



May 2018

## ***License Plate on Forrest's Trail to Bolivar***



***This battlefield supporter visited the 1868 Hardeman County Courthouse in Bolivar, the site of an earlier courthouse, burned in 1864 by Union troops. Thanks to a Union Masonic brother, local resident Austin Miller was allowed to move the court's records to the Miller home before the courthouse was burned.***

After raiding into Kentucky and capturing Fort Pillow on April 12, 1864, Gen. N.B. Forrest withdrew south through Jackson, and Bolivar, Tennessee. In an effort to catch Forrest, Gen. Samuel Sturgis was sent to cut off his escape. Sturgis sent 700 cavalry and two pieces of artillery ahead to engage the Confederates at Bolivar. On May 2, 1864, they engaged the enemy for two hours in fortifications west of town, originally constructed by Union forces when they held the area. Forrest destroyed the bridge across the Hatchie River and escaped into Mississippi. Sturgis, pursuing into Mississippi, stated on May 7, "Though we could not catch the scoundrel we are at least rid of him, and that is something."

Sturgis failed to mention the burning of part of Bolivar in his report on the action but local planter and founder of Bolivar, John H. Bills wrote: "To punish the town for supporting Forrest, General Sturgis ordered the courthouse and town square burned to the ground." Union forces would continue the pursuit of Forrest for the rest of 1864, with various expeditions into Mississippi. Sturgis was not rid of Forrest but would face him again on June 10, 1864, at Brice's Crossroads, where Forrest inflicted a decisive defeat on the Union general.

### ***Send Us a Photo of Your Plate***

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### ***A Conversation Starter***

Noticed the Civil War license plate on another vehicle lately? As you drive the state be on the

site. Email your photo and name of the battlefield or site to [info@tcwpa.org](mailto:info@tcwpa.org). We'll do the rest. Help tell the stories of Tennessee's Civil War history.

lookout for fellow preservationists who have the plate on their vehicle. Meet people who share your support for battlefield preservation or stop to compliment you on a good looking tag. They're great conversation starters!



### **Complimentary Membership**

If you've purchased a Civil War Battlefield preservation license plate you are eligible for a complimentary 1-year membership in TCWPA. For more information visit [tcwpa.org/license-plate](http://tcwpa.org/license-plate).

You can purchase the license plate at your County Clerk's office for \$36.00 plus your regular registration fees. Proceeds from the sale of the plate will help protect and interpret important battlefields in Tennessee. For more information, visit: [tcwpa.org/license-plate](http://tcwpa.org/license-plate)

