bedford Forrest, between Dec. 17 and 18, 1862, with a 2,000 man cavalry brigade crossed the Tennessee River at Clifton into West Tennessee. On December 17, Gen. Sullivan dispatched cavalymen from Jackson under the command of Col. Ingersoll to Lexington to impede Confederate forces. Around noon, Union forces confronted rebel pickets on the Lower Road and withdrew to a bridge that crossed Beech Creek five miles southeast of Lexington. After securing the bridge and picketing the road, Col. Ingersoll retreated to within one-half mile of Lexington as night fell. On the morning of Dec. 18, Starnes on the Old Stage Road and Capt. Gurley on the Lower Road. Furious fighting led by Capt. Frank Gurley regiments crushed Federal defenses and forced them to retreat to Lexington where Ingersoll would make his last stand and surrender. Union casualties consisted of 11 killed, captured and missing, while Confederate casualties were three dead and five wounded. Ingersoll was captured and paroled three days later only after learning the finer points of draw poker from his congenial Confederate captors. This group rode into Clarksburg about noon of the next day. General Nathan Bedford Forrest had traveled around north of Huntingdon, into McMoresville during the night of the 29th and for two days rested and then marched on to Parkers Cross Roads. Early in the morning of 1 January, Gen. Forest and his forces were enjoying breakfast on the wooded lots of the Hiram Britt farm. Everyone seemed to be enjoying those precious morsels of food when about 8:00 the soldiers went, grabbed their guns, and hastened to the line of battle, north of Hicks field. The Federals under Dunnovan lined up south of Britts dwelling and toward the Trenton road. In a short time the cannon were thundering on both sides, balls ripping through ranks of men leaving them mangled and dead. The smaller arms were being constantly used and at times all that could be seen were the colored streaks made by bullets. About eleven the 39th IA Inf. Twelve pieces of Confederate artillery and a battery of about 6 guns soon their right dashed them with fire. They misunderstood their orders and retreated but Col. Cummings ordered them to a halt. They stood their ground, then, and fought with their fellows, to the ultimate defeat of the Confederates. Forrest fought bitterly, causing the Federals to give up strategic positions. Forrest could not cope with fresh Federal troops, the day was almost spent for prolonged battle purposes, about the hour of three, so he ordered retreat. Although in later years General Sullivan did not talk much about this battle he wired his commander, General Grant, in a burst of enthusiasm soon after the engagement; "We have achieved a glorious victory. Captain John Rinaker, C. One reason being that General Forrest and his men did not like to concede defeat, Federal officer, Dunnovan, was beaten by his foes all day and did not like to

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admit this, and Colonel Sullivan, despite his exuberant declaration to Gen. Grant, was not "on the spot" when he should have been. There has remained a human interest story concerning this battle and it is worth relating. The plantation of Peter Pearson, a prominent Henderson Countian, was located only a short distance from the scene of the battle. These boys perched themselves in a position where they could view the conflict. Very soon they had a taste of the battle. In the distance an officer saw the boys through a pair of binoculars and perhaps thinking them spies, ordered that they be fired upon. Chubby "X" and his two Negro companions ran as fast as they could away from the scene, with bullets peppering all about them. Fortunately they arrived safely home. And, to add insult to injury, at dusk as the Federals were marching past the Pearson house, thirteen year old "X" Pearson had to draw water for the thirsty "Yankees. Horses hoofs sounded along the dusty roads as Colonel Robert G. It was the evening of 16 December This group having traveled 28 miles arrived next at Lexington and there were joined by Col. Hawkins of the 2nd W. TN, with men. At noon, these combined forces marched to Beech Creek, about 5 miles east of Lexington. Halting at this place Ingersoll sent Capt. Burbridge forward with one company to obtain information and locate, if possible, the person of Capt. The sun was beginning to lose its radiance when sometime after five in the evening the Federal troops forged and spotted upon investigation, Confederate pickets. Burbridge was ordered back, slowly to Beech Creek. By then it was dark, and Col. Fox of the 2nd W. TN to destroy the bridge that spanned the creek, and to picket the road. This was one mile from Lexington. Luckily for the Federal soldiers of the 5th OH under an Adjutant arrived on the scene. Lucky in the sense of increased numbers, unlucky in that these young men were raw recruits, many having never undergone the rigors of battle or even a thorough military drill. There were two roads leading into Lexington, the stage road and one simply called the "lower" road. Fox destroyed the stage road bridge but left the one on the lower route. Along the pickets men sang, slept, and waited for the morning of the 18th which came after so long a time. Funke of the 11th IL advanced along the stage road. Major Funke met the enemy after about 4 miles and fought hard, the Federals placing two cannon at the crossing of the creek and Lt. McGuire commanding them opened fire on the Confederates. Both sides suffered dearly. The Confederates were pressing their enemies in stubborn fashion at the lower road bridge. The position was eventually taken by Col. Ingersoll who sent Captain Hays of the 2nd W. TN into the Hardest fighting; the forlorn Captain and his men came back to Col. Burbridge advanced, drove the Confederates back and then the Federals had to surrender some of their conquered territory. The "Rebs" were closing in on the left and right flanks and in desperation Col. Ingersoll tried to send forth the 2nd W. TN but they were repelled. The Federals rallied three times, the brave Lt. McGuire shouting orders, rushing into the thick of the skirmish, displaying himself in a soldierly manner. At the third assault the Confederates broke the Federals. Ingersoll was captured, released later; the command fell to Col. Meek of the 11th IL. The Confederates took prisoners. Wagner with seven men killed, nine wounded, fifty-one taken prisoners. The 5th OH surrendered 51 men, and the 2nd W. TN 15, while their compatriots of the 14th IN battery lost two men killed, two wounded and 29 prisoners with their leaders, Major Kerr, Capt.

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