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CUMP AND COMPANY

A NEWSLETTER FOR FRIENDS AND FANCIERS OF GENERAL WILLIAM T. SHERMAN

Volume 6, No. 2

Sept/ Oct 1999

MARCHING THROUGH GEORGIA SONG

BY HENRY C WORK

SONG	WUTR	50
MARCH	MAJK	50
FANTASIA	HOLNT	60
PARAPHRASE	DRESSLER	60

THE S. BRAINARD'S SONS Co.
NEW YORK CHICAGO

VARIATIONS	GUNNER	60
FOUR HANDS	DRESSLER	50
TRIUMPHAL MARCH	DRESSLER	50
MARCH (SIMPLIFIED)	F. WEBER	50

WASHINGTON ARTILLERY
OF
NEW ORLEANS.
RECRUITS WANTED.

Officers of this Battalion are now in search to enlist such Young Men, citizens of Louisiana, as are within conscript ages, who may come forward and offer themselves for service.

By special authority of the Secretary of War, any person liable to conscription may be called, and conscripts enrolled and assigned to fill up this organization.

A company of 100 MEN WILL BE PAID TO ENLIST IN THE REGIMENT.

The recruiting station will be at the residence of J. B. WALTON, at the residence of J. B. WALTON, at the residence of J. B. WALTON.

J. B. WALTON

Colonel and Chief of Artillery, 1st Army Corps, 2d Division, 2d Army.

I have authorized my Recruiting Office at Baton Rouge, La., to receive applications.

C. W. SQUIRE

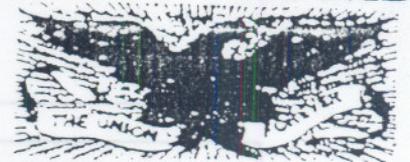


HOME GUARDS!
To Arms! To Arms!
YOUR CAPITOL IS IN DANGER!

SKOWHEGAN DRILL CLUB.



RALLY ROUND



THE FLAG BOYS!
100 MEN WANTED!!

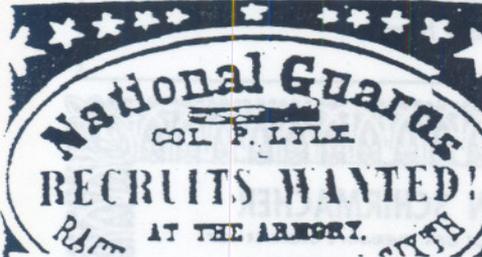
For the 33d Mich. Infantry.

Enlist before April 1st, secure the Government Bounty of \$300 00.

AND "KEEP OUT OF THE DRAFT!"

Government Bounty, \$300; State Bounty, \$100; Town Bounty, \$100.

REGIMENT ORDERED SOUTH!



Rekruten Verlangt



26. Regiment
Wisc. Volunteers!!

See States Report
and New Direct of
\$300 per M.

25 Dollars and one Month
bonus, will be furnished
during the following by
John Drucker in
most profitable
arrangement. See
book in Oberlinstr.



FIRE ZOUAVES!
Company F,
RECRUITS WANTED!

PAY AND RATIONS TO COMMENCE AT ONCE!

CENTRAL HEAD QUARTERS

No. 403 Walnut

GLOBE ENGINE CO. Germantown Road,
INDEPENDENCE, MOSE, George St. below

Mounted Rangers.

TERRY AND LUBBOCK'S REGIMENT!
FOR VIRGINIA DURING THE WAR!!

A company of not less than 64 nor more than 100 privates, is now being organized for the above service.

Each man must furnish the equipments for his horse, and arms himself, either with a short rifle or double barreled shot gun, and a six-shooter. Transportation from Abbeville to Virginia free! The best horses are now being purchased and will be furnished to the men in Virginia.

The undersigned is now ready to enlist men and will receive in La. Group on Saturday the 30th inst.

A roll will be left at the office of Fred Tate, Esq., in whose application may be made during my absence.

LOUIS M. STROBEL,
Enrolling officer.

HIBERNIA GREENS
IRISH BRIGADE.

COL. THOS. FRANCIS NEAGHEY & LIEUT. COL. ROBERT,
SIXTY-NINTH REGIMENT.

Recruiting Station, Hibernia Greens' Armory,
Hennepin Road, Liberty Street.
RICHARD BELLON, JOHN P. DUNNEN,
PETER O'NEILL.

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CAMP AND COMPANY
 I am still...
 opportunity...
 of our Govt...
 before all the good...
 St. Louis will by my...
 The Press has now...
 Franklin and...
 Association of the...
 -W. T. Sherman to John Sherman, 1862

TWENTY-FIRST WISCONSIN INFANTRY IN THE CIVIL WAR

Service of John H. Abrahams, Pvt. (1862-1865)

By John H. Abrahams, Jr.

PART 3 - AFTERMATH, CHATTANOOGA, AND PREPARATIONS FOR THE ATLANTA CAMPAIGN

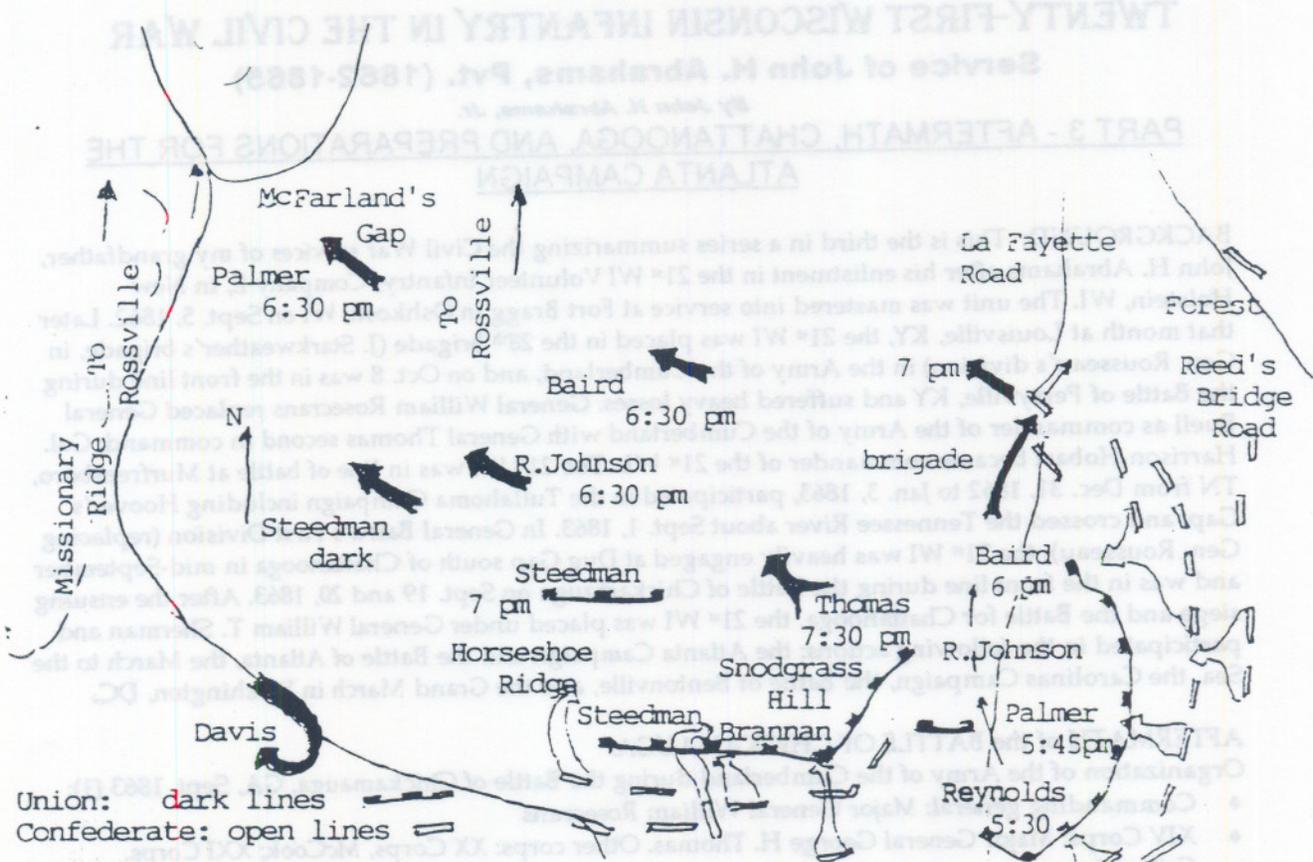
BACKGROUND: This is the third in a series summarizing the Civil War services of my grandfather, John H. Abrahams after his enlistment in the 21st WI Volunteer Infantry, Company E, in New Holstein, WI. The unit was mastered into service at Fort Bragg in Oshkosh, WI on Sept. 5, 1862. Later that month at Louisville, KY, the 21st WI was placed in the 28th brigade (J. Starkweather's brigade, in Gen. Rousseau's division) in the Army of the Cumberland, and on Oct. 8 was in the front line during the Battle of Perryville, KY and suffered heavy losses. General William Rosecrans replaced General Buell as commander of the Army of the Cumberland with General Thomas second in command; Col. Harrison Hobart became commander of the 21st WI. The 21st WI was in line of battle at Murfreesboro, TN from Dec. 31, 1862 to Jan. 3, 1863, participated in the Tullahoma Campaign including Hoover's Gap, and crossed the Tennessee River about Sept. 1, 1863. In General Baird's First Division (replacing Gen. Rousseau), the 21st WI was heavily engaged at Dug Gap south of Chattanooga in mid-September and was in the front line during the Battle of Chickamauga on Sept. 19 and 20, 1863. After the ensuing siege and the Battle for Chattanooga, the 21st WI was placed under General William T. Sherman and participated in the following actions: the Atlanta Campaign and the Battle of Atlanta, the March to the Sea, the Carolinas Campaign, the Battle of Bentonville, and the Grand March in Washington, DC.

AFTERMATH of the BATTLE OF CHICKAMAUGA:

Organization of the Army of the Cumberland during the Battle of Chickamauga, GA, Sept. 1863 (1):

- ◆ Commanding general: Major General William Rosecrans
- ◆ XIV Corps: Major General George H. Thomas. Other corps: XX Corps, McCook; XXI Corps, Crittenden
- ◆ First Division: Brigadier General Absalom Baird. Other divisions: 2nd, Negley; 3rd, Brannan; 4th, Reynolds.
- ◆ Second Brigade: Brigadier General John C. Starkweather. Other brigades: 1st, Scribner; 3rd, King.
- ◆ 21st WI: Lt. Col. Harrison C. Hobart. Other regiments in brigade: 1st WI, 79th PA, & 24th IL (+ 4th IN Bat.)

After an all night march northward on Sept. 18, 1863 following the encounter at Dug Gap, General Baird's First Division and others were positioned on the far left north flank of the Union forces during both days of the Battle of Chickamauga, Sept. 19 and 20. On Sept. 19, these divisions fought off three major Confederate attacks under General Bragg, starting in early morning and lasting until after dark. Early on Sept. 20, the Confederate army again attacked the Union left and rolled south until Confederate reinforcements (Longstreet) breached the Union right just before noon. The Union right including the XX and XXI Corps along with General Rosecrans and staff retreated to Rossville to protect Union supply lines. Union troops on the field under Thomas' XIV Corps on Snodgrass Hill east of La Fayette Road including the 21st WI stood firm behind log barricades while the remainder of Union troops from the breached right flank formed a tight crescent south of Snodgrass Hill just west of the road, collectively holding off the entire Confederate army until dark. Reynold's division, east of the road, retreated first because it had the longest distance to travel, followed by Palmer's, Reynold's, and Baird's (see Figure 1). Baird, to the north, held off the Confederate right wing until the other Union divisions passed across the rear of his position. During the orderly retreat, Baird's division (including the 21st WI) and other divisions cut their way to Rossville, but lost many by casualty and capture. Col. Hobart, commander of the 21st WI, and about 75 officers and men, were captured during this retreat. Those listed in Company E as wounded are Capt. R. H. Weisbrod, and privates W. Welch, G. Braggs,



Map adapted from Tucker (2).

