

DNA 170

HISTORY
OF THE
SEVENTY-EIGHTH PENNSYLVANIA
VOLUNTEER INFANTRY
EDITED BY J. T. GIBSON
UNDER THE DIRECTION
OF THE
HISTORICAL COMMITTEE
OF THE
REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION

RH
~~19~~ 38
1905

very anxious in regard to our welfare, and, not hearing from us for so long, they would be led to the conclusion that we had all been captured, if not killed. It is not necessary to say that the advance guard of our Army, returning from Kentucky, was hailed with delight, and our first letters from home were read with intense interest.

The Morning Report Books of some of the companies tell us that the advance of our Army returning from Kentucky reached Nashville on the 6th of November, but Bates' History says that on the morning of the 26th of October we saw from our fortifications the victorious legions of General Rosecrans approaching the city. It is possible that a detachment from General Rosecrans' Army reached the city on the 6th of November, and that our first mail was received on the 12th.

On the 30th of October, 1862, General W. S. Rosecrans succeeded General Buell, and this part of the Army was designated the "Department of the Cumberland." On the 7th of November, General Rosecrans issued orders assigning to General George H. Thomas the command of the center of the Army. His command included the divisions of Rousseau, Negley, Dumont, Frye and Palmer, the 78th Regiment being in General John F. Miller's brigade of Negley's division. General McCook was given command of the right wing of the Army and General Crittenden commanded the left.

During the latter part of November and the first half of December, General Bragg, commanding the Confederate forces, took possession of Murfreesboro, Tennessee. The organization of General Rosecrans' Army was now permanently and definitely fixed, with General Thomas commanding the center, General McCook the right and General Crittenden the left. General Thomas' command comprised three divisions General Rosseau commanding the first, General Negley the second and General Palmer the third.

On the 10th of December the 78th Regiment was released from provost duty and moved out with the Army to Camp Hamilton, six miles south of the city. Here Miller's Brigade was assigned to the eighth division, commanded by General Negley, and the division was reviewed on the 11th by General Rosecrans, commander of the Army. Our experience as provost guards of the city afforded us an opportunity of seeing the worst part of city life. The Louisville and Nash-

ville railroad depots are located in the worst social part of the city, and the guards at the station were in demand every night to settle brawls in disreputable places in that section of the city. During most of this time the Regiment was quartered in the court house.

VIII.

The Battle of Stone River

By the middle of December the Louisville and Nashville Railroad had been repaired, and by the 20th sufficient provisions had been accumulated to support the Army until navigation should be opened on the Cumberland River. The two armies were at this time well equipped and nearly equal in numerical strength. The Army of the Cumberland had slight advantage in numbers, but this was more than counterbalanced by the fact that it was to be the attacking army, and would need to employ a good many regiments in guarding its supply trains, while the Confederate Army would be on the defensive. From the 12th of December until the 26th the time was devoted to drilling and disciplining the troops and perfecting the organization of the Army. Foraging expeditions went out nearly every day and they generally reported skirmishes with the enemy. Reconnoitering parties also went out on all the principal roads leading in the direction of Murfreesboro in order to ascertain the position and the strength of the enemy.

The 24th of December was a clear, bright day, and the 78th Regiment spent the day in reconnoitering. The signal corps of the Army was not at that time as thoroughly organized as afterwards, and sentinels were stationed on the tops of the hills in the neighborhood to keep a lookout for the enemy, and report to the commanders of the reconnoitering expeditions. The writer, with a squad of infantry, spent the day on the top of a hill overlooking all the roads leading in the direction of Murfreesboro, while a squad of cavalry remained at the foot of the hill to carry messages to the front. From our point of observation we could see our reconnoitering parties on the different roads to a distance of probably four or five miles, and we could also know something of the movements of the enemy by the clouds of dust that were visible in the distance.

There were several sharp skirmishes during the day, and we could hear the boom of the cannon and see the smoke rising.

No general advance was made on Christmas Day, but we all felt that the close of the old year and the ushering in of the new would be memorable in history because it would contain the record of a great battle between the Union forces under General Rosecrans, and the Confederate forces under General Bragg. Our Army was in good spirits and confident of victory, but there was unusual thoughtfulness, and the letters written home were more serious than usual.

In this sketch of the battle of Stone River we shall not attempt to give a scientific description of the battle in military terms, although the *Compte de Paris* says this battle was planned and executed in fuller accord with military science than any other battle of the War that had been fought up to that time. Neither shall we attempt to give a sketch of the battle from the standpoint of the commander of the Army, who looks upon the whole field from a central position and sees in all parts of the field the outworkings or failure of his own plans. We shall try to picture the battle as it was seen and participated in by the soldiers and line officers of our Regiment. Nevertheless, it will be necessary to give a complete sketch of the battle in order to show the part taken by our own Regiment.

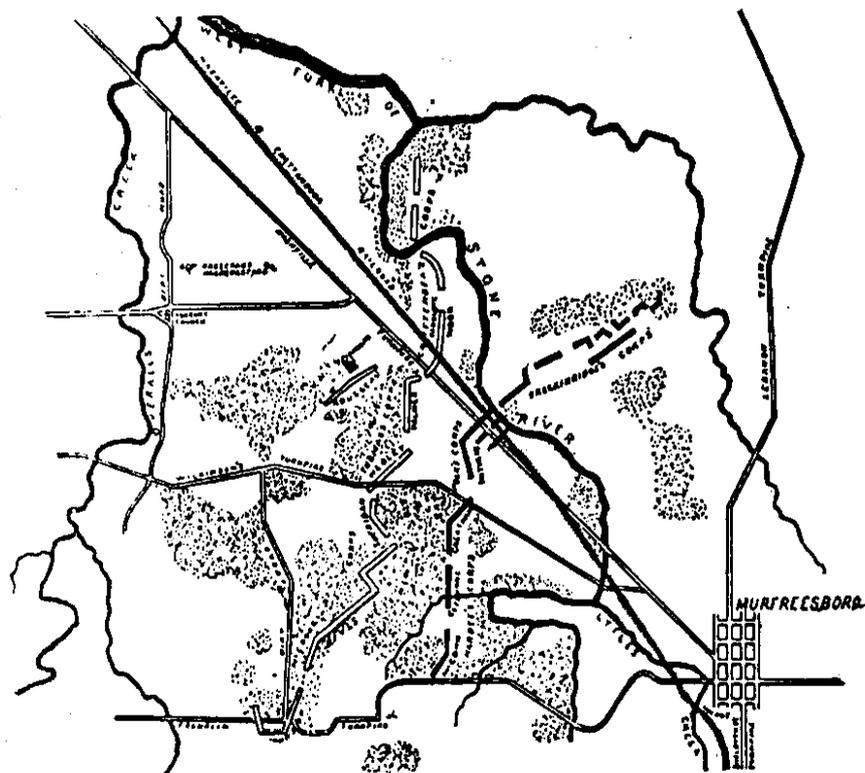
Our brigade was commanded by Colonel John F. Miller of the 39th Indiana, and comprised the 78th Pennsylvania, the 74th Ohio, the 37th Indiana and the 21st Ohio Regiments, with Battery G, 1st Ohio Volunteer Artillery and the 1st Kentucky Battery. General Stanley commanded the 1st brigade of General Negley's Division, and ours was designated as the 2d. In this battle the 77th Pennsylvania fought in the 2d brigade of the 2d division under General McCook, while the 79th Pennsylvania was in the 3d brigade, 2d division, commanded by General Rosseau.

