

Old 5th Kentucky Mounted Infantry Regiment October 1861 to October 1862

The Civil War Experiences of the Barkers and Gevedons of Morgan County

A Call to Arms

Abraham Lincoln, a known abolitionist, had been elected President in November of 1860 and took office in March 1861. Afraid of what Lincoln might do, several southern states seceded from the Union. Reasons for joining the Confederate cause were complex and varied. In Kentucky there was not as strong a sentiment in favor of slavery as elsewhere since few people had slaves, but southeastern Kentucky had close ties to Virginia, a state that had seceded.

The newly elected pro-Union Kentucky legislature passed bills requesting that the Federal government send troops to preempt any possible rebellion. Home Guards were quickly formed in each county. Federal Marshalls began arresting individuals suspected of inciting rebellion which further angered those sympathetic to the southern cause. Still, attempts to recruit men for the Confederate cause met tepid response. Then a single event initiated a cascade of events that affected the whole region.

In September of 1861, General William T. Sherman, the ranking Union commander in Louisville, ordered William “Bull” Nelson, the commander of Camp Robinson in Garrard County, to move south to preempt unrest and to drive the Confederates already mustered at Prestonburg out of Kentucky. As they passed through Caney (on what is now Rt. 191), a senile old man stepped out onto his porch to watch the soldiers pass. Mumbling incoherently, he shot his pistol into the air, some say in support of the troops, others were not so sure. The troops opened fire and put several bullets into the old man. The entire county became outraged at the news and Confederate enlistments swelled.

In late summer, well-known attorney and land owner Andrew Jackson May began personally recruiting men to the Confederate cause. They included many prominent citizens such as Henry Chapman Swango, a prosperous farmer and school teacher in Hazel Green. There is little doubt that the Barkers and Gevedons knew both of these men and it may have played an important roll in their decisions to join them. May took his recruits to Prestonburg where they camped on the farm of his cousin William May. There they were assured of a food supply and a place to begin training for war. In late October May returned his men to West Liberty where on October 21, 1861, they officially became Company A of the 5th Kentucky Mounted Infantry Regiment of the Confederate States of America (see map and legend).

The 5th Kentucky was “composed almost exclusively of mountain men and one of the finest corps of soldiers ever enlisted in the army”. According to the pro-Confederate *Louisville Courier*, the 5th consisted of “hardy, raw-boned, brave mountaineers” who were “trained to hardship and armed with long rifles”.

Barker enlistments included:
William Barker, Age 52, and three of his sons;
Henry M. Barker, Age 29;
John Calhoun Barker, Age 27;
George W. Barker, Age 22;



Henry M. Barker



John Calhoun Barker

Gevedon enlistments from the family of Joseph and Mary Ann (Leach) included:
William Leach Gevedon, Age 22;
Joseph T. Gevedon, Age 17;
and Willis Green Gevedon, Age 20 (official enlistment date was Oct. 25).



**William Leach
Gevedon**



**Willis Green
Gevedon**

These enlistments left William Barker's wife Elizabeth (Mumbauer) alone with her daughters Verlina, and Eva and young sons Thomas and William. Making matters more difficult, Henry M. Barker was married to a Gevedon sister. Henry and Angeline had just started their family and there were four children under five years of age. Most difficult of all, they lost an infant child just three months before Henry's enlistment. It is difficult to imagine the hardships these women would face, but at the time of the enlistment it was generally believed that the war would last no more than a month.

The entire 5th Infantry Regiment was under the overall command of Colonel John S. Williams until early November when Brigadier-General Humphrey Marshall was sent to take

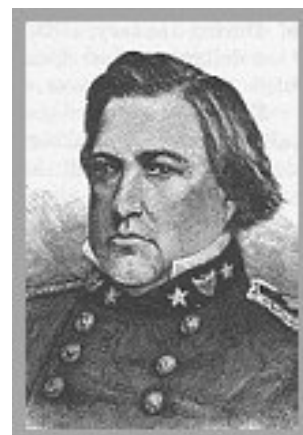
command in Prestonburg. Today this unit is referred to as the “Old” or “Original” 5th Kentucky Infantry Regiment. In the arcane world of military designations, there was sometimes more than one unit with the same name and many units consolidated or split, changing names as they went.

