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COLONEL WILLIAM T. SHAW, OF ANAMOSA, IOWA.

THE BATTLE OF PLEASANT HILL.

BY COL. WILLIAM T. SHAW.

After the disastrous defeat of Gen. N. P. Banks at Sabine Cross Roads, April 8th, 1864, he fell back on Pleasant Hill during the night of the 8th and morning of the 9th, where Gen. A. J. Smith* had just arrived with detachments of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth army corps.

Early in the morning of the 9th, Gen. Banks sent a request to Gen. Smith to send him a brigade "*upon which he could rely.*" My brigade (Second brigade, Third division, Sixteenth army corps) was sent. I reported to Gen. W. H. Emory, commanding the First division Nineteenth army corps.

Gen. Banks had already sent his trains and engineer corps and some other forces to the rear in full retreat to Grand Ecore, and wanted a brigade "upon which he could rely" to cover his retreat.

The first division of the Nineteenth was formed in the edge of a heavy growth of timber with a large field in front, somewhat cut up with gulleys and dotted over with small pines. On the opposite side of the field was large timber, but rather scattering. Two of Emory's brigades (Col. W. L. McMillan's and Col. Lewis Benedict's) were formed on the edge of the timber on the left of the Mansfield road, and one (Brig. Gen. William Dwight's) on the right. Dwight's line was formed down a hollow which made a considerable angle to the rear and entered the low swampy ground to his right.

On the right of the Mansfield road, about 50 yards in front of Dwight, was a slight eminence sloping away to the right which not only completely commanded the village of Pleasant Hill, but also the field in front of Gen. Emory, across which the enemy would have to come to attack him.

*See pp. 76-77 of this volume for a brief notice of the distinguished services of Gen. A. J. Smith.

Gen. Richard Taylor (rebel commander) says of this hill: "The hill before alluded to, on which was posted the enemy's battery, was the key to his position in this quarter." On the left slope of this hill and near the road was posted the 25th N. Y. Battery.

On reporting to Gen. Emory I found him on foot a short distance in rear of his line, with neither staff officers nor orderlies. He ordered me to relieve Col. McMillan's brigade on the left of the road. McMillan, anticipating that I had come to relieve him, was already moving by his right flank down the Mansfield road to the rear. I immediately occupied the ground vacated. I had scarcely got into position when Dwight vacated his position and moved down to the right of the Mansfield road. My own brigade was formed in the following order: the 24th Missouri, Maj. Robert W. Fyan, on the right; 14th Iowa, Lieut. Col. Joseph E. Newbold, right center; 27th Iowa, Col. James I. Gilbert, left center; and 32d Iowa, Col. John Scott, on the left. Some time after Dwight had abandoned his position on my right rear, Col. Benedict on my left moved to my rear (see Col. Fessenden's report,* page 430), thus leaving my brigade entirely alone on the main road by which the enemy would approach, from one-fourth to one-half mile in advance of all other troops.

Although I naturally felt gratified that my command had been selected as the brigade "*that could be relied upon*," and although I knew that this meant that I was to bear the brunt of the fight, still I hardly relished the idea of doing all the fighting with both flanks "in air." However, I determined to make the best of the situation.

I saw that it was absolutely necessary that I should occupy the hill before alluded to. I therefore moved my brigade to the right, so as to bring the 24th Missouri and three companies of the 14th Iowa to the right of the road, advancing the 24th Missouri so as to occupy the ridge in front. This, however, left a space of about one regiment between

Where reference is made in this article to official reports they may be found in Series I, Vol. XXXIV, Part I, "Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies."

my right and the swamp. As I had no doubt that I could get a regiment from either Dwight's or McMillan's command, and not deeming it advisable to move farther to the right, I dispatched a staff officer to Gen. Emory to apprise him of the situation, but he could not be found. I then went in person to Gen. Dwight and explained the situation to him. He promised to send a regiment, which he did not do, and which in his report he denies having promised to do. It is simply a question of veracity between us. I here give his statement: "About this time Col. Shaw, commanding a brigade of Gen. A. J. Smith's troops, came to me saying that he was in front of my position and both his right and left were being severely pressed, and desiring that I should send out a regiment to his support. As I had no authority to more than hold my position, I declined to march out from it."

The location of the federal forces at 4 p. m. may be briefly stated as follows: Shaw's brigade on the right, about one-third of a mile in advance of all other troops, across the main road leading from Mansfield to Pleasant Hill by which the enemy was expected to make their attack; the 1st division, 19th army corps, McMillan's and Dwight's brigades scattered around loosely on the right of the Mansfield road, anywhere from one-half mile to one mile to the rear of Shaw's line; Benedict's brigade on the left of the road a quarter of a mile to the rear of Shaw's left; A. J. Smith, with part of the 16th army corps to the left of the road in position so as to meet an attack from the Jessup road.

The rebel forces (as stated by Gen. Richard Taylor in his report) were in position as follows:

At 3 p. m., the infantry being somewhat restored by rest, the plan of attack was formed and the troops put in motion. The Arkansas and Missouri divisions, under Churchill and Parsons, with Etter's and Daniel's batteries, were sent to the right to outflank the enemy, reach the Jessup road, and attack from the South and West. Churchill, the senior officer, was to push Hardeman's, McNeill's and Terrill's cavalry to his right and to communicate with Walker on his left. When the enemy was driven, the cavalry above mentioned was to push down the Jessup road for twelve miles, take a cross-road leading into the Natchitoches road, and thus fall on the enemy's line of retreat. Walker fled to the right through the woods to form line between the Pleasant Hill and Jessup roads and com-

municate with Churchill's left. As soon as he heard Churchill's and Parson's guns he was to attack by *echelon* of brigades from his right, the men to throw forward their right shoulders as they came into action. Orders were given to all to rely on the bayonet, as we had neither ammunition nor time to waste. These orders were well carried out, as many ghastly wounds among the federals testify.

