Kentucky’s Civil War Heritage Map

Both sides in the American Civil War considered Kentucky a key to victory. Lincoln is reported to have said that “If I had to fight it on his side, but myself have Kentucky.”

From Cumberland Gap in the east to Columbus in the west, fighting raged for control of crucial mountain passes, navigable rivers, and railroad junctions. The war divided Kentucky more profoundly than any other state, for Kentuckians. It truly was a brothers’ war.

And one of the war’s climactic battles took place in the state at Perryville. Along with the battle of Antietam in Maryland two weeks earlier, Perryville represented the failure of the Confederacy’s two-pronged effort to gain the support of those important border states and to persuade European powers, as well as the Lincoln administration, to recognize the Confederacy as an independent nation that could not be conquered.

It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that the Confederacy would have won the war if it could have gained Kentucky, and, conversely, that the Union’s success in retaining Kentucky as a base for invasions of the Confederate heartland brought eventual Union victory.

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Go to www.kentuckytourism.com for a complete list of paragraphs and more detailed Civil War site information.

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