

NORTH CAROLINA'S PARTICIPATION IN
THE BATTLE OF GETTYSBURG

A Thesis

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by

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H. Lynn Estes. NORTH CAROLINA'S PARTICIPATION IN THE BATTLE OF GETTYSBURG. (Under the direction of Dr. William N. Still, Jr.) Department of History, East Carolina University, November 1982.

This study examines the role that North Carolina played in the Battle of Gettysburg, July 1-3, 1863. Gettysburg was one of the most crucial battles in the conflict and North Carolina's participation was important.

General Robert E. Lee won an important victory at Chancellorsville, Virginia in May, 1863. He alone with President Jefferson Davis decided that this victory should be taken advantage of by an invasion of the North. A successful invasion could force the North into a negotiated peace which would undoubtedly recognize the importance of the Confederacy. It had other possible advantages such as obtaining needed supplies and recruits, and even convincing European powers into intervening in the conflict.

Early in June Lee's troops crossed the Potomac with Harrisburg, Pennsylvania as the immediate objective. There were several clashes and skirmishes in which North Carolina troops participated as Lee's men passed through Maryland and southern Pennsylvania.

North Carolina units participating in the battle included the brigades commanded by James Johnston Pettigrew, Stephen Dodson Ramseur, Junius Daniel, Alfred Iverson, Robert F. Hoke (commanded by Colonel Isaac E. Avery), A. M. Scales, and James H. Lane. Other North Carolina units involved included the 1st and 3rd North Carolina regiments, Robertson's Cavalry brigade, two cavalry regiments and four artillery

batteries. Finally, one of Lee's division commanders, Dorsey Pender, was a North Carolinian.

North Carolina's casualties at Gettysburg numbered 770 killed, the greatest number of any southern state.

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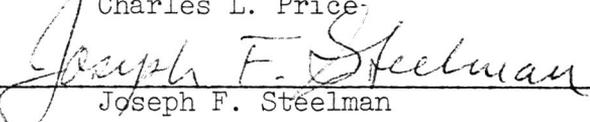
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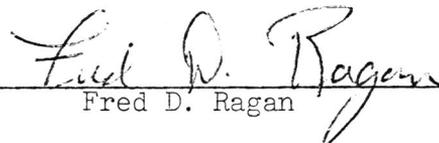
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Gettysburg was neither the largest battle of the Civil War nor the most sanguinary, but is certainly the most famous and the most controversial. It is commonly referred to as the turning point of the war. There have been a few works about various aspects of North Carolina's participation in the battle of Gettysburg, but a detailed, comprehensive work dealing with all the aspects of North Carolina's participation has never been done.

At this point a general overview of the campaign before the battle commenced is in order. The battle took place on July 1 through July 3, 1863 near the small Pennsylvania town of Gettysburg. In May of 1863 General Robert E. Lee and the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia, had won what many have called Lee's greatest victory, at Chancellorsville in Virginia. The cost, however, was great. Besides the army having taken heavy casualties, Lee's best corps commander and a military genius in his own right, Stonewall Jackson, had been fatally wounded. Lee was deeply saddened by Jackson's death, but felt obligated to persevere, in spite of the difficulties. The Army of Northern Virginia was reorganized, in an attempt, to minimize the effects of Jackson's death. Richard Ewell was elevated from division command, to take command of Jackson's old command, the Second Corps. Units were taken from Ewell's Second Corps and James Longstreet's

First Corps, and combined into a new corps, designated Third Corps, with A. P. Hill brought up from division command in charge. William Dorsey Pender of North Carolina was placed in command of the famous "Light" division formerly commanded by Hill.

General Lee decided that the best way to take advantage of the Confederate victory at Chancellorsville, would be to invade the North. A decisive victory by the Confederates on Northern soil could very well end the war with the Confederacy victorious, because of the threat of European intervention. This was not Lee's only alternative, however. He could remain on the defensive and send part of his army to the West and relieve Vicksburg. This was the course of action favored by James Longstreet. After careful consideration, Lee rejected this alternative. Another major factor in Lee's decision, besides the one already mentioned, was logistics. Virginia had been ravaged by war. Lee wanted to gather supplies from the lush Pennsylvania farmland.

In June the Confederates made their move. On June 9th, just before the Confederates moved out to start their invasion of the North, the cavalry battle at Brandy Station occurred. The First North Carolina cavalry regiment of Wade Hampton's brigade took an active part in the struggle. In this action Jeb Stuart's Confederate cavalry were caught off guard by a sudden Federal cavalry raid across the Rappahannock River. The Confederates recovered from their initial surprise and after a spirited encounter, the Federal troops withdrew back across the river.¹

The 2nd North Carolina cavalry regiment of W. H. Lee's brigade

¹Douglas Southhall Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants. New York: Scribners, 1944, vol. 3, pp. 1-19. Hereinafter cited as Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants.

played a minor part in the fighting. An unfortunate decision on the part of Brigadier General Beverly H. Robertson, a Georgian, whose brigade consisted of the 4th and 5th North Carolina cavalry regiments, allowed Gregg's Federal cavalry to complicate matters for Stuart by almost taking Fleetwood Hill. Gregg's forces crossed the river just south of Robertson's position. Instead of dividing his brigade to hit Gregg on the flank and delay him, giving Stuart more time, Robertson decided to keep his forces together and hold his position. The advantage of hindsight shows Robertson's decision to have been the wrong one. Stuart was critical of Robertson because of this.²

Many blamed Stuart's overconfidence for the surprise at Brandy Station. The Richmond Examiner held Stuart accountable. Pender of North Carolina had this to say of the matter: "I suppose it is all right that Stuart should get all the blame, for when anything handsome is done he gets all the credit. A bad rule either way. He however retrieved the surprise by whipping them in the end."³

Most sources indicate that Lee's immediate objective was Harrisburg, the capital of Pennsylvania.⁴ The Confederates crossed the Potomac, and continued on into Federal territory with little difficulty. The invasion was led by Rodes's division of Ewell's Second Corps. The first brigade to cross the Potomac was Ramseur's North Carolina brigade.

²Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, vol. 3, pp. 13-14.

³Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, vol. 3, pp. 18-19.

⁴These sources include such authorities as: Edwin B. Coddington, The Gettysburg Campaign (1968); Clifford Dowdey, Death of a Nation (1958); James S. Montgomery, The Shaping of a Battle: Gettysburg (1959); Wilbur S. Nye, Here Come the Rebels! (1965); Edward J. Stackpole, They Met at Gettysburg (1956); George R. Stewart, Pickett's Charge (1959);

At the head of Ramseur's brigade were the "Rough and Ready Guards" from Asheville. They were Governor Vance's old company. This company was an integral part of the 14th North Carolina infantry regiment commanded by Colonel Risdin T. Bennett. This unit marched to Hagerstown, Maryland and then continued on until it reached Carlisle, Pennsylvania.⁵

A member of Rodes's division left a most interesting diary which gives an account of the exhausting march of Lee's army into Pennsylvania in June of 1863. This diary is brief and to the point. It contains misspelled words and bad grammar also. It is valuable, though, for the vivid impression it gives of the northward march.⁶

For many years the author of this diary was unknown. It is now known that the author was Leonidas Torrence of Gaston County. He was the son of William Wilson Torrence and Sarah Ann (Wilson) Torrence of Gaston County, North Carolina, just across the border with South Carolina. When secession came Leonidas joined the "Gaston Guards," which became Company H of the 13th North Carolina regiment. Later in the war the forces were recognized, and the 13th regiment became the 23rd regiment. It served with Iverson's brigade. This unit fought in several major battles. Young Leonidas died from wounds received on the

and Glenn Tucker, High Tide at Gettysburg (1958).

⁵Clark, Histories of the Several Regiments, vol. I, pp. 171, 253-254; Tucker, Front Rank, p. 50. Hereinafter cited as Clark, Histories of the Several Regiments.

⁶Haskell Monroe, ed., "The Road to Gettysburg, The Diary and Letters of Leonidas Torrence of the Gaston Guards," North Carolina Historical Review, vol.36, p. 476. Hereinafter cited as Monroe, "Torrence's Diary."

first day of battle at Gettysburg.⁷

Torrence's unit formed a line of battle near Brandy Station on June 9 to support Stuart's cavalry if that became necessary. By June 12 the "Gaston Guards" had moved from Brandy Station through Flint Hill and Front Royal and on across the Shenandoah River. Then Torrence's brigade passed through Millwood, Berryville, Smithfield, Bunkers Hill, and Martinsburg. Here Torrence participated in a fight against a small Federal force, and the Confederates cut the Baltimore and Ohio railroad. By June 17 Leonidas Torrence and the "Gaston Guards" were in Williamsport, Maryland. Leonidas complained of sore feet in a letter to his parents. However, he did not complain about not getting enough to eat. For once, the Confederates had plenty of food. These foodstuffs were obtained from the lush farms of Maryland and Pennsylvania. Leonidas also managed to secure himself a pair of shoes. For the most part, the Confederate soldiers were well behaved during this invasion of the North. The food and other supplies which they confiscated was paid for with Confederate currency. By June 22 Iverson's brigade had marched through Hagerstown and Funkstown in Maryland to Middleburg and Green Castle in Pennsylvania. The march continued through Chambersburg, Green Village, Shipensburg, Leesburg, Jacksonville, and into Carlisle. From June 27 through June 29 Torrence's unit encamped in the U. S. Barracks near Carlisle. The only crisis occurred when a drunk North Carolina regiment almost fought an equally drunk Georgia regiment. This was the result of overindulgence

⁷Monroe, "Torrence's Diary," p. 476.

in captured whiskey. On June 30 the unit passed through Papertown, Pettersburg, and Hartsburg. On July 1 the unit marched from camp near Hartsburg into the furious action.⁸

Another member of Rodes's division, newly arrived Brigadier General Junius Daniel of North Carolina, made a speech at the raising of the Confederate flag over the Carlisle Barracks. Generals Trimble, Ewell, and Rodes also made some "remarks."⁹

There were several major skirmishes in the Gettysburg campaign, prior to the actual battle itself, in which North Carolina troops participated. Hoke's North Carolina brigade was involved in the maneuvering that set up the attack by Hays's Louisianans which forced the Federal forces to abandon Winchester. The Federal force attacked was a small, independent garrison commanded by General Milroy which was not attached to the Army of the Potomac. Both of the Confederate units mentioned were part of Early's division. Richard Ewell, the Second Corps commander, ordered Johnson's division to cut off Milroy's retreat. The 1st and 3rd North Carolina infantry regiments of Stuart's brigade performed well in this action. They staunchly held their ground when attacked by the desperate Federal troops.¹⁰

The cavalry was involved in several skirmishes. Robertson's brigade attacked a Federal cavalry brigade at Middleburg and did quite well. Major James H. McNeill was wounded in the fight. There was another clash near Middleburg on June 19 in which the 1st, 4th, and 5th

⁸ Monroe, "Torrence's Diary," pp. 508-513.

⁹ Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, vol. 3, p. 34.

¹⁰ Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, vol. 3, pp. 22-27.

North Carolina participated. Another fight occurred at Upperville on June 21. Robertson's brigade was attacked from the rear and one of the regiments broke. Colonel P. G. Evans was severely wounded. The 1st North Carolina along with the remainder of Wade Hampton's brigade retrieved the situation. The 1st North Carolina fought the 1st United States dragoons in hand-to-hand combat and bested them. On June 27 at Fairfax Court House the 1st North Carolina routed a Federal cavalry detachment. The 1st's Major John H. Whitaker was killed. North Carolina's losses in these cavalry battles were 31 killed and 103 wounded.¹¹

General Joseph Hooker, who was still in command of the Army of the Potomac after the Federal debacle at Chancellorsville, slowly retreated, keeping between the Confederates and Washington. Hooker had requested the withdrawal of Federal troops from Harper's Ferry to join with a portion of the Army of the Potomac to conduct operations against the supply line of the Confederate Army. Hooker's request was refused. A thoroughly disgruntled Joe Hooker turned in his resignation. Lincoln accepted his resignation and appointed Major General George Gordon Meade to replace Hooker. Meade, more cautious by nature, decided to maneuver so as to force Lee to attack him, instead of attacking Lee's supply line as Hooker had planned to do. Meade's first day of command was June 28. That same day General Lee learned of the presence of the Army of the Potomac north of the Potomac. Lee then decided to concentrate his columns in the Gettysburg vicinity. At the same time

¹¹Confederate Military History, N. C. Vol., p. 170.

Meade ordered the Federal I Corps and XI Corps to Gettysburg. Not knowing each others' plans the two commanders' forces were moving toward a momentous collision.

Major General Harry Heth's division, which was the lead division of A. P. Hill's III Corps, arrived at Cashtown 8 miles west of Gettysburg on June 29. General Jubal Early of Ewell's II Corps had passed through Gettysburg on June 26. Early had demanded clothing, provisions, and money. Early's demands were refused. Needing to get to York, Early left without harming the town, but sent word to Hill's Corps that there was a supply of shoes. Pettigrew's North Carolina brigade held the advance position of Heth's division on the night of the 29th. As a precautionary measure Pettigrew sent Lieutenant W. E. Kyle with Company B of the 52nd North Carolina regiment to Millerstown. Millerstown was five miles to the south. Millerstown was a short distance north of Fairfield. Fairfield was on the main road from Hagerstown to Gettysburg.¹²

Gamble's Federal cavalry brigade, while on patrol, passed near Fairfield. It spotted the campfires of Kyle's outpost. That evening a few shots were exchanged between Kyle's company and a portion of Gamble's brigade. Gamble refrained from using artillery to avoid alerting other Confederates in the area. On the morning of June 30 Gamble and the remainder of Buford's Federal cavalry division withdrew to Emmitsburg. Buford reported the skirmish to Pleasanton, his superior. Pleasanton passed on this information to Reynolds, the

¹²Glenn Tucker, High Tide at Gettysburg, pp. 92-93.

Federal I Corps commander. Kyle remained at Millerstown until night. Then he reunited with Pettigrew at Marsh Creek, which was three and a half miles from Gettysburg.¹³

On the morning of June 30 Brigadier General James Johnston Pettigrew's North Carolina brigade was ordered by General Heth to march to Gettysburg to secure shoes for his men. His force included three of his four regiments, three artillery pieces, and several wagons. Pettigrew was told to expect the town to be garrisoned by militia which he could easily drive off. If he met organized resistance or any units of the Army of the Potomac, he was to avoid attacking. Lee's forces were spread out and information about the Federal Army was scarce. This was the main reason for Pettigrew's orders.¹⁴

The brigade was paid early in the morning on June 30, and then began the march to Gettysburg. The 11th North Carolina regiment led the way, preceded by a skirmish line.¹⁵

Approximately two miles from town the advance group arrested a civilian on horseback, who claimed to be a doctor visiting a patient. Colonel Collett Leventhrope, upon a thorough questioning of the doctor, to his surprise, was told that there were four or five thousand Federal cavalry in the area, and an even larger Federal force only a few miles away.¹⁶

¹³Glenn Tucker, High Tide at Gettysburg, pp. 92-93.

¹⁴Glenn Tucker, High Tide at Gettysburgh, pp. 92-93; Clark, Histories of the Several Regiments, vol. I, p. 115.

¹⁵Glenn Tucker, High Tide at Gettysburg, p. 98; Clark, Histories of the Several Regiments, vol. I, p. 115.