Murfreesboro is situated on high rolling ground on the right bank of Stone River about thirty miles from Nashville. Previous to the war it claimed a population of five thousand. It is the center of a rich agricultural district, and from it diverge many turnpikes and roads communicating with the principal places in middle Tennessee. General Polk and Kirby Smith of the Confederate Army were at Murfreesboro, while Hardee's corps was on the Shelbyville and Noblesville

turnpike, between Triune and Eaglesville, when the Stone River campaign began.

The morning of December 26th was cloudy and misty, but the reveille sounded an hour before day; tents were "struck," and at break of day the army moved forward in three columns, the right wing under General McCook, advancing by the Nolensville Pike to Triune; the center, under General Thomas, by the Franklin and Wilson Pikes to Nolensville, and the left wing, under General Crittenden, by the Murfreesboro pike to Lavergne. We struck the picket lines and outposts of the enemy very soon after we passed our own lines, and brisk skirmishing was kept up during the day. It rained almost incessantly, and the roads were very muddy, but the enthusiasm of the soldiers was not dampened.

At early dawn of the morning of the 27th the troops were on the march, and there was brisk skirmishing all day and frequent artillery duels, with little damage to either side. Inasmuch as the enemy destroyed the bridges on their retreat, and it was necessary to repair them in some cases, there was but little progress made on the 28th. By the evening of the 29th, however, the main body of the army had reached a position some five or six miles from Murfreesboro, and, so far as possible, was formed in line of battle and bivouacked for the night. On the 30th of December the two armies faced each other, and, so far as the average soldier or line officer could judge, there seemed to be no good reason why the battle should not be fought at once. There were rumors that General Bragg's Army was retreating, but we did not believe them. The two great armies, each numbering nearly fifty thousand men, were not more than three or four miles apart, and seemed to be in touch with each other all along their advance line. During the day, the army under General Rosecrans kept steadily advancing and taking a more definite position for battle. The skirmishers advanced at different points, discovering masked batteries and rifle pits which compelled them to retreat. Looking out from our lines, directly in front, we could see different points where we supposed there were masked batteries of the enemy, and the day was spent trying to make discoveries as to the strength of their different positions. Companies H and B were deployed as skirmishers, and A and F were in reserve of skirmish line. Early in the morning James Myers, a private of Co. H, was killed, and it is believed



Stone River Battlefield

that he was the first man killed in the great battle. Though not on the skirmish line, in the afternoon our forces were within range of the minie balls of the enemy's sharpshooters and skirmishers, and we felt confident that we were in full range of some of their batteries which they were concealing for the present. We learned for the first time the real meaning of being on the *qui vive*. In the afternoon we overheard one of General Thomas' staff talking to our division commander about the possibilities of capturing some rifle pits about a thousand yards in our front, where we supposed there were masked batteries. General Negley said, in reply, "We can take them if you say so." A captain remarked in an undertone, "He might add, 'But we would rather not.'"

During the day our skirmishers advanced across the open fields at different points and were driven back in turn by the superior forces of the enemy, a number being killed and wounded on the skirmish line and by the enemy's artillery.

General McCook, with his three divisions, under Generals Woods, Johnson and Sheridan, formed the right wing, General Thomas, the center, with Negley's and Palmer's divisions in front, and Rousseau's division in reserve, and General Crittenden, with Van Cleve's, Woods' and Palmer's divisions forming the left wing. The left wing rested on Stone River, the right extending southwesterly and resting on a high wooded ridge on the Franklin turnpike. The line of battle was about three or four miles long.

In the evening of this bleak, cloudy, wet and dreary day the wind veered to the north, and, as no camp fires were permitted, the condition of the soldiers was anything but comfortable. Early in the night the clouds were swept away and the stars peeped out. Everything seemed terribly impressive. The deep silence was ominous of the coming storm. Within half a league of each other lay two great armies, each ready to give battle on the morrow, General Rosecrans having massed his army on the left, expecting to attack the enemy's right and the Confederate commander having massed his army on his left, to attack our right.

On the morning of the last day of the old year, at 6:20, ten minutes after dawn, the Confederates made their attack on our right, moving forward in four heavy columns with strong reserves, and our first great battle was begun. As we heard the roar of battle, we had every confidence that McCook's troops would be able to hold their position. Very soon it be-

came evident to us that our right wing was retreating and the enemy advancing. We still felt confident that there was no serious disaster; that the falling back was only the giving way of the skirmish line, and that, probably, for a purpose. But, as the roar and smoke kept sweeping onward until our whole right wing was turned, things began to look very threatening. General Negley's division was on the right of center, joining General McCook's left, and when General McCook was driven backward it left General Negley's division exposed to fire from three sides. The two brigades under General Stanley and Colonel Miller were formed two columns deep across a corn field and peach orchard in front of a cedar woods, facing, at a slight angle, the Wilkinson Pike and another cedar woods, on the other side of the pike. We had been exposed to a heavy artillery fire during the early morning hours, but did not feel the real shock of the battle until McCook's entire left wing had been driven to our rear. Then we were attacked on the left, in front and on the right. The enemy moved in heavy columns, firing deadly volleys of musketry, and also concentrating his artillery on this one point. The roar of the artillery with the rattle of musketry was deafening, and the scene indescribably appalling. While shot and shell and minie balls were flying thickest, something occurred that we could not at the time understand. We were commanded to fall back; and, after retreating in good order for perhaps one hundred yards, we were ordered to take the same terrible position we had been holding a few minutes before. Colonel Miller, our brigade commander, whose official report is found in Volume 20 of official records of the War of the Rebellion, explains this as follows: "At this junction, the troops on our right retired and some unauthorized person ordered Colonel Sirwell to retire his regiment. This regiment was fighting gallantly and holding position on the crest of the hill, but on receiving the order retired to the cedars in the rear. Seeing this, I immediately ordered Colonel Sirwell forward to the same position. This order was obeyed promptly, and the men took position in admirable order." This is the explanation. A mistake had occurred, but the troops obeyed orders in the most trying circumstances. The strife was terrific; but, in the very nature of the case could not last long. No soldiers ever behaved more courageously, but it is probable that these soldiers afterwards did more effective work. From my own observation, I am convinced that a large part of the firing was too high to do the best execution.

At this critical moment orders were given to retreat through the dense cedar woods, but it was nearly impossible to preserve the regimental lines. As we left the open fields, our eyes looked on the most terrific scene of slaughter we were ever called upon to witness. The artillery of the enemy was doing fearful execution. We saw one shell explode exactly in the line of the regiment on our left, killing, at least, three men. Nearly all our artillery horses had been killed. One of the last sights witnessed as we entered the cedar woods in our retreat was an artilleryman trying to haul his gun off the field with one horse, the other five having been killed. One wheel of the gun carriage had become fastened between two rocks, and the brave artilleryman was trying with a rail to pry it out. What became of him, I know not, but we lost five out of the nine pieces of artillery with which we began the battle. When we entered the cedar woods, looking backward on the open field, there seemed to be nearly a regiment of our division left on the field killed and wounded.

As we retreated through the woods, we passed through a brigade of Western troops in line of battle waiting for us to pass to the rear so that they could open fire on the enemy. They did not seem alarmed, but confidentially assured us that they would be able to stop the enemy; and, no doubt, they would have done so had they been attacked only in front, but their confidence and their courage were of no avail. The enemy's artillery opened an enfilading fire that no troops could withstand, and, within ten minutes, they were driven to the rear in great confusion.

This was our first great battle. From the first we had not the slightest idea of anything but victory, but we certainly began to feel about this time that we were not having everything our own way. We had lost some twenty-seven pieces of artillery, and the whole right wing and the right of center had been driven back in great confusion.