Figure 1. Withdrawal of General Thomas' Headquarters and several divisions from Snodgrass Hill and Horseshoe Ridge, and Baird's, R. Johnson's, Palmer's, and Reynolds' divisions from east of La Fayette Road on evening of Sept. 20, 1863 after Battle of Chickamauga. The 21st WI Regiment, located in Starkweather's Second Brigade, on left flank of Baird's First Division, Army of the Cumberland.

and E. Schooner. Miles (4) indicates that many Union troops also retreated north through Rossville Gap, but both McFarland and Rossville Gaps lead directly to Rossville. The Union position was solidified by Sept. 21 and 22 at Rossville, and the siege by the Confederate army began.

In the morning on Sept. 21, General Baird asked Major Michael Fitch—on duty as division inspector for nine months and on leave from the 21st WI—to form a new line for the division across the hills covering the gap at Rossville. This was completed by 3 P.M. but done with difficulty since the division was scattered after the night retreat. There was another first line to the east which was formed from portions of other scattered divisions. Some Confederate shells were fired into Union lines and there was a minor skirmish. All wagons, ambulances, and surplus artillery carriages were moved to Chattanooga just north of Rossville, then Brannan's division of the XIV Corps was stationed half-way there to cover them. Strong skirmish lines were sent out, supported by Baird's division and Union cavalry for troop withdrawal which started at 9 P.M. The withdrawal was made by divisions with supporting distances of each other, from left to right and completed by 7 A.M. on Sept. 22 with Baird's division including the 21st WI, the last to leave for its post in Chattanooga.

CAMP AND COMPANY

At this point, nearly half of the Confederate army consisted of reinforcements sent recently to the Chattanooga area. According to Tucker (2) "A major cause of Rosecrans' defeat was failure to get the expected assistance from Burnside and Grant at a time when Bragg was being reinforced by Longstreet." Thomas placed himself squarely on the side of Rosecrans'.

There were some critics, of course, who argued that Thomas's forces should not have retreated from the field on Sept. 20, 1863. In response, Fitch (6) listed the following reasons why it was advisable to retreat: 1) Thomas was ordered to do so; 2) Thomas's forces were low on ammunition and rations; 3) the utter exhaustion of the troops after days of continuous front line fighting, and after a night march to reach the battlefield; 4) the prospect that with Thomas's forces still in the field, the Confederate army may have forced a wedge between them and Chattanooga; 5) Union commanders were not fully aware of the exhaustion and discouragement within the Confederate army.

President Lincoln believed that as long as the Union army held Chattanooga, its earlier goal, then the Confederate army lost the battle.

CAPTURE AND TREATMENT:

A famous episode of those captured at Chickamauga is related by Hobart in a June 3, 1891 reading before the Commandery of the State of Wisconsin. This report (9) is summarized, as follows, using his own words where appropriate: "During the evening retreat of the 21st WI in General Baird's First Division, on Sept. 20, 1863, a rebel battery and cavalry swept between these retreating troops and the main army, also retreating. Hobart directed his command to cut its way out, but while passing through a thicket of pines, he was confronted by rebel infantry. Later he surrendered his sword to Confederate General Cleburne, who assured Hobart of safe conduct. A large number of Union prisoners of war were marched across the Chickamauga River where they viewed the shattered remains of the Confederate battlefield. Some 15,000 passed the cold night without provisions, then marched 30 miles to Tunnel Hill, GA, where townspeople threw bread across a guard line which was then doubled. The prisoners were placed in old slave quarters and stripped of all blankets and coats on orders from General Bragg. The next day in Atlanta, Hobart marched the prisoners in columns through crowds to the depot, all singing the 'Star Spangled Banner.'"

On Sept. 30, 1863, the train arrived in Richmond, VA and about 250 officers from the Army of the Cumberland were marched to Libby prison. All items of value were taken; all prisoners slept on the bare floor and were fed mostly corn bread. Many provisions, sent in boxes, were never received, but those received, were shared by all. There was no glass in the windows, the vermin population was high. The prison was mined and orders were issued to blow up the buildings if Union forces attempted a raid. Some prisoners were moved to North Carolina. An escape tunnel was cut using a table knife, chisel, and a spittoon by digging downward and rearward through masonry in a basement chimney. After digging nightly, a position beneath a shed was reached after about 30 days. The narrow tunnel was eight feet below the street and almost 70 feet long. Under Hobart's direction, the men acquired citizens' clothes and filled their pockets with bread and meat. The escape started about 7 P.M. on Feb. 9, 1864, during a dancing party; Hobart and Col. T. S. West of Wisconsin were the last to leave, and emerged about 9 P.M. that evening. One hundred and nine prisoners escaped through the tunnel that night, but only 57 reached Union lines.

Traveling mostly at night, the men quickly moved into a ravine in a suburb of Richmond, located by using a war map of Virginia, then headed towards the Williamsburg Pike. The next morning, now reduced to four travelers, they found themselves on the Fair Oaks battlefield within a burial area of Union dead, then followed the course of the Chickamahony River. But next came bugle notes of the enemy cavalry close by, and sounds of citizens' alarms. The next night and day they traveled from woods to woods, but being lost, they approached a house and were provided food and directions by a

"large good-looking negro." He led them around swamps and enemy cavalry, but the following day they were delayed by the deep, cold Diascum River until a Rebel soldier in a boat was paid off in cash—but the alarm was sounded. After five days and six nights, the four travelers at 2 A.M. were stopped by cavalymen, who were Union soldiers from Pennsylvania. Brief stories of other members of the 21st WI captured at Chickamauga are as follows:

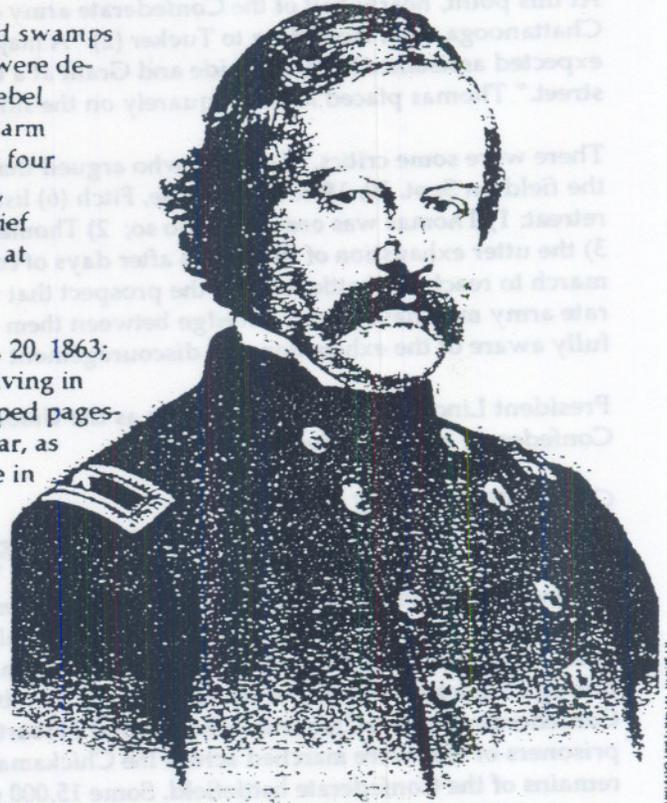
♦ Edward Beach, 1st Sgt. Co. E: Captured Sept. 20, 1863; he was the great grandfather of Thomas Selby, living in Michigan (10). This summarizes a speech (12 typed pages-copied) made by Beach several years after the war, as follows: "On Oct. 1st, 1863 he arrived at Belle Isle in

Richmond, VA but moved to the Smith Tobacco Warehouse on Oct. 5. Slow starvation occurred for most because of the meager rations; further, all personal possessions were taken, all slept on the bare floor, and most suffered from the cold. Smallpox broke out in November and got worse with time. Late in November blankets and foods reached them from the Union Gov't but on Dec. 9 the prisoners were moved by rail to Danville, Virginia and replaced by rebel wounded. Rations were received Dec. 10 for the 4,200 Union prisoners, but the food was so bad that men, near starvation, threw it away. Smallpox worsened,

but no assistance was offered until too late and many prisoners were left to die on the floor. After some 200 prisoners escaped through tunnels, discipline became even more severe. Many of the supplies sent from homes of the prisoners were taken by the guards."

On Apr. 13, 1864, the Confederates started to ship prisoners to Andersonville—but as became a pattern, they were told that they would be exchanged at City Point, VA and issued three days' rations. Instead, Andersonville was reached after six days in crowded box cars, when the prisoners were divided into groups of 90 men each and marched towards the gates through lines of fixed bayonets. A horrible sight greeted them through the opened gates—the prisoners inside looked almost non-human. Each new prisoner located his own vacancy, but fights were prevalent for space. The "hospitals" were in two corners, consisting of small spreads of canvas for shade. By early May, 1864, this space was too small and a stockade outside the gate was used. No cooking utensils were issued after April, leading to other problems.

Commonly, as many as 4 to 12 prisoners were chained together. Roll call was at 8 A.M. daily, but sick prisoners were carried in blankets and sometimes made to stand for hours in the sun or rain. Few medicines were furnished. Late in the summer, an inspector from Richmond recommended removal of the commander because of terrible conditions. Following the capture of Atlanta on Sept. 1, 1864, preparations were made to remove Union prisoners and by Sept. 7, the first group left for Savannah, GA and Charleston, SC, leaving the stockade almost empty by late September. In late October some 6,000 prisoners were moved from Savannah to Millen, GA. On some cold morning in November, as many as 15 to 25 prisoners were found dead from exposure. Another promise was made to exchange



After his escape, Harrison C. Hobart was eventually promoted to the rank of brigadier general. At the end of the war, he returned to Libby Prison to liberate its remaining prisoners.

CINCINNATI HISTORICAL SOCIETY

CAMP AND COMPANY

the sick prisoners, but instead the guards requested \$50, even only \$10, so that the less-sick prisoners were moved instead of the actual sick. Those at Millen, not exchanged, were moved back to Savannah, then southwest to Blackshear and camped in deep woods for weeks, and returned to Savannah on their way to the stockade at Florence, SC. But the railroad to the north had been cut, so they returned to Blackshear, then went southwest to Thomasville (near the Florida border), where they stayed for about one month. The prisoners were then marched northward some 70 miles to Albany and took the railroad back to Andersonville on Dec. 23, 1864; the stockade was empty, several wells were filled and the ground plowed, but the commander was still brutal.

In his diary dated Nov. 1, 1864, Beach reported that only one of seven of those captured at Chickamauga were left. His final departure from Andersonville was not recorded or not available. Later, Beach lived in Chicago, IL, then Waukesha, WI where he is believed to be buried.

♦ Michael Gillis, Co. A: Born May 16, 1832 in Nova Scotia and captured Sept. 20, 1863: He spent almost two years at Andersonville prison, was discharged June 8, 1865, and returned to Fond Du Lac, WI, then died Sept. 27, 1895 from tuberculosis acquired during the war. He was the great-great grandfather of Chris Gravelle living in WI (11).

OCTOBER 1863—LIFTING THE SIEGE OF CHATTANOOGA:

The Union army of some 35,000 troops was under siege in Chattanooga with supplies running low. The inner fortifications were prepared so that 10,000 troops could hold the city, with the remaining troops free to protect supplies and supply lines and included cavalry and mounted infantry north of the river to guard the crossings. Union troops half encircled Chattanooga facing east with both flanks resting on the Tennessee River, with Thomas's XIV Corps in the center. Confederate lines were within a short distance of Union lines with two other lines of entrenchment beyond. The railroad from Nashville to Stevenson, where supplies were accumulating, was being maintained, but the Union army was almost surrounded and had no suitable means of supply (6-Fitch) except for one precipitous road over 60 round about miles to Stevenson. Trees within the Union lines were cut for fortifications and fuel. It hadn't rained since early in July and any troop or animal movement caused clouds of dust.

It appeared that Bragg intended to starve the Union troops while destroying communications, thus forcing Union forces to abandon Chattanooga. Bragg took possession of the point of Lookout Mt. when the Union brigade stationed there was withdrawn on Sept. 24. Longstreet's forces moved into Lookout Valley. The Confederate forces commanded both sides of the river and the rail and wagon roads between Chattanooga and the Union base of supply at Bridgeport and Stevenson, as well as to the north and west, in addition to the strategic heights of Missionary Ridge to the south and east.