On the left of Walker, Bee held Debray's and Buchel's cavalry in the main road from Mansfield, with orders to charge through Pleasant Hill whenever the right attack disordered the enemy. To the left of the road Major, with his own and most of Bagby's cavalry (dismounted) was to move forward, outflank the enemy's right, and gain and hold the Blair's Landing road. These latter movements were under the immediate charge of General Thomas Green. Polignac, whose division had suffered more than any in the previous battle, was held in reserve in the Mansfield road behind Bee's cavalry.

Thus it will be seen that my brigade was opposed to three brigades of cavalry under General Bee, Walker's division of infantry, consisting of three brigades and Polignac's division in reserve, supporting the cavalry division. Walker also had three batteries, viz: Nettle's, Mosley's and West's in front of my left. Opposed to Smith's troops and Benedict's brigade of the 19th army corps were Churchill's and Parson's divisions of infantry, Hardeman's, McNeill's and Terrill's cavalry, and Etter's and Daniel's batteries.

There had been desultory skirmishing along my front since about 11 a. m. At about 3:30 p. m. the enemy's skirmishers became very aggressive, especially upon my right, and I was compelled to support that part of my line with another company.

At 4 p. m., perceiving that the enemy was moving his artillery into position on the left of the road in the edge of the timber, and that the right of Walker's division had been moved forward, so that his line faced towards the position where my line crossed the road, I saw that an attack was imminent. I therefore sent word to my surgeon, Dr. G. M. Staples, who had taken one of the largest houses in the village for a hospital, "to be prepared to receive the wounded within half an hour, and to send forward ambulances and stretchers with necessary attendants immediately."

Here I may be allowed to relate a little incident which may account in some measure for my being left so far in ad-

vance of the rest of the army, without any orders, except to hold my position. While Dr. Staples was making preparations to receive the wounded, Gen. Banks rode up with several of his staff, and inquired :

“Who occupies this house ?”

“I am occupying it as a hospital,” replied Dr. Staples.

“I would like,” said Banks, “to occupy it as my headquarters for the night.”

“I cannot give it up,” replied Staples, “for I have just received orders from Col. Shaw to be prepared to receive the wounded within half an hour.”

“Oh !” returned Banks, “Col. Shaw has had a little skirmishing with the enemy’s pickets, and thinks he is going to have a fight. I assure you, Doctor, there will be no fighting tonight.”

At this, Dr. Staples (who was a particular friend of mine) got angry and replied :

“I shall only give up the house on the order of Col. Shaw. But (he added) you can occupy the upper rooms if you wish.”

“That will do,” replied Banks.

He then commenced to dismount, but before his left foot was out of the stirrup, the artillery opened in my front. Banks immediately rode rapidly away—but not in the direction of the firing. This was about 4:45 p. m.

Walker opened upon my line with three batteries; Nettle’s, Mosley’s and West’s, disabled my battery, and forced it to retire to the rear, leaving one gun on the field.

Here I will give a concise statement of the action on this part of the field.

Gen. Green, seeing my battery leaving in some disorder, thought it time to charge down the Mansfield road with his cavalry. I was sitting upon my horse, with Col. Newbold, in front of the 14th Iowa, in order to get a better view of the enemy’s movements in the direction of the artillery firing. Col. Newbold called my attention to the formation of the cavalry across the road on the further side of the open ground.

"I believe," he said, "that they are forming for a charge on our line."

In the meantime their artillery had kept up a rapid fire on my line, making frequent gaps in the ranks, when a shell bursting near me severely wounded my horse, admonishing me that they had got my range, and I had better change my position. Riding along my line I directed the regimental commanders to hold their fire until they got orders. My skirmishers on my right, who had not been recalled, had pushed forward into a clump of thick timber. As the rebel cavalry charged down the road these skirmishers, concealed in the woods to the right of the road, opened fire, doing considerable execution. The whole brigade immediately opened fire with such effect that those who were not either killed or wounded jumped from their horses, and concealing themselves in the ravines and among the small pines, escaped to the rear. I will, however, give the rebel officers' account of this affair, as they could see its effect better than I could. Gen. Taylor in his report says:

At about 5 p. m. Churchill and Parsons opened on the right and Walker commenced his advance in support. Just then our fire overpowered the enemy's battery in front of the Mansfield road and disabled his guns, which were removed to the rear. The confusion and movement incident to this, coupled with the sound of Churchill's and Parsons' attack, led Gen. Green naturally to suppose the time for Bee's charge had arrived. Bee led forward Debray's and Buchel's fine regiments in most gallant style across the fields and up the slope, where he was stopped by a close and deadly fire of musketry from the dense woods on either side of the road. Bee was struck, Buchel mortally wounded, and Debray and Major M. Menard, of the same regiment struck. Many a gallant horseman went down. Bee drew back, himself retiring last. The charge failed for the time, but the gallantry displayed by Bee, Debray, Menard and others produced its effect on the enemy.