The enemy fought with splendid discipline, and with courage worthy of a better cause. The courage of our soldiers, the line officer, regimental brigade and division commanders, was probably never excelled, but they fought at very great disadvantage, and it did seem as though the great army under General Rosecrans was about to be destroyed.

As we emerged from the cedar woods, General Rousseau's division and the troops that had been massed on the left

were concentrated around the ridges overlooking the scene of the morning's battle. Nearly all the artillery in the army was unlimbered around these ridges, and nearly all available forces were under the immediate command of General George H. Thomas. It was a year after this event that he became known as the "Rock of Chickamauga," but he always came to the front in the crisis, and was the man for the hour. With a victorious army sweeping to the rear, it was necessary for him to change front in the face of the foe, but he did it with the coolness and precision of a parade. He quickly posted the troops that were not engaged in line of battle to protect the artillery, that they might check the enemy and give the retreating regiments and brigades time to reform their lines in the rear. General Rousseau, the commander of General Thomas' first division, on his magnificent horse, was a sight to inspire courage in the hearts of the retreating soldiers. An aidecamp suggested to General Rousseau to take a position a little to the rear, but he swung his sword aloft, saying, "I will stand here, right here; I won't budge an inch."

In our retreat through the cedar woods toward the Nashville Pike, the Regiment being, to some extent, disorganized, many of our men became separated from the command, and fortunately so, as it turned out, for a detachment of the Regiment which had so become separated, together with some other regiments, formed on the right of the pike, at a point where there was a gap in our new line, through which the enemy was endeavoring to reach the rear of our line. This detachment of the 78th, with other troops who had strayed from other regiments, charged the advancing enemy, and drove them back into the open field, while our own troops took position behind a rail fence and held the enemy in check until General Rosecrans had perfected his line in the rear. After this was done this detachment rejoined the Regiment on the Nashville Pike.

As soon as the retreating troops had gotten fairly to the rear of the artillery and the line of infantry supporting, a most terrific cannonade began. Shot and shell and solid cannon balls swept trees, fences and columns of men before them like leaves in autumn. Fences and cotton fields were set on fire. It was at this point an ideal battle. In all our army experience we never witnessed anything more terribly grand. The very earth seemed to tremble. But the seemingly overwhelm-



General Jas. S. Negley

ing attack of the enemy had spent its force and he was compelled to fall back. He had failed, for the central position of our army was unmoved. As the old year closed, we knew that we had suffered very great loss, and that we were on the defensive, but we were not discouraged. We had defeated the enemy. In his official report of the action of this day, 1863, Colonel Miller says, "During this entire engagement, and in all these terribly appalling circumstances, both officers and men of my command behaved with admirable coolness and bravery. Examples of heroic daring and gallantry were everywhere to be seen, but, where all acted so well it is difficult to make special mention without doing injustice." The first name he does mention was the name of the commander of the 78th Pennsylvania Volunteers. He adds, "too much cannot be said in praise of both officers and men. The losses in my brigade killed and wounded in action, amounted to over 500 men." The meaning of these figures is evident when it is known that our brigade went into action with only 2,105 men. We were glad when the sun went down and darkness put an end to the conflict, and the thought of renewing the conflict with the beginning of another day did not drive away "tired nature's sweet restorer."

New Year's Eve, A. D., 1863, on Stone River battle field, was cold and disagreeable, and no words can describe the mortal agony of that night. Between the picket lines of the two armies lay hundreds of wounded men, away from home and friends, and with no one to minister to them as they passed through the Valley of the Shadow of Death. The last day of the old year was to many a brave young soldier the last day of mortal life, and, whether we look on the Union soldier or on the Confederate, the scene was unspeakably sad. As we lay in line of battle we realized as we never had done before that war's burdens could not be measured in dollars and cents. No man could be hired with money to face the dangers or endure the hardships of a great battle, and no man could be paid in money for such services. If we would know the horrors of war we must look on the expiring agonies of these true and brave young men, and on the broken hearts at home.

During that eventful day our own Army had suffered a very heavy loss. Several thousand men had been seriously wounded, and probably more than a thousand had been in-

stantly killed. The commander of our own brigade, General Miller, was wounded in the neck but did not leave the field. General Rosecrans, the Commander of the Army, had not been wounded, but his military cloak was red with the blood of his gallant chief of staff, General Garresche, who had been beheaded by a cannon ball when he was only a few feet from his Commander.

During the night General Rosecrans held a Council of War in a dismal little log cabin on the battle field. We learned afterwards that a majority of the officers present at this Council favored falling back to a better position, and it is said that General Rosecrans was in favor of retreating to Nashville, while General Crittenden was opposed to retreating, and General Thomas only said, "This Army cannot retreat." This remark of General Thomas expressed the whole truth most tersely. The Army could fight better than it could retreat. No camp fires could be lighted, and we need hardly say that it was a desperately dismal night for both officers and men—it was not an ideal New Year's Eve, though it snowed a little during the night.

New Year's Day dawned clear and crisp. We expected an attack by the enemy in the early morning; but, as the day grew older and only an occasional shot was heard from some battery, we began to suspect that General Bragg's Army had suffered as severely as our own, and that it was in no condition to attack us. This conviction was very satisfactory, and the general sentiment of the men seemed to be in favor of letting well enough alone. We were not impatient to reach Murfreesboro. Had General Rosecrans' Army been in condition to make an attack we could probably have driven the Confederates out from Murfreesboro that day, but neither army was prepared to attack the other.

During the day, stragglers from the ranks came in rapidly, and the regiments were filled up. The position of the troops was changed somewhat, but each army seemed waiting to see what the other was about to do. Rations were distributed as far as possible, but in many cases the commissary trains had been either delayed or destroyed by the enemy's cavalry. The cracker supply having been cut off, it was necessary to distribute flour instead of crackers. Each man in the Regiment drew a certain quantity of flour, and the facilities for turning this into bread or anything edible were exceedingly primitive.



78th Regiment at the Battle of Stone River

On the afternoon of the first and forenoon of the second, going through the lines of the 78th Regiment, you might have seen soldiers making dough of flour, water and salt, and baking it on a stone laid on hot coals. As the sun went down on the evening of the first, the wounded, having been cared for as far as possible, the soldiers went to sleep again on the battlefield in comparative comfort and in good spirits.

The morning of January 2nd found General Negley's division assigned to a position to support the right of General McCook's corps. We remained in this position till 1 P. M., but while we were trying to turn flour, water and salt into digestible food we were ordered to support General Crittenden's corps, on the left wing of the Army, and took position in an open field to the left and in the rear of batteries on the left of the railroad, near the bank of Stone River. On our left the river flowed directly northward, but about half a mile in front there was a bend so that in our front it flowed directly eastward, and part of General Crittenden's corps had crossed the river and were in line of battle extending to the river a little north of where the river began to flow northward. The position can be easily understood by reference to the diagram of the plan of battle on another page. A bluff overlooking the river concealed us from the enemy, and we had an impression by this time that General Rosecrans was massing his troops on his left in order to attack the right wing of the enemy. It was developed afterwards that General Bragg was massing his troops on his right to attack our left. The combination, therefore, was in some respects the reverse of what it had been in Wednesday's battle; then General Bragg had massed his troops against our weakest point and found us unprepared, whereas, on Friday, he massed his forces where we were best prepared to meet him.

