

“I Have Never Seen the Like Before”

Herbst Woods, July 1, 1863

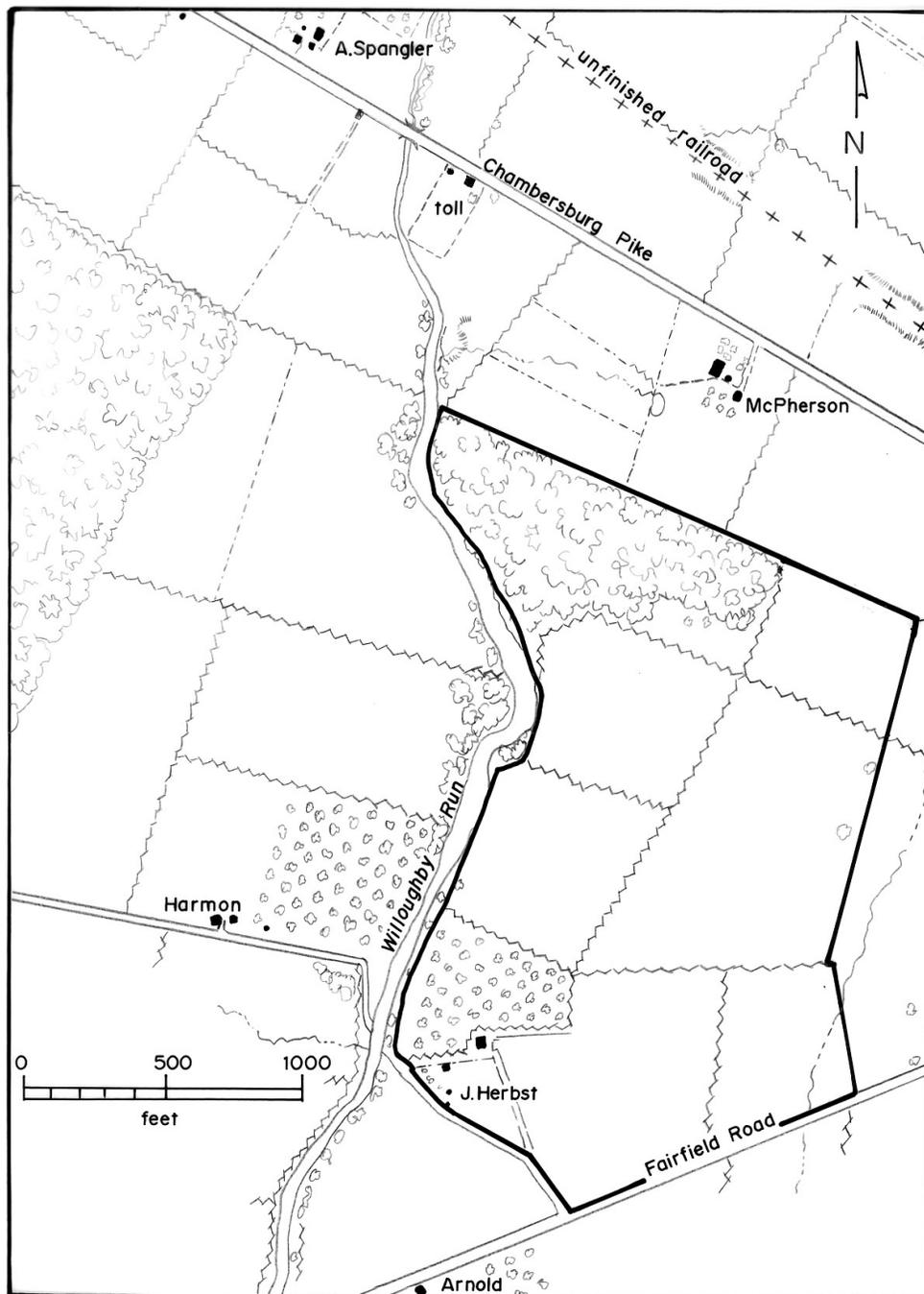
D. Scott Hartwig

Of the 160 acres that John Herbst farmed during the summer of 1863, 18 were in a woodlot on the northwestern boundary, adjacent to the farm owned by Edward McPherson. Until July 1, 1863 these woods provided shade for Herbst's eleven head of cattle, wood for various needs around the farm, and some income. Because of the level of human and animal activity in these woods they were free of undergrowth, except for where they came up against Willoughby Run, a sluggish stream that meandered along their western border. Along this stream willows and brush grew thickly.¹

Although Confederate troops passed down the Mummasburg road on June 26 on their way to Gettysburg, either Herbst's farm was too far off the path of their march, or he was clever about hiding his livestock, for he suffered no losses. His luck at avoiding damage or loss from the Confederate invasion of Pennsylvania began to run out on June 30. It was known that a large force of Confederates had occupied Cashtown on June 29, causing a stir of uneasiness. William Comfort and David Finnefrock, the tenant farmers on the Emmanuel Harmon farm, Herbst's neighbor west of Willoughby Run, chose to take their horses away to protect them. Herbst and John Slentz, the tenant who farmed the McPherson farm, apparently decided to try their chances and remained on their farms, thinking they stood a better chance of protecting their property if they remained.²

On the morning of June 30 a large Confederate infantry brigade under the command of General James J. Pettigrew approached Gettysburg from Cashtown along the Chambersburg turnpike. Pettigrew's mission was to gather supplies in Gettysburg, not to fight. He had been advised that he might encounter some militia "which he would have no difficulty in driving away." Although no one anticipated that any troops from the Army of the Potomac were yet in Pennsylvania, in the outside chance some had ventured as far north as Gettysburg, Pettigrew had explicit orders that he was not to engage them. Robert E. Lee did not want to become embroiled in a battle until it was at the time and place of his choosing.³

Pettigrew's column marched at 6:30 A.M. It was an overcast day and intermittent showers fell on the marching soldiers. Along the way a man who one of Pettigrew's aides,



The farm of John Herbst, July 1863. Map by John Heiser

Lieutenant Louis G. Young, described as “General Longstreet’s spy,” rode by in the direction of Gettysburg. He soon returned with news that Buford’s division of Union cavalry “estimated at three thousand strong” had arrived in Gettysburg. Shortly after the spy departed, another rider came out from Gettysburg. Identifying himself as a member of the Knights of the Golden Circle he brought the same warning that Federal cavalry were approaching Gettysburg. Pettigrew halted the column and sent a courier back with this news to his division commander, Henry Heth, in Cashtown, and requested instructions. Push on, Heth responded, the cavalry were likely a home

guard and not from the Army of the Potomac. Pettigrew marched past the Herr Tavern. He halted the main body of his command near Willoughby Run and advanced a skirmish line up what would become known as McPherson's Ridge to scout ahead. His skirmishers passed over McPherson's Ridge and by McPherson's farm, and advanced to Seminary Ridge. Pettigrew and some of his staff may have accompanied the skirmish line, for several mounted Confederate officers were seen on the Chambersburg pike where it crosses Seminary Ridge, in conversation with some of the nearby residents. It was about 10:30 A.M. John Buford's division had not yet arrived in Gettysburg, but Pettigrew observed some mounted troops in the distance, probably Buford's advance scouts, and he may have seen the main body of the division approaching along the Emmitsburg road. Whatever he saw convinced him that if he advanced to Gettysburg there would be a fight, so he ordered his column to turn around and return to Cashtown.⁴



Herbst house and post-battle barn in 1877. GNMP Archives

Pettigrew's departure and the arrival of Buford's cavalry likely gave John Herbst and his neighbors a sense of relief and comfort. But anxiety replaced relief when Colonel William Gamble's brigade of Buford's cavalry, with some 1,700 men and horses, filed south from the Chambersburg pike around noon to bivouac on Herbst's, McPherson's, and the Lutheran Seminary's property. What damage Herbst suffered at the hands of Buford's men is unknown, but Slentz watched as the Federal troopers threw down approximately a quarter-mile of McPherson's fencing to make room for maneuvering and for cooking fires.⁵

Buford kept his troopers busy through the afternoon and night of June 30 establishing picket lines, reconnoitering the terrain, and dispatching patrols out nearly every road emanating from Gettysburg. He believed that the Confederates who had come to Gettysburg that day from Cashtown would return in greater strength on July 1. Based upon his analysis of the terrain and his knowledge of the general strategic situation, Buford determined to make a stand astride the western branch of McPherson's Ridge, where the Chambersburg pike passes by McPherson's farm. This position offered several advantages. The ridgeline offered concealment for troops beneath its crest, Willoughby Run ran along the western base of the ridge offering an obstacle to advancing troops, and the McPherson farm buildings and Herbst Woods offered cover to dismounted troopers south of the pike. It was a good position for covering the western approaches to Gettysburg, but Buford worried that the enemy would strike him before Union infantry could come to his support.⁶

The nearest supports had marched to within five miles south of Gettysburg and were camped along the Emmitsburg road on both sides of Marsh Creek. This was Brigadier General James Wadsworth's 1st Division, 1st Corps. The rest of the 1st Corps was bivouacked nearby. The 1st Corps commander, Major General John F. Reynolds, had been elevated that day to command of the Left Wing of the Army of the Potomac, consisting of his own 1st Corps, the 3rd Corps, and the 11th Corps. Reynolds' orders were to proceed to Gettysburg on July 1 with the 1st Corps and

report to his commander, Major General George G. Meade, on whether or not the ground around Gettysburg was a position from which the army might want to offer the enemy battle.⁷

Wadsworth's division consisted of two infantry brigades: the 1st, commanded by Brigadier General Solomon Meredith; and the 2nd, led by Brigadier General Lysander Cutler. Meredith's brigade had won renown in the army as the Iron Brigade. During much of 1862 John Gibbon had been brigade commander, and he molded the men into a first-class fighting unit. To set the unit apart from other units and build esprit, Gibbon had the men draw the uniform of the U.S. Regular Army, including frock coats, leggings, and the black felt Hardee Hat. By the time of Gettysburg the frock coats and leggings had largely disappeared, and most of the men wore the standard uniform of U. S. Volunteers, but the Hardee Hat remained the signature of the brigade, and all enlisted men still wore it.

June 30 had been an easy day for Meredith's men. After a twenty-six-mile march on June 29 to Emmitsburg, they had only marched four miles and halted on the north bank of Marsh Creek at noon. The only grumbling was about the weather. "I don't think I ever before saw at this time of the year such a long continued, misty, drizzling storm as we have been marching through since crossing the Potomac," wrote Lieutenant Colonel Rufus R. Dawes of the 6th Wisconsin. The respite from marching gave the brigade's officers and sergeants the opportunity to work on monthly returns and clothing accounts (paperwork was not suspended while on campaign), and to muster the men for pay. For those soldiers who did not draw picket duty, the locals offered good food to eat. "We lived high here," wrote a lieutenant in the 19th Indiana. "People brought in everything in the way of eatables."⁸

For the moment, these tough veterans enjoyed their respite from marching. Everyone knew that they were closing upon the enemy and that contact might be made any day. But they were in a Northern state, among friendly people who plied them with good food and fresh milk, and for these few precious hours the war seemed a distant thing. In spite of the burdensome paperwork the end of the month always brought, George H. Stevens, lieutenant colonel of the 2nd Wisconsin, might have had a few moments to think about home, and his wife and two children. Stevens was 31 years old. He had organized a militia unit in Fox Lake, Wisconsin before the war, where he ran a retail grocery. When the firing on Fort Sumter occurred, he closed his store and told his brother, "This is the last time I shall put up these shutters. The store is closed. Tomorrow I shall call a meeting of the Citizens Guard, and find out how many will go with me to war." He rose from captain to lieutenant colonel.⁹

Among the other field and company officers in the brigade who labored, like Stevens, with paperwork and other duties were Lt. Colonel William W. Dudley of the 19th Indiana; Lt. Colonel John Callis, 7th Wisconsin; and Lieutenant Gilbert A. Dickey, 24th Michigan. They, with Stevens, were something of a cross-section of the Iron Brigade's leadership. Dudley was only twenty years old, but had proven his courage and leadership ability to everyone in the regiment at Antietam. He hailed from Vermont, but when his hopes of entering Yale were dashed due to a lack of funds, he ended up in the grain-milling business in Richmond, Indiana. The thirty-five-year-old Callis was a North Carolinian, like the men he was soon to face in battle. He had seen some of the world in his life. His family moved to Lancaster, Wisconsin when he was a young



A pre-war photograph of Lt. Colonel George H. Stevens in his militia uniform. Fox Lake Public Library, WI

boy. From there he drifted around, to Minnesota, the California gold fields, and Central America, before settling down in Lancaster in 1853. As a captain he took command of the regiment in a hard fight at South Mountain, and led it again at Antietam three days later, which helped earn him promotion to lieutenant colonel in March 1863. Dickey was one of the first graduates of what became Michigan State University. He must have been a bright, energetic fellow, for he enlisted as a commissary sergeant in August 1862. By January 1863 he was promoted to sergeant major, then to lieutenant in April.¹⁰ It was men like Stevens, Dudley, Callis, and Dickey, among others, who provided the experience and leadership that kept the Iron Brigade a crack unit despite its heavy losses in previous battles.

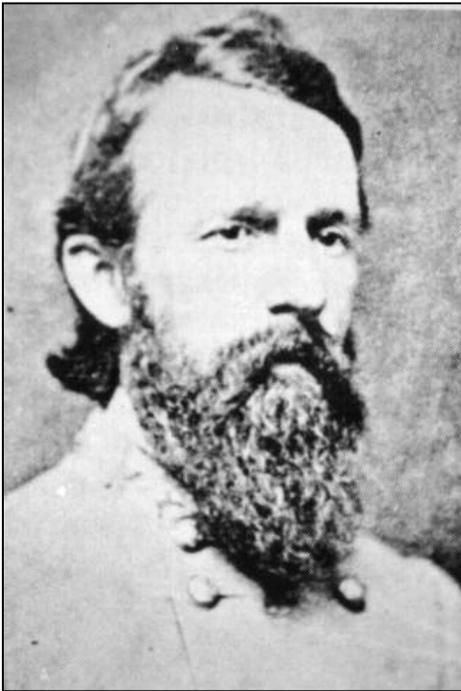
While Meredith's men rested on the banks of Marsh Creek, decisions were being made ten miles west of Gettysburg, at Cashtown, that would have a profound effect upon Meredith's westerners, John Herbst, and the hundreds of North Carolinians, Tennesseans, and Alabamians who were camped about Cashtown. Upon his return from his march to Gettysburg, James Pettigrew reported the Union cavalry presence he had observed to his division commander, Major General Henry Heth, and the Confederate 3rd Corps commander, Lt. General Ambrose P. Hill. Pettigrew was of the opinion that the horsemen were from the Army of the Potomac and were not militia. Neither Hill nor Heth believed the enemy had any substantial force around Gettysburg and "they expressed their doubts so positively," that Pettigrew called upon one of his aides, Lieutenant Louis G. Young. He did so because Young had served on the staff of Dorsey Pender during the Seven Days battles, and Hill knew him. Pettigrew thought Young might carry some weight with Hill. Young tried his best. He and another lieutenant on the staff had ridden at the rear of the column during the march back from Gettysburg and carefully observed the Union horsemen who had shadowed their march back to Cashtown. "I said their movements were not those of a home guard," recalled Young. Hill replied that he still could not believe that any part of the Army of the Potomac was this far north yet, but added "in emphatic words," that he hoped it was "as this was the place he wanted it to be." Pettigrew and Young were frustrated that they could make no impression on their seniors. Young thought a "spirit of unbelief" had taken hold that left Hill and Heth "unprepared for what was about to happen."¹¹

Clearly someone was at Gettysburg, and Hill intended to clear him out. "I intended to advance the next morning and discover what was in my front," he reported. Heth was ordered to march to Gettysburg at 5 A.M. with his entire division, nearly 7,500 strong, supported by Major Willie Pegram's reserve artillery battalion of twenty guns. For extra assurance, Hill ordered Major General William D. Pender's division, some 6,700 men, and Major David G. McIntosh's reserve artillery battalion of sixteen guns, which had just arrived on the east side of South Mountain, to follow. Hill's third division, led by Major General Richard Anderson, was still west of the mountains. He was ordered to march early the next morning so that his men could be on hand if necessary. A courier was sent to army headquarters to inform Lee of these plans and relate the details of Pettigrew's expedition to Gettysburg. Another courier sped off into the night with a dispatch to 2nd Corps commander Lt. General Richard Ewell, who was moving north of Gettysburg with two divisions, to alert him that the 3rd Corps would be moving on that town in the morning. Although Hill did not anticipate trouble, he no doubt believed he had taken sound measures to assure he could handle anything his troops might encounter.¹²

Hill's report on Gettysburg makes it clear that Lee knew he was moving to that town on July 1 and that Pettigrew had encountered a cavalry force there on June 30. What is not known is Lee's response to Hill. Clearly, Lee did not object to Hill's plan. If he had, the 3rd Corps would not have gone to Gettysburg on July 1. He probably thought it a safe move for the same reasons Hill did: He did not think that any substantial force of the Army of the Potomac was in Pennsylvania yet. But it is very likely Lee sent Hill the same caution he sent Ewell on July 1: "in case we found the enemy's force very large, he did not want a general engagement brought on till the rest of the army came up."¹³

The order of march in Heth's division for July 1 called for the veteran brigade of Brigadier General James J. Archer to lead. Archer's was the most experienced brigade in the division, consisting of Alabamians and the army's only Tennessee regiments. Before the reorganization of the army in May 1863 that created Heth's division and a 3rd Corps, Archer's brigade had been part of A. P. Hill's famous Light Division. The men had seen action in every major battle of the war in the Eastern Theater from the Seven Days through Chancellorsville. The amount of combat the men had experienced, combined with the difficulty of receiving conscripts for the Tennessee regiments, left the brigade small by comparison to the other infantry brigades in the army. The June 30 muster gave the brigade strength at 1,324, of which about 1,200 were effectives.¹⁴

Archer was a Marylander, born in Bel Air in 1817. He attended Princeton and studied law at the University of Maryland, but when hostilities broke out with Mexico he raised a company of volunteers and led them to war as their captain. Two months after entering the service he was commissioned into the U.S. Regular Army regiment of Voltiguers (voltiguers were light infantry or skirmishers). He won a brevet promotion to major for gallantry at Chapultepec. The army mustered him out in 1848, and he returned to his legal practice, but he missed the army life, and when the army expanded in 1855 he secured a commission in the 9th Infantry. Archer resigned when the war broke out and took the position of colonel in the 5th Texas Infantry. He was promoted to brigadier general on June 3 and took command of the brigade that he now would lead to Gettysburg on July 1.¹⁵



Brig. Gen. James J. Archer. GNMP

Furgurson Harris, of the 7th Tennessee, described Archer as "enigmatical. His exterior is rough and unattractive, small of stature and angular of feature, his temper was irascible, and so cold was his manner that we thought him at first a martinet." For a time, Harris related, Archer was "one of the most intensely hated men." That changed after the men observed their commander in battle. "While in battle he seemed the very God of War, and every inch a soldier according to its strictest rules," wrote Harris, and he won the confidence of his men "by his wonderful judgment and conduct on the field." Out of respect his men nicknamed him "The Little Game Cock."¹⁶

When Pettigrew learned that Archer's brigade would lead the division to Gettysburg the next day, he sought Archer out to impart a warning based on what he had seen of the ground near the town. Pettigrew "minutely" described the topography of the country between Cashtown and Gettysburg to Archer, and warned him to "look out" for a road that came into the turnpike from the south, which the enemy might use to strike him in the flank. This may have been the Herr Ridge road. Pettigrew also gave warning of a ridge "some distance out of Gettysburg on which he would

probably find the enemy, as this position was favorable for defense." This was McPherson's Ridge. According to Pettigrew's aide, Lieutenant Young, Archer listened "but believed not."¹⁷

Since Pettigrew anticipated action on July 1, his acting inspector general, Captain William W. McCreery, had an active that evening checking that all the regiments of the North Carolina brigade were prepared. McCreery was twenty-six and a West Point graduate, class of 1860. He was the son of a U.S. Naval officer who perished with his ship in 1843. An uncle had suffered the same fate, and these tragedies carried a powerful influence on McCreery's

appointment to West Point. He resigned in June 1861 and during that year he served Robert E. Lee as his ordnance officer in western Virginia and South Carolina. Promotion to captain brought assignment to General John C. Pemberton's staff, again as an ordnance officer. In May 1863 he returned East to join Pettigrew's staff. The new assignment was doubtless welcomed by McCreery, for even though it was still a staff position, it was with an infantry brigade, where the likelihood of seeing some combat was very good, which was something McCreery looked forward to. He had visions of glory on the battlefield and once told a girlfriend that if he were killed in battle, "he wanted it to be where he had seized the colors from the dead color-bearer's hand and rallied the troops." In fewer than twenty-four hours in farmer Herbst's woods, he would have his opportunity.¹⁸

Among the men of Pettigrew's brigade who made their preparations that evening for the early morning march were the ninety-one officers and men of Company F, 26th North Carolina. These men hailed from Caldwell County, North Carolina, in the western part of the state. Commanded by twenty-year-old Captain Romulus M. Tuttle, they may have been one of the largest infantry companies in either army, being only nine men shy of the authorized infantry company strength of one hundred. The company reflected the tight-knit family structure of the rough mountain country these men called home. There were three sets of twins in the company ranks, and the Coffey family counted nine members present for duty. When the regiment formed in line of battle, Captain Tuttle's company occupied the position immediately to the left of the color guard, a post that was sure to draw plenty of fire in combat.¹⁹

Company F and the rest of the regiment spent the night of June 30 on the picket line, which was established west of Marsh Creek. Less than one mile distant, on a ridge rising east of the creek, pickets of Company E, 8th Illinois Cavalry, kept a sharp eye on the Chambersburg pike and waited for the morning.