Gen. Bee, commanding cavalry division C. S. A. reports as follows:

At 4:30 o'clock I was ordered in person by Gen. Green to charge with all the cavalry the enemy, who were in the same position as they had been all day, but were supposed by him to be wheeling in retreat. I at once moved with Debray's and Buchel's regiments that were formed in the road, ordering the other cavalry regiments to follow, and in columns of four moved rapidly across the space intervening between the two armies, but

before reaching nearer than two hundred yards from the enemy's line of battle, and before the order was given to deploy and charge, the command was literally swept away by a cross-fire at close range, from an enemy concealed behind a string of fence perpendicular to the enemy's line of battle. This fire was as unexpected as disastrous. Fortunately there were ravines of young pines on our right, which furnished somewhat of shelter until the shock could be recovered from; but the empty saddles, the men shot and falling in all directions, the confusion, produced a scene imperishable on my memory. Although the fire was now opened from the front as well as the ambuscade, what was left of Debray's gallant regiment succeeded in returning to our lines with a loss of one-third of their number. I had two horses shot under me. Col. X. B. Debray was injured by the fall of his horse, which was killed.

The rebel cavalry charge on my center and right had most signally failed, as is thus seen by Taylor's and Bee's reports.

I may here state that many of the enemy fell within my ranks. I was sitting on my horse in the ranks of the 14th Iowa when an officer riding at full speed pitched from his horse and fell at my horse's feet. Lieut. Logan, Co. I, lifted him up into a sitting posture. I asked his name and rank, he replied, "Col. Buchel, I am mortally wounded, lay me down." I, supposing he was dying, and being very much engaged, at that time gave him no further attention. Gen. Bee, however, states that he lived till the next day and died at his headquarters.

Walker, on my left and center, advanced diagonally across the open field (pushing his artillery well to the front) by *echelon* of brigades from his right, his first brigade striking my left flank, the 32d Iowa. Col. Scott, who gallantly met this attack by throwing back his left so as to strike Walker's advancing line partially in flank, and by opening a well-directed fire at close range, compelled the enemy to fall back in disorder. Walker's 2d and 3d brigades attacked successively my center (which consisted of the 27th Iowa, Col. Gilbert, and seven companies of the 14th Iowa, Col. Newbold), but the well-directed and rapid firing of these regiments soon checked their advance, although they kept up a very destructive fire, which caused heavy loss in these regiments, and which would have been much more fatal had

they not been protected by the nature of the ground. In the meantime Major's brigade of cavalry was dismounted and sent to the left, opposite to my right (24th Mo., Maj. Fyan, and three companies of the 14th Iowa).

Gen. Major, not having made any report, I here give the report of Col. George Wythe Baylor, one of his colonels:

Late in the evening our infantry and artillery came up, when we were ordered to charge. We immediately mounted and moved forward, but as our horses were some distance in the rear, Buchel's and Debray's regiments being formed and in the saddle had made a charge and been repulsed. Gen. Major then ordered our brigade to the left wing, where we were dismounted and attacked the enemy (the skirmishers before mentioned who had done such effective service in the repulse of the cavalry charge) in flank and drove them rapidly back to their breastworks, which had been hastily made of pine saplings and rails. The fighting was close and hot. Here Lieutenant Thomas W. English, adjutant of Madison's regiment, fell, gallantly cheering the men. The enemy had a very strong position. The pine logs and rails of which I have spoken were piled up at a right angle with the main road. Behind this the enemy were lying, and could only be shot when in the act of firing. Across a small enclosure and in rear of this temporary work was an abrupt hollow running parallel with it, where the enemy were securely posted in heavy numbers. We were not strong enough to dislodge them or flank them. Our position was such that we received a good portion of Buchel's fire, which we returned. It was now becoming dark and difficult to distinguish friend from foe. I explained to Generals Green and Major our position, and also pointed out to Lieutenant John Yost, of West's battery, who had just come up, the position of the enemy, and asked for reinforcements. General Polignac's regiments started to my assistance, but unfortunately just at this moment Lane's regiment, that had been ordered to our support, and who were on our extreme left, opened fire on us at 300 yards distance, and we were compelled to leave our position, some of Polignac's division having fired on us at the same time. A little more daylight would have enabled us with Polignac's division to flank the enemy, but Gen. Polignac not knowing the enemy's position did not wish to risk his men under so many cross-fires from friend and foe.

Walker had now rallied his broken columns, and pushing his artillery still further to the front, made a vigorous attack along my whole line to the left of the Mansfield road, but was stubbornly resisted by my men although our losses were very heavy, especially in the 32d Iowa.

While these operations were taking place on the right, Churchill and Parsons had passed my left, sweeping Bene-

dict's brigade of the 19th corps before them with scarcely any resistance, until they struck Smith's troops on our left. A few of them got as far as the Mansfield road, where they were checked by McMillan who was on the right of the road. Gen. Mower with two brigades of the 16th army corps met them, immediately checking their advance and driving them rapidly back. Part of them retreated in the direction in which they had advanced, others fell back along the left of the Mansfield road, coming up in rear of the 32d Iowa; but Scott, facing part of his regiment to the rear, received them so well that they sheared around his flank, leaving him to connect with Mower's advance in pursuit of the retreating foe.

This digression seemed necessary before I completed the account of the operations on our right.

At a little before 6 p. m., Gen. Smith, seeing the enemy had passed my left flank, which I could not see on account of the thick woods, sent a staff officer, Capt. J. J. Lyons, to me, ordering me to fall back and connect with Gen. Mower's right, as the enemy was getting in my rear.

I had already sent my adjutant, Capt. C. T. Granger, to him saying I must have support. (See Granger's statement published herewith).

At this time I was very heavily engaged along my whole line with Walker's division of infantry, and Major's dismounted cavalry. I told Capt. Lyons to say to Gen. Smith that I was so heavily engaged I could not then fall back without great danger, owing to the heavy timber in the rear of three of my regiments and the fierce attack in front; that as soon as I repulsed the present attack I would comply with his order. (See Capt. J. J. Lyons' statement—War Records).

