

# “Floyd’s Folly”

September 11-13, 2015



We, the members of the 36th VA/7th WV Infantry, Company B, would like to invite you to our event, Floyd’s Folly, on September 12-13, 2015. The idea for this event arose two years ago with the planning beginning in earnest about a year ago. Now, with the help of Sam Cowell, superintendent of Carnifex Ferry Battlefield State park, as well as various historians, we have arrived at the point where we are prepared to ask you, as members of the progressive reenacting community, to join us in recreating events leading into and as part of the 1861 battle of Carnifex Ferry. After four years of mostly forming adjuncts at major mainstream events, we are looking forward to events designed with the intention of providing authentic experiences for those involved, and we believe that a large portion of the community is looking for the same. From the beginning, our goal has been to put on a quality event to our fellow historians by providing new experiences on original ground that many have not visited. In the following documents we have outlined the history of the battle and our plans for the event, including scenarios that have never before been recreated. We hope you’ll join us and help us bring a high quality reenactment to West Virginia this fall.

Thank you.

## HISTORY OF THE CAMPAIGN

In early August 1861, Confederate Brigadier General John B. Floyd began movements to regain control of the Kanawha Valley in western Virginia. Against the advice of fellow officers, Floyd established Camp Gauley at the Patterson farm on August 22 located on the north side of the Carnifex Ferry between Gauley Bridge and Summersville and immediately began construction of defensive works in a location that would disrupt communication between federal Brigadier General Jacob Cox at Gauley Bridge and General William S. Rosecrans in the Grafton area.

On August 13, Colonel Erastus Tyler's 7th Ohio Infantry was ordered to a position at Kessler's Cross Lanes from which they could keep an eye on the Sunday Road and the roads to Summersville and Gauley Bridge. They arrived on August 15, but with no enemy nearby and the federal position at Gauley Bridge being threatened by the confederate forces of Brigadier General Henry Wise, they proceeded to a position six miles from Gauley Bridge on August 19. On the morning of August 24, the 7th Ohio began a march back to Kessler's Cross Lanes, arriving the evening of August 25. Having no supply wagons and no knowledge of the confederate forces just two miles away at Camp Gauley, the men of the 7th bivouacked, scattered on the roads and the porches of the nearby homes, without properly posting guard. On the morning of August 26, Floyd brought his forces out of their defenses to attack the 7th Ohio while they were cooking breakfast. The Union forces were surprised and quickly routed. Floyd then withdrew to the river and resumed his defensive position at Camp Gauley.

Learning of Col. Tyler's rout at Kessler's Cross Lanes, Gen. Rosecrans moved three brigades south from Clarksburg to displace confederate forces in the area. Rosecrans began the march from Big Birch Mountain to Kessler's Cross Lanes at 4 in the morning on September 10. After a series of skirmishes against Floyd's scouts at Summersville at dawn and Hughes Ferry shortly after noon, Rosecrans arrived a mile from Kessler's Cross Lanes at about 2 in the afternoon. Brigadier General Henry W. Benham's brigade was ordered to advance down the Ferry Road but not to bring on a general engagement. A short way down the road, the lead regiment of Benham's brigade, the 10th Ohio Infantry, pushed portions of the 50th Virginia Infantry from their camp a mile in advance of Floyd's defensive works back into their entrenchments. In order to ascertain the situation in front, Rosecrans ordered Benham to send Colonel William H. Lytle and 4 companies of the 10th Ohio further down the Carnifex Ferry Road. The 10th Ohio rounded the woods at a corner of the road, leaving them facing the confederate defensive works 400 yards ahead across the Patterson farm fields.

The assault on Camp Gauley consisted of three ill-organized attacks against different portions of Floyd's lines. The 10th Ohio Infantry under Col. Lytle and the 12th Ohio Infantry under Col. John W. Lowe attacked the portion of Floyd's line held by the 50th Virginia Infantry under the command of Col. Alexander Welch Reynolds and the 51st Virginia Infantry under the command of Col. Gabriel Colvin Wharton. In this section of the line there was also a battery of artillery under the command of Col. John Henry Guy. The 13th Ohio Infantry under the command Col. William Smith formed on the left of the Carnifex Ferry road and advanced against the portion of the line held by Col. Henry Heth and his 45th Virginia Infantry. Lastly, the 9th Ohio Infantry under Lt. Col. Charles Sondershoff formed to the right of the 12th Ohio Infantry and moved against the portion of the line held by the 36th Virginia Infantry under

the command of Col. John McCausland. Darkness halted several hours' fighting during which Gen. Floyd and Col Lytle were wounded and Col John Lowe was killed. The prospect of a better coordinated attack by superior Union forces convinced Floyd to retreat during the night.

### **WHAT DO WE PLAN TO DO?**

The event Floyd's Folly 2015 will portray the strategic and tactical maneuvers in the area of the Gauley River including three separate engagements covering approximately two weeks of history. Starting with the Battle of Kessler's Cross Lanes and ending with the Battle of Carnifex Ferry. Scott Buffington and Dave Pridgeon have graciously agreed to fulfil the positions of overall US and CS respectively. Their knowledge and experience will be a great asset to this event. Rations will be provided and will be based on those issued to both Union and Confederate forces prior to and during the campaign. As far as the battle is concerned we will be focusing on three distinct scenarios with those being Kesler's Cross Lanes, Hughes Ferry, and Carnifex Ferry. A short description of each scenario is as follows:

#### Scenario #1:

Kesler's Cross Lanes On August 26, Brig. Gen. John Floyd, commanding Confederate forces in the Kanawha Valley, crossed the Gauley River to attack Col. Erastus Tyler's 7th Ohio Regiment encamped at Kessler's Cross Lanes. The Union forces were surprised and routed. Floyd then withdrew to the river and took up a defensive position at Carnifex Ferry. We are currently working on getting permission to use the original battlefield. Should this not happen, suitable land has already been scouted at the Carnifex Ferry Park.

