

PUBLISHED MONTHLY IN THE INTEREST OF  
CONFEDERATE ASSOCIATIONS AND KINDRED TOPICS.

## **THE FIRST DAY AT GETTYSBURG.**

BY CAPT. S. A. ASHE, RALEIGH, N. C.

In the summer of 1863, Gen. R. E. Lee reorganized his army. The first corps under Longstreet had no North Carolinians in it. The second corps under General Ewell had Hoke's Brigade, containing the 6th, 21st, 24th, and the 57th North Carolina regiments, as well as the 1st North Carolina Battalion, but the 24th North Carolina regiment was now detached. Also, in that corps were the 1st and 3rd North Carolina regiments in Stuart's Brigade and Daniel's Brigade, composed of the 3rd, 43rd, 45th, 53rd regiments and the 2nd Battalion. Iverson's Brigade, in Rodes' Division, contained the 5th, 12th, 20th, and 23rd North Carolina regiments, and Ramseur's Brigade contained the 2nd, 4th, 14th, and 30th North Carolina regiments. In the third corps, under A. P. Hill, were Heth's Division, Pettigrew's Brigade, containing the 11th, 26th, and 52nd North Carolina regiments, Pender's Division, Lane's Brigade, containing the 7th, 18th, 28th, 33rd, and 37th North Carolina regiments, and Scales' Brigade containing the 13th, 16th, 22nd, 34th, and the 38th North Carolina regiments.

Altogether, in Lee's army were thirty-two North Carolina regiments and two battalions, besides Artillery and Cavalry.

In June, 1863, Lee marched into Pennsylvania. Toward the end of the month, Lee himself was at Chambersburg, some twenty-five miles northwest of Gettysburg, having with him the corps of Longstreet and A. P. Hill, while Ewell's Corps was at Carlisle, to the northeast. Learning that Meade's army was moving northward, Lee directed Hill and Ewell to concentrate near Cashtown.

At 11 o'clock of the 30th, as Pettigrew's Brigade was approaching Gettysburg on the Chambersburg Pike, it unexpectedly met the Federal cavalry under General Buford. There was a slight skirmish, but Pettigrew, in conformity with orders, withdrew; and Buford hastened up the Federal infantry that was approaching from the south.

The town of Gettysburg is in a wild, rocky, mountainous country. About half a mile west was Seminary Ridge, running North and South, with the Seminary itself near the town. A mile further across the valley, called McPherson Woods, was another ridge, and farther on a third ridge, the two ridges separated by a stream known as Willoughby Run. There were steep hills, and the surface was rough and rocky with stone walls protruding here and there. From the northwest corner of the town ran out the Chambersburg Pike and an old railroad line, about a hundred yards apart, and it was along this pike and in the McPherson Woods that the first battle was to be fought. Running out to the northeast of the pike was the Mummasburg road with woods on its sides, and north and south ran the McPherson Ridge, with a rock wall more than five hundred yards long on its

crest; and where that ceased, on the east of the crest of the ridge, the ground fell abruptly.

On the morning of July 1, the Confederate columns were moving. A. P. Hill's Corps was the first to reach the vicinity of Gettysburg—coming along the Chambersburg Pike, Heth's division being the advance, and Pender's was following some miles distant. When Heth reached Willoughby Run, he found the Federals posted on the opposite side contesting his passage.

Some of the Federal infantry had arrived. As the Federal infantry came, Buford had them occupy strong positions on the western slopes of McPherson Ridge, and he parked the artillery on a commanding position. Cutler's Federal Brigade was posted, two regiments to the south of the pike and railroad, and two regiments to the north in a deep cut and protected by an embankment.

Heth placed Marye's Battery on the south of the pike, and opened on the Federal line. Archer's Brigade was at the south of the pike, with Pettigrew's Brigade supporting it some distance in the rear, while Davis's Brigade was north of the pike and the old railroad line, which were about one hundred yards apart. The Federal line of defense ran north and south, and so the 55th North Carolina Regiment, being on Davis's extreme left when the advance began, was the first Confederate regiment to come into view and it received the first fire of the enemy, which it promptly returned. Then Davis's Brigade hastily charged, and when it neared the Federal position, wheeled to the right, enveloping the enemy, who abandoned the position, suffering great loss. Such was the opening of the conflict. In the advance, Colonel Connally, as gallant a soldier as ever drew breath, had seized the colors of the 55th and, waving it aloft, along with the color guard, rushed forward in front of the regiment. He was the particular target of the enemy's fire and fell prostrate, wounded in the hip and arm. Major Belo, close by, rushed up and asked if he were badly wounded. The quick reply was, "Yes, but pay no attention to me! Take the colors and keep ahead of the Mississippians." Belo did so.