John Herbst and neighbor John Slentz remained at their farms that night with their families, perhaps thinking that they could better protect their homes and belongings from Buford's cavalry if they stayed.

The crisp notes of *Reveille* roused the troopers of Gamble's brigade from their blankets at dawn on July 1. Overcast skies heavy with the threat of rain greeted the men as they went about their morning routine of preparing a hasty breakfast, grooming and feeding the horses, and cleaning their weapons. The early dawn hours passed by quietly, but around 8 A.M. a courier sped down the turnpike from the direction of Cashtown. He bore a report to Colonel Gamble from Captain Daniel W. Buck, who commanded the squadron on picket along the turnpike. The enemy was "approaching his pickets from the direction of Cashtown, with deployed skirmishers in strong force, about 3 mile distant." Gamble was in Gettysburg with Buford when the report arrived, so Major John L. Beveridge, commanding the 8th Illinois, ordered another squadron from the brigade forward to support Buck and had the brigade buglers sound "Boots and Saddles," then "to horse." By the time Gamble and Buford came galloping up from town, the men were standing by their horses and ready for action.²⁰

Gamble ordered the troopers to mount, and the entire command advanced in line of battle to eastern McPherson's Ridge. Lieutenant John H. Calef came swinging up the turnpike with Battery A, 2nd U.S. Artillery, consisting of six three-inch rifles, and reported to Gamble, who told him to select his own position. Calef picked a position opposite McPherson's farm on western



Capt. Romulus M. Tuttle. Clark, North Carolina Regiments

McPherson's Ridge, astride the turnpike. More of McPherson's fences were leveled and the guns moved into position. No sooner had Calef done this than he received a summons from Buford. He wanted Calef's battery distributed over as large a front as possible to convey the impression of a larger force, and he ordered Calef to re-deploy his battery with a section on either side of the turnpike and a third section immediately south of Herbst Woods.²¹

In the midst of these preparations for battle, Buford, or someone from his command, discovered that the farmer Slentz and his family were still home and ordered them to leave at once. There was no time to pack and collect the farm animals. The family left so quickly that Slentz's wife left bread baking in the oven, and the children scurried off without their shoes. If anyone advised John Herbst to leave, he stubbornly ignored the warning. Although he had may have heard the distant firing of Buford and Heth's skirmishers, he apparently remained hopeful that the fighting would pass by him, and so he stayed put.²²

Four miles south of Gettysburg, Wadsworth's division assembled to begin the march to Gettysburg. The men were slated to give way to the other divisions of the corps as they had led the column the day before, but Reynolds ordered Wadsworth not to wait for the other divisions to come up but to go ahead and lead the column again that day. They ate their typical breakfast of hardtack and coffee and received extra ammunition so that each man carried 60 rounds. Meredith had to call in his pickets, so Cutler's brigade and Captain James Hall's 2nd Maine Battery started first. Reynolds and his staff rode ahead with orders for General Abner Doubleday, acting commander of the 1st Corps, to bring up the 2nd and 3rd divisions and the balance of the corps artillery brigade.²³



*Sgt. Cornelius Wheeler, Co. I, 2nd Wisconsin Infantry.
GNMP*

By the time Meredith's column was formed, Cutler's brigade and Hall's battery were nearly one mile ahead. Around 8 A.M. the brigade set out, with the 2nd Wisconsin in front, followed by the 7th Wisconsin, 19th Indiana, 24th Michigan, 6th Wisconsin, and the brigade guard, a force consisting of twenty men from each regiment in the brigade. Deducting non-combatants, there were some 1,829 officers and men in the five regiments. Even though no one expected a fight that day, Sergeant Joseph O. Williams in Company I, 2nd Wisconsin, felt an ominous premonition that he could not shake. He fell in alongside his first sergeant, Cornelius Wheeler, to talk about it. Both men came from Dodgeville, Wisconsin, and had seen plenty of hard service and could speak honestly with one another about their fears. Williams told Wheeler that "he felt as though something was going to happen to him, and that he should not get through the day." Such presentiments among soldiers

are not uncommon, and Wheeler laughed it off “and told him he was foolish to feel so blue.”²⁴

A short time later Wheeler was joined by regimental sergeant major, George H. Legate, who had made his way up from the rear of the regiment to join him. Legate had served in Company I until his promotion in April. He sought out Wheeler for the same reason Williams had. “Corny, we are going to have a fight to-day, and I will not come out alive,” Legate said. Wheeler laughed and told him that he was the second man to tell him he was going to die this day. It was “all nonsense,” said Wheeler, for there was no prospect of a fight, and even if there were one, Legate could stay out of it for the “Sergeant-Major was not of much account in a fight, anyway.” But Legate would not hear of it, and he responded, “No, I will stay with the regiment whatever happens.”²⁵

In Company B, 24th Michigan, Andrew J. Arnold, George H. Pinkney, Richard Conners, and John S. Rider all reported to the regimental surgeon and asked for permission to fall out of the ranks. Whether the four were in collusion together and hoping to find something good to eat in the area or were simply ill or too footsore to keep up is unknown. The surgeon issued each a pass, and the column marched on without the four.²⁶

Most of the men in the brigade were in high spirits that morning. Some of the men in Company F of the 6th Wisconsin, which consisted principally of Germans from Milwaukee, and included “some very good singers,” struck up a marching song in German. Everyone in the regiment fell into step with the music. When they finished the entire regiment raised three cheers. Then some of the Company K men started up another marching favorite:

*On the distant prairie where the heifer wild,
Stole into the cabbage in the midnight mild,
Every one that knew her said she was a thief
And should be killed and quartered and issued out for beef.*

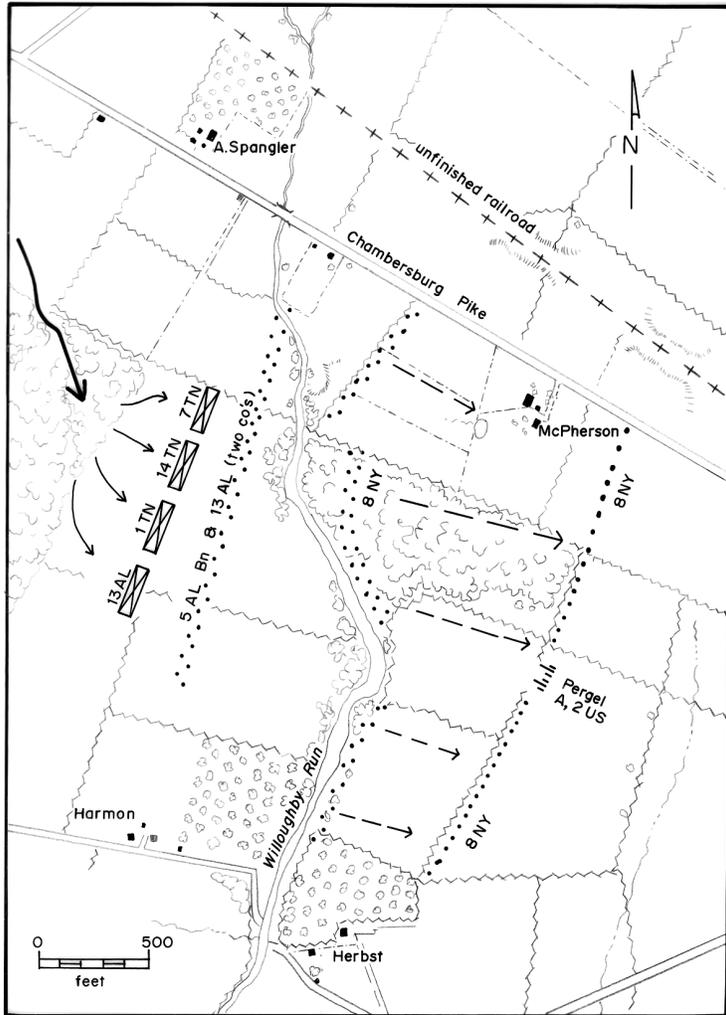
The refrain, which everyone in the regiment sang out, was “*On the distant prairie, hoop de dooden doo.*” Catching the spirit of his regiment, Lt. Colonel Dawes ordered the drum corps to the front of his regiment and had the color guard uncased the colors. The drum major ordered, “The Campbells are Coming.” Dawes intended that they would “make a show in the streets of Gettysburg.”²⁷

Miles away, on the Chambersburg pike, General Archer led his Tennesseans and Alabamians across Marsh Creek. They had been fired upon by a Union picket post at the top of a ridge east of the creek, and Archer had deployed the entire 5th Alabama battalion and two companies of the 13th Alabama as skirmishers. They fanned out north and south of the turnpike about one hundred yards ahead of the brigade. The main body of Archer’s brigade, followed by the rest of Heth’s division and Pegram’s artillery battalion, moved in column along the pike. Some shots were exchanged, but Colonel Birkett Fry, of the 13th Alabama, recalled the resistance of Buford’s cavalry was “inconsiderable,” and that “our advance was not retarded.”²⁸

After clearing Belmont School House Ridge, the Confederates pushed on across the open ground extending to the next ridge, about a mile distant, known as Herr Ridge. They encountered more dismounted Federal cavalry there, but they too were easily dislodged by Archer’s skirmish line. On Herr Ridge Heth paused. The ground descended in his front to Willoughby Run, and then rose again to McPherson’s Ridge, about a mile away. This was the position Pettigrew had warned Archer about the night before. Some Union soldiers could be seen south of the turnpike along the ridge. Its defensive advantages were easily apparent. The enemy could conceal troops behind its reverse slope or in Herbst Woods. “It was evident that the enemy was in the vicinity of the town in some force,” Heth reported afterward. But it was also evident that he was confident that his division could easily handle whatever the Yankees had in his front. Heth ordered Major Willie Pegram to bring his battalion forward and unlimber along Herr Ridge. At the same time he

directed Archer to deploy his brigade in line south of the turnpike while Brigadier General Joseph Davis formed his Mississippians and North Carolinians north of the pike. Pettigrew's and Colonel John M. Brockenbrough's brigades remained in reserve.²⁹

Pegram unlimbered his guns north and south of the pike and commenced lobbing shells into Herb Woods and at the handful of Union soldiers who could be seen along McPherson's Ridge. He drew an almost-immediate reply from Lieutenant Calef's guns that were near the pike. Archer led his brigade into the woodlot of Joseph Wible and Emmanuel Harmon (known as Herr Ridge Woods today), where he could deploy his brigade under cover and threaten the flank of the Calef's guns on the pike. His regiments were deployed as follows from left to right: the 7th Tennessee, 14th Tennessee, 1st Tennessee, and 13th Alabama, with the 5th Alabama battalion and two companies of the 13th still advancing in front as skirmishers.³⁰



Approximately 10:30 A.M.. Archer deploys on Herr Ridge and moves against Gamble's skirmish line. Map by John Heiser.

Riding ahead of the 1st Corps, General Reynolds had already arrived on the field and met with Buford, who briefed him on the situation. Reynolds decided to confront Heth's advance along McPherson's Ridge if he could get Wadsworth's men up rapidly enough. Leaving Buford to delay the Confederates he galloped off with his staff to meet Wadsworth's division at the Nicholas Codori farm on the Emmitsburg road, south of Gettysburg. When Cutler's brigade and Hall's battery arrived they were ordered to move cross-country at the double-quick to reinforce Buford. The Iron Brigade was perhaps one-half mile in rear of Cutler. The firing of Calef and Pegram's guns had carried to them earlier, but the damp atmosphere deadened the sound, and Rufus Dawes recalled, "It did not attract our attention as indicating any serious engagement." But when the Westerners reached the Codori farm, orders were barked out for non-combatants to fall out, and the column turned off the road and set off toward Seminary Ridge at the double-quick. No one in the brigade now doubted that serious work lay ahead.³¹

Archer's brigade emerged from Harmon's Woods and moved briskly down the eastern slope of Herr Ridge. Sergeant Charles Pergel's section, south of Herbst Woods, opened fire on

them and, according to Calef, “succeeded in checking them for the time.” Archer halted his brigade, not because Pergel’s guns were damaging his brigade, but because resistance was clearly increasing and he was moving away from his supports. Heth rode up and ordered him to resume his advance. Archer “suggested” to Heth that his brigade was too small “to risk so far in advance of support.” Heth listened but did not agree, and Archer had no choice but to push on.³²

Pergel continued to shell the approaching Confederate line, apparently directing most of his fire at the 13th Alabama on Archer’s right flank. A member of this regiment recalled that Pergel’s shelling caused them to move “somewhat faster” than the rest of the brigade in order to “run from under the shells.” Archer’s skirmish line advanced to Willoughby Run and pushed across it, pressing the skirmishers of the 8th New York and 8th Illinois back through Herbst Woods and up the slope of McPherson’s Ridge. The rapid advance from Herr Ridge left the main body of the brigade in some disorder. The 13th Alabama were in advance of the other regiments, and a swampy area near the creek caused the 1st Tennessee to fall behind. The banks of the creek were thick with undergrowth, which further disordered the line. But once the brigade reached the creek a ridge of ground immediately east of the creek shielded them from view of Pergel’s guns and gained them a reprieve from the artillery fire.³³

John Herbst led his family to the safety of his house’s cellar where they listened to the sounds of fighting moving steadily toward their farm. He may have now regretted not evacuating his family, but it was too late to do so now.³⁴

With Archer’s men entering Herbst Woods, Lieutenant Calef thought it imprudent to “wait till they arrived within canister range” of Pergel’s section, and he ordered the guns to limber and withdraw back to near the seminary, where he had withdrawn the rest of his battery. Gamble’s skirmish line was falling back, although still disputing Archer’s advance. Relief was at hand. In the very nick of time Cutler’s 2nd Brigade and Hall’s Maine battery came streaming onto the field. Two of Cutler’s regiments, the 14th Brooklyn and the 95th New York, were advanced to western McPherson’s Ridge, between Herbst Woods and the Chambersburg pike. As they were forming, some of Gamble’s skirmishers came running out of the woods and shouted to the 14th Brooklyn, who were forming closest to the woods, “They are coming, give it to them.” Colonel Edward Fowler, commanding the 14th, recalled that moments later, Archer’s skirmishers opened fire upon his regiment, striking several men. Fowler was a popular target too. His horse was hit twice in the head, and third ball went through his coat and struck his thigh, causing a severe contusion. Fowler’s regiment, and the 95th, returned the fire, and Archer’s skirmishers melted back into the cover of the woods.³⁵

While his skirmishers on his left flank sparred with the Federals near the McPherson farm, the main body of Archer’s brigade advanced. Raising a yell, the 7th and 14th Tennessee crossed Willoughby Run and entered Herbst Woods. The objective of these two regiments was probably to turn the flank of Cutler’s regiments at the McPherson farm, and envelop Hall’s battery, which by now had unlimbered on McPherson’s Ridge. The 1st Tennessee, in the center of the brigade, remained slightly behind the other regiments because of the delay imposed by the swampy ground and undergrowth along Willoughby Run. On the right of the 1st, the 13th Alabama reformed after crossing the stream and advanced ahead of the 1st, up the nearby bluff toward a John Herbst wheat field that extended up to the crest of eastern McPherson’s Ridge. Archer accompanied the 13th. He had dismounted when his brigade started its advance from the Herr Ridge woods. This limited his mobility and his ability to supervise his brigade, which now moved up McPherson’s Ridge in a concave line, with the flanks in advance of the center.³⁶

Unseen by Archer or his men, Meredith’s Iron Brigade had reached Seminary Ridge, which they crossed south of the Schultz house, and were moving down the slope of this ridge toward McPherson’s Ridge. Colonel Lucius Fairchild, commanding the 2nd Wisconsin, could see troopers of the 8th New York lying down in a skirmish line south of Herbst Woods, and Pergel’s section, which was probably just preparing to withdraw. He was met by Colonel John A. Kress, of Wadsworth’s staff, who ordered Fairchild to form his regiment into line on the double-quick

and added, “he would find the enemy in his immediate front as soon as he could form.” Fairchild gave the command “Forward, into line,” followed by “Forward, double-quick,” then, “Load.” Fairchild dismounted, as did Lt. Colonel Stevens and Major John Mansfield. Stevens took his post behind the right center of the regiment as it formed. Sergeant Major Legate took his place behind the left flank company. Sergeants Wheeler and Williams helped supervise the deployment of Company I and took their places in the company line of file closers.³⁷

Up ahead, General Reynolds, with some of his staff, rode into the extreme eastern finger of Herbst Woods. He could see the 7th and 14th Tennessee approaching and was anxious to blunt their advance before they gained possession of the woods and turned Cutler’s left flank. As the 2nd Wisconsin came rushing up the slope, Reynolds rode over to them and called out, “Forward Men, forward for God’s sake & drive those fellows out of those woods.”³⁸

