

Kentucky's Civil War: Hart County's L&N Railroad Bridge



Historical Marker #2160, placed near Munfordville in Hart County, notes the strategic importance of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad Bridge over the Green River during the Civil War.

An engineering marvel of its day, the 1,800-foot-long bridge was damaged and repaired several times during the war. As Louisville was a major supply depot for Union troops, Northern soldiers built earthworks to protect the bridge while Confederate soldiers worked to destroy it.

The first military action near the bridge was the Battle of Rowlett's Station, fought on Dec. 17, 1861. Rebel soldiers attacked a portion of the 32nd Indiana Infantry at Rowlett's Station, and, after holding off repeated charges by Texas cavalry, the Northerners held the field. This was an early victory for Union arms in Kentucky.

Later, when the Confederates invaded Kentucky in 1862, Union fortifications near the bridge were attacked and besieged, resulting in the surrender of nearly 4,000 Federal soldiers after the Battle of Munfordville. That invasion ended after the Battle of Perryville, and Union troops continued to garrison the bridge until the close of the Civil War.

Image: Members of the 32nd Indiana Infantry build a pontoon bridge near Munfordville. Later, this regiment fought at the Battle of Rowlett's Station. From the collections of the Kentucky Historical Society.