

COMMENTS ON THE "HORNET'S NEST" — 1862 AND 1887

Compiled by Mildred Throne

A "sunken road" figured in many Civil War battles, the one at Shiloh being among the most famous. That the men who fought in the old road on April 6, 1862, did not understand the value of this natural trench is obvious from the reports that the regimental commanders made after the battle. Not until the 1880's, when Confederate battle reports and memoirs were published, did the Iowa soldiers come to appreciate and glory in what they had done some twenty-five years before. They discovered, among other things, that the Confederates had named that particular sunken road the "Hornet's Nest," and that they gave credit to the men who fought there for saving the Union army. Now the Iowans no longer needed to apologize for their capture that day in 1862; now they organized "Iowa's Hornet's Nest Brigade" and held reunions until only a handful remained to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the battle of Shiloh.

In 1884, when the tenth volume of the *Official Records* appeared, the men of the Iowa regiments eagerly read what their former enemies had to say about the battle of Shiloh. And in this volume, devoted almost entirely to reports of that battle, they found that their line of defense in the old road had been decisive. In the following year Albert Sidney Johnston's son wrote his account of the battle for the *Century Magazine*, and he too gave credit to the men of the "Hornet's Nest" for stopping the Confederate advance.¹ These, and other Confederate writings, brought to the Iowans who had fought in the sunken road pride in an accomplishment they had not, until then, appreciated.

In the reports of the battle written by the colonels of the five Iowa regiments in the "Hornet's Nest" — the 2nd, 7th, 8th, 12th, and 14th — immediately after the battle, the military historian finds practically no mention of the "old," the "sunken," or the "abandoned" road. The Confederate reports, however, give credit to the defensive position of the Union troops in the sunken road, adding elaborate details of the repeated attacks

¹ *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War* (4 vols., New York, 1956), 1:563, 566.

necessary before the position could at last be stormed. To show the evolution of the place of honor given the "Hornet's Nest" in the history of the battle of Shiloh, the 1862 reports of the Iowa commanders, as they appear in the *Official Records*, are here reprinted, followed by a sampling of the lengthy Confederate reports in which the men in gray explained, and perhaps justified, their long fight for the position. Then, in contrast, the reports of Colonels Tuttle, Bell, and Shaw, made at the first reunion of Iowa's Hornet's Nest Brigade in 1887, are reprinted. These reports, particularly Tuttle's, illustrate the perils for the military historian in placing too much reliance on the memories of old soldiers. Nevertheless, their accounts are interesting as reconstructions of the fight in the sunken road in the light of the Confederate battle reports.

IOWA REPORTS — 1862

Col. James M. Tuttle — 2nd Iowa:²

. . . On the morning of the 6th I proceeded with my brigade, consisting of the Second, Seventh, Twelfth, and Fourteenth Iowa Infantry, under the direction of Brig. Gen. W. H. L. Wallace, and formed line on the left of his division. We had been in line but a few moments when the enemy made their appearance and attacked my left wing (Twelfth and Fourteenth Iowa), who gallantly stood their ground and compelled the assailants to retire in confusion. They again formed under cover of a battery and renewed the attack upon my whole line, but were repulsed as before. A third and fourth time, they dashed upon us, but were each time baffled and completely routed. We held our position about six hours, when it became evident that our forces on each side of us had given way, so as to give the enemy an opportunity of turning both our flanks. At this critical juncture General Wallace gave orders for my whole brigade to fall back, which was done in good order. The Second and Seventh Regiments retired through a severe fire from both flanks and reformed, while the Twelfth and Fourteenth, who were delayed by their endeavors to save a battery which had been placed in their rear, were completely cut off and surrounded and were compelled to surrender. . . .

² Report dated April 10, 1862, *War of the Rebellion . . . Official Records . . .* (128 vols., Washington, D. C., 1880-1901), Series I, Vol. X, Part I, 148-9. (Hereafter listed as *Official Records*. All references are to this volume.) This terse report should be contrasted with the elaborate details Tuttle remembered in 1887. See below, pp. 264-9.

