

Wheelers Raid on a Wagon Train - 1863 - Sequatchie Valley

On the morning of November [October] 2, I reached Sequatchie Valley, and at 3 o'clock on the following morning proceeded down toward Jasper with about 1,500 men. After traveling about 10 miles we overtook and captured 32 six-mule wagons, which were destroyed. The mules were carried on with the command.

On approaching Andersons Cross-Roads, we were met by a considerable force of cavalry, which we charged and drove before us. We here found a large train of wagons, which proved to extend from the top of Waldens Ridge for a distance of 10 miles toward Jasper. This train was heavily loaded with ordnance, quartermasters, and commissary stores. The number of wagons was variously estimated at from 800 to 1,500. No one saw, perhaps, more than half the train. The quartermaster in charge of the train, as well as other employees, stated that there were 800 six-mule wagons, besides a great number of sutler wagons. The train was guarded by a brigade of cavalry in front and a brigade of cavalry in rear, and on the flank, where we attacked, were stationed two regiments of infantry. After a warm fight, the guards were defeated and driven off, leaving the entire train in our possession. After selecting such mules and wagons as we needed, we then destroyed the train by burning the wagons and sabering or shooting the mules. During this work my pickets were driven in on both flanks and my rear. Fortunately, the enemy was repulsed, and we remained undisturbed for eight hours and until our work was thoroughly accomplished.

Just before dark, as we were retiring, a large force of cavalry and infantry moved upon us from Stevenson, skirmishing with our rear until dark. During this, General Martin, Colonel Avery, and Lieutenant-Colonel Griffith were distinguished for gallantry.

From the "Official Record" of the "War of the Rebellion"

During the night, I moved over Cumberland Mountains, and early next morning joined General Wharton near the foot of the mountains and went forward to attack McMinnville. The enemy was pressing close behind, but we succeeded in capturing the place with an enormous supply of quartermasters and commissary stores, with the fortifications and garrison, which numbered 587 men, with arms, accouterments, & c.;(???) 200 horses were also captured.