The 282 officers and men of the 2nd swept up to the crest of eastern McPherson’s Ridge and advanced into Herbst Woods. The men of the 7th and 14th Tennessee, and possibly the 1st Tennessee, saw them coming. Corporal Robert K. Beecham in Company H, of the 2nd, thought he heard someone shout from Archer’s ranks, “Thar comes them old black-hats! It’s the Army of the Potomac, sure!” The Tennesseans shouldered their weapons and delivered a murderous volley into the 2nd’s ranks. Nearly one hundred men were cut down. Among them was Lt. Colonel Stevens, with a bullet that ripped into his abdomen. Sergeant Williams realized his morning’s premonition and went down too, killed instantly. Despite the carnage, the 2nd exhibited its mettle by closing ranks over the bodies of the fallen and forging ahead toward the 7th and 14th Tennessee, “loading and firing as we went down a slight incline,” and raising a “battle yell.” Fifty yards into the woods a Rebel bullet hit Fairchild in the arm and shattered his elbow. Major Mansfield took command, and the regiment continued to slowly press ahead.³⁹

The opening exchange of fire between the 2nd Wisconsin and Archer’s brigade also



A mid-July 1863 photograph showing the northeast corner of Herbst Woods, near where Reynolds was killed. The Lutheran Seminary can be seen in the left background. LC

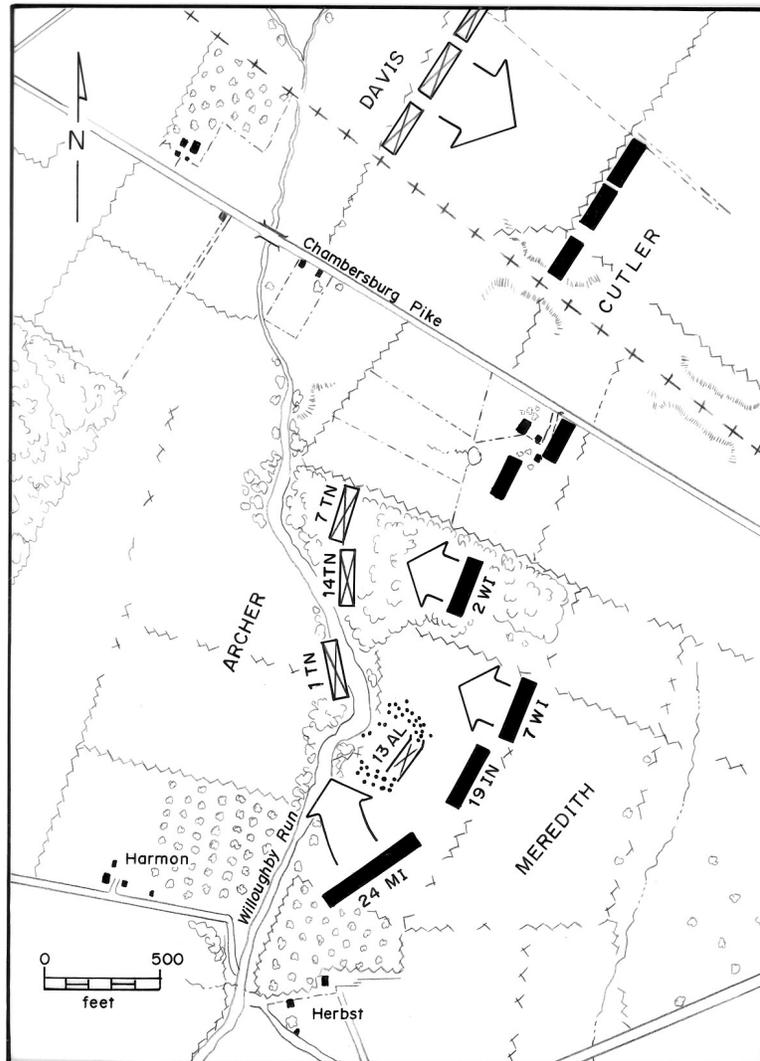
claimed Reynolds, who had remained near the eastern edge of the woods after the 2nd passed him.

He had turned in the saddle to look back toward the seminary, probably looking for the rest of Meredith's brigade, when a bullet hit him in the back of the neck and killed him instantly. "He never spoke a word or moved a muscle after he was struck," wrote one of his aides. Captain Joseph Rosengarten, in a letter written in 1876, said he thought the Confederates who shot Reynolds "lay on the edge" of Herbst Woods. He could have meant the southern edge of the woods, where there might have been some skirmishers the 2nd Wisconsin had bypassed, or he might have meant the southwestern finger of the woods, near Willoughby Run. Whichever it was, Rosengarten thought it was Reynolds' small escort that drew the fire, because several

orderlies were hit in addition to Reynolds.⁴⁰

While members of his staff carried Reynolds' body away, the rest of the Iron Brigade was forming line and rushing up the eastern slope of McPherson's Ridge to support their embattled comrades in the 2nd. The 360 officers and men of the 7th Wisconsin, under Colonel William W. Robinson, were the first to arrive. Robinson led his regiment through one of Herbst's wheat fields to just below the crest of the ridge, and a very short distance south of Herbst Woods, where he halted.

Immediately "a heavy fire" opened upon them from the direction of the ravine cut by Willoughby Run. Dense smoke and the humid weather conditions cut visibility, and Robinson was momentarily confused whether the fire came from "the enemy or the left wing of the Second Wisconsin." Captain Craig Wadsworth, the son of the division commander and a member of his staff, rode up from the direction of Cutler's



Approximately 11-11:30 A.M. Meredith strikes Archer's front and flank. Map by John Heiser

brigade, and Robinson inquired if the captain "could tell what troops those were firing in the ravine." Wadsworth pointed out a Confederate battle flag a short distance farther to the left in the ravine and told Robinson that the elder Wadsworth directed "that we should drive them out." Robinson intended to do so but thought it prudent to wait a few minutes for the 19th Indiana and 24th Michigan to form on his left before advancing.⁴¹

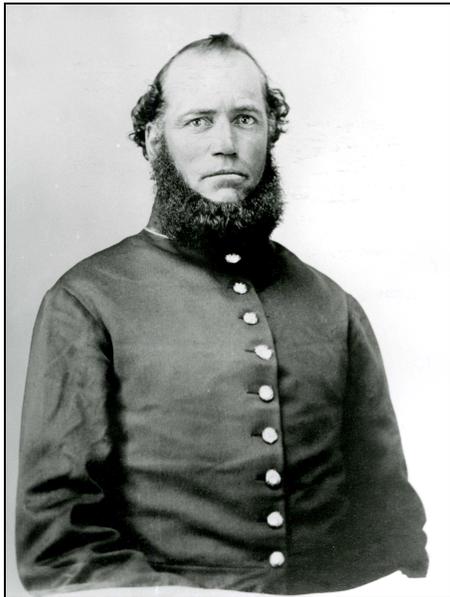
The battle flag Captain Wadsworth pointed out to Colonel Robinson belonged to the 13th Alabama. When the 2nd Wisconsin charged into Herbst Woods, Colonel Newton George,

commanding the 1st Tennessee, and the only mounted officer in the brigade, rode over to the 13th Alabama and asked Archer if the Alabamians could advance and wheel to the left to get a cross-fire on the Federals. Archer agreed, and Colonel Birkett Fry led his regiment up the slope of McPherson's Ridge. By the time this movement had developed the 7th Wisconsin had certainly come into view along McPherson's Ridge, and Fry's men directed their fire at this target while slowly wheeling to the left. Suddenly, another Union regiment appeared on the 7th Wisconsin's left. It was the 19th Indiana.⁴²

The 19th was warned by aides of Reynolds and Meredith that enemy troops were advancing up the western slope of McPherson's Ridge. The Hoosiers came into line beside the 7th Wisconsin and without waiting for orders from their field and company officers, loosed a volley into the 13th Alabama. Caught by surprise, the Alabamians wavered. "Without for a moment slackening their pace," the 19th Indiana continued moving forward, the men loading and firing as they did so. On their right the 7th Wisconsin's rifles crashed, and Colonel Robinson ordered his regiment to fix bayonets and charge.⁴³

The color bearer of the 19th Indiana was Private Burlington Cunningham of Company K. Cunningham carried the flag because he had helped rescue it when it fell during a charge the regiment made at Antietam. As the 19th advanced up the slope of McPherson's Ridge the flag was furled and covered by the shuck. A staff officer who passed by called out to Cunningham, "do not unfurl the flag," a warning he gave probably because in the close proximity of the enemy, they wished to maintain the element of surprise. But when the 19th began to move from column to line, Cunningham asked Sergeant Abram Buckles to pull the shuck off. Buckles did so, and Cunningham shook the flag out. It immediately drew a "shower of bullets" from the 13th Alabama and 1st Tennessee, one of which hit Cunningham in the side and he fell unconscious. Buckles took the flag and went on.⁴⁴

Following the 19th Indiana and hearing the same warnings that the enemy was approaching on the opposite side of McPherson's Ridge, Colonel Henry Morrow halted his 24th Michigan to allow his men to load their rifles. But a staff officer from Wadsworth, probably Colonel Kress or Captain Wadsworth, rode up and ordered Morrow to move forward immediately and not halt to load. Morrow obeyed, and deploying from column to line, led his men up to the crest of McPherson's Ridge, coming up on the 19th Indiana's left. The 13th Alabama was now completely outflanked. Some of its members attempted to resist the onslaught that bore down upon them. Rosewell Root, in the ranks of the 24th, wrote that they poured "volley after volley" into the 24th. The first to fall was the forty-three-year-old color bearer of the regiment, Able G. Peck, "a brave and faithful soldier," who took a bullet in the forehead. Charles Bellore, a corporal in the color guard, seized the flag before it touched the ground and bore them forward.⁴⁵



*Color Sgt. Abel Peck, 24th Michigan.
GNMP Archives*

Most of the 13th Alabama "skedaddled" before the advance of the 24th Michigan and 19th Indiana, tumbling down the slope of McPherson's Ridge to the cover along Willoughby Run. General Archer may have been unaware of the disaster that was swiftly overtaking his brigade. There is some evidence that he joined the 1st Tennessee when the 13th Alabama moved forward to attack the flank of the 2nd Wisconsin. A captain in the 1st

Tennessee recalled that the smoke from the heavy firing "hovered near the ground, shutting out

from view the movements of the Federal forces.” The smoke may have obscured Archer’s view of the 24th Michigan, whose approach threatened to envelop the right of his line. The first warning of trouble came when the 13th Alabama came falling back in disorder. Moments later the 19th Indiana, 24th Michigan, and 7th Wisconsin appeared through the battle smoke in seemingly overwhelming numbers. There was no time to order retreat, and the survivors of the 13th Alabama and 1st Tennessee either surrendered or fled across Willoughby Run toward the northwest, the only apparent escape route. Archer, who was greatly exhausted by this point, was swept along in the retreat.⁴⁶

When they became aware that the right flank of the brigade had dissolved, the 7th and 14th Tennessee began to give way in front of the 2nd and 7th Wisconsin. Some members of the regiments took cover in an old quarry in the northwest corner of Herbst Woods. The rest took cover “behind trees and a slight elevation of the ground.” Despite his regiment’s severe losses, Major Mansfield ordered his 2nd Wisconsin to charge the Tennesseans at the double-quick. Mansfield’s aggressive tactics worked, and Archer’s men broke “in confusion to the rear,” fleeing across Willoughby Run and into the open fields of the Harmon farm beyond.⁴⁷

Mansfield led his regiment across Willoughby Run in pursuit of the fleeing Confederates. Private Patrick Maloney, “a brave patriotic, and fervent young Irishman” of Company G, spotted Archer among the enemy attempting to get away. He dashed ahead of his comrades, into the very midst of some of Archer’s men, and seized the general. “Archer at first resisted arrest,” wrote Lieutenant Dennis B. Dailey of Company B and acting aide-de-camp to Meredith, but several other soldiers ran to Maloney’s aid and together they subdued him. They hauled Archer and some other prisoners to Major Mansfield, who took Archer’s sword from him. Lieutenant Dailey came up moments later, and Mansfield, who had his hands full reorganizing his regiment, gave him Archer’s sword and turned Archer and the other prisoners over to him. Dailey recalled that Archer appealed to him “for protection from Maloney.” Apparently as the price for this protection Dailey asked Archer for his swordbelt and sidearm, which Dailey recalled the general surrendered “with great reluctance, saying that courtesy permitted him to retain his side arms.” There would be no such chivalry this morning, and Dailey ordered Archer taken to the rear.⁴⁸

All four regiments of the Iron Brigade pursued Archer’s men across Willoughby Run into the open ground of the Harmon farm. Orders soon came forward from Meredith to halt. Word had arrived that Cutler’s right flank had been driven in and the brigade’s flank was now in peril. Meredith ordered all four regiments back to the east bank of Willoughby Run and to change front to the north in Herbst Woods to face the new threat. Just at the high-water mark of the brigade’s charge, Jonathan Bryan, of Company H, 2nd Wisconsin, was caught up in the excitement and exhilaration of victory, and waved his hat and shouted in celebration. An instant later a Confederate at the edge of Herr Ridge Woods put a bullet through his heart, and the life of “one of the best and bravest” of the 2nd Wisconsin ended.⁴⁹

Archer’s survivors streamed back to the shelter of the Herr Ridge woods. Brockenbrough’s brigade had come up to help cover their retreat, but the damage had been done. Of the nearly 1,200 men taken into action, 373 were killed, wounded, or captured. The losses fell heaviest on the regiments on the right flank. The 13th Alabama lost 168 men, more than half its strength. The 1st Tennessee lost 109, including its colonel, Newton George, who was captured.⁵⁰

While Archer’s broken brigade reformed, Meredith’s four regiments withdrew across Willoughby Run and began to maneuver to change front to the north. During this movement word arrived that a counterattack by the 6th Wisconsin, 95th New York, and 14th Brooklyn had defeated Davis’ brigade and driven it back. Meredith ordered a new change of front so the brigade would face west. Because the 2nd Wisconsin had suffered the heaviest losses in the morning engagement, Meredith ordered the 2nd and 7th regiments to switch positions, to place the 7th on the brigade’s right flank. The 19th Indiana and 24th Michigan also changed places, so that the 19th Indiana formed the left flank of the brigade, although no one recorded why Meredith

made this change. All four regiments deployed in Herbst Woods, to take advantage of the cover and concealment there, although the 19th Indiana's position, which extended from the rising ground where the 24th Michigan was posted down slope to the edge of the timber along Willoughby Run, was only "sparsely covered with trees." The nature of the brigade's front placed the 19th Indiana and 24th Michigan closer to the stream than the 7th and 2nd Wisconsin, but Robert Beecham, in the 2nd, recalled the stream was in "close rifle-range" of their position. Skirmish details from each regiment were ordered out. The men took cover in the brush along the banks of Willoughby Run or in the oat fields west of the stream on the Harmon farm.⁵¹

While the main body of the brigade reformed in Herbst Woods, details led the prisoners taken from Archer's brigade to the rear, where they turned them over to Gamble's cavalry. Some 400 small arms were captured or picked up where Archer's men dropped them, and these were systematically disabled.⁵²

A lull had settled over the field after Archer's and Davis' defeat, but it would not have seemed so to the uninitiated, like John Herbst and his family. Confederate artillery on Herr Ridge continued to shell McPherson's Ridge and Herbst Woods. "It seems to me one of the great wonders of the world that that we didnt lose one half thee regt from the grape [shrapnel balls] that came in there to pay us their respects," wrote Sergeant Augustus Zeigler of the 24th Michigan. The foliage of Herbst's hardwoods proved a blessing, for it prevented Confederate gunners from accurately targeting Meredith's regiments, and casualties were light. Confederate sharpshooters and skirmishers were active as well. During the redeployment in the woods, the 24th Michigan's adjutant, Captain William H. Rexford, was hit in the groin, and the lieutenant colonel, Mark Flanigan, took a bullet in the leg. Standing six foot four inches tall and mounted on a large horse, "he was a big mark for the sharpshooter that picked him off," observed Sergeant Zeigler. No sooner had Flanigan been removed from his horse than Colonel Henry Morrow, who had been on foot, swung up into the saddle. The men called out to him to dismount fearing he too would be shot, but Morrow explained that he needed to be mounted to manage the regiment since he was now the only field officer left in the regiment, Major Edwin Wight being with the rear guard as field officer of the day. "The boys didnt care for that, they would save their Colonel," wrote Sergeant Zeigler. "They told him at the same time raising their pieces that they would kill his horse under him if he didnt get off. They would rather shoot him themselves, and wound him slightly, than give the rebels the satisfaction of killing him." Moved by his men's earnest appeals, Morrow dismounted.⁵³

Everywhere along the brigade front the men were ordered to lie down to prevent unnecessary casualties. In the 2nd Wisconsin, roll was called to determine the losses in the morning battle. It revealed that 116 men had been killed and wounded out of 282 taken into action, the heaviest loss of the four regiments of the brigade engaged against Archer. The other regiments may have called roll as well, but none recorded its losses other than to say that they had been "many." Since all suffered less than the 2nd Wisconsin, a reasonable estimate would place total losses for all four regiments at between 200 to 300. The wounded either made their way or were transported to the Lutheran Seminary, where surgeons had established the 1st Division hospital. Among them was Lt. Colonel Stevens. Wounded in the abdomen, his chances for survival were remote. The dead, scattered through Herbst Woods, across Herbst's grain fields, and along the banks of Willoughby Run, remained where they fell. "We had no men to spare from our ranks for any purpose where the absolute necessity did not exist," wrote Corporal Beecham.⁵⁴

Sergeant Major Legate had been spared the death he expected that morning when he spoke to Sergeant Wheeler. No Confederate bullet had found him during his regiment's charge through Herbst Woods, and he now lay with the survivors of his regiment in Herbst Woods.

