

The Southern Defender™

Published for the Southern Victory Campaign of the Sons of Confederate Veterans

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Nathan Bedford Forrest, American Hero by Walter H. Trisler

On October 31, 1877, former Confederate Army Chaplain, The Reverend Doctor George Tucker Stainback ascended to the podium of Court Avenue Presbyterian Church in Memphis, Tennessee, to conduct the funeral of Memphis' most famous son of that time, Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest.

Dr. Stainback's text was "the fourth verse of the eleventh chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews: 'He being dead, yet speaketh'." A more appropriate selection could not have been offered, for nearly one hundred fifty years after his passing, General Forrest still speaketh.

To those who know and cherish the Christian principles of liberty on which the United States and Confederate States of America were founded, Forrest is a hero. He rose in life from the rudest of beginnings to become, not only a material success, but an icon of a noble social order. When a sense of duty imposed upon him the call to defend that social order, he did. And he did it with all the energy and substance in his command, and so successfully that even his enemies grudgingly admired him.

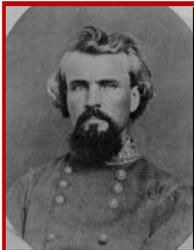
To his detractors, however, the ideals that make Gen. Forrest the hero of the old Christian order, make him anathema to the new, neo-Marxist order. Of course, the hateful characteristics of his modern detractors did not develop overnight. It has taken years for proponents of the new order to replace the truth with errors, omissions and lies in the minds of millions.

nature places him in the realm of Satan. To this god, the neo-Marxists offer sacrifices, which include the reputations and careers of their enemies and even that of the faithful if they step out of line. Those who remain within the bounds of permitted conduct are allowed to remain in the herd. Those who stray are sacrificed, with the news media lighting the fires to burn the sinners at the stake. Fear is struck in all who witness the spectacle.

But the faithful sacrifice not only the living but also the dead by eternally destroying the reputations of people who caused them pain in the past. By destroying the reputations of painful *past* enemies, the neo-Marxists deprive their *current* enemies of heroes who could inspire them to noble and daring deeds today.

Using Sin to Attack Past Enemies

Back in 1877, the people of Memphis were honored to place the remains of Gen. Forrest beneath their sod. There he rested—his wife, Mary Ann eventually coming to his side—for over 100 hundred years, but he was not to be left in peace. The neo-Marxists know that Christianity teaches its followers to hate sin. But this teaching gives the neo-Marxists an entry point into the Christian psyche; therefore, they constantly point out the sins of any hero whose memory they want to destroy. Since all men have sinned, this is a workable plan, especially with help from academia, the entertainment industry and the news media.



Photos from Left to Right:
1. Gen. Forrest, Brady-Handy photo collection. Library of Congress.
2. Forrest Monument, Memphis, Tenn. 1906. Library of Congress.
3. Roller skating in Memphis at the Forrest Monument, 1906. L.O.C.
4. Forrest Monument, 2013. Editor.

Did You Know?

For instance, did you know that in July, 1875, Gen. Forrest was invited to speak before the International Order Of Pole Bearers, a black organization some point to as the forerunner to the NAACP? He accepted the invitation and gave a short oration encouraging blacks to achievement in their new opportunities. He received a bouquet and a standing ovation. And did you know that in his funeral procession of ten thousand white marchers there were an additional three thousand blacks? Or, further, that there were seventy-four blacks who rode with him at the beginning of the war, and seventy-three faithfully served until his surrender? Odd behavior, indeed, for people who, according to modern understanding, should have hated him.

Are You a Victim of the Neo-Marxists?

If you have hateful feelings toward Gen. Forrest you might be the victim of neo-Marxist influences, which function dogmatically as a religion. This religion has a god whose anti-Christ

So, they smear Gen. Forrest by constantly pointing out his sins—real and pretended—to the unsuspecting masses, robbing them of their heritage in a great hero. If the omission of key details can make the sins bigger, no problem. After years pass and resistance from those who know the truth falls away, the masses are won. Thus, in 2020 Memphis officials had so much support they could even force Gen. Forrest's bones to find a new grave!

Making Dixie Great Again

But thanks be to God, a remnant is providing a new resting place for our hero, his monument and his wife in Columbia, Tennessee, at the headquarters of the Sons of Confederate Veterans and the Southern Victory Campaign. May God bless it all!

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People who do not read have little advantage over people who cannot read.

Mary Ann Forrest

Dr. Samuel W. Mitcham Jr.