¹⁶Glenn Tucker, High Tide at Gettysburg, p. 98.

Leventhrope halted his regiment to consult with Pettigrew further back in the column after his conversation with the doctor. Leventhrop's halt in all probability prevented a clash between elements of the Confederate and Federal armies at Gettysburg until the next day.¹⁷

The 47th North Carolina regiment of Pettigrew's brigade also had a delay. The men were marching eagerly along, when all of a sudden a farmer rode leisurely out of the woods. He asked to see the commanding officer. The man was sent to the head of the column even though some of the men thought he was a spy. Almost instantly the 47th was stopped and the men were told to find cover. Shortly afterwards a few shots were fired at extreme range from the woods on both sides of the road. The farmer was not a spy, but came to warn the Confederates. Men of the regiment were convinced that they had escaped an ambush. This farmer was probably a member of the Knights of the Golden Circle, a local Copperhead group. This was mentioned in the report of Captain Louis G. Young, the assistant adjutant general of Johnston Pettigrew.¹⁸

On the march to Gettysburgh, Pettigrew also met Harrison, Longstreet's spy, who went to Gettysburg. He quickly returned and reported the presence of Buford's cavalry division near the town. The day was extremely hot, and the march was quite tiring. Pettigrew's men arrived on the ridges west of town late in the afternoon. Pettigrew approached cautiously because of his knowledge of Buford's presence, obtained from three independent sources. If he had not been warned, Pettigrew very

¹⁷Tucker, High Tide at Gettysburg, p. 98.

¹⁸Tucker, High Tide at Gettysburg, p. 99.

easily could have marched right into a trap. Sending this many men on a long, tiring march to seek shoes (wearing out shoe leather all the while) was a foolish move on the part of Harry Heth. Luck and Pettigrew's caution avoided a disaster. Pettigrew withdrew without a fight because of his orders.¹⁹

Pettigrew's brigade retreated to the bridge over Marsh Creek three and a half miles west of Gettysburg. Pettigrew left Captain Young and Lieutenant Walter H. Robertson behind to watch Buford. Young and Robertson found this task easy because of the rolling country with many ridges. Whenever a Federal trooper came within 300 or 400 yards, the two Confederates would show themselves atop a ridge. Then the Federals would stop. This process was repeated a few times. Each side was more interested in observing the other than in doing any harm.²⁰

When he returned to Cashtown, Pettigrew informed Heth of the presence of the Federal cavalry. Pettigrew tried to convince Heth and later Hill that the Army of the Potomac was in the Gettysburg vicinity. They were more impressed with his lack of formal military training than his great capacity. Neither believed that the force Pettigrew spoke of was part of the Army of the Potomac. Pettigrew even called in Captain Young to help convince Hill. Young previously had worked for Hill and might persuade him. Even this failed. In Young's own words, Hill: "replied that he still could not believe that any portion of the Army

¹⁹Tucker, High Tide at Gettysburg, p. 100; Clark, Histories of the Several Regiments, vol. I, pp. 115-116; Coddington, The Gettysburg Campaign, pp. 263-264.

²⁰Clark, Histories of the Several Regiments, vol. I, p. 116.

of the Potomac was up; and in emphatic words, expressed the hope that it was, as this was the place he wanted it to be."²¹ After Hill had expressed his opinion, Heth asked permission to take his whole division to Gettysburg the next morning to get the shoes. Hill gave his permission. This disbelief on the part of Heth, Hill, and the other brigadiers in Heth's division left them unprepared for the events which transpired on July 1. Pettigrew warned General Archer, whose brigade was to lead the column, to be prepared for the presence of the Army of the Potomac, but he refused to believe Pettigrew. Archer would have regrets the next morning for not heeding the warning.²²

Now that the discussion of events leading up to Gettysburg has been completed, an examination of the weaponry and tactics employed at Gettysburg should be undertaken. An understanding of Civil War weapons and tactics would greatly enhance one's understanding of the battle of Gettysburg.

The three arms used in the Civil War were, of course, infantry, cavalry, and artillery. Infantry was the most basic, the most numerous, and the easiest to maintain. The cavalry and artillery branches were more technical in nature. Cavalry, of course, required horses. Artillery also required quite a few horses. The cannon and ammunition were very heavy. North Carolina's contribution to the Army of Northern Virginia was heavily weighted toward infantry. The industrial capacity to produce artillery was low in North Carolina.

²¹Clark, Histories of the Several Regiments, vol. I, pp. 116-117.

²²Tucker, High Tide at Gettysburg, p. 101; Clark, Histories of the Several Regiments, vol. I, p. 117.

Most horses the state had were needed at home.

The first branch to be discussed is artillery. The great majority of cannon used in the Civil War were either the smooth-bore Napoleons or iron rifled cannon. The Napoleon was named for Napoleon III of France. Even though it was a smoothbore, the Napoleon was still effective when compared to the newer rifled ones. The Napoleon's main asset was the hitting power of its $4\frac{1}{2}$ inch bore. The Napoleon became a huge and murderous shotgun when loaded with canister. Its extreme range was a little less than a mile. Its effective range was much less than that. It shot a spherical projectile.²³

The standard rifled cannon were the 10-pound Parrotts and the "3-inch." These guns fired elongated, conoidal-nosed projectiles. The difference in the bore of the Parrott and the 3-inch was minimal for combat purposes. These rifled guns were newly invented. They soon became universal. The range for these weapons was $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles. The rifled cannon lacked the short-range deadliness of the Napoleon. There was also a 20-pound Parrott which was almost too heavy for the horses.²⁴

The Confederates had at Gettysburg two Whitworths, which were breech-loaders that had been made in England. These had an extremely long range and made a distinctive sound when fired. There were also some small, obsolete smooth-bore howitzers in the Confederate Army.²⁵

The ammunition used in these cannon will be examined next. The

²³Stewart, Pickett's Charge, p. 34.

²⁴Stewart, Pickett's Charge, p. 34.

²⁵Stewart, Pickett's Charge, p. 34

first type was solid shot or simply "shot." This was a cast-iron ball. It was the most reliable type of ammunition and had the longest range. In a mass of troops the shot could be horribly effective. A shot striking a gun could break a wheel or axle or even dent or crack a barrel; however, a miss was as good as a mile. Used against ordinary formations the shot was little more effective than musket balls.²⁶

The second type of ammunition used was the "shell." This was a hollow projectile filled with a bursting charge of powder set off by a time-fuse. Even against ordinary formations a shell could cause appalling casualties; however, large proportions of shells did not explode, or exploded in the wrong place. Percussion-shells which exploded when they struck the ground were good for rifled guns, but the Confederate at Gettysburg had only a few--thus they relied on the law of averages.²⁷

The third type of ammunition was spherical case commonly called shrapnel. It was hollow and filled with musket balls. The musket balls were scattered by a bursting charge in a way that was theoretically murderous. Only an occasional one of these exploded at the proper place.²⁸

The fourth and final type of ammunition was canister. This was a big tin can filled with cast-iron balls an inch in diameter. When fired the can disintegrated. The discharge was like a large shotgun.

²⁶Stewart, Pickett's Charge, p. 116.

²⁷Stewart, Pickett's Charge, p. 116

²⁸Stewart, Pickett's Charge, p. 116.

Canister was good only at short range. It was rarely used beyond 500 yards. Canister was not very effective over 400 yards. Around 250 yards it became lethal and at 150 yards double canister was used. This was two cans. Under canister fire an infantry line could be expected to disintegrate (manuals said this). The effect depended on the number of guns firing. Canister was sometimes called "canned hell-fire." Canister was limited to defensive use because of its short range. To advance close enough to use canister against an unbroken infantry line would get the horses and gunners shot up.²⁹

Each gun between the limbers and caisson had four ammunition chests. Each chest had twelve shots, twelve spherical cases, four shells, and four canisters. Each gun thus had 112 rounds of long-range ammunition. These numbers were the standard for a Napoleon. The rifled guns had slightly more ammunition. The caisson could return to the ammunition train for three more chests.³⁰

There were major differences in artillery practice between the Federal and Confederate armies. A Confederate battery contained four guns, which were not necessarily all the same type. A Federal battery contained six guns, all of the same type. The Confederate system caused confusion in the resupplying of ammunition to a battery. However, the Confederate system made a battery's function more flexible. Different guns were available for different functions within a battery. The Federal system was more smooth logistically.

²⁹Stewart, Pickett's Charge, p. 117.

³⁰Stewart, Pickett's Charge, pp. 117-118.

The Federal Army took the technical aspects of artillery use and training much more seriously than did the Confederate Army. The aristocratic nature of the Southern officer made technical education somewhat distasteful. The Southern artillery man believed in getting as close to the enemy as possible, and then just pointing the gun and shooting. The Federal artilleryman was both more cautious and more systematic in his aiming techniques. The piney woods of Virginia were ideal for the Confederate doctrine. However, the open, rolling Pennsylvania countryside favored the Federal doctrine. This was to help the Federal Army to come out on top at Gettysburg.

The relative ineffectiveness of artillery in an offensive role in the Civil War era was to prove quite unpleasant to the Confederate side at Gettysburg. The inefficiency of long-range artillery fire has been demonstrated in the discussion of gun types and ammunition types. The destructiveness of canister fire on defense was a great aid to the Federal cause at Gettysburg. The celebrated cannonade of July 3 by the Confederates, by and large, was a waste of ammunition. Very little good came of it. Its only real benefit was to the morale of the common Confederate soldier.

The great majority of Civil War infantrymen used the rifled musket as their main weapon. It was muzzle-loading and had an effective range of 250 to 300 yards. Extreme range was, of course, greater, but accuracy was reduced. It was a great improvement over the old smooth-bore musket of the Napoleonic era. This old musket had an absolute maximum effective range of 100 yards. The rifled gun was much more accurate than the smoothbore as well. Ammunition for the rifled musket

was the Minie ball. The fragment of cloth that went into a wound caused by a Minie ball caused infection. That was the reason for the large number of amputations done during the Civil War.³¹

The change in infantry weapons combined with minimal change in artillery produced a change in tactics. Four vital changes were brought about: (1) battle lines were stretched, (2) armies were forced to form for combat farther apart, (3) the density of men in the battle zone was reduced, and (4) battles became fire fights with shock action considerably reduced. This made battles longer and less decisive. Casualties became much higher. The importance of skirmishers was increased. Tactically the rifled musket made defense stronger than offense. There were two major reasons for this. The increased firepower of the rifled musket caused the men to build temporary earthworks. These earthworks allowed defenders to group in greater density and to be supplied with ammunition easier than attackers. At Gettysburg the tactical advantage conferred upon the defense by greater firepower was of paramount importance due to the relative openness of the battlefield.³²

At first, cavalrymen armed themselves with pistols and sabers, but these were quickly discarded for rifled muskets and later for carbines. Buford's division was armed with carbines at Gettysburg. Civil War cavalrymen were like dragoons. They used horses for quick mobility, but usually fought dismounted like infantry. Mounted charges were

³¹ John K. Mahon, "Civil War Infantry Assault Tactics," Military Affairs, vol. 25, 1961, pp. 57-58.

³² Mahon, "Civil War Infantry Assault Tactics," p. 59.

extremely rare. Buford's men were able to hold off the Confederate onslaught early on July 1 because of their use of the new Sharps carbine.

Cavalry served as flank guards and performed reconnaissance duties. They also executed annoying raids behind enemy lines. Jeb Stuart, as noted earlier, had suffered a loss of prestige in the Brandy Station affair. He sought to regain his prestige. A glorious raid (in Stuart's mind) would restore the situation. Stuart was able to do just that in the Gettysburg campaign. Discretionary orders from Lee gave him free rein. For the price of 125 wagons and glory for Stuart and the cavalry, Stuart let his illustrious commander down. In other words, because of his preoccupation with his own prestige, Stuart failed in his reconnaissance duties to Lee and the army. As many historians have previously noted, this was to prove disastrous for the Confederates.

Now that the role of North Carolina in events leading up to the battle and the weapons and tactics employed there have been discussed, it is time to present information about the commanders and units from North Carolina involved in the Battle of Gettysburg. They are presented roughly by their order of appearance on the battlefield.

As has been previously noted, the first Confederate commander to make an appearance at Gettysburg was Brigadier General James Johnston Pettigrew of North Carolina. Pettigrew's march to obtain shoes precipitated the battle. His command of Lee's rear guard ended the campaign. In between he commanded almost half the troops in the renowned assault of July 3. Unfortunately for the Confederacy a federal cavalryman mortally wounded Pettigrew during the retreat to

Virginia.³³

Pettigrew was a multi-talented individual. In North Carolina he was regarded as somewhat of a genius. One of his superior officers thought he was capable of assuming Lee's responsibilities should that event become necessary, even though he had had no formal military training. Pettigrew was born into a prominent North Carolina family, which owned the spacious estate of Bonvara in coastal Tyrrell County. He showed great promise early in life. His early education was by private tutors and was aimed at a professional and not a military career. Young Pettigrew's mind was keen and his capacity for acquiring new information was limitless. Bonvara overlooked the peaceful waters of Lake Scuppernong. The plantation extended along the waters of the Scuppernong River, from which the delicious Southern grape takes its name.³⁴

Pettigrew had reached the age of 35 by the time of Gettysburg. By this time he was already recognized as an author, diplomat, lawyer, linguist, and legislator. He had black hair and a mustache with dark complexion. He had sharp, penetrating black eyes. Pettigrew was a slender and handsome man. He used quick gestures and made decisions promptly. He was of French Huguenot ancestry.³⁵

Pettigrew attended the University of North Carolina. His grades were the highest that had ever been made there. At Chapel Hill young Pettigrew led his class in fencing, boxing, and the singlestick. He

³³Dictionary of American Biography, p. 516.

³⁴Tucker, High Tide at Gettysburg, p. 95.

³⁵Tucker, High Tide at Gettysburg, p. 95.

had athletic ability. He also led the class in mathematics, the classical languages, and all the other liberal arts courses.³⁶

At the graduation exercises in 1847 Pettigrew delivered the valedictory address. His graduation was attended by James Knox Polk, then President of the United States. Mr. Polk had returned to visit his alma mater, where he also had won high scholastic honors. Secretary of the Navy, John Young Mason, also an alumnus, and Captain Matthew F. Maury accompanied President Polk. Captain Maury was a distinguished naval hydrographer and meteorologist. Maury was involved in establishing the National Observatory and Hydrographic Office. He was about to launch into a career of oceanography. Maury was later to write The Physical Geography of the Sea. These three, Polk, Mason, and Maury, looked in on the final examinations in mathematics and astronomy. They were so impressed with Pettigrew's knowledge that they invited him to return with them to Washington to teach at the Naval Observatory. He also taught at the Nautical Almanac Office during his stay in the Capital.³⁷

Johnston Pettigrew's loyalty to the Confederacy was probably a rebellion against his uncle, James Louis Petigru, dean of the bar in Charleston, South Carolina. He studied law in Baltimore and then became an associate in his uncle's law firm. The two different spellings of their last name made the shingle confusing.³⁸

³⁶Tucker, High Tide at Gettysburg, pp. 95-96.

³⁷Tucker, High Tide at Gettysburg, p. 96.

³⁸Tucker, High Tide at Gettysburg, p. 96.