On receiving Smith's orders I ordered Quartermaster Buell, who had just come up with a supply of ammunition, to hitch on to the gun left by the 25th N. Y. battery, and draw it to the rear, and learn where Mower's right was. I soon repulsed the enemy along my whole line. It was now getting dark, and I commenced the withdrawing of my bri-

gade from the right. On attempting to give the order to fall back to Col. Scott on my left, I found he had been entirely cut off by the retreating enemy (Churchill's and Parson's divisions), and I was forced to leave him without orders. I fell back with the three regiments I could communicate with, although the 27th Iowa being farthest in the timber got somewhat mixed up with the retreating rebels and suffered some loss from them, or from one of Dwight's regiments, which opened fire into the small pines, supposing the 27th was the enemy. I, however, formed my brigade on the ground occupied by Dwight when I fell back. Dwight immediately fell back out of sight. I remained in this position, or near it, until daylight next morning, when I was ordered to cover the retreat of Bank's army, which commenced about midnight.

I lost many brave and gallant men in this action, my casualties amounting to nearly 500, my whole force being less than 1,500. Of the 14th Iowa, Lieut. Col. J. E. Newbold, Lieuts. McMillan, Shanklin and Logan, were killed. Of the 32d Iowa, Lieut. Col. Mix, Capt. Amos B. Miller and Adjutant Charles H. Huntley were killed, and Lieut. Thomas O. Howard mortally wounded. Capt. H. F. Peebles, Capt. Michael Ackerman, Lieut. John Divine dangerously wounded. The total loss of the 32d was 210. Maj. Fyan having made no report of officers killed I am unable to give his loss. Col. Gilbert, 27th Iowa, having given his losses on separate paper, I am unable to present the names of his officers killed and wounded.

I might here close the account of this battle as far as my observation went, but the reports of Gen. Banks and Gen. Dwight are so inaccurate that perhaps some comment is necessary.

Banks makes the following report of the battle, page 183:

About 5 o'clock the enemy abandoned all pretension of maneuvering and made a most desperate attack upon the brigades upon the left center commanded by Colonels Benedict and Shaw. The line wavered at this point momentarily, but, supported by the First Vermont Battery, soon regained its position, and the enemy was repulsed. Finding the position so much stronger than anticipated, or in pursuance of other plans, he gradu-

ally worked his way to the center and right where the same desperate attacks were repeated upon our right flank, the whole force of the enemy gradually concentrating upon our right. The brigades of McMillan and Dwight repelled every attack, and drove him back with terrible loss. The brigade commanded by Gen. Dwight had been suddenly changed at the commencement of the action, so as to cover the right of our center and a part of the right flank, and became in the end the pivot upon which the entire lines changed front to meet the altered plans of the enemy. The battle lasted until 9 o'clock in the evening. The rebels had concentrated their whole strength in futile efforts to break the line at different points. The most severe pressure occurred toward the close of the engagement upon the front occupied by Gen. Dwight's brigade. The troops held in reserve moved forward at the critical moment and maintained our position, from which the enemy was driven precipitately and with terrible destruction of life. He fled to the woods on the right, and was pursued with great energy by the whole of our forces until it was impossible in the darkness to distinguish friend from foe.

I can truthfully state that in this whole quotation from Banks there is not one word of truth except that part which says: "About 5 o'clock the enemy . . . made a most desperate attack upon the brigades on the left center, commanded by Cols. Benedict and Shaw." In this quotation he says Shaw's brigade was on the left center, when in fact it was on the extreme right. (See Emory's map, also Shaw's map). Gen. Emory, page 392-3, says:

At about 5:15 p. m., he (the enemy) emerged from the woods in all directions, and in heavy columns completely outflanked and overpowered my left wing composed of the 3rd brigade and a brigade (Risdon M. Moore) of General Smith's command, which broke in some confusion and enabled the enemy to get temporary possession of four pieces of artillery of Battery L, First United States. My right stood firm and repulsed the enemy handsomely, and the left I think would have done so but for the great interval which was left between it and the troops to the left, leaving that flank entirely exposed, and the fall of the gallant leader of the Third Brigade, Colonel Benedict. I immediately ordered General McMillan's brigade from the right to the left, in the open space in the rear of the line of the Third Brigade, and ordered him to charge the enemy. Behind this line most of the Third brigade rallied, some joining themselves to McMillan's brigade and some to Gen. Smith's command; all moved forward together, and drove in the enemy's right flank more than one and one-fourth miles. Seeing their right wing driven in and thrown upon their left wing, they renewed their attack with great vigor upon my right, but were repulsed with great slaughter, and during the whole day my right, which

was in *echelon* in front of the rest of my line, held its ground against several determined assaults.

Banks further says: "The enemy, finding the position so much stronger than anticipated, or in pursuit of other plans, gradually worked his way to the center and right, where the same desperate attacks were repeated upon our right flank, the whole force of the enemy concentrating upon our right. The brigades of McMillan and Dwight repelled every attack and drove him back with terrible loss."

Emory says: "My right (Shaw's brigade) stood firm and repulsed the enemy handsomely. . . I immediately ordered Gen. McMillan's brigade from the right to the left in the open space in rear of the 3rd brigade, Col. Benedict."