On Sept. 28, a Presidential Order reorganized the Army of the Cumberland with the XXI and XX Corps consolidated into the IV Corps under General Granger and the XIV Corps, including the reserve corps, under General Palmer. General Rousseau returned from Washington and replaced General Baird as commander of the First Division, which included General Starkweather's Third Brigade and the 1st and 21st WI. Each corps was composed of three divisions and each division was composed of three brigades.

By early October, the Union army was down to almost one quarter rations, although the troops seemed in good health. The pickets of both armies chatted on occasion but artillery duels were common. The animals with their heavy work seemed to be suffering the worst. The poor mountain roads open to the Union army were almost impassable due to heavy rains in early October and because supply wagons were being destroyed by General Wheeler's cavalry by the thousands. On Oct. 5, Confederate general Wheeler and his cavalry raided Union supply routes and destroyed 500

wagons, killed 1,000 mules, and burned several railroad bridges. In Tennessee his cavalry was pursued heavily as the Confederates drove north to destroy all Union communications and supplies. Those at McMinnville were destroyed but the Union forces caught up in time to save Murfreesboro and points north from pillage, but telegraph lines to Nashville were cut.

Now the Administration in Washington directed reinforcements to assist General Rosecrans: the XI Corps under General O. O. Howard and XII Corps under General H. W. Slocum, both commanded by General J. Hooker from the Army of the Potomac were ordered, traveling south through KY and TN. General Burnside's Army of the Ohio, promised to Rosecrans all during the month of September, traveled south through eastern TN but was deflected further to the east. The XV Corps under General W. T. Sherman from the Army of the Tennessee, moved eastward along the northern border of AL. Raiders along Sherman's advancing route from the west destroyed 102 miles of railroad tracks and burned 182 bridges, but Sherman's troops rebuilt these facilities in 40 days and arrived at Chattanooga in mid November. These reinforcements later were the primary troops used in the battle for Chattanooga, along with numerous troops from the Army of the Cumberland.

Rosecrans continued preparations for breaking the siege soon after the Chattanooga fortifications were complete, and a risky but workable plan was developed by the Chief Engineer General Smith. Rosecrans described the plan to General Thomas on Oct. 19, who approved the plan on Oct. 20. Thomas was just notified that he succeeded Rosecrans on orders from General Grant who was *en route* from St. Louis and Cincinnati to help the army fight its way out. Grant arrived on Oct. 23 and, after inspections, approved the complex plans to lift the siege. In haste and secrecy, the plan was started on Oct. 26 and was nearing a successful completion on Oct. 28 when Confederate General Longstreet attacked Union positions at midnight but was routed after a three hour battle. When Hooker's forces regained Lookout Valley, the siege of Chattanooga was raised and the new "cracker line" was open to Brown's Ferry. Kelley's Ferry, several miles downstream, was reached Nov. 1. Now it was time to drive Bragg from the strongholds of Lookout Mt., Chattanooga Valley, and Missionary Ridge.

BATTLE FOR CHATTANOOGA:

After reinforcements arrived and the siege was overcome and supplies were arriving daily, and after Bragg dispatched Longstreet into eastern TN, Grant and Thomas began making plans to route the Confederates from rifle pits along the base on the west side and southwest of Orchard Knob located about half way between Chattanooga and Missionary Ridge, and from his strong entrenchments on Missionary Ridge. Apparently, Longstreet was dispatched to eastern TN because he voiced disapproval of Bragg's methods and because Bragg believed that his position on Missionary Ridge was too strong to take. Longstreet's departure left the Confederate left flank minimally protected. Seeing this, Grant ordered Thomas to attack and carry the north end of Missionary Ridge on Nov. 7, but it was soon determined that the Army of the Cumberland with its used up animals was not in the best condition for offensive battle, thus further operations were delayed until General Sherman arrived. But during November, the Army of the Cumberland rebounded from the constraints of the retreat and siege and began to concentrate its forces to operate offensively.

General Sherman reached Bridgeport with his advance troops on Nov. 15 and, along with the lead generals, surveyed the region north of the Tennessee River, where it was determined that the north end of Missionary Ridge was minimally guarded and that all the Union forces possible should converge towards the north end of Missionary Ridge. The date for execution was set for Nov. 21, but heavy rain on Nov. 20 and 21 and poor maps, delayed Sherman's deployment. Experiencing bridge problems when crossing at Brown's Ferry, Sherman crossed the Tennessee River at midnight on Nov. 23 between North Chickamauga and South Chickamauga creek upstream from Chattanooga, and two divisions were across by daylight. Bragg had withdrawn from his northern fortifications and river defenses and moved south and east to a stronger position just north of Tunnel Hill, so, by 1 P.M.,

Sherman's three divisions moved forward after crossing the river. By 4 P.M., Sherman's advanced columns occupied the two northernmost summits of Missionary Ridge but became heavily engaged when they found the summit just north of Tunnel Hill to be strongly defended.

According to Fitch (6) and other sources, Starkweather's brigade including the 21st WI, had been ordered in reserve because the brigade had lost more in killed and wounded than any other brigade of the division at Chickamauga, and was instructed to hold the Chattanooga works in case the next planned attack failed. Howard's troops were sent to assist Sherman's river crossing but were not needed. Thomas's troops, including the 21st WI, were to join forces with Sherman's and Howard's troops on the left of the Union line if this attack was successful.

Meanwhile on Nov. 22, parts of several divisions including the 15th WI overran Orchard Knob, so that Grant and Thomas could now easily view the entire valley and Missionary Ridge clearly. Grant had instructed Thomas to move his troops out of the Chattanooga trenches into line at Orchard Knob (14-Symonds); the Compendium (15) shows the 21st WI at Orchard Knob Nov. 22 and 23, as does Certificates of Service provided by the State of Wisconsin (16, 17). An Easel, dedicated by the wife of John H. Abrahams on July 22, 1896 (18), lists a presence of the 21st WI at Orchard Knob, Nov. 23; Lookout Mountain, Nov. 24; and Mission Ridge on Nov. 25.

This move to Orchard Knob made Hooker's attack on Lookout Mountain easier. At 4 P.M. on Nov. 24th, Hooker was sent by Grant to defeat Confederate troops on 1,500 ft. high Lookout Mt.; it was noted by many early the next morning by the sight of the Union flag when heavy fog cleared on the heights. Great cheers rang out from the Union troops in the valley, but the sight was seen by both armies.

Bragg's entire forces now held Missionary Ridge, still a strong position, but weakened and over extended with removal of Longstreet from its left flank. Grant informed Thomas that Sherman would attack the next morning and Thomas's attack would be cooperative to carry the rifle pits at the base of Missionary Ridge or to move north to the left if needed. After sunrise on Nov. 25, Sherman moved south and encountered the Confederate main fortifications, and at 10 A.M., Grant, from his position on Orchard Ridge, sent Howard on Thomas's left, then Baird's division at noon to assist Sherman in turning the Confederate right flank. Baird later returned to his position facing Missionary Ridge, and Hooker moved against the Confederate left flank near Rossville to the south with assistance from Thomas. Thomas's forces, with now less than four divisions in the center, were held back while Sherman struggled to the north to take Tunnel Hill.

Grant believed that troops in the Army of the Cumberland would not fight because of the rough handling received from the Confederate forces during the Battle of Chickamauga in September. His plan of battle was for Sherman with five divisions to make the main attack from the north and sweep everything before him down the ridge (12-Cist). Then the Army of the Cumberland would "demonstrate" by taking the rifle pits at the base of Missionary Ridge and aid in pursuit. According to Sherman, Grant told him earlier "that the men of Thomas's army have been so demoralized by the battle of Chickamauga that he feared they could not be got out of their trenches to assume the offensive." Thus the attack on the rifle pits was to be a "demonstration", but Thomas's troops were determined that they would not take this lesser role while any other force under Grant's command would be given credit for saving the Army of the Cumberland. Union forces on Nov. 25 were approximately: Thomas, 18,000; Hooker, 9,000; Sherman, 24,000.

What happened next on Nov. 25 was one of the most unusual and significant Union victories of the Civil War. After waiting to determine Sherman's progress over the rough terrain and against strong fortifications at Tunnel Hill, Grant, with approaching darkness at 3 P.M., ordered Thomas to move his

troops against the rows of rifle-pits at the base of a strong Confederate center located on 500 foot high Missionary Ridge initiated by a series of cannon shot. According to Cist (12) "The rebels opened fire with shot and shell from their batteries, as our troops advanced, changing it soon to grape and canister, which, with the fire from the infantry, made it terrifically hot. Dashing through this over the open plain, the soldiers of the Army of the Cumberland swept on, driving the enemy's skirmishers, charging down the line of works at the foot of the ridge, capturing it at the point of the bayonet, and routing the rebels, sending them at full speed up the ridge, killing and capturing them in large numbers."

The assault, in full view of both armies, was done swiftly, but Union troops were now pinned by rifle fire against the base of Missionary Ridge. Then, without orders and to the surprise of both armies, Union troops started to climb the ridge and soon swept over the crest of Missionary Ridge in zig-zag lines. The entire charge lasted about one hour. Further, Bragg had placed his cannon too far back from the brow on the hill so they could not fire on Thomas's troops climbing the steep slope, although lighted shells and large boulders were rolled down the hill to stop the advance of Thomas' troops while shouting "Chickamauga, Chickamauga" (8) as a threat. With these troops on top of the ridge, Bragg and his forces retreated in panic down the eastern slopes and much of their cannon and supplies were captured by Union troops. Grant was heard to say "Damn the battle, I had nothing to do with it." Thomas just smiled. According to Van Horne (7), Grant gave no instructions to assault the summit, and in fact questioned Thomas as to who had ordered it. After the Army of the Cumberland reached the top and relieved pressure on the north of the ridge, Sherman was able to take the tunnel. Apparently, the 21st WI was not in the actual attacks, but was in line of battle a short distance away at all times; the Compendium (15) places the 21st WI at Missionary Ridge on Nov. 25.

Major Michael Fitch had been on duty as division inspector separating him from the 21st WI for a period of nine months, and as such, took part in the assault on Missionary Ridge on Nov. 25, 1863. Fitch rode up the ridge at the extreme right of General Carlin's brigade. After receiving a temporary repulse, the brigade reached the top, and captured over a thousand prisoners.

After burning bridges and crossing Chickamauga Valley, the Confederate troops stopped after dark on Taylor's Ridge near Ringgold, GA. On the morning of Nov. 26th, Palmer's entire XIV Corps and Hooker attacked Taylor's Ridge. Later in the day Hooker was driven back from a pass on Taylor's Ridge with heavy losses. Meanwhile, part of Thomas's troops along with Sherman's advanced through Chickamauga Station to Graysville just over the border in Georgia and surprised the rear guard of the Confederate troops, then captured three cannon and a large number of prisoners. After Graysville, Sherman's troops, after a sharp fight, turned left and struck the railroad between Dalton, GA and Cleveland, TN. Howard then destroyed the railroad thoroughly. The XV Corps destroyed the Atlanta Railroad below Graysville to the state line. The pursuit was discontinued Nov. 28, 1863.

Shortly after, Sherman was ordered to join with Granger's column moving to Knoxville to relieve Burnside, under attack by Longstreet, a distance of 84 miles. Along the way his forces destroyed supplies and rolling stock, and at Cleveland they destroyed a copper-rolling mill and large ordinance depot (6-Van Horne). Sherman, Howard, and Granger marched with scant provisions and no change of clothes, but found Burnside safely entrenched and well fed (Cleaves). Arriving Dec. 6, they found that Longstreet had called off his attack on the strong fortifications and took up a menacing presence in east TN on Dec. 4. With Granger in pursuit, Sherman returned to Chattanooga on Dec. 16, and marched his troops to winter quarters in northern Alabama.

This ended the battle of Chattanooga, and the Confederate army was at Dalton with no movement imminent (5). Union losses were 5,800 men; Confederate losses were 6,700 men (14), 7,000 muskets, 40 cannon, and many wagons (7). General Starkweather, previously brigade commander, which included the 21st WI, relieved General Johnson at Stevenson after the battle (5).