The older Petigru was notorious for his loyalty to the Union dating back to the nullification crisis. By 1863 it seemed that he was the only man in South Carolina who had not seceded from the Union. When the other members of his church were kneeling to pray and the regular request for God's assistance for the President of the Confederacy came up, he rose to his feet to show his disapproval. The old man was delighted at the bewilderment this action caused. His most important contribution to society was the codification of the laws of South Carolina. Long after the elder Petigru is forgotten, his remark about wartime finances of the Confederacy will be remembered in times of inflation. The remark was that "you take your money to the market in your market basket and bring home your groceries in your pocketbook."³⁹

Young Pettigrew possessed a brilliant legal mind. He studied civil law in Germany. He traveled extensively in Europe. He mastered French, German, Italian, and Spanish. He also developed a reading knowledge of Hebrew and Arabic. He spent seven years abroad as a diplomat and a writer. As a member of the South Carolina General Assembly, he argued eloquently against resuming the slave trade. Pettigrew wrote a book about his travels in Spain. He had at one time contemplated joining the French Army to fight for Italian freedom. In his book Pettigrew commented on the military tactics used by the French at Solferino. He, previously to Solferino, thought modern weapons had brought to an end the usefulness of the frontal assault. The success of a frontal assault at Solferino changed his mind. One wonders what

³⁹Tucker, High Tide at Gettysburg, p. 96.

he would have written after Gettysburg.⁴⁰

In 1859 Pettigrew, sensing the approach of hostilities, joined a rifle company in Charleston. He soon became that unit's colonel. When war broke out, Pettigrew traveled to Richmond with his South Carolina troops. There was a delay in mustering these troops into the Confederate service causing Pettigrew's unit to disband. He was impatient to get into action and joined Hampton's Legion as a private. Luckily, he was spotted by some of his North Carolina friends on the Raleigh railroad station platform as he was traveling to the front. Shortly thereafter he was elected colonel of the 22nd North Carolina regiment which was then stationed near Raleigh at Camp Ellis.⁴¹

An officer who served with him for several months gave this description of Pettigrew: "He was quick in his movements and quick in his perception and in his decision . . . His habit was to pace restlessly up and down in front of his tent with a cigar in his mouth which he never lighted . . . As gentle and modest as a woman, there was [about him] an undoubted capacity to command, which obtained for Pettigrew instant obedience." He was "courteous, kindly, and chivalric," and "unfailingly a gentleman."⁴²

He turned down the offer of a brigadier generalship. His ability was noticed by both President Davis and General Joseph E. Johnston. In the spring of 1862 the offer was renewed, this time with more vigor. Pettigrew accepted. He commanded a brigade in the early part of the

⁴⁰Tucker, High Tide at Gettysburg, p. 97.

⁴¹Tucker, High Tide at Gettysburg, p. 97.

⁴²Tucker, High Tide at Gettysburg, p. 97.

Peninsular campaign at Yorktown. He was left for dead at Fair Oaks and was mourned as lost in Richmond and Raleigh. However, he recovered in a Federal prison camp and was exchanged. When he returned he found his brigade under the command of his fellow North Carolinian, Dorsey Pender. A new unit was formed for Pettigrew. He commanded the new brigade on the North Carolina coast and at Gettysburg.⁴³

Now that we have taken a look at Pettigrew himself, we should examine his brigade. Pettigrew's unit consisted of the 11th, 26th, 47th, and 52nd North Carolina regiments. The 47th was both a Coastal Plain and a Piedmont unit. The 52nd hailed from Piedmont counties. The 11th was commanded by Colonel Collett Leventhorpe; the 26th by Colonel Harry King Burgwyn; the 47th by Colonel George H. Faribault; and 52nd by Colonel J. K. Marshall. The 11th and the 26th regiments, in particular, were outstanding units.⁴⁴

The 11th regiment could possibly claim that it was the senior battle regiment of the Army of Northern Virginia, because it was the reorganized "Bethel Regiment," that D. H. Hill had commanded in the first battle of any consequence of the Civil War.⁴⁵

The 11th may well have had the best commander of any regiment in the entire Confederate Army. Colonel Leventhorpe was the son of a

⁴³Tucker, High Tide at Gettysburg, p. 97.

⁴⁴U. S. War Department, The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, Washington, Government Printing Office, 1880-1901, vol. 27, pt. 2, p. 289; Clark, Histories of the Several Regiments, vol. III, p. 89, 235.

⁴⁵Tucker, "Some Aspects of N. C.'s Participation in the Gettysburg Campaign," North Carolina Historical Review, vol. 35, p. 206.

wealthy English family from Devonshire. He attended Winchester College and was commissioned as an ensign in the 44th regiment of British Infantry, the very regiment which burned Washington in the War of 1812. He traveled to many parts of the world while serving in the British Army, including such places as the West Indies, Canada, and Ireland. He rose to the rank of captain, but decided to emigrate to the United States to study medicine.⁴⁶

Leventhrope graduated with honors from the medical school at Charleston. For the next 18 years he practiced medicine, and his memories of British Army life faded. When North Carolina seceded, these memories returned, and Leventhrope volunteered his services to the Confederacy. He was 46 years old at the time. When the 11th regiment was formed from the First Volunteers, he was elected colonel of the regiment. William J. Martin, a professor of mineralogy at the University of North Carolina became lieutenant-colonel.⁴⁷

The days in the British Army came back quickly to Colonel Leventhrope. Soon he was looked upon as one of the very best field officers in the Confederate Army. The 11th regiment represented all three major geographical regions of the state. The regiment trained primarily at Wilmington and gained so much precision that Colonel Leventhrope could say that it was almost as good as British regulars. The 11th regiment was greatly praised by the Inspector General of the Confederate Army, R. H. Chilton. He considered it to be the finest regiment in the

⁴⁶Tucker, "Some Aspects of N. C.'s Participation in the Gettysburg Campaign," North Carolina Historical Review, vol. 35, p. 206.

⁴⁷Tucker, North Carolina Historical Review, vol. 35, p. 207.

Army of Northern Virginia.⁴⁸

The 26th regiment had been Governor Vance's regiment. This unit hailed from the Piedmont region primarily. The 26th suffered the first war casualty, Private James Hudson, who died from natural causes and not as a result of battle.⁴⁹

The 26th had a friendly rivalry with the 11th over which one was the better regiment. The 26th was proud of Captain Mickey's regimental band, which a member of the regiment called the best in the Army of Northern Virginia. This was, no doubt, a spirited regiment.⁵⁰

After Zeb Vance was elected governor, the command of the regiment was taken over by Colonel Harry King Burgwyn, an honor graduate of the University of North Carolina. He had also been a student under Jackson at Virginia Military Institute. Jackson felt that Burgwyn would "make an ornament not only to the artillery, but any branch of the military service."⁵¹ Burgwyn was only 21 years old at the time of Gettysburg. He was a talented leader, and was greatly admired by his men. Prior to becoming colonel of the 26th, Burgwyn had been lieutenant-colonel and camp instructor. He insisted on strict discipline which was rigidly enforced. At first some of the men had been resentful of this, but they found that Burgwyn and his discipline were just what was needed in the thick of battle.⁵²

⁴⁸Tucker, North Carolina Historical Review, vol. 35, p. 207. —

⁴⁹Tucker, North Carolina Historical Review, vol. 35, p. 210.

⁵⁰Tucker, North Carolina Historical Reivew, vol. 35, p. 210.

⁵¹Tucker, North Carolina Historical Review, vol. 35, p. 211.

⁵²Ibid.

Pettigrew's brigade was part of the division of Major General Harry Heth. This division contained three other brigades; those of Archer, Davis, and Brockenbrough. Davis' brigade included the 55th North Carolina regiment. This unit had shown plenty of spirit in an incident which occurred before they joined the Army of Northern Virginia for the Gettysburg campaign.⁵³

The 55th had been drilling in a quiet sector of the North Carolina coast. It was a young regiment. Not an officer or soldier in it had reached the age of thirty. Colonel John Kerr Connally of Yadkin County was the 55th's commander. Major A. H. Belo was second in command.⁵⁴

On the coast of Suffolk the 55th had been kept busy by matters almost as pressing as fighting the Federal Army; Federal troops had made a sudden raid and captured a heavy piece of artillery. When the incident was reported, two officers of Law's Alabama brigade, Captain L. R. Terrell and Captain John Cussons, stated that the 55th had been given the assignment to protect the piece, but had retreated in a disorderly fashion. The 55th was not responsible, according to its officers. It had maintained its ground. The outraged Colonel Connally demanded that the report be corrected at once. Terrell and Cussons refused to do so.⁵⁵

Connally and Belo challenged Terrell and Cussons to a duel. The Alabamians accepted. Terrell's choice of weapons was double-barreled shotguns loaded with buckshot. This was very dangerous and somebody was

⁵³Official Records, vol. 27, pt. 2, p. 289.

⁵⁴Tucker, Front Rank, Raleigh, N. C., Centennial Commission, 1962, p. 48.

⁵⁵Ibid.

quite likely to be killed. Cussons chose Mississippi rifles at 40 paces. Belo's first shot ripped through Cussons' hat and Cussons' first shot missed entirely. Cussons' miss caused Belo to miss on his second shot. Cussons' second shot tore through Belo's uniform right above the shoulder.⁵⁶

Friends of both Connally and Terrell attempted a reconciliation. The incident was re-examined, and according to the North Carolina version, Terrell corrected the report. According to the Alabama version, Connally's second withdrew the challenge. This shows the personal recklessness which was common in the Southern Army.⁵⁷

The 55th claimed that it was one of the finest Southern regiments. The men took great pride in Connally as a commander. The regiment had a band of 17 pieces. The men had good gray uniforms and full strength companies. The 55th regiment made a good addition to General Lee's army.⁵⁸

The division of Major General Robert Rodes was the second Confederate division to participate in the fighting. This division included three North Carolina brigades; those of Ramseur, Daniel, and Iverson.⁵⁹

Stephen Dodson Ramseur was a capable and promising young officer. He was Lee's youngest brigadier general. He was only 26 years old at the time of Gettysburg. Dod Ramseur was known as the Chevalier Bayard of the war by the Richmond newspapers. He was a handsome, black-eyed,

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 49.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 49.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 49.

⁵⁹Official Records, vol. 27, pt. 2, p. 287.

very intelligent young man. He graduated from West Point in the last class before secession. He was slim, with good posture, but boyish in his appearance. Ramseur had a high, rounded brow and thick, dark hair. His personality was open and friendly. Ramseur was an excellent horseman. He loved the artillery. He preferred it to infantry. He was more needed as in infantry commander, however. He had been a brigadier since November 1, 1862. Later in the war he was to become a Major General. Ramseur made a valuable contribution to the partial success of the Confederates on July 1. He had led the attack at Malvern Hill and was Jackson's advance brigade at Chancellorsville.⁶⁰

Ramseur had been born as the son of Jacob A. Ramseur and Lucy M. (Wilfong) Ramseur in Lincolnton, North Carolina. He was a descendent of John Wilfong who fought in the American Revolution. Young Ramseur attended Davidson College where he was taught by D. H. Hill. Hill was a major influence in Ramseur's decision to attend West Point. He was known as a hard fighter in the Confederate Army. Jubal Early said of Ramseur: "He was a most gallant and energetic officer whom no disaster appalled, but his courage and energy seemed to gain new strength in the midst of confusion and disorder."⁶¹ D. H. Hill said that Ramseur "revelled in the fierce joys of strife," and that "his whole being seemed to kindle and glow amid the excitements of danger."⁶²

⁶⁰Tucker, High Tide at Gettysburg, p. 134; Dictionary of American Biography, p. 431.

⁶¹Dictionary of American Biography, p. 341

⁶²Tucker, High Tide at Gettysburg, p. 135.

Ramseur's brigade consisted of the 2nd, 4th, 14th, and 30th North Carolina regiments. The 2nd was commanded by Colonel W. R. Cox and was primarily from the eastern part of the state; the 4th was commanded by Colonel Bryan Grimes and hailed from both the Piedmont and the eastern part of the state; the 14th was commanded by Colonel R. T. Bennett and hailed from mainly the Piedmont; the 30th was commanded by Colonel F. M. Parker and was a unit both of the Piedmont and Coastal Plain.⁶³

Junius Daniel was known as a hard fighter although he had no experience with the methods of the Army of Northern Virginia. His brigade had never fought with the Army of Northern Virginia either. It consisted of the 32nd, 43rd, 45th, and 53rd North Carolina regiments and the 2nd North Carolina battalion. The 2nd battalion was commanded by Major H. L. Andrews; the 32nd regiment was commanded by Colonel E. C. Brabble and could call both the Piedmont and the east home; the 43rd was commanded by Colonel T. S. Kenan and hailed from both the Piedmont and the east; the 45th was commanded by Colonel J. H. Morehead and came from the Piedmont; the 53rd was commanded by Colonel W. A. Owens and came from both the Coastal Plain and the Piedmont.⁶⁴

Iverson's brigade consisted of the 5th, 12th, 20th, and 23rd North Carolina regiments. Iverson, however, was not a North Carolinian, but a Georgian. The 5th was commanded by Colonel Thomas M. Garrett; the 12th by Lieutenant-Colonel W. S. David; the 20th by Lieutenant-Colonel Nelson Slough; and the 23rd by Colonel D. H. Christie. The 5th was a

⁶³Official Records, vol. 27, pt. 2, p. 287; Clark, Histories of the Several Regiments, vol. I, pp. 170, 252, 718, vol. II., p. 502.

⁶⁴Official Records, vol. 27, pt. 2, p. 287; Clark, Histories of the Several Regiments, vol. II. p. 524, vol. III, pp. 4, 40, 264.

product of the east and the Piedmont. The 12th, 20th, and 23rd all hailed from the Piedmont section of the state.⁶⁵

Early's division was the third Confederate division to be committed to battle. It contained Hoke's North Carolina brigade commanded by Colonel Isaac E. Avery, because of Hoke's wound at Chancellorsville. This unit consisted of the 6th, 21st, and 57th North Carolina regiments. Major Samuel McDowell Tate commanded the 6th regiment. The 21st was commanded by Colonel W. W. Kirkland and the 57th by Colonel A. C. Godwin. The 6th was both an eastern and a Piedmont unit. Both the 21st and the 57th were Piedmont units.⁶⁶

Pender's division was the last one to be committed to battle on July 1. William Dorsey Pender was the highest ranking North Carolinian at Gettysburg. He was a Major General. Pender was considered to be one of the ablest officers in the Army of Northern Virginia by General Lee.⁶⁷

Pender was the youngest division commander in Lee's army. He was gentle, but was aggressive in battle. He looked like a dreamer, but fought like a demon. He wrote love letters to his wife almost daily. These letters showed a deep religious faith and a deep compassion for others.⁶⁸

⁶⁵Official Records, vol. 27, pt. 2, p. 287; Clark, Histories of the Several Regiments, vol. I., pp. 286, 632, vol. II., pp. 118, 232.

⁶⁶Official Records, vol. 27, pt. 2, p. 286; Clark, Histories of the Several Regiments, vol. I., p. 310, vol. II., p. 136, vol. III., p. 412.

⁶⁷Tucker, High Tide at Gettysburg, p. 161; Dictionary of American Biography, p. 416.

⁶⁸Tucker, High Tide at Gettysburg, p. 161.

