

Northern Kentucky Views Presents:

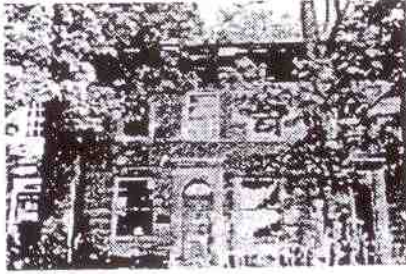
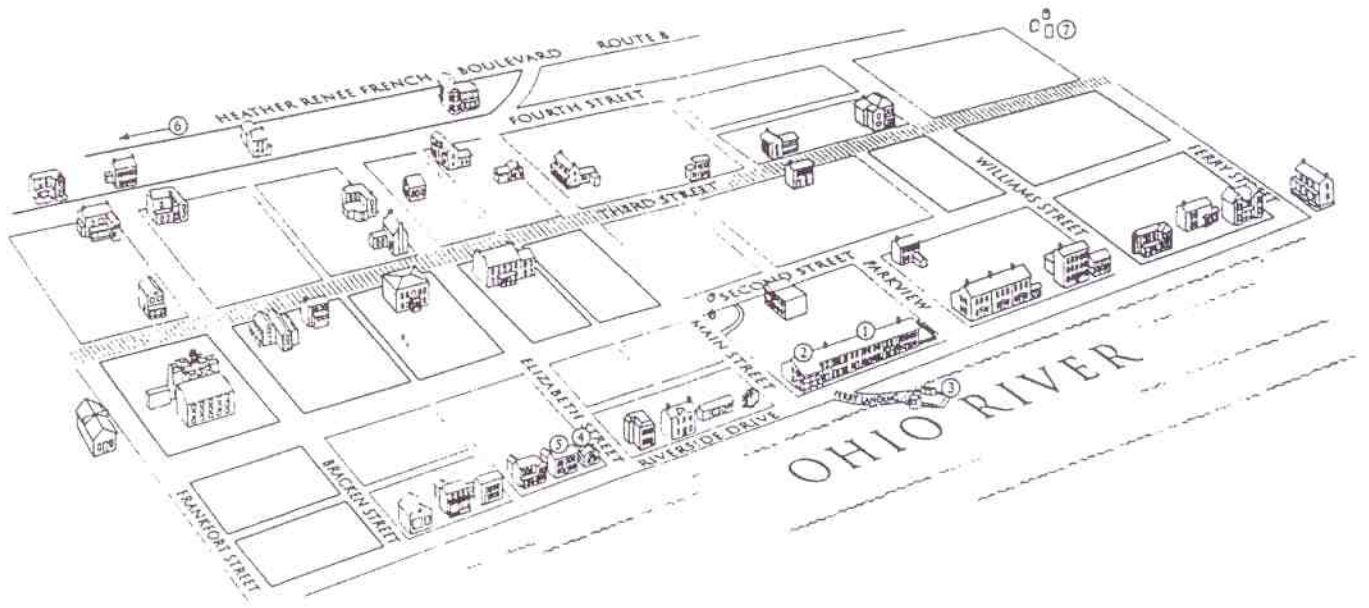
Civil War Battle of Augusta

Steven G. Appleman

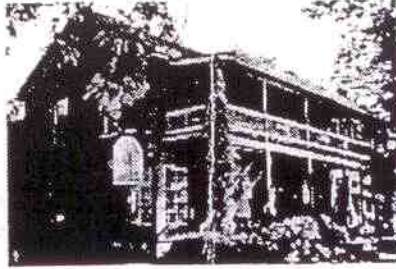
September 27, 1862

www.nkyviews.com

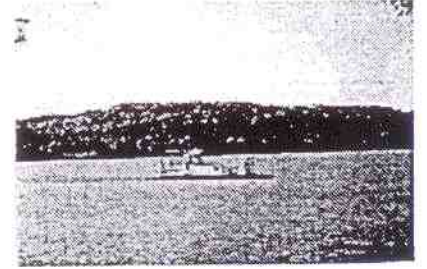
WALKING TOUR MAP OF AUGUSTA



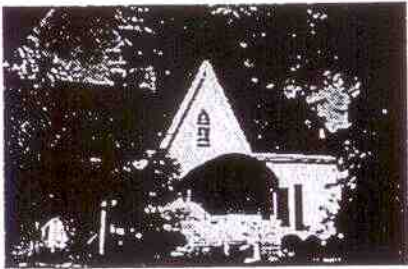
1. 115 W. Riverside Drive (c. 1797)
Piedmont House with its famous Piedmont doorway brought from Virginia. Home of the Armstrong family and later Dr. Joshua Taylor Bradford, a famous American surgeon who commanded the Home Guard against the Confederate attack led by Morgan's Raiders.



