



A LITTLE FIGHT BETWEEN FRIENDS AND FAMILY

IT IS A CLICHÉ DESCRIPTION of the Civil War, brother versus brother, but in Kentucky it was literally true. In this hotly divided, officially neutral border state, families were torn apart as fathers and sons went off to fight in opposing armies. More than 75,000 Kentuckians enlisted in the Union army, while approximately 25,000 took up arms for the South. Kentucky regiments battled each other at Perryville, Kentucky, at Shiloh and Chattanooga, Tennessee, and at scores of other places.

On July 5, 1863, the Union and Confederate Kentucky troops were not simply scattered among the units on the battlefield. They were at the forefront that day when Brigadier General John Hunt Morgan headed into Lebanon, Kentucky, with 2,500

Confederates, most of them Kentuckians. At 6:00 A.M., Morgan learned that the 380 Federals of the 20th Kentucky Infantry were stationed at the town. Commanding the unit was Lieutenant Colonel Charles Hanson, whom the war had recently dealt a tragic blow; his brother, Confederate Brigadier General Roger Hanson, had died on January 4, 1863, from wounds received on January 2 in the Battle of Stone's River, Tennessee. Hanson's regiment was filled with former friends, close relatives, and even brothers of men in Morgan's command. In fact, Hanson's brother-in-law, Lee Wheeler, was an officer in one of Morgan's regiments.

The scene for this battle between friends and family began shaping up that June in middle Tennessee around Tullahoma.

by stuart w. sanders

**KINSHIP DID NOT STOP BULLETS FROM FLYING
WHEN JOHN HUNT MORGAN RODE INTO LEBANON, KENTUCKY.
BUT THE REBELS' OUTGUNNED NEIGHBORS AND RELATIVES
ACROSS THE BATTLE LINE GAVE AS GOOD AS THEY GOT.**

Brigadier General John Hunt Morgan, pictured with his wife, Martha Ready, was a native of Kentucky, a state heavily divided in its wartime loyalties. Morgan sided with the Confederacy.



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IMMEDIATELY THE TOWN WILL BE SHELLED.

Hanson refused. "Then notify the women and children to leave immediately," the Southerner grimly replied. "The town will be shelled."

As the adjutant returned to Confederate lines, Hanson placed his men inside a brick railroad depot and several surrounding structures. He later reported that although the women and children were warned to leave, the Confederates

shells went through the roof, leaving men on the ground floor unscathed. "Our artillery could not bear on [the depot], only at the roof," remarked Confederate Sergeant Henry Stone. Hanson noted, however, that shell fragments burst through the building, "setting the roof on fire in two places."

frustrated Morgan sent out another flag of truce. The Confederate cavalier threatened that if Hanson did not surrender, the town would burn.

ALTHOUGH SURROUNDED, Hanson refused to accept Morgan's message, claiming that the Confederates violated the flag of truce by moving their soldiers closer to the depot during the

Van Buren J. Sellers (opposite) rode with Morgan's cavalry before he was captured in July 1863. Some of these Confederate prisoners at Fort Delaware (below) also fought for Morgan. Among them are some close relatives of Morgan: brothers Colonel Richard C. Morgan (standing, fourth from right) and Captain Charlton H. Morgan (standing, third from right) and brother-in-law Colonel Basil W. Duke (standing, second from right).



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advanced and started shelling "before the citizens had reasonable time to make their escape." While shells dropped on businesses and residences, the Southern troops surrounded the town.

The Confederate cannon fired upon the depot from less than 300 yards away. Despite the close range, a couple of important factors impeded the artillery's effectiveness. First, the sturdy brick structure protected the Federal troops from shrapnel. Second, the depot was on lower ground than the artillery, so the

After this ineffective barrage, Morgan ordered a charge on the depot. When the Confederate soldiers deployed, the Union troops pinned them down in some high weeds that surrounded the building. "Many of the enemy were killed at a distance of 400 and a few as far as 900 yards," Hanson proudly informed his superiors. At noon, with the stifling summer heat reaching the mid-90s, a

cease-fire. Sergeant Eastham Tarrant, who wrote the regimental history of the 1st Kentucky Union Cavalry, remarked sarcastically that Morgan, "the embodiment of Southern honor and chivalry...", took advantage of a flag of truce, by moving up and occupying houses immediately around Hanson's forces, then ordered his Artillery forward, stopped negotiations and ordered his men to open fire again." Although it is not known whether Morgan violated the cease-fire intentionally, several of his

men did enter residences across from the depot. When the battle resumed, the Rebels fired at the Federals from across the street.

