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English 210

Battle of Sabine-Crossroads

The American Civil War is the deadliest war in American history. The death toll for both the Union and the Confederates surpassed 618,000 (Casualties 1). There were numerous battles that occurred during the Civil War that many of us may not know about, such as the Battle of Mansfield. The battle of Mansfield played a significant role and had a surprising outcome.

The Battle of Mansfield, also referred to as The Battle of Sabine Crossroads, took place on April 8, 1864, in North Louisiana’s Desoto Parish just outside the town of Mansfield. The Union had been pushing its way towards Shreveport on land and using the naval forces on the Red River in what they called the Red River Campaign. The Union had already taken control of Natchitoches and several other places when their Major General, Nathaniel P. Banks, decided to move towards Mansfield in an effort to find the concentration of Confederate soldiers lead by, Major General Richard Taylor. Major General Richard Taylor determined that the area where the battle was fought provided him a good spot to take a stand against the Union and to meet with reinforcements (Battle of Mansfield).

The battle began with Major General Nathaniel P. Banks’ soldiers arriving with the Confederate cavalry in front of them. The Union militia continuously attacked the confederate lines that morning. As morning gave way to afternoon, Major General Richard Taylor decided to take his Confederate forces and go on an offensive attack of the Union forces. Taylor had his men attack the flanks of the Union lines and drive the Union forces about 3 miles away from the place where the battle began. Finally, around 6 p.m. that afternoon, along with the help of another Union division, the Confederate advance was halted. The Confederate forces may not have over taken the flanks of the Union forces by the end of the battle, but they did cause Major General Nathaniel P. Banks to withdraw his men and retreat (Mansfield Sabine Cross-Roads).

The Confederate militia was about 9,000 strong and had units from Louisiana, Texas, and the Trans-Mississippi Department. The expected reinforcements from Arkansas arrived after the battle had ended and played no role in the battle or the outcome. The Union military made up of around 12,000 soldiers was significantly larger than that of the Confederate military. These men made up what was called the Army of the Gulf (Battle of Mansfield).

The Battle of Mansfield ended with the Union having 113 deceased soldiers and 581 wounded soldiers. The Confederate military did not keep exact records of their dead or the wounded but it is said that the confederate military had about 1,000 men that were either wounded or dead as a result of the Battle of Mansfield. Some of the dead Confederate soldiers were placed to rest in Minden, Louisiana, and 100 were laid to rest in the historic Confederate Cemetery in Keatchie, Louisiana (Battle of Mansfield). The battle only lasted one day and was won by the Confederate militia, because the Confederates overwhelmed the Union military forcing them to retreat. The victory was short lived because the two Major Generals and their soldiers met again at The Battle of Pleasant Hill the next day, April 9, 1864 (Mansfield Sabine Cross-Roads).

Works Cited

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