2. 101 W. Riverside Drive
James Armstrong drug store, fired on but not burned during Morgan's Raid in the Battle of Augusta. Presently operating as the "Beehive Tavern and Restaurant".



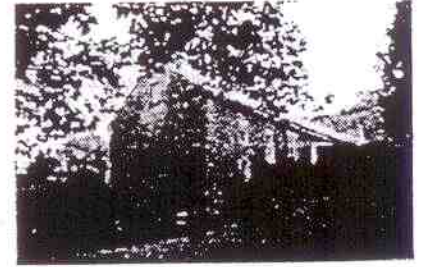
3. Augusta Ferry
The ferry rights belonged to Augusta College until the Kentucky State Legislature gave them to Joshua T. Bradford. Because the Augusta College was the center of a great controversy in the slavery/anti-slavery issue.



4. 202 E. Riverside (c. 1864)
This house replaced Tom Houk's drug store that was burned in Morgan's Raid on Augusta.



5. 206 E. Riverside (c. 1864)
Thornton F. Marshall home, Kentucky Senator who cast the deciding vote that kept Kentucky in the Union during the Civil War.

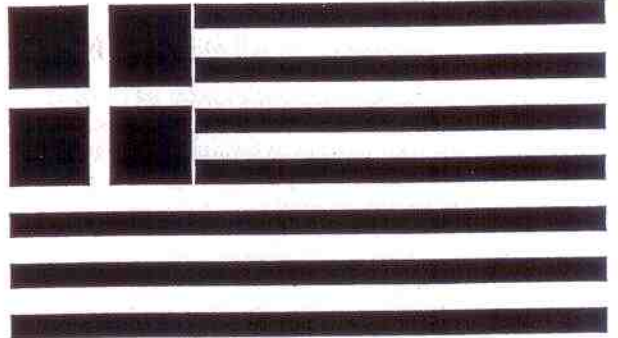


6. Off of Route 19 and Route 8 (c. 1860)
Wine cellar was used to hide children during the Morgan's Raid on Augusta. Produced premier U.S. wines in the cellar.

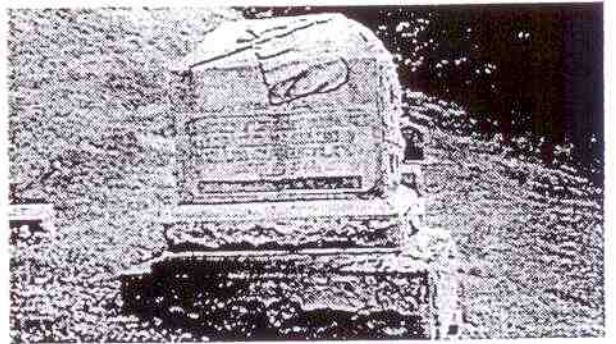
CIVIL WAR BATTLE OF AUGUSTA SEPTEMBER 27, 1862

Morgan's Raiders struck terror into the hearts of residents of the towns in their path. It was not uncommon for towns to fold under Morgan's rage. However, during the fall of 1862, a detachment of the fearsome Confederate cavalry unit was sent to Kentucky on a mission the resulted in a fierce fight inside the small town of Augusta, a fight that Morgan's men had not counted on and did not want.