#### Scenario #2:

Hughes Ferry On the morning of September 10, 1861 prior to the beginning of the principal engagement at Carnifex Ferry, Gen. Rosecrans sent elements of the Chicago Dragoons to burn the ferry boats located at Hughes Ferry. Upon encountering Confederate resistance, Rosecrans ordered the 13th Ohio Infantry forward in support and the Confederate forces withdrew. This scenario will be done at the main Carnifex Ferry battlefield site.

#### Scenario #3:

Carnifex Ferry Learning of Col. Erastus Tyler's rout at Kessler's Cross Lanes, Brig. Gen. William S. Rosecrans moved three brigades south from Clarksburg to support him. On the afternoon of September 10, he advanced against Brig. Gen. John Floyd's camps at Carnifex Ferry. Darkness halted several hours' fighting. We will portray the three main attacks against Floyd's defensive works as described above. We are currently planning on including in this scenario a march for the Confederate forces following the path of the 22nd Virginia Infantry. The morning of September 10 found them camping at the ferry. They formed up and marched the one mile from the ferry and arrived at the battlefield a short time prior to the battle. This is EXTREMELY rough terrain. Do not let the idea of only one mile fool you. At the same time we are currently planning on a march for Union forces to march from Kesler's Cross Lanes to Camp Gauley. This will follow approximately 1-2 miles on the original ground. It is our goal for the US troops to

march this and form directly into line of battle for the Carnifex Ferry Scenario. CS Troops will be behind breastworks. Those of the 50th Virginia Infantry are already built as an educational tool for the public. The positions of the 36th and 45th Virginia Infantry will need to build their own (These will basically be thrown together as we cannot dig on a public park). This third scenario will be our main scenario.



We are setting a cap at 400 reenactors split as 250 US and 150 CS . Registration is currently set to open on February 1, 2015. Impressions will be as follows:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>9th Ohio Infantry</b><br/>1 Company totaling 25 Men</p> <p><b>10th Ohio Infantry</b><br/>5 Companies totaling 125 Men</p> <p><b>13th Ohio Infantry</b><br/>4 Companies totaling 100 Men</p> <p>Guidelines can be found at:<br/><a href="http://campgauley.webs.com/federal">http://campgauley.webs.com/federal</a></p> | <p><b>36th Virginia Infantry</b><br/>1 Company totaling 25 Men</p> <p><b>50th Virginia Infantry:</b><br/>3 Companies totaling 75 Men</p> <p><b>45th Virginia Infantry:</b><br/>2 Companies totaling 50 Men</p> <p>Guidelines can be found at:<br/><a href="http://campgauley.webs.com/confederate">http://campgauley.webs.com/confederate</a></p> |
|--|---|

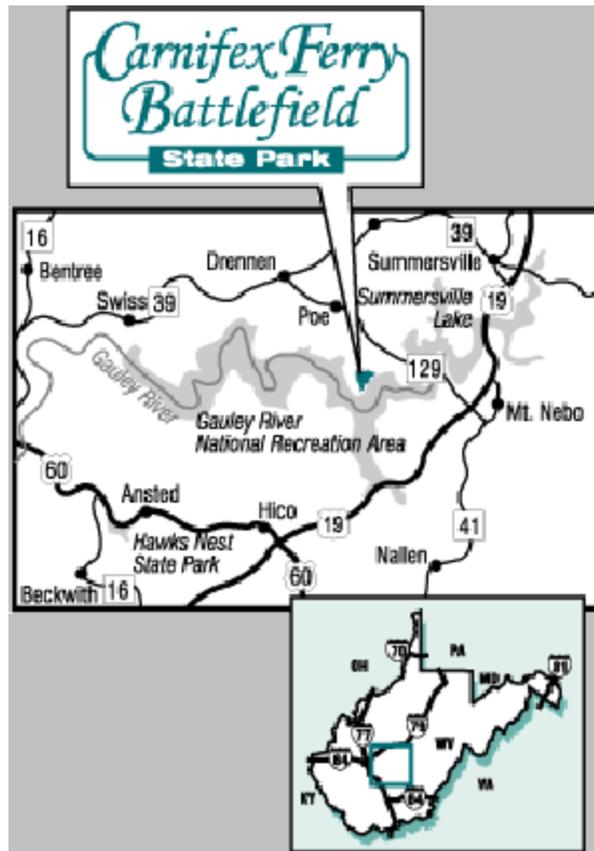
Companies must have 25 men or they will be consolidated. Each company/battalion chosen will each have their own distinct scenarios and experiences throughout the weekend. If you would be interested in forming one of these companies please let us know by emailing [Stephen.Pavey@yahoo.com](mailto:Stephen.Pavey@yahoo.com).

## Why?

All revenue from registration above expenses will be given to the park for preservation efforts at the battlefield. Thus, the purpose of Floyds Folly will be two-fold: to provide an authentically minded event for the progressive community and to raise preservation funds for Carnifex Ferry.

## WHERE

This event will take place on the original fields of the Patterson Farm which is now Carnifex Ferry Battlefield State Park. The physical address for this park is 1194 Carnifex Ferry Rd, Summersville, WV 26651.



If you have ANY questions please do not hesitate to give me a call or send me an email. Our contact information is below:

Stephen Pavey  
Phone: (304)640-8887  
Email: [stephen.pavey@yahoo.com](mailto:stephen.pavey@yahoo.com)