Both at Chancellorsville and Gettysburg, where he commanded a division, Pender was quite impressive. Lee later expressed the wish that he had given Pender the command of a corps. Had Pender commanded the Confederate III Corps at Gettysburg on July 1 things might have gone better for the Confederates. Many of his friends thought his promotion to major general came a bit too late.⁶⁹

Pender was fairly tall and was powerfully built. His strength was demonstrated in a feat which he performed while serving with the cavalry in the West against the Indians. At this time he was a lieutenant of dragoons. He had been riding alone to bring up reinforcements, when he was suddenly accosted by an Indian chief. He did not have enough time to draw his sword. He grabbed the chief first by the arm, then by the neck and pinned him. Pender held him down and then continued his mission. When he reached the men, he picked up the Indian and threw him to the ground. In the words of one of the officers of the 16th North Carolina regiment: "He was one of the coolest, most self-possessed and one of the most absolutely fearless men under fire I ever knew."⁷⁰

Pender was a native of Edgecombe County. He was educated in the common schools of Edgecombe County and worked as a clerk in his brother's store at age 15. At 16 Pender was appointed to West Point. He graduated in 1854, ranking 19 out of a class of 46. He married Mary Frances Shepperd, the sister of one of his classmates, in 1859. They made an

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 162.

⁷⁰Ibid.

extremely happy couple, until his untimely death in 1863.⁷¹

Pender resigned his regular army commission in 1861 when Lincoln called on North Carolina for troops to fight against the other Southern states. Then he became a lieutenant-colonel and a drill instructor at Camp Garysburg, North Carolina. His rise to higher rank was rapid. He proved himself as a regimental commander during the Peninsular campaign. For great service at Seven Pines he was promoted to brigadier general. After Chancellorsville he was made major general. He fought with great prowess at Gettysburg.⁷²

Pender's wife was a woman of strong convictions. Because of her piety she hated to see the Confederates in the role of an invader. He wrote to her on June 24 from Shepherdstown: "Tomorrow I do what I know will cause you grief, and that is to cross the Potomac . . . May the Lord prosper this expedition and bring an early peace out of it."⁷³

He believed in the cause of the South. Prior to 1863 he wrote: "Take a few examples and see how hard and almost impossible it is to subdue a people determined to be free. The Netherlands whom Philip tried to crush. Spain against Napoleon. This country in '76. . . ."⁷⁴

Pender wrote his last letter from Fayetteville, Pennsylvania. He seemed confident but anxious. He wrote: "The people are frightened to death and will do anything we intimate to them . . . I am tired of invasions for although they have made us suffer all that people can

⁷¹Ibid., p. 162.

⁷²Ibid., pp. 162-63.

⁷³Ibid., p. 162.

⁷⁴Ibid., pp. 162-63.

suffer I cannot get my resentment to that point to make me feel indifferent to what goes on here."⁷⁵

He felt that plundering would undermine the discipline of the troops. "But for the demoralizing effect plundering would have on our troops, they [the Pennsylvanians] would feel war in all its horrors."⁷⁶

Pender was confident in his men. "I never saw troops march as ours do. They will go 15 or 20 miles a day without having a straggler and sing and yell on all occasions. Confidence and good spirits seem to possess every one of them. I wish we could meet Hooker and have the matter settled at once."⁷⁷

Pender's division contained two North Carolina brigades, those of A. M. Scales and James H. Lane. Scales was wounded leading the attack of his brigade on July 1. Later, after the war, he was to become Governor of North Carolina.⁷⁸

James H. Lane was a native of Virginia, but spent a good portion of his life in North Carolina and was considered to be a North Carolinian. Lane served with the famous "Bethel Regiment." He was a professor before the Civil War started. In October of 1861 he became colonel of the 28th North Carolina regiment. He served in all the major battles of the Army of Northern Virginia. He was promoted to brigadier general in November of 1862. Lane commanded the rear guard at

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 163.

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸Official Records, vol. 27, pt. 2, p. 290.

Sharpsburg. His brigade participated in the great charge on July 3.⁷⁹

Scales's brigade consisted of the 13th, 16th, 22nd, 34th, and 38th North Carolina regiments. The 13th was commanded by Colonel Joseph H. Hyman; the 16th by Colonel John S. McElroy; the 22nd by Colonel James Conner; the 34th by Colonel W. L. J. Lowrance; and the 38th by Colonel William J. Hoke. This unit represented all three major geographical areas of the state.⁸⁰

Lane's brigade consisted of the 7th, 18th, 28th, 33rd, and 37th North Carolina regiments. The 7th was commanded by Colonel Edward G. Haywood; the 18th by Colonel John D. Barry; the 28th by Colonel Samuel D. Lowe; the 33rd by Colonel Clark M. Avery; and the 37th by Colonel William M. Barbour. This brigade represented both the Coastal Plain and the Piedmont areas.⁸¹

There were a few other North Carolina units involved in the Gettysburg campaign. The 1st and 3rd North Carolina regiments were contained in Steuart's brigade of Johnson's division. Robertson's cavalry brigade was a North Carolina unit. There was one North Carolina regiment in Hampton's cavalry brigade. There was a North Carolina regiment in W. H. F. Lee's cavalry brigade. There were also four artillery batteries from North Carolina in Lee's army.⁸²

⁷⁹Dictionary of American Biography, p. 578.

⁸⁰Official Records, vol. 27, pt. 2, p. 290; Clark, Histories of the Several Regiments, vol. II, pp. 586, 690, vol. I., pp. 672, 764.

⁸¹Official Records, vol. 27, pt. 2, p. 289; Clark, Histories of the Several Regiments, vol. I., p. 378, vol. II., pp. 17, 287, 352, 404.

⁸²Official Records, vol. 27, pt. 2, pp. 286, 291, 283.

CHAPTER II

JULY 1

At 5 a.m. on July 1 Heth's division left Cashtown headed for Gettysburg. It was accompanied by Pegram's reserve artillery battalion. A. P. Hill ordered Dorsey Pender to follow Heth, with his division, just in case Heth ran into trouble. Pender's division was accompanied by McIntosh's reserve artillery battalion. Archer's brigade of Tennesseans and Alabamians led Heth's column. They were followed in order by the brigades of Davis, Brockenbrough, and Pettigrew. The brigade commanded by Davis, who was Jefferson Davis' nephew, included the 55th North Carolina regiment. Davis' other regiments were from Mississippi. Brockenbrough's brigade consisted entirely of Virginians.¹

The skirmishers leading Archer's brigade soon ran into Federal troops at the point where the Cashtown Pike crosses Marsh Creek. This Federal force was part of Gamble's brigade of cavalry, which was part of Buford's division. Archer deployed to the south of the turnpike and Davis to the north. Davis was opposed by Buford's other brigade commanded by Colonel Devin. Brockenbrough and Pettigrew remained in column on the road. Archer and Davis then continued their advance. The Federal cavalry used delaying tactics to give the Federal I Corps

¹Official Records, vol. 27, pt. 2, p. 289; Andre B. Collins and James A. Gross, Gettysburg, 1971, p. 27.

time to arrive to help hold the position. The Confederates advanced slowly and cautiously, looking for weak points in the enemy line. Gradually the Confederates increased the pressure on the small force. Federal success in their delaying action was due to Confederate caution, the rapid-firing Sharp's carbine used by Federal cavalry, and the good work of Calef's horse artillery battery. The cavalry fought dismounted, and as it turned out, made a tough infantry force.²

Finally Heth became convinced that he was facing a small force and threw caution to the winds. Archer and Davis attacked furiously. Buford sent word of his predicament to Reynolds, commander of the Federal I Corps. Reynolds hurried his troops forward to help the hard-pressed cavalry. Just as the cavalry was cracking and starting its process of withdrawing, Wadsworth's division of the I Corps arrived on the field.³

General Reynolds was shot and killed while directing the positioning of some of Wadsworth's troops. This was a great tragedy for the Federal side. Reynolds was reputed to be the best corps commander in the Army of the Potomac. He was replaced as commander of Federal I Corps by Abner Doubleday, the inventor of baseball, when his division (Doubleday's) arrived on the field later in the day.⁴

Cutler's brigade opposed Davis north of the turnpike and the "Iron Brigade," commanded by Solomon Meredith, who was a native of North Carolina, opposed Archer south of the turnpike. Meredith's "Iron

²Collins and Gross, Gettysburg, pp.27-31.

³Ibid., pp. 28-29.

⁴Ibid., pp. 30-31.

Brigade" attacked Archer on the flank and surprised him. Over a thousand Confederates were captured, including General Archer himself.⁵

Davis attacked Cutler with the 55th North Carolina on the Confederate left, the 42nd Mississippi in the center, and the 2nd Mississippi on the right nearest the Cashtown Pike and the Railroad cut. After a spirited engagement Cutler's men were driven back to Seminary Ridge. This attack was greatly aided by a flanking maneuver by the 55th North Carolina. As the 55th reached Cutler's flank, they wheeled quickly to the right. They were realigned on the colors by Colonel Connally, who seized the flag and jumped to the front in so doing. This was extremely foolish. It drew fire from the Federal soldiers. He was immediately hit in the arm and the leg. He collapsed. Major Belo rushed to Connally's side. Connally's response to Belo when questioned if he was badly hurt was: "Yes, but pay no attention to me. Take the colors and keep ahead of the Mississippians."⁶ Captain J. B. Pierce of the 147th New York heard the cry run down the Federal lines: "They are flanking us on the right!"⁷ He described the movement. The Confederate regiment was: "pressing far to our right and rear, and came over to the south side of the rail fence, their colors dropped to the front. An officer corrected the alignment as if passing in review. It was the finest exhibition of discipline and drill I ever saw, before or since, on a battlefield."⁸

⁵Ibid., p. 31.

⁶Tucker, High Tide at Gettysburg, p. 114.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

As Davis was pursuing Cutler, he was attacked on the flank by one regiment of the "Iron Brigade" which had been left in reserve and by two regiments of Cutler's brigade which had remained south of the turnpike. Many of the Mississippians sought cover in the nearby railroad cut. Here they were trapped. The 55th North Carolina attempted to cover the Mississippians with fire. They put down a heavier fire than the Federals expected, but nonetheless many members of the 42nd and 2nd Mississippi were forced to surrender.⁹

Two members of the color guard of the 55th North Carolina had been the first Confederate casualties of the battle. This had occurred in the clash with the Federal cavalry earlier that morning. Lieutenant-Colonel Smith of the 55th was killed in the fight with Cutler. General Heth praised the conduct of both Connally and Belo in his report of the battle.¹⁰

The twin disasters of Archer and Davis can be blamed on overconfidence and carelessness on the part of Heth and A. P. Hill. Hill and Heth, you will recall, had chosen to ignore Pettigrew's report. When he ran into opposition from the Federal cavalry, Heth remembered Pettigrew's warning and became too cautious. By the time Heth convinced himself that he was only facing a small force, it was too late. He became overaggressive and incautious, thus resulting in the debacles of Archer and Davis.¹¹

⁹Collins and Gross, Gettysburg, p. 31.

¹⁰Official Records, vol. 27, pt. 2, p. 637.

¹¹Clark, Histories of Several Regiments, vol. II, pp. 116-117.

This first phase of fighting on July 1 ended around 11 a.m. There was no more fighting until around 2:30 p.m. All times given are approximations. There is wide disagreement among the various sources what time the second phase of fighting started. As far as can be determined 2:30 p.m. is a reasonable educated guess.

During this lull from around 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. forces on both sides were realigned and reinforcements were brought up. Heth put Archer on the far right close to the Fairfield Road. Pettigrew's brigade was placed on Archer's left. Next to Pettigrew was Brockenbrough's brigade. Davis' brigade was placed astride the Cashtown turnpike as a reserve. Thus, Heth placed Pettigrew and Brockenbrough in position to bear the brunt of the fighting because of the decimated condition of Archer and Davis. Heth was ordered by Hill to continue his attack and was promised Pender's division as support. Hill had neglected to inform General Lee of the fighting, but Lee knew that fighting must have broken out because of the obvious sound of gunfire. Hill had, however, informed Richard Ewell, commander of the Confederate II Corps, that he intended to advance on Gettysburg. Ewell started his corps toward Gettysburg as a precautionary measure. Rodes marched toward Gettysburg on the Middletown Road and Early by way of the Heidlersburg Road.¹²

The remainder of the Federal I Corps and the XI Corps arrived before the fighting broke out again at 2:30. The Federal commanders, Doubleday, of the I Corps (upon Reynold's death), and Howard, of the

¹²Coddington, The Gettysburg Campaign, p. 286.

XI Corps, were warned of the approach of Rodes by Buford's cavalry. Preparations were made to oppose Rodes's advance. Rodes had hoped to surprise the Federal I Corps and attack it on its exposed right flank. The I Corps line was extended to the Mummasburg Road where it intersected Oak Ridge, an extension of Seminary Ridge. This extension was manned by Robinson's division with its brigades of Baxter and Paul. Rowley's division filled in the rest of the McPherson's Ridge position. Biddle's brigade was placed on the left with its flank resting on the Fairfield Road. Its flank was protected by Gamble's cavalry brigade of Buford's division. Next to Biddle was Meredith's "Iron Brigade." Stone's brigade was on Meredith's right with Stone's flank resting on the Cashtown turnpike. Cutler covered the gap between the Cashtown turnpike and Robinson's two brigades at Oak Ridge. The XI Corps was placed in flat ground due north of Gettysburg. Schurz's division was on the left and Barlow's was on the right. Von Steinwehr's division was left in reserve on Cemetery Hill, south of Gettysburg.¹³

After General Rodes's men burst through the woods on Oak Ridge around 2:30, the fighting began again in earnest. Rodes's artillery, under Carter, opened fire on Robinson's position. Rodes mistook Robinson's defensive preparations for an attack. He sought to anticipate the Federals by attacking them first. Rodes quickly rearranged his troops. Rodes's division was a strong unit with approximately 8,000 men. It consisted of five brigades. These were commanded by Brigadier General Junius Daniel, Brigadier General Stephen Dodson Ramseur, Brigadier General George Doles, Brigadier General Alfred

¹³Coddington, The Gettysburg Campaign, p. 287.

Iverson, and Colonel Edward O'Neal. Of these, Daniel and Ramseur were North Carolinians whose troops were also North Carolinians. Iverson was a Georgian, but his brigade was composed entirely of North Carolinians. Doles's men were Georgians and O'Neal's were Alabamians.¹⁴

Doles was put in reserve on the left to protect the flank of the division from the Federal XI Corps. The 5th Alabama regiment of O'Neal filled the gap between Doles and Oak Hill. Ramseur's brigade was kept in reserve. The main assault was assigned to Iverson's brigade and the remainder of O'Neal's. Daniel was to support them on the right. O'Neal was to assault the Federal line at a 90 degree angle, and Iverson was to hit the line at an oblique angle. The brigades formed an obtuse angle with all of them facing south, except for Iverson's, which faced southeast. The selection by Rodes of O'Neal and Iverson to make the chief attack was unfortunate. They were the least capable of his brigade commanders. Against the typical pre-Gettysburg Army of the Potomac it would not have mattered, but the Federal I Corps was experienced, desperate, and determined.¹⁵

The attack was badly botched by both Iverson and O'Neal. Only Daniel made any progress at all. O'Neal failed to lead his brigade personally. Because of this O'Neal's advance became disorganized and was made in a direction different from that planned by Rodes. The 3rd

¹⁴Coddington, The Gettysburg Campaign, p. 287; Official Records, vol. 27, pt. II, p. 287.