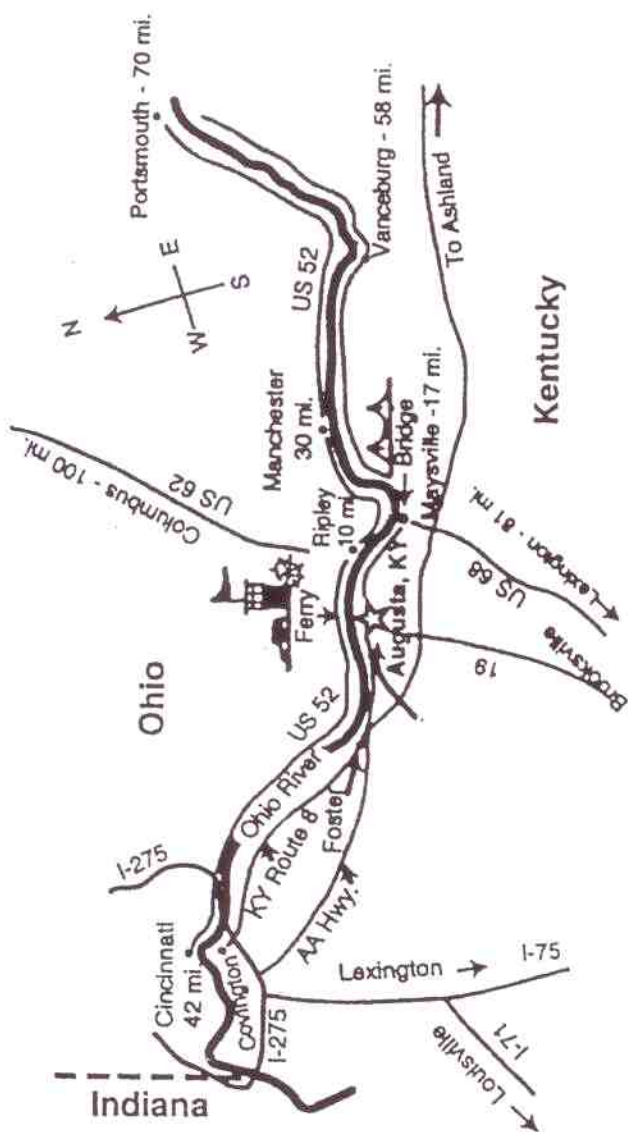
Steven G. Appleman



AUGUSTA FLAG
circa 1862



7. Civil War Monument in Payne Cemetery (off Route 8)
The Payne Cemetery is located in the west end of Augusta. In this cemetery can be found graves of eight unknown soldiers killed in the Civil War battle of September 27, 1862. The inscription reads: *In memory of eight unknown Confederate soldiers killed at Augusta, KY Sept. 27, 1862.*



Although the small town of Augusta is secluded, it is convenient to surrounding metropolitan areas:
42 miles east of Cincinnati, 17 miles west of Maysville, 90 miles north of Lexington, 100 miles south of Columbus

Contact:

In order to defend themselves, Augusta city leaders appropriated \$1,500 for the purchase of 100 weapons to help defend their town. The mayor and city council also made it unlawful to sell gunpowder. Joshua Taylor Bradford, a noted Kentucky surgeon, was made a colonel and put in charge of forming a home guard and providing armed protection for the town.

The citizens of Augusta knew that Morgan's men were in the area, and rumors ran rampant about what might happen next. Colonel Bradford put the town under strict martial law, placed pickets at every road, and positioned scouts three miles out on the roads leading into Augusta. He also established drill grounds at Abe Baker's lumberyard, where the home guard would practice its maneuvers.

On September 17, Duke decided to make his move on Augusta and initiated his plan to harass Cincinnati. Bradford had sent out a large scouting party that came into contact with the raiders on their way to Augusta. However, according to Duke, "They dispersed and were cut out from taking part in the action that day. Soon the advanced pickets were coming into Augusta telling alarming stories of the raiders moving toward the town."

Sam Veach, 10 years old at the time, would never forget the excitement of that day. "The town was all agog expecting the pending disaster," he later recalled. Veach was ordered by his father, who was a picket, to take his family to the Baker wine cellar for safety because the Rebels were coming. Before young Veach went to the safety of the wine cellar, his father instructed him to take the black mare and mule colt to water. While he was waiting for the animals to drink at the river, Veach saw Bradford instruct Dan, a local black man, to cut a group of mules loose and get them back to the barn because the Rebels were near.

Women and children took refuge in the many brick homes of the small town. Eight-year-old Lizzie Vandyke was playing with her dolls until she was called by her mother to come home. She and her family hid in the cellar until the fighting was over.

At noon, Bradford received reports of the approach of between 400 and 500 Confederate raiders. He had at his disposal the gunboat Belfast, which was equipped with a 12-pounder howitzer and hay bales to protect its sides. Two other gunboats, Florence Miller and Allen Collyer, were patrolling up and down the river with their howitzers. A. D. Wilson, master of Allen Collyer, brought his boat alongside Belfast to obtain additional ammunition. Bradford sent a courier to ask for the help of Allen Collyer because, Bradford thought, "We will surely be attacked by 2 o'clock."

Before the Confederates attacked the town, Wilson was alerted by the crew of Florence Miller that the Rebels were trying to cross the river above Augusta and steamed off to intercept them. Florence Miller docked at the wharf and stayed, along with Belfast, to help protect the town.