The private soldier in a volunteer army like our own differs in many respects from the private soldier in the armies of other nations. By thorough discipline he becomes a part of a machine, and he obeys orders, but he does not refrain from thinking nor cease to exercise his intelligence, and he very frequently is disheartened because the orders are not in accord with his judgment. On the other hand, when he

thinks his commander is making a wise disposition of his forces, his courage is greatly stimulated. We had evidence of this in Friday's battle. We had been driven in great confusion on Wednesday by the attack of the enemy, but the recollection of that day did not in the least interfere with our confidence that we should be victorious on Friday, because, when the attack was made on Friday, we had evidence, satisfactory to us, that the enemy was attacking our strongest position. We felt that, however it might issue, no mistake had been made by our commander.

About four o'clock a furious charge was made on Van Cleve's division on the south side of the river, not far from where the river turns eastward at nearly a right angle. When this attack was made the 78th Regiment was lying back of the crest of the hill overlooking Van Cleve's position, and our artillery was on our right and in our front a little nearer the crest of the hill. When the enemy attacked Van Cleve, their batteries opened a very heavy fire on us to which our batteries replied. Shells, solid shot and grape shot were flying thick, but we were comparatively safe, being protected by the crest of the hill. My personal recollection of this position and of what took place is still very distinct. General Negley rode along our lines, and being cheered by his troops, said in reply, "Boys, you will now have an opportunity to pay them back for what they did on Wednesday." These words of the General, in whom we all had the greatest confidence, inspired the soldiers with courage and enthusiasm in the crisis of the battle. The final issue depended on what Negley's command would do within the next fifteen minutes. General Van Cleve's division had been driven back into the bend of the river, and some had been compelled to retreat across the river, passing through our line as we lay behind the crest of the hill. Just at this critical moment, another regiment (I believe the 99th Ohio), of a different brigade, was ordered forward, marched to the crest of the hill in good order, fired one volley and retired. Why the regiment retired we never knew. Just as this moment, also, our batteries had exhausted their ammunition and, lumbering, galloped to the rear. Then our Regiment, being the first in General Miller's brigade, was ordered forward. Shot and shell and minie balls were flying very thick when we reached the crest of the hill, but we opened fire at once and were followed by other regiments of our brigade. Only a

few moments had elapsed when the shout went up, "They are retreating! They are retreating!" Without any command from any person, so far as I know, led by the soldierly instinct that sometimes sees better than generals can plan, men and officers moved forward in double quick, crossed the river and drove the enemy before them. Then began what came as near being a hand to hand fight as we had ever witnessed up to this time. In crossing the river, the lines of the different regiments were thrown into great confusion, but General Miller, our Brigade Commander, in his official report, says, "A tolerable line was kept on the colors of the 78th Pennsylvania Regiment, etc., the men moved forward with spirit and determination." During all this time the enemy's batteries were posted on an eminence in a field to our front, but when this charge was made their infantry retreated in great disorder leaving the ground covered with the dead and wounded. When we were about 150 yards from the battery, General Miller ordered the 78th Regiment to charge, and the command was instantly obeyed, the 19th Illinois, 69th Ohio and other regiments joining with us. We captured a battery of four guns, two of them being secured by our Regiment. We captured, also the colors of the 26th Tennessee Infantry. The captured flag was seized, I believe, at the same time by Private Davis of Company I and Private Hughes of Company B. The picture on another page, entitled "The Charge of the 78th Regiment," is reproduced and condensed from a picture that appeared just after the battle in Frank Leslie's Magazine. The boy who is represented astride one of the captured guns was James Thorne, a lad about sixteen years old, a member of Company A and a native of Tennessee. As he sat on the captured cannon and patted it lovingly, he called out to the commander of his company, "Here it is, Captain."

Speaking of this charge, Bates' History of the Regiment says, "The fury of the conflict now threatened mutual annihilation, but Stanley and Miller with the 19th Illinois and the 21st and 74th Ohio, the 78th Pennsylvania, 11th Michigan and 37th Indiana, charged simultaneously, driving the enemy rapidly before them, capturing a battery of four guns, the colors of the 26th Tennessee, the color sergeant being killed with a bayonet. The banner is the trophy of the 78th Pennsylvania." It is true that this charge was participated in by all the regiments of Negley's division, but, it should also be remembered that the charge was led by the 78th Pennsylvania.

and that the soldiers of the 78th are entitled to the credit of inspiring courage in others as well as acting for themselves.

When we reached the ridge running parallel with the river before it begins to go northward, it was about sunset. The whole Confederate line had fallen back, leaving a large number of prisoners in our hands. Our lines were greatly broken, and although the men were recklessly enthusiastic, we were not in good condition to either charge the enemy or resist a charge. As darkness settled down on the Army other troops were sent to take our places, and we withdrew across the river to our former position. We had lost heavily in killed and wounded, but not so heavily as on Wednesday. The Confederates had not only failed in their attack on our left wing but had been driven from the field in great confusion and with great loss. It is said that General Bragg lost 2,000 men in forty minutes that afternoon.

We were in line of battle all the next day but no attack was made by either army. It soon became evident that the captured points were the key to the enemy's position, for, on the night of the 3rd, he retreated from Murfreesboro, leaving many wounded in our hands.

Thus ended the great battle of Stone River. According to the official report of General Rosecrans, we fought the battle with 37,977 infantry, 2,223 artillery, 3,200 cavalry, making a total of 43,400 men. If we include the forces that moved on the enemy, and were detailed to guard wagon-trains and hold other points in our rear, we had about 47,000 men. We lost in killed 1,533 men, wounded 8,778, about twenty per cent. of the entire forces engaged. This, we believe, is the highest percentage of killed and wounded that occurred in any battle of the war. General Rosecrans estimated the enemy's forces at 62,490, and their loss at 14,560. General Bragg's official report makes his loss about 11,000. He left some 2,000 wounded in our hands. The whole number of prisoners captured by us was 3,694, and the whole number captured by the enemy was put down at 2,800. According to official reports the 78th Pennsylvania Regiment began the battle with 540 men. The loss in killed and wounded was 149, and in prisoners thirty-nine. The loss in killed and wounded was twenty-eight per cent. of the number with which we went into the battle.

Through some error Colonel Sirwell's official report of this battle was not published in the official records of the War

of the Rebellion, and we did not have access to it this sketch, but it has been discovered since and is in the appendix. Colonel Miller's report of it by our brigade mentions the 78th Regiment several times in commendation. We have quoted elsewhere his words of our coolness and courage on Wednesday; and the charge on the right wing of the enemy on Friday he says, "The colors of the 78th Pennsylvania, a 19th Illinois, were the first to cross the river. They followed in as good order as possible." In another report he says, "The colors of the 26th Tennessee at the charge were near the battery and were captured by the 78th Pennsylvania and brought to the rear."

In this, our first great battle, we learned some things we could hardly have learned elsewhere. First, we learned to have greater respect for the bravery and coolness of our enemies. Second, from the commander of the regiment to the private soldier, there was a complete reversal of our judgments of each other. Many who had not been recognized as leaders were now given a low rank, and many others came to be recognized as the real leaders. We discovered that the quiet, thoughtful and conservative were the men to be depended on in the crisis of the battle; these were the men that came to the front. Forward General Thomas was the most highly respected and most thoroughly trusted officer in our Army. For a year after this time that he came to be called "Old Chickamauga," but he was recognized by the army as the rock of Stone River. The night of the battle set out this bright star, and his light has never been dimmed. It would not be possible today to convince any old soldier in command that he was not one of the very best in the Army.