Lt. Col. James C. Parrott — 7th Iowa:³

. . . On the morning of the 6th, at 8 o'clock, I received your order to hold the regiment in readiness for a forward movement, the rebels having attacked our outposts. The regiment was formed immediately, and at about 9 a. m. it was ordered to move forward, and it took position on the left of the Second Iowa Infantry. It then moved forward by the flank until within a short distance of the advancing rebels, where it was thrown into line of battle, being in heavy timber, when it advanced to the edge of a field, from which position we got a view of a portion of the rebel forces. I ordered my men to lie down and hold themselves in readiness to resist any attack, which they did, and remained in that position until ordered to fall back at about 5 p. m., holding the rebels in check and retaining every inch of ground it had gained in the morning, being all the time under a galling fire of canister, grape, and shell, which did considerable execution in our ranks, killing several of my men and wounding others. The regiment, when ordered, fell back in good order and passed through a most galling flank fire from the enemy. . . .

Col. Joseph J. Woods — 12th Iowa:⁴

. . . On the morning of April 6, the rebels having attacked our advanced lines at Shiloh, Tenn., the Twelfth Iowa Infantry was rapidly formed and joined the other regiments — the Second, Seventh, and Fourteenth — of the Iowa brigade, being the First Brigade, under Brigadier General Tuttle [Tuttle became a brigadier general on June 22, 1862] of the Second Division, under General Wallace. The brigade was marched to near the field beyond General Hurlbut's headquarters and formed in line of battle, the Second and Seventh on our right, the Fourteenth on our left. The Eighth Iowa, of Prentiss' division [sic. The 8th Iowa was in Wallace's Second Division, Third Brigade], was on the left of the Fourteenth, forming an angle to the rear with our line. An open field lay in front of our right. Dense timber covered our left. A small ravine was immediately behind us. In this position we awaited the approach of the enemy. Soon he made a bold attack on us, but met with a warm reception, and soon we repulsed

³ Report written April 10, 1862, *ibid.*, 150.

⁴ Report written April, n. d., 1862, *ibid.*, 151-2, dated at Maquoketa, Iowa. Woods was wounded and thus escaped capture. The reports written at leisure, such as those by Woods, Shaw, and Geddes, contain more details than those written by Tuttle and Parrott, written immediately after the battle.

him. Again and again repeatedly did he attack us, trying vainly to drive us from our position. On the contrary, we repulsed every attack of the enemy and drove him back in confusion.

Thus matters stood in our front until about 4 p. m., at which time it became evident, by the firing on our left, that the enemy were getting in our rear. An aide-de-camp rode up and directed me to face the rear and fall back, stating, in answer to my inquiry, that I would receive orders as to the position I was to occupy. No such orders reached me, and I suppose could not. The Second and Seventh Iowa had already gone to the rear, and on reaching the high ground between our position and General Hurlbut's headquarters we discovered that we were already surrounded by the enemy, caused by no fault of our own, but by the troops at a distance from us on our right and left giving way before the enemy. Seeing ourselves surrounded, we nevertheless opened a brisk fire on that portion of the enemy who blocked our passage to the Landing, who, after briskly returning our fire for a short time, fell back. A brisk fire from the enemy on our left (previous right) was going on at the same time. Seeing the enemy in front falling back, we attempted by a rapid movement to cut our way through, but the enemy on our left advanced rapidly, coming in behind us, pouring into our ranks a most destructive fire. The enemy in front faced about and opened on us at short range, the enemy in our rear still closing in on us rapidly. I received two wounds, disabling me from further duty. The command then devolved on Captain [Samuel R.] Edgington [of Company A], acting as field officer. . . . To have held out longer would have been to suffer complete annihilation. The regiment was therefore compelled to surrender as prisoners of war. . . .

*Col. William T. Shaw — 14th Iowa:*⁵

. . . Our division occupied the center of the line, having that of General Prentiss on its left, with General Hurlbut beyond him, while the divisions of Generals Sherman and McClernand were on its right. Our brigade occupied the left of the division, and was arranged . . . so that the Fourteenth occupied the extreme left of our division, next to General Prentiss' command.

⁵ Written at Anamosa, Iowa, October 26, 1862, after Shaw's release from prison, and addressed to Governor Samuel J. Kirkwood, since Shaw's parole prevented him from making an "official report." *Ibid.*, 152-4.

Our line of battle was formed about half past 8 o'clock a. m., about 500 yards from the enemy's artillery, which at once opened a severe fire upon us. The ground was rolling and wooded, but free from underbrush,⁶ interspersed here and there with cleared fields and cut up by several roads.