This certainly disposes of Banks' statement that McMillan did any fighting on the right of the road. But further criticism of Banks' report is unnecessary. Reference to rebel reports, as well as all the official reports of Smith's forces, and Benedict's brigade, shows that the rebel right was driven back by our left, that our right (Shaw's brigade) withstood every attack of the rebel left till night closed, and Shaw retired under orders after the fighting had ceased; that Dwight, according to his own statement, was one-fourth of a mile in rear of Shaw's brigade on the right of the Mansfield road, and could not possibly have been engaged with the enemy, except the retreating forces of Tappan's division on the left of the road. It will be perceived that Emory, his division commander, does not mention Dwight or his brigade after the fight commenced.

I here give an extract from the report of Captain J. J. Lyon who brought the order of Gen. A. J. Smith for me to fall back and connect with Mower's left:

In riding up the road (down which the shot and shell and overshot bullets were flying) I passed the 25th N. Y. battery, the head of which had reached the field just beyond Pleasant Hill. I believe the rear part of the battery was abandoned in the road,—but anyhow I saw no infantry till I struck the line of the 14th Iowa, stretched across the road and then heavily engaged with the enemy, as was the 24th Missouri, both of which I could see, and also the flanking of the last named regiment. You also told me

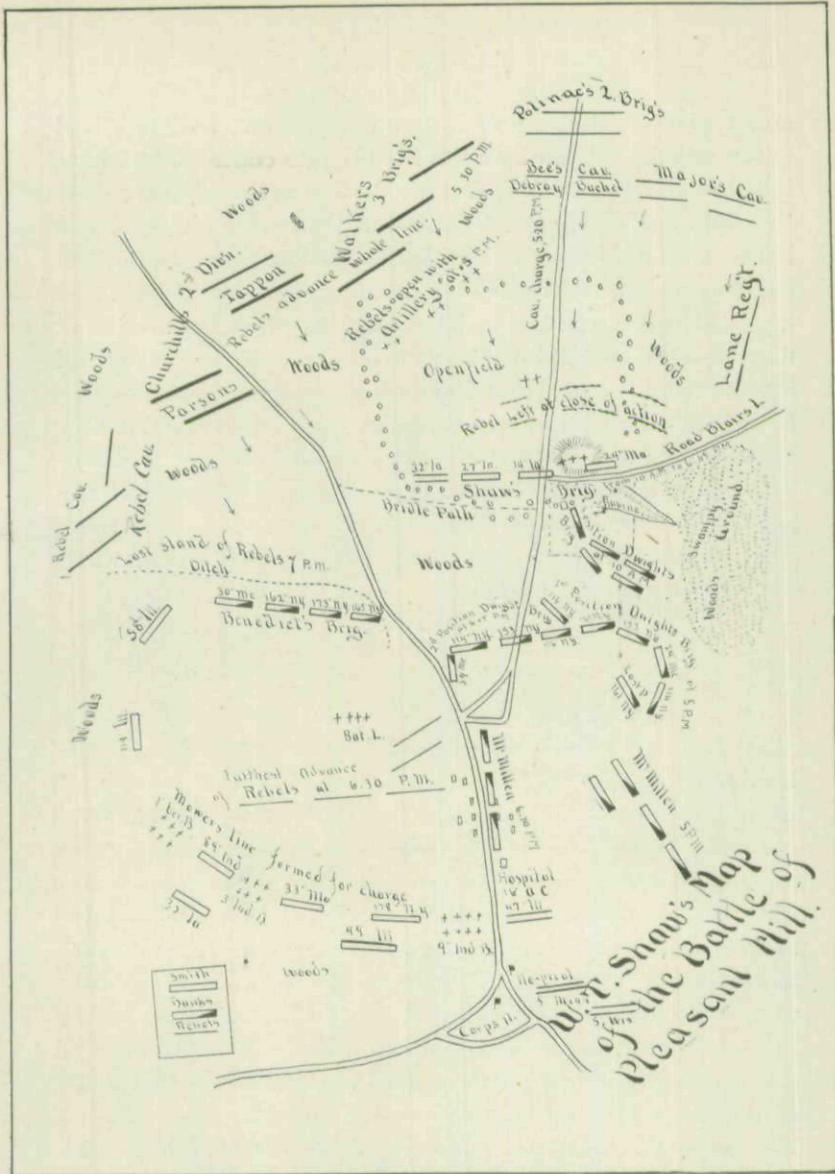
that you could not retire just then (being so heavily engaged) but would do so and connect on the left as soon as possible.

I have not quoted from the reports of Smith's officers, but will say they all corroborate the statements here made. I have only quoted from a few of Banks' officers reports and the rebel reports that I may show the great inaccuracy of Banks' and Dwight's reports. As before stated I sent Quartermaster Buell to the rear with the abandoned gun of the 25th N. Y. artillery. He was followed by quite a number of wounded, and men assisting them. Gen. Dwight says after having made certain dispositions of his troops, "Col. Shaw of Gen. Smith's division, with some artillery and a regiment of infantry came flying through my lines and the enemy was upon me." Nothing could be more untruthful than this statement. It might be possible that he should mistake Lieut. Buell for Col. Shaw, but that he could take a disabled gun hitched to an ammunition wagon, and followed by a few wounded men, for "some artillery and a regiment of infantry," seems impossible unless he was very much frightened; and as I had not yet withdrawn my brigade, which was one-fourth of a mile in front of him, it could not be possible that "the enemy was upon him." It also looks singular that with all the terrific fighting reported by Banks and Dwight neither Dwight nor any of his command report any loss in killed and wounded. Dwight says: "At this time the brigade was entirely surrounded by the enemy with the exception of the ravine on the right," thus flatly contradicting Banks who says: "The whole force of the enemy concentrating on our right the brigades of McMillan and Dwight repelled every attack and drove him back with great loss."

