



River Run Red: The Fort Pillow Massacre in the American Civil War

Andrew Ward

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On April 12, 1864, a force of more than 3,000 Confederate cavalry under Nathan Bedford Forrest galloped across West Tennessee to storm Fort Pillow on the Mississippi River, overwhelming a garrison of some 350 Southern white Unionists and over 300 former slaves turned artillerymen. By the next day, hundreds of Federals were dead or wounded, more than 60 black troops had been captured and reenslaved, and more than 100 white troops had been marched off to their doom at Andersonville. Confederates called this bloody battle and its aftermath a hard-won victory. Northerners deemed it premeditated slaughter. To this day, Fort Pillow remains one of the most controversial battles in American history.

The fullest, most accurate account of the battle yet written, *River Run Red* vividly depicts the incompetence and corruption of Union occupation in Tennessee, the horrors of guerrilla warfare, and the pent-up bigotry and rage that found its release at Fort Pillow. Andrew Ward brings to life the garrison's black troops and their ambivalent white comrades, and the intrepid Confederate cavalymen who rode with the slave trading Nathan Bedford Forrest, future founder of the Ku Klux Klan.

The result is a fast-paced narrative that hurtles toward that fateful April day and beyond to establish Fort Pillow's true significance in the annals of American history. Destined to become as controversial as the battle itself, *River Run Red* is sure to appeal to readers of James McPherson's bestselling *Crossroads of Freedom: Antietam*.

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