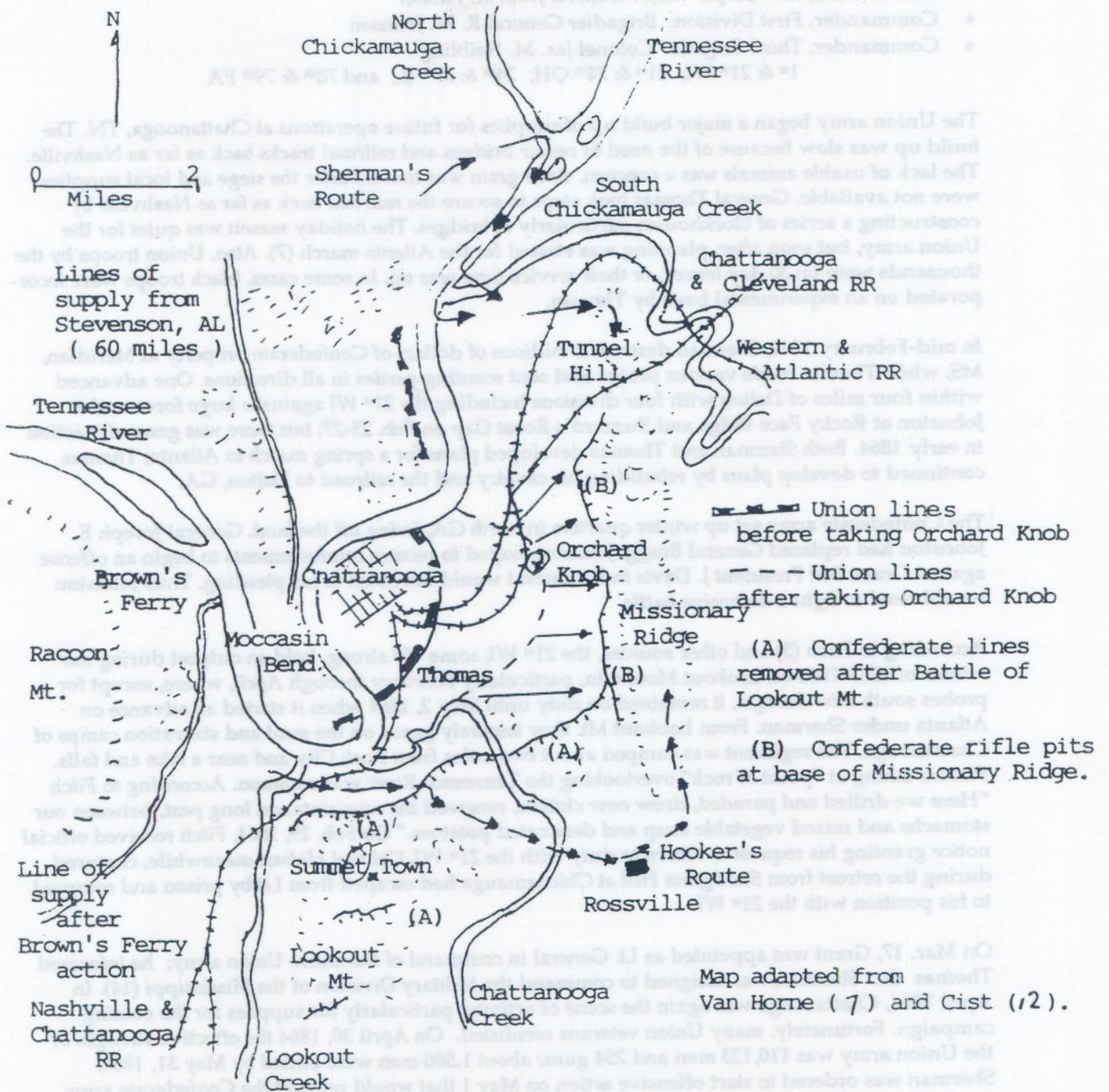


Figure 2. Conditions attained in preparation for the Union assault on Missionary Ridge, Nov. 25, 1863. Battle for Chattanooga.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE ATLANTA CAMPAIGN:

INTERIM ORGANIZATION OF THE ARMY OF THE CUMBERLAND: JAN. - MAR. 1864:

- ◆ Commanding general: Major General George H. Thomas
- ◆ Commander, XIV Corps: Major General John M. Palmer
- ◆ Commander, First Division: Brigadier General R. W. Johnson
- ◆ Commander, Third Brigade: Colonel Jas. M. Neibling
1st & 21st WI; 21st & 74th OH; 24th & 37th IL, and 78th & 79th PA

The Union army began a major build up of supplies for future operations at Chattanooga, TN. The build up was slow because of the need to repair bridges and railroad tracks back as far as Nashville. The lack of usable animals was a concern, since grain was limited after the siege and local supplies were not available. General Thomas took steps to secure the railroad back as far as Nashville by constructing a series of blockhouses particularly at bridges. The holiday season was quiet for the Union army, but soon after, planning was started for the Atlanta march (7). Also, Union troops by the thousands were on 30 day leaves, or their service time was up. In some cases, black troops were incorporated on an experimental basis by Thomas.

In mid-February 1864, Sherman destroyed millions of dollars of Confederate property at Meridian, MS, while Thomas made various probes and sent scouting parties in all directions. One advanced within four miles of Dalton with four divisions including the 21st WI against a large force under Johnston at Rocky Face Ridge and Buzzard's Roost Gap on Feb. 25-27; but there was general inaction in early 1864. Both Sherman and Thomas developed plans for a spring march to Atlanta; Thomas continued to develop plans by rebuilding his cavalry and the railroad to Dalton, GA.

The Confederate army set up winter quarters in north GA, living off the land. General Joseph E. Johnston had replaced General Bragg. Johnston hoped to receive reinforcements to begin an offense against Grant, but President J. Davis in Richmond would not listen to his pleading. Thus Johnston would need to fight a defensive battle.

According to Fitch (5) and other sources, the 21st WI, some 400 strong, held an outpost during the winter of 1863-1864 on Lookout Mountain, particularly February through April, where, except for probes south into Georgia, it remained on duty until May 2, 1864 when it started an advance on Atlanta under Sherman. From Lookout Mt. they leisurely gazed on the mud and starvation camps of Chattanooga. The regiment was camped about two miles from Rock City and near a lake and falls. Picture taking at "point of rock" overlooking the Tennessee River was common. According to Fitch "Here we drilled and paraded, drew new clothes, renewed the acquaintance, long past, between our stomachs and mixed vegetable soup and desiccated potatoes." On Feb. 29, 1864, Fitch received official notice granting his request to return to duty with the 21st WI. Colonel Hobart meanwhile, captured during the retreat from Snodgrass Hill at Chickamauga had escaped from Libby prison and returned to his position with the 21st WI.

On Mar. 17, Grant was appointed as Lt. General in command of the entire Union army; he informed Thomas that Sherman was assigned to command the Military Division of the Mississippi (14). In April 1864, Chattanooga was again the scene of activity, particularly for supplies for the coming campaign. Fortunately, many Union veterans reenlisted. On April 30, 1864 the effective strength of the Union army was 110,123 men and 254 guns; about 1,500 men were added by May 31, 1864. Sherman was ordered to start offensive action on May 1 that would prevent the Confederate army from shifting troops to General Lee in Virginia. Winter camp ended May 4, 1864; the 21st WI crossed Chattanooga Creek through Rossville Gap to Graysville to rejoin the XIV Corps.

To be continued with the Atlanta Campaign

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CUMP QUOTE:

I am still resolved to quit and seek retirement. I only wait the favorable opportunity. I have done my share and suffered enough from the enemies of our Govt. North & South and have a right to look to myself and family before all the good name I carried into the Volunteer service is gone. St. Louis will be by my choice or I may go to California. The Press has now killed McClellan—Buell, FitzJohn Porter, Sumner, Franklin, and Burnside. Add my name and I am not ashamed of the Association. If the Press can govern the Country let them fight the Battles.

—W. T. Sherman to John Sherman, 1863

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Volume 6, No. 3

Nov/ Dec 1999



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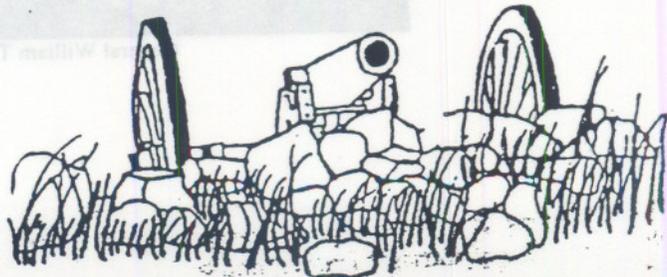
Savannah Morning News; Sherman's Civil War Selected Correspondence of William T. Sherman 1861-1865, Edited by Brooks D. Simpson and Jean V. Berlin; Roger Sherman Inn; Country Living; The Columbus Dispatch; The Charger—Cleveland Civil War Round Table

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Editor: Dori R. McCann



TWENTY-FIRST WISCONSIN INFANTRY IN THE CIVIL WAR

Service of John H. Abrahams, Pvt. (1862-1865)

By John H. Abrahams, Jr.

PART 4 - AFTER CHATTANOOGA: THE ATLANTA CAMPAIGN

BACKGROUND: This is the fourth in a series summarizing the Civil War services of my grandfather, John H. Abrahams, after his enlistment in the 21st WI Volunteer Infantry, Company E, in New Holstein, WI. The unit was mustered into service at Fort Bragg in Oshkosh, WI on Sept. 5, 1862. Later that month at Louisville, KY, the 21st WI was placed in the 28th brigade (J. Starkweather's brigade, in Gen. Rousseau's division) in the Army of the Cumberland, and on Oct. 8 was in the front line during the battle of Perryville, KY and suffered heavy losses. General William Rosecrans replaced General Buell as commander of the Army of the Cumberland with General Thomas second in command; Col. Harrison Hobart became commander of the 21st WI. The 21st WI then was in line of battle at Murfreesboro, TN from Dec. 31, 1862 to Jan. 3, 1863, participated in the Tullahoma Campaign including Hoover's Gap, and crossed the TN River about Sept. 1, 1863. In General Baird's First Division (replacing Gen. Rousseau), the 21st WI was heavily engaged at Dug Gap south of Chattanooga in mid-Sept. and was in the front line during the Battle of Chickamauga on Sept. 19 and 20, 1863. The 21st WI was placed in reserve because of its losses at Chickamauga, and after the siege it was in line of battle during the battles for Chattanooga, then went into winter quarters on Lookout Mt. and participated in raids towards Dalton, GA along with the XIV Corps under Thomas.

After receiving new WI recruits, the 21st WI was placed under General William T. Sherman and participated in the following actions: the Atlanta Campaign, the battles for Atlanta, the March to the Sea, the Carolinas Campaign, and the Battle of Bentonville, and finally the Grand March in Wash. DC in May, 1865. The 21st WI of course is just one of many hundreds of regiments which served the Union during the Civil War—and each unit has its own story to tell.

AFTER CHATTANOOGA—LATE 1863.

21st WI: The 21st WI was in continuous action at Chickamauga from Sept. 12 to 22, 1863, and suffered severe losses during the battles of Sept. 19 and 20, so were placed in reserve at Chattanooga after it was secured against Confederate attacks. Most action in the battles for Chattanooga was conducted by Union reinforcements, such as units of Generals Howard, Hooker, and Sherman which arrived in October and November. The 21st WI was in line of battle during the attacks on Orchard Knob on Nov. 23 and Missionary Ridge on Nov. 25 and was involved in some pursuits of retreating Confederate forces and a reconnaissance to Cooper's Gap on November 30—December 3, 1863.

AFTER MISSIONARY RIDGE.

Troops of Generals Thomas, Granger, Howard, and Sherman were involved in the pursuit of General Bragg's retreating Confederate forces, which took strong positions at Dalton, GA some 40 miles southeast of Chattanooga. (Figure 1.) The XIV Corps took a lively pace through the Chattanooga Valley and Ringgold during this pursuit, finding huge stocks of corn and corn meal along with pellets for mules burned by the retreating Confederates.