It will be observed that Emory says he moved McMillan to the left who joined with Smith in driving the enemy back on the left, and that Dwight says that the 13th Maine and 161st N. Y. on the right did no firing.

I may now concisely sum up the battle which the foregoing statements and quotations, I believe, will fully prove:

That Shaw's brigade was on the extreme right and front, opposed to Walker's division of infantry, Green's cavalry,



NOTE.—These maps need but little explanation; Emory's shows the position of my brigade, probably as it appeared to him from the road in the rear, at the time I moved the 24th Mo. to the right and front. My map shows the position at the close of action after the 24th had been compelled to fall back to the line of the old fence to prevent being flanked. As to the other positions marked on Emory's map I know nothing personally, but from the Rebel reports it would appear impossible there could have been any Rebels in the position marked "Rebels massing to attack at close of action." I can also say positively there was not a gun fired from that direction. Of the positions marked on my map other than that of my own brigade, I have given them from official reports of officers engaged in the battle. Of the Rebel positions there is no doubt of their correctness, as Taylor's report is clear and specific. With regard to the positions of the Federal forces I believe I have come something near being correct, still it is very much like guess work, as our official reports are very contradictory:

and Polignac's division of infantry in reserve, and repulsed every attack. Assaults upon his brigade continued without intermission from 4:45 p. m. till darkness ended the battle; that Benedict's brigade, 1st division 19th army corps, on the left and rear of Shaw, and the 1st and 3rd brigades of the 16th army corps, under Gen. Smith, were on our left and rear and opposed to Churchill's and Parsons' divisions with cavalry; that Dwight and McMillan were in reserve on the right of the Mansfield road; that Parsons and Tappan, commanding Churchill's division, drove Benedict back, capturing Battery L, U. S. artillery, until they struck Smith's troops and McMillan's brigade which had been moved to the left of the road, with fragments of Benedict's brigade, who drove them back on the left from one and a half to two miles, when darkness ended the pursuit.

JUDGE CHARLES T. GRANGER'S* STATEMENT.

By request of Col. William T. Shaw I here set down my observations and recollections of certain particulars of the battle of Pleasant Hill, Louisiana, April 9, 1864. Many of which are fresh in memory. Allowing for the differences in observation, by persons who witnessed the same event, there are some facts as to that battle that ought to be without dispute. I remember distinctly that Shaw's brigade was detached on the morning of that day from Gen. Smith's command of the 16th Army Corps, and was, by Gen. Emory, placed on the extreme right of the Union line, and across the Mansfield road, from a third to a half mile in advance of the remainder of the line, and in a position so that both flanks of the brigade were exposed. This brigade relieved that of Gen. McMillan which went to the rear. To the right, and from one-half to three-fourths of a mile in the

*Charles T. Granger was born in Monroe county, New York, October 9, 1835; settled in Allamakee county, Iowa, in 1854; admitted to the bar in 1860; entered the military service in 1862, as Capt. Co. K, 27th Iowa Infantry, and served through the war; participated in the capture of Fort De Russy, and in the battles of Pleasant Hill, Yellow Bayou, Tupelo, Old Town Creek, Nashville, Fort Blakely, and in many skirmishes; district attorney, 1867-73; circuit judge, 1873-87; district judge, 1887-88; supreme judge, 1889-1900.



Sincerely Yours,

Charles T. Granger

CAPT. CHARLES T. GRANGER.

Acting Asst. Adj. General on the staff of Col. Wm. T. Shaw at the battle of Pleasant Hill, La., April 9, 1864; at present (1898) Judge of the Supreme Court of Iowa.

rear of our line, was the brigade of Gen. Dwight, but not in the line of battle. By order of Col. Shaw, I placed the skirmish line of our command soon after taking our position. Through the day, until about 4 o'clock, little of note occurred. About that time the artillery of the enemy opened on a section of the 25th N. Y. battery, occupying a rise of ground just in front of the main part of our line, which was somewhat disconnected by a part of the 14th Iowa, and the 24th Missouri being a few rods in advance of the rest of the line, to better command the open field in front. The battery was practically on a line with the advanced portion of the brigade, but it soon retired, leaving one gun which was taken off the field later on by Lieut. Buell. This was followed by a cavalry charge on the right of our line which was nearly annihilated by one or two discharges of musketry. Then came the Confederate columns of infantry in overwhelming numbers, so that it seemed, as the facts afterward appeared from the reports of the Confederate officers in command, that they had massed their forces for a crushing assault on that part of the line. The enemy came in such numbers, and with such a length of line that it succeeded in turning our left flank, the 32d Iowa, under command of Col. Scott, which met the situation heroically and as successfully as seemed possible in view of the surroundings. Our line was practically held intact until orders came from Gen. Smith to fall back so as to connect with the line of the 16th Army Corps under Gen. Mower. As our right flank became endangered Col. Shaw sent me, and I think others of his staff, to ask Gen. Dwight to come to his relief on the right, supposing him to be in reserve for such a purpose. I was unable to find Gen. Dwight with his command, nor could I find him at all. At that time his command was not engaged nor under fire, but it was on the right of the Mansfield road and quite a distance from it. On my return Col. Shaw ordered me to go to Gen. Smith and tell him that Gen. Dwight had left, that his flank was being turned, the ammunition short, and that he must have support. I found Gen. Smith back of the main line of the Union forces, near where we

had reported to Gen. Banks in the morning. On my way to Gen. Smith, I saw Gen. Emory, dismounted, and giving orders, in person, to a battery toward which the enemy was advancing, and after a discharge, it, as well as the lines under command of Gen. Emory, commenced a hasty retreat. The appearance then was that the day was lost, as the main part of the Union line was giving way, and batteries and infantry were retreating in disorder. The advance of the enemy's line was, assuming the line of the Mansfield road there to be north and south, from the northwest, so that, if the advance continued, it would cross the road in the rear of our brigade. Its advance may have been far enough so that the left of its line may have reached the road, but I am confident not farther, for by that time I had delivered the message to Gen. Smith, and was returning, so that I had a fair view of what transpired.