¹⁵Coddington, The Gettysburg Campaign, p. 289.

Alabama regiment was left behind with Daniel's brigade. This attack was repulsed, and O'Neal's men were forced back. Even sending in the 5th Alabama regiment as support did not help.¹⁶

O'Neal's failure exposed Iverson's left as it attacked the Federal brigades of Baxter and Paul, which were hidden behind a stone wall on the Forney farm. Iverson did not lead his brigade personally either, and his men strayed from their proper line of advance. Iverson's unit got caught in the open and was hit by fire from the front and both flanks. In spite of this, it resolutely continued to fight until relieved by Ramseur's men. A member of the 23rd regiment described it this way: "Unable to advance, unwilling to retreat, the brigade lay down in this hollow or depression in the field and fought as best it could."¹⁷ The reason that Iverson's men were caught by surprise was Iverson's failure to order that a skirmish line lead his brigade into action. The skirmish line was standard procedure for Civil War fighting.¹⁸

A member of the 12th North Carolina regiment said this of Iverson's brigade's predicament:

There was not a bush nor a tree between the place where Iverson formed and the Federal line, a distance of nearly half a mile. The brigade was put in on a false alignment, in a northeast and southwest line, while the enemy's line was almost due north and south. The troops bounded forward, not knowing certainly where the enemy was, for his whole line, with every flag, was concealed behind

¹⁶Official Records, vol. 27, pt. II, p. 553.

¹⁷Clark, Histories of the Several Regiments, vol. II, p. 236.

¹⁸Official Records, vol. 27, pt. II, p. 554.

the rock wall on their right and center and the drop in the ground on their left. Not one of them was to be seen. The other regiments of Iverson's brigade got within very close range of the enemy before the 12th was well up, owing to the alignment of the brigade, as already stated (from left to right, 5th, 20th, 23rd, and 12th), when the Federals raised up their position and poured a deadly volley into the 5th, 20th, and 23rd and the two left companies of the 12th.¹⁹

General Ewell described the plight of Iverson's brigade thusly:

The left of Iverson's brigade was thus exposed, but these gallant troops obstinately stood their ground till the greater part of three regiments had fallen where they stood in line of battle. A few of them, being entirely surrounded, were taken prisoners; a few escaped.²⁰

Rodes had this to say about the predicament of Iverson's men: "His men fought and died like heroes. His dead lay in a distinctly marked line of battle. His left was overpowered, and many of his men, being surrounded, were captured."²¹

During all the confusion, Iverson made the mistake of thinking that one of his regiments had surrendered and gone over to the enemy. He even sent word of this to Rodes. Of course, this was not true.

Later, in his report Iverson stated:

When I saw white handkerchiefs raised, and my line of battle still lying down in position, I characterized the surrender as disgraceful; but when I found afterward that 500 of my men were left lying dead and wounded on a line as straight as a dress parade, I exonerated, with one or two disgraceful individual exceptions, the survivors, and claim for the brigade that they nobly fought and died without a man running to the rear. No greater gallantry and heroism has been displayed during this war.²²

¹⁹Clark, Histories of the Several Regiments, vol. I, p. 635.

²⁰Official Records, vol. 27, pt. II, p. 444.

²¹Ibid., p. 554.

²²Ibid., pp. 579-580.

Iverson was in a confused state of mind at the time of his attack. Iverson's qualification of the gallantry of his men "with one or two disgraceful individual exceptions" was unjustified. There simply were no "disgraceful individual exceptions." One of Ramseur's men was more blunt in describing Iverson's condition. He said Iverson was drunk.²³

The 12th regiment on the right suffered least and later helped in the general assault around 3:30 p.m. The 12th was partially protected by a slight rise of ground on its front. Iverson commended the officers and men of the 12th North Carolina for holding their position and for their advance without supports into the woods occupied by Federal troops. Its role in the grand assault later that day was very satisfying after the disaster which had occurred. The 12th later captured more prisoners than it knew what to do with. Rodes also said in his report:

The 12th North Carolina, which had been held well in hand by Lieutenant-Colonel Davis, and the shattered remnants of the other regiments of Iverson's brigade, which had been rallied and organized by Captain D. P. Halsey, assistant adjutant-general of the brigade, made under his guidance a dashing and effective charge just in time to be of considerable service to Ramseur and Daniel, and with them pressed closely, after the enemy.²⁴

General Ewell, the immediate superior of Rodes, also praised the conduct of Captain Halsey.²⁵

²³Ibid., p. 580.

²⁴Ibid., p. 554.

²⁵Official Records, vol. 27, pt. II, p. 451; Clark, Histories of the Several Regiments, vol. I, p. 635.

In the Official Records Iverson's casualties are listed as 512 killed and wounded and 308 missing. The losses must be greater than reported, however. On June 30 Iverson's brigade contained 1,356 men and 114 officers. If 308 men were captured by the Federal troops, and this was very close to the number they claimed, the losses in killed and wounded must have been far greater than 512, because there were not more than 350 or 400 men with the brigade after the battle. A better estimate would be around 750.²⁶

Iverson's men were wastefully and needlessly sacrificed. The enemy's position was unknown. The troops strayed and were left to die without guidance or help until Ramseur was able to relieve them. All of the field officers were killed or wounded. General Iverson did not enter the battlefield at any time. Much of the blame for this calamity can be placed on Iverson's shoulders. Ewell, Rodes, and O'Neal are far from blameless, however. Lieutenant-Colonel Nelson Slough and Major J. S. Brooks of the 20th regiment were wounded. Colonel D. H. Christie of the 23rd regiment was fatally wounded. Lieutenant-Colonel R. D. Johnston and Major C. C. Blackwell, also of the 23rd, were wounded. The tragic consequences of Iverson's disaster for North Carolina is aptly described by a member of the 23rd: "Deep and long must the desolate homes and orphan children of North Carolina rue the rashness of that hour."²⁷ One member of the 23rd was found lying dead, still clinching his musket, with five bullet holes in his head.

²⁶Clark, Histories of the Several Regiments, vol. I, p. 636.

²⁷Ibid., vol. II, p. 235.

Thirty-five years after the war flattened bullets were found in the clay of "Iverson's Pits," as this area of the battlefield came to be known, which had fallen from the skeletons. This field was a mine of war relics--pieces of shrapnel, canister, and bullets. Lieutenant George B. Bullock, of Company I of the 23rd, said this was the only occasion when blood ran like a branch, in his experience during the war, which was considerable. The pits where Iverson's dead were buried were easily distinguished from the surrounding ground around 1900 from the more luxuriant growth of crops and grass over them. Mr. Forney, who owned this land, could trace the edges of the pits easily. There were superstitions in the neighborhood for years regarding this field. Laborers were reluctant to work there when night approached. Mr. Sheads, who built a house on the spot occupied by the 97th New York, served wine from grapes grown where dead of the 12th regiment were left.²⁸

The disaster of Iverson's brigade left Daniel's whole front uncovered. Daniel found himself opposed by large numbers of Federal troops. In effect, Daniel's brigade was the right flank element of Rodes's entire division. Soon the whole brigade was under heavy fire. Daniel boldly attacked these Federal troops, which included Stone's Pennsylvania brigade, with his 2nd North Carolina battalion and 45th North Carolina regiment. The Federal troops were strongly posted along the railroad cut and in the edge of the woods behind the cut. This railroad cut, the same on which Davis' Mississippians had met

²⁸Ibid., vol. I, p. 637; vol. II, pp. 236-237.

misfortune, was near the Cashtown turnpike and in the area of the McPherson farm. This line of battle was nearly at right angles to Iverson's line of battle. The Federal line was supported by two batteries of artillery to the right of the cut, near a stone barn, and also by another battery on a hill to the left of the cut. Daniel sent his 43rd and 53rd North Carolina regiments to support his own left and Iverson's right. The center of Rodes's position was being threatened because of the failure of O'Neal and Iverson. Daniel knew this and could see Federal reinforcement streaming in. The 2nd battalion and the 45th regiment forced the stubborn Federal I Corps troops back. These fine units advanced under heavy fire to a fence under cover of a slight rise of ground. Here they fought the Federal forces at close range and with steady and well-directed fire. With support from the left by the 43rd and 53rd regiments, the 2nd battalion and 45th regiment renewed the attack and advanced to the cut. They drove the enemy from the cut in confusion and also forced the withdrawal of the Federal artillery from the barn. The 32nd regiment tried to gain a flanking position on the right. Daniel's men were forced to halt and regroup when they reached the cut. The railroad cut was impassable at the point where Daniel's men reached it because of the steepness of its sides. General Rodes used the following words in describing this phase of Daniel's operations on July 1:

General Daniel's gallant brigade, by a slight change in the direction of Iverson's attack, had been left too far to assist him directly, and had already become engaged. The right of this brigade coming upon the enemy, strongly posted in a railroad cut, was, under its able commander's orders, thrown back skillfully, and the position of the whole brigade was altered so as to enable him to throw a portion of

his force across the railroad, enfilade it, and attack to advantage.²⁹

The 2nd battalion and 45th regiment fell back 40 paces to the crest of a hill to find cover. From this position Daniel's men kept up a heavy fire on the Federal relieving columns. Also, General Daniel found time to examine the cut more closely. Daniel decided that the only way to carry the barrier was to get one regiment astride of it to support those on the left. The only way to do this was to move this regiment by the flank to the rear and to the right of Daniel's position. This regiment would have to cross in front of Davis' brigade of Hill's III Corps to carry out this maneuver. Daniel sent an officer to ask for co-operation but did not receive any. This assignment was carried out by the 32nd North Carolina regiment. This was the adjustment referred to by Rodes. At 3:30 p.m. Daniel's men burst across the railroad cut simultaneously with the general Confederate advance. Captain A. H. Gallaway of the 45th regiment captured a stand of Federal colors' and recaptured the colors of the 20th North Carolina regiment of Iverson's brigade. Around four o'clock in the afternoon Daniel's brigade left the pursuit of the retreating Federals to Ramseur's men.³⁰

In this action of Daniel's brigade on July 1 several of the officers were casualties. Lieutenant W. R. Bond and Lieutenant-Colonel W. J. Green, who were Daniel's aides-de-camp, were wounded. Lieutenant Colonel H. L. Andrews of the 2nd battalion was killed, and Major J. M. Hancock of the same unit was wounded. Lieutenant-Colonel Samuel H.

²⁹Official Records, vol. 27, pt. II, pp. 554, 566-567.

³⁰Ibid., pp. 444-445, 567.

Boyd and Major John R. Winston of the 45th regiment were wounded. Major H. G. Lewis of the 32nd regiment was also wounded. Daniel's brigade's casualties are listed as 800 killed or wounded and 116 missing in the Official Records.³¹

General Rodes said this about Daniel's assault, which was made after regrouping at the railroad cut:

After this change, General Daniel made a most desperate, gallant, and entirely successful charge upon the enemy, driving him at all points, but suffering terribly. The conduct of General Daniel and his brigade in this most desperate engagement elicited the admiration and praise of all who witnessed it.³²

Daniel's later comment on the conduct of his troops in this action was:

I feel it my duty at this point to make mention of the gallant conduct of my troops during this action. Their loss in killed and wounded amounted to about one-third the number that entered the fight. All acted with courage and coolness, but it fell to the lot of the 45th, Lieutenant-Colonel Boyd; 2nd battalion, Lieutenant-Colonel Andrews, and the 32nd, Colonel Brabble, to meet the heaviest efforts of the enemy. This they did in the most gallant manner, repulsing them at every advance, and finally driving them in confusion from the field.³³

While Rodes's attack was taking place, Heth's division reattacked the Federal position on McPherson's Ridge. The attacks were made by Pettigrew's and Brockenbrough's brigades. Pettigrew's men attacked both Biddle and Meredith. The 47th and 52nd regiments faced Biddle. The 11th and 26th met the "Iron Brigade" head on. For a short period

³¹Ibid., p. 562.

³²Ibid., p. 554.

³³Ibid., pp. 567-568.

the 52nd formed in squares to protect itself from Federal cavalry on its right flank. The alignment of the brigade from left to right was the 26th, 11th, 47th, and 52nd regiments respectively. The 26th had a direct clash with the 24th Michigan. This was a deadly combat. Pettigrew's men cracked three successive Federal lines of defense. Despite heavy casualties, the 47th and 52nd forced Biddle back and exposed the left flank of the famous "Iron Brigade," whose prowess had already been seen. This forced a Federal retreat to Seminary Ridge. The 11th and 26th paid a high price for their success against the "Iron Brigade." These two fine North Carolina regiments suffered the highest casualties of any regiments in Lee's army. Most of them came from this very attack on July 1 and not on the 3rd when the famous charge was made. The "Iron Brigade" suffered heavily from its contact with these fine units. It suffered more casualties than any other Federal brigade at Gettysburg. The great majority of them came from this savage contact with Pettigrew's brigade. Out of approximately 1,800 men in the "Iron Brigade" 1,100 were casualties. Pettigrew's brigade lost 1,100 out of 3,000. The 26th regiment suffered about seventy-four percent casualties. The 11th regiment suffered over fifty percent casualties. The 47th and 52nd did not lose as heavily as the 26th or 11th. Company F of the 26th from Caldwell County suffered 100 percent casualties. All but a half dozen of those occurred in this assault of July 1. Every one of this company's three officers and eighty-eight men were either killed or wounded. Astonishing as this sounds, the records kept by the company confirm it. Thirteen color-bearers of the 26th were shot down. Of these, Colonel Burgwyn, commander of the 26th, Captain William

McCreery, Private Franklin Honeycutt, Company B, Private John Marley, Company G, and Private William Ingram, Company K, were killed. Lieutenant-Colonel Lane, Lieutenant George Wilcox, Color Sergeant J. Mansfield, Sergeant Hiran Johnson, Company G, Private John Stamper, Company A, Private G. W. Kelly, Company D, Private L. A. Thomas, Company F, and Private John Vinson, Company G, were wounded. Colonel Leventhorpe of the 11th regiment was wounded. Burgwyn's place as commander of the 26th was taken by Lieutenant-Colonel John R. Lane, referred to above as a wounded color-bearer. In this attack by Heth's division, General Heth was himself wounded. Pettigrew took over as the division commander. Colonel Marshall of the 52nd regiment replaced Pettigrew. Lieutenant-Colonel Marcus A. Parks took over the 52nd regiment. This attack by Pettigrew may very well be the bloodiest attack of its size in the entire Civil War.³⁴

Two curious things happened during this bloody assault. Some of Pettigrew's men had trouble ramming their cartridges down their gun barrels. This was due to slick ramrods caused by sweating on this sweltering day. One expedient used to remedy this was ramming the gun into the ground. The other thing was that some of the wounded were foaming at the mouth. This was observed by Captain Louis G. Young, an aide-de-camp of Pettigrew. He attributed it to the fact that the attack was delivered after several hours of suspense. The effect on the nerves was severe.³⁵

³⁴Ibid., pp. 289, 643; Clark, Histories of the Several Regiments, vol. II., pp. 119-120.

³⁵Clark, Histories of the Several Regiments, vol. II, p. 119.