Almost everyone is aware that the Sons of Confederate Veterans is reintering the body of Nathan Bedford Forrest at its Elm Springs Headquarters in the summer of 2020. Few realize that they are actually burying two people: General Forrest and his wife, Mary Ann.

Mary Ann Montgomery Forrest was a fine Christian woman who was admired by all who knew her. She was the love of Bedford's life and, in many ways, exerted a profound influence on him.

She was born in Franklin County, Tennessee, on October 24, 1826, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. William Hugh Montgomery. Her father died in October 1829, leaving Mrs. Montgomery (age 27) with four children to raise. She succeeded well and even managed to send Mary Ann to the prestigious Nashville Female Academy, where she received a fine education and learned the social graces.

It Happened On the Way to Church

One Sunday morning in April 1855, she and her mother were on their way to church when they tried to ford a creek. They got stuck in the middle. Two young, male spectators were laughing at their plight and their driver's fruitless efforts to dislodge the vehicle when 23-year-old Nathan Bedford Forrest rode up. He waded into the creek, lifted each woman in turn, and carried them to the bank. Then he and the servant pushed the buggy out of the mud. "Why didn't y'all help these ladies?" Forrest growled at the spectators. When the pair did not say a word, Forrest snapped: "I suggest that you remove yourselves from this vicinity at once, or I'll give you a thrashin' you won't soon forget!" They departed.

The two ladies thanked Forrest profusely. He introduced himself and, with the same suddenness and audacity which marked his military campaigns, asked if he could call on Mary. She consented, and he visited her the next day. Remarkably, the two spectators from the incident at the creek were also in the parlor to visit Mary! Forrest angrily ordered them to leave, and they did.

Bedford Forrest proposed to Mary Ann on his second visit. She hesitated but accepted on his third, contingent upon her uncle's approval. Reverend Samuel Cowan, a Presbyterian minister, was not excited at the prospect of having Bedford in the family. Mary was every boy's dream, and Bedford was every father's nightmare. He had none of Mary's pedigree. She was well-educated, and he was a first-grade dropout. She was a cousin of Sam Houston and a relative of General Richard Montgomery, a hero of the American Revolution, whereas he was the son of a blacksmith. Mary Ann was pretty, petite, gentle, well-mannered, Christian and introverted. Bedford was a rough, extroverted frontiersman who loved to fight, gamble, and curse. To top it off, he was not a Christian, but he did not drink. The Reverend pointed out their differences and wanted to know: "Why do you want to marry her? She's nothing like you."

"I don't want to marry anybody like me", Forrest retorted. "I want to marry a Christian girl." This he did on September 25, 1845, in Hernando, Mississippi. Rev. Cowan performed the ceremony.

What changed Rev. Cowan's mind? Probably, it was Mary herself. She already had proof of his respect for and gallantry toward women. Plus, he was well groomed, a fine physical specimen, and already owned his own business.

Life With Bedford

Bedford always treated his wife with respect. He generally did not curse when she was around, and he banned dirty talk and risqué jokes. He did not tolerate humor that degraded women. He once fired one of his best friends for having sex outside of marriage, saying that he would not tolerate in his army any man who would "do that" to a woman. As for adultery—well, it was simply unthinkable.

Bedford's worst vice was gambling, and it did cause some stress within his marriage. Mary Ann considered it a sin and often begged him not to gamble, but he would do it anyway. And he was good at it. On three separate occasions, he won the modern equivalent of \$50,000 playing poker—\$100,000 once. On another occasion after the war, Forrest co-signed a note for a friend, who defaulted. The note came due, and Forrest had to pay it, but he did not have the funds. He decided to win the money at the poker table. Mary tried to dissuade him. He told her to wish him luck. "I most certainly will not," she replied. She said she would be on her knees while he was gone, her Bible in her hand, praying for his eternal conviction. That evening, he won the required amount and picked up the money to leave. The other gamblers wanted a chance to win their money back and tried to talk him into staying. Forrest refused. "My wife is sitting at home with her Bible on her knee," he declared. "I told her I would quit as soon as I had enough money to pay my debt of honor. I am never going to gamble again." He never did.