This has led to much confusion for historians and has been the source of mistaken identities. This is apparently the source of the erroneous ‘field worker’s report’ from 1940 stating that Henry M. Barker had deserted in Corinth, Mississippi. The Old 5th was never in Mississippi. To confuse matters further, there was another Henry Barker in the 5th Kentucky Infantry Regiment, but who did not use a middle initial. His muster cards show he was “absent without leave” when the regiment disbanded in October of 1862.

The men were eager to send the Yankees packing, but in reality were poorly equipped and had little training as a fighting unit. Most of the men carried their own flintlock squirrel rifles or shotguns. In fact, they would eventually become known as the ‘Ragamuffin Brigade’. In response to a requisition to the Confederate War Department, General Lee wrote that owing to the scarcity of arms he was having pikes (medieval lances) made and offered to send some to the troops. In addition, the approximately 1400 men were too few in number to attain objectives that would have realistically required a force of several thousand. Captain May also sent a telegram to President Jefferson Davis in Richmond, Virginia requesting urgent assistance. Davis replied that they “were sorely pressed on every side” and were unable to send troops. In any case, it was too late.



The “caves” (up the ravine next to the Stillwater Schoolhouse and Church) where food and valuables were hidden from both Union and confederate armies. They are in fact depressions created by overhanging limestone slabs.



Gen. Humphrey Marshall

The Barker Patriarch Dies at Ivy Mountain

On October 23, just two days after the unit’s formation, General Nelson marched south from Maysville with four Ohio regiments and an assortment of Kentucky volunteers and militiamen. Nelson’s Union forces engaged Colonel May’s new recruits in a brief skirmish as they were mustering at the county seat of West Liberty. May retreated with his men thirty miles southeast on the Pound Gap Road to Prestonburg and bivouacked again on the May farm. Captain May had hoped to reach the security of Colonel William’s main body of the 5th Kentucky with over 1000 men, but they had already retreated south to Picketon (now Pikeville).

Captain May, who would later write of recalling that a narrow gorge had helped a small Greek army defeat an army of thousands of Persians at Thermopylae, decided to make a stand at Ivy Narrows. Ivy Mountain had a level bench land overlooking the narrow pass. There May built a breastworks (above ground trenches made by piling up, earth, logs etc.) and positioned his men.

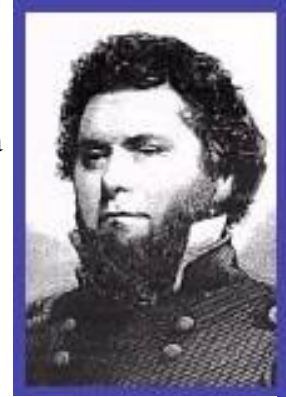
Meanwhile, Nelson's forces having reached Prestonburg on November 5, and not finding May's men, rested for three days not realizing that the Confederates were waiting for them only three miles away. On November 8, a fateful day in Barker history, Nelson continued his pursuit of May's Confederates south on Pound Gap Road. The road, as they entered the Narrows, was only seven feet wide and carved out of the steep mountainside and paralleling the creek twenty-five feet below. When the Federals rounded a sharp bend, the Confederates opened fire. One of the first shots was fired at Nelson and a bullet severed the strap of his binoculars case. Several men around him were immediately cut down. Nelson sent men from the back of his column diagonally up the mountainside toward the Confederate position while his cavalry fought from the road. The hill was very steep, and some of the deaths may have resulted from men receiving superficial wounds and falling to their deaths.