While the charge of Davis's Brigade was successful, misfortune had befallen Archer's Brigade. Cutler's two Federal regiments, south of the pike, and Buford's Cavalry resisted Archer's crossing the Run; but the brigade had forced passage and was advancing, fighting the front, when, suddenly, the "Iron Brigade," which had been stationed in the woods on his right, rushed out behind him and enveloped his brigade, taking many prisoners, among them General Archer himself.

Returning to Davis's Brigade, when the 55th North Carolina wheeled to the right and reached the railroad cut, half of it extended beyond the embankment; and later, Archer's Brigade being destroyed, the brigade was directed to retire through the cut, the 55th to cover the retreat.

The Federal regiments in reserve now began a counter attack, and, as the 55th was about to retire, charged upon the Confederates. A part of the regiment being in the railroad cut, it was at much disadvantage; but the charge was withstood and the 55th

North Carolina wheeled to the right and reached the railroad cut, half of it extended beyond the embankment; and later, Archer's Brigade being destroyed, the brigade was directed to retire through the cut, the 55th to cover the retreat.

The Federal regiments in reserve now began a counter attack, and, as the 55th was about to retire, charged upon the Confederates. A part of the regiment being in the railroad cut, it was at much disadvantage; but the charge was withstood and the 55th continued to retire. The loss of the regiment was great in dead and wounded, and many were captured in the cut. Then the battle ceased and it was not revived until nearly three o'clock. Pettigrew was under fire from the Federal artillery, but the failure of both Davis and Archer showed that the Federals were too strong to be pressed, so Pettigrew's Brigade merely kept its position.

Now new forces on each side began to arrive. The Federals, in defense, had strong positions to resist attack—stone walls, hills, and woods, which they occupied. They availed themselves of every advantage.

Pender's Division was the first of the Confederates to come. It took position to support Pettigrew's Brigade, which had held the South front, subjected to a shelling from the Federal batteries.



THE NORTH CAROLINA MONUMENT AT GETTYSBURG

General Heth had been wounded in the first clash of arms, and General Pettigrew had succeeded to the command of the Division; Colonel Marshall, taking command of the Brigade, which was three thousand strong, was at the Confederate right, supported by Scales and Lane.

Hours passed. It was about two o'clock when Rodes' Division began to arrive, reaching the vicinity from the northeast and crossing well to the west to be in touch with Heth at the west of the town. The

Federal line ran virtually north and south. With Rodes were the three North Carolina brigades of Daniels, Iverson, and Ransom, and O'Neill and Doles. He arranged Iverson's Brigade in front, with O'Neill in support. Daniels farther to his right, Ramseur in reserve; while Doles's Brigade was to the north and east, holding in check Federal cavalry that threatened his flank and rear.

With Rodes' entrance begins a new conflict. Iverson's North Carolina brigade led the attack. It emerged from the McPherson Ridge 1,450 strong and advanced to the southeast, under artillery fire, through an open grass field. Pickets had not been sent out, and Iverson was not aware that behind a stone wall, five hundred and fifty yards long, running north and south on the crest of the hill, the Federals lay concealed. The approach from the northwest was oblique, and when Iverson's Brigade was at point-blank range, the Federals rose and poured into it a withering fire from front and flank. Unable to advance, unwilling to retreat, the brigade lay down in a depression in the field and fought as best they could. The carnage was great.

O'Neill's Brigade, Alabama, was to support Iverson. It consisting of the 6th, 12th, and 26th Alabama, and being at the left of the line it had been subjected during Iverson's advance to a protracted artillery fire that lasted an hour. It now advanced against the Federals at the wall, but after a desperate and bloody battle, O'Neill found that his left regiment was being flanked by a heavy Federal force, and therefore, he had to retire. While this was in progress, Federal regiments rushed over the stone wall to Iverson's regiments, killed and wounded many and took two hundred prisoners. But the 12th Regiment, being on the extreme right, escaped. There was a hollow in the near woods, and it lay there, out of view, for a time, separated from the other troops.

