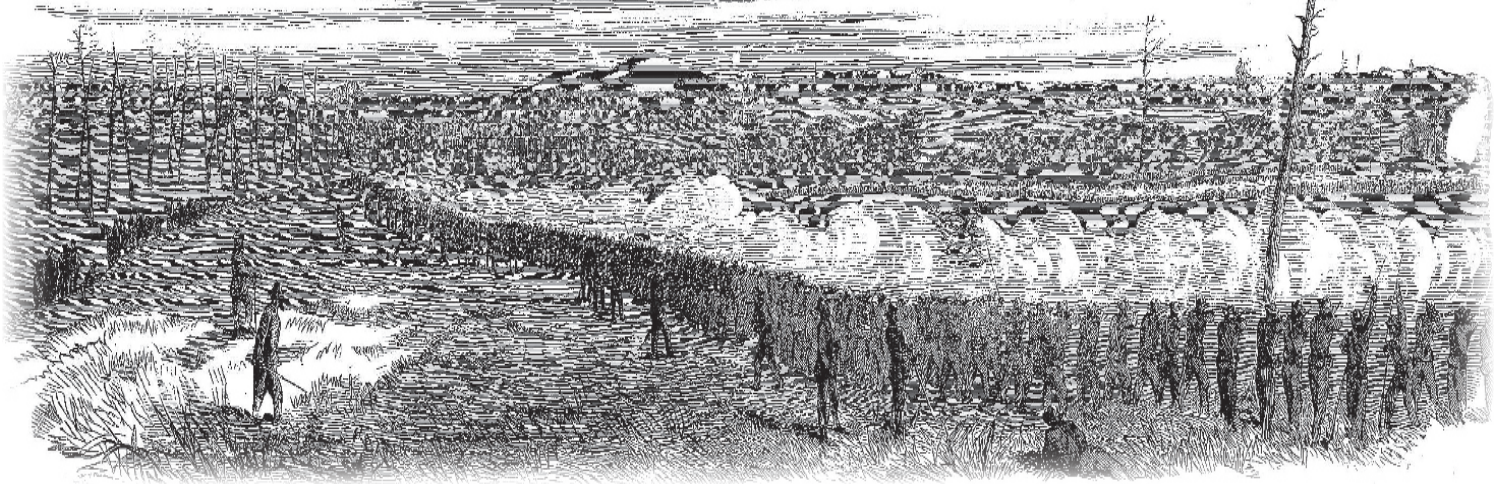




Battle of Kolb's Farm

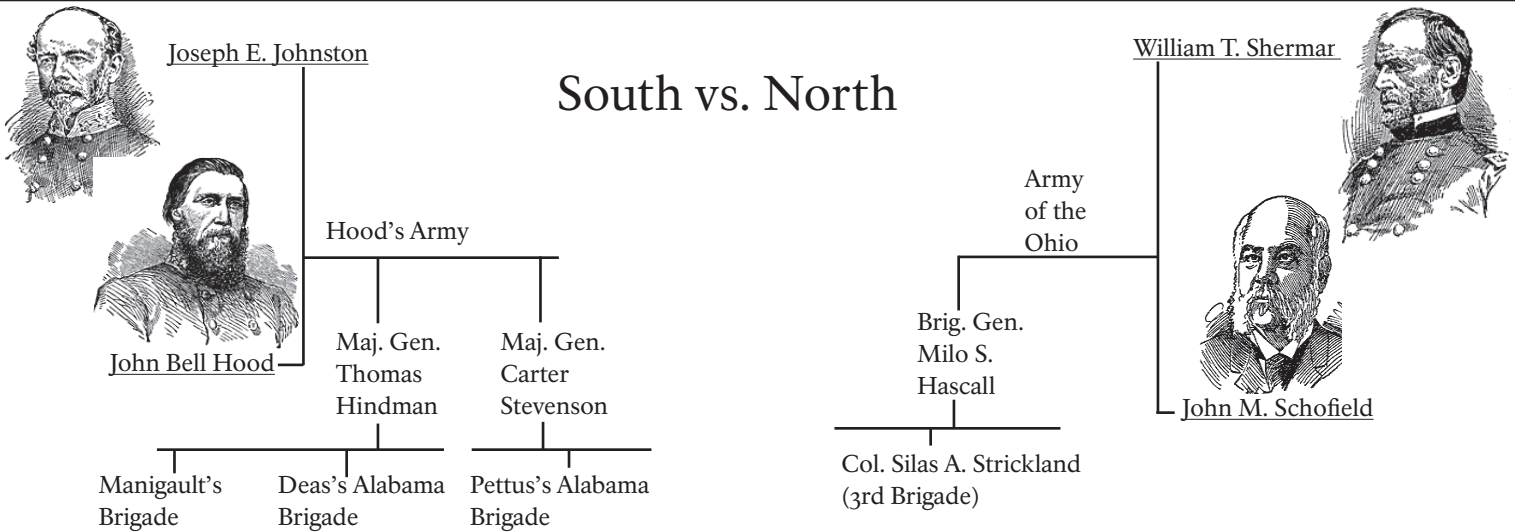


From *Harper's Weekly*

Before the War: The Kolb Family Farm

On a 600-acre rural farm plantation known as the Kolb Farm, the widow of Peter Valentine Kolb resided with her family in an atypical enclosed, wooden dog-trot house. On June 22, 1864, her peace was rudely disturbed by Federal and Confederate troops who met in what was a complete disaster for Confederate forces. The Kolb homesite, which stood (and still stands) in its current location on the south side of Powder Springs Road, bore silent witness to the ugliness. It had been a self-sufficient farm since the 1830's...remaining that way until war came to Georgia. The impending fighting caused the Kolb family to flee to Madison, Georgia, ahead of the approaching Union Army. The Kolbs, like many of their neighbors, abandoned their property in their flight, only to return to destruction and desolation.

South vs. North



The Build-Up to the Battle of Kolb Farm

On June 18, 1864, General Joseph E. Johnston moved his Lost Mountain line two miles southeast, forming up into the heavily entrenched Kennesaw Mountain line which spread from the railroad on the right all the way to Cheatham Hill on the left. He placed his cannons on the slopes of Kennesaw Mountain, Little Kennesaw Mountain, and Pigeon Hill, giving him control of the railroad and Sherman's approach to Marietta while his cavalry was used to protect the flanks of the six-mile-long line.

Advancing eastward from Noses's Creek in the early afternoon, Major General Joseph Hooker deployed the divisions of Lieutenant Colonel Charles H. Butterfield on the left, Brigadier General John W. Geary in the center, and Brigadier General Alpheus S. Williams on the right. This line ran south from the IV Corps to Kolb's Farm. Meanwhile, Milo S. Hascall's Division of the XXIII Corps went into position on the other side of Powder Springs Road. Colonel Silas A. Strickland's Third