The initial volley was a bloody one and the source of most of the Union casualties. In his battle report written a few days later, Nelson wrote:

"The skirmish was very sharp. The mountainside was blue with puffs of smoke, and not an enemy to be seen. The first discharge killed four and wounded thirteen of Marshall's men. I ordered the Kentuckians to charge. Colonel Harris, whose regiment was immediately behind me, led his men up the mountainside most gallantly, and deployed them along the face of it."

According to Nelson, the battle lasted for an hour and twenty minutes. It is not known exactly when William Barker was mortally wounded. The following is an account of his death told by Willis Gevedon to his nephew Monroe Gevedon.

"We had taken our position in the flat above the narrows, each of us with his old squirrel rifle. The Yanks were coming down the Burning Fork with the cavalry in front, passing along the bluff under us and from where we stood we could only see their heads. The cavalry could do us no harm, but their infantry, coming on behind, could see us, and was pouring bullets in on us, but were out of range of our small bored guns. So we were taking it out on the cavalry, but Uncle Billy Barker and John Pieratt, off to our right, could not see over the bluff, where they were immediately shot down. Henry seeing them fall, sat his gun against the bush from which we was firing, ran down to his father and held his head up till he was dead, then coming back up to me, he picked up his gun, took the bullets from his pouch and counted them. Then he said, "Green, I have eleven bullets; that means eleven of their scalps for the death of my father." I saw him load and fire the eleven shots, and at every shot, I saw a yank fall from his horse. Of course, others were



Gen. William Nelson

firing, but I don't believe Henry missed."

The Confederates continued to hold their ground until a third Union regiment climbed the north side of the mountain and descended on the rebels from above. The Confederates retreated across the Ivy Creek Bridge. After traveling south a few miles a heavy downpour began. Nelson halted his pursuit, but the Confederates continued in the rain.

Captain May was ordered to take his regiment back up the road toward Ivy Creek as the main force withdrew. At 1:30 pm the next day (Nov. 9) the Union forces attacked and May's sharpshooters immediately brought down eight Federals. It is likely that the Barkers and Gevedons were among the men who returned to Ivy Creek to face Nelson's men. There were several brief skirmishes as May's men retreated and eventually blocked Nelson's pursuit by felling trees across the road, and destroying bridges on the road to Pikeville.

What officially became known as the Battle of Ivy Mountain was, in reality, merely a skirmish. Although the number of casualties was similar on both sides (about 10 deaths and several dozen wounded), the Confederates were forced to retreat to Virginia to seek re-supply. In the rush to evacuate before being cut off, the Confederates left their dead at the scene, presumably including William Barker. What happened to the bodies of the fallen members of the 5th Kentucky Mounted Infantry Regiment at Ivy Mountain has been a subject of great