One needs to witness a great battle in order to get a fair estimate of the relative courage of commanding officers and their soldiers. Private soldiers, line and field, are to face greater physical dangers than are faced by commanding officers of the army, and the courage to face duty faithfully is of as high an order as the courage of the commanding officer. Commanding officers have the consciousness that the eyes of the nation and of the world are upon them, they know that to falter is to bring disgrace upon their whole duty is to write their names high in the

fame. The private soldier rarely has such stimulant to courage. He simply does his duty from a conviction of duty; when he faces death he knows that, if he escape, his name will not become the synonym of bravery, and that, if he be killed, he will only be one amongst a thousand, and that he may fill an unknown grave. General Porter, in his excellent sketch, entitled "Campaigning with Grant," tells with pardonable pride how, on different occasions he received promotion on account of special acts of bravery. It was his good fortune to act in the presence of the commanding General of the Army. Had the commanding general seen as distinctly the acts of each individual, private soldier there would have been thousands of promotions for just as good reasons; but, when the private soldiers and line officers faced the greatest dangers, they were not usually under the eye of the commander of the army.

Our Government can never pay its debt to the soldiers and line officers who fought its battles. We hear a great deal said about the amount of money it costs the United States Government to pay pensions to its soldiers, and we would not encourage the giving of pensions to those who have not by actual service fairly earned them, but we risk the assertion that there is not a man in the United States worth \$100,000, who, if compelled to either make his check for \$75,000 for the support of the war, or go as a private soldier into a battle like the Battle of Stone River, would not promptly make out his check. If the matter of honor and consciousness of duty could be eliminated, we are confident that most men would give all their worldly goods rather than go into a great battle. Dollars and cents do not have any value at such a time. The average soldier at the Battle of Stone River faced death courageously because he was a conscientious, manly man. His patriotism had made him a soldier; his sense of honor and his conscience constrained him to do his whole duty in the crisis of the battle and he faced death courageously, if not fearlessly. Every true soldier, whether he serve in the regular army or in the volunteer army, deserves the Nation's gratitude and is entitled to the esteem of all good men.

The Battle of Stone River has not been given as prominent a place in the history of our Civil War as its importance merits. Before this battle took place the outlook for our country was very dark and threatening. Our armies had gained no signal victories for many months, and there was very great danger that some of the Nations of Europe would

recognize the Southern Confederacy, and that it would be impossible for us to maintain our blockade. Had General Rosecrans' Army been defeated at the Battle of Stone River, and compelled to retire to Nashville, it would not only have prolonged the War, but would have greatly increased our danger of becoming involved in conflicts with foreign countries.

At a joint meeting of Union and Confederate veterans, held in a tent at Chattanooga on the 19th of September, 1889, Ex-Governor Marks of Tennessee declared that the general results of the summer and fall campaign of 1862 were disastrous to the Federal armies, and he adds, "The result of those campaigns had the effect of bringing more than one of the foreign countries to a serious consideration of the question of recognizing the Confederacy. It had the further effect of so alarming the people of the States of the Mississippi Valley as to the final result of the War that they were considering whether the time had not come for them to surrender the Union and secure the free navigation of the Mississippi." The Federal Government saw its dangers; and, to prevent the recognition of the Confederacy and the revolting of the States of the Mississippi, it determined to press the winter campaign from Virginia to Vicksburg. Governor Marks goes on to say that on the 30th of December General Rosecrans formed his line of battle in front of Murfreesboro, and, he adds, "Up to that hour every battle fought in that winter campaign to prevent the recognition of the Confederacy and to prevent the revolting of the Mississippi Valley had been a crushing, overwhelming defeat of the Federal Army. The battle made Murfreesboro the hinge upon which the fate of the Confederacy must turn. That battle, won by the Confederates, the paper blockade would be torn to tatters, and the independence of the Confederates assured." Governor Marks goes on to say that the Federal Army at Stone River was defeated until the battle of Friday afternoon, when, he says, "On that field the genius of Rosecrans turned the paper blockade into one of adamant and doomed the Confederates to fight on to the end in hunger and rags, without pay and without the appliances of war."

Making all due allowances for oratorical license and exaggeration, as well as for the prejudice of the speaker, it must be confessed that the Battle of Stone River marked a crisis in the history of our Civil War, and was one of the most important battles of the War. It is possible that both the Confed-

erate and Federal Armies have fought with greater desperation than at Stone River; it is safe to assert, however, that no two armies ever fought better. It was in the crisis of this battle that the 78th Pennsylvania Regiment distinguished itself, and it should not be forgotten by the friends and descendants of this Regiment, that, on Friday afternoon, at a crisis in the history of a battle that was fought at a crisis in our National history, the 78th Pennsylvania Regiment led the charge that turned the tide of battle and brought victory to the Union arms. There should be a monument to the 78th Pennsylvania Regiment erected on the bluff overlooking the scene of Friday evening's battle on the 2nd of January, 1863.

Saturday, the 3rd of January, was spent on the battle field reorganizing the troops and rearranging the lines of battle. During a rain storm about dusk on Saturday evening the enemy made a last vicious charge on our lines, but were easily repulsed, and we discovered afterwards that it was only a feint to cover their retreat. General Rosecrans had such regard for the Sabbath that he would not attack the enemy on that day, and, not being attacked by the enemy, we devoted the day to the burial of our dead.

IX.

Provost Guards of Murfreesboro

General Bragg's Army retreated from Murfreesboro on the night of the 4th of January, and on the morning of the 5th the Union Army took possession of the town. By general order of General Rosecrans, the 78th Pennsylvania was the first infantry regiment to enter the town, and we were made provost guards. General Rosecrans and General George H. Thomas both established their headquarters in the town. The next three and a half months were spent in provost duties with occasional foraging expeditions and a march to Nashville to exchange regimental arms. The soldiers of the 78th Pennsylvania have very pleasant recollections of their stay in Murfreesboro. General Bragg's hasty retreat showed that he would not be prepared to attack our Army for some time, and we were comparatively free from any sense of danger from that source. Our association with the people of Murfreesboro was not as free and neighbor-like as they had been during the

previous summer when we mingled with the people of Cuba, Pulaski and other points. The great battle that preceded our entrance into the town led the people of the town to be in awe of us.

While in Murfreesboro the Army was organized into corps, the 14th, under General Thomas, the 20th, under Cook, and the 21st, under General Crittenden. The 78th Pennsylvania was assigned to the 3rd brigade of the 14th division of the 14th corps with Colonel Miller as brigade commander, and General Negley as commander of the 14th division. The changes made were changes in name rather than organization, but the Army of the Cumberland came to be known from this time onward as comprising the 14th Army Corps.

General James S. Negley received special commendation for the part he had taken in this battle and was commended to a Major General. The soldiers who fought under him in this battle regarded this as a well merited honor and it can be said that our experiences and observations in the battle led to the officers and soldiers of the 78th Pennsylvania Regiment a greater degree of mutual sympathy and respect than existed up to this time.

While in Murfreesboro we saw the first fruits of the great work that the Christian people of the South had undertaken to do for the colored people who were freed by the Emancipation Proclamation. We had a young colored man named Dudley for our cook. Like many of the young colored men who were throwing off the shackles of slavery, he believed that knowledge was power, and that it was necessary for him to get an education. He was extremely pious, and believed that if he were able to read the Bible he might become a preacher. In the evening, sitting beside the camp fire with his spelling book and New Testament, he seemed the very embodiment of patience and perseverance, as he struggled with this elementary part of his education. He made slow but steady progress and was soon able to read. He did not carry on the purpose to become a preacher, but he did become one of the most prominent colored dentists in the City of Nashville and became thoroughly trusted by all who knew him, whether white or black.