Young described Pettigrew's attack the following way:

When the order came to advance, Pettigrew's brigade about 3,000 strong, marched out in perfect alignment, and under as hot a fire as was ever faced, moved steadily through the wheat, reserved its fire for close range, which when delivered, it pressed on until it overcame its adversary. It was a hotly contested field, and the stubborn resistance of the "Iron Brigade" was met with more than equal determination on the part of Pettigrew's brigade. For a short time the battle raged at 40, then 20, yards between the contestants.³⁶

Major Jones, in his official report on Pettigrew's brigade, said this of the attack:

The brigade moved forward in beautiful style, in quick-time, on a line with the brigade on our left commanded by Colonel Brockenbrough. When nearing the branch (Willoughby Run) the enemy poured a galling fire into the left of the brigade from the opposite bank where they had massed in heavy force, while we were in line of battle awaiting the order to advance. The 47th and 52nd North Carolina, although exposed to a hot fire from artillery and infantry, lost but few men in comparison with the 11th and 26th. On went the command across the branch and up the opposite slope, driving the enemy at the point of the bayonet back upon their second line.

The second line was encountered by the 26th regiment, while the other regiments were exposed to a heavy artillery shelling. The enemy's single line in the field on our right, was engaged principally with the right of the 11th North Carolina and the 47th North Carolina. The enemy did not perceive the 52nd North Carolina, which flanked their left until the 52nd discovered themselves by a ranking and destructive fire by which the enemy's line was broken.

On the second line the fighting was terrible, our men advancing, the enemy stubbornly resisting, until the two lines were pouring volleys into each other at a distance not greater than 20 paces. At last the enemy were compelled to give way. They again made a stand in the woods, and the third time they were driven from their positions losing a stand of colors which was taken by the 26th regiment, but owing to some carelessness, they were left behind and were picked up by some one else.³⁷

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Official Records, vol. 27, pt. II, p. 643.

General Heth had this to say about the attack of Pettigrew's brigade:

Pettigrew's brigade encountered the enemy in heavy force, broke through his first, second, and third lines. The 11th North Carolina regiment, Colonel Leventhorpe commanding, and the 26th North Carolina regiment, Colonel Burgwyn, Jr., commanding, displaying conspicuous gallantry, of which I was an eyewitness.³⁸

Of the 47th and 52nd regiments Heth said:

The 52nd and 47th North Carolina regiments, on the right of the center, were subjected to a heavy artillery fire, but suffered much less than the 11th and 26th North Carolina regiments. These regiments behaved to my entire satisfaction.³⁹

General A. P. Hill said this of Pettigrew's attack: "Pettigrew's brigade, under its gallant leader, fought most admirably, and sustained heavy loss."⁴⁰

Captain Louis G. Young expressed the opinion that no brigade he saw in action surpassed the conduct of Pettigrew's brigade in this desperate fighting of July 1. General Heth further commented:

Pettigrew's brigade, under the leadership of that gallant officer and accomplished scholar, Brigadier General J. Johnston Pettigrew, fought as well, and displayed as heroic courage as it was ever my fortune to witness on a battlefield. . . .⁴¹

While Pettigrew and Brockenbrough were attacking, General Jubal Early's division arrived on the field. Old "Jube," as Early was

³⁸Ibid., p. 638.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 607.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 638; Clark, Histories of the Several Regiments, vol. II, p. 119.

called, immediately ordered an attack by his men on the right flank of the Federal XI Corps. This was the division of Francis Barlow. This area of the battlefield became known as "Barlow's Knoll." Gordon's Georgia brigade attacked first. Ames's brigade of Barlow's division was hit savagely. Ames was a skillful officer and managed to stabilize the situation. Just as this occurred, Ames was struck on the flank by the Louisiana brigade of Harry T. Hays, and the North Carolina brigade of Hoke which was commanded by Colonel Isaac E. Avery. This stroke unhinged the entire Federal line. Thus, Early's arrival was a masterpiece of timing. Early arrived at a later hour than Rodes because he took a different route.⁴²

A member of Hoke's brigade described the action in this manner:

As the conflict neared our position the effect was marvelous; the men were wild with excitement, and when their time came they went in with the wildest of enthusiasm, for from where they stood they could see two miles of the enemy's line in full retreat. It looked indeed as if the end of the war had come.⁴³

Colonel Goodwin of the 57th North Carolina regiment described Hoke's brigade's assault as follows:

Skirmishers were deployed in front of our lines, and at 3 p.m. the order to advance was received. The enemy had formed line of battle on the hillside in front of the town, under cover of a strong fence, portions of which were made of stone. Our advance was made with great deliberation until we approached a sluggish stream, or slough, about 200 yards in front of the enemy's lines, when the batteries opened upon us with grape and canister, seconded by a very destructive fire from the infantry. Colonel Avery now gave the order to double-quick, and the brigade gallantly dashed through the stream and up the hill

⁴²Collins and Gross, Gettysburg, p. 36.

⁴³Clark, Histories of the Several Regiments, vol. II, p. 44.

to the fence, the enemy stubbornly holding their position until we had climbed over into their midst.⁴⁴

An officer of the 6th North Carolina regiment made the observation that the Federal soldiers fought with more determination at Gettysburg than in other battles with the Confederates in Virginia. He attributed this doggedness to the fact that Gettysburg was on northern soil, and the Federal troops were fighting for their homes. He also noted that this did not dampen the spirits of the Confederate soldiers though.⁴⁵

Hoke's brigade made its assault through wheatfields ready for the harvest. The brigade moved forward, leaving its dead and wounded behind, and as it advanced the troops could see the Federal lines thinning down despite fierce resistance. The 57th regiment on the extreme left had very light casualties. The 6th and 21st regiments, however, had heavy casualties. Total casualties for Hoke's brigade on July 1 were 145. Two pieces of artillery were captured by the 6th regiment. Later, during the Federal retreat, the brigade was sent east of the town and ordered to halt at the foothills of Cemetery ridge. The brigade became a target of furious artillery fire from that eminence, but found cover in a depression.⁴⁶

Early's attack was the signal for the Confederates to attack all along the line, or so it seems. Ramseur surged forward in an attack with his own brigade and elements of Iverson's and O'Neal's support of Daniel. Ramseur was warned of the position of Baxter's and Paul's

⁴⁴Official Records, vol. 27, pt. II, p. 484.

⁴⁵Clark, Histories of the Several Regiments, vol. I, p. 311.

⁴⁶Ibid., pp. 311-312.

Federal brigades by survivors of Iverson's calamity. Ramseur sent his 2nd and 4th North Carolina regiments to support O'Neal. He sent the 14th and 30th North Carolina regiments along with the 3rd Alabama to help Iverson. Ramseur described the action in these terms:

With these regiments (3rd Alabama, 14th and 30th North Carolina), I turned the enemy's strong position in a body of woods, surrounded by a stone fence, by attacking en masse on his right flank, driving him back, and getting in his rear.⁴⁷

Rodes said this of Ramseur's attack:

Ramseur's brigade, which under my orders had been so disposed as to support both Iverson and O'Neal, was ordered forward, and was hurled by its commander with the skill and gallantry for which he is always conspicuous, and with irresistible force, upon the enemy just where he had repulsed O'Neal and checked Iverson's advance.⁴⁸

In this attack First Lieutenant F. M. Harney of Ramseur's 14th North Carolina defeated the 150th Pennsylvania regiment with his sharpshooters, and captured their colors with his own hand. Shortly afterwards he was fatally wounded. Major D. W. Hurtt of the 2nd regiment was wounded. Colonel F. M. Parker of the 30th regiment was also wounded. Ramseur's brigade had 152 reported killed or wounded and 44 reported as missing.⁴⁹

Pender's division took over the attack of Heth against the Federal I Corps which had been driven back to Seminary Ridge. The Georgia brigade of Thomas was left in reserve. The attack was delivered with A. M. Scales's North Carolinians on the left, Abner Perrin's South

⁴⁷Official Records, vol. 27, pt. II, p. 587.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 554.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 451.

Carolínians in the center, and James H. Lane's North Carolínians on the right. Pender's attack crashed forward with irresistible force. Lane's brigade was delayed by dismounted Federal cavalry. Because of this Lane's unit did not play a large role in the major assault on Seminary Ridge. Scales and Perrin bore the brunt of the attack. Scales and Perrin charged straight up the hill in the face of terrific fire. Major Englehard, Pender's assistant adjutant-general, who made the report for the division, had this to say about Scales's brigade:

General Scales on the left, with his left resting on the turnpike, after passing the troops of General Heth, advanced at a charge upon the flank of a brigade of the enemy which was engaged with the extreme left of General Heth's division, upon the opposite side of the road, which soon caused the enemy to fall back.⁵⁰

Scales's men and Perrin's men took heavy casualties. Lane's were fairly light.⁵¹

The Federal line collapsed under all this pressure. The Federal forces retreated to Cemetery Hill. Most Confederate sources term the Federal retreat a rout, but that appears to be an exaggeration. This Federal retreat occurred around 4 p.m. During the pursuit Ramseur's brigade entered Gettysburg from the northwest at the same time that Perrin's men entered from the west. Ramseur's brigade then became involved in a bit of skirmishing in the streets of Gettysburg. Thirteen of the Confederate brigades encamped in or around the town that night. Sixteen Confederate brigades were involved in the fighting on July 1; of these, seven were from North Carolina. Before

⁵⁰Ibid., pp. 657-658.

⁵¹Ibid., pp. 655-658.

discussing the possibility of an attack by the Confederates on Cemetery Hill on July 1, two incidents of the day should be examined.⁵²

As was discussed earlier Alfred Iverson failed to lead the attack of his brigade personally. He went all to pieces when he saw his brigade being decimated. His brigade was placed under Ramseur's command. The men of the brigade were thankful to be under the command of a competent leader and a fellow North Carolinian. After the battle, Ramseur, in a letter to his fiance commented that Iverson was removed from command "for misconduct at Gettysburg."⁵³ He did not give any details.⁵⁴

There was an incident between two North Carolina officers on opposing sides at the close of the day's fight. Colonel Thomas S. Kenan of the 43rd North Carolina, inspected the condition of his men atop Seminary Ridge after the first day triumph of Daniel's North Carolina brigade. While Kenan was engaged in this activity, Lieutenant Henry E. Shepherd reported that the lieutenant-colonel of the 7th Wisconsin regiment was lying painfully wounded nearby and was from North Carolina. The reason Lieutenant Shepherd was so concerned was because the wounded Federal officer, like himself, was from Fayetteville. He had moved to Lancaster, Wisconsin at the age of ten. His name was John B. Callis. Kenan told him: "You are my prisoner and I

⁵²Clark, Histories of the Several Regiments, vol. I, pp. 171, 253-254; Tucker, Front Rank, p. 50.

⁵³Ramseur to fiance, July 29, 1863, Ramseur Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

⁵⁴Ibid.

will treat you well. I may be yours later on." To show his appreciation Callis presented his spurs to Kenan.⁵⁵

Many of the critics of the fighting on July 1 have claimed that an advance by the Confederates immediately after the Federal retreat would have taken Cemetery Hill and destroyed the whole Federal position. This might have brought recognition of the Confederacy by Britain or France. These critics, however, are being unrealistic and also unfair to the Confederate leadership. The Confederates were almost as disorganized in their tumultuous pursuit as the Federal army in its retreat. As a result of this confusion, the massive assault lost its momentum. For the most part, in the Civil War, disorganization reduced the fighting efficiency of units as much as the casualties they suffered. An officer of the 14th North Carolina regiment of Ramseur's brigade made this statement: "Many of our command were overcome by the heat, and I go upon record now and here as saying that immediate and effective pursuit of the enemy was out of our power."⁵⁶ General Lee left all responsibility for an assault on Cemetery Hill in Ewell's hands. If Ewell had been a genius on the order of Stonewall Jackson, he may have been able to mount an assault, but Ewell was no Jackson and should not have been expected to be one. Within one hour after the collapse and retreat of the I and XI Corps, the Federal line was reorganized and strengthened by General Hancock, commander of the Federal II Corps, who was placed in charge of all Federal forces by

⁵⁵Tucker, Front Rank, p. 55.

⁵⁶Clark, Histories of the Several Regiments, vol. I, p. 719.

Meade until he arrived. It would have taken a "blockbuster" assault after this time to have taken the position.

Abner Perrin blamed the failure of the Confederate pursuit on the fact that Anderson's division of Hill's corps was not immediately available to be thrown into the fight. Perrin sharply criticized Anderson for being slow. Lee may not have wanted to throw in Anderson's division because it was the only Confederate reserve. Perrin's criticism shows more heat than light. The ultimate responsibility for no assault on Cemetery Hill on July 1 belongs to General Lee. His orders to Ewell were discretionary, and he refused to commit Hill's corps.⁵⁷

All in all, the Confederates performed well on July 1. Their grand assault was well coordinated and executed. The only unfortunate moments for the Confederates were the early debacles of Heth and Rodes. All of the North Carolina units in the action performed well. The problems of Iverson's brigade were primarily the fault of Iverson himself, who was not a North Carolinian but a Georgian. Pettigrew's brigade showed dogged determination. Ramseur's, Hoke's, Lane's and Scales's brigades showed great timing and spirit in the grand assault from 3:30 to 4 p.m. which crushed the Federal line. Because of the lack of cavalry support and ignorance of the terrain in the Gettysburg vicinity, the Confederates could not realistically have expected to do much better on July 1 given the fierce resistance of the Federal I Corps. The skillful handling of the Federal cavalry by Buford also played a vital role in determining the outcome of the day's action.

⁵⁷Coddington, Gettysburg Campaign, p. 316.

CHAPTER III

July 2

To put North Carolina's participation in the Gettysburg campaign in the proper perspective, it is necessary to tell some of the overall Gettysburg story as well as the story of the contributions of other states to this great drama of American history. It is especially important to do this when writing of the second day of battle. In the assault of Longstreet's I Corps on July 2 no North Carolina troops were involved except for supporting artillery batteries; however, this is an important phase of the battle, and should not be ignored. This phase is also important for its effect on the attack by Ewell's II Corps the same day. North Carolina infantry were prominent in this assault.

The position occupied by the Federal army on July 2 would have been nearly impregnable had the Federal army had sufficient numbers of troops to properly man it. In other words, the problem was one of manpower and not of terrain. The Federal position ran from the commanding elevations of Culp's and Cemetery hills on the north to equally commanding position of Little Round Top on the south. Between Cemetery Hill and Little Round Top runs a long, low ridge known to history as Cemetery Ridge. Had not one of history's most famous episodes occurred here, it would have remained nameless as doubtless so would have the other three named here. The fact remains, however,

that Cemetery Ridge is very insignificant to the human eye, whereas the other three are not. In fact, the ground to the west of the southern end of Cemetery Ridge along the Emmitsburg Road is higher than Cemetery Ridge.