<h1>The New-York Times.</h1>	
NEW-YORK, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 1861.	
<p style="text-align: center;">GRAT VICTORY IN KENTUCKY.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The Rebel Generals Williams and Howes Defeated by Gen. Nelson.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">A BRILLIANT PIECE OF STRATEGY.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Four Hundred Rebels Killed and a Thousand Taken Prisoners.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">THE TWO REBEL GENERALS CAPTURED.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CINCINNATI, Tuesday, Nov. 12.</p> <p>Gen. NELSON met the rebels, under Gen. WILLIAMS, at Piketon, Pike County, Ky., on Friday last, and gained a glorious victory.</p> <p>Col. LUKE MOORE attacked the rebels in the rear with 3,600 men, while Col. HARRIS, of the Second Ohio Regiment, with 600 men, attacked them in the front, Col. HARRIS falling back and Col. MOORE pressing forward, until the enemy were brought into the midst of Gen. NELSON's Brigade, when our forces pressed them on all sides, killing four hundred of them and taking a thousand prisoners. The balance scattered in all directions. The Federal loss is small.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">LEXINGTON, Ky., Tuesday, Nov. 12.</p> <p>A courier from Gen. NELSON's Brigade, with dispatches for Gen. THOMAS, reports that the fighting at Piketon lasted two days. The rebels lost 400 killed and 1,000 prisoners.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">COMPLETENESS OF THE VICTORY.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CINCINNATI, Tuesday, Nov. 12—P. M.</p> <p>The battle at Piketon lasted Friday and Saturday, and the victory was complete.</p> <p>Gen. WILLIAMS and HOWES are among the prisoners.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OFFICIAL NEWS AT THE WAR DEPARTMENT.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">WASHINGTON, Tuesday, Nov. 12.</p> <p>The following dispatch was received to-day by the War Department:</p> <p style="text-align: right;">FARM, Ky., Nov. 12.</p> <p>A courier with dispatches to Gen. THOMAS, reports that after two days' fighting, the rebels lost four hundred killed and two thousand prisoners. The National loss is small.</p> <p>Gen. WILLIAMS and Gen. HOWES were both captured in the battle by Gen. NELSON. This is reliable.</p> <p>The Gen. NELSON, who commands the loyal forces in Kentucky, is Lieut. WM. NELSON, of the navy. He entered the naval service in 1841 from Kentucky, and has always been regarded as a gallant officer. At the instance of his friends, and because of the confidence reposed by the President in his skill as a commander, he was appointed Brigadier-General of Volunteers. He has been for the past three months doing an excellent service by distributing arms among the loyal citizens of his native State. He established the first Union camp in Kentucky—known as Camp Dick Robinson—when many undoubtedly loyal men of that State opposed it as impolitic.</p>
<p>Wildly inaccurate stories about the Battle Of Ivy Mountain appeared in on the front page of the New York Times on Nov. 13, 1861. Claims were made of 400 rebel deaths and a thousand captured. In actuality, there were about 10 deaths on each sides with a few Confederates captured.</p>	

discussion among historians. In our book we reported that there was perhaps a mass grave on the site that was later paved over or moved by the highway department when the highway was widened in 1971. This story was based on an interview of Union brigade surgeon Bradford in the *Cincinnati Gazette* just ten days after the battle. Bradford stated that they buried eleven enemy dead. Some residents of the area claim that there was indeed a cemetery with a flag that was destroyed when the road was widened.

Recent discussions with regiment historians tell a different story. According to this version, the dead were reportedly collected by the Union forces and brought south a few hundred yards to what is now the small town of Ivel. They were supposedly laid out on the porch of a store for the families to claim. Later in the war this benevolent action would likely have not taken place, but being one of the first actions of what was still thought to be a short war, such chivalry was not uncommon. Reportedly, all but four bodies were claimed. Perhaps both versions of the story are partially true. It is possible that only the four unclaimed bodies were actually buried and that the graves were destroyed by the highway department. If some bodies were claimed, it is not known if Wil-

liam Barker's body was among them. A grave has never been found for William Barker in the cemeteries that have been visited. Based on the assertion that he had been placed in a mass grave at the battle site which no one could find, an extensive search has not been done for his grave. If one exists, it is most likely located on the homestead or in a nearby church or family cemetery. It is entirely possible that there is only an unmarked fieldstone on his grave. Although the land grant survey for his farm exists, the exact location of the farm cannot be determined. Kentucky used the



Pound Gap Road near Prestonburg 1880

“meets and bounds” surveying system in those days, just visible landmarks including trees instead of survey coordinates used today. This will be a focus of future research. It is not just that it would be nice to know William's final resting place, but also that veterans groups are placing military markers on the graves of all known members of the 5th Kentucky Mounted Infantry Regiment that they can find. They have recently placed one on Henry's grave at Grassy Lick.

