

The Confederacy's Last Hurrah: The Battle of Palmito Ranch

The Battle of Palmito Ranch was the last major engagement of the Civil War, and it marked the end of the Confederacy's hopes for victory. The battle was fought on May 12–13, 1865, near Brownsville, Texas, and it resulted in a Confederate victory. However, the victory was Pyrrhic, as the Confederacy was on the verge of collapse and the battle had no strategic impact.

Background

By the spring of 1865, the Confederacy was on the brink of collapse. General Robert E. Lee had surrendered the Army of Northern Virginia at Appomattox Court House on April 9, and other Confederate armies were surrendering or disbanding. However, Confederate forces in the Trans-Mississippi Department, which included Texas, Arkansas, and Louisiana, continued to resist. General Edmund Kirby Smith, the commander of the Trans-Mississippi Department, hoped to hold out until the Union agreed to a negotiated peace settlement.



The Confederacy's Last Hurrah: Spring Hill, Franklin, and Nashville by Wiley Sword

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

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In April 1865, Union forces under the command of General Philip Sheridan began moving into Texas. Sheridan's goal was to defeat Smith's army and capture the Rio Grande Valley. Smith decided to make a stand at Palmito Ranch, a plantation about 10 miles north of Brownsville. Smith's army consisted of about 5,000 men, while Sheridan's army had about 8,000 men.

The Battle

The Battle of Palmito Ranch began on May 12, 1865, with a Union cavalry charge. The charge was repulsed by Confederate infantry, and the Union forces fell back. The Union forces then began a series of artillery bombardments of the Confederate positions. The bombardments caused some damage, but they did not dislodge the Confederates.

On May 13, the Union forces launched a series of infantry assaults on the Confederate positions. The assaults were met with heavy Confederate fire, and the Union forces were unable to make any headway. The battle ended in a Confederate victory.

Aftermath

The Battle of Palmito Ranch was the last major engagement of the Civil War. The Confederacy was on the verge of collapse, and the battle had no strategic impact. However, the victory boosted the morale of the Confederate troops in the Trans-Mississippi Department, and it gave Smith

hope that he could hold out until the Union agreed to a negotiated peace settlement.

Smith's hopes were dashed when news of Lee's surrender reached Texas in June 1865. Smith surrendered his army to Sheridan on June 23, 1865, and the Civil War came to an end.

Legacy

The Battle of Palmito Ranch is often referred to as the "last battle of the Civil War." While this is not technically accurate, as there were a few minor skirmishes after Palmito Ranch, it is true that Palmito Ranch was the last major engagement of the war.

The battle is also significant because it was the only major Confederate victory in the Trans-Mississippi Department. The victory boosted the morale of the Confederate troops in the department, and it gave Smith hope that he could hold out until the Union agreed to a negotiated peace settlement. However, Smith's hopes were dashed when news of Lee's surrender reached Texas in June 1865.

The Battle of Palmito Ranch is a reminder of the tenacity of the Confederate troops in the Trans-Mississippi Department. Despite the fact that the Confederacy was on the verge of collapse, the Confederate troops in Texas continued to fight until the very end.

Image Gallery

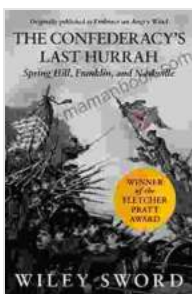


Confederate troops at Palmito Ranch



Further Reading

- National Park Service: Palmito Ranch
- Texas Almanac: The Battle of Palmito Ranch
- History.com: The Last Battle of the Civil War Is Fought



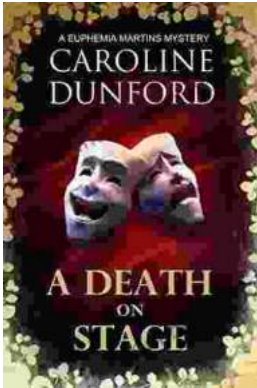
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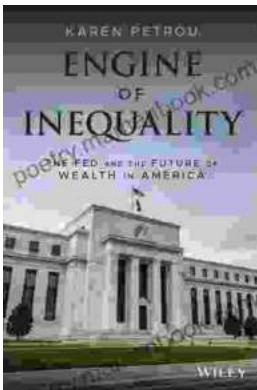
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