On the 21st of April the Regiment was relieved of its provost duty in the town of Murfreesboro by the 37th Michigan and removed to Camp Sill in the neighborhood of

town. The weather was very pleasant during this season, and the camp was made as neat and comfortable as possible. The time for the next two months was devoted to picket duty, regimental and brigade drill, with occasional expeditions for reconnoitering purposes. Our experience during these two months were not sufficiently exciting to impress themselves very definitely on our memories. We find in different diaries and in the Morning Report Books of some of the companies such records as the following, "May 1st, the brigade was out five miles from town on a reconnoissance, returned to camp in the evening." The monotony is indicated by such records as, "The Regiment on picket duty." "Relieved and returned to camp." "On brigade drill," or "On division drill," etc. We also find special mention of pay day.

It might not be amiss at this point to make a little record showing how the soldiers used their money. The pay of private soldiers was only thirteen dollars a month, afterwards increased to seventeen dollars, and they were usually paid for from two to four months at a time. Arrangements were made by which they could send as much of this money as they desired home to their friends; and it would be safe to assert that a great majority of the private soldiers of the 78th Pennsylvania sent home to their families and friends not less than two-thirds of all the money they received each pay day. It must be confessed, however, that a few could hardly be restrained from gambling, and some of them succeeded in getting rid of all the money they received in a few hours at cards or in a game called "chuckaluck." Others spent their money very freely at the sutler's, paying exorbitant prices for things that did them no good.

X.

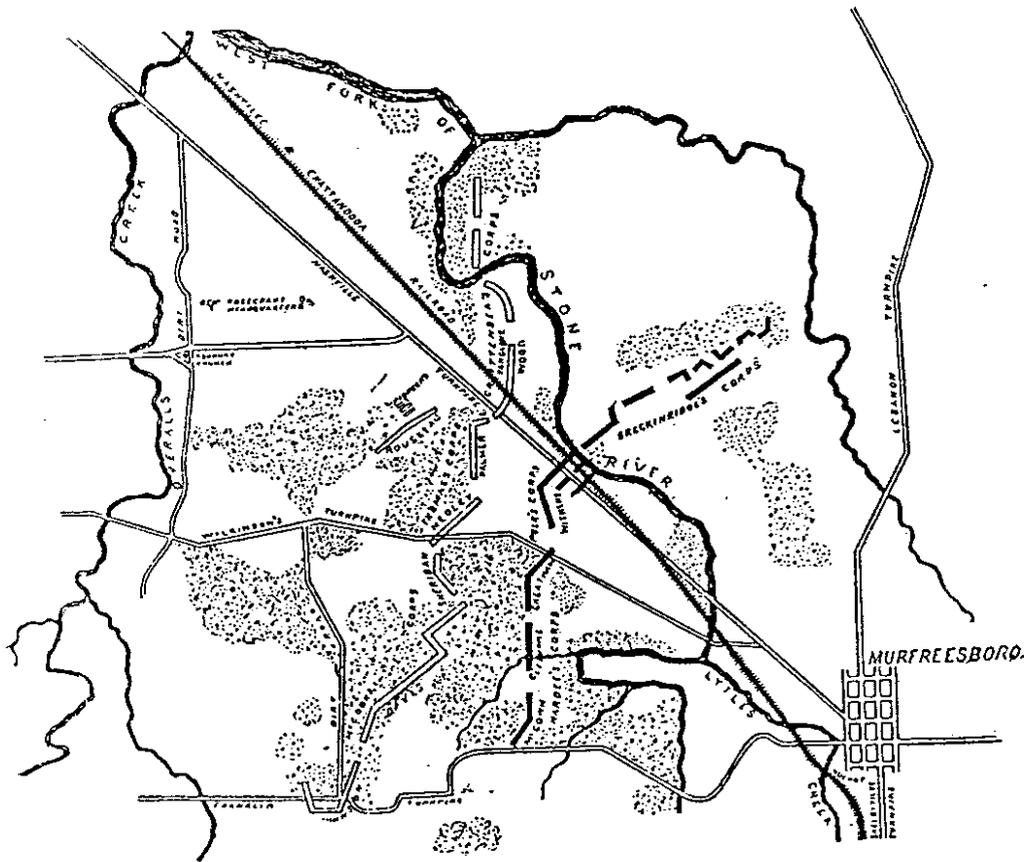
The Tullahoma Campaign

When General Bragg retreated from Murfreesboro he selected a strong position, distributing his infantry from Shelbyville to Wartrace. His cavalry was posted at McMinnville, on his right, and was thrown out as far as Guy Gap. Tullahoma was his depot of supplies. A glance at the map will show that he was directly between our Army and Chattanooga.

For a year or more some of our ablest generals had regarded Chattanooga as the strategic key to the Southern Confederacy. The theory that Vicksburg was the key to the Confederacy was based on a wrong impression with regard to the importance of opening that great waterway, the Mississippi River. Before the time of railroads, Vicksburg would probably have been the key, but it is doubtful whether the sacrifices made for the capture of Vicksburg were wisely made, since railroads are more important than rivers. If Vicksburg had been left in the hands of the Confederates and Chattanooga seized, Vicksburg would probably have been evacuated. The Confederate Government perceived the strategic importance of Chattanooga before the United States Government did, but the Confederates felt secure in the possession of that stronghold, since its position seemed practically impregnable.

It was while our Army was in Murfreesboro that the Chattanooga campaign was matured by General Rosecrans, General Thomas and others. By way of preparing for the campaign Murfreesboro was fortified and supplies were accumulated. General Rosecrans perceived the weak point in his position at this time. His cavalry contingent was not strong enough to protect his line of communication and harass that of the enemy. Had his cavalry force been doubled and his infantry force lessened to that extent his army would have been better fitted for this great military movement. Very few of the officers and soldiers who took part in this campaign had any adequate idea of the ultimate scope and aim of the different movements, for General Bragg had not yet retreated to Chattanooga, and the average soldier thought more of General Bragg's Army than of strategic positions.

Early in June General Rosecrans concentrated the three corps of Generals Thomas, McCook and Crittenden on the enemy's right, and, in order to conceal his purpose, made an attack with his cavalry forces on the enemy's left. He discovered however, that he could only succeed by a great sacrifice of life; he saw, also, that if the enemy were defeated he would have an open way for retreat. He, therefore, determined on a flank movement. On the 24th of June McCook advanced toward Liberty Gap, where, after some skirmishing, the Confederates, finding themselves flanked, fell back, and our forces took possession of the Gap. General Thomas' command, with Reynolds' division in advance, followed by Rousseau's and Negley's divisions, marched out on the Manchester Turnpike.



Stone River Battlefield

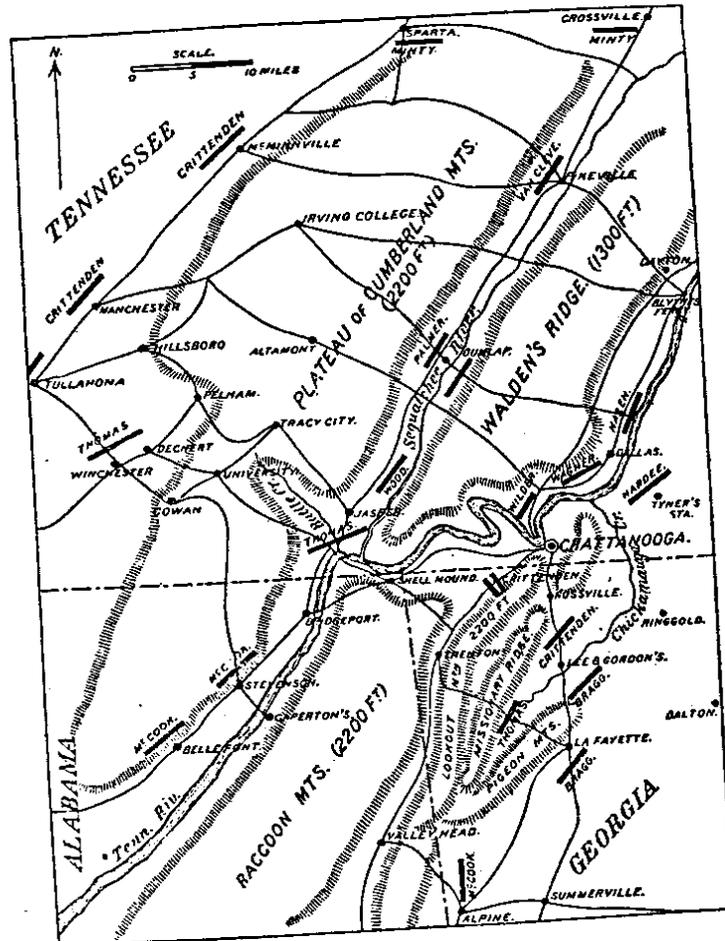
that he
not on
within
and sk
range o
the pre
of bein
of Gen
about t
thousar
masked
take th
tone, "I