The Fervent Prayers of a Righteous Woman

The Forrests had two children: William Montgomery "Willie" Forrest and Frances "Fanny" Forrest, who were born in 1846 and 1849, respectively. Fanny died when she was five. Willie rode off to war with his father, served as one of his aides, and rose to the rank of captain. He was a Christian and more like his mother than his father. Mary Ann joined the Forrests in camp when she could. She was like a mother to many of "my boys" and sometimes served as Bedford's nurse. She prayed frequently. Meanwhile, General Forrest killed 30 Yankees in one-on-one combat, was seriously wounded four times, had 29 horses shot out from under him, and often escaped death or capture by a hair. He attributed his survival to the prayers of his wife and his mother.

General Forrest was famous for his fierce temper. When he was about to explode with rage, only Mary could stop him. She would touch him on the arm and say: "Bedford!"

Bedford Becomes a Christian

Bedford and Mary Forrest were, as the Bible says, unequally yoked. For years, Forrest thought Christianity was a fine religion—for women. Once during the war, a friend called upon him to convert to Christianity. Forrest said that he didn't have time now, but if he survived the conflict, he would consider it. Finally, through the efforts of Mary, Rev. (formerly Lt. Colonel) Raleigh White, and Rev. George Tucker Stainback of his own First Cumberland Presbyterian Church, he was baptized on November 14, 1875.

Nathan Bedford Forrest died of diabetes on October 29, 1877. His last earthly thoughts turned to the one person who had loved and been through it all by his side. "Call my wife," he said to Colonel Meriwether. He then closed his eyes, never to open them again.

Meanwhile, Willie Forrest married Jane Taylor Cook in 1868 but she passed away in 1882 at the age of 36 or 37. Mary devoted her latter years to helping Willie raise her three grandchildren.

Mary Ann Forrest was a fervent supporter of the Confederate cause and always a kind, cultured, Christian lady. She ascended to heaven on January 22, 1893, at age 66. She was initially buried in Elmwood Cemetery, Memphis, Tennessee, next to her husband.



Dr. Samuel W. Mitcham has authored more than 40 books, including *Bust Hell Wide Open*, *The Life of Nathan Bedford Forrest*. Type the title into a search engine or order autographed copies while they last at VictoryFlagsAndMore.com. Watch Dr. Mitcham's Forrest video there, too.



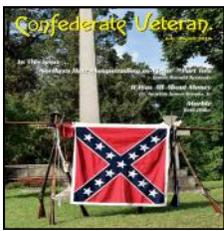
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The Fort Pillow “Massacre”

Dr. Samuel W. Mitcham, Jr.

It was April 1864 and Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest was returning from his latest raid into western Tennessee. Strengthened by new recruits, fresh horses and equipment captured from Uncle Sam, Forrest was ready to return to Mississippi. On his way back, he halted at Eaton, Tennessee, where several ladies tearfully begged him to take Fort Pillow before he left the state. The troops there were largely ex-slaves that previously belonged to the residents of the area and were now terrorizing their former masters, who did not know what to expect next, but they feared the worst. Robberies had occurred, and a number of women had been insulted, abused and raped by blacks and “Tennessee Tories”.

“General Forrest was a man of great sympathy, and when he heard the pathetic stories told by the ladies, he changed his plans and decided to capture Fort Pillow,” recalled Theodore Brewer, one of Forrest's soldiers. The sexual violations threw him into a cold rage. “You may go home and rest assured that I will take the fort if it costs me my life,” he said to the women.

Since Fort Pillow had no military value it is clear that Forrest had only one motive for attacking it: chivalry. Forrest always stood as a protector of women, so he was honor-bound to do his duty.

The Union defenses at Fort Pillow were very poorly constructed. After an all-night ride of almost 60 miles, Forrest and his men arrived on the morning of April 12, 1864. They sneaked up on the drowsy pickets and took them prisoner or silenced them with their knives. Attacking immediately, they captured the first two lines of earthworks, and the garrison fell back to its final defensive position.

The Yankees were now surrounded. But, instead of accepting Forrest's generous surrender terms the Union commander decided to bolster his men's courage by allowing them to drink. Barrels of whiskey, beer and ale, were placed at various spots in the fort, and the men were granted unlimited access. The liquor made the defenders bulletproof in their own minds. When scouts reported to Forrest that they were drinking, he was pleased: “I will give them time to get drunk.”

Forrest nevertheless rode forward to give them a second chance to surrender. In doing so, he exposed himself to the ridicule of the garrison, which had been drinking about three hours. They lost all sense of restraint. Trooper Winik later recalled: “. . . the cocky Federals openly taunted Forrest, daring him to try to take the garrison. It was the mistake of their lives.” They also taunted the Confederate privates, dared them to attack, and made faces at them and “insulting gestures” with their hands. The boys in gray became furious.