On Nov. 29, Sherman turned north joining Howard and Granger and headed northeast through Cleveland, TN to relieve Union General Burnside in Knoxville, believed to be low on provisions and known to be under attack by Confederate General Longstreet. The Union troops marched rapidly over muddy roads in cold weather with no provisions since being diverted from their actions against Bragg after Missionary Ridge. (1) On reaching Fort Sanders on Dec. 3, they found that Longstreet was defeated days before and retreated into eastern TN near Greenville (2), while Burnside was safe in a strong fortification with good provisions. Sherman refrained from pursuing Longstreet and was concerned why Burnside was not out disrupting Confederate communications, reducing their supplies, and hindering their ability to conduct war. Wired by Grant to return to Chattanooga, Sherman began his return on Dec. 7 and arrived there Dec. 17, where his troops went into winter quarters in northern Alabama and found new uniforms, good housing, and relaxation.

CAMP AND COMPANY

The Confederate army set up winter quarters in north Georgia, living off the land and further depleting local supplies for the planned Union campaign into GA (3). Confederate General Joseph E. Johnston, who replaced General Bragg, waited for supplies and reinforcements for aggressive action but this was refused by President Davis. Union plans were to hold all territories gained, improve communications, gather reinforcements and needed supplies, and to reorganize. Thomas sent troops in all directions to determine Confederate strength west to Huntsville, AL, north to Murfreesboro, east to Knoxville, and south past McLemores Cove. During the holidays, Union troops generally withdrew and the year ended quietly, with the Confederate troops in no condition for offensive action. (3)

PREPARATION FOR OFFENSIVE ACTION—JANUARY, FEBRUARY, MARCH & APRIL, 1864:

Interim organization of the Army of the Cumberland, with the 21st WI, under Major General George H. Thomas was as follows:

- ◆ Major General John M. Palmer, commander, XIV Corps
- ◆ Brigadier General R. W. Johnson, commander, First Division
- ◆ Colonel Jas. M. Neibling, commander, Third Brigade (21st WI)

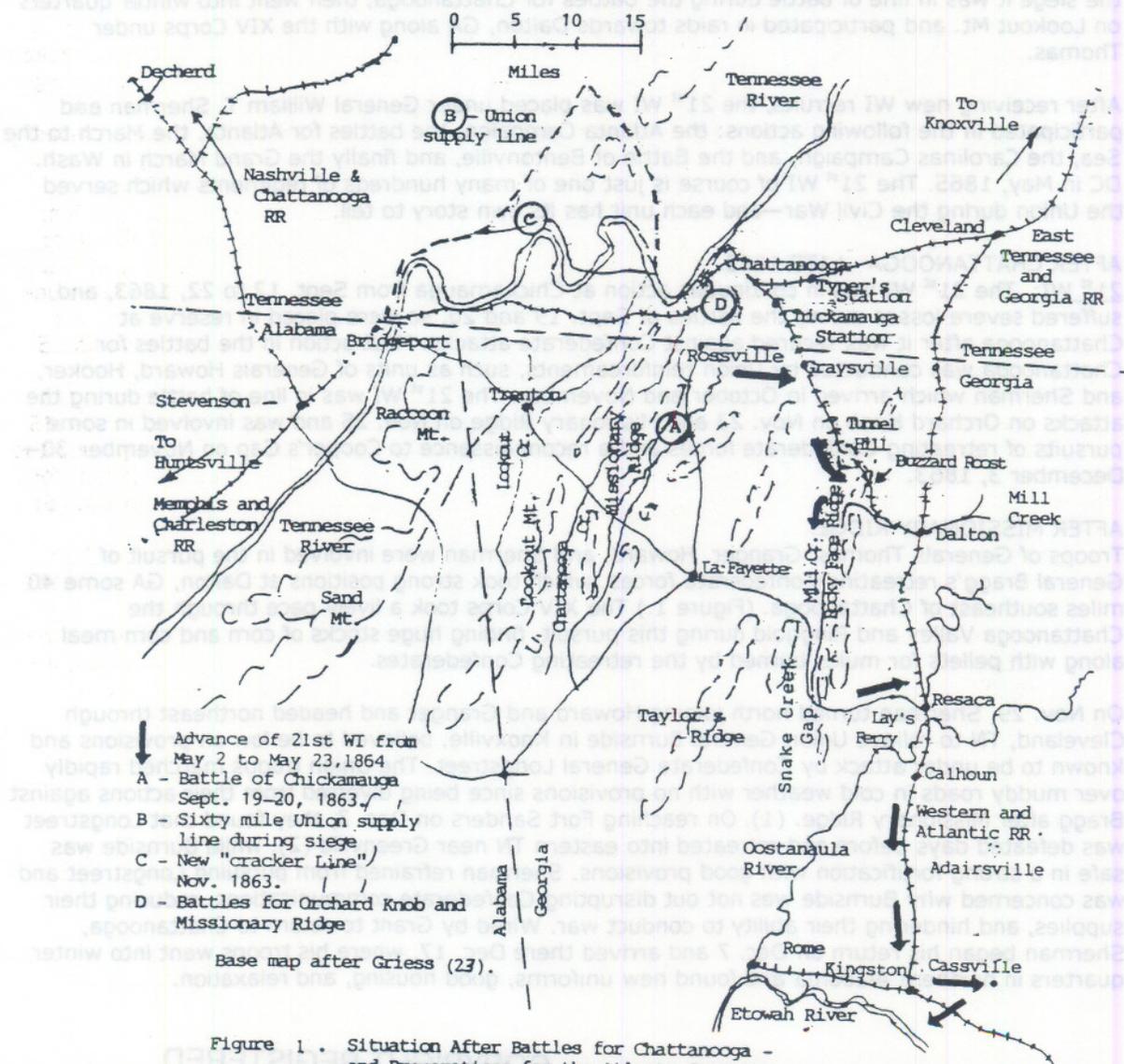


Figure 1. Situation After Battles for Chattanooga - and Preparations for the Atlanta Campaign.

JANUARY 1864: The Confederate army retained strong positions at Dalton, GA and at Buzzard Roost west of Dalton, and constructed strong defensive positions to Atlanta. The Union army, while rebuilding, assumed a defensive position from Knoxville to Bridgeport, and then to Louisville, KY, with Chattanooga its base of supplies. Bridges in the Bridgeport area were rebuilt by Jan. 15, 1864 and Thomas continued sending scouting parties in all directions (3). Grant had plans using Mobile, AL as an objective, via Atlanta, GA and Montgomery, AL, with Sherman on the right flank and Thomas holding the Confederates at Dalton, GA.

On Jan. 18, with Longstreet again threatening in eastern TN, troops under Thomas advanced beyond Knoxville, capturing prisoners, but were driven back by strong forces to Marysville just west of Knoxville. The Union army did not wish to bring on a general engagement at this time (3) because 1) horse casualties were high for both sides since the infantry in deep woods could approach battery positions and shoot the animals, 2) about ten thousand animals died during the siege at Chattanooga and those remaining were weak (3, 4), while some of Thomas's troops were not yet back from leave, and, 4) there were rumors that Longstreet was receiving reinforcements. On Jan. 24, a movement through McLemore Cove destroyed a Confederate camp. When the railroad to Bridgeport was completed, Thomas transferred workers to the road leading to Knoxville.

Major General Halleck in Washington, DC on Dec. 11, 1863 had notified Grant of evidence indicating that the Confederates may soon threaten to attack isolated Union garrisons along the Mississippi River and attempt again to close it to Union use (5). With the proposed build up of troops at Chattanooga, Sherman became concerned about the withdrawal of Union troops from the MS valley (1)—after so many battles had been fought to gain that territory—and was deployed to Vicksburg, MS. The objective was to utilize the garrisons at Vicksburg and Memphis against Meridian, MS, considered the most important Confederate supply hub in the area, where major rail lines crossed that sustained Confederate operations in northern MS and western TN.

FEBRUARY 1864: In late January, Sherman marched in secrecy from Vicksburg toward Meridian, MS and by Feb. 3 his troops were across the Big Black River where they feinted toward Mobile to scatter Confederate forces. Besides his two major columns, Sherman ordered other troops in this vast command to create diversions to draw Confederate forces from the Meridian area. Almost unopposed, Sherman's 10,000 troops including the 25th WI reached Meridian on Feb. 14 where his troops destroyed huge supplies of food and clothing, an arsenal, a mill, and all railroads within 25 miles of Meridian. The cavalry column from Memphis was delayed by skirmishing, so Sherman returned to Vicksburg by a northern route in hopes of locating the column; both columns reached Vicksburg in early March. Sherman reported creating desolation in a path 50 miles wide across MS (1) and destroying \$50 million worth of property (Confederate figures--\$5 million), to help keep the Confederates paralyzed during campaigning in the east. Union troops lived off the land, except for ammunition and medicine, providing Sherman with field experience for later operations in GA. (5).

During this period, Sherman developed much of his distrust for the cavalry and determined they could be more useful in collecting information rather than fighting, and could help in tearing up the railroads (1). This was not popular with the elite cavalry which believed in fighting a "gentleman's war"; similarly, the Union farm hands-soldiers also distrusted the cavalry. Sherman and Hooker had started to reform the cavalry in late 1863 and had made much progress by the spring of 1864, including the use of repeating rifles. Some of Thomas's troops were just returning from leave in February; conversely, many animals were yet to be replaced.

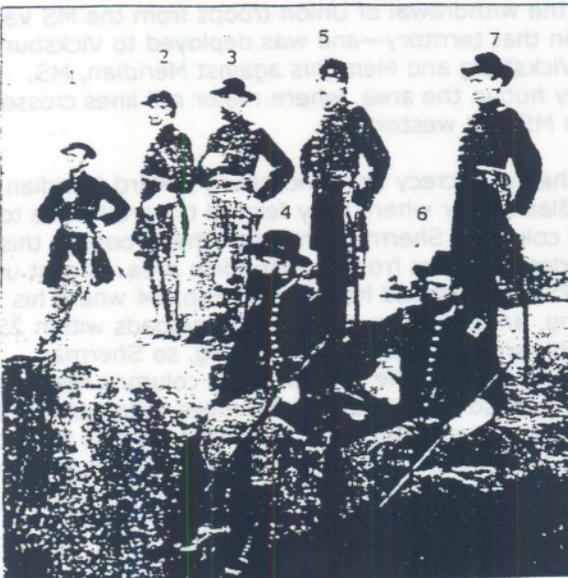
21st WI: On Feb. 22, Thomas moved on Dalton because it was believed that Joe Johnston was sending forces into AL against Sherman; he placed a division at Ringgold and Carlin's brigade including the 21st WI moved against Taylor's Ridge and all divisions moved to within four miles of Dalton. Although some Confederate infantry was routed, they were found to be in force. On Feb. 24, Palmer's XIV Corps advanced on Tunnel Hill and took possession of the town after skirmishing with Wheeler's cavalry. When the Confederate forces formed a new line, Palmer's troops withdrew three miles to the northwest. (3).

In a new approach, Davis's division (XIV Corps) moved on Tunnel Hill near Dalton while R. John-

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son's division (XIV Corps) moved south with its left of White Face Ridge; they found Confederate forces in strength at Buzzard Roost at Mill Creek Gap in White Face Ridge just west of Dalton. With few local provisions and inadequate transportation to supply provisions, Thomas ordered withdrawal to Rossville with the divisions of Johnson, Davis, and Baird covering each other's withdrawal. R. Johnson's division was posted at Tyler's Station, Graysville, and Parker's Gap. More than three hundred Union troops were killed and wounded. Grant seemed disappointed at the withdrawal, although the initial advance caused J. Johnston to recall two divisions sent against Sherman (3). But the strength of Confederate forces had been determined, so Thomas suggested a plan to Grant which would take Dalton by a strong movement through Snake Creek Gap to the south.

21st WI: According to Fitch (6) and other sources, the 21st WI, some 400 strong, held an outpost during the winter of 1863-64 on Lookout Mountain, particularly February through April where, except for probes south into GA in late Feb. 1864, it remained on duty until May 2, 1864. From Lookout Mt. they leisurely gazed on the mud and starvation camps of Chattanooga. The regiment was camped about two miles from Rock City and near a lake and falls. Picture taking at "point of rock" overlooking the Tennessee River was common. Fitch wrote "Here we drilled and paraded, drew new clothes, renewed the acquaintance, long past, between our stomachs and mixed vegetable soup and desiccated potatoes." He recalls a picture of officers of the 21st WI taken on the high cliffs of Lookout Mountain, possibly the same picture shown in Figure 2.