Burlington Cunningham lay in one of John Herbst's grain fields for several hours, knocked unconscious by the bullet that hit him during the 19th Indiana's charge that morning. The stretcher parties left him alone, thinking he was dead. But Cunningham was made of tough

grit. He woke up sometime in the early afternoon and returned to his regiment. What must have been the surprise of his comrades, who thought him dead, when Cunningham walked up and asked to resume his position as color bearer? Abe Buckles gave him the colors, and Cunningham took his place in the line.⁵⁵

The 24th Michigan was joined during late morning-early afternoon lull by Arnold, Pinkney, Conners, and Rider, the four men who had been issued surgeon's certificates that morning. When they had heard the booming of the artillery they collectively decided to pocket their certificates and hurried to the front to join their comrades in Herbst Woods. All had been present at Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville, and they did not want break their record of being present for every action the regiment had participated in.⁵⁶

When the bullet from one of Archer's men killed Reynolds that morning, it left Major General Abner Doubleday in command of the 1st Corps, and Major General Oliver O. Howard, of the 11th Corps, in command of the field. Whatever plans Reynolds might have been thinking of died with him, and Howard and Doubleday could only speculate on his intentions. Both presumed these had been to defend the approaches to Gettysburg as long as possible to enable the rest of the army to concentrate for battle. John Herbst's woodlot loomed importantly in the defense that Doubleday organized along the McPherson and Seminary ridges to meet the next Confederate onslaught. Doubleday considered Herbst Woods "the key of the position," for as long as the woods were held, the enemy could not pass on either the Hagerstown road or Chambersburg pike without exposing its flanks to the force in the woods.⁵⁷

The problem of defending Herbst Woods was providing Meredith's brigade with proper support, for the brigade's position was on the forward, or western slope of McPherson's Ridge. The open ground north and south of the woods was exposed to the superior Confederate artillery along Herr Ridge and no troops could be deployed there. Doubleday did the best he could under the circumstances. He placed Colonel Roy Stone's brigade of the 3rd Division to Meredith's right rear, between the woods and the Chambersburg pike, where the men could find cover from the McPherson farm buildings and the shelter of western McPherson's Ridge. Here they could provide adequate cover to Meredith's right flank. The other brigade of the 3rd Division, Colonel Chapman Biddle's brigade of three Pennsylvania and one New York regiments, was tasked with supporting Meredith's left flank. Biddle formed three regiments behind McPherson's Ridge, some 200 yards to the left rear of the 19th Indiana. It was the closest to Meredith's left that he could place his men and have cover. Doubleday bolstered Biddle's line with Captain James Cooper's excellent Battery B, 1st Pennsylvania Light Artillery (four 3-inch rifles), which unlimbered on the crest of McPherson's Ridge in about the center of Biddle's line. Biddle's fourth regiment, the nine-month volunteer 151st Pennsylvania, were left at the seminary to be retained by Doubleday as a corps reserve.⁵⁸

To protect Cooper's battery from sharpshooters and skirmishers, General Wadsworth, who seemed to roam all over the 1st Corps front that morning and afternoon issuing orders to troops regardless of to whom they belonged, ordered Biddle to send a company forward to occupy the Harmon house and farm buildings. Company K, 20th New York State Militia, commanded by Captain Andrew Baldwin, drew the dangerous assignment. Confederate skirmishers had already found cover in Harmon's buildings, but the New Yorkers ran forward and drove them out. In one of war's cruel ironies, the courageous resistance of Baldwin and his men during the next few hours would cost Emmanuel Harmon and John Herbst dearly before the day was done.⁵⁹

Unaware that Doubleday considered their position critical to holding the McPherson's Ridge line, the veteran officers of the Iron Brigade sized up their position in Herbst Woods during the lull in the infantry fighting. They were nearly unanimous in the opinion that the position was untenable. Through the rest of the morning and into the early afternoon they observed Heth's

division redeploying in open view along Herr Ridge. The superior numbers of Confederate artillery so completely commanded the field between Herr Ridge and McPherson's Ridge that their infantry could deploy with impunity. The men of the 19th Indiana observed that the lines of Rebel infantry "extended so far beyond our left that we could not see the right of his line." The adjutant of the 19th, Lieutenant George Finney, wrote that although the brigade had won high honors for bravery on other battlefields, it "was nothing, compared to the work now before them." Both Colonel Williams, of the 19th, and Morrow, of the 24th Michigan, several times sent back to Meredith their opinion that their position was untenable and asked permission to withdraw to the crest of McPherson's Ridge and throw up rail barricades. Colonel Robinson, on the right flank, reported "heavy columns" of Confederate infantry moving to the south "evidently with the intention of turning our left," and that other "heavy columns" were massing in his front. To all of these warnings and requests to change position, Meredith sent the same response: The corps commander had selected the brigade's position and "we must hold it at all hazards."⁶⁰

Perhaps thinking that one more earnest plea might change Meredith's mind, the 19th Indiana sent its bright young sergeant major, Asa Blanchard, back to argue the case.

Blanchard explained what Meredith had already heard, that the forming Rebel line outflanked the left of the brigade by one-half mile, and that a better position would be at the crest of

McPherson's Ridge, where the brigade could entrench or build breastworks. Blanchard presented his commander's arguments for a change in position so clearly and logically that Meredith told him to go back and make his case to General Wadsworth. Wadsworth heard Blanchard out, but told him "he regarded this timber as the strongest position of the line and of the utmost importance," and considered it a virtual redoubt on the 1st Corps line. He "hoped that it would be held." According to Lt. Colonel Dudley, Blanchard replied, "General, if that is what you want and[?] the Iron Brigade can't hold it, where can you find troops who can?" To this Wadsworth reputedly told Blanchard to return and present Wadsworth's compliments to General Meredith and tell him that "with the Iron Brigade in possession of McPherson's Woods I have no fear for our left flank." Blanchard returned and made his report. There were no options left. Herbst Woods would be defended, in the words of Lt. Colonel Dudley of the 19th Indiana, "as long as there were men left to do it."⁶¹



An 1887 view from the 19th Indiana position looking toward Willoughby Run and the Harmon farm, and showing the ground over which the 26th North Carolina approached. GNMP Archives

One-half mile west of Meredith's regiments, along Herr Ridge, General Heth had spent the rest of the morning and early afternoon reorganizing his division for a renewed attack. Pettigrew's and Brockenbrough's brigades were moved up to Herr Ridge. Pettigrew deployed his big brigade in the Herr Ridge woods. Brockenbrough formed on the North Carolinians' left, part of the brigade in the woods and the rest extending into the open toward the Chambersburg pike. Archer's brigade, now commanded by Colonel Birkett Fry, took its place in the line on Pettigrew's right. By around noon or 1 P.M. there were some 4,300 men in the three brigades that stood poised to assail the defenders of McPherson's Ridge.

Around 1:30 P.M., Confederate infantry of General Robert Rodes' division, which had occupied Oak Hill, a mile north of Herbst Woods, advanced to attack the right flank of Doubleday's 1st Corps. The sound of intense small-arms fire carried to Heth's soldiers on Herr Ridge. Both A. P. Hill and General Lee had arrived on the battlefield by this time and, according to Heth, he rode over to them when Rodes' attack jumped off and suggested that his division advance. Lee responded that he did not want to become involved in a general engagement since Longstreet's corps was not yet on the field. Heth returned to his division to wait and watch the growing fight between Rodes and the 1st Corps.⁶²

In the Herr Ridge woods, sharpshooters from Company K, 20th New York State Militia, perched atop Harmon's farmhouse made life dangerous for the men of the 26th North Carolina, who were lying down quietly awaiting the summons to advance. After several men were hit by this fire Colonel Henry Burgwyn called for a volunteer to silence the sharpshooters. Lieutenant J. A. Lowe responded and crept forward to a point where he was able to fire at their antagonists. Whether he hit anyone was not clear, but he silenced the fire from Harmon's rooftop⁶³

Burgwyn was troubled by the apparent delay in moving against the enemy he could see holding Herbst Woods, in his regiment's front. He expected the Federals were using the time to strengthen their position and that his men would pay the price in blood because of it. The regiment's Lt. Colonel, John R. Lane, recalled that to relieve some of the strain of waiting, the men offered words of encouragement to one another, "and some jokes were indulged in." The laughter that these elicited was probably of an anxious nature, for the roaring of artillery and deadly rattle of musketry from the fighting around the McPherson farm spoke of the perils that lay ahead.⁶⁴

At the McPherson farm, with no pressure upon him from Heth's front, Colonel Roy Stone shifted the weight of his brigade to confront the attacks of Rodes' infantry from the north. From his position on Herr Ridge, Heth observed these movements and thought that since his division was inactive the enemy was moving troops from his front to fight Rodes. He rode back to Lee, explained the situation, and again asked permission to attack. This time Lee relented. He told Heth to return to his command and "I will send you word when to go in." A short time later Heth received his orders to attack. The time was about 2:30 P.M.⁶⁵

Staff officers dashed off with orders to Brockenbrough, Pettigrew, and Fry. Soon the shout of "attention" rang out along the 26th North Carolina's line and the regiment rose to its feet. "All the men were up at once and ready," recalled Lt. Colonel Lane. The 91 officers and men of Company F formed their line immediately to the left of the color guard. In their ranks was 19-year-old Eli Setser, of Caldwell County. Two years before, when he enlisted at age 17, he wrote his father, "we think we can whip six thousand yankees," and added, "i think i can whip six my self." Nearly two years in the army had tempered Setser's youthful bravado. In the next hour he and his comrades would see a fight the like of which they could not have imagined.⁶⁶

Sergeants and lieutenants dressed the lines of their companies. The color guard took its position four paces in front of the regimental line, and the field officers mounted and took their posts. With some 840 officers and men in line the regiment presented an impressive sight. The command, "Forward, March," echoed down the line, and the regiment stepped off. Major John T. Jones described the ground that extended before them: "In our front was a wheat-field about a fourth of a mile wide; then came a branch, with thick underbrush and briars skirting the banks.

Beyond this was an open field, with the exception of a wooded hill directly in front of the Twenty-Sixth Regiment, about covering its front.⁶⁷

To the 26th's right was the 11th North Carolina, and beyond it, the 47th and 52nd North Carolina. Brockenbrough's Virginians moved off on Pettigrew's left, and Fry's Tennesseans and Alabamians on his right. Meredith's skirmish line and Baldwin's skirmishers at the Harmon farm immediately opened fire, but, wrote Lt. Colonel Lane, "Their aim was rather too high to be effective." Moving forward at quick time and with parade ground-like lines the three brigades swept down the slope of Herr Ridge toward the defenders of McPherson's Ridge.⁶⁸

Watching the Confederates approaching, Private William Moore, in the 19th Indiana, thought the Rebels maintained, "as good line as ever troops did upon parade." It was, he thought, "an awe inspiring sight to observe them." On the 24th Michigan's skirmish line, Augustus Zeigler watched the long lines of Confederates approaching and heard them raise "their mean treasonable howl." He and his comrades scampered back toward the safety of the brigade's main line. On McPherson's Ridge, Colonel Charles Wainwright, commander of the 1st Corps Artillery Brigade, judged the Confederate line "outflanked us at least half a mile on our left," and concluded that "there was not a shadow of a chance of our holding this ridge." The officers and men of the Iron Brigade shared Wainwright's opinion, but they grimly prepared to do their duty as soldiers. As the long, yelling lines of Southerners bore down upon them, the field officers gave their men last-minute instructions. Colonel Williams and Lt. Colonel Dudley cautioned the men of the 19th Indiana not to fire until the Rebels reached the opposite bank of Willoughby Run, then to fire low and not waste ammunition. Colonel Morrow gave similar orders, instructing his regiment to hold its fire until the enemy "should come within short range."⁶⁹

Amelia Harmon and her aunt, and John Herbst and his family trembled in their basements listening to the crash of artillery and crack of skirmishers' rifles. The two companies of the 20th New York State Militia, using the cover around Harmon's farm buildings, peppered the 52nd North Carolina, which was moving directly toward the farm. Amelia Harmon heard shouts and the pounding of feet above her, and then slamming doors followed by silence. The Federals were leaving, using the Willoughby Run ravine to make good their escape. Soon she heard a swishing sound, "like the mowing of grass," then shadows darting past the window of the cellar. Peering out through the window she saw that the legs of the men dashing by were clad in Confederate gray. Then came the sound of men entering the house. Amelia and her aunt dashed up the stairs to the kitchen. Across the yard their barn was on fire, and the Confederates in the house had piled newspapers, "books, rags, and furniture" in one of the rooms and "already tiny flames were curling upward." Both women jumped on the fire to try to extinguish it and pleaded with the North Carolinians "to spare our homes." But Amelia observed "no pity in those determined faces." Someone, perhaps Pettigrew or Colonel James K. Marshall, commander of the 52nd North Carolina, had ordered all of Harmon's buildings burned to assure no other Yankees could use them for cover. Amelia and her aunt were forced to flee.⁷⁰

By skillful management of his cavalry, Buford took Fry's brigade out of the battle and delayed the advance of the 52nd North Carolina. The 8th Illinois Cavalry, mounted, maneuvered to threaten Fry's right flank. To protect the division's flank and rear, Fry was forced to halt and change front to the south or southeast. Pettigrew's brigade swept on without Fry's flank protection. Before Pettigrew's line reached Willoughby Run other elements of the 8th Illinois, or a part of another regiment of Gamble's brigade, moved toward Pettigrew's exposed flank as if they meant to charge. Although under skirmish and artillery fire, Colonel Marshall ordered his regiment to form square – the only unit to do so on the Gettysburg battlefield – and sent a company of infantry out as skirmishers to drive off the Federal horsemen. They succeeded, but the Union troopers had delayed and frustrated the right of Heth's attack with mobility and clever tactics.⁷¹

On the Iron Brigade line in Herbst Woods the men lay on their bellies watching the 11th and 26th North Carolina, and the right of Brockenbrough's brigade, rapidly approaching. The men of the 26th North Carolina were within eighty paces of Meredith's line when officers gave the order to fire. Hundreds of rifles fired at once with a deafening crash. John McCain, in Company B, 26th North Carolina, thought that this volley hit seventeen men in his company. From Lt. Colonel Dudley's vantage point, "at our first volley the first line in our front disappeared from view." Colonel Morrow thought his regiment's volley "inflicted but little injury on the enemy," for they poured down and across Willoughby Run unchecked and "yelling like demons." The men of the 19th and 24th swiftly rammed home fresh cartridges and unleashed another volley into the masses of Confederates who were pushing their way through the underbrush along the creek. The rifle fire "mowed us down like wheat before the sickle," wrote one man in the 26th. The undergrowth along Willoughby Run inevitably caused crowding and confusion in the ranks of the 26th and 11th as the men pushed their way toward the easiest crossing points. This offered targets that Colonel Williams and Morrow's soldiers simply could not miss. Edward Raymor, in Company B, 24th Michigan, grimly noted in his diary that he killed fourteen men that day.⁷²



An 1898 photograph of Willoughby Run. Herbst Woods is on the right. Note the brush along the banks. Four men were shot attempting to carry the colors of the 26th North Carolina across the creek. GNMP Archives.

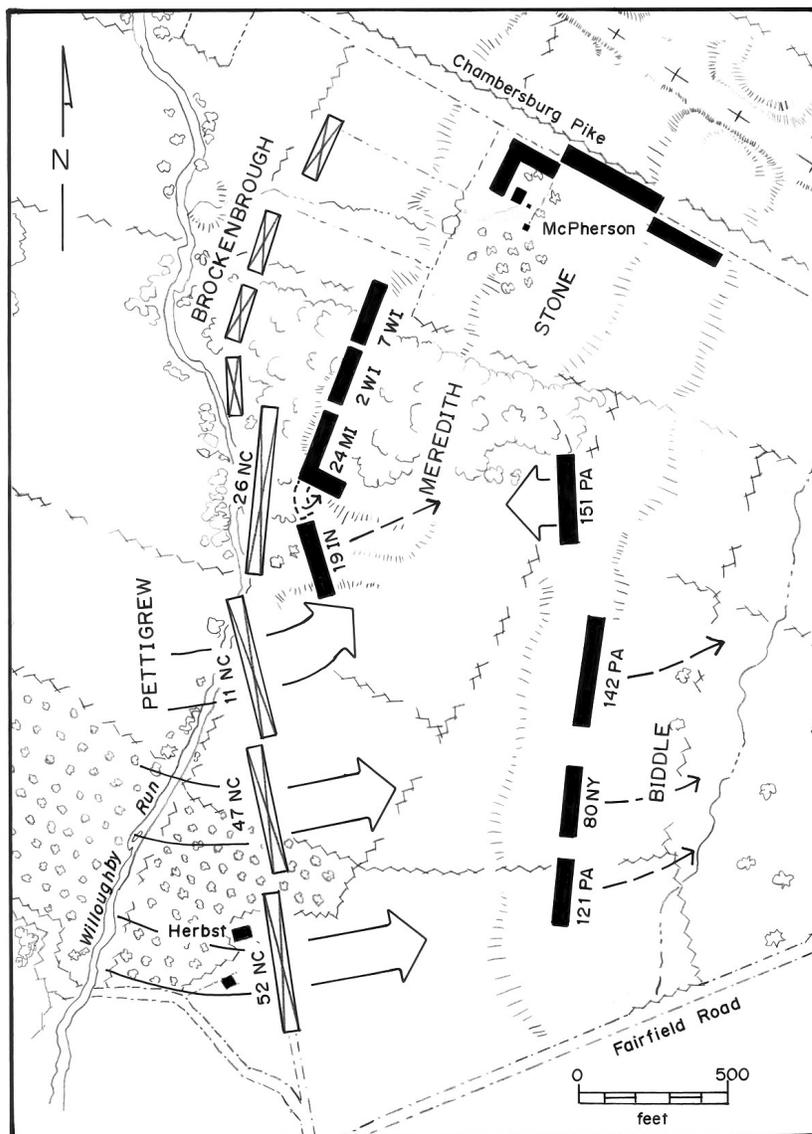
As they attempted to force passage of Willoughby Run, the 26th and 11th returned the fire. With more than 1,300 riflemen in these two regiments, they had the 19th and 24th heavily outgunned. The distance between the opposing lines was point blank -- only 20 to 40 yards and the consequences for both sides were murderous. The crowding of Confederates on a narrow front offered a beautiful target for the artillerymen of Lieutenant George Breck's Battery L, 1st New York, four guns of which had been

placed south of Herbst Woods to support Biddle's brigade. They added shrapnel and shell to the hellish mayhem and piled up Confederate casualties. Breck's guns had a partially enfilading fire on the 26th and for a few moments caused terrible havoc. "Our loss was frightful" from this fire, recalled Lt. Colonel Lane, of the 26th. With the artillery support the Union firepower, in the words of one survivor of the 26th, "began killing our men like forty." Fortunately for the Confederates, Breck fired only six rounds per gun before the advance of the right wing of the 11th North Carolina and the 47th North Carolina caused him to order his guns to limber to the rear.⁷³

The men of the 26th North Carolina reformed as best they could after getting across Willoughby Run, and started advancing up the slope of McPherson's Ridge, slowly, but "now

with better execution.” On their right, elements of the 11th North Carolina crossed Willoughby Run and discovered that the flank of the 19th Indiana was unsupported. They promptly wheeled to enfilade the 19th’s line. Hit from front and flank, casualties piled up quickly. The slaughter, wrote a sergeant, “became frightful, beyond description,” and the “shrieks and groans of the wounded was too horrible for contemplation.” One of the early casualties in the 19th was color bearer Burlington Cunningham, who took a bullet in the leg. Someone else took the flag, but he too went down.⁷⁴

The storm of bullets, shrapnel balls, and shell fragments struck men at all points of the body, the thigh, hand, hip, knee, groin, back, face, ankle, neck, bowels, fingers, arms, eyes, feet, nose – no part of the human anatomy was immune from the flying lead. John Coy, a private in Company A, 24th Michigan, was hit five times; George Zulch, of the same company, four times; two other men were hit three times. Every point on the line was dangerous, but it was the men who carried and surrounded the colors who drew the heaviest fire. Nowhere in those dismal woods was it more dangerous than around the colors of the 26th North Carolina. Color Sergeant Jefferson Mansfield took a bullet in the foot before crossing Willoughby Run. Sergeant Hiram Johnson took the colors from Mansfield. He went down while crossing Willoughby Run. Private John Stamper, from Company A, seized the flag, but was shot almost immediately. Then Private



2:30 – 3:30 P.M. Pettigrew and Brockenbrough assault Herbst Woods and the 1st Corps line. Map by John Heiser.