In a short time the enemy's infantry made their appearance, advancing in line of battle. I at once perceived that the line of our brigade was not parallel with theirs, but inclined to it at an angle of about 45 degrees, the left in advance, thus exposing my left flank to the enemy some distance in advance of General Prentiss' line, upon which it should have rested, and about 200 yards from his extreme right. After consulting with Colonel Woods, of the Twelfth, who was next to me on the right, I threw back my regiment and the left wing of the Twelfth, so as to bring our part of the line parallel to the advancing enemy and in line with General Prentiss' division, but still failing to connect with it by an interval of about 200 yards. This also improved our position, which had previously been directly upon a ridge, exposed to the enemy's artillery, and gave us that ridge as a partial shelter. The enemy advanced steadily in two lines, about 200 yards apart. I ordered my men to lie down and hold their fire until they were within thirty paces. The effect of this was, that when the order to fire was given, and the Twelfth and Fourteenth opened directly in their faces, the enemy's first line was completely destroyed. Our fire was only returned by a few, nearly all who were not killed or wounded by it fleeing in every direction. I then immediately advanced my regiment, in which I was gallantly joined by the left wing of the Twelfth. Passing almost without opposition over the ground which had been occupied by the first lines, we attacked and drove back their second for some distance, until I was forced to recall my men for fear of my left flank being turned, no part of General Prentiss' division having advanced with us. In this movement we took a number of prisoners, including 1 captain, whom I sent to the rear. Returning, the Fourteenth took up its old position in the line of battle, and Colonel [James L.] Geddes, of the Eighth Iowa, now formed his regiment on our left, in line with us and General Prentiss' division, filling up the gap which had previously existed there. That division, however, with the one beyond it, materially changed its position in the course of the forenoon, its left falling back

⁶ Perhaps there was no underbrush at this particular point in the line, but all the Confederate reports mention the heavy growth of underbrush that protected most of this position.

repeatedly, until the line of these two divisions had swung around almost at right angles to us. I now perceived a large force of the enemy approaching from the left and front, and immediately reported the fact to Colonel Tuttle, who, at my request, sent me a couple of brass 6-pounders, which were near by. These I got into position just in time to receive the enemy. They advanced with the most desperate bravery, the brunt of their attack falling upon the Eighth Iowa, by whom it was most gallantly borne. I have good authority for saying that the firm resistance of the center at that time was the chief means of saving our whole army from destruction.⁷ The fighting continued with great severity for about an hour, during which we repelled what General Beauregard in his official report counts as three of the five distinct charges made by the rebels that day upon our center, and at the end of that time the enemy facing us fell back fully repulsed. Colonel Geddes now withdrew a short distance to take care of his wounded, and at his request, as his position was more important and exposed than my own, I moved to the left and occupied it, thus leaving an interval on my right between us and the Twelfth. When Colonel Geddes reformed it was on the right of General Prentiss, with whom Colonel Geddes fought during the rest of the day.

General Prentiss' line had now swung around so far as to be almost parallel with ours, and back to back with us, about 150 yards in our rear, at our end of the two lines. In this position he was again engaged by a large body of the enemy, who had advanced from the left, having driven in General Hurlbut's division. At about a quarter to 5 p. m. I received an order from Colonel Tuttle to about-face and proceed to engage the same body of the enemy. In order not to interfere with General Prentiss' lines I marched by an oblique, passing close to the Eighteenth Wisconsin in his line, and here for the third time that day the Fourteenth engaged with the enemy. After less than half an hour we repulsed them and made a short advance, which revealed to me the facts of our position. The enemy's center had advanced over the ground defended by us before our change of

⁷ Here Shaw expresses an opinion not much current at the time. That he had had several months of imprisonment to mull over the battle and argue it out with fellow-prisoners explains why his report and those of Cols. Woods and Geddes are more detailed than those of Tuttle and Parrott. "Every day we fought the battle of Shiloh over again," wrote Capt. J. H. Stibbs, in an account of their imprisonment. Mildred Throne (ed.), "Iowans in Southern Prisons, 1862," *IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY*, 54:86 (January, 1956).