THIS PHOTO WAS TAKEN 15 months after the Battle of Perryville, when the 21st Regiment was in position at Lookout Mountain in Chattanooga, Tenn. On top row, from left, James E. Stuart, Oshkosh, captain, Company B; Alfred A. Hardin, Waupun, 2nd Lt., Company G; John Henry Otto, Appleton, captain, Company D; Rudolph J. Wiesbrod, Oshkosh, captain, Company E; Fred W. Borchardt, Manitowoc, 1st Lt., Company D. Bottom row, from left, Bartholomew J. Van Varenburg, Two Rivers, captain, quartermaster, and Albert B. Bradish, Neenah, captain, Company I.

21st WI: Requesting that he be returned to duty, Fitch received this General Order, No. 35 granting his request as follows: "Headquarters, First Division, 14th Army Corps, Tyler's Station, Tenn., February 29, 1864. Major M. H. Fitch, 21st Regiment Wisconsin Vols., is at his own request relieved from duty as division inspector and will join his regiment without delay. By Command of Brigadier General Johnson" (6). He returned to the regiment on Lookout Mt. March 1 and later found that some 139 volunteers were to be added to the regiment, as follows by company: Companies A. 8; B, 19; C 6; D, 14; E, 7; F, 29; G, 17; H, 11; I, 5; K, 23. Most were young, and quickly incorporated into the ranks. According to Wells (7), Hobart (and Capt. Walker) would bring over 100 of these recruits from WI.

21st WI: Colonel Hobart meanwhile, captured during the retreat from Snodgrass Hill at Chickamauga, escaped from Libby prison on Feb. 9, 1864 and regained Union lines near Williamsburg, VA on Feb. 15; he would soon return (about April 1) to his position as commander of the 21st WI. The previous brigade commander General Starkweather replaced General R. Johnson with staff work in Chattanooga and was replaced by Colonel J. Neibling during an interim organization and later by General Carlin.

MARCH 1864: The military situation was still not developed, and Thomas turned his attention to plans for an Atlanta Campaign with examination and repair of the railroads; he concluded that six thousand infantry and two thousand cavalry could securely hold the railroad to Nashville, TN. Block houses with earthworks were constructed at bridges, thus allowing a smaller force to secure the railroad than needed by General Rosecrans before Chickamauga. Thomas transferred the cavalry from rear to front and used new regiments and local militia so veteran troops could be released from guard duty (3). Supply was still a major problem with only a single track from Stevenson to Chattanooga and south to Atlanta.

On March 17, Grant was appointed Lt. General in command of the entire army; he advised Thomas that Sherman was assigned to command the Military Division of the Mississippi, which thus provided coordination of Grant's troops in VA and Sherman's in GA. Sherman was now in charge of all armies from the Alleghenies to the Mississippi River. Later when Sherman was asked if Thomas was dissatisfied at not being in Sherman's place, he answered, "Not a bit of it. It don't make any difference which of us commands the army. I would obey Tom's orders as readily and cheerfully as he does mine." (1, 8). Thomas in fact was concerned as to why he should serve under a junior major general (9), but did not raise the issue. Thomas again proposed a plan that would concentrate the Army of the Cumberland for an attack on Snake Creek Gap south of Dalton, and west of Resaca, which differed from Sherman's plan having the massive Army of the Cumberland in the center, with a smaller corps of armies on each side.

Nashville was a vast warehouse where Sherman moved to March 24—his first day in command—to prepare for supplying the army in GA (1), and give instructions for maintaining and repairing the railroad tracks. At President Lincoln's wish, Thomas used the railroad to haul provisions to the distressed civilians in the Chattanooga and Knoxville area (10), but since there was only a single track, Sherman restricted railroad travel to dead freight and military use with limited private use (8). Sherman also reorganized the railroad to increase its capacity from 60 cars a day to 193 a day. He bought 35 thousand horses with little concern for price because of need.

APRIL 1864: Chattanooga was again the scene of activity, particularly regarding supplies for the coming campaign (4). Fortunately, volunteer reenlistments in the Union army were strong. But there was a disagreement between Thomas and General John Logan involving West Point graduates vs. volunteers; Sherman was developing the army with fewer West Pointers and with promotions due to merit (1).

Near the end of April, Sherman moved from Nashville to Chattanooga and set up the armies as follows (1, 3):

- ◆ Center—Army of the Cumberland under Thomas, composed mostly of veterans and positioned at Ringgold, GA. The smaller armies on the flanks consisted of younger men and would use the veteran center army as support;
- ◆ Army of the Ohio under John M. Schofield was positioned to the north along the TN-GA border;
- ◆ Army of the Tennessee under James B. McPherson was positioned to the south near Lee and Gordon's Mill.

Grant and Sherman were to coordinate their movements on two fronts—with Grant to strike Lee, and Sherman to strike Johnston about the same time, so the stage was now set with Sherman the artful master of flanking and Johnston the capable master of defense. Although, Confederate President Jefferson Davis expected J. Johnston to drive the Union army back to the Ohio River (10), Johnston was refused reinforcements and would need to fight a defensive battle. Movement south by the Union army feature a series of feints and flanking actions used extensively by Sherman in his march to Atlanta. As a result, J. Johnston would be forced from strong defensive positions upon finding that Union troops threatened to get behind his forces to cut communications thus causing the Confederate army to retreat.

THE ATLANTA CAMPAIGN—MAY 1864.

The Order of Battle of the Union army under Major General William T. Sherman, May 7 to Sept. 2,

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1864 (11, 12), with George Thomas second in command; all army and corps commanders listed are ranked as major generals:

- ◆ Army of the Tennessee; James B. McPherson. Included: XV Corps, John A. Logan; XVI Corps, Grenville M. Dodge; XVII Corps, Francis P. Blair
 - ◆ Army of the Ohio; John M. Schofield, XXIII Corps
 - ◆ Army of the Cumberland; George H. Thomas, commander (and second in command under Sherman). Included: XIV Corps, John M. Palmer (with the 21st WI); other corps—IV Corps, Oliver O. Howard; XX Corps, Joseph Hooker. In the XIV Corps, all divisions (and brigade) commanders below are listed as brigadier generals.
- First Division—Richard Johnson (with the 21st WI); other divisions, Second Div., Jefferson C. Davis; Third Div., Absalom Baird.
First Brigade—William P. Carlin; other brigades, Second, J. King; Third, B. Scribner.
21st WI—Lt. Col. Harrison C. Hobart; other units in brigade, 10th WI, 2nd, 33rd, & 94 OH, 15th KY, 42nd 88th IN, and 104 IL.

The railroad running from the main base at Chattanooga to Atlanta was the focus of operations, so a large number of troops would be needed to maintain it. During the advance into GA, the Union would leave detachments to guard the railroad supply line, whereas the Confederates were using less guard forces as they retreated south. The distances in miles along the single track railroad from Chattanooga were: Ringgold-23, Tunnel Hill-31, Dalton-38, Tilton-47, Resaca-56, Calhoun-60, Adairsville-69, Kingston-79, Cassville-91, Allatoona-98, Big Shanty-103, Marietta-119, Chattahoochee or Vinnings-130, and Atlanta-138 (6). The original starting date for the campaign was May 5 and Thomas started movement to his position at Ringgold on May 2, with R. Johnson's First Division joining with the XIV Corps on May 3 (3).

21st WI: The 21st WI broke winter camp on Lookout Mt. May 4th with 353 ready muskets, new uniforms, and were in good health. They crossed the Chattanooga Valley through Rossville Gap to Graysville to rejoin the XIV Corps. Some were unhappy when they were replaced in camp by two large MI regiments (13). Fitch remembers the first night at Graysville with white shelter tents stretched in all directions, and with soldiers burning their left-over candles, which could not be carried on the march so were placed on top of their front tent poles.

21st WI: Officers for the 21st WI were: Lt. Col. H. C. Hobart, Commander, and Major M. H. Fitch. First Lts: J. H. Otto, A. A. Harding, J. LaCount, and W.H. Fargo. Second Lts: Hubbard and Doriem. Captains: C. H. Walker, R. J. Weisbrod, J. E. Stuart, F. W. Borshardt, H. Turner, H. K. Edwards, J. M. Randall, and A. B. Bradish (6).

According to Fitch (6) the southern press chose to view this campaign as an opportunity rather than a threat. One newspaper, *The Richmond Examiner*, stated in part on Feb. 8, 1864 that "It seems already settled that the enemy's present army organization must go to pieces, and after the spring campaign we should have demoralized armies to fight. The campaign of 1864 will open under the most encouraging aspects for the south. Our armies will be stronger, better armed, and better disciplined than before. The enemy is completely ignorant of our plans of operation...." The build-up and plans for the offensive were in fact favorable to the Union, particularly in regard to the 2 to 1 ratio. On April 30, 1864, the effective strength of the Union army was 110,123 men and 254 guns; about 1,500 men were added by May 31, 1864.

The Confederate army was entrenched at Dalton because of the strong natural defenses, although, Joe Johnston had his misgivings, and because this was the limit of pursuit after Missionary Ridge and where the Confederates went into winter quarters (14). Grant and Sherman were to start their offensives at the same time to prevent Lee and Johnston from exchanging forces. Sherman was wired on May 6 that Grant was ready to move on Lee (1), which initiated the move by Thomas from Ringgold on the broad front with the XIV Corps paralleling the railroad through Catosa Station Gap (15), and south to the town of Hills where the corps split onto separate roads. The XIV Corps advanced on Tunnel Hill (3) where the 21st WI met resistance. The Confederate pickets at Tunnel Hill retreated to 500–800 foot high Buzzard Roost (8, 9). The XIV Corps segments joined again

south of Tunnel Hill and continued south generally following the route of modern US 41 to Chatagotta Church just west of Dalton while some angled directly toward Dalton.

DEMONSTRATION ON ROCKY FACE RIDGE:

Rocky Face Ridge was considered too strongly defended for a direct Union attack, so the Army of the Cumberland demonstrated around and toward the various gaps to provide a feint for the Army of the TN some ten miles south to move through Snake River Gap toward Resaca and interrupt Confederate communications (1, 3), to force Joe Johnston to fight at Dalton. The Union battle line, about three miles west of Dalton just beyond Rocky Face Ridge, was about eight miles long, with Hooker's XX Corps on the south flank facing east, Palmer's XIV Corps just to the north starting a curve to the east, then Howard's IV Corps on a curve facing south east, and Schofield's XXIII Corps on the north flank facing almost south. (See Figure 3) (11).

21st WI: During the costly demonstration on May 8, the XIV and IV Corps threatened both sides of Buzzard Roost (9). Carlin's First Brigade including the 21st WI was located directly in front of Mill Creek Gap along Rocky Face Ridge, about in the center of the Union's position and one half mile in front of Sherman's command post and near where US Highway 41 and route I-75 now run through Mill Creek Gap. Carlin's brigade (10) moved in line of battle to a position on the ridge about one half mile southwest of Buzzard Roost at Mill Creek Gap, on R. Johnson's right with Scribner's brigade to his left (see Figure 3). On May 9, the 21st WI and the 33rd OH moved right in an attempt to reach its top, but were strongly repulsed. Five assaults made by the brigades were repulsed with many wounded (6). Carlin's and Scribner's brigades also attempted to build bridges over dammed up Mill Creek (8) but withdrew with losses (12). The demonstration continued May 10 and 11.

Confederate General Hood was sent to Resaca during the afternoon of May 9 with three divisions to repel the Army of the TN, but returned to Dalton after McPherson backed his troops through Snake Creek Gap when his flanks were attacked, even though he was close to his objective (9); but the Gap was only lightly held at the time (4, 10). Most disappointed, Sherman then decided to move through Snake Creek Gap in force to cut off the Confederate retreat from Dalton to Resaca (1). By May 12, Joe Johnston was convinced of a flanking movement and transferred his infantry and artillery to Resaca by a night march, leaving the cavalry behind. Thus the opportunity for the Union troops to hold the Confederate forces at Dalton until strong Union support could pass through Snake Creek Gap and reach the railroad was lost (6, 3). Also 4,000 Confederate reinforcements had arrived.