De
fields at
superior
wounde

Ge
Woods,
eral Th
ions in
Crittend
forming
the righ
wooded
was abo

In
the win
mitted,
able. E
stars po
The dee
half a le
give bat
his army
the Com
left, to a

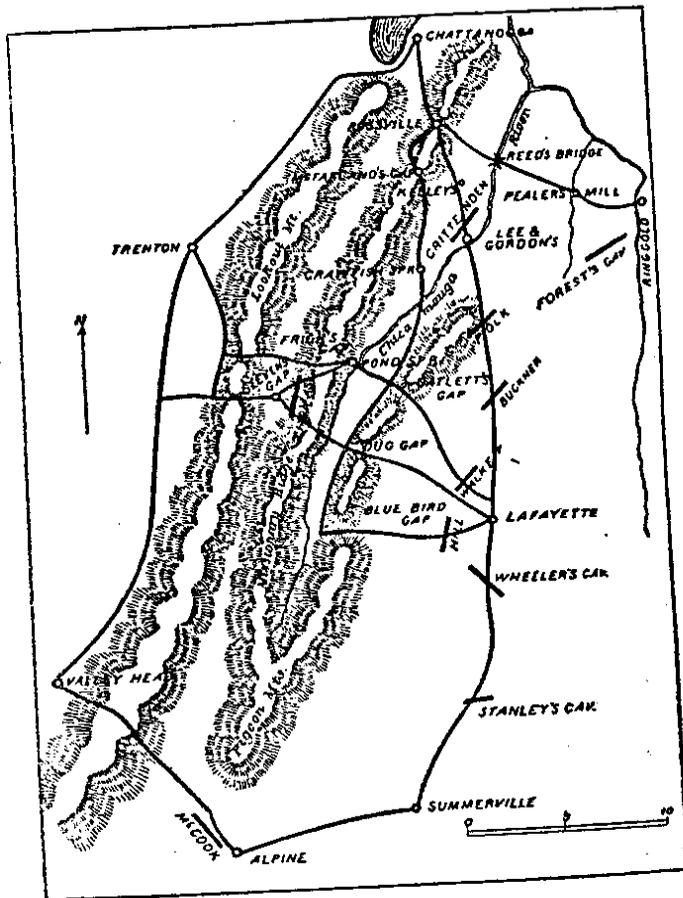
On
ten min
our righ
reserves
the roa
troops w



The Campaign for Chattanooga

cc
In
ta
ne
of
ne
re

ea
ma
ba
as
rec
at
the
the
Ri
cro
wo
by
of
eith
fer
To
the
Riv
the
Ter
abc
the
to
ates
cau
into
selv
Jeff
sug
this
rock
Duc
mer
Bra

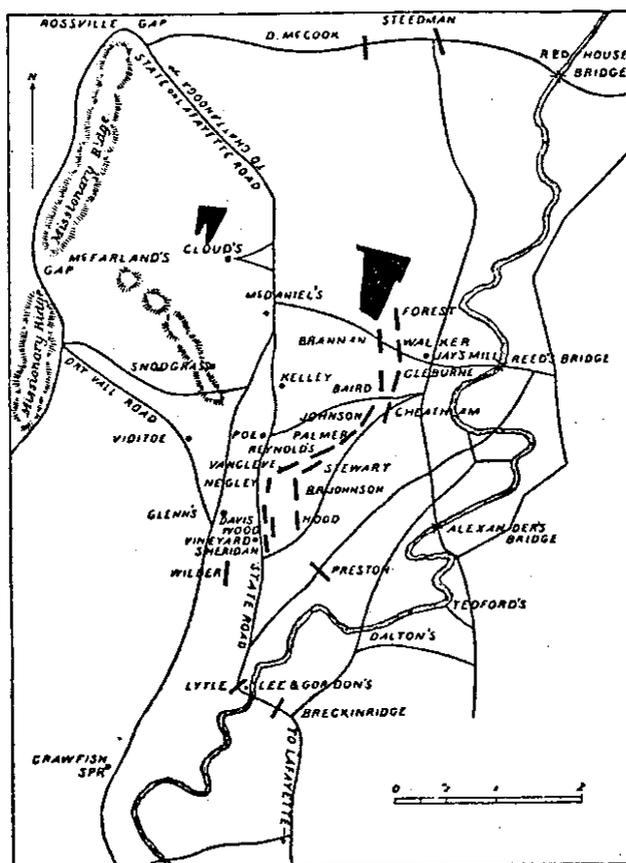


McLemore's Cove

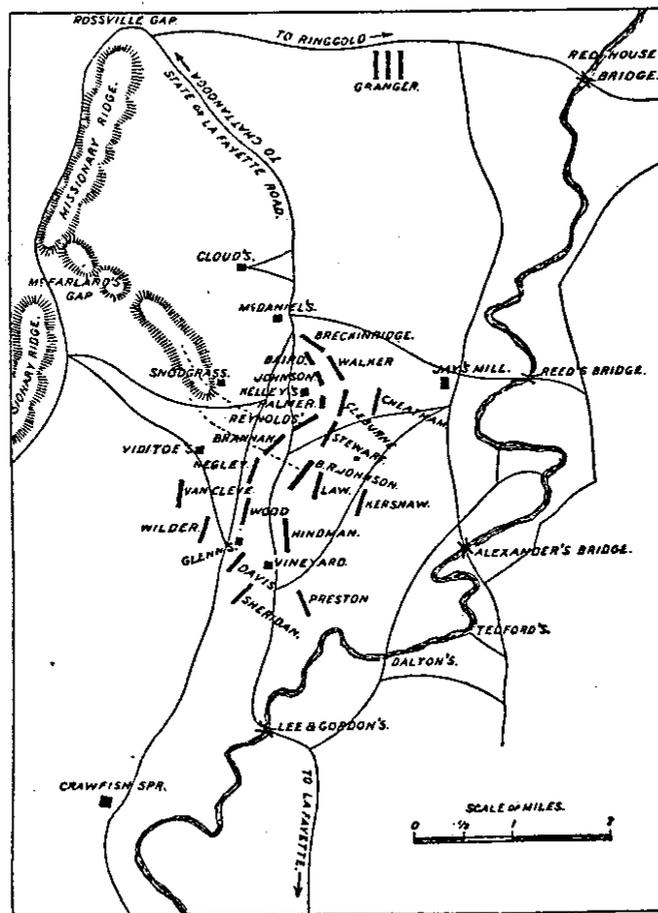
H
 from Cha
 The impr
 whereas
 campaign
 ate forces
 gard to th
 strategy
 was const
 to Pikevil
 effectually
 eral Bragg
 time was
 the forces
 Army had
 given eas
 strategy
 of Genera
 Bragg's A
 To gain
 but for in
 it was rac