George W. Kelly, of the color guard, took the flag, but before he cleared Willoughby Run a shell fragment from Breck's guns wounded him the ankle. Private Larkin Thomas, of Company F, now took the flag and carried it across Willoughby Run.⁷⁵

To the left of the colors, men were falling rapidly in Company F. Eli Sester would never return to Caldwell County. Several Yankee bullets hit him, including one that shattered his hip. So many men in the company were shot that when Lieutenant Thomas J. Cureton, commanding Company B, on the left of Company F, received an order to close his company to the right, he looked to where Company F should have been and saw "only two or three men" still standing. James Dorsett, in Company E, recalled the bullets flew around him "like hailstones." Many men around him were falling to the ground "throwing up their arms and clawing the earth. The whole field was covered with gray suits soaked in blood."⁷⁶

John Herbst's quiet stand of hardwoods had been transformed from a place of peaceful beauty to a nightmarish space of choking smoke, ear-splitting noise, heart-rending shrieks, shouts, curses, and killing. There was no brother's war in Herbst Woods that day, no noble gestures of chivalry, only two bodies of men hell-bent on killing one another.

On Meredith's left flank the flanking fire cut through the 19th Indiana like a scythe. Colonel Williams counted 20 dead and 100 wounded. That meant he had at best 180 officers and men left on the firing line. They had held off the left of the 11th North Carolina and right of the 26th for what Lt. Colonel Dudley thought was an hour, but was probably ten or fifteen minutes. For Williams to hold his position any longer threatened the annihilation of his regiment. He ordered them to withdraw. The survivors started back, loading and firing as they went. The colors of the 19th had gone down repeatedly during the fighting, and shortly before the order to retreat was given they went down again. Sergeant Major Asa Blanchard had been detailed to keep the colors up, but the men went down so fast and the situation was so chaotic that when Lt. Colonel Dudley saw the national flag go down he picked it up. Almost immediately Dudley took a bullet in his right leg, shattering his fibula between the ankle and knee. He fell to the ground still clutching the flag. Blanchard appeared, and, as Dudley recalled, "his voice trembling with feeling, took the staff from my hand and giving it to a soldier he had detailed, assisted me back from the line a few feet and said: 'Colonel, you shouldn't have done this. That was my duty. I shall never forgive myself for letting you touch that flag.'" Blanchard called on two slightly wounded soldiers and ordered them to carry Dudley to safety.⁷⁷

Meanwhile, the state color had gone down, and someone in the ranks called Lieutenant William W. Macy's attention to this. Macy replied, "Go and get it." Sensing the suicidal consequence of this order the soldier replied with a curse and added, "I won't do it." Macy ran to the flag and with the help of Lieutenant Crockett East, furlled the flag and was tucking it its shuck when a bullet killed East. The lieutenant fell upon the color. Macy pulled it from under his body and started up McPherson's Ridge, when Burr Clifford, of Company F, took the flag from him. Clifford recalled that he instantly became a target, although he tried to furl the colors as best as he could. One bullet struck the staff, another hit below his hand on the staff. Another hit his hat, two went through the "tail of my Blouse," and a fourth through his pants at the knee. As Clifford made his way up McPherson's Ridge he was confronted by Blanchard, who thought the private was running away with the flag. He took the flag from Clifford, unfurled it, and began waving it vigorously back and forth, shouting "Rally, boys." Nearby, Private William R. Moore passed by with the national flag, which he had picked up after Dudley fell holding it. A bullet clipped off Moore's index finger on his left hand, and blood spurted out, Moore recalled, "about like a chicken's having its head chopped off." He called out to Blanchard that they had better follow the regiment up the hill. Blanchard ignored Moore. Then a bullet hit Blanchard in the groin and severed an artery. Blood spurted forth in a gush. Before he died, Blanchard was heard to say, "Don't stop for me. Don't let them have the flag. Tell mother I never faltered." Burr Clifford took the state color and moved on.⁷⁸

Some 100 yards to the rear, within Herbst Woods, the 19th Indiana attempted to reform to meet the oncoming 11th North Carolina. Brigade Commander Meredith was helping to form this new line when a Confederate shell burst over him. Fragments killed his horse and fractured his skull. Man and animal fell in a heap. The fall broke several of Meredith's ribs, and the weight of his dead horse injured his leg. Word was carried to Colonel Robinson that he was now in command of the brigade.⁷⁹

The 11th North Carolina and elements of the right wing of the 26th North Carolina were quick to take advantage of the 19th Indiana's retreat. While some pressed on after the Hoosiers, powerful elements maneuvered to deliver a murderous enfilading fire into the 24th Michigan's now-exposed left flank. Colonel Morrow sent orders for Captain William J. Speed, the commander of Company D, and acting major, to refuse the line with the two left companies to meet this fire. One of the companies was Company G. As the two companies attempted to execute this difficult maneuver a bullet dropped Lieutenant Gilbert Dickey, the first officer to die that day in the 24th. Captain Speed soon joined him, when a North Carolinian put a bullet through his heart. Charles Ballure, who had taken the colors from Abe Peck in the morning, was also killed. Private August Earnest raised the fallen colors.⁸⁰

"It seemed as if the bullets were as thick as hailstones in a storm," wrote Lt. Colonel Lane, of the 26th North Carolina, of the conflict at this point. The battle smoke that settled upon the combatants was so thick that within the woods it was "almost as dark as night." Everywhere lay lifeless bodies, men writhing in pain from wounds, or staggering or dragging themselves to find some safety. Those still fighting "were pouring volleys into one each other at a distance not greater than 20 paces."⁸¹

The concentrated fire of the 26th North Carolina and 11th North Carolina shot so many men on Morrow's left flank that he was compelled to fall back across a slight ravine that cut diagonally southwest through the woods. "It was on the retreat that we lost so fearfully," wrote Sergeant Zeigler. Twenty feet away Zeigler saw Major Wight drop, shot through the eye. Two men picked him up and started off with him when Wight recovered himself and told them to set him down, that they were needed on the firing line. Wight made his way off the field under his own power. August Earnest, the 24th's third color bearer, died on this new line. The flag fell at the feet of 1st Sergeant Everard B. Welton. He picked it up until Morrow came along and took the flag to give it to Color-Corporal Andrew Wagner. Wagner waved the flag back and forth so that the men might see the line Morrow wanted them to form upon. It also drew the attention of a Confederate rifleman, who sent a bullet into Wagner's lung, and the fourth color bearer went down, falling upon the flag. Morrow went to Wagner and, after assuring him his wound was not mortal, pulled the flag out from under the corporal and raised it again. Private William Kelly saw his colonel with the flag and took it from him, saying, "the Colonel of the Twenty-Fourth Michigan shall not carry the colors while I am alive." The angel of death found Kelly quickly and in a moment he lay at Morrow's feet, dead. At this point the eighth (if Colonel Morrow's brief tenure as color bearer is counted) man to carry the 24th's colors, Private Lilburn A. Spaulding, claimed them.⁸²

Observing the desperate battle of the 26th North Carolina from his perspective as brigade commander, General Pettigrew was awed by the men's stubborn courage. He turned to Captain William W. McCreery, of his staff, and told him to find Colonel Burgwyn and tell him that "his regiment has covered itself with glory today." McCreery, the man who once told a girlfriend that if he were killed during the war he wanted it to be after he took a flag from a dead color-bearer's hand and rallied the troops, had long sought this moment. The danger of combat held a certain appeal to him. As he rode forward a bullet killed his horse and threw the captain, but he was on his feet immediately making his way toward the line of battle. He came upon Captain Louis Young, also of Pettigrew's staff, who was still mounted and working to get a cluster of soldiers moving who had found cover along the bank of Willoughby Run. McCreery strode up and started to recount his adventures getting to the front in a "joyous way," when Young cut him off

and said that they had no time to talk about such things. Now, they needed to get the men moving forward. Young thought that to McCreery, the “the danger was an enjoyment.” Perfectly happy, McCreery left Young and went looking for Colonel Burgwyn.⁸³



*Colonel Henry Burgwyn. Clark,
North Carolina Regiments*

Burgwyn was behind the center of his battle line, working hard to assist his line officers in maintaining order and encouraging the men to keep moving forward. After the 19th Indiana had been dislodged, Lt. Colonel Lane made his way over from the right of the 26th to see how things were faring in the center. He found his colonel in the murky haze that had descended upon the field. Burgwyn shouted above the din, “It is all right in the centre and on the left; we have broken the first line of the enemy [19th Indiana].” Lane called back, “We are in line on the right, Colonel.” Moments later Captain McCreery came up, his face beaming, and delivered General Pettigrew’s message to Burgwyn, that the 26th North Carolina “has covered itself with glory today.” Burgwyn was intensely proud of his regiment and Pettigrew’s praise was inspiring. Suddenly a bullet hit the color bearer and he fell only yards away from McCreery and Burgwyn. It was the moment McCreery had imagined and hoped for – the chance for glory. He dashed to the fallen flag, picked it up and, waving it, advanced to the front of the battle line. In the smoky haze he drew the instant attention of a Michigan rifleman, who put a bullet through the captain’s heart. He died instantly, falling forward and

“bathing the flag in his life’s blood.”⁸⁴

It was a slugfest now, a question of who could kill or disable more of the enemy and stand the killing best. The fighting had reached a point, in Lt. Colonel Lane’s words, “where the fighting is fiercest and the killing the deadliest.” One of Colonel Burgwyn’s riflemen wrote that they “drove on as hard as we could,” that the Federals “would step back slowly,” while the 26th “kept pushing them through the woods, taking a dead rest against the trees and saplings.” The colors were up again moments after McCreery died attempting to advance them. This time the bearer was Lieutenant George Wilcox, of Company H. After pulling the color from under McCreery’s body Wilcox took several steps before a Minié ball thudded into his right side. Somehow he kept his feet, but then another bullet struck his left foot and the lieutenant went down. It was apparent to even the bravest that bearing the color guaranteed death or wounds, and no one stepped forward to retrieve the flag from where it fell from Wilcox’s grasp.⁸⁵

Whether it was the fall of its flag, or that the fire of the 24th Michigan was more than man could stand, the 26th hesitated and its advance halted. Although from today’s perspective carrying flags into battle seems nothing short of madness, to the foot soldier of the Civil War it represented a point of inspiration on the attack, and a symbol of determination and defiance on the defense. In the smoky haze of black-powder warfare the flag was the rallying point for the regiment. Where the colors went, the men were expected to follow, and where the colors stood, the men were expected to stand. It was critical for someone to pick up the 26th’s fallen flag and inspire the men to continue to move forward. Colonel Burgwyn sensed the crisis and need for inspiring leadership. He stepped forward, picked up the fallen flag, and strode to the front of the firing line, shouting as loud as his voice could be heard, “Dress on the colors!” This was an order practiced on the drill ground, and now the men who heard their colonel attempted to obey his command and making their way toward the bloodstained battle-flag. Burgwyn called out to the commander of Company B, Lieutenant Thomas J. Cureton, asking whether he could furnish a color bearer. Cureton ordered Private Franklin L. Honeycutt to assume the deadly assignment.

Honeycutt did not hesitate, but dropped his rifle and took the flag from his colonel. As he did so, Lt. Colonel Lane came up to report that the right was in line. Burgwyn told Lane what Pettigrew had said of the regiment, that they had covered themselves with glory. The words were barely spoken when a bullet hit Burgwyn, penetrating both lungs, and Honeycutt, who had only taken “a few steps” was shot through the head and killed.⁸⁶

When Burgwyn fell Lt. Colonel Lane went to his side immediately and asked if he was seriously hurt. “A bowed head and a motion to the left side and a pressure of the hand is the only response,” Lane recalled. Lane sensed that the battle had reached a crisis point. “The flag is down, the line is halting,” and the enemy was firing upon the 26th with “murderous effect.” Lane may have feared that unless he could get the men moving again, the assault might fail. Leaving his dying colonel he ran to the right of the regiment, where he found Captain James C. McLauchlin, the commander of Company K. “Close your men quickly to the left,” he told the captain, “I am going to give them the bayonet.” Lane ran to the left wing and gave similar instructions to Major Jones. When he returned to the center of the regiment Lane found the colors still on the ground with Burgwyn and Honeycutt lying near them. Lane picked up the flag. As he did, Lieutenant Milton B. Blair of I Company rushed up to him and said, “No man can take these colors and live.” Lane responded grimly, “It is my time to take them now,” to which Blair “remarked you will get tired of them.” But the adrenaline rush of combat had emboldened Lane, and shouting “at the top of his voice while advancing with the flag” he cried out, “26th, follow me.” The survivors responded and started up the slope of McPherson’s Ridge following the example of their brave lieutenant colonel.⁸⁷



*Lt. Colonel James Lane. Clark,
North Carolina Regiment.*

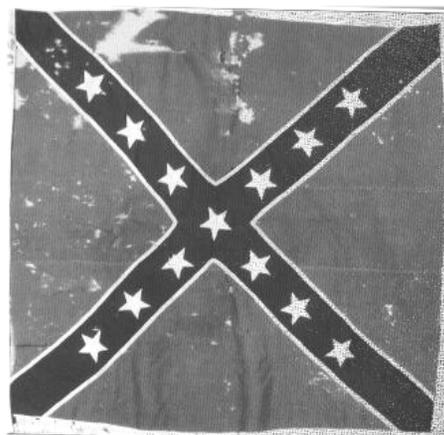
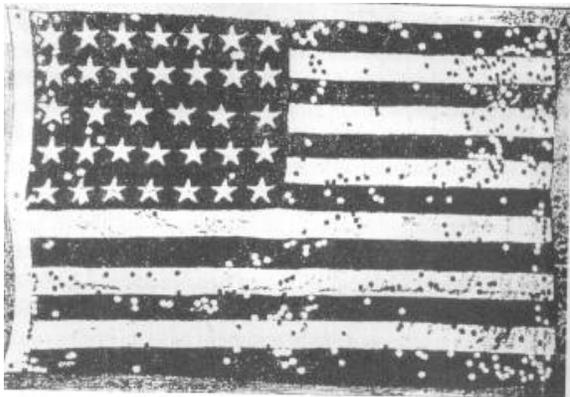
Fortunately for Meredith’s hard-pressed brigade, Brockenbrough’s brigade did not press home its attack with the same resolute courage as Pettigrew’s men did. Initially, Brockenbrough’s direction of advance carried it in the direction of the 150th Pennsylvania, of Stone’s brigade, which was posted near the crest of western McPherson’s Ridge, between Herbst Woods and McPherson’s farm buildings. But when the Virginians reached the creek, the old quarry where some of Archer’s men had been captured during the morning battle stood in their path, and the woods offered considerably more cover than moving over the open slope of McPherson’s Ridge, so most of brigade entered Herbst Woods and advanced directly upon the 2nd and 7th Wisconsin. When they reached the crest of the ravine cut by Willoughby Run the Federals opened fire, and Brockenbrough’s men dropped down behind the crest or used the cover of Herbst’s hardwoods and “opened a galling fire” in return. Brockenbrough’s veterans were content to simply trade fire with the Federals and let Pettigrew’s men carry the fight to close quarters against Meredith’s left.⁸⁸

The battle raged all along the Iron Brigade’s front with “terrific fury.” Courage knew no uniform color in that terrible place. At one point in the firefight with Brockenbrough’s brigade, Sergeant Solon Richard, of Company E, 7th Wisconsin, observed the color bearer of one of the Virginia regiment’s fall mid-way between the lines. Richard dashed forward in front of his regiment’s line, thinking he might capture the fallen flag. When he reached the spot where he

saw the flag go down, “owing to the roughness of the ground or the flag bearers ability to crawl off with it,” the flag was not there. But he did spot two of Brockenbrough’s men “hugging the ground for safety.” Richard ordered them to drop their weapons and to surrender, which they did. The three ran back to the 7th’s line “amid the cheers of the regiments.” According to Richard’s lieutenant, during his entire adventure the bullets “were falling like hailstones about him,” yet he escaped with his prisoners with only a slight wound to the foot.⁸⁹

Private Ezekiel Parker, of Company C, attempted to duplicate Richard’s reckless courage. He spotted “several battle flags” gathered together “in a shallow ditch” in front of the 7th’s line. Probably the color bearers had advanced their regimental battle flags to the edge of the ravine cut by Willoughby Run. Parker concluded to try to capture one, or at least shoot its bearer, and he ran forward to “within five paces” of one of the flags. He raised his rifle and shot into the Confederates he found around the flag, or at its bearer. It is not clear who his target was, for he discovered more perhaps than he had bargained for. Parker then apparently made a rush for the flag, but one of Brockenbrough’s men shot and wounded him. Fortunately the Confederates did not allow him to lie in front of their lines, but dragged him to safety and made him their prisoner.⁹⁰

The soldiers in this death grapple fought one another with no less courage or ferocity than Americans have fought any other foe in this country’s history. The madness, the slaughter, of this conflict that now raged through Herbst’s stand of hardwoods begs the question: What could have motivated these American soldiers to stand this level of violence and carnage? By this stage of the war, all hoped for peace, but a peace on their own terms. “God knows how tired I am of this war,” Colonel Burgwyn wrote his mother on the eve of the Gettysburg campaign. But, as a fellow North Carolinian wrote to his father, although he was “as sick or sicker of the war than any man,” that “backing down will not do now.” The soldiers Pettigrew’s and Brockenbrough’s men fought in Herbst Woods shared a similar sentiment. Sergeant Major George Legate, in the 2nd Wisconsin, wrote his parents that despite disgust with the prosecution of the war, the men of his regiment, “as good and faithful soldiers who had already gained an enviable reputation,” would do their duty and see the conflict through. Patriotism may have been “played out” by the veterans on both sides, but the fundamental belief in the justness of their cause continued to motivate them. Backing down or giving up was not an option.⁹¹



The colors of the 19th Indiana and 26th North Carolina

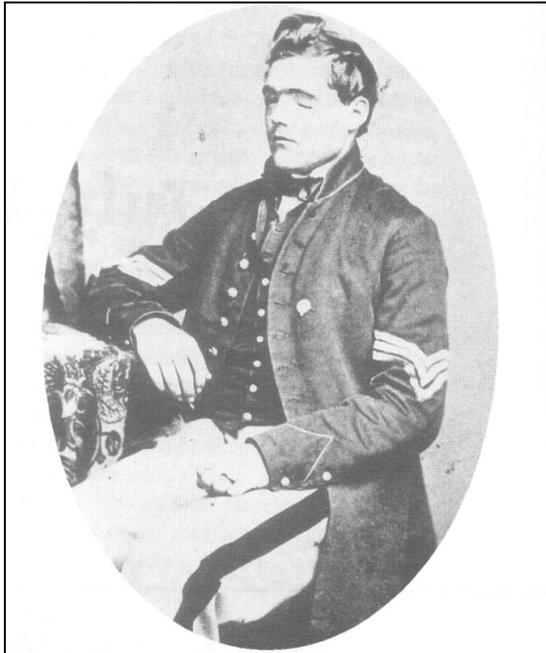
But patriotism and devotion to a cause offer only part of the explanation. Most veteran soldiers found motivation through loyalty to their regiment and commitment to comrades. Arnold, Pinkney, Conners, and Rider, of the 24th Michigan, gave up the safety of a surgeon’s certificate for the line of battle because to a good soldier, as these men were, keeping out of the

fight while their comrades were in danger was unthinkable. Honor, both personal honor and the honor of the regiment, played a role as well. The men of Meredith's brigade fully understood the peril of defending Herbst Woods, yet they defended it tenaciously although personal survival would have been far more likely had the men simply fallen back at the advance of Pettigrew's brigade. They did not do so for the same reasons that they did not desert because they were disgusted with the handling of the war by their political and military superiors, because they were "good and faithful soldiers" who had won "an enviable reputation" in the war. The men who had earned the nickname, "the Iron Brigade" could not cut and run from a fight and maintain their hard-earned reputation.