BATTLE OF RESACA:

The XIV Corps moved south several miles west of Dalton then south to Hainorth at Mill Mt., where it joined the other units (15). On May 12-13, McPherson moved south along the west side of Mill Creek and started through Snake Creek Gap, followed by Palmer's XIV Corps and the remainder of the Army of the Cumberland (3), then the Army of the OH, although some units pursued the retreating Confederate forces directly south from Dalton. South of Snake Creek Gap several miles west of Resaca the XIV Corps turned eastward through Caldwell then due east through Alton and Moore to a point a mile north of Resaca. On the night of May 13, the 21st WI and other regiments stacked arms and bivouacked in a woods and were soon asleep in their blankets (6).

On May 14, the XIV Corps just south of center of the Union's six-mile line, advanced due east with orders to reach the railroad; but the army was not aware of heavy breastworks established by the Confederates (16). The Confederate position was strong north and west of Resaca behind Camp Creek. Sherman's troops faced Resaca in a similar configuration as at Rocky Face Ridge at Dalton, except at Resaca the northern third of the Union line fish-hooked markedly towards the east overlapping the Confederate right flank. Fighting was more intense at Resaca than at Dalton with greater losses for both since the two armies confronted each other more fully and openly.

21st WI: The XIV Corps attacked a strong, elevated position in full sweep of the Confederate fire with major obstructions, but was forced to retreat with about 1,000 casualties (17). Heavily involved were Carlin's brigade in R. Johnson's division, with King's brigade to its left and Scribner's brigade behind, all again near the center of the Union line with the Union right flank resting on the

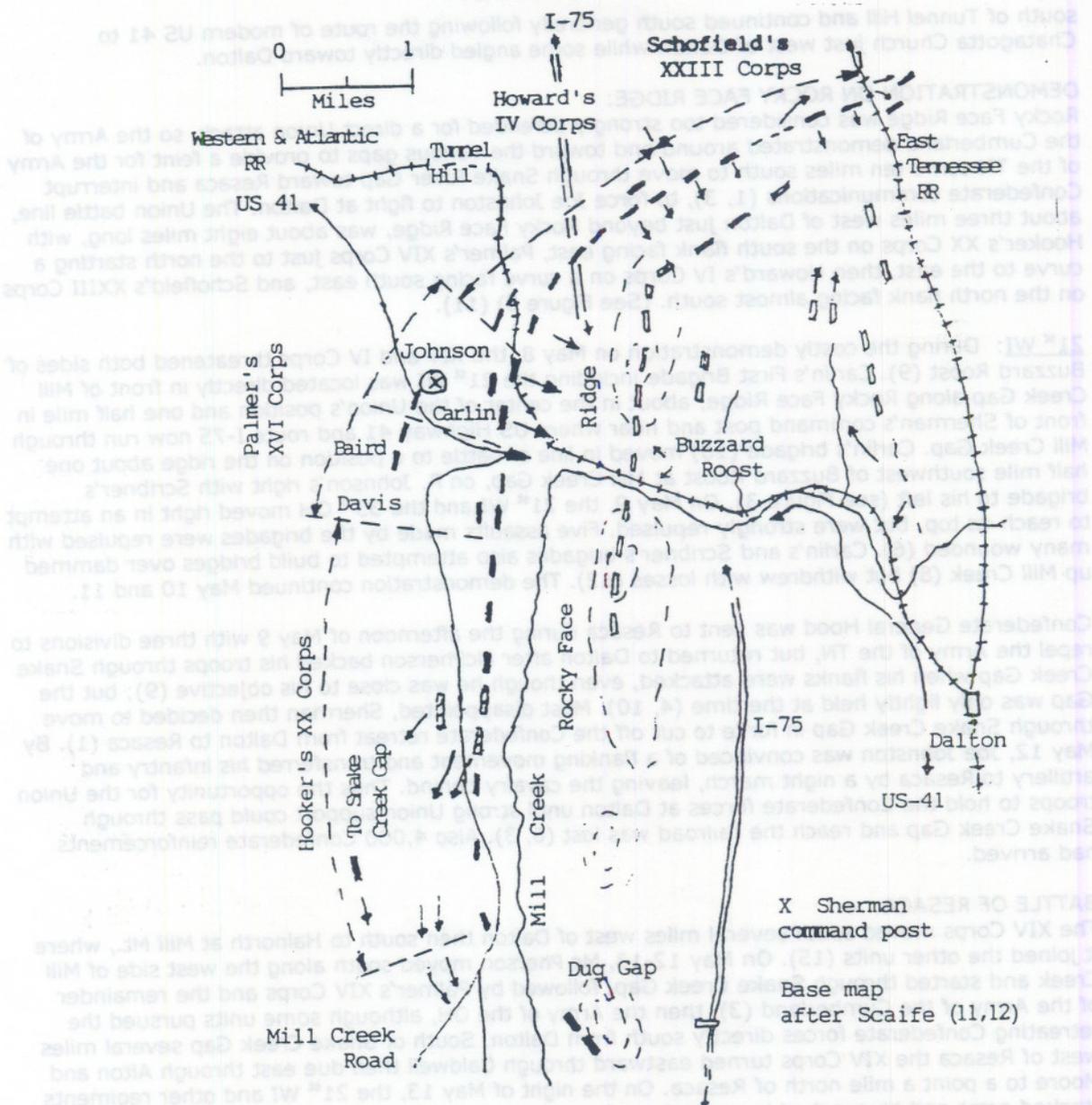


Figure 3 . Dalton, GA area, Union attacks, May 1864.
 Rocky Face Ridge & Dug Gap, May 8; northern sector May 9

Oostanaula River about two miles south. Fitch (6) was ordered to form a skirmish line using Carlin's brigade; Lt. La Count of Company K commanded the 21st WI through thick underbrush. The brigade formed in two lines and advanced against strong fortifications at 9 A.M. (12) with the 21st WI in the front line (18), which was ambushed with many lost, but the woods was cleared of Confederates. The front line with the 21st WI on the left then moved across a hill and came under fire from Confederate pickets. On the bottom of the hill the brigade formed a flank movement with skirmishers in front, which also cleared the woods after sharp fighting (13). Moving from the woods into a ravine, the brigade crossed fordable Camp Creek at 10 A.M. where it forks and faced a

strong line of entrenchments. A heavy volley killed and wounded several in the 21st WI and its colors were shot down (6), and musket fire swept the field so the first line was driven back to the protection of timber along the creek; there it delivered a destructive fire for the remainder of the day.

On May 15, the Confederate right flank tried to turn the Union's weaker far left flank but was driven back. With the entire Union army entrenched and engaged in front of Resaca, the Union conducted an attack across the north half of the front at 1 P.M. as a feint, while a division of the Army of the Cumberland on the south flank groped further south to find a suitable place to cross the Oostanaula River. After much confusion in both armies, some of the Union troops managed to cross the river on two pontoon bridges three miles south and attain some hills (8) south of Resaca (16) and threaten J. Johnston's army. The Confederates evacuated the Resaca area later on May 15, crossing the Oostanaula River about dark and continued retreating south towards the Etowah River. Union losses were: Army of the Cumberland in center, 3,500; Army of the OH, 840; Army of the TN, 400 (9).

On May 16, at 3:30 A.M., the Confederates completed crossing the river near present day US 41 and burned the railroad bridge (Figure 4) (19) and removed their pontoon bridge. Later that day the Army of the Cumberland with the 21st WI occupied Resaca (6); the railroad trains arrived there at 6 P.M. and the bridge to the south was rebuilt in several days (20). Sherman ordered immediate pursuit of the Confederate army, with the 21st WI crossing the river just above the railroad bridge (13). Stubborn Confederate resistance by the rear guard and in fortified areas was encountered. But more important was that land east and south to the Etowah River was flatter than the mountain region to the north, giving the Confederate army less natural fortifications.

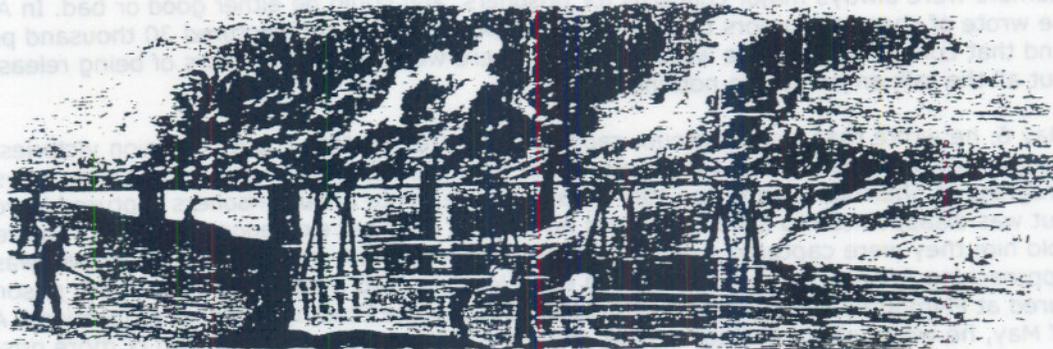


Figure 4 - Burning the Railroad Bridge at Resaca, GA. May 15, 1864.

21st WI WOUNDED: Many of the 21st WI were killed or wounded in the brigade attack on the Confederate strong fortifications at Resaca—one of those wounded was Pvt. Jeremiah Reardon of Co. K. Jerry Reardon was born in Lowell, MA on June 3, 1843, then moved with his parents to New York City before migrating to the new and unsettled country of Kossuth, WI in the early 1850s, then moved to Manitowoc, WI shortly after. He enlisted in the 21st WI in August 1862; his records (21) show that he enlisted at age 19 years and was 5' 7" in height, with a light complexion, and he was a farmer by occupation, as were many enlistees from WI.

He was in action during all the battles and skirmishes with the 21st WI until losing an arm at Resaca, May 14, 1864, when he was involved in the advance ordered by Hobart, under the direction of Fitch (6) and lead by Lt. La Count of Co. K. According to Burns (13), Reardon and others returned to the creek under the hottest fire that the regiment was in since Perryville in 1862, with crossfire over the field from five guns on the right and four on the left. When Burns revisited the site years later and studied the piles of bullets, canister, and pieces of shell, he wondered how anyone managed to reach the creek alive and added, "and what a baptism of fire for the recruits."

CAMP AND COMPANY

On returning to the creek, Reardon assisted wounded Pvt. Brown (later Chaplain Brown) of Co. K and directed him to the rear, when he too stopped a bullet hitting below his shoulder. Reardon was not certain what he should do for a moment since firing was heavy, but soon decided to head to the rear. By now his arm was dangling and he was getting weaker, then fell in the creek as he tried to cross (22). At this point, a comrade, Moses Ladd, lifted him up and helped him across the creek—never forgotten by Reardon—and gave him his canteen which Reardon quickly emptied. Records indicate that he arrived at a hospital at Chattanooga, TN the day he was wounded, and that a ball passed through the humerus just above the left elbow joint. Muster rolls in late May and all of June listed him as wounded and by July 10 it apparently became necessary to amputate part of his left arm.

In his paper, Burns (24) recalls the great ham theft of the winter encampment on Lookout Mt. Lt. La Count was returning to camp after a foraging party with a wagon load of hams, bacon, and potatoes, but there was a rumor that the food was intended only for officers. It then appears that some enlisted men "removed" the hams *en route*, so a squad was gathered which examined all tents but found nothing. Co. K soon sang a song "Who stole the Ham?"; according to Burns, "Jerry Reardon hurt his voice singing it and hasn't been much of a singer ever since." He was great grand uncle to Laurie Becker living in southern WI who proudly writes, "He was every bit an Irishman—quick-witted with a rich tenor voice that rang in the hills as he marched and fought." (21). More on this in Part 5.

21st WI FOLLOW-UP: This information, provided by his great grandson, Tom Selby in MI (25), presents excerpts from the diary through May 28, 1864 of Edward Beach, 1st Sgt. Co. E, 21st WI, who was captured at Chickamauga and imprisoned at Andersonville as described in Part 2, and his attempts to follow the movement of Sherman's army by talking with new prisoners. His main concern of course was the poor food or lack thereof, and of only pine boughs at best for housing. Rumors were always major concerns for prisoners, and could be either good or bad. In April 1864, he wrote of cheering rumors that Grant just took Richmond and captured 30 thousand prisoners, and that Longstreet and Lee were wounded. There were constant rumors of being released "soon" but all the talk amounted to nothing.