After another hour of fighting, Morgan ordered all businesses adjacent to the depot to be put to the torch. The fires were easily set, but the Confederate soldiers on the street and in the weeds remained pinned down by accurate Federal gunfire. Confederate Colonel Basil W. Duke, Morgan's brother-in-law and commander of one of his brigades, realized that the Southerners needed to deploy a unit that was more experienced in street fighting. After conferring with his commander, Duke ordered the 2d Kentucky Cavalry into the fray. With smoke, flames, and heat spreading toward the depot, some of the raiders ran up to the building and fired through the windows.

Within the hour, the depot caught fire and Hanson surrendered. The battle had lasted 6 hours and 20 minutes. Hanson noted that each Federal soldier had spent 125 rounds of ammunition and that several of his men's rifles had seized up from constant firing.

The 380 Union soldiers had held off 2,500 Confederates for nearly seven hours. According to Duke, 8 or 9 Rebels were killed and 25 to 30 wounded. Hanson reported 5 killed, 16 wounded, and his entire force captured.

The real trouble started after the Federals had been captured. "After the surrender," Hanson informed his superiors, "the officers and men were grossly mistreated, some with personal violence and indignity...." It turned out that one of Morgan's brothers, 19-year-old Lieutenant Thomas Morgan, had been killed in the fighting, and his death had whipped the Confederate troops into a frenzy of retribution.

Several minutes after the 2d Kentucky had been ordered into battle, Lieutenant Morgan charged the depot at the head of his men. "Poor Tommy

Morgan ran forward and cheered the men with all of the enthusiasm of his bright nature," wrote Confederate soldier Robert Alston. "At the first volley he fell, pierced through the breast." Thomas lurched backward and fell into the arms of his brother Calvin. As Calvin cradled his younger sibling, Thomas cried, "Brother Cally, they have killed me." Then he died.

THOMAS WAS THE YOUNGEST member of the Morgan family, but he had been the first to join the Confederacy. Very popular with the troops, he was known as a good Christian, highly intelligent, sensitive, handsome, and even a gifted singer. A member of the Confederate 10th Kentucky Cavalry called Thomas "a mere boy, but noted for his daring bravery



Like many Kentucky soldiers, these 10 of Morgan's raiders (photographed as prisoners at Camp Douglas in Illinois) had sometimes faced friends, neighbors, and relatives in battle. About 25,000 Kentuckians fought for the South, and 75,000 for the North.

and his devotion to the cause." The Morgans and the other raiders took Thomas's death personally.

Thomas had continually exposed himself to gunfire during the fight in Lebanon. Duke wrote that he "habitually sought and exposed himself to danger, seeming to delight in the excitement it afforded him." After one such episode, Morgan had ordered Thomas to the rear. But the admonishment did no good. As Duke wrote, "He was stricken by the fate which his friends feared for him."

Rage over Thomas's death consumed the raiders. When Federal Captains Cor-

nelius McLeod and Henry Parrisi emerged from the burning depot to surrender, Charlton Morgan, another brother in Morgan's command, threatened to shoot both men in retribution for Thomas's death. Hanson stepped in to prevent the shooting, whereupon Charlton grabbed him by the beard and shouted, "I will blow your brains out you damned rascal." It took several Confederates to pull Charlton off Hanson. "For the offense to myself," Hanson noted, "[Charlton] afterward apologized." Grief soon replaced Charlton's rage. "In the death of Tom I feel as my future happiness was forever blighted," he wrote to his mother. "I loved him more than any of my Brothers."