Honor was also at the root of the seemingly insanely reckless acts that occurred around the regimental colors. The colors served a functional purpose in battle, in marking the center of the regiment in the smoky haze of black-powder combat, but they also served an important inspirational function. They were a symbol of the heart of the regiment. But there was a point in the Herbst Wood fight where the average soldier recognized that carrying the colors bordered on suicide and refused to pick them up. Even honor had its limits.

The combat in Herbst Woods attained intensity so murderous and bloody that pure anger and survival instincts took their place beside devotion to comrades and personal and unit honor as a motivation to fight on. Anger surely drove Augustus Zeigler, of the 24th Michigan, who referred to the Confederates as "barbarians" in his post-battle letter. Lieutenant William B. Taylor, of the 11th North Carolina, expressed no sympathy for his enemy when he wrote several weeks after the battle that their charge against Meredith's men was made "at an awful cost," but "we paid it to them two fold . . . we just mowed them down." For the men of Meredith's brigade, ordered to hold their position until driven out, their very survival rested on whether or not they could shoot enough of the enemy to break their resolve. And for Pettigrew's men, it came down to how many Yankees they needed to drop to drive them. For both sides it proved to be more than either probably imagined.⁹²

The withdrawal of the 19th Indiana and 24th Michigan exposed the flank of the 2nd



Sgt. Jefferson Coates. GNMP Library

Wisconsin to the 26th North Carolina. From Colonel William Robinson's perspective, the 2nd was being "badly cut up," and the enemy was rapidly "gaining ground on our left." He anticipated an order to withdraw but none came. Among those who died in the 2nd was Pat Maloney, General Archer's captor. The left companies of the regiment absorbed the brunt of the 26th's flanking fire, and the extreme left flank was Sergeant Major Legate's post in battle. His premonition that morning seemed to beckon at last when a Minié ball hit him in the leg. The ball must have cut an artery, for Legate or someone else tied a tourniquet around the leg to staunch the flow of blood.⁹³

At last Captain Hollon Richardson, of the brigade staff, rode up to Colonel Robinson and ordered him to retire to Seminary Ridge. The 7th apparently received and began to execute this order before the 2nd, for Sergeant Cornelius Wheeler thought the 7th was being withdrawn to create a reserve. But the orders soon came for the 2nd to withdraw as well and soon the entire

Iron Brigade had retired from its original position, leaving behind its windrows of dead and wounded to mark the original line. Among the wounded was a 7th Wisconsin sergeant, Jefferson Coates. Coates was probably hit during the retreat, for the bullet hit him in the right side of the head “immediately behind the outer angle of the eye.” It traversed his forehead, destroying both eyes and producing a wound “of not less than an inch and half in diameter.” Coates fell blinded and helpless.⁹⁴

Help was on the way for Meredith’s embattled Iron Brigade. Doubleday released his only reserve, the 151st Pennsylvania, to help fill the gap between Biddle and Meredith, and to provide some support to Meredith’s vulnerable flank. The 151st was a strong regiment, as the average in the Army of the Potomac went in 1863, counting 21 officers and 446 enlisted men. It was a nine-months regiment and its enlistment was due to expire in approximately three weeks, on July 27. Its only combat had come at Chancellorsville, and this had only been skirmishing that inflicted sixteen casualties on the regiment. The unit’s 28-year-old commander was an unlikely warrior. Lt. Colonel George F. McFarland was an educator, the principal and owner of the McAlisterville Academy in Juniata County, Pennsylvania, with no military background. But McFarland applied himself vigorously to learning the trade of a soldier. Command fell to him at Gettysburg when his colonel went on sick leave in early June. As with any change of leadership in a regiment that was not truly battle-tested, there were questions among the men about whether McFarland could manage the regiment effectively in battle. One man in the ranks thought McFarland “ain’t worth a shaw of tobacco.” Another thought him “brave and efficient,” but not the equal of their colonel. McFarland, and his regiment’s, trial was now at hand.⁹⁵

General Thomas Rowley, the acting 3rd Division commander, personally ordered McFarland to lead his regiment forward. The time was probably somewhere between 3 and 3:30 P.M. when the 151st set out toward the seething cauldron of battle that raged along McPherson’s Ridge and in Herbst Woods. The clouds of dense smoke clinging to the woods and ridgeline, the deafening roar of battle, and the streams of bloodied wounded coming back from the front, must have struck utter fear into the hearts of these Pennsylvania soldiers. McFarland warned his men “against excitement and firing at random.” He also decided upon a rather unorthodox tactic and instructed his men that when they came up against the enemy they would not fire by volley, which was a standard tactic in both armies. Instead, he wanted the men fire at will but only when they “saw an enemy on which to take a steady aim.” McFarland had long stressed marksmanship in the regiment and sought to drill the men in target practice whenever possible. This training paid its benefits that afternoon in Herbst Woods.⁹⁶

The 151st made its way up eastern McPherson’s Ridge and over its crest. Most of the right wing entered the far eastern part of Herbst Woods. The rest of the regiment’s line extended southeast into a meadow. Men of the 19th Indiana were falling back at this time toward the edge of the woods and attempting to form on the 151st’s right. Directly in front of McFarland’s right wing, in the heart of the woods, Morrow’s 24th Michigan was conducting its fighting withdrawal across the ravine, and the 7th and 2nd Wisconsin were minutes away from their own retreat. The 11th North Carolina, and probably some elements of the 26th North Carolina’s right wing, appeared directly in the 151st’s front. Before McFarland halted his line, the North Carolinians loosed a volley at his regiment “which brought several of my men down.” But the Pennsylvanians stood firm, and strictly adhering to McFarland’s engagement orders, opened a steady and accurate fire upon their assailants. By this, reported McFarland, “Many of the enemy were brought low.”⁹⁷

The position of the regiment on the crest of McPherson’s Ridge exposed it to a murderous fire that gradually increased as Pettigrew’s 47th and 52nd North Carolina turned the flank of Biddle’s brigade and drove it back toward Seminary Ridge. “I know not how men could have fought more desperately, exhibited more coolness, or contested the field with more determined courage,” wrote McFarland afterward. One of his lieutenants, W. O. Blodgett of

Company F, saw men fall around him “like ripe apples in a storm.” One of his men was shot through the heart and fell without a groan within three feet of him. Then another was shot through the temple and died. Another comrade was hit immediately beside Blodgett. Some of the wounded continued to fight until struck a second time. “Every man stood right up to the work and fought like tigers – not a single exception,” he wrote with pride.⁹⁸

Brigade command and control had dissolved in the Iron Brigade. “Each regiment was fighting by itself, and none seem to know what the others were doing, except to be hotly engaged like themselves,” wrote the 24th Michigan’s historian. The wounding of Meredith, combined with the relentless pressure from the 26th and 11th North Carolina, prevented any semblance of an organized brigade line being reformed once the original line collapsed. The effort of the 19th Indiana to reform in the woods beyond the ravine after being outflanked proved impossible under the continuing enfilading fire that the 11th North Carolina delivered, and the 19th fell back to the edge of the woods as the 151st Pennsylvania came up. Casualties had reduced the regiment to what Colonel Williams described as “a mere squad.” The 7th Wisconsin soon fell back, and Colonel Robinson halted on the 19th’s right to help cover the withdrawal of the 24th Michigan and 2nd Wisconsin. When the 151st’s fire checked the advance of the 11th North Carolina, the remnant of the 19th started back toward the seminary, followed by the 7th Wisconsin.⁹⁹

The 24th Michigan counted “scarcely a fourth of the forces taken into action,” or about 120 men, still standing in their position east of the Herbst Woods ravine. “We had inflicted severe loss on the enemy,” reported Colonel Morrow, “but their numbers were so overpowering and our own losses had been so great that we were unable to maintain our position, and were forced, step by step,” back toward the edge of Herbst Woods and crest of McPherson’s Ridge. Assuming the 151st Pennsylvania was there to cover their retreat, both the 24th Michigan and 2nd Wisconsin did not halt when they came up beside the Pennsylvanians, but continued to fall back toward the seminary. It was a fighting retreat, carried out “in good order, firing as we retired,” to discourage their pursuers.¹⁰⁰

Lt. Colonel Lane, still bearing the regimental flag, led the cheering, yelling survivors of the 26th North Carolina through the human wreckage that littered the woods. They were driving the enemy, and Lane was determined to push them completely out of the woods. As the last members of the 24th Michigan reached the edge of Herbst’s timber and prepared to enter the open fields leading to the seminary, Corporal Charles McConnel paused for one last shot. The Confederate color bearer, advancing toward him about thirty yards away, caught his attention and he drew a bead of him. At the moment McConnel squeezed the trigger, Lane turned to cheer on his men. It may have saved his life, but did not spare him a terrible wound. McConnel’s bullet struck Lane in the back of the neck, “just below the brain,” barely missing his jugular vein and spinal column, smashed through his jaw, taking off part of his tongue and knocking out his front teeth, before exiting through his mouth. A lieutenant in the 26th saw Lane fall “as limber as a rag” and thought for certain the man was dead. The captain of Company E, Stephen W. Brewer, quickly picked the flag up from beside Lane. “We raised a cheer,” wrote Lieutenant Cureton, “the yankee line gave way we charge to the top of the Hill where we found another line.” This was the 151st Pennsylvania.¹⁰¹

Lt. Colonel McFarland found his regiment alone and unsupported on either flank. Biddle’s regiments on his left flank had been driven back to Seminary Ridge by the 47th and 52nd North Carolina. The Iron Brigade had withdrawn from Herbst Woods, so there was no close support on his right flank. The 11th North Carolina pressed his front, and now the 26th North Carolina was swarming up through Herbst Woods on his front. Looking to his rear he could see the 24th Michigan and 2nd Wisconsin, and perhaps the 7th Wisconsin and 19th Indiana, reforming in the low ground between Seminary Ridge and McPherson’s Ridge, the officers “moving up and down the line acting with great coolness and bravery.” More than one-half his regiment was sprawled about, dead, dying, or wounded, in the edge of Herbst Woods or in Herbst’s pasture,

and he observed the 47th North Carolina moving, he thought, to cut him off. To save his men McFarland ordered them to withdraw. The time was probably around 3:30 P.M. The battle for Herbst Woods was over.¹⁰²

John Herbst and his family cowered in their basement as the battle swept across their farm. When the firing around his farm buildings subsided, Herbst emerged from his cellar. He encountered a Confederate officer, probably a lieutenant of the 52nd North Carolina, the regiment that had passed through Harmon's farm and his own. The lieutenant told Herbst he had orders to burn the farm buildings because Union soldiers had used them for cover, that he had already set fire to the barn, and now intended to burn Herbst's house. One can only imagine Herbst's emotions at that moment. His dreams, his life, his family's future, were staked upon this farm. Now war had descended upon him like a plague and threatened to destroy it all in a single day. He must have pleaded with the Confederate officer to spare his home. But after the casualties Pettigrew's brigade had suffered, and the whole history of the war and tales of Yankee depredations in the South that this lieutenant no doubt had heard or seen firsthand, there was no pity for John Herbst or his home or possessions. The lieutenant and his men entered the Herbst home. They found two wounded Union soldiers and a Confederate, either from Archer's brigade or the 52nd, who had been carried into the house. One of the three was so badly wounded he could not be moved. The wounded men begged the lieutenant not to burn the house. Their appeal saved Herbst's home. But smoke and flame burst forth from the barn, consuming Herbst's wagon, ladders, reaper, mower, winnowing mill, cultivator, plow, and all the wheat, corn, hay, straw, Rye-straw, and corn fodder in and around the barn.¹⁰³

The battle swept on to Seminary Ridge and then through town. The clash of battle in Herbst Woods was replaced by screams and moans, by curses and prayers. The stink of blood, of death and wounds, replaced the smell of powder. By the principles of war in the 19th century the Confederates had won the battle for possession of Herbst Woods. They had driven the Iron Brigade and the 151st Pennsylvania out of it. But there was no euphoria of victory in the ranks of the 26th North Carolina and the 11th North Carolina, just as there was no sense that they had accomplished something noble and heroic among the Federal soldiers who survived the combat. Of the 550 officers and men the 11th North Carolina carried into action, 250 were killed or wounded. The 26th North Carolina, which had borne the brunt of the head-on attack into the woods, had been slaughtered. At least 549 of the 800 men who stepped off from Herr Ridge Woods were dead or wounded, including their beloved Colonel Burgwyn, who died while being carried from the field. Brockenbrough's casualties are more difficult to determine as his brigade also engaged Stone's brigade at the McPherson farm. The colonel of the 47th Virginia, who filed a report for the brigade in August, reported 300 men lost on July 1. But since the brunt of the fighting at the McPherson farm was borne by regiments of Daniels' brigade, Rodes' division, it must be presumed that most of Brockenbrough's loss on July 1 occurred against the 2nd and 7th Wisconsin.¹⁰⁴

It is more difficult determining the Union casualties in Herbst Woods, since all of these regiments carried on the fight to Seminary Ridge, on the ridge at the barricade in front of the seminary, then through town to Cemetery Hill. The 19th Indiana lost a minimum of 20 dead and 100 wounded out of the 308 carried into action. The 24th Michigan earned the melancholy distinction of suffering the largest number of casualties of any regiment in the Army of the Potomac at Gettysburg, with 363 on July 1, as well as the largest number of men killed outright in action, with 67, although this number rose to 99 when those who died of their wounds are added. The majority of the 24th's casualties were suffered in the morning fight with Archer and the afternoon battle in Herbst Woods. A reasonable estimate would be that two-thirds of the 24th's casualties were suffered in these two actions, or some 240 men killed, wounded, and missing, or captured, nearly 50 percent of the regiment. Since most of the 24th's captured were taken during

the regiment's retreat from the seminary through town, most of the losses in Herbst Woods were men killed or wounded.¹⁰⁵

The 2nd Wisconsin lost 77 percent of its number on July 1: 233 of 302 carried into action. It was the greatest percentage loss in the entire brigade. Fully 116 of the 191 killed and wounded were lost in the morning action in Herbst Woods. How many casualties were suffered in the afternoon fighting in the woods is unknown, but a reasonable estimate would place the figure at half of the remaining 75 killed and wounded, so that the 2nd probably lost around 150 killed and wounded, one half its number. The 7th Wisconsin escaped with the lightest losses of the brigade, but this was relative, for everyone suffered heavy casualties that day. Of the unit's 364 officers and men, 178 were casualties. The 7th took its greatest losses in the fight for the seminary, and particularly in the retreat from the seminary. The unit's losses in the Herbst Woods fight, both morning and afternoon, can only be estimated. The 151st Pennsylvania lost 337 men, or 72 percent of its strength that terrible day. According to Lt. Colonel McFarland, nearly all his 262 killed and wounded were hit in their fight on the edge of Herbst Woods.¹⁰⁶

Given what is known of the losses to both sides, the morning and afternoon battle in and immediately around Herbst Woods cost the Confederates as many as 1,472 men out of 3,457 taken into action, or 42 percent. Known Union losses were approximately 800 and possibly higher. More than 2,200 Americans had died or been wounded or captured on this small parcel of John Herbst's farm in a single day of combat. Nearly all these casualties were suffered in the woods or in Herbst's meadow and wheat field south of the woods, a total area of perhaps 30 to 35 acres. The two regiments suffering the greatest total loss of all regiments in the entire Army of the Potomac at Gettysburg, the 24th Michigan and 151st Pennsylvania, fought in Herbst Woods. The two regiments that led all regiments in the Army of Northern Virginia for killed and wounded in the entire battle, the 26th and 11th North Carolina, fought in Herbst Woods. No location on the Gettysburg battlefield exceeded this terrible place for manifest slaughter.¹⁰⁷

Those who survived the afternoon's battle in Herbst Woods were left numb and depressed. Tom Setser, of the 26th North Carolina, wrote home, "You may talk of this big fite and that big fite but tha hante bin [no] such fiting as was dun over thair for the first days fite. I could all but walk over the field on the dead and wounded. I never hav seen the like before." Lieutenant Cureton recalled that when they returned to the woods after the July 1 fighting subsided, "there it was we saw the sickening horrors of war." Many of the 26th's wounded were still awaiting evacuation and remained where they fell, so too were all the Federal wounded who had not been carried off by friends or got off the field under their own power. All were "crying pitiously for water," which Lieutenant Cureton said they administered to friend and foe. But he also observed that the "Battlefield Robbers" had been at work. These men robbed the dead and wounded of both sides of valuables or souvenirs. One man they attempted to rob was Sergeant Jefferson Coates. With his eyes shot out and bleeding from a head wound, Coates may have seemed dead to the men who came upon him. When one of the group attempted to remove the sergeant's shoes Coates came to life and struggled against the man. Another Confederate soldier stabbed at the sergeant with his bayonet. An officer who observed the struggle dashed up and chased off Coates' assailants, but then departed, probably to continue on with his unit. Later, a Georgian of Thomas' brigade, Pender's division, found Coates and carried him to one of Herbst's big hardwoods, sat him up against its trunk and gave him a full canteen of water. Coates insisted that the man take half his coffee as a measure of thanks.¹⁰⁸

Captain Louis G. Young, of Pettigrew's staff, had his own disturbing experience when he passed through the woods after the battle and heard what he described as "dreadful – not moans but – howls" coming from some of the Union wounded. Young approached several different men hoping to calm them, but "to my surprise I found them foaming at the mouth as if mad, and evidently unconscious of the sound of their voices." The captain did not relate what he did to ease the suffering of these men, or if he simply recoiled in horror from the woods.¹⁰⁹

Pettigrew's brigade was withdrawn to the Herr Ridge woods later that afternoon to assess the damage done them and to reorganize. The men of the 26th North Carolina were exhausted and depressed. In these same woods only several hours before they had formed, proud and magnificent, 840 men strong. Now, as they counted those present for duty, they numbered 212. Of the 91 Caldwell County men in Company F, only one man remained unhurt, Sergeant Robert Hudspeth. Colonel Burgwyn was dead, and Lt. Colonel Lane gravely wounded. Lieutenant Cureton recalled, "a gloom had settled over the entire regiment at the loss of their comrades [and] friends." The mood in the 11th North Carolina, with 40 percent of its strength dead and wounded, likely mirrored that of the 26th.¹¹⁰

The survivors of the Iron Brigade and the 151st Pennsylvania rallied on Cemetery Hill late that afternoon. Soon after, the Iron Brigade was ordered to the north slope of Culp's Hill and to entrench its position. Of the 1,883 splendid soldiers who had marched up from Marsh Creek that morning full of life and hope, 1,212 were casualties, the largest number that any brigade in the Army of the Potomac would suffer at Gettysburg. Some who emerged unscathed from Herbst Woods did not escape the rest of the fighting. In the fighting at the seminary, Major Mansfield was severely wounded in the left leg. So too was Lt. Colonel John Callis, of the 7th Wisconsin, and Lt. Colonel McFarland, of the 151st Pennsylvania. Callis took a bullet in the lung, and McFarland was shot through both legs, resulting in the amputation of his right leg. Captain Albert Edwards, the senior surviving officer of the 24th Michigan, checked his strength on Culp's Hill and found there were 3 officers and 99 men left of the 28 officers and 468 men carried into action that day. The 19th Indiana had 9 officers and 69 enlisted men left. And so it went for each of the regiments. "You cant blame me for feeling downhearted," wrote Augustus Zeigler, in the 24th Michigan, of that night. He was the only sergeant left in his company, and there were no commissioned officers. When Captain Edwards came by and told him to take command of his company, Zeigler replied that "I couldnt see the Co.," and "asked him where they were." Edwards "merely hung down and shook his head."¹¹¹