May 6, he wrote that a small group, captured near Dalton, told about the Union victories at Chattanooga; new arrivals on May 12 and 14, some from the 1st WI, brought encouraging news about the progress of Sherman's army; on May 17 and 18, he wrote about prisoners captured beyond Dalton, but was disappointed to learn there was no news of prisoner exchange; on May 23, more prisoners told him they were captured well beyond Dalton; on May 28, he heard that Sherman was approaching Atlanta. From April through early May, he also mentioned talking with prisoners captured at Plymouth, NC, some WI men captured along the Potomac, and other locations. At the end of May, he wrote about his legs aching, that he is becoming more tired, and of more prisoners arriving—and some escapes. More on this in Part 5.

CROSSING THE ETOWAH RIVER:

Sherman hoped to force Johnston to fight at Kingston, but his attempts to cross the Oostanaula River—a tributary of the Etowah River—south of Resaca with the bulk of the Union army, were resisted strongly; the Union troops crossed the river on three pontoon bridges. Sherman ordered Thomas to follow the Confederate line of retreat on a broad front; on May 17, Thomas sent a division west which captured Rome along with machine shops, military stores, and cotton which the Confederates did not have time to destroy, while troops led by Howard's IV and Palmer's XIV Corps, moving south through Calhoun and Adairsville (13) to Kingston, were under constant skirmishing. Johnston set a trap south of Adairsville on the railroad for the Union army but Hood failed to ambush the Union's left flank (14, 26); then Thomas rushed the fortifications at Adairsville with McPherson and Schofield pressing Johnston's flanks, and the Confederate army again retreated.

On May 18, the XIV and IV Corps camped at Kingston (3) while the Confederates formed a new line at Cassville. On May 19, at 8 A.M., the XIV Corps with the 21st WI advanced toward Cassville and met strong resistance which yielded under pressure, but skirmishing continued until dark. After a

clothing (6). Many in the Union army were impressed with this area of GA, noting that the neatness and comfort of the farm houses of the poorer class resembled life in the north, in contrast with general shiftlessness observed in AR, MS, and AL (11, 12). Sherman halted the army at the Etowah (7) on May 21, during morning skirmishes, Union pickets were sent towards the railroad at Allatoona as a feint to cover Union movements on Dallas; but the Confederates learned of the diversion and extended their strong lines to Dallas. (See map, Figure 5.) But Sherman believed he was on the Confederate right flank and kept trying to turn it on the north.

On May 24, most of the Army of the Cumberland camped at Burnt Hickory (9), but Palmer's XIV Corps including the 21st WI was impeded behind wagons and halted towards the rear, then resumed the march on May 25, and arrived at Brown's Mill later that day to close up behind the IV Corps about three miles from Dallas. The divisions of the XIV Corps marched on four poor roads to converge on the GA gold mine country (10) near Dallas (see Figure 5), including Davis's division marching from Rome, GA; but Confederate General Wheeler's cavalry was operating behind and to the west of Union troops converging on Dallas.

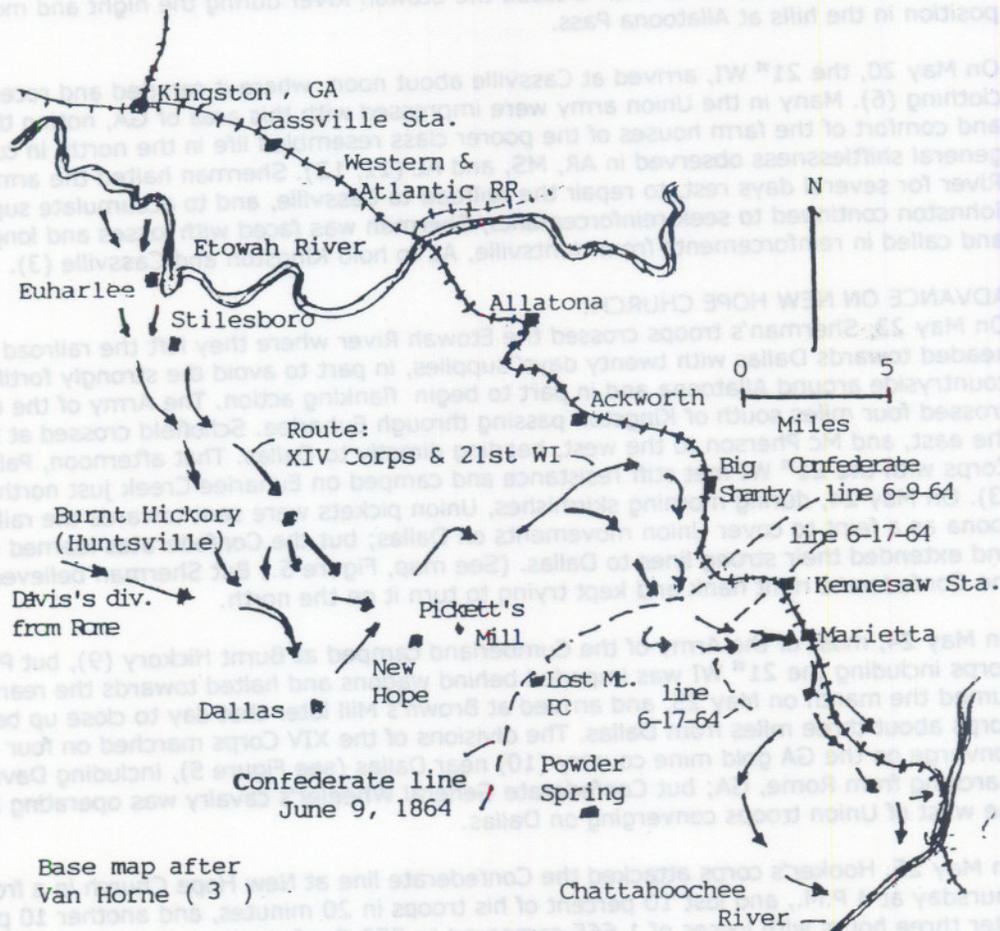
On May 25, Hooker's corps attacked the Confederate line at New Hope Church in a frontal assault, Thursday at 4 P.M., and lost 10 percent of his troops in 20 minutes, and another 10 percent (8) after three hours with losses of 1,665 compared to 350 Confederate losses (16). Although reaching within 30 paces of the fortifications, Hooker fell back during a heavy rain storm; the remainder of the Union troops arriving the following day, and Thomas decided to entrench after meeting this stiff resistance. Pickett's Mill to Atlanta will be featured in Part 5.

PICKETT'S MILL TO KENNESAW MOUNTAIN:

For days, both armies were under constant fire and attacks during day light causing heavy losses to both sides (3), and both were building breastworks and digging rifle pits at night. Sherman then ordered Howard's IV Corps to attack what was believed to be the Confederate right flank, while Joe Johnston continued to move his forces back north and east towards the railroad and Pine Hill to keep Union troops from reaching there. Looking for the Confederate right flank, Howard marched north and east about 2:30 P.M. (8) on Friday, but skirmishers became lost in the dense woods and deep ravines so that the troubled Union flanking movement was spotted and the Confederates prepared for battle (12).

On May 27, R. Johnson's division (XIV Corps) with Carlin's brigade fell in on the left of Wood's division (IV Corps) to coordinate in an attack on strong Confederate fortifications just as Hazen's advancing brigade was caught in a crossfire, losing heavily before falling back. On May 28, while Howard's Corps with R. Johnson's division held and stabilized the Union position at Pickett's Mill; the Confederates, in strong fortifications, struck the strong positions of the XV and XVI Corps several miles south at Dallas. Both armies became disorganized in the rough country, but the Union troops rallied and held its position although pinned down until June 1.

CUMP AND COMPANY



Base map after Van Horne (3)

Figure 5. Atlanta Campaign: Routes- Army of the Cumberland and XIV Corps from Etowah River May 23, 1864 to Chattahoochee River early July 1864.

On May 29, 30, and 31, the Confederate army struck the Union left in a series of attacks to keep Union troops from returning to their supply lines where the railroad passed through the town of Ackworth. The Confederates abandoned their strong position at Allatoona as the Union fought its way back to the railroad. Carlin's brigade with the 21st WI, which had been under continuous fire until June 6, advanced north and east just behind the Army of the Cumberland, joining it on June 9 where all was quiet. Sherman's overall movement now was toward the Chattahoochee River, but his problems increased because of lengthening the Union supply line and because the land to the south was densely wooded and broken by ravines (1).

Next: Pickett's Mill to Atlanta

Note: Appreciation is extended to the following individuals in Wisconsin, in addition to those cited in the text, for offering information, guidance, and encouragement which assisted in the preparation of this regimental history of the 21st WI Volunteer Infantry: Will Bloedow with interests in the 32nd WI Volunteer Infantry; Dennis Moore, Manitowoc Round Table and author (27); and the Gravelles. In addition, the Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park provided timely and in-depth assistance which is appreciated.

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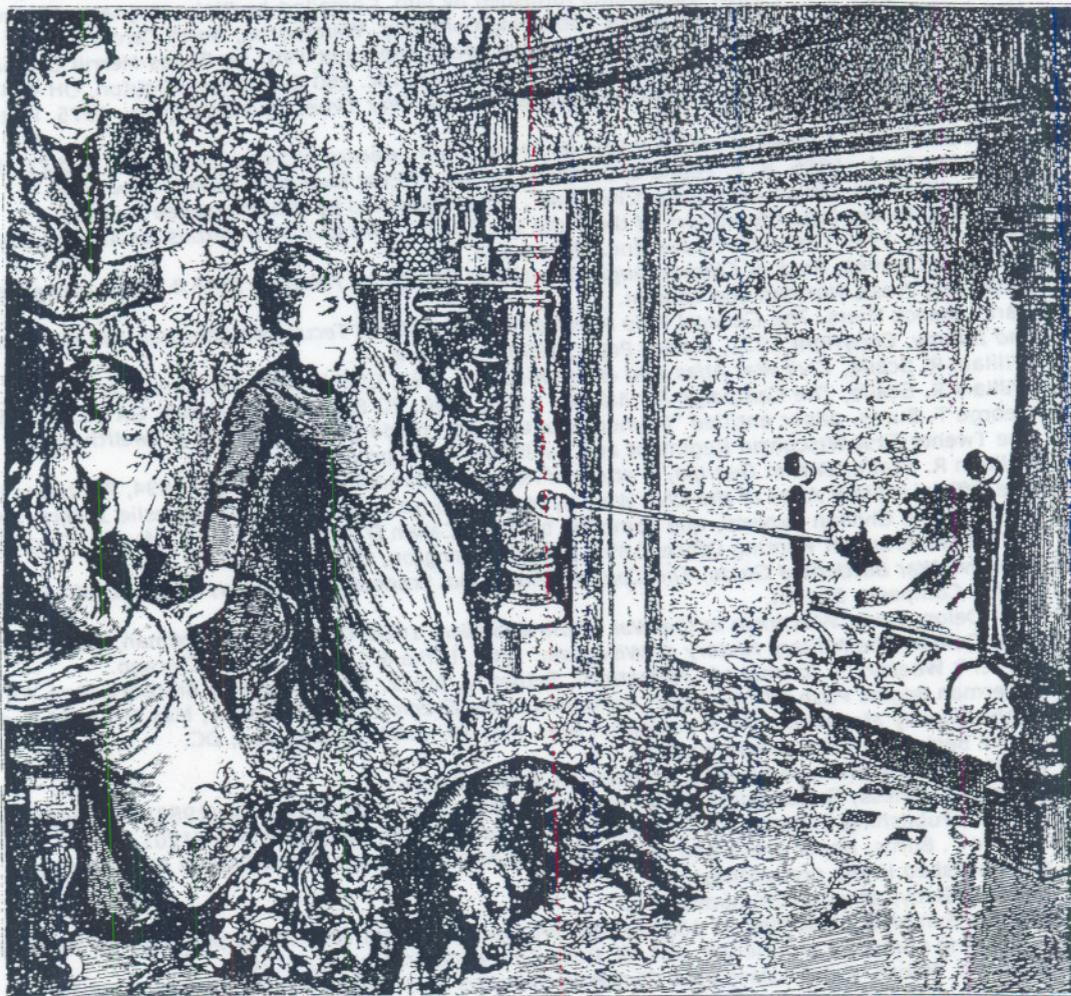
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