And just there I witnessed a signal and gallant military feat not falling to the lot of every volunteer soldier. The enemy came forward flushed with the prospect, and their shouts gave evidence that the victory was theirs. And so it seemed to the observer who knew not what they were at once to encounter. They came up a gradual slope and when just at its top, as if from out of the earth, rose Gen. Mower's command of the 16th Army Corps, and with a volley and a charge, and in much less time than I can state the facts, it put that line, so confident a moment before, in full retreat and with results so well known to history. Had not the main body of Taylor's army been held in check by our brigade no such feat would have been possible. It was more than a passing compliment, it was an historic fact, when Gen. Banks said that night: "Gen. Smith, your command has saved my army." It is to be regretted that subsequent official reports are not as well in line with the truth. Excepting a slight detour, when it seemed that I must get around the flank of the rebel line, which was driven back by Gen. Mower's charge, I followed the Mansfield road in going to and returning from Gen. Smith. And I have positive knowledge that, except in our front, there was no fighting on

the right of the Mansfield road. Had Gen. McMillan's or Dwight's brigade been engaged, they being on the right of the road, it would not have been possible for any person to pass along that road, for the Confederate line must have crossed it. Capt. Lyon, afterwards of Gen. Smith's staff, also came along that road with orders for Col. Shaw to fall back and connect with his line. This line of road was also constantly used to carry back the wounded as is generally known by those engaged in that work. When I returned with word from Gen. Smith I found Col. Shaw engaged in a spirited conversation with some officer whom I did not know, and he was insisting, against what seemed to be his wishes, that he could not fall back under such a fire—that our safety was in holding for support or repulsing the enemy. I may be justified in stating literally Gen. Smith's answer when I delivered Col. Shaw's message. It was: "Where in h—ll is Dwight?" repeating the expression as if astonished, and then answered that relief would be sent. As darkness came on, relief came, and we fell back a short distance and formed in line where we remained during the night. The falling back was as orderly as it could be in passing through heavy timber.

There could be no more palpable misstatement than that contained in the report of Gen. Dwight as to the manner in which our brigade fell back. It is exceedingly strange that Col. Shaw should have lost one-third of his men in that battle, and Gen. Dwight none, if the statements of the latter are true, and his brigade did the severe fighting.

AN ARMY LETTER BY QUARTERMASTER T. C. McCALL.*

GRAND ECOLE, LA., April 16, 1864.

On the 7th of this month, two divisions of the 16th Army Corps, commanded by Gen. A. J. Smith, were ordered to march with Gen. Banks' army from this place to Shreveport, a distance of ninety miles by land, while our transports con-

*Thomas Clifton McCall was born on a farm near Canton, O., September 4, 1827. His grandfathers were both soldiers in the Revolutionary War. His father, Samuel

veying one division of the 17th Army Corps, accompanied by several gunboats for protection, were to run up the river and meet us at Shreveport. General Banks' army was composed of the 13th and 19th Army Corps. The two divisions of the 16th Army Corps above mentioned and seven or eight thousand cavalry under Gen. Lee, were under way by 7 o'clock, and although it rained the greater part of the day, we marched fifteen miles, and on the 8th twenty miles, Gen. Smith's command camping one mile east of a little town called Pleasant Hill. About 10 o'clock that night, we learned that the 13th Army Corps and Gen. Lee's cavalry had been attacked, badly cut up and driven back by the enemy, they being some twelve miles in advance of us; and by one o'clock on the morning of the 9th a portion of Lee's cavalry and the train and the stragglers of the 13th Corps commenced passing our camp to the rear, and continued to do so until after daylight. In fact it was a perfect rout, and as there were two Iowa regiments belonging to the 13th Army Corps that day engaged, for their benefit I will here state, that from the best information I could gather from officers and men who took part in the battle, the 24th and 28th Iowa did their whole duty; but they with the other troops of the 13th Army Corps were fed out piece meal to the rebels, and the fault was entirely with the commanding general and not with the men.

But I will confine myself to facts within my own knowledge. About 9 o'clock on the morning of the 9th Gen. A. J. Smith's command was ordered to the front, as the rebels were within two miles of Pleasant Hill. The 2d Brigade

W. McCall, was a soldier in 1812, and was wounded about the time of Hull's surrender. T. C. McCall removed to Polk Co., Iowa, in 1846, and taught the first school east of the D. M. river. He was afterwards in the real estate business in Des Moines, but in 1858 removed to Nevada, his home thereafter. In 1862 he was commissioned quartermaster of the 32d Iowa Infantry and served with the regiment until 1864—after the Tupelo expedition—when he was commissioned Assistant Quartermaster, with the rank of Captain. He was not mustered out until November, 1865, seven months after the war ended. He was retained in the service until that time owing to his great efficiency in winding up business matters connected with the army. He was a member of the Iowa House of Representatives in 1862, 1882 and 1884, and was elected State Senator in 1891. He served in the session of 1892, though in failing health, and died August 11, of that year. The Senate Journal of 1894, pp. 129-136, contains a report of the tribute paid by that body to the memory of this pioneer settler, soldier and legislator.

of the 3d Division, 16th Army Corps, was composed of the following regiments: 14th Iowa, Lieut.-Col. Newbold; 27th Iowa, Col. Gilbert; 24th Missouri, Maj. Fyan, and the 32d Iowa, Col. John Scott. This brigade, commanded by Col. Wm. T. Shaw of the 14th Iowa, was ordered to form in line of battle immediately in front of the rebel forces and about one and a half miles west of Pleasant Hill. This order was well and promptly obeyed, the 24th Missouri on the right, 14th Iowa on the right-center, the 32d Iowa on the left, and the 27th Iowa on the left-center, with a line of skirmishers thrown out fifteen or twenty rods in advance of their main line. Thus matters stood until 4 o'clock p. m.

