

## History

**Update ~ Sept. 6 8:30 pm**

[Chalk Bluffs](#) being fortified ~ Camp Johnston occupied at Belmont

[War is Here ~](#)

**A Tale of Fear**

### **Two Tennessean's Survive to tell about the Civil War**

Mike (MJ) McKinnie was my ancestor. He rode with the 7th Tennessee; Co. E and was with General [Nathan Bedford Forrest](#) for the final two years of the War.

During my search for his Civil War Service, I had the Good Fortune of becoming acquainted with Esteemed Southern Historian ~ [Shelby Foote](#).

These two #KronKips that follow were recorded during the time frame when I spoke with Mr. Foote ~ not bugging him, but so often so, that he referenced me as 'The Belmont Guy' nearing end of our all-too infrequent chats. [#DonnWoody](#)

His explanation of [#The Compromise](#) and his simple eloquent defense of [#The Flag](#) are must views for All Historians or People interested in Fact over Myth and distorted 21st Century Media Hype.

Folks must remember to keep History in context when viewing it; looking outside in is easy to do. That 20/20 hindsight effect, ya know.

It's ironic, however, that the pursuit of MJ's War Record came about as a result of my search for another ancestor W.L. (Wil) Collins. In addition to a Family Bible that traces the Collins' lineage; in possession of a relative of mine in [Denmark, Tennessee](#), there are the oral recollections my Aunt Bess was able to relay to family members that reverberate today.

MJ's war experiences were lengthier than Wil's and both survived to tell the tale. The Collins' recollection of Wil is that he was 'teched' after the Battle of Shiloh and never fought again.

Wil was in [Polk's Artillery Battery](#). A unit that was blown to smithereens in Rhea Field on Sunday, April 6, 1861. Wil's battery was in a cannon duel with Sherman's unit positioned at Shiloh Church. The Confederates were blown away in Rhea Field.

My 19-year old great-great-great grandfather saw this first hand. Now, the Collins family are a quiet bunch.

But, had Wil been able to fight further he would have been picked up by one of Forrest's many recruiting raids through West Tennessee. As it appears, Wil was unable to serve for whatever reason; 'teched' was good enough to get a pass with renegade recruiters in 1861, my memory in 2015 is one of honor.

### [Rhea Field](#)

Wil's journey to that fateful Sunday morning near Pittsburg Landing in a clearing just over the bogs below Rhea Spring began in Bolivar, Tennessee [at the Pillars Mansion](#). Mustered into service in late early 1861, Marsh Polk's 6-gun battery almost had a chance to see the elephant at Belmont in November of that year.

[General Leonidas Polk](#) had committed the most egregious error of the [Civil War](#) when he occupied [Columbus, Kentucky](#) in late September only to be trumped by General US Grant's move to occupy [Paducah](#) and [Smithland](#). Polk had invaded a sovereign state and Confederate authorities were outraged. Union officials took full advantage of the tactical and political mistake that would haunt Polk until that fateful day on [Stone Mountain in Georgia in 1864](#).

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## Cairo, Ill. ~ August 1861.

*Grant contemplating action* ~ Feint near Commerce would open way to Belmont. Proceed as discussed. **#Grant**

The Evening gave perfect way to the gathering Grant wanted to talk. Heightened focus with the Light Show in the Galaxy provided cover to the intense hushed sounds emanating from Grant's tent.

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**SUMPTER FIRED UPON** ~ Word reaches Grant; troops on Heightened Alert. The Union General feels the need to move; test his green troops; bust up this Big Camping adventure with 100,000 Boys from Iowa ~ Wisconsin and Illinois were beginning to enjoy too much.

The Drilling had sapped their energy and kept the vast majority in Line. Now, what would they do when they mustered into their First Battle Line.

Grant was about to find out. [At Belmont.](#)

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**SILENCE OVER THE WIRES** ~ [Tension Mounting . Pending Movements. Awaiting Orders](#)

It was time. The War was engaged. Fighting Means Killing. And, both sides knew it.

This *Kronicle* is of the Union and Confederate Movements from the outbreak of the American Civil War in 1861 ~ through their Fateful Meeting Again at Shiloh.

Those Yankees and Rebels who met for the first time; engaged for the first time; Killed One Another For the First Time did so at A Place Called Belmont. (Just happens to be My Home-Land)

Yankee theatrics inside Camp Johnston on the Belmont Plain that cold November morning in November of 1861 would come back to Haunt the **Yanks**.

It didn't sit well with Rebel Leaders at the time it happened ~ as evidenced by the across the Mississippi shelling of the Camp while under Plunder and Pomp by the Yankees ~ but, Camp Talk as the **Rebs** slowly worked their way in retreat over the next 4-months would set the stage for vengeance and culminate with the ultimate Karmic savage payback.

Only few realize ~ it seems to me ~ the singularly importance of the [Battle of Shiloh](#).

Civil War Study in America is geared toward the Popular and Publicized ~ and this is with no bit of Historic Envy ~ just edification and illumination of the significance of ~ not only Belmont ~ but, that of Shiloh's wailing failure that doomed the Confederacy to defeat.

That's my take for what it's worth.

Massed troops; with soldiers from All-States in the Confederacy in One Giant Army poised to attack the Union Forces at Pittsburg Landing.

Their ferocity was gained ~ in part ~ on the [Plains of Belmont](#) on that November Day ~ a mere 4-months prior.

***My How The World Had Changed during that Time Span.***

*...to be continued...*

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