(provisional) brigade faced east, while two other brigades slanted off to the southwest, protecting the right flank. Major General Carter L. Stevenson advanced a little after 5pm, while Brigadier General Alfred Cumming and Brigadier General Edmund W. Pettus, commanding an Alabama unit, made their way through thick underbrush to reach their positions. The 14th Kentucky waited till the enemy was within thirty feet of their position before opening fire. This Union regiment stopped an assault by two Confederate brigades, disrupting Hood's plan to turn Sherman's right. The 14th Kentucky lost twelve men and forty-eight wounded. Johnston had ordered Hood to check the Union advance. Instead, Hood decided to engage with Union forces. He chose two of his three divisions, Hindman's and Stevenson's, to carry out the attack. Early in the afternoon of June 22nd, Union skirmishers clashed with advanced elements of Hood's Corps. The Union side had prepared dirt and fence-rail breastworks for protection.

The Day of the Battle: June 22, 1864

The Union Army, which outnumbered the Confederates 14,000 to 11,000, contained nearly forty cannons. Hindman's Division was arrayed north of Powder Springs Road while Stevenson's was positioned diagonally across the road. Brown's and Reynold's troops quickly drove off the 123rd New York and emerged from the forest ahead of Cummings' and Pettus's column. They advanced on Brigadier General Joseph F. Knipe's and Brigadier General Thomas H. Ruger's brigades, occupying a low ridge overlooking Kolb Farm. Geary, Williams and Hascall waited until they came into optimal range, then opened up their batteries, throwing a crossfire of shell and canister fire, which was approximately five hundred yards away. Brown's and Reynold's troops quickly panicked, and the situation dissolved into confusion. Knipe's brigade and two of Ruger's regiments fell under a rapid fire. Remaining survivors fled into a ravine or retreated into the tree line. Williams' Battery fired down on the ravine with plunging shot, and Confederate forces suffered massive casualties.