The fleeing Confederates did manage to slow the pursuit of Union forces long enough for May to reach William's main force at Piketon. From Piketon they retreated to Pound Gap on the Virginia border. Nelson occupied Piketon for a few days, but reasoned that because the Confederates were low on supplies and winter was setting in, they were of little threat. He decided not to pursue them. Nelson was right on both counts. Cold weather came early. The win-

ter of 1861-62 was unusually bitter. For three weeks the men of the 5th Kentucky were cold and starving. Many of the soldiers were nearly naked and one report claimed that there were 350 bare-foot men and fewer than 100 blankets for over 700 soldiers. One visiting general was appalled and ordered one thousand outfits sent to Marshall's men. Unfortunately, when the suits arrived they were found to be of summer cotton, rather than of wool. In mid-December the following appeal appeared in the *Abingdon Virginian*:

“...we saw on Sunday last over one hundred barefoot, thinly-clad, but heroic Kentucky soldiers near Pound Gap, shivering with cold and marching to and fro over frozen ground, with feet as red as those of pigeons, assisting to keep off from your hearths the Vandal scoundrels who have already invaded their own. Can you not spare them a few pairs of woolen socks, flannel shirts and other necessities?”

On November 28, they were reinforced by the 29th and 54th Virginia Infantry Regiments. The Confederate forces stayed near Pound Gap for about two weeks and then headed to Abingdon, Virginia to re-supply. While camping there, they were visited by Generals Robert E. Lee and J.E.B. Stewart.

Defeat at Middle Creek and Pound Gap

Just before Christmas, Marshall moved his combined Kentucky and Virginia forces of about 2000 men back through Pound Gap into Kentucky. He established a fortified camp at Hager Hill north of Prestonburg and a cavalry camp a few miles farther north at the mouth of Jenny's Creek near Paintsville. The Union Command at Catlettsburg learned of the Confederate army's return to Kentucky and in early January sent forces south under command of Colonel James A. Garfield. On January 7, 1862 the Union forces surprised the Confederate cavalry encamped on Jenny's Creek. The Confederates fled, but later ambushed and skirmished with Union forces chasing them. Garfield arrived at Hager Hill encampment to find it had been abandoned two days earlier. At nightfall on January 9, Marshall's forces, having slogged heavy cannon through deep mud, finally reached Abbot Creek east of

HUMPHREY MARSHALL AND HIS GANG.
Correspondence of the Louisville Journal.
MOUNT STERLING, Ky., Dec. 13, 1861.

The news of the advance of the enemy from Virginia on this section of the State is nothing but one tissue of misrepresentation and exaggeration. We were grossly deceived here as to the number of the enemy. The facts of the case are these: There are only several hundred of them, and no fear need be entertained of their doing much harm in this immediate section. They are in West Liberty, under a cowardly bully named Jack May, and would most gladly compromise to remain there if we would let them. They are a part of Col. Williams' men, and not regulars of the rebel army. They have produced a perfect terror in the mountains, and the panic-stricken Union men have fled in every direction.

Clip from New York Times, Dec. 15, 1861
Entitled "Humphrey Marshall and His Gang" and reports on the Confederates return to Kentucky. It reads in part, "They are in West Liberty under a cowardly bully named Jack May and would most gladly compromise to remain there if we would let them."



James A. Garfield (center)

