

ESSENTIAL CIVIL WAR CURRICULUM

Kelly's Ford

By Daniel T. Davis

Resources

If you can read only one book

Author	<i>Title. City: Publisher, Year.</i>
Wittenberg, Eric J.	<i>The Union Cavalry Comes of Age: Hartwood Church to Brandy Station, 1863.</i> Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press/Potomac Books, 2003.

Books and Articles

Author	<i>Title. City: Publisher, Year. "Title," in Journal ##, no. # (Date): #.</i>
Blumberg, Arnold D.	"Battle of Kelly's Ford, Virginia," in David S. Heidler and Jeanne T. Heidler, eds. <i>Encyclopedia of the American Civil War: A Political, Social, and Military History.</i> New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2000.
Cooke, Jacob B.	<i>Battle of Kelly's Ford, March 17, 1863. By Jacob B. Cooke, (Late First Lieutenant, First Rhode Island Cavalry).</i> Providence: Soldier's and Sailors' Historical Society of Rhode Island, 1887.
Maxwell, Jerry H.	<i>The Perfect Lion: The Life and Death of Confederate Artillerist John Pelham.</i> Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2011.

Organizations

Organization Name	Description, contact information including address, email
Kelly's Ford Interpretive Center	An interpretive center has been opened at Kelly's Ford, described here: https://www.battlefields.org/news/interpretive-center-opens-kellys-ford-anniversary

Web Resources

URL	Name and description
https://www.battlefields.org/learn/civil-war/battles/kellys-ford	This is the American Battlefield Trust page on the Battle of Kelly's Ford.
https://www.battlefields.org/learn/videos/battle-kellys-ford	Historian Clark B. Hall describes the Battle of Kelly's Ford in this short video. Additional resource links are provided on this page.
https://kellysford63.wordpress.com/	The Battle of Kelly's Ford is a website that provides a repository of resources on the battle.
https://emergingcivilwar.com/2013/03/17/a-challenge-answered-the-battle-of-kellys-ford-march-17-1863/	This is the Emerging Civil War's essay on Kelly's Ford written by Daniel Davis.

Other Sources

Name	Description, Contact information including address, email

<p>FROM THE RAPPAHANNOCK; The Late Brilliant Affair at Kelly's Ford. The First Real Cavalry Fight of the War. The Rebels Driven Six Miles Beyond the River. Gallant Charges and Hand-to-Hand Conflicts. The Effectiveness of the Sabre Tested. OUR CASUALTIES LESS THAN FORTY. A large Number of Rebels Killed and Wounded and Sixty Taken Prisoners.</p>	<p>This New York Times article on the Battle of Kelly's Ford was published on March 20, 1863 and is available on line here: http://www.nytimes.com/1863/03/20/news/rappahannock-late-brilliant-affair-kelly-s-ford-first-real-cavalry-fight-war.html?pagewanted=all</p>
<p>Kelly's Ford: The Most Important River Crossing of the Civil War</p>	<p>This essay on Kelly's Ford, written by Clark B. Hall, is available here: https://www.battlefields.org/learn/articles/kellys-ford-most-important-river-crossing-civil-war</p>
<p>Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania National Military Park</p>	<p>The Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park is operated by the National Park Service and includes Kelly's Ford. The park is open from sunrise to sunset seven days a week all year. It is located at 20 Chatham Ln Fredericksburg, VA 22405. (540) 693-3200. Their website is: https://www.nps.gov/frsp/learn/photosmultimedia/kelly.htm</p>
<p>The Battle of Kelly's Ford, Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park</p>	<p>This is the park's page on the battle which includes directions to the battlefield and a self-guided tour. Their website is: http://www.fauquercivilwar.com/Assets/downloads/Tour_Battle%20of%20Kellys%20Ford.pdf</p>
<p>Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper Volume 16 1883</p>	<p>The complete issues of Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper from 1860-1865 is available on DVD for \$12.50 here: http://www.paperlessarchives.com/civil_war_leslies_weekly.html</p>

Scholars

Name	Email
Daniel T. Davis	Danieltdavis81@gmail.com

Topic Précis

On February 5, 1863, ten days after assuming command of the Army of the Potomac, Major General Joseph Hooker issued General Orders Number 6. It outlined Hooker's organizational plans. A critical element of the order involved the army's mounted arm. For the first time in its existence, Hooker's cavalry would operate in a single corps under one commander, Brigadier General George Stoneman Jr. Prior to this Union cavalry was disorganized and split up in small units among corps, division and brigade commanders. General Orders Number 6 placed Stoneman and his troopers on the same structural level as their Confederate counterparts led by Major General James Ewell Brown "Jeb" Stuart. In early March 1863 Hooker dispatched Brigadier General William Woods Averell, commander of the Second Division of the new cavalry corps, to attack Brigadier General Fitzhugh Lee who commanded three Confederate cavalry regiments in camp across the Rappahannock River near Kelly's Ford. At 8:00 a.m. on March 17, Averell arrived opposite the ford and fighting began as the federals tried to force a crossing. By noon Averell's whole force was across the river and began to advance on the road northwest from the river. The federal cavalry ran into Lee's advancing cavalry and the two forces charged forward. At some point during the attack, Major John Pelham, the commander of the Stuart Horse Artillery, rode forward with the Virginians, fell mortally wounded by a round fired by the federals. Attack followed counterattack until darkness began to fall. At that point Averell decided to withdraw and return to union lines. Averell and his men returned triumphantly to their camps. He not only vindicated himself but proved the value of Hooker's decision to reorganize the mounted arm. The Federals inflicted 133 casualties on the Confederates while only losing 78 killed, wounded, and missing. "The principal result achieved by this expedition has been that our cavalry has been brought to feel their superiority in battle; they have learned the value of discipline and the use of their arms," Averell reported. Kelly's Ford began the ascension of the Union cavalry. Subsequent fighting later that summer at Brandy Station, Aldie, Upperville and Gettysburg proved for the first time in the war, they were equals of Stuart and his troopers.
