

that vessels in the river were bringing in more troops, shortened the time to twenty minutes. Bradford refused to surrender, and Forrest quickly ordered the attack.

The Confederates charged across the short distance between their lines and the fort, helping one another scale the parapet, from which they fired into the fort. Victory came quickly, with the Union forces running toward the river or surrendering. Shelby Foote describes the scene like this:

Some kept going, right into the river, where a number drowned and the swimmers became targets for marksmen on the bluff. Others, dropping their guns in terror, ran back toward the Confederates with their hands up, and of these some were spared as prisoners, while others were shot down in the act of surrender.³

In his own official report, Forrest makes no mention of the massacre. He does make much of the fact that the Union flag was not taken down, saying that if his own men had not taken down the flag, “few if any, would have survived unhurt another volley.”⁴ However, as Jack Hurst points out and Forrest must have known, in this twenty-minute battle, “Federals running for their lives had little time to concern themselves with a flag.”⁵

The federal congressional report on Fort Pillow, which charged the Confederates with appalling atrocities, drew much criticism from Southern writers, and even respected writer Shelby Foote, who does not deny a massacre occurred, says it was largely a “tissue of lies.”⁶ In an important article, John Cimprich and Robert C. Mainfort Jr. argue that the most trustworthy evidence

Long quotation is set off from text by indenting. Quotation marks are omitted.

Writer uses a primary source as well as secondary sources.

Quotation is introduced with a signal phrase.

The writer draws attention to an important article containing primary sources.