Daniel had borne still farther to the right and, having joined Davis' Brigade, he detached the 3rd Alabama and the 53rd North Carolina regiments to attack the Federal line at the end of the stone wall, while with the other regiments he turned to attack the Federals at the railroad cut, who would have been on his flank.

It happened that the 12th North Carolina regiment had moved close to the Federal front, unperceived, and joined in the assault made by the 3rd Alabama and the 53rd North Carolina, which was entirely successful. But the other part of Daniel's Brigade suffered some disaster. The Federals there were drawn up one hundred yards beyond the cut; the brigade pressed its way to the cut, suffering heavily, and the men speedily jumped into it. But, presently, a Federal battery that enfiladed the cut opened fire, and the men retreated in confusion.

"Then was heard a voice that might have been heard a quarter of a mile, ordering the men to halt and reform on him, without regard to companies." It was General Daniel. The men obeyed, then rushed forward, and inflicted a heavier loss on the enemy than they themselves had sustained.

While the battle was thus raging at the north side of the pike, Pettigrew's Brigade and Brockenborough's, under a heavy fire, crossed Willoughby

Run, hotly resisted. "They enter the slope. The colors of the 26th Regiment have fallen seven times; volleys of musketry are fast thinning their ranks." "Pender, with Scales's Brigade, is rushing to their aid—and passes to their right." Major Englehard reports that "the brigade encountered a most terrible fire of grape and shell on the left flank, and grape and musketry in the front, but still it pressed forward at double-quick until the bottom was reached; here the fire was most severe."

The brigade halted at the foot of the hill. Pender rushed up, urging the men to stop only to reform, and then to press forward on the double-quick. Scales ordered his men to charge. Led by Colonel Gordon of the 34th, the men dashed for the ridge. "With a cheer, Pettigrew's Brigade now reached the crest, and Scales' Brigade, now joined by Perrin's, drives the Federal line back to Seminary Ridge."

While this was in progress at the south, at the northern end of the line, Ramseur, with the reserve, became active. He had detached the 2nd and 4th North Carolina to support O'Neill, and now, with the 13th and 14th North Carolina and the 3rd Alabama, he moved to the attack on the north end of the stone wall, O'Neill joining in the movement. "They press on *en masse* and seize Oak Hill. With them is Captain Fry and his artillery, who, by his energy and skill, did much to accomplish the result. They take Oak Hill and enfilade the Federals behind the stone wall. These break and withdraw to interior ridges near the city."

Rodes had posted Doles' Brigade still farther to the north and east, where the Federal cavalry were threatening the flank, and Doles advanced against a hill occupied by skirmishers. He drove them off—and occupied the hill.

Earlier, new Federal divisions, passing through Gettysburg, had reached the field. At first they had turned to the west and northwest, where the battle was raging. But when General Barlow's Division came, it went to the north and occupied some woods half a mile from the stone wall. When Doles moved to the hill in his front, Barlow prepared to attack him. Dividing his 1st Brigade into two parts, he moved on Doles. It was now about 3:30; General Early's Division had marched fourteen miles and was near Gettysburg. They heard the firing and double-quickened a mile to reach the scene, arriving exhausted. Early placed Gordon on the right near Doles, next Hays, then Avery's Brigade, with Colonel Jones and a dozen pieces of artillery at the east; and Jones was instructed to open fire on the Federal artillery and infantry.

When Barlow's second line moved westward against Doles, Gordon appeared on the scene and attacked it. Gordon says: "Moving forward under heavy fire over rail and plank fences, and crossing a creek whose banks were so abrupt as to prevent passage except at certain points, the brigade rushed upon the enemy with a resolution and spirit rarely excelled." "The colors on position of the two lines were less than fifty paces apart." These Federals being driven back, the flank of those engaged with Doles was exposed. Barlow sought to charge front and meet Gordon's men on his flank, but his effort failed,

and that Federal "force was driven back in the greatest confusion and with immense loss." But Doles found himself now about to be flanked by a heavy Federal force that appeared on his right, and he turned to meet it.

Barlow was wounded, and General Ames, of his 2d Brigade, now took charge. Ames says: "My brigade was finally formed in rear of some cover near a small stream, half a mile from the town. From this position it was driven, the men of the front division running through the lines of my regiments, creating considerable confusion. The whole division was falling back, with little or no regularity, regimental organizations having been destroyed."

