



October 2019

License Plate Encounters Onlookers at Parkers Crossroads



Stopping by Tour Stop 1 this battlefield preservation supporter visits the Parkers Crossroads Battlefield where on December 31, 1862, 3,000 federals in the brigades of Col C.L. Dunham and Col. J. Fuller, met Brig. Gen. N.B. Forrest's 1,800 cavalry and infantry troops. The battle began about 9 AM, with skirmishes and artillery fire, with mounted and dismounted troops. The battle culminated when, surprised by Federals surrounding his troops, Forrest responded with his order to "Charge'em both ways". Confederates rushed past the Union forces, withdrawing south. Casualties: Union: 237; Confederate: 500.

Hearing the sound of battle, Addison Pyles and others from his nearby plantation rode to watch the battle.



The plantation was located on the hill behind the house as viewed from the Red Mound Post Office site, with Tour Stop 6 in the foreground. Henry F. Pyles, a slave at the plantation, accompanied Addison and gave his account years later as part of the Works Progress Administration's, "Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers Project, 1936-1938" (Oklahoma Narratives):

“The Yankees cone through past our place three-four times, and one time they had a big battle jest a mile and a half away at **Parker's Crossroads.**”

“I was in de field hoeing, and I remember I hadn't watered the cows we had hid way down in de woods, so I started down to water them when I first heard de shooting. We had de stock hid down in de woods and all de corn and stuff hid too. 'cause the Yankees and the Sesesh had been riding through quite a lot and either one take anything they needed iffen they found it. First I hear something way off any "Br-r-rump! Then again, and again. Then something sound like popcorn beginning to pop real slow. Then it git faster and I start for de settlement and de big house. All Master's folks was staying at de big house then, and couldn't git back to town 'count of de soldiers, so they all put on they good clothes, with de hoop skirts and little sunshades and the lace pantaloons and got in the buggy to go see de battle! They rid off and it wasn't long till all the n----rs was following behind. We all got to a hill 'bout a half a mile from the crossroads and stopped when we couldn't see nothing but thick smoke all over de whole place. We could see men on horses come in and out of de smoke, going this way and that way, and then some Yankees on horses broke through de woods right close to us and scattered off down through de field. One of de white officers rid up close and yelled at us and took off his hat, but I couldn't hear nothing he said.”

“Then he rid on and catch up with his men. They had stopped and was turning off to one side. He looked back and waved his hat again for us to git away from that, and jest then he clapped his hand to his belly and fell off his hoss. Our white folks turned their buggy round and made it for home.....”



A section of the historic Lexington-Huntingdon Road still in use, near where Pyles saw the soldier shot. The site is approximately ½ mile south of Tour Stop 7. The soldier has never been identified.

“For three-four days after that they was burying soldiers 'round there, and some of de graves was on our old place. Long time afterwards people come and moved all them to other graveyards at Shiloh and Corinth and other places.”

Pyles’ account is one of more than 2,300 first person accounts of slavery and 500 photographs of former slaves in the Library of Congress’ Slave Narratives collection.

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