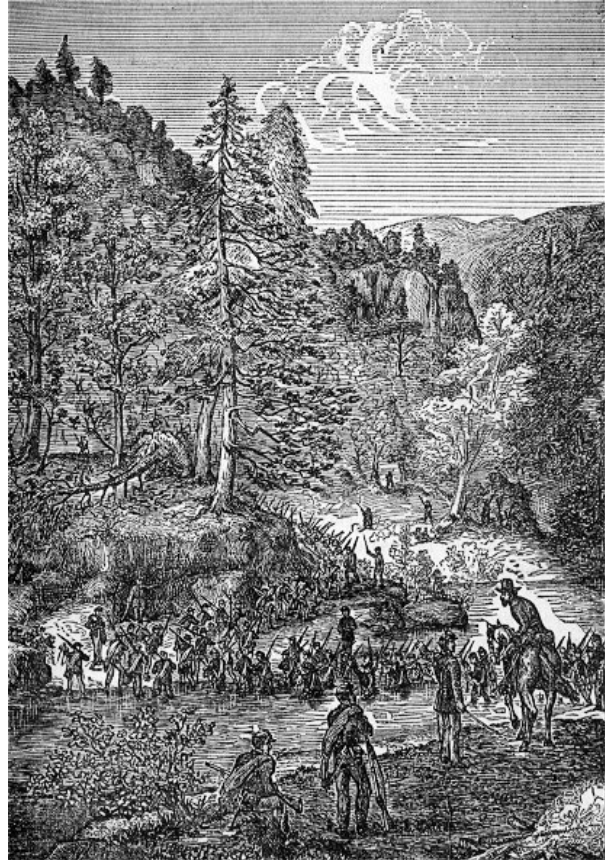
their original fall mustering campsite of the Samuel May farm. Marshall immediately sent a squad of men to May's farm to grind corn at the mill for his hungry army, but were driven off by Garfield's forces. Early the next morning Marshall moved his men south to the Forks of Middle Creek to avoid entrapment and took up defensive positions in the hills surrounding the creek. Marshall placed the 5th Kentucky and 29th Virginia on his right wing overlooking the creek. The Cavalry was positioned on the other side of the creek and the artillery battery was positioned between them.

At 1:00 PM, January 10, 1862, Garfield's pursuing army reached Marshall's pickets a half-mile upstream from the mouth of Middle Creek. Garfield ordered a squad of soldiers to dash into the valley and draw fire to learn the positions of the Confederates. It worked. Garfield ascended Graveyard Point and surveyed Confederate positions. He ordered two Ohio regiments to cross the swollen creek, but they drew heavy fire. In fact, Marshall's artillery battery dropped heavy cannon shot into the midst of the Union forces, but because they were old, the explosive shot failed to detonate.

Garfield then sent the 14th and 22nd Kentucky regiments against fellow Kentuckians of the 5th Infantry Regiment, presumably including Henry, his two brothers and at least two Gevedons. The Union forces charged up the hill and engaged the 5th Kentucky in hand-to-hand combat. In an ebb and flow that lasted most of the afternoon, the Federals attacked and were repulsed repeatedly. Slowly the Confederates were pushed up the hill and at dusk the fighting stopped.

About 3000 men had fought furiously at Middle Creek in raw conditions. The best estimates are that there were about 27 Union and 68 Confederate casualties. By nightfall, Marshall's men had not eaten for more than 30 hours. He now feared mass desertions by his tired, cold and hungry forces. He ordered the burning of his heaviest wagons and retreated southward to look for food for his men and forage for their horses. They traveled up the Left Fork of Middle Creek past modern-day Goodloe and Pyramid, over Brushy Mountain and down Brush Creek near modern-day Hueysville. They camped on the farm of Joseph Gearhart where they uprooted and burned all of the fence posts to keep warm. Garfield decided not to pursue them and retreated to his headquarters at Prestonburg. The Battle of Middle Creek was yet another defeat for the beleaguered rebels. James A. Garfield was promoted to Brigadier General and his victory would be his launching pad to the Whitehouse.

After staying for a week at the Gearhart farm, Marshall moved his men farther up the Right Beaver Creek to Martin's Mill at modern-day Wayland. There they camped on the farm of



**Lithograph of the Battle
of Middle Creek**

Confederate loyalist and large land owner Johnny Martin. Within a few days, Marshall retreated again to the safety of Pound Gap on the Virginia border. Once again the Confederate forces were faced with bitter cold and starvation. Supplies were virtually unavailable locally and what they possessed had been hauled 55 miles from Virginia. There was also inevitably, disease. In February 1862, there was an outbreak of measles and mumps, and Marshall's worst fears were realized. There was large-scale desertion. Muster cards show that both William Leach Gevedon and Willis Green Gevedon became sick and spent some time hospitalized in Virginia. In spite of these hardships, none of the Barkers or Gevedons deserted.