Whe
 Crittenden
 paratively
 the corps
 marched
 in Chattan
 at that tin
 point for

On t
 following
 received f
 stating th
 will occup
 sires you
 rangemen
 that Gene
 that he sh
 concentrat
 but he th
 was, there
 Thomas
 pursuit an



Battle of Chickamauga, September 19th

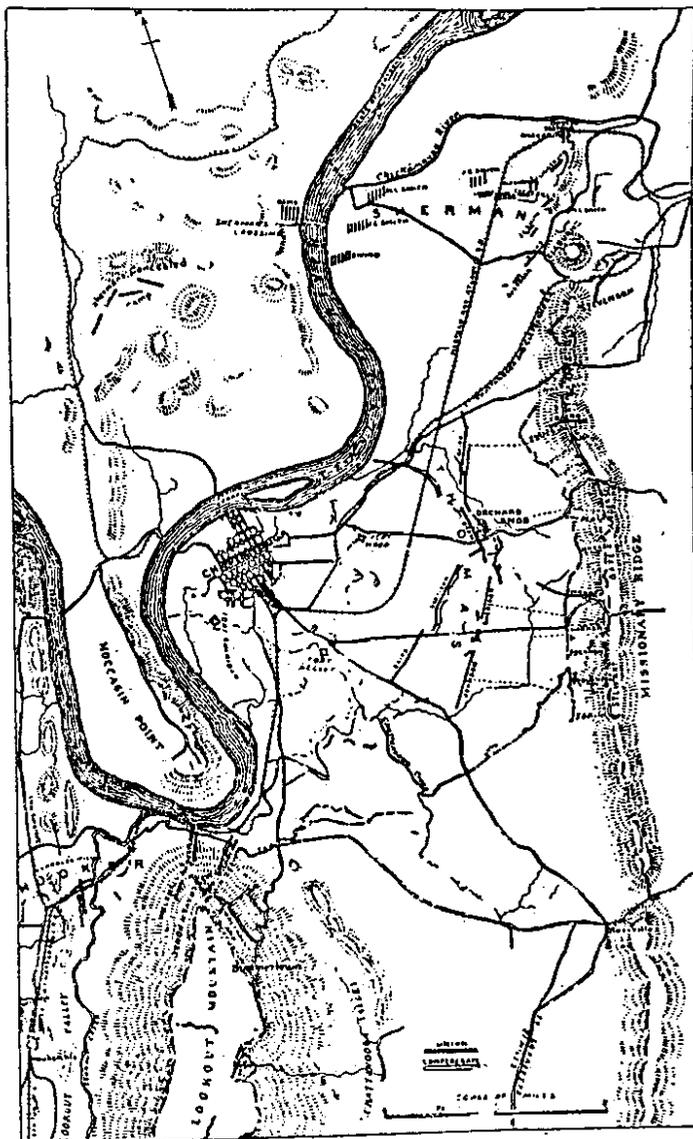


Battle of Chickamauga, September 20th

account
 ected, the
 ay after-
 ement of
 ening of
 follows:
 ny of the
 hile Jef-
 r to cover
 ttanooga.
 encamped
 f General
 ort, cross-
 the North
 at stream
 n Lookout
 Cruft's di-
 n of Sher-
 on account
 forty guns.
 er General
 was sent to
 er crossing

vs: Three
 in and the
 ek. Three
 breastworks.
 agg's head-
 eet's corps

neral Sher-
 me in with
 awing. In
 reconnois-
 erates were
 n the battle
 onfederates
 back to the
 ed to bring
 and General
 all the other

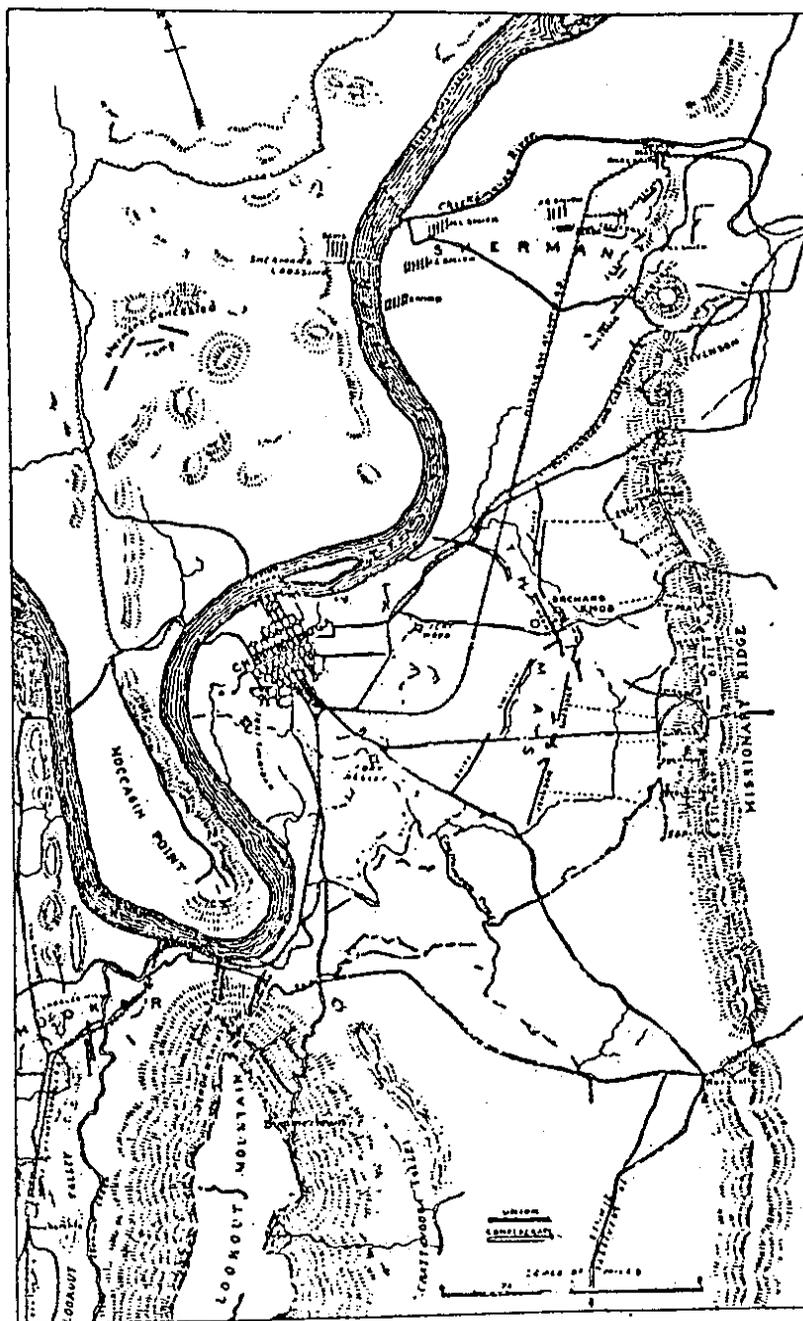


Chattanooga—Lookout Mountain—Missionary Ridge

nt
ne
r-
of
of
s:
he
ef-
ver
ga.
ed
ral
ss-
rth
am
out
di-
ner-
unt
uns.
eral
t to
sing

three
the
three
orks.
ead-
corps

Sher-
with
In
nois-
were
battle
rates.
o the
oring
neral
other



Chattanooga—Lookout Mountain—Missionary Ridge