When General Meade inspected the position in the very early morning hours of July 2, he did not find the situation entirely to his liking. The position was held by only the battered I and XI Corps and the XII Corps with a part of the III Corps. The remainder of the III Corps was at Emmitsburg. The II Corps was three miles away. The V Corps was six miles away. The VI Corps had only begun its thirty-five mile march from Manchester, Maryland. The I and XI Corps were posted at Cemetery Hill. The XII Corps was posted at Culp's Hill. The III Corps covered Cemetery Ridge. Little Round Top was left unoccupied. Before the Confederates attacked, the II and V Corps and the remainder of the III Corps arrived. The II Corps reinforced Cemetery Ridge while the V Corps was put in reserve along the Baltimore Pike. The VI Corps arrived late in the evening.¹

General Lee had all of his Confederate divisions available except for Pickett's division which was guarding the Confederate supply trains at Chambersburg. Ewell's II Corps was on the Confederate left. Johnson's division held the extreme left opposite Culp's Hill, Early held the center opposite Cemetery Hill, and Rodes was on Early's right. Hill's III Corps faced the west side of Cemetery Hill at right angles to Ewell. Pender was on the left and Anderson on the right. Heth's division under Pettigrew was in reserve. The artillery commanded by

¹Collins, and Gross, Gettysburg, p. 41.

Walker was to take up eligible positions along the line. General Lee decided to make the main attack on the Federal left. Lieutenant General James Longstreet, commander of the I Corps, was to put McLaws and Hood on the right of Hill's III Corps. The plan was to partially envelop the Federal left and then drive it in. Hill's task would be to threaten the enemy center and prevent reinforcements from being drawn to either wing. His right division (Anderson's) would co-operate in Longstreet's attack. Ewell's II Corps would make a demonstration simultaneously with Longstreet's attack. It was to make a real attack if the opportunity arose.²

In war it is best to keep battle plans simple. So many things can go wrong and there is so much confusion in the midst of a battle. Even simple plans of operation are difficult to carry out. The Confederate plan for July 2 described above sounds simple enough, but yet it proved to be too complex to be executed properly on this particular day. Things began to go wrong almost at once when this plan was adopted.

James Longstreet was against Lee's plan of July 2. This was unfortunate since Longstreet was the chief instrument to be used to carry out the plan. It seems that Longstreet had developed a new theory of fighting in the last months or so, since Fredericksburg in December of 1862. This theory permitted offensive strategy, but demanded defensive tactics. Longstreet believed that a Civil War army commander ought to outmaneuver the enemy and force them to do the attacking. Accordingly, he thought the Confederates should maneuver around the Federal left

²Ibid., p. 42.

flank and force them to do the attacking. However, Longstreet's plan had some serious flaws. First of all, Stuart's cavalry was not available to cover such a maneuver. The cavalry was still involved in its ill-fated raid. Secondly, such a move would stretch the already lengthy Confederate line almost to the breaking point. Thirdly, even if the maneuver succeeded, there was no guarantee that Meade would attack, given his cautious nature. Finally, if Meade had attacked, the attack might have been successful because of the stretched nature of the Confederate line.

Longstreet was just a bit reluctant in carrying out Lee's plan, but could not really be accused of insubordination. Longstreet had often been a little slow in setting up an attack in the past, but once delivered his attacks were often devastating. Longstreet was slow in setting up this particular attack as well. Hood and McLaws did not begin their series of marches to get in position until around noon. They lost much time trying to disguise their moves from the Federal signal station on Little Round Top. Hood and McLaws were not in position until around 3:30 p.m. By that time, the plan of operations against the Federal left had to be changed because of a move made by the Federal III Corps commander, Daniel Sickles.³

Sickles was not pleased with his position along Cemetery Ridge because he felt the position was dominated by the high ground along Emmitsburg Road to the west. Sickles became more and more nervous as time passed. It was obvious that the Confederates were preparing for an attack. He felt that his position was precarious; therefore,

³Ibid.

Sickles, in disobedience to direct orders from General Meade, moved his corps forward to occupy the higher ground to the west. Sickles believed this would improve his position.⁴

Many critics have said that this move was a mistake. There are three major reasons for this view. The ground occupied by Sickles was densely wooded along its approaches. The ground in front of Cemetery Ridge was open. Thus, Sickles' position had an obstructed line of fire while the Cemetery Ridge position did not. The approach march to Sickles' new position was only about one-fourth of a mile, whereas the approach march to his former position was about three-fourths of a mile. Thus, an attacker would be exposed to fire three times as long in attacking Cemetery Ridge as in attacking Sickles' new position. Lastly, the new position was too far forward to be in support range of the Federal reserves.

About 4 p.m. Longstreet's artillery opened fire. Shortly after this, Hood's division, on the extreme right of the Confederate line, which was composed of Georgians, Alabamians, Texans, and Arkansans, opened the attack. A little later McLaw's division joined Hood's in the attack. McLaw's division was composed of Georgians, South Carolinians, and Mississippians. McLaw's attack was supported on its left by four brigades of Anderson's division. This division included Alabamians, Floridians, Georgians, Mississippians, and Virginians. The Virginians were left in reserve. Hood's supporting artillery included two North Carolina artillery batteries. McLaw's artillery included

⁴Ibid., p. 43.

one artillery battery from North Carolina.⁵

In the attack the Federal troops were driven from their position astride the Emmitsburg Road to the cover of a ravine and a line of stone fences at the foot of Cemetery Ridge. The Federal forces were dislodged from this line of fences after a severe struggle and retreated up the ridge. They left behind a number of artillery batteries in Confederate possession. Wilcox's Alabamians and Wright's Georgians played a great role in this Confederate success. Wilcox reached the foot of Cemetery Ridge and Wright momentarily gained the crest. These two brigades became separated from McLaws and the other two brigades of Anderson. Wilcox and Wright were counterattacked by the Federal reserves from the front and both flanks. They were forced to retreat and leave the captured artillery behind. By this time it was nearly dark and McLaws' division also fell back. Longstreet decided to wait for Pickett to arrive and to continue the battle the next day. He decided to hold the ground gained on the right by Hood. His left withdrew to its original position. Four cannon, several hundred prisoners, and two regimental flags were captured by Longstreet's I Corps.⁶

Thus, Sickles' move nearly resulted in disaster for Meade and the Army of the Potomac. Had Ewell's II Corps attacked the Federal right simultaneously with Longstreet's attack, it is seriously doubtful that the Federal defense would have held under the pressure. This brings up another difficulty with Confederate execution of Lee's battle plan

⁵Official Records, vol. 27, pt. II, p. 319.

⁶Ibid.

on July 2. Because of atmospheric conditions or inattention or both, Ewell did not notice Longstreet's artillery fire; therefore, the two Confederate wings did not synchronize their attacks to bring maximum pressure to bear on the Federal line. By the time Ewell attacked, Longstreet's attack had been under way for several hours.⁷

Ewell gave the order to attack around 6 p.m. Edward Johnson's division assaulted Culp's Hill. The 1st and 3rd North Carolina regiments of Steuart's brigade participated in the attack. Part of the Federal entrenchments were overrun by elements of the 1st North Carolina and the 1st Maryland. This group of North Carolina soldiers was headed by Lieutenant Green Martin of Company B, who was badly wounded at the moment of victory. It was unfortunate for the Confederates that this success occurred at night. If this had happened during the day, it could have been exploited. Johnson's division could very well have captured the Baltimore turnpike. This would have cut the Federal supply line and forced Meade to evacuate Culp's and Cemetery hills.⁸

The attack by Early's division at almost the same time as Johnson's attack posed still another threat to the Federal army on July 2. This assault was a co-operative effort of Hoke's North Carolina brigade and the "Louisiana Tigers" brigade of Harry T. Hays. Hoke's brigade was commanded by Colonel Isaac E. Avery while Hoke was recovering from his wound suffered at Chancellorsville. The two brigades charged up the heights, pushed back the Federal troops lining the stone wall,

⁷Collins and Gross, Gettysburg, p. 52.

⁸Tucker, Front Rank, pp. 51-52.

and captured some Federal artillery batteries.⁹

Here again there was no coordination between attacking groups, and these two brigades were left without support. Just for a moment, they commanded the very core of the Federal position. The supporting attack of Rodes on Early's right never came off because of hesitation by Rodes and lack of cooperation by Early and Rodes. They were counterattacked by the Federal II Corps under General Winfield S. Hancock and driven back to the base of the hill.¹⁰

General Early described the action in this manner:

Accordingly, as soon as Johnson became warmly engaged, which was a little before dusk, I ordered Hays and Avery to advance and carry the works on to the heights in front. These troops advanced in gallant style to the attack, passing over the ridge in front of them under a heavy artillery fire, and then crossing a hollow between that and Cemetery Hill, and moving up this hill in the face of at least two lines of infantry posted behind stone and plank fences; but these they drove back, and, passing over all obstacles, they reached the crest of the hill, and entered the enemy's breastworks crowning it, getting possession of one or two batteries. But no attack was made on the immediate right, as was expected, and not meeting with support from that quarter, these brigades could not hold the position they had attained, because a very heavy force of the enemy was turned against them from that part of the line which the divisions on the right were to have attacked, and these two brigades had, therefore, to fall back, which they did with comparatively slight loss, considering the nature of the ground over which they had to pass and the immense odds opposed to them, and Hay's brigade brought off four stand of captured colors.¹¹

General Ewell described Early's assault as follows:

As soon as information reached him that Johnson's attack had commenced, General Early, who held the center of my corps,

⁹Ibid., p. 52.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Official Records, vol. 27, pt. II, p. 470.

moved Hays' and Hoke's brigades forward against the Cemetery Hill. Charging over a hill into a ravine, they broke a line of the enemy's infantry posted behind a stone wall, and advanced up the steep face of another hill, over two lines of breastworks. These brigades captured several batteries of artillery and held them until, finding that no attack was made on the right, and that heavy masses of the enemy were advancing against their front and flank, they reluctantly fell back, bringing away 75 to 100 prisoners and four stand of captured colors. Major-General Rodes did not advance, for reasons given in his report.¹²

A member of the 6th North Carolina regiment had this to say of the assault:

As we approached the hill the guns on Battery Hill, over towards Culp's Hill, had an enfilading fire on us. Still our men rushed forward, crawled over the stone wall near the base of the hill, drove from behind it a strong line of infantry, and went still forward to the top of the hill, and silenced the numerous pieces of artillery that had been so advantageously posted. We had full possession of East Cemetery Hill, the key to General Meade's position, and we held it for several minutes.¹³

General Ewell said that "the conduct of Hays' (Louisiana) and Hoke's (North Carolina) brigades (the latter under Colonel Avery) at Cemetery Hill, Gettysburg, was worthy of the highest praise."¹⁴

Colonel A. C. Godwin said this of the conduct of the men:

In the desperate struggle through which we had just passed, the officers and men of Hoke's brigade fulfilled all the expectations which their gallantry on former occasions had excited. No body of men of equal number could have accomplished greater results against such overwhelming odds.¹⁵

¹²Ibid., p. 447.

¹³Clark, Histories of the Several Regiments, vol. I, p. 313.

¹⁴Official Records, vol. 27, pt. II, p. 450.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 485.

Colonel Avery was fatally wounded in the attack. While his men continued the attack, Avery managed to write a note to Lieutenant Colonel Samuel McDowell Tate, who had replaced him as commander of the 6th North Carolina regiment. This note will long be remembered in North Carolina's participation at Gettysburg. Avery's note read, "Tell my father I fell with my face to the enemy." It was written with a pencil, although it has often been told that Avery wrote it with his own blood. Total casualties for the brigade on July 2 were 200.¹⁶

Probably the most unfortunate loss of the battle was Major General William Dorsey Pender, who was wounded while preparing to take his division into action on the late afternoon of July 2. Pender died on the homeward retreat at Staunton, Virginia at the age of 29. General Lee said of him, "I shall ever believe, if General Pender had remained on his horse an hour longer we would have carried the enemy position."¹⁷ Major Joseph A. Englehard, Pender's adjutant general, gave this opinion: "Seldom has the service suffered more in the loss of one man."¹⁸

Again, as on July 1, the Confederates came very close to victory. The execution of the battle plan formulated by General Lee left much to be desired. There was too much hesitation and not enough coordination. The efforts were always too little or too late. Even the blunder made by Sickles was not fully taken advantage of. Hoke's North Carolina brigade did all that could be asked of it. The odds were too much against it to expect it to retain its position on East Cemetery Hill.

¹⁶Tucker, Front Rank, pp. 52-53.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 53.

¹⁸Ibid.

The 1st and 3rd North Carolina regiments of Steuart's brigade contributed nobly to the momentary success at Culp's Hill. The indecisiveness of July 2 would lead to a third day of battle at Gettysburg.

CHAPTER IV

JULY 3

After the first two days' action, General Lee had little choice as to his course of action. He could either take the offensive again or retreat back to Virginia. Lee was unwilling to retreat because of the near successes of July 1 and 2. Lee felt that a final knockout blow could destroy the Army of the Potomac for good. Lee figured that, because of the flank attacks on the Federal line on July 2, the flanks were strong, and the center was weak. Lee decided to strike Meade in the center. A success here would cut the Federal army in half, which could then be destroyed at Lee's leisure. Lee did not want just another victory; what he wanted was a decisive victory!

Lee's original plan was for Longstreet to assault the Federal center with Pickett's fresh division supported by Heth's division under Pettigrew and two brigades of Pender's division under Trimble. At the same time that the attack on the center was taking place, Johnson's division with support from Rodes and Early would attack the Federal right.¹

This plan had three grave dangers. First, of all the attacking troops, only Pickett's division was fresh. Heth's division, as one will recall, was involved in heavy fighting on July 1. So was Pender's

¹Official Records, vol. 27, pt. II, p. 320.

division. Johnson's division was involved in much fighting on July 2. Second, General Longstreet was opposed to Lee's plan. He wanted to envelop the Federal left. Third, almost a mile of open ground separated the armies at the projected point of attack.

Things began to go wrong with Lee's plan almost from the beginning. Before the plan was finalized there was early fighting in the Culp's Hill vicinity. Meade was attempting to dislodge Johnson's division from Spangler's Spring. Meade felt the need to relieve the Confederate threat to the Baltimore Pike which was an important link in his lines of communication and supply. The Federal XII Corps under Henry Slocum, which had hemmed in Johnson during the night, was ordered to attack and recapture the Federal entrenchments taken by the Confederates the previous evening.²

The Federal Brigades of Colgrove and McDougall attacked the Confederates in the area of the spring. These attacks were repulsed, but Confederate counterattacks were repulsed in turn. While this was happening, the Confederates reassaulted Culp's Hill. Daniel's Brigade participated in this charge. It failed. The failure of the attack was followed by a surging counterattack by the Federal troops. The Confederates gave way all along the line at Culp's Hill. The breast works were recaptured by the Federal troops. Johnson then retreated back across Rock Creek.³

General Daniel described the action in part, concerning the furious fighting in the Culp's Hill vicinity, in the following terms:

²Ibid.

³Collins and Gross, Gettysburg, pp. 58-59.

On reaching the left, I received orders from General Johnson to charge the enemy's works, in conjunction with General Steuart. This charge was made in a most gallant manner, and the enemy driven from a portion of their works in front of my center and right and near the works captured the evening before by Jones' brigade. Owing to the heavy fire brought upon General Steuart, he was unable to advance farther, and I was, therefore, unable to occupy the works of the enemy; but from a sheltered position, within less than 50 paces, I obtained through a gorge between their lines of intrenchments a most desctuctive fire with the whole of the 45th regiment for five minutes upon a crowd of the enemy who were disorganized and fleeing in great confusion. And here, owing to the fact that the enemy were returning our fire at this time very feebly, and that our own aim was unobstructed, we succeeded in inflicting heavy loss upon them.⁴

Major Winston of the 45th regiment was wounded again on July 3, this time more severely. Colonel Thomas S. Kenan of the 43rd regiment was also severely wounded in this fighting.⁵

After Johnson was pushed back from Culp's Hill, Lee was forced to change his plan of attack. No longer was it intended that Pettigrew's and Trimble's commands support Pickett. Pickett's division would be on the right, and Heth's division under Pettigrew would deploy to the left. Wilcox and Perry of Anderson's division would deploy in echelon to Pickett's right. Lane's and Scales's brigades under Trimble would support Pettigrew. The entire operation would be under Longstreet's command.⁶

Pickett's division was deployed in three lines with Kemper in two lines on the right and Garnett also in two lines on the left. Armistead, a native of New Bern, was in support and was the third line.