Following the surrender, the angry Confederates burned more than 20 buildings in Lebanon. The courthouse,

businesses, homes, hotels, and Union supplies were all consigned to flames. The raiders also burned the county clerk's office and all county records, ensuring that papers indicting some of Morgan's men for treason would be turned to ashes.

Although Morgan usually forbade his men from plundering towns, in Lebanon he allowed his command free reign over the businesses. Similarly, enemy soldiers captured by Morgan's men were usually treated

well and paroled immediately, but after the fight at Lebanon, the entire Federal garrison was forced to march the 10 miles to Springfield in the sweltering heat. The men reportedly made the trip in an hour and a half, and several of the Federals died along the way. Some collapsed from exhaustion, while a handful were crushed to death under the wheels of Morgan's artillery. Hanson fared well; shortly after the fight, his brother-in-law Lee Wheeler found him and ensured his safety.

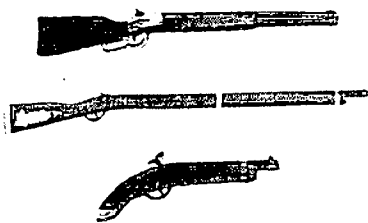
The fury over Thomas Morgan's death was not the only reason behind the mistreatment of (continues on page 66)

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(continued from page 44)

the Union prisoners. The fight at Tebb's Bend and the long battle at Lebanon had delayed Morgan's advance, allowing pursuing Federal troops to catch up to the raiders. The Southerners needed to move quickly or be caught in another fight.

News of Morgan's victory spread throughout the countryside within several days. On July 7, Frances Dallam Peter, a 20-year-old woman who lived down the street from the Morgans' mother in Lexington, Kentucky, learned of Thomas's death and wrote that "Mrs Morgan was dreadfully distressed." A soldier passing by the Morgan house "heard such shrieks and cries that he stopped and asked one of the servants what was the matter and the servant said one of his young 'marsters' had been killed, but didn't know which one...."

Despite Peter's proximity to the Morgan family, however, her greatest concern was not for the well-being of the Morgans or their fellow raiders. Peter was a staunch Unionist; her worry revolved around whether a flag that she and other "Lexington ladies" had presented to the 20th Kentucky had been captured. "If it had been taken by any other than Morgans gang," she wrote, "we wouldn't have cared so much, but to fall into the hands of such highway robbers was too bad...."

Morgan's raiders left their Union prisoners in Springfield and made a night march to Bardstown. Ignoring Bragg's order to stay in Kentucky, Morgan crossed the Ohio River within several days. In enemy territory, the Confederates were constantly hounded by Union troops. After a battle at Corydon, Indiana, and a chase through Indiana and Ohio, Morgan and his command were captured.

From the time they had crossed the Cumberland River into Kentucky on July 2 until they surrendered in Ohio on July 26, Morgan's raiders had fought in 22 skirmishes and 2 engagements. The Confederates' presence in Ohio forced Federal authorities to declare martial law in Cincinnati, Covington, and Newport, and sent sev-

eral states into complete panic. After crossing the Ohio River the raiders had spent an average of 21 hours a day on horseback.

Although John Hunt Morgan, Charlton Morgan, Basil Duke, and scores of other raiders were locked up in the Ohio penitentiary, Morgan eventually made his escape. He returned to Confederate lines, but was never the same. On September 3, 1864, near Greeneville, Tennessee, he was killed in a surprise cavalry encounter. Within weeks of his death, a shroud of legend

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surrounded him and he became an icon for the Southern cause.

Hanson eventually returned to command Union troops in the field. In 1864, Hanson was wounded at Saltville, Virginia, and sent back to Kentucky to recuperate. In an incident that captured the ironies and tensions of life in Civil War Kentucky, Hanson's pro-Confederate mother-in-law sent her carriage to meet him at Lexington. The carriage drove Hanson back to his mother-in-law's home in central Kentucky. As he gingerly climbed from the carriage he called for his mother-in-law. "Well, Mrs. Wheeler," he said, "united we stand, divided I fall; but it's all for the old flag." CWT

STUART W. SANDERS of Perryville, Kentucky, has written articles for several history publications. He has served as director for the Perryville Battlefield Preservation Association.