Gradually, the wreckage of war that strewed Herbst Woods and pasture was cleaned up. The Confederates gathered up their wounded and buried their dead. Presumably because of the demands necessary to evacuating and attending to their own wounded, the Confederates did not remove the Union wounded in the woods. Some were evacuated by Surgeon D. Cooper Ayres, of the 7th Wisconsin, who received permission on July 2 to remove the wounded. But despite Ayres' efforts many wounded remained. Somehow, word of this reached Colonel Morrow. He had been wounded in the head at the seminary, then turned command of the regiment over to Captain Edwards and went in search of medical attention in Gettysburg. He was captured and sent to join the thousands of other Union prisoners taken on July 1. Fortunately for Morrow, a Confederate surgeon, who coincidentally was a fellow Mason, examined his wound and declared that he was not fit to travel, and sent him back to a hospital in Gettysburg. Morrow removed his shoulder straps, and the wife of Gettysburg attorney David Willis tied a green scarf around his neck so that he might pose as an assistant-surgeon. Somehow he learned of the plight of the wounded in Herbst Woods. On July 3 he went looking for someone in authority and found General John B. Gordon. Morrow explained the situation and asked for Gordon's help. Gordon promised that there would be detail of ambulances at Morrow's disposal that evening.¹¹²

True to his word Gordon had twelve ambulances waiting for Morrow in Gettysburg that evening. Taking along what attendants and nurses he could round up, Morrow returned to Herbst Woods. A sickening and heart-rending scene greeted him. Nearly all of the Union dead remained unburied and were now "blackened and swollen" and giving off an awful stench. The Confederates had stripped many of their uniforms. Morrow and his assistants attempted to identify some of the dead, but their most pressing work was to administer to the wounded. The colonel later related that the "moans and cries for assistance and water were heartrending." Some men were delirious and ranted about the battle or of home and friends. Morrow never forgot one

young soldier of his regiment, Patrick Cleary, whom he found in McPherson's barn, with about 200 other wounded from the Iron Brigade and Stone's brigade. Cleary was one of the two youngest men in the 24th Michigan and had been hurt badly in the leg. Some surgeon had told him he would not survive his wound. Morrow told him the surgeon was the best judge of such things and that he should prepare himself to die. But Cleary begged Morrow that if he could arrange for a surgeon to amputate his leg, "I'll be with the regiment in a week," then added, "Ain't you proud of the Twenty-fourth now?" Morrow made the arrangements thinking it was hopeless. Cleary lost his leg, but not his life, thanks to Morrow. Many others were certainly spared that night from the icy grasp of death by this man's selfless actions.¹¹³

Most of the dead of the Iron Brigade and the 151st Pennsylvania lay where they fell until July 5. When the Army of Northern Virginia withdrew, burial details were dispatched to attend to them. The commander of the 1st Corps Artillery Brigade, Colonel Charles Wainwright, rode out to look at the field. The unburied dead "presented a ghastly sight, being swollen almost to the bursting of their clothes, and the faces perfectly black." Wainwright thought that the work of the burial details "was very ineffectually done, for twenty or more were put in a trench side by side, and covered with only a foot or two of earth." J. Howard Wert, a civilian, went over the first day's field of battle that same day and was shocked at the "ghastly horrors of those sickening burials of valiant men." Despite the nauseating and emotionally stressful nature of the work, details from the 24th Michigan, and no doubt all the other regiments that fought in Herbst Woods, made every effort to identify the dead they buried. Seven days later, a member of the Detroit Board of Trade visited Herbst Woods with a committee of that organization and found the woods "covered with graves almost as thickly as in a cemetery." Many of the graves were marked, "but many are unrecognizable." The fathers of Gilbert Dickey and Walter Wallace, lieutenants of the 24th who had lost their lives in the woods, found the graves of their sons. "Bitter tears were shed by these afflicted parents over the graves of their noble boys," wrote an observer.¹¹⁴



*Henry R. McCollum, Co. B, 2nd
Wisconsin Infantry. Killed in action, July
1. Buried in the National Cemetery.
GNMP Archives*

So many of the men who had marched up from Marsh Creek that gray morning of July 1 full of life and enthusiasm, or stepped off from the woods on Herr Ridge with confidence and courage, and then met in farmer Herbst's woodlot, now lay dead or maimed, or joined with columns of prisoners who faced an uncertain future. Although Cornelius Wheeler survived the day, and ultimately the war, his friends who had premonitions of their deaths, Sergeant Joe Williams and Sergeant Major George Legate, did not. Legate died, apparently at a Confederate hospital, on July 3. His loss was deeply felt in the regiment. He is buried today in the Soldiers National Cemetery. Nearby lies Lt. Colonel George Stevens. He died of his wounds at the 1st Corps hospital on July 5 and was initially buried in the Evergreen Cemetery before being moved to the National Cemetery. Gilbert Dickey's father apparently decided he wanted his son to remain at Gettysburg, for he was later moved from his Herbst Woods grave to the Michigan plot



*Lt. Gilbert Dickey as a student
in 1861.*

in the National Cemetery. Pat Maloney, the captor of General Archer, probably lies today with the unknowns in the cemetery. Burlington Cunningham, the stalwart color bearer of the 19th Indiana, survived his two wounds and lived until 1930. Lt. Colonel William W. Dudley survived as well, although surgeons had to amputate his leg below the knee, which ended his active service. Jefferson Coates spent months recovering from his wounds. He was blinded for life but lived until 1880. He was awarded a medal of honor on June 29, 1866 for “unsurpassed courage in battle” at Gettysburg. Of the four comrades of Company B, 24th Michigan, who had forsaken a surgeon’s certificate to fall out to take their place on the line, only George Pinkney emerged from Herbst Woods unscathed,

but died in an accidental shooting in August 1864. Andrew Arnold took a bullet in the foot that fractured his heel. He was discharged in January 1864. John S. Rider died, but there is some question whether he was killed in action on July 1 or died from his wounds on July 12. According to his service records, Richard Conners was “slightly wounded in the head by solid shot,” although it is difficult to imagine how anyone could be slightly wounded by a solid shot. The wound disabled him from active service and he transferred to the Invalid Corps with whom he served until mustered out in June 1865.¹¹⁵

Pettigrew’s aide, Louis G. Young, buried Colonel Henry Burgwyn and Captain William McCreery on the Charles B. Polley farm, located north of the Chambersburg pike and about one-half mile west of the Herr Tavern. Burgwyn’s family had his remains removed in 1867 and re-interred in the Soldier’s Cemetery in Raleigh. McCreery’s body returned to Raleigh in 1871 and was buried in Oakwood Cemetery. Of the 91 men in Company F who faced fire on July 1, 31 were killed or died of their wounds, a number of fatalities not likely exceeded by any company-sized unit at Gettysburg. General Archer marched with other Confederate prisoners captured on July 1 to Taneytown, Maryland. On July 2 they marched to Westminster, Maryland, where they boarded boxcars that took them to Baltimore. Archer was imprisoned at Fort McHenry. He was subsequently transferred to Fort Delaware prison and then Johnson’s Island prison. In August 1864 he was exchanged, but his health was ruined. He returned to duty in the lines around Petersburg, but his fragile constitution could not stand the exposure of active service. He contracted pneumonia and died on October 24, 1864. Lt. Colonel Lane recovered enough from his serious head wound to return to duty in November as colonel of the 26th. He suffered three more wounds in the war, at the Wilderness, Yellow Tavern, and at Reams’ Station. In 1903 he returned to Gettysburg for the fortieth anniversary at the invitation of the North Carolina Society of Baltimore. Charles McConnell, who tried to end Lane’s life in Herbst Woods forty years before, was also there. The two former adversaries met and shook hands, and McConnell declared, “I thank God I did not kill you.”¹¹⁶

1863 was a tragic year for John Herbst. Besides the economic and emotional losses he incurred from the battle, his wife Susan died that year. He married again and became known as one of Adams County’s “most estimable citizens, honest and upright in all things.” He died in 1904 and is buried in Evergreen Cemetery.¹¹⁷

Herbst Woods would never be the same after July 1. What happened there on July 1 forever transformed it. Even after the dead were removed and the battle-scarred trees healed, the memory of that terrible day, and all those lives that were forever destroyed by what happened there, lingered over it and haunts it still. There are monuments here to remind us of those who struggled here. In 1886 a granite monument was erected to mark the approximate spot where John Reynolds fell. The Iron Brigade regiments and the 151st Pennsylvania erected and dedicated monuments in 1888. Nearly 100 years later, in October 1985, a modest monument to the 26th North Carolina was placed. These monuments speak to this and future generations of what happened

here that terrible July day, but nothing evokes the power of this place and its memories as the landscape itself. The woods and fields, Willoughby Run –these are the greatest monument to those who fought here – the preservation of place. So long as we preserve this place, future generations can walk this ground and learn something about what courage means, and perhaps, if we listen carefully, hear the faint whisper of the names of those of so long ago who made this quiet spot hallowed ground . . . Williams. . . Legate . . . Burgwyn . . . McCreery . . . Coates . . . Maloney . . . Setser . . . Stevens . . . Dickey . . . Lane . . . Blanchard . . .



Three members of Company F, 26th North Carolina. From left to right, Sgt. John Tuttle, Private James. D. Moore, Private Henry C. Coffey. One of 16 Coffey's in the 26th, Henry was the 86th man wounded in the company on July 1. Moore was only 16 and was the 85th man wounded in his company. Tuttle was 18. He survived the battle but was killed at Bristoe Station in October. Both Coffey and Moore recovered from their wounds. Clark, North Carolina Regiments, v. 2

Notes

¹ John Herbst damage claim, file 14-CF-52, Gettysburg National Military Park (GNMP) Library.

² "The Significance of the Harmon Farm and The Springs Hotel Woods," Kathleen George Harrison, March 1991, Harmon Farm file, GNMP Library. Both Slentz's and Herbst's damage claims indicate that they did not attempt to take their horses or livestock to safety. Slentz did leave his farm on the morning of July 1, but Herbst remained during the fighting that day. For Slentz's damage claim see "Edward McPherson Farm Historical Study," Kathleen R. Georg, October 1977, GNMP Library, p. 102.

³ Louis Young, "Pettigrew's Brigade at Gettysburg," in Walter Clark, ed., *Histories of the Several Regiments and Battalions from North Carolina in the Great War 1861-'65* (Wendell, NC: Broadfoot Bookmark, 1982), 5:115. Pettigrew's force consisted of the 11th, 26th, and 47th North Carolina, of his own brigade, the 55th Virginia, of Brockenbrough's brigade, and three guns of the Donaldsonville Artillery. See Harry W. Pfanz, *Gettysburg The First Day* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 25.

⁴ Young, 115; Pfanz, 25-26; Michael Jacobs, *Notes on the Rebel Invasion of Maryland and Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1864), 21-22.

⁵ According to Michael Jacobs, Buford's division reached Gettysburg at 11:30 A.M. See Jacobs, 22; Edward McPherson damage claim, in Georg, 104.

⁶ Hillman A. Hall, W. B. Besley, and Gilbert G. Wood, *History of the Sixth New York Cavalry* (Worcester, MA: The Blanchard Press, 1908), 136. According to the 6th's historians, the brigade commander, Colonel Thomas Devin, did not believe the Confederates would advance against him as early in the morning as Buford believed, and that he could handle the force the enemy was likely to send. Buford replied to Devin,

“No, you won’t. They will attack you in the morning, and they will come ‘booming,’ skirmishers three deep. You will have to fight like the devil to hold your own until supports arrive.”

⁷ U.S. War Department, *War of the Rebellion: The Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901) [Hereafter cited as *OR*], 27(3):419-420, 460-461. It is uncertain whether Reynolds ever received Meade’s July 1 dispatch described on page 460-461.

⁸ Rufus R. Dawes, *Service With the Sixth Wisconsin Volunteers* (Madison, WI: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1962), 157; Alan D. Gaff, *On Many a Bloody Field: Four Years in the Iron Brigade* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana Univ. Press, 1996), 254.

⁹ C. A. Stevens to Daniel L. Durrie, July 29, 1886, State Historical Society of Wisconsin (SHSW).

¹⁰ Alan Nolan, *The Iron Brigade* (Ann Arbor, MI: Historical Society of Michigan, 1983), 114-115; O.B. Curtis, *History of the Twenty-Fourth Michigan of the Iron Brigade* (Gaithersburg, MD: Butternut Press, 1984), 367. Dickey’s 1861 class had seven members. All were excused two weeks early to enlist in the Union army. See, <http://kevinforsyth.net/ELMI/armory.htm> (October 2005), also, http://www.ahs.uwaterloo.ca/~mhavitz/fh_history/fh_history.1.pdf (October 2005).

¹¹ Young, 116-117. In an article that Heth wrote for the *Philadelphia Weekly Press* on September 22, 1877, he said that he said that Hill had just come from a meeting with Lee when he met with Heth, Pettigrew, and Young, and said to Heth that “the information [Lee] has from his scouts corroborates that I have received from mine – that is, the enemy are still at Middleburg [Md.], and have not yet struck their tents.” If true, it helps explain why Hill and Heth were skeptical of what Pettigrew reported. Yet Heth’s post-war accounts of the battle must be used with some caution for he suffered either from either a deliberate or naturally bad memory. For instance, in a subsequent account for the *Press*, published on March 23, 1878, he wrote that on July 1, “I did not have so much as a skirmish with General Buford’s cavalry or with any other cavalry.” Yet his after-action report of Gettysburg states that he did skirmish with cavalry! See *OR*, 27(2):637.

¹² *OR*, 27(2):607. Hill apparently did not inform Ewell of his plan to move on Gettysburg until the next morning, since Ewell reported that he received a message to this effect upon the morning of July 1 when he was between Heidlersburg and Middletown (Biglerville). See *OR*, 27(2):444.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 444.

¹⁴ John Busey and David Martin, *Regimental Strengths and Losses at Gettysburg* (Hightstown, NJ: Longstreet House, 1994), 177.

¹⁵ Francis B. Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1903), 1: 168; Richard N. Current, ed., *Encyclopedia of the Confederacy* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1993), 1:50.

¹⁶ F. S. Harris, “Gen. Jas. J. Archer,” *Confederate Veteran*, 3:18.

¹⁷ Young, 117.

¹⁸ George W. Cullum, *Biographical Register of Officers and Graduates of the U. S. Military Academy* (New York: James Miller, 1879), 2:502; Rod Gragg, *Covered With Glory: The 26th North Carolina Infantry at Gettysburg* (New York: Harpers Collins, 2000), 124-125; Robert E. L. Krick, *Staff Officers in Gray: A Biographical Register of Staff Officers in the Army of Northern Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 207.

¹⁹ Gragg, 102; Weymouth T. Jordan, ed., *North Carolina Troops 1861-1865: A Roster* (Raleigh, NC: Division of Archives & History, 1979), 7:533-548.

²⁰ John L. Beveridge, “The First Gun at Gettysburg,” in Ken Bandy and Florence Freedland, compilers, *The Gettysburg Papers* (Dayton, OH: Morningside Bookshop, 1978), 1:91; *OR*, 27(1):934.

²¹ *OR*, 27(1):1031; John H. Calef, “Gettysburg Notes: The Opening Gun,” *Journal of the Military Service Institution of the United States*, 40:17.

²² Georg, 27-28.

²³ *OR*, 27(1):244.

²⁴ Cornelius Wheeler, “Reminiscences of the Battle of Gettysburg,” in Bandy and Freedland, 1:201. Meredith’s men gave a variety of times for the start of their march that morning, from “early on the morning” to “7 o’clock” to between 7 A.M. and 8 A.M. Wadsworth gave the time his division marched as 8 A.M. Since it is clear that Cutler’s brigade started before this, Meredith probably got underway around 8. See *OR*, 27(1):265.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 201.

²⁶ Curtis, 182.

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- ²⁷ James P. Sullivan, "The Charge of the Iron Brigade at Gettysburg," typescript, GNMP Library; Dawes, 164.
- ²⁸ Marc and Beth Storch, "What a Deadly Trap We Were In," *Gettysburg Magazine*, 6:17; Birkett Fry to John Bachelder, December 27, 1877, in David L. and Audrey J. Ladd, eds., *The Bachelder Papers* (Dayton, OH: Morningside Press, 1994), 3:1932.
- ²⁹ OR, 27(2):637, 646, 649.
- ³⁰ Storch, 18; Dr. W. H. Moon, "Beginning of the Battle at Gettysburg," *Confederate Veteran*, 33:449.
- ³¹ Charles Veil to David McConaughy, April 7, 1864, GNMP Library; OR, 27(1):265; Lance J. Herdegen and William J. K. Beaudot, *In The Bloody Railroad Cut at Gettysburg* (Dayton, OH: Morningside Press, 1990), 166; M. C. Barnes to W. W. Dudley, March 28, 1883, in Ladd and Ladd, eds., *The Bachelder Papers*, 937-938.
- ³² OR, 27(1):1031; J. B. Turney, "The First Tennessee at Gettysburg," *Confederate Veteran*, (8:535. The fact that Heth did not move Pettigrew and Brockenbrough up in close support of Archer and Davis is the clearest evidence that Heth underestimated the enemy forces in his front.
- ³³ E. T. Boland, "Death of Gen. Reynolds," *National Tribune* (May 20, 1915); Moon, 449; William F. Fulton II, *War Reminiscences of William Frierson Fulton II* (Gaithersburg, MD: Butternut Press, 1986), 76; OR, 27(2):646.
- ³⁴ John Herbst damage claim, GNMP Library.
- ³⁵ OR, 27(1):1031; C. Tevis, *The History of the Fighting Fourteenth* (Brooklyn, NY: Eagle Press, 1911), 82-83, 132-133.
- ³⁶ R. T. Mockbee, "Historical Sketch of the Fourteenth Tennessee," Eleanor Brockenbrough Library, Museum of the Confederacy; W. H. Bird, *Stories of The Civil War* (Columbia, AL: Advocate Print, n.d.), 7; James Simpson to his mother, July 8, 1863, Allen-Simpson Papers #29 Microfilm, Southern Historical Collection (SHC), University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Simpson wrote that he and Archer were within three feet of each other.
- ³⁷ John B. Bachelder, *John B. Bachelder's History of the Battle of Gettysburg* David L. & Audrey J. Ladd, eds., (Dayton, OH: Morningside Press, 1997), 217.
- ³⁸ Charles Veil to David McGonaughy, April 7, 1864, Gettysburg College Special Collections, copy GNMP Library.
- ³⁹ Twenty men of the 2nd Wisconsin were detailed to the brigade guard; Robert K. Beecham, *Gettysburg: The Pivotal Battle of the Civil War* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1911), 65. Several different members of the 2nd recorded that the first volley cut down 30 percent of the regiment. See George H. Otis diary, SHSW; Robert Hughes diary, SHSW; Sydney Meade diary, SHSW; incomplete draft report of Colonel Lucius Fairchild, SHSW. See also Cornelius Wheeler to parents, July 11, 1863, Cornelius Wheeler Papers, Area Research Center, University of Wisconsin at River Falls; OR, 27(1):273.
- ⁴⁰ Charles Veil to David McConaughy, April 7, 1864; Joseph G. Rosengarten to Samuel P. Bates, Jan. 13, 1876, Samuel Bates Papers, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC).
- ⁴¹ OR, 27(1):279. Robinson reported that the 2nd Wisconsin was the length "of the battalion in advance." I presume Robinson meant the size of his regiment, which would mean the 2nd was about 100 yards in advance of the 7th at this point.
- ⁴² Moon, 449.
- ⁴³ William W. Dudley report, Union battle reports, v. 27, boxes 48-52, Record Group 94, National Archives; Alan Gaff, "Here Was Made Our Last and Hopeless Stand," *Gettysburg Magazine*, 2:29; Bird, 7. Bird described the arrival of the 19th Indiana: "when all of a sudden a heavy line of battle rose up out of the wheat, and poured a volley into our ranks." OR, 27(1):279; Lance Herdegen and Sherry Murphy, eds., *Four Years With the Iron Brigade: The Civil War Journals of William Ray* (Cambridge, MA: De Capo Press, 2002), 191.
- ⁴⁴ Henry C. Marsh, "The Nineteenth Indiana at Gettysburg," Indiana State Library.
- ⁴⁵ OR, 27(1):267; Roswell Root to his grandfather, August 23, 1863, Gregory Coco Collection, United States Army Military History Institute; Curtis, 164.
- ⁴⁶ Turney, 535; OR, 27(2):646. Based on Moon's and Turney's accounts, and the after-action report of Lt. Colonel Shephard, all of whom saw Archer, he moved from the 13th Alabama to the 1st Tennessee, and in retreat went in the direction of the 7th Tennessee.
- ⁴⁷ OR, 27(1):274.