Bradford instructed his men to take cover in the houses on Front Street and along Upper Street to Second. Although the Augusta militia was outnumbered, it was thought that the Union gunboats would help even the odds and aid the efforts to defend the town.

Duke approached from the Brooksville Pike, and when he was close to the town he turned off the road and climbed to the crest of the hill overlooking Augusta. The raiders had a perfect view of the city and could see every action of the August Home Guard from the ridge.

After conferring with his captains, Duke agreed that the

immediate worry was the two gunboats, because they commanded the streets into the town. According to Duke, "If they could be driven away, then I would have no more trouble and the garrison would surrender without a fight."

The Confederates had two mountain howitzers that Duke strategically placed to open fire on the boats. Captain Jacob Cassell was ordered to maneuver Company A across Germantown Pike, move along the riverbank on the eastern edge of the town, and use direct rifle fire to annoy the troops on the boats.

Duke decided to send a group of his men under a white flag of truce to demand the town's surrender, saying that he felt the citizens were outnumbered and that innocent lives could be spared. Belfast Captain Charles Sedam saw the Confederates coming straight down the hill and ordered the boat's howitzer to be fired. The shell landed within 30 yards of where the guns were located killing three of the raiders.

The Confederates' howitzers were repositioned, and they opened fire on Belfast, while Company A riflemen shot from the riverbank. One of the shells found its mark and penetrated Belfast's hull. Sedam decided that his boat could no longer take the punishment and steamed off after firing only three shots. Florence Miller did not attempt a shot and steamed off behind Belfast. The "bullpups," as Duke admiringly called his howitzers, had accomplished their task perfectly.

Expecting that a mere show of force would cause the town to surrender, Duke commanded Companies B and C to enter the town with him and assess the situation. Company B was to go down Main Street and Company C was divided to cover Elizabeth and Upper streets. The troops were instructed to enter the town on foot because it would be less confusing and they would not be such easy target. The advance troops of Company B maneuvered down Main Street, turned off Main onto Front Street, and surrounded Colonel Bradford's two-story brick home. Seeing that the gunboats had deserted him and that the town was now full of Confederate troops, Bradford waved a white handkerchief from his second story window.

Company C was not as fortunate. As it came down Upper Street, the Augusta Home Guard opened fire on the raiders without knowing that Bradford wanted to surrender, killing and wounding several men. Duke immediately ordered his men to take cover on the right-hand side of the street, even though the fire came from both sides. The fight, which Duke had not expected and which Bradford had tried to avoid, was now underway.

Duke immediately sent Companies E, I, L and M to help in the battle. At the first shots from the center of town, Captain Cassell of Company A sent a detachment led by Lieutenant Greenberry Roberts to help with the fight. Roberts forgot Duke's instructions and galloped into the middle of the battle, adding to the general confusion. The sergeant who was left in charge of the howitzers mistook Roberts for the enemy and opened fire. Roberts and several of his men were killed instantly.

Confederate losses were mounting. Lieutenant George White bolted down Upper Street into the fight and was shot from his horse. Captain William Kennett and new recruit Lieutenant Courtland Prentice were mortally wounded while engaged in battle on the narrow streets. Whip Roger fell at the door of a house on Upper Street and called for help to get a message to his father. When Lieutenant P.T. King came to his side, he was shot dead. Private C.T. Puckett came to the defense of both officers

and was also shot.

Captain Sam Morgan, a cousin of John Hunt Morgan, was hit while fighting on Elizabeth Street. Wash Morgan, Sam's brother, witnessed the shooting and ran toward Bradford's house crying for vengeance.

After 30 minutes of bitter fighting and chaos, Duke restored his troops to some semblance of order. He posted details of men in the middle of the street in front of the occupied houses with instructions to fire at the snipers and prevent them from taking accurate aim. Other details were given the task of breaking into the houses. The howitzers were moved down the hill and fired into houses in which the home guard refused to surrender. The guns were double-shotted with grape and canister, then aimed at the windows.

Duke then ordered the houses in which the resistance was strongest to be set on fire. While the fighting was still raging, many of the town's women came to the aid of the fallen men on both sides. Several members of the Augusta Home Guard began to wave makeshift white flags of surrender. Thinking it was a general surrender, Duke ordered his men to put out the fires. But as with Bradford's earlier attempt, it was not a total surrender because several of the defenders kept firing, killing two men who were trying to put out a fire. Mary Coburn, an Augusta resident, commented, "The women and children wave their white flags out the windows and the men was behind them and done the shooting out of tile winders."