This is not to say that non-deserters never left their unit for a few days at a time. In a common practice called 'ghosting', men would slip away at night and return home to check on their families and then return to camp. Some of the men who lived close to a particular campsite and were prone to leaving had their pants taken from them each night. This apparently did not deter them completely since some were seen by relatives coming up the road in their long underwear.

By early March, the 1400 Confederates had built 60 log huts capable of accommodating about a dozen men each. They also constructed a makeshift hospital, command post, and a commissary. They were hunkered down waiting for warmer weather and guarding the Gap's strategic position through the Cumberland Mountains when on March 16 they were attacked by Garfield's forces. While one regiment kept the Confederates occupied in a frontal assault, another regiment descended from one of the mountains above the camp. Completely taken off guard, the Confederates barely escaped with the cloths on their backs and were pursued six miles into Virginia before Garfield called off the chase. The Union forces ransacked the camp, taking clothing, blankets, arms and personal affects. Then they set it afire. Major Thompson, who was the commanding Confederate officer at Pound Gap, wrote to General Humphrey back at Abingdon.

"I got out with all my men. I fought them nearly an hour and a half, until my retreat was nearly cut off. Then I was forced to retreat. The enemy was 2,500 infantry and 100 cavalry. My men are entirely without tents or blankets".

Victory and Triumphant Return to Kentucky

Once again the rebels retreated to Abingdon, Virginia and later camped at nearby Tazewell, but within a few weeks they were on the move again. On May 1, Union regiments commanded by future presidents William McKinley and Ruterford B. Hayes had chased Confederates out of pro-south Princeton, West Virginia in preparation for attacking the Confederate held East Tennessee &



Prestonburg, KY 1891

Virginia Railroad. Alarmed, three different Confederate armies marched on Princeton from several directions.

Jack May's 5th Kentucky Mounted Infantry that included the Barkers and Gevedons was among the most battle-tested regiments. On May 15, as they approached Princeton, the 5th Kentucky was brought forward to lead Marshall's army up New Hope Church Road from the west. When they got within a mile of Princeton they were attacked by Union Forces. They quickly pushed the Federals back into Princeton. The next day saw several more skirmishes and the Union forces were sent retreating in a panic. By early morning on the 18th, Marshall's Army had retaken Princeton. This was the first clear-cut victory the 5th Kentucky Infantry had achieved over the Union and the railroad remained in Confederate hands the rest of the war. Marshall's army soon returned to camp near Tazewell, Va. for a long-deserved rest.

The Confederate fortunes in Kentucky were greatly improving. The Army of Mississippi with 32,000 men entered Kentucky and immediately drove Union forces north. Another army of 20,000 joined them.

May's 5th Kentucky was ordered to re-enter Kentucky and travel to Mt. Sterling to block the retreat of the Union army. They reached Picketon on August 8, to find it had already been raided by Confederate forces and was nearly deserted. They moved on to Prestonburg and Salyersville where they camped and waited for Marshall's main army. By late August the two larger Confederate armies had occupied Richmond and by September 1, they were in Lexington. In quick succession they also captured Danville, Paris and Georgetown. The terrified state legislature in Frankfort moved its operations to Louisville where martial law was declared. Panic was even beginning to grip Cincinnati.

On September 17, Marshall's army led by the 5th Kentucky 'Ragamuffins' triumphantly entered West Liberty where they had first organized. They marched through town to the sound of a "brass band and drum and fife". They received similar receptions as they entered Owingsville and Mount Sterling. In Owingsville, the 5th Kentucky Regiment was presented with a regiment flag made by the women of the town.