Stevenson attacked and closed to within two hundred yards of Hascall's Union line before Federals opened fire at point blank range from artillery and musket fire, routing the Confederates. Hindman's division broke through the tree line opposite Robinson's brigade and Geary's right. Artillery quickly brought the left wing, consisting of Wil-

liam Tucker's and Brigadier General Zachary C. Deas's brigades, to a halt, forcing their retreat. Meanwhile, on the right, Brigadier General Edward C. Walthall's Mississippians advanced only a few yards before being forced to the ground. Brigadier General Arthur M. Manigault's men encountered a swamp and a creek, making it difficult for them to cross and engage the Union forces. After several attempts, they were forced back across and into the forest. The Union artillery fired at a rate of ninety rounds a minute. According to Williams, cannon fire alone fought back Hindman's division. The Confederates never came within range of Federal rifles.

Casualties

General Hood lost 1500 men killed, wounded and missing; of that number, two thirds were from Stevenson's Division. Union Forces, however, suffered only 250 killed and wounded. Eighty-six of those were from Knipe's Brigade and 72 were from Strickland's Brigade, mainly from the 123rd New York Regiment. After the battle, General Hooker used the Kolb farmhouse as his field headquarters.

The Battle of Kolb's Farm temporarily checked Sherman's southward maneuvering and influenced his decision to attempt penetration of the Kennesaw Line.

After the War: Return to Kolb Farm

A Self-Sustaining Farm

The Kolb home was built sometime in the 1830's by Peter Valentine Kolb with the assistance of neighbors, friends and possibly Native Americans. The cabin was located on 600 acres of land and featured a blacksmith shop, cotton gin, grist mill, and sawmill. The blacksmith shop was across the road from the cabin opposite the well. A quarter of a mile away was the grist mill, sawmill, and cotton gin. The farm also had slave quarters as well as a barn to the west of the cabin, smokehouse to the left of the house, and an area for bees to make honey.

Wanton Destruction of Property

When the Union forces arrived, the Kolb farm sat empty, the family having already left for Madison, Georgia. A few of their neighbors stayed in their

homes, determined to protect what was theirs. The damage to the family home was, unfortunately, typical. During the Battle of Kolb Farm, the left side of the house was used for observation and as a post for Federal sharpshooters. The house was positioned at the western base of a slight ridge, so when the Confederate artillery opened fire, they destroyed large sections of the roof. The house was used as a field hospital during the fighting. Soldiers tore down the walls upstairs to make more room for the injured. When the Union army left Kolb farm, they burned all of the outbuildings. A few of the slave quarters didn't fully burn. The family home survived only because the type of wood used in its construction would not catch fire when Union soldiers attempted to burn it down.

The Battle Site Today

The Kolb house was abandoned many years after the War. It was repurchased in 1888 by the Kolb family, although the owner(s) in the interim years are unknown. The family rebuilt the upper level and turned it into an attic, and a front porch was added as well. On the right side of the house, a wing addition was built; it was used as a kitchen and servants' quarters and a back porch. A picket fence was constructed around the yard in the same location as the split rail fencing today.

The breastworks from the Battle remained intact and cannon balls and bullets, some of which were embedded in some of the trees, were found throughout the area. Many of the surrounding homes were not rebuilt. The community was permanently changed now that many familiar families were now missing

from the landscape.

In 1895, the Kolb family sold the home to a new owner whose name is lost to history. This person resold the home in 1908. Alterations were made to make the house more modern.

In 1941, the Kolb home and site was purchased by the federal government and became part of the Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield. The National Park Service restored the house to its original exterior look. Today the house is closed to the public. Of the original 600 acres, only 2.3 acres are preserved, including the farmhouse and family cemetery.