The Confederates were enraged by what they saw as an attempt to take advantage of the surrender to kill more of their men. All the houses from which shots had come were set on fire.

Several brutal hand-to-hand fights occurred between the few remaining combatants. Private James March of Company A met a member of the home guard at the doorway of a house, avoided his banner thrust, spun the man to the ground and used the bayonet on him. One raid bashed in the head of a guardsman with the butt of his pistol after the two had been locked in combat. Duke commented, "I never saw my men fight with such ferocity and few lives were spared with the men who kept up resistance."

The Augusta Home Guard fought until holding out was no longer humanly possible. At last, Bradford was able to secure a complete surrender of his forces.

James Weldon came running down the street toward Bradford yelling that they should not surrender. When a Confederate drew his saber and was about to run Weldon through, Bradford stepped between them, telling Weldon he must surrender and that it was useless to fight on. In doing so, he saved Weldon's life.

Various Confederate raiders wanted revenge because of the deaths of several of their comrades and the misdeeds they perceived had been committed by the home guard. Wash Morgan mounted his horse, drew his saber and rode up and down the street yelling, "I have lost my brother and 10,000 Yankees will pay for it." Morgan blamed Bradford for the actions of his men and wanted to exact some form of revenge from him. Duke noted, "It was with great difficulty that the lives of Bradford and his men could be saved."

As the prisoners were being gathered up, Duke met with his officers and made a quick assessment of the situation. Of the 350 officers and made a quick assessment of the situation. Of the 350 men (under Duke's command) engaged in the battle, they had suffered 21 killed and another 18 wounded. The howitzers

had used up all their ammunition, rendering them useless on any further expedition to Cincinnati. In addition they had more than 100 prisoners to deal with. His men completely exhausted from their unexpectedly difficult struggle, Duke ordered a withdrawal to Falmouth.

Approximately 15 Augusta men were killed during the battle, and several others were wounded. Dr. William Taylor, Nick Worthington, John B. Story, George Byers, Oliver Stairs, John Gephert, John Perkins, William Gregg, William Bland and Alpheus McKibben were among the guardsmen who lost their lives defending their town. Harrison County citizens William Bland, Ellis Day, John Drake and Major Little were badly wounded.

The Confederates gathered up every carriage and wagon they could find to help transport their wounded and carry some of the goods they looted from the local stores. Some of the raiders helped themselves to whiskey from George O'Neill's hotel, while others took items from the local stores.

Joseph Doniphan, mayor of Augusta, said that as soon as Bradford surrendered, the raiders "commenced the pillage and plunder, every Rebel acting for himself. Stores were broken open and rifled of what was wanted by the Rebels. "The wounded who could not travel or who needed immediate attention were taken to local homes for care.

Much of the lower section of Augusta was now in flames. Duke wanted to give assistance to certain residents who were Southern sympathizers and to show appreciation to the women who had helped the wounded. James Armstrong's home on the corner of Upper and Front streets was one of the last houses to be set on fire. When the Confederates decided to help put the fire out, Armstrong told them to "let it burn," but he also asked Duke to "collect and destroy all the arms of the Home Guards, that they might not give trouble again."

Little Doshia Kirk was crying because the piano she loved to play was stuck inside the Bradford Hotel, which was burning. To comfort her, Confederate soldiers told her they would pull the piano out of the fire if she would play "Dixie" on it. She agreed, and as soon as the piano was sitting outside, Doshia began to play, much to the amusement of the raiders.

The Confederates started on the return trip to Falmouth, taking the Brookville Pike and reaching the county seat of Brooksville by Pike and reaching the county seat of Brooksville by nightfall. According to Doniphan, "The prisoners were all taken from town as rapidly as they could march. "Because of the short, tenacious battle and the loss of several good officers, Duke said of his night in Brooksville, "It was one of the gloomiest and saddest that any man has ever known."

The citizens of Augusta also had a dismal night, and several anxious days followed. Young Sammy Veach came into town after the raiders left and said, "We found horrifying sights of every sort." The dead were stacked in rows inside the store on the corner of Upper and Front streets. Many of the homes were still aflame and could be seen at night burning brightly. "Of all bloody sights you ever saw I never witnessed such a scene." Mary Coburn said. "I have often heard of war and read of it but now I witnessed it."

By Steven G. Appelman
America's Civil War, May 1996
