

## Kentucky's Civil War: The Battle of Mill Springs



*Historical Marker #863 in Pulaski County commemorates the Battle of Mill Springs.*

Fought on Jan. 19, 1862, the battle was an early Union victory that helped break a Confederate defensive line that spanned across southern Kentucky.

With Confederate troops entrenched at Beech Grove, Union Brig. Gen. George Thomas moved his 4,000 soldiers to Logan's Crossroads, 10 miles north of the rebel position. The Confederates, hoping to strike Thomas before he was reinforced, decided to attack.

The day was rainy and foggy and Union forces were initially pushed back. The Federals, however, managed to stabilize their lines, and Confederate hopes for a victory faded when Confederate Gen. Felix Zollicoffer was killed. The Confederates' antiquated flintlock muskets failed to fire because of the rain, and, after a Union bayonet charge against the rebels' left flank, the Confederates were driven from the field.

The Confederates, who lost more than 500 troops killed and wounded, crossed the Cumberland River and left Kentucky. Their failure at Mill Springs—also called the Battle of Fishing Creek, Logan's Crossroads, and Beech Grove—was an early turning point in the Civil War.

Photo: The Battle of Mill Springs, fought near Nancy, Kentucky, was an important early turning point in the Civil War. From the collections of the Kentucky Historical Society.