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- ⁴⁸ Dennis B. Dailey to Abner Doubleday, March 24, 1890, *John B. Bachelder Papers*, GNMP Library; OR, 27(1):274. It is apparent that Lt. Dailey forgot some of the details of that day when he wrote Doubleday in 1890, for Major Mansfield is quite clear that Archer surrendered his sword to him, and that he turned the prisoner and sword over to Dailey.
- ⁴⁹ Bachelder, *History*, 229; Beecham, 67.
- ⁵⁰ Storch, 26-27.
- ⁵¹ Bachelder, *History*, 229-230; Beecham, 68-69; William W. Dudley report.
- ⁵² William W. Dudley to Hon. George R. Blanchard, August 9, 1887, in Norma F. Hawkins, ed., "Sergeant-Major Blanchard at Gettysburg," *Indiana Magazine of History*, 34:2, 214.
- ⁵³ OR, 27(1):268, 279; August Zeigler to family, July 21, 1863, <http://www.24th-michigan.org/azieglett.html> (3 December 2004). The author would like to thank Rob Richardson, the webmaster of the 24th Michigan Regimental website, for the outstanding resource he has provided on this regiment. Flanigan lost a leg as a result of his wound. Rexford survived as well, but was discharged in November 1863 for disability. See Curtis, 157, 357, 360.
- ⁵⁴ Beecham, 69, 71; OR, 27(1):267; "Report of John Callis," *The Bachelder Papers*, 1:140; Callis' "report" must be used with some caution as it is quite self-serving and not altogether accurate; George W. New to John Bachelder, Sept. 8, 1865, *The Bachelder Papers*, 197-198. It is not certain that Stevens was taken to the seminary, but since he was hit early in the action and this being the 1st Division hospital, it is unlikely he was taken elsewhere.
- ⁵⁵ Marsh, "Nineteenth Indiana at Gettysburg."
- ⁵⁶ Curtis, 182.
- ⁵⁷ OR, 27(1):246; Abner Doubleday, *Chancellorsville and Gettysburg* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1992), 130.
- ⁵⁸ OR, 27(1):315.
- ⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 317.
- ⁶⁰ William W. Dudley report; OR, 27(1):268, 279.
- ⁶¹ Norma F. Hawkins, ed., 215. Although Dudley is clear that Blanchard was sent to meet with Wadsworth, the story apparently was related to Doubleday, for he included a variation of it in his book *Chancellorsville and Gettysburg*. He wrote that when Meredith's regiments were moving past him toward Herbst Woods during the action with Archer he urged the men to hold the woods at all hazards, to which they responded, "If we can't hold it, where will find men who can?" Either Doubleday forgot when this incident took place and who the exchange took place between, or he deliberately changed the time the incident took place to mid-morning, rather than afternoon, and put himself in place of Wadsworth. See Doubleday, 130.
- ⁶² Henry Heth, "Letter from Major General Henry Heth, of A. P. Hill's Corps, A.N.V.," *Southern Historical Society Papers*, 4:158.
- ⁶³ John R. Lane, "Address at Gettysburg," *John R. Lane Papers*, Southern Historical Collection (SHC), University of North Carolina
- ⁶⁴ *Ibid.*
- ⁶⁵ Heth, 158; Pfan, 275. Lee probably wished to consult with A. P. Hill before he gave Heth permission to attack.
- ⁶⁶ Lane, "Address;" Gragg, 101.
- ⁶⁷ Lane, "Address;" OR, 27(2):643.
- ⁶⁸ Lane, "Address."
- ⁶⁹ Pfan, 276; Augustus Zeigler to family, July 21, 1863, <http://www.24th-michigan.org/azieglett.html> (3 December 2004); Nevins, ed., *Diary of Battle* [NEED COMPLETE REFERENCE HERE], 235; Hawkins, ed., 215; OR, 27(1):268.
- ⁷⁰ Theodore B. Gates, *The Ulster Guard and the War of the Rebellion*, (New York: Benj. H. Tyrrel Printers, 1879), 433; *Gettysburg Compiler*, July 3, 1915.
- ⁷¹ Pfan, 289; OR, 27(2):646-647; Walter Clark, *North Carolina Regiments* (Wendell, NC: Broadfoot Bookmark, 1982), 3:236-237.
- ⁷² Curtis, 160; "Letter From a Confederate Soldier," March 28, 1911, Gettysburg Newspaper Clippings, v. 6, Vertical File 7-NC26, GNMP Library; Hawkins, ed., 215; OR, 27(1):268; Gragg, 116; Edward Raymor diary, <http://www.24th-michigan.org/menu.htm> (4 April 2004).
- ⁷³ Louis G. Young to Maj. Wm. J. Baker, Feb. 10, 1864, *Francis D. Winston Papers*, North Carolina State Archives. Edward Raymor, 24th Michigan, wrote in his diary that the range was 20 paces; see Raymor

diary, <http://www.24th-michigan.org/menu.htm> (4 April 2004); Lane, "Address;" Gragg, 117; OR, 27(1):362. Cooper's battery had been supporting Biddle but was moved before Heth's attack.

⁷⁴ Lane, "Address;" After-action report of Colonel Samuel J. Williams, 19th Indiana, in Gaff, "Here Was Made ...," 29; Gaff, *On Many a Bloody Field*, 260; Henry C. Marsh, "The Nineteenth Indiana at Gettysburg," United States Army Military History Institute.

⁷⁵ Curtis, 177; Gragg, 117-118.

⁷⁶ Thomas J. Cureton to Col. J. R. Lane, June 15, 1890, *John R. Lane Papers*, SHC, UNC; Gragg, 118.

⁷⁷ Gaff, "Here Was Made ...," 29; Hawkins, ed., 215-216.

⁷⁸ Gaff, *On Many a Bloody Field*, 262-263; also see, Hawkins, ed., 216, and Henry Marsh, "The Nineteenth Indiana at Gettysburg." Marsh's and Dudley's accounts differ in certain respects. Gaff uncovered other primary accounts describing the color incidents and I have accepted his version as accurate.

⁷⁹ Gaff, *On Many a Bloody Field*, 263.

⁸⁰ OR, 27(1):268; Curtis, 160, 165, 188.

⁸¹ Lane, "Address;" OR, 27(2):643.

⁸² Curtis, 164-165.

⁸³ Gragg, 123-125.

⁸⁴ Lane, "Address;" McReery's blood still stains the 26th North Carolina flag, which is displayed at the Museum of the Confederacy in Richmond.

⁸⁵ Lane, "Address;" Gragg, 127, 129.

⁸⁶ Lane, "Address;" Thomas J. Cureton to Col. Lane, June 15, 1890; *John R. Lane Papers*, SHC, UNC; Gragg, 129-130.

⁸⁷ Lane, "Address;" Cureton to Lane, June 15, 1890, *John R. Lane Papers*.

⁸⁸ OR, 27(1):279; Mark Finnicum to Governor Salomon, July 24, 1863, Records of the Wisconsin Adjutant General, SHSW.

⁸⁹ L.E. Pond to Adj. General, June 21, 1867, Records of the Wisconsin Adjutant General, SHSW.

⁹⁰ Jno. C. Schooner to Adj. General, March 19, 1867, Records of the Wisconsin Adjutant General, SHWS.

⁹¹ Henry C. Burgwyn to his mother, May 28, 1863, Burgwyn Papers, SHC, Univ. of North Carolina; Allen Paul Speer, ed., *Voices From Cemetery Hill* (Johnson City, TN: Overmountain Press, 1997), 112; George H. Legate to his sister, Jan. 27, 1863, George H. Legate Pension File, National Archives.

⁹² Augustus Zeigler letter, July 21, 1863, <http://www.24th-michigan.org/azieglett.html> (3 December 2004); W. B. Taylor to his mother, July 29, 1863, William B. Floyd Collection, V7-NC11, GNMP Library.

⁹³ OR, 27(1):274, 279-280; Cornelius Wheeler manuscript, undated fragment, SHSW.

⁹⁴ OR, 27(1):274, 280; Wheeler manuscript; Medical Report of Jefferson Coates, August 10, 1863, Jefferson Coates Military Service Record, NA.

⁹⁵ Michael Dreese, *The 151st Pennsylvania Volunteers at Gettysburg: Like Ripe Apples in a Storm* (Philadelphia: McFarland & Co., 2000), 16-17. Although nicknamed the "Schoolteachers' Regiment" after the war, Dreese points out that although at least 60 teachers served in its ranks, most of the men were farmers, skilled tradesmen, or in the lumber industry.

⁹⁶ OR, 27(1):327; Dreese, *The 151st Pennsylvania Volunteers*, 17.

⁹⁷ OR, 27(1):327.

⁹⁸ Ibid; W. O. Blodgett to wife, July 2, 1863, in *Stepping Stones*, publication of Warren County Historical Society, 2:1, V6-PA151, GNMP Library; Dreese, *The 151st Pennsylvania Volunteers*, 48.

⁹⁹ Curtis, 162; M. C. Barnes to W. W. Dudley, March 28, 1883, *John B. Bachelder Papers*, GNMP Library; Gaff, "Here Was Made ...," 30. The timing of some of these events is difficult to determine with any degree of accuracy. Barnes' letter to Dudley establishes that the 19th formed for at least a few minutes on the 151st Pennsylvania's right, and Colonel Williams' report establishes that the 7th Wisconsin formed on his right. But Williams is not clear on when he retreated. Colonel Robinson's report indicates that his regiment halted its withdrawal to support the retreat of the other regiments. It is probable that these two regiments remained until they could see the 24th and 2nd coming back, then withdrew per their orders to do so. Ultimately, only the 151st Pennsylvania remained in Herbst Woods.

¹⁰⁰ OR, 27(1):269, 274. No one in the 24th Michigan or 2nd Wisconsin mentioned the 151st Pennsylvania, but they surely passed by the right flank of this regiment during their retreat. Such was the smoke and confusion of the moment and each regiment's focus on fighting for its own survival, that it is not unusual that the officers and men did not take particular notice of who was fighting nearby. Lt. Colonel McFarland wrote in 1867 to John Bachelder that he thought the Iron Brigade "evidently regarded my regiment as a

relief, and very soon after I got into position, it fell back to the hollow midway between the ridge and the Seminary and there reformed.” See, McFarland to Bachelder, Feb. 7, 1867, *Bachelder Papers*.

¹⁰¹ Lane, “Address;” Gragg, 135; Thomas J. Cureton to J. R. Lane, June 15, 1890, *John R. Lane Papers*, SHC.

¹⁰² McFarland to Bachelder, Feb. 7, 1867, *The Bachelder Papers*; Michael Dreese, *An Imperishable Fame: The Civil War Experience of George Fisher McFarland* (Mifflintown, PA: Juniata County Historical Society, 1997), 132; OR, 27(1):328.

¹⁰³ John Herbst Claim File, File 14-CF-52, GNMP Library.

¹⁰⁴ Louis G. Young to Maj. Wm. J. Baker, February 10, 1864, *Francis D. Winston Papers*, NCSA. The 26th may have lost more than 549 men. Their quartermaster, Captain J. J. Young, reported that only 216 men were unhurt at the end of the day’s fighting. See, OR, 27(2):645; Colonel R. M. Mayo, “Report of part taken by Heth’s (Old) Brigade in the Battles of Maryland and Pennsylvania,” Henry Heth Collection, Museum of the Confederacy. Mayo does not state that the brigade lost 300 men on July 1. He writes that they carried 800 into action on July 1, suffered severely, and had only 500 available on July 3 when they took part in Pickett’s Charge.

¹⁰⁵ Busey and Martin, 23; Gaff, “Here Was Made,” 29; OR, 27(1):268.

¹⁰⁶ Busey and Martin, 23; OR, 27(1):280; Dreese, *An Imperishable Fame*, 130.

¹⁰⁷ Busey and Martin, 264, 299-301.

¹⁰⁸ Gragg, 140; Thomas Cureton to J. R. Lane, June 22, 1890, SHC; Jefferson Coates brevet commission for Gettysburg, Adjutant Generals Records, Wisconsin, Series #1151, Register of Commissions by Brevet, 1864-1870, NA; Undated and Untitled typescript by Alan E. Kent, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, on Jefferson Coates, V6-WI7, GNMP Library.

¹⁰⁹ Louis G. Young, “Pettigrew’s Brigade at Gettysburg,” in Walter Clark, *Histories of the Several Regiments and Battalions from North Carolina in the Great War, 1861-1865* (Wendell, NC: Broadfoot’s Bookmark, 1982), 5:119.

¹¹⁰ Cureton to Lane, June 22, 1890, SHC; William H. S. Burgwyn, “Unparalleled Loss of Company F,” *Southern Historical Society Papers*, 28:201.

¹¹¹ W. W. Dudley conducted a statistical study of the strength and losses of the brigade, which gave the strength and losses of the brigade as 1,883 and 1,212 respectively. This varies from Busey and Martin, who give the strength on July 1 as 1,829, and losses as 1,153. Given the number of casualties and the confusion such losses can produce in an organization, it is difficult to say whose statistics are correct, but I have accepted Dudley’s. See Nolan, *The Iron Brigade*, 365-366; Busey and Martin, 239, 274; OR, 27(1):274; John Callis to John Bachelder, no date, but probably 1864, Ladd and Ladd, eds., *The Bachelder Papers*, 1:142; Dreese, *An Imperishable Fame*, 129. Callis lay for 43 hours on the battlefield before receiving attention. For Callis’ heart-rending ordeal with his wound, see, *The Medical and Surgical History of the Civil War* (Wilmington, NC: Broadfoot Publishing Co., 1991), 8:584-585; Curtis, 163; Gaff, 273; Augustus Zeigler Letter, July 21, 1863, <http://www.24th-michigan.org/azieglett.html> (3 December 2004).

¹¹² Thomas Cureton wrote that the 26th’s dead were buried on July 2. See Thomas J. Cureton to J. R. Lane, June 22, 1890, SHC; Augustus Zeigler claimed that the Confederates not only did not evacuate the Union wounded, they would not allow anyone to go on the field to bring them a drink, or allow a doctor or nurse to go near them. This was a rumor, as Sergeant Sullivan Green wrote on July 4, the day after Colonel Morrow visited Herbst Woods and reported that the Confederates gave the wounded water and generally treated them well although they did not remove them. See Augustus Zeigler Letter, July 21, 1863. For the report that Surgeon Ayres removed some wounded on July 2, see *Milwaukee Sunday Telegraph*, Sept. 30, 1884; Curtis, 184, 188, 191.

¹¹³ Curtis, 184, 188, 191, 177.

¹¹⁴ Nevins, ed., *A Diary of Battle*, 113; Gregory A. Coco, *A Strange and Blighted Land: Gettysburg the Aftermath of a Battle* (Gettysburg: Thomas Publications, 1995), 73; Curtis, 186.

¹¹⁵ Wheeler manuscript; George H. Legate pension file, NA; For the feelings about Legate’s death, see “Letter from Capt. Otis,” *Mineral Point Tribune*, July 29, 1863 [The author is indebted to Marc Storch of Wisconsin for this source]; John Busey, *The Last Full Measure* (Hightstown, NJ: Longstreet House, 1988), 158, 161, 34; George A. Stevens pension file, NA. Stevens’ pension file does not contain any explanation for why his wife did not have his body shipped to Wisconsin for burial, which given his rank seems unusual. The source for Gilbert Dickey’s photograph on page 189 is,

www.ahs.uwaterloo.ca/~mhavitz/fh_history/fh.history.1.pdf. Unfortunately, Burlington Cunningham's pension file was misplaced in the National Archives and could not be located when the author visited there in January 2004. For information on his post-war years see, <http://jerry.vigo.lib.in.us/civilwar/019notes.htm> (4 April 2004); Gaff, 272-273; *The Medal of Honor of the United States Army* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1948), 137; Andrew J. Arnold, Richard Conners, George Pinkney, and John S. Rider military service and pension records, NA. According to the 24th Michigan muster roll, Rider died of his wounds on July 12. His pension record contains this same information. However, William Way, the chaplain of the 24th wrote the family on July 9 that John was killed on July 1 and that he buried him with "my own hands," which seems rather conclusive. Rider had a brother, Alfred, who served in the 1st Michigan Cavalry and was mortally wounded and died on July 18. There is also evidence that John Rider is not buried in the National Cemetery, or that the man under that stone is not John Rider, for Way wrote to Mr. Rider in December 1863 requesting an additional \$20 to pay for shipping both John and Alfred's bodies to Michigan. See William Way to Mr. Rider, July 9, 1863, December 2, 1863, Ryder Family Papers, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan.

¹¹⁶ Gregory Coco, *Wasted Valor: The Confederate Dead at Gettysburg* (Gettysburg: Thomas Publications: , 1990), 114-115; Coco, *Gettysburg's Confederate Dead* (Gettysburg: Thomas Publications, 2003), no pagination; William H. S. Burgwyn, "Unparalleled Loss of Company F," 202-204; Richard Current, ed., *Encyclopedia of the Confederacy* (New York: Simon & Shuster, 1993), 1:51; Roger Long, "The Confederate Prisoners of Gettysburg," *Gettysburg Magazine*, 2:95-96; Jordan, *North Carolina Troops*, 7:463; Gragg, 244.

¹¹⁷ *Adams County Sentinel*, Sept. 7, 1904; Mary and Lillians Rose, "Jacob Herbst and his Descendants," Herbst Family file, Adams County Historical Society.