Word came that a large force of more than 50,000 Union troops was massing around Perrysville southwest of Lexington. On October 4, the 5th Kentucky marched through Paris and camped northeast of Lexington. The next day they passed through Lexington and camped just out of town to the southwest. On October 6, they were ordered to march on Perrysville. By the time they arrived, the second largest battle in Kentucky was over. On October 8, nearly 80,000 Confederate and Union forces had fought for four hours to a draw. There were 1,355 dead and 5,480 wounded. After returning to Lexington briefly, Marshall's forces returned south to guard the retreat of the main Confederate armies as they moved east through Richmond and Clay City.

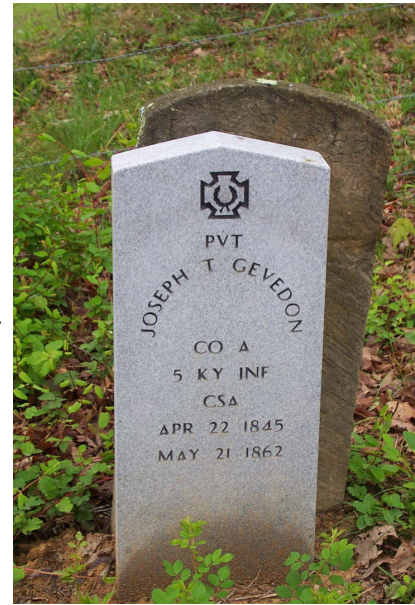
The Men of the Old 5th Lay Down Their Arms

The 5th Kentucky Regiment was approaching Hazel Green as the date of the unit's scheduled disbanding was also approaching (October 21). They arrived in Hazel Green on October 20, 1862 and when they were ordered to continue on, the members of the 5th Kentucky Regiment refused and said they were going home.

Although the Conscription Act of 1862 had recently been passed requiring twelve-month volunteers to reorganized for two additional years, both Col. May and Gen. Marshall had assured them that it had no force in Kentucky since it was still officially part of the Union. True to his word, Gen. Marshall intervened. He ordered his men to stack their arms and then discharged them. With that, a “magnificent regiment (had) vanished”.

The motivations for not re-enlisting were many. The men obviously missed their families and their help was needed at home. In addition, the thought of heading off to another state to fight while fighting in their own state threatened their families was distasteful. Finally, they had learned that Col. May had resigned his commission due to illness.

Some of the members of the 5th Kentucky Regiment were eventually persuaded to reenlist. As far as can be determined, the only Barker or Gevedon to do so was Henry’s brother George W. Barker. Muster cards for George show he re-enlisted in Company D of the ‘new’ 5th Kentucky and was with them through late 1864. His unit became part of the famous ‘Orphan Brigade’ or ‘Louisville Legion’. George survived the terrible slaughter at the Battle of Chickamauga and the siege of Atlanta. After the war he moved to Missouri where he became a judge. Henry Barker’s brother-in-law (Angeline’s brother) Joseph Gevedon was the only Barker or Gevedon not discharged on October 21, 1862. He had been captured at some point during the campaign and sent to prison in Louisville. There he became ill, probably from



typhoid fever and was released to go home. He died in May 1862 and is buried in the Gevedon Cemetery on Gevedon Fork of Grassy Creek. A new marker has recently been placed next to his original tombstone.



Henry M. Barker and wife Angeline Gevedon circa 1900

The rest of the Barkers and Gevedons of Company A all lived to old age. Henry became a well known school teacher in Morgan County. Soon after Henry’s death in 1910, a fifty-year reunion was organized. Fewer than a dozen attended. It is not known if any remaining Barkers or Gevedons were among them.

Inevitably, there are questions left unanswered. How did the war experience change the Barkers and Gevedons? Were there lingering animosities between regions and even families that affected their lives? Would they have done it again? Unfortunately, there are no known family letters or documents that provide any clues. In the end, all we really know is that they fought and suffered and some of them died. The survivors went home and life went on.