



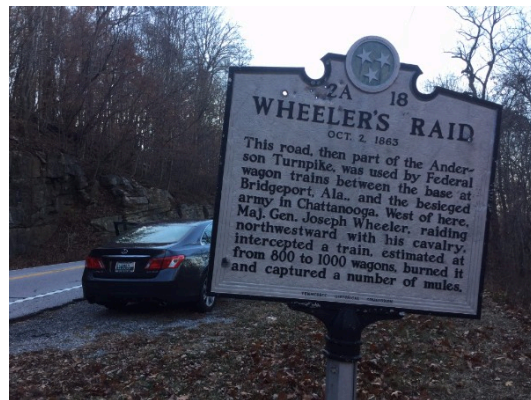
November 2017

## *License Plate Rides to Wheeler's Raid Capturing the Federal's Supply of Ammunition, Food, and...Whiskey*

In the fall of 1863 after their defeat in the Battle of Chickamauga, the Union army withdrew to the city of Chattanooga. Under siege and surrounded by General Braxton Bragg's Army of the Tennessee, Union commanders continued their efforts to move food and ammunition overland in order to keep their army supplied. In an attempt to cut off those supplies, Confederate cavalry commander Gen. Joseph Wheeler carried out numerous raids on the Federal supply trains. Wheeler's October 2, 1863 raid in the Sequatchie Valley, west of Chattanooga, was the most spectacular.

After capturing a small train of 32 wagons south of Dunlap, Wheeler attacked the Union supply train that stretched for 10 miles from the top of Walden's Ridge to the valley. During the day-long raid Wheeler succeeded in routing the enemy, capturing the entire train and more than a thousand prisoners. After selecting and sending to the rear the supplies that could be carried off, including a large supply of whiskey, the remainder of wagons and mules numbering from 800 to 1000 were destroyed.

While this raid severely strained the Union Army's supply system for a short while, the Federals captured Brown's Ferry three weeks later, opening the "Cracker Line," and allowing desperately needed supplies to



*This battlefield supporter stopped along US 127, about 7 miles south of Dunlap and about 2 miles south of the intersection with East Valley Road (Hwy 283). Much of the present day road in this area is located on or within a short distance of the historic road.*



*Confederate cavalryman John Wyeth recounted, "When the fighting with the escort began, the teamsters turned about in the hope of escape...As we came nearer, they became panic-stricken and took to their heels for safety, leaving their uncontrolled teams to run wild. Some of the wagons were overturned, blocking the road in places with anywhere from 10 to 50 teams, some of the mules still standing, some fallen and tangled in the harness, and all in inextricable confusion...As we proceeded, men were detailed to set fire to the wagons and kill the mules. After a run of 6 or 7 miles, I ventured to stop for*

reach the Union Army in Chattanooga.

*a few minutes to help myself to a tempting piece of cheese and some crackers which I saw in one of the wagons.”*

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