

Nathan bedford forrest essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Nathan Bedford Forrest

Nathan Bedford Forrest was born in Bedford County, Tennessee on July 13, 1821. He was the son of William and Marian Beck Forrest. William Forrest was a blacksmith. Unfortunately, he died when Nathan was only 16 years old, leaving Nathan with the task of supporting the family. Nathan did not have a formal education and started out as a farm laborer.

Nathan Bedford Forrest was almost illiterate but started trading horses and cattle. Before joining the Confederate Army, he moved to Mississippi and became a wealthy cotton planter, real-estate broker, and a slave dealer. There, Forrest also owned and operated a large plantation. He became a self-made millionaire.

In June of 1861, Nathan Bedford Forrest enlisted as a private in the Confederate Army. He raised and equipped a mounted battalion at his own expense. Just before the war ended, he was promoted to Lieutenant General. Forrest was the most feared cavalry commander of the Civil War. He was wounded four times in battle, killed 30 Union Soldiers hand to hand, and had 29 Horses shot out from under him. His famous saying was, “ War means fightin,’ and fightin’ means killin’.”

Forrest led the Battle of Chickamauga and forced the Federals to retreat. He did not follow the orders of his commander, Colonel Bragg. Bragg demanded that Forrest turn his troops over, but Forrest threatened him with bodily harm. The incident went unreported, and Bragg reassigned Forrest further west.

Forrest was an individual who did not believe in letting anyone who was fighting against him win and live. Sometimes, when the Union Army retreated from him, he would pursue them for days, still attacking. One of the things Forrest never did was surrender. Even as the war was nearing the end, Forrest said that if he would have to go into Mexico and fight he would. In 1865, Forrest's group was the last one to surrender to the Union Army.

When peace finally came, and the war ended, Forrest returned to Mississippi and began restoring his plantation. Nathan Bedford was a powerful human being with an extremely fiery temper. Things he saw starting in the South easily aroused his temper. One thing that disturbed him was the belief that northern carpetbaggers were trying to take over the South.

On Christmas Eve, 1865, the South was poverty-stricken and depressed. Six young Confederate soldiers were penniless and in the lowest of moods. They wanted to do something to lift their spirits. One of them suggested forming a club. They decided to meet about their idea again.

At their second meeting, they decided on the name Klan because they were all of Scottish-Irish descent. Ideas went back and forth with the letter "K" and the name Ku Klux Klan was born. They were planning to be "merrymakers" and jokesters to cheer up their families and girlfriends. Masquerades were popular, so they decided to make costumes. Since they were poor, they took items from their linen closets. They covered their heads and bodies with sheets and pillowcases, draped their horses, and went out to put on silly shows for people. The Ku Klux Klan started out as a group of pranksters.

The newly freed slaves saw these men riding around a night and thought they were ghosts. The Blacks were afraid of almost everything in their newly found freedom. So, the Klan started scaring the Black people as a joke, but things turned more violent as more members joined the Klan. One of their main purposes was not to let the ex-slaves vote in any elections.

In May of 1866, Forrest learned about the powerful Ku Klux Klan movement started in Pulaski, Tennessee. Forrest was eager to learn about this powerful organization so he went to Nashville, Tennessee to see Captain John Morton, his Chief of Artillery during the war. There, Capt. John Morton swore Nathan Bedford Forrest into the Klan. After he joined the Klan, a meeting was held to make a more promising name known as " Ku Klux Klan, the Invisible Empire." There, after many days of deliberation, Forrest was made the first and most powerful Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan. He soon commanded 100, 000 Klansmen throughout the Old Confederacy. Forrest commanded the Klan for several years. The number of members grew and the violence became more brutal. For these reasons, Forrest decided to leave the Ku Klux Klan.

Forrest returned to his home and began making more money. He became the President of the Marion Railroad. A couple years later he died from diabetes on October 29, 1877.