In the meantime, however, Gen. Banks had started his train and the greater part of his cavalry back to Grand Ecore, ordering Gen. Smith's train to fall in with them; but Gen. Smith positively refused to have a team moved. Gen. Banks had also well arranged his army (in my humble opinion) for a desperate battle, with the exception that his line on the left of the 32d Iowa was placed not less than eighty rods to the left and in the rear of that regiment. This defect in the line Col. Scott and Col. Shaw tried to have remedied long before the battle began, but from some cause or other it was not done. About 4 p. m. the rebels began the attack—first on the 32d Iowa—and Col. Shaw's entire brigade was soon hotly engaged. Thirty minutes had not elapsed before the rebels, taking advantage of the defect in our line, before mentioned, had made their way round the left flank of Col. Scott's regiment and in heavy force attacked our entire army, and for almost an hour pushed our forces steadily back, except Col. Scott's regiment. This was so nearly surrounded by the rebels, that when Gen. Smith ordered Col. Shaw to have his brigade fall back, he (Col. Shaw) found it impossible to have the order conveyed to Col. Scott; consequently our brave Colonel remained surrounded by his little band of heroes, fighting hordes of rebels on every hand, until the battle was almost over—our forces having by most determined bravery driven the rebels in turn and regained the greater part of the ground

they had lost, he availed himself of the opportunity, and led his men by the left flank obliquely within our lines. Night having closed in, the firing soon ceased and the battle was over. Our army held the same ground as before the battle, except that part occupied by Col. Shaw's brigade, which was outside of our lines. As our entire army was ordered to fall back to Grand Ecore; all were under way by 3 o'clock on the morning of the 10th. We were unable to gather up our dead and wounded and give them proper attention. This was a source of much regret to all the officers and men of Col. Shaw's brigade, and particularly Col. Scott, as he had left so many of his brave men suffering on that field. I am satisfied that if he had known, when the battle was over, that we were to fall back at 3 o'clock the next morning, nothing could have prevented him from bringing his dead and wounded from the field.

The engagement at Pleasant Hill, though of short duration, was a severe and well-fought battle—the opposing forces being very nearly equal. Gen. Banks' forces numbered nearly twenty thousand, and the rebel force from twenty to twenty-eight thousand. Col. Shaw's brigade lost almost as many men in killed, wounded and missing as the balance of our entire army, being nearly 500 of that number. Col. Scott's regiment lost 209, of whom 53 were killed, 130 wounded, and 26 missing. The regiment went into the fight with 440 men. Among the killed of the 32d Iowa were Lieut.-Col. Edward H. Mix, a brave and experienced officer. He was shot dead on the field. Next on our list is our once mutual friend, Capt. A. B. Miller, who was too well known and appreciated in Iowa to need any praise from me. He was mortally wounded, and died on the 12th. First Lieut. Howard, of Capt. Miller's company, was also mortally wounded, and died on the 12th. Second Lieut. Griffin, of the same company, was taken prisoner, and Orderly Sergeant Brockway, of the same company, was severely wounded, leaving the company without an officer. Capt. Hubert F. Peebles, of Co. C, dangerously wounded, had his leg amputated; Capt. Ackerman, Co. A, was also dangerously wounded;

Lieut. Devine, Co. F, shot in the knee, had his leg amputated. Second Lieut. Wright, Co. E, severely wounded, and all of them prisoners. Adjutant Charles H. Huntley is missing, supposed to be a prisoner. Lieut.-Col. Newbold, of the 14th Iowa, was killed. He was an excellent officer, and adored by his men.

But the most bitter part of the whole affair was that after we had fairly whipped the rebels and driven them from the field, we disgracefully fell back (or rather retreated) leaving our dead and wounded to the mercy of our enemies. We have learned satisfactorily that one regiment of rebel cavalry was so badly routed that they never stopped till they reached Mansfield, some twenty miles distant; and that two divisions of their infantry were so panic-stricken that they never halted until they were six miles from the field—and that the entire rebel army except their pickets fell back six miles that night.

I have no more time to write, but send you this communication to set Iowa regiments right, at least with their friends, for I notice the newspaper accounts from this department do them great injustice. For instance, in a New York paper, it was stated that Fort De Russy was captured by certain New York regiments, while I know of my own personal knowledge that Fort De Russy was captured by Col. Shaw's brigade, and the 14th, 27th and 32d Iowa were the first to mount its walls. From what I have already heard, I fear Iowa troops will be misrepresented in the reports of the battle of Pleasant Hill, and it should not be so, for Gen. Banks on the morning after the battle thanked Gen. Smith for saving his army.

Gen. Banks is now fortifying here, and I have no idea what will be the next move. I am sure of one thing, however, viz: we would like to move out of this department.

T. C. McCall.

Iowa State Register, May 14, 1864.

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