At the rout of Barlow's 1st Brigade, Early directed Gordon to stop; and, hurrying along his line, he ordered Hays and Avery to move in toward Gordon. Hays met with no opposition except some skirmishers and artillery, he taking two pieces of artillery. He now joined Gordon on the field.

But General Schurz had placed a brigade near the city on the east, and Avery's Brigade ran over them, as they broke at the first fire. Colonel Jones, in command of the artillery at the east, says of this movement: "We could see the Confederate and Federal lines arrayed against each other in open ground. They stood apart in battle array, and in plain view for two miles, except along where the line was hid in the depression of the hills. Then a Confederate brigade on our extreme right moved forward upon the expectant enemy. Then came the expected yell, a rush, and the enemy's line was broken."

"The brigades moved in echelon, and there was the same yell and the same flight of the enemy. As the conflict neared our position, the effect was marvelous. The men were wild with excitement. Where they stood they could see two miles of the enemy in full retreat. The 57th North Carolina was on the extreme left of our line, and its opponents broke at the first fire. But one of Schurz's brigades took position behind a fence on a hill. The Federal artillery on the ridge opened with shell and canister on us, but Avery and the brigade double-quickened, reached the fence, routed Schurz's men, who fled before them, the 6th North Carolina Regiment capturing two pieces of artillery."

The new Federal line from Seminary Ridge up to the north of the town had been assailed. At the extreme west was Pender with Scales's Brigade; Lane on the right with Perrin, Pettigrew and Brockenborough on the left. Farther along, Daniel, with Davis and their commands; and Ramseur and O'Neill's at the north.

Scales, on the west, says: "After heavy fighting and serious losses we passed up the ascent, crossed the Ridge and commenced the descent just opposite the Theological Seminary. Here the brigade encountered a most terrific fire from grape and shell on our flank, and grape and musketry in our front. Every discharge made havoc in our line, but still we pressed on at a double-quick to the bottom, about seventy-five yards from the college in our front."

At the north, Rodes and Ramseur had penetrated beyond the Federal flank, and everywhere at the north of the line the attack had been irresistible. The Federal brigades gave way and sought safety in flight. They reached the city closely pursued by the

victorious Confederates; and indeed there was fighting in the streets. And now at Seminary Hill, General Perrin quickly divided his brigade, sending two regiments at one end of the Federal line and two at the other, taking them in the flank and routing them. In ten minutes they likewise flee from the field and enter the town, closely pursued by Pender's and Perrin's Confederates. Five thousand Federal prisoners were taken, and the Federals sought safety on Cemetery Ridge a mile south of the town.

More attention has been given to the last and most important day of the battle of Gettysburg than to that of the first day, but the first day was a real North Carolina Day. It was fought by thirty-two North Carolina regiments and two battalions, ten Georgia regiments, seven Alabama, five Louisiana, five South Carolina, and three regiments each of Mississippi, Tennessee, and Virginia—in all, thirty-six others, and the defeat of the Federals was complete.

In this first engagement, while other brigades suffered heavily, those of North Carolina fared the worst. The 26th North Carolina regiment lost 28 officers and 468 men; the 20th North Carolina Regiment lost 29 killed and 93 wounded; Iverson reported a loss of 500 killed in his brigade; and Scales's Brigade suffered heavily, as did all of them.

In the preliminary clash, the 55th North Carolina regiment had its part. Later, when the great battle began, the North Carolina regiments were at the right and left ends of the line, and the debacle was when Ramseur's four North Carolina regiments penetrated the center, separated the Federal wings, and started the flight of the enemy.

The victorious army, after the tremendous exertions of July 1, now rested for the night, Hill in possession of Seminary Ridge, Ewell's Corps to the north and east of the town.

Avery's Brigade was directed to the east of the town, where it was at first subjected to artillery fire, but found shelter in a valley. The brigade was anxious to proceed and take possession of Cemetery Ridge to the southeast of the town, but had no orders to go farther. All night a thousand men were cutting down trees on Culp's Hill and breastworks were thrown up and artillery placed on Cemetery Hill, and a battery placed on a small hill between the two eminences. Indeed, the Federals, the whole length of Cemetery Ridge, were fortifying all night long.

If Longstreet, with his very fine corps, had struck the Federals early the next morning, there probably never would have been a third day at Gettysburg.



*The Flag of the N.C. 18th Reg.*