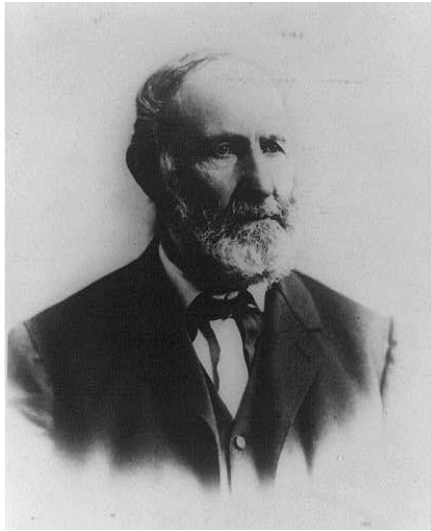


Kentucky's Civil War: Clay County's Goose Creek Salt Works



Historical Marker #531 commemorates the Goose Creek Salt Works, which were destroyed by Union troops during the Civil War.

Salt was a precious commodity to both armies. Therefore, these works, owned by Union Col. T. T. Garrard, became an inviting target.

When the Confederates occupied southeast Kentucky in September 1861, they sent wagon trains to Goose Creek and procured 200 barrels of salt. Although the area soon fell back under Union control, that autumn rebel troops again took salt from the works. After the Confederates were driven from the state, one Union officer noted that the Southerners “boasted” that the salt “has been worth more to them than all their other spoils in Kentucky.”

To prevent the salt from ever again falling into Confederate hands, Union Gen. Don Carlos Buell ordered the works destroyed. Soldiers in charge of the destruction lamented that the local population would suffer from the lack of salt, but they commended Mrs. Garrard for not protesting, since “such destruction would help to restore the Union.”

After the war, the Kentucky Department of Agriculture noted that the destruction practically ended salt manufacturing in Clay County.

Photo: Garrard owned the Goose Creek Salt Works, which were destroyed by Union troops in late 1862. Photo courtesy the Library of Congress.