⁴Ibid., pp. 568-569.

⁵Ibid., p. 569.

⁶Ibid., p. 320.

Each of Pickett's brigades were made up of five regiments of Virginians. Perry was on Kemper's immediate right and Wilcox was to the right of Perry.⁷

In Pettigrew's command Archer's brigade under Fry was on the right joining and to the immediate left of Garnett. Next to it on the left was Pettigrew's own brigade under Marshall. On Marshall's left was Davis' brigade. On the extreme left was Brockenbrough's brigade. This division was deployed in one line. Scales's brigade under Lowrance deployed behind Fry. Lane deployed behind Marshall. Heth's division consisted of 17 regiments. Five were from North Carolina, 4 from Virginia, 3 from Mississippi, 3 from Tennessee, and 2 from Alabama.⁸

Most of the morning was spent by Lee and Longstreet planning the attack. The attacking force not counting Wilcox and Perry numbered approximately 11, 000 men. Pickett's manpower numbered 4,500. Pettigrew's numbered 4,900. Trimble's numbered 1,600. There were feverish preparations for an artillery bombardment. This artillery bombardment did not begin until around 1 p.m. and lasted for about two hours. At first, the fire was very accurate and caused considerable damage to Federal artillery. Soon, however, the smoke became thick and the Confederates started overshooting their targets. This overshooting resulted in heavy casualties in the vicinity of Meade's Headquarters. Eventually, Meade was forced to relocate his headquarters. When the bombardment first started the Federal artillery held its fire under orders from Henry Hunt, Chief of Artillery. One by one the Federal

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid., p. 289.

corps commanders countermanded Hunt's orders and ordered their guns to counterfire. This fire helped the morale of the Federal infantry. It also did some damage to Longstreet's attack force. Longstreet left the decision of when to advance with Colonel Alexander who was directing his artillery fire. Around 3:30 p.m. Alexander sent Pickett a message to advance. Pickett's division was to give the signal to advance to Pettigrew and Trimble. Pickett's men marched obliquely to the left to maintain parallel position with Pettigrew. Pettigrew and Trimble were to charge straight ahead. When Heth's division started forward, Davis and Brockenbrough fell behind. Davis surged out late and caught up with the formation. Brockenbrough went part of the way but never did catch up. The rest of the formation advanced with no problem. Pettigrew's command, however, soon came under heavy artillery fire. Brockenbrough was attacked on the left flank by the 8th Ohio and gave way. The rest of Heth's division maintained its formation. Kemper on Pickett's right was hit on his right flank by Stannard's Vermonters. This crowded his men to the left and caused some confusion between Garnett and Fry. The whole Confederate line except for a small group led by Armistead was stopped at the stone wall in front of the Federal line. Pettigrew's and Trimble's commands were up against Hays's division of Hancock's II Corps. Pickett's men were opposed by Gibbon's division of the same corps. Gibbon had remained loyal to the Union eventhough he had been appointed to West Point from North Carolina. Armistead's small breakthrough was easily contained by the Federal forces. The penetration by Armistead has often been called the High Water Mark of the Confederacy. Once Armistead was contained

the whole Confederate assault quickly collapsed. The North Carolinians under Lane and Lowrance were the last to retreat.⁹

The author of "Gettysburg, Then and Now" had this to say about the charge:

The left of that charging column under Pettigrew and Trimble, suffered as severely as the right under Pickett. Great injustice has been done these troops by the prevailing erroneous impressions that they failed to advance with those of Pickett.

"Such is not the fact, as they were formed behind Seminary Ridge where they had over 1,300 yards to march under the terrible fire to which they were exposed, while Pickett's division being formed under cover of the intermediate ridge, had but 900 yards to march under fire. At first, the assaulting columns advanced en echelon, but when they reached Emmittsburg road, they were on a line, and together they crossed the road. The left of Pettigrew's command becoming first exposed to the fearful enfilading fire upon their left flank from the Eighth Ohio, and other regiments of Hays's division and of Woodruff's battery and other troops, the men on that part of the line (Brockenbrough's brigade) either broke to the rear or threw themselves on the ground for protection.

"But Pettigrew's other brigades, Davis, Marshall and Frye, with the brigades of Lowrance and Lane, under Trimble, advanced with Pickett to the stone wall and there fought desperately.¹⁰

A member of the 26th regiment described the charge in the following manner:

As soon as the fire of the artillery ceased, General Pettigrew, his face lit up with the bright look it always wore when in battle, rode up to Colonel Marshall, in command of the brigade, and said: 'Now Colonel, for the honor of the good Old North State, Forward.' Colonel Marshall promptly repeated the command, which taken up by the regimental commanders, the 26th marched down the hill into the valley between the two lines. As the forward march continued, our artillery would occasionally fire a shot over the heads of

⁹Bryan Grimes Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Chapel Hill, vol. 39, No. 292.

¹⁰Clark, Histories of the Several Regiments, vol. II, p. 364.

the troops to assure them that they had friends in the rear.

The brigade had not advanced far when the noble Marshall fell, and the command of the brigade devolved on Major Jones, of the 26th, while that of the regiment on Captain S. W. Brewer, of Company E, a man who proved on that day as he has often since, that he was thoroughly qualified to lead.

The Confederate line was yet unbroken and still perfect, when about half a mile from their works the enemy's artillery opened fire, sweeping the field with grape and canister; but the line crossed the lane (Emmittsburg road) in good order. When about 300 yards from their works the musketry of the enemy opened on us, but nothing daunted the brave men of the 26th who pressed quickly forward and when the regiment reached within about 40 yards of the enemy's works, it had been reduced to a skirmish line. But the brave remnant still pressed ahead and the colors were triumphantly planted on the works by J. M. Brooks and Daniel Thomas, of Company E, when a cry came from the left, and it was seen that the entire left of the line had been swept away.

The 26th now exposed to a front and enfilade fire, there was no alternative but to retreat, and the order was accordingly given. Captain Cureton, of Company B, and others, attempted to form the shattered remnants of the regiment in the lane (Emmittsburg road) but pressed by the enemy, the attempt was abandoned.¹¹

An officer of the 37th regiment of Lane's brigade described the charge this way:

It was a grand sight, as far as the eye could see to the right and to the left, two lines of Confederate soldiers with waving banners pressing on into the very jaws of death. Trimble's command was the second line in support of Pettigrew, Lane upon the left and Scales upon the right. In a few minutes after the start we were obliqued rapidly to the left to take the place of Brockenbrough's brigade, which had broken; over the Emmittsburg road we went and rushed for the stone wall, the line all the while seemed to be melting away. When the order came to retire, those who were spared did so in perfect order--never anything like a panic, as some people think--and halted at the position from which we had started.¹²

¹¹Ibid., pp.365-366.

¹²Ibid., p. 687.

A Northern officer described the charge as follows:

They moved up splendidly, deploying as they crossed the long, sloping interval. The front of the column was bearly up the slope, within a few yards of the II Corps' front and its batteries, when suddenly a terrific fire from every available gun on Cemetery Ridge burst upon them. Their graceful lines underwent an instantaneous transformation; in a dense cloud of smoke and dust, arms, heads, blankets, guns, and knapsacks were tossed in the air, and the moans from the battlefield were heard from amid the storm of battle. Sheets of missiles flew through what seemed a moving mass of smoke; human valor was powerless, and the death-dealing guns were everywhere throwing blazing projectiles in their faces.¹³

While the attack was being repulsed and the Confederates were preparing for a Federal counterattack which never came, a cavalry clash was taking place three miles east of Gettysburg. The 1st and 2nd North Carolina regiments participating gallantly. Meade was being very cautious. He did not want to throw away a hard-earned victory. The next day, ironically July 4, the long retreat to Virginia began.

After the war a furious controversy developed between Virginia and North Carolina over North Carolina's role in the famous charge of July 3. The initial efforts to explain the failure of the charge was to blame the North Carolinians. Pickett's Virginians had broken the Federal line at one point while the other units did not. Pickett's men felt they had not been properly supported. Blaming the North Carolinians came naturally because Virginians had held low opinions of them since colonial times. This was a possible smoke screen by chauvinistic Virginians to cover up Brockenbrough's failure.¹⁴

¹³Clark, Histories of the Several Regiments, vol. II, p. 126.

¹⁴Stewart, Pickett's Charge, p. 282.

General Pickett held this opinion. His report was destroyed at Lee's request to avoid dissensions in the Army of Northern Virginia and the Confederacy. A Virginia war-correspondent for a Richmond newspaper wrote the first up-Pickett and down-Pettigrew account. This article was written from Hagerstown, Maryland on July 8, 1863. This article definitely should not have been published. It was false and it hurt the war effort. This shows the tensions which were rampant in the Confederacy.¹⁵

North Carolinians had intense resentment of these slanders. Some efforts were made at counter-propaganda, but North Carolinians were already established as the villains. The Virginia version became established in historical tradition. The North Carolina counterattack eventually went to extremes. The North Carolina slogan "Farthest at Gettysburg" arose. This claim rests on geographical instead of military data. Some of the North Carolina troops advancing against the wall held by Hays went farther east than Pickett when some of his troops broke the Federal line. A Virginia rebuttal was quickly launched. The mass of data available makes for difficulty in maintaining a derogatory attitude toward North Carolinians or any of the other brigades, except for Brockenbrough's. Doing so would require calling eye-witness accounts false. It also requires a conspiracy on the part of the Federal soldiers. Lee was reported by Imboden as praising Pickett's division and questioning the conduct of the troops on the left. Lee was probably referring to Brockenbrough's brigade. It must be

¹⁵Ibid., p. 283.

remembered that Imborden was a Virginian, and that when he wrote his recollections the down-Pettigrew tradition was already well established. This was long after the war.¹⁶

There are several good reasons why part of Pickett's men broke through, and Pettigrew's did not. First of all, Pickett's division was fresh while Pettigrew's had been involved in heavy fighting on July 1. Secondly, Pettigrew's men had more ground to cover to reach the wall than did Pickett's. Therefore, they were exposed to fire for a longer period. Thirdly, Pettigrew's men were subjected to more artillery fire than Pickett's. Lastly, the Federal line was very strong where it was hit by Pettigrew. while Pickett's breakthrough came at the weakest spot in the Federal line. At "the angle," where Armistead's brigade broke the line, the front was manned by an artillery battery, instead of a strong line of infantry as at all other psrts of the line. This was a mistake that was made by the Federals. This mistake by the Federals gave some of the Confederates the idea that the charge might have succeeded, when in fact, the chance that it would succeed, was virtually nil. Had there been a strong line of infantry in front of "the angle" instead of an artillery battery, it is highly doubtful that a breakthrough would have occurred. This charge was reckless in the extreme and should not have been attempted.

With the defeat at Gettysburg the strategic possibilities open to the Confederacy were substantially reduced. No longer could offensive warfare be an effective option for the South. The possibility of European recognition was almost nonexistent at this point. The South

¹⁶Ibid., p. 284.

attack on a well-placed Federal line could be successful. He differed in this respect from Lee, but could not say too much because he was outranked. The power of the tactical defensive was proved over and over during the Civil War. This was due to the increased firepower of the new weaponry. The defense of the Federal I Corps on July 1 and the failure of the charge on July 3 are good examples.¹⁷

The Gettysburg campaign ended on a sour note as far as North Carolinians are concerned. General Pettigrew, who commanded Lee's rear guard on the retreat to Virginia, was fatally wounded by a Federal cavalry patrol at Falling Waters. He died near Bunker Hill, Virginia. Pettigrew was mourned as one of the great soldiers North Carolina gave to the Confederacy. His portrait hangs in the Southern Historical Collection at the University of North Carolina.¹⁸

North Carolina's casualties at Gettysburg numbered 770 killed, the greatest number of any southern state. The second greatest death toll belonged to Georgia with 435 killed; then Virginia, 399; Mississippi, 258; South Carolina, 217; Alabama, 204; and the other Confederate states in smaller numbers. The states from the deep South did not have as many troops at Gettysburg; and therefore, did not suffer as many casualties. North Carolina troops suffered one-fourth of the total Confederate casualties.¹⁹

To conclude this study of North Carolina at Gettysburg, the following quotation from a member of the 6th regiment of Hoke's brigade

¹⁷Ibid., p. 21.

¹⁸Dictionary of American Biography, p. 516.

¹⁹Bryan Grimes Papers, vol. 39, no. 292.

is appropriate:

The tourist or traveler visiting this field in days to come, as he goes from point to point with a well-informed guide, will hear him, in describing the operations of the two armies on the first day, on the second day and on the third day, make frequent mention of the North Carolina troops.

From the point known as "The Bloody Angle" he will describe Pickett's charge, so called because General Pickett was in command of the assaulting columns, a charge very unjustly skopen of as "The charge of Pickett and his Virginians," to the prejudice of troops from other states that participated in it, among whom were several regiments of North Carolina troops, who acted well their part, and will be duly mentioned in all true accounts of the fight.

When they come to stand on Cemetery Hill, to which every visitor will go, for from it nearly all the field can be pointed out except Lee's right on the Emmitsburg road, and Meade's left on Roundtop, the guide will point westward toward Cashtown and the Chambersburg pike, where the fighting began. North Carolina was there.

He will then point out Seminary Ridge, beyond which the Federal General Reynolds was killed; the railroad cut; and the rock wall from which the Federals were driven after a most determined stand. North Carolina was there. He will turn towards the field on the north of the town, where Ewell's corps came in and where the Federal General Bartow was killed; and still further to the east, where Early's division fought along Rock Creek and near the brick-yard, and through the town. North Carolina was all along there. Turning then directly east, he will call attention to the monuments, two or three miles off, which mark the place of the cavalry fighting. North Carolina was there too. Then he will show Culp's Hill, where General Johnson and his men did such noble work and came so near being successful in their efforts to turn Meade's right flank. North Carolina was there.

And to conclude his description from this point of view, the guide will then tell how Hays' Louisiana brigade and Hoke's North Carolina brigade (then commanded by Colonel I. E. Avery), after laying under fire all day, some of which was a terrible cannonade, emerged in line of battle from the little valley that runs through Culp's field, and charged up the hill through the shot and shell and grape and canister and ball that was poured upon them by the well-posted Federals. He will point to where Avery fell, and tell how they still came on and on, driving back the infantry and then encountering the gunners, who resisted even to a hand-to-hand struggle, until finally the guns were silenced and spiked; and he will then ask that the records of those

facts may be read in the inscriptions on the costly, durable monuments erected there by the Federal regiments and batteries that were in the fight. North Carolina was there.

The Confederate soldier--the North Carolina Confederate soldier--may glory in the records of Gettysburg.²⁰

²⁰Clark, Histories of the Several Regiments, vol. I, pp. 315-316.

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