So did General Forrest. He walked up and down the ranks, shouting encouragement to his men and yelling, “At 'em! At 'em!”

“He was the incarnation of all the destructive powers on earth,” Captain Dinkins recalled. “He was to a battle what a cyclone is to an April shower. His voice could be heard by the Yankees. No doubt they trembled, as later events proved.” “Blow the charge, Gaus, blow the charge!” Forrest shouted at his bugler.

Eagerly the “Johnnies” surged forward. Firing as rapidly as they could, the sharpshooters poured a hail of lead into the fort, keeping Union heads down as the men of the first assault wave climbed out of a ravine, ran across some higher ground and into a ditch at the foot of the redan. The first men in the ditch used their bodies as ladders as the next waves climbed to the top of the parapet and poured over it like a flood. The fighting was fierce, often hand-to-hand. But the Rebels had superior numbers and better weapons, so Union casualties rose quickly. The Federals broke. “Boys, save your lives!” the Union commander shouted as he ran away. He had completely lost control. Some Yankees surrendered, some tried to, others kept fighting, while still others took the only route of retreat available to them: down the bluff, toward the river—a gauntlet of death.

Several jumped into the river, taking their chances with the current. They were shot. The river was red with blood.

Inside the dying fort, there was complete confusion. Here, murders undoubtedly took place. Some of the Yankees played dead, and some pretended to surrender by dropping their weapons, then picked them up again and fired into the backs of Confederate soldiers after the assault wave passed. The Southerners were in no mood to take prisoners after this outrage. There can be no doubt that many were seized by an atavistic rage—what the Germans call a “Blutrausch”—a fury of the blood. The Romans called it “insanitas belli”—the fury of battle. Confederate Sergeant Achilles V. Clark wrote his sisters on April 19: “Our men were so exasperated by the Yankee's threats of no quarter that they gave but little.”

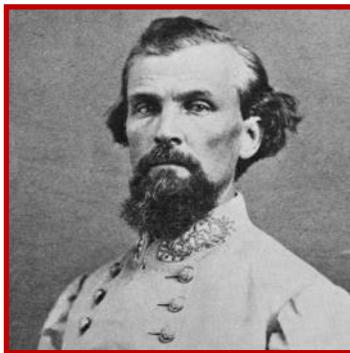
Some of the black soldiers played dead until just before they were to be buried, then sprang to life to plead for their lives. Since it was well known that the Yankees would “emancipate” then conscript ex-slaves, many, but not all, were spared.

It seems clear from the subsequent testimony that Forrest tried to stop the unnecessary slaughter once the battle was won. At one point, sword drawn, he rode between a group of African-Americans who were trying to surrender and some of his men, who were about to shoot them. Most of the murders that took place near the end of the battle occurred at the foot of the bluff, while Forrest and his second-in-command, General Chalmers, were on the top of the bluff. Forrest, nevertheless, would spend the rest of his life under the shadow of “the Fort Pillow Massacre.”

A reporter for the New York Tribune wrote an article, dated April 18, 1864 from Knoxville, breaking the “news” of the “Fort Pillow Massacre.” The propaganda piece was reproduced throughout the North. But there was no massacre. In military terminology, a massacre is when all or nearly all of the defenders are deliberately killed—such as at the Alamo, Thermopylae or Little Big Horn. Forrest clearly could have killed all of the Yankees had he wished, but he took dozens of prisoners, so Fort Pillow was not a massacre. It was, however, an atrocity, because a good many men were not granted quarter or were put to death after they surrendered.

The Radical Republicans soon saw a political opportunity. They conducted an investigation. Much of the testimony was false and at least two “eyewitnesses” were in Memphis at the time of the battle. The final report was “politically correct” by 1864 standards, and most of its conclusions were exaggerated or distorted and cannot stand close scrutiny. For example, it declared that the Confederates murdered black women and children, even though they had been evacuated by the Union Navy before the battle began. Naturally, Forrest and his men were demonized, and 40,000 extra copies of the report were printed for dissemination to the Northern public, in hopes of swaying them to vote for Lincoln's re-election and the war's continuation. The report fastened “butcher” on Forrest—a label he did not deserve but would wear for the rest of his life.

In view of the uproar, and distrustful of the Congressional probe, General Sherman ordered his own investigation. After receiving the results, he did nothing. Sherman was not the kind of man to shrink from retaliation if he felt it was justified. He obviously concluded that the Congressional investigation had little merit.



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