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front and were now attacking us in the rear. Both wings of their forces had advanced so far as to form a junction between us and Pittsburg Landing, their right, which we were now facing, meeting at an angle with their left, which had driven in McClelland's and Sherman's divisions on our right, and into this angle we were about being pressed by this new attack in our rear. General Prentiss having already surrendered with a part of his command, the Fourteenth was left in advance of all that remained, but completely inclosed, receiving the enemy's fire from three directions. The regiment still kept its ranks unbroken and held its position facing the enemy, but the men were almost completely exhausted with a whole day of brave and steady fighting and many of them had spent their whole stock of ammunition. It was therefore useless to think of prolonging a resistance which could only have wasted their lives to no purpose, and at about a quarter to six p. m. I surrendered them and myself prisoners of war. . . .

Col. James L. Geddes — 8th Iowa:⁸

. . . About 8 o'clock on the morning of the 6th I ordered the regiment under arms and formed line of battle in front of my encampment, awaiting orders to proceed to the front. At this time the firing on our advanced line had become general, and it appeared to me evident that we were being attacked in force by the rebel general. After remaining under arms about half an hour, during which time I had ordered the baggage belonging to the regiment to be loaded on the wagons and an extra supply of ammunition to be issued to the men, I was ordered by Colonel [Thomas W.] Sweeny, Fifty-second Illinois, brigade commander, to proceed to the front. On arriving at our advanced line I was ordered by Colonel Sweeny to take my position on the left of the brigade to which I was attached, for the purpose of protecting a battery immediately in front. Here the regiment remained about one hour exposed to a severe fire from artillery of shell and grape, killing and wounding several of my men.

About 11 a. m. I was ordered by Colonel Sweeny, through his aide, Lieutenant [William] McCullough, Eighth Iowa, to leave my position and take ground to my left and front. This change of position brought my regiment on the extreme right of General Prentiss' division and left of General Smith's [sic. Wallace's], the latter being the division to which my regiment

⁸ *Official Records*, 165-7. Written at Vinton, Nov. 13, 1862, and addressed to Governor Kirkwood.

belonged. I was thus entirely detached from my brigade, nor did I receive any orders from my brigade or division commander during the remainder of that day. On arriving at the point I was ordered to defend I formed my regiment in line of battle, with my center resting on a road leading from Corinth to Pittsburg Landing and at right angles with my line. Here I immediately engaged a battalion of the enemy, and after a severe conflict of nearly an hour's duration, in which I lost many of my men, the enemy were driven back with heavy loss. . . .

About 1 p. m. General Prentiss placed a battery in position immediately in front of my regiment, with instructions to defend it to the last. The precision of its fire, which was directed by the general in person, made great havoc in the advancing columns of the enemy. It therefore became an object of great importance to them to gain possession of the battery. To this end they concentrated and hurled column after column on my position, charging most gallantly to the very muzzles of the guns. Here a struggle commenced for the retention and possession of the battery of a terrific character, their concentrated and well-directed fire decimating my ranks in a fearful manner. In this desperate struggle my regiment lost 100 men in killed and wounded. . . .

About 3 p. m. all direct communication with the river ceased, and it became evident to me that the enemy were driving the right and left flanks of our army and were rapidly closing behind us. At this time I could have retreated, and most probably would have saved my command from being captured had I been ordered back at this time; but I received no such order, and I considered it my duty to hold the position I was assigned to defend at all hazards.

General Prentiss' division having been thrown back from the original line, I changed front by my left flank, conforming to his movements and at right angles with my former base, which was immediately occupied and retained for some time by the Fourteenth Iowa, Colonel Shaw. In this position I ordered my regiment to charge a battalion of the enemy (I think the Fourth Mississippi), which was closing fast around us. The shells from our own gunboats in their transit severing the limbs of trees hurled them on my own ranks.

It now became absolutely necessary, to prevent annihilation, to leave a position which my regiment had held nearly ten consecutive hours of severe fighting, successfully resisting and driving back the enemy in every attempt

to take the position I was ordered to hold and defend. With a loss of near 200 in killed and wounded I ordered my regiment to retire. On retiring about 300 yards I found a division of the rebels under General Polk thrown completely across my line of retreat. I perceived that further resistance was useless, as we were now completely surrounded. Myself and the major portion of my command were captured at 6 p. m. of that day, and I claim the honor for my regiment of being the last to leave the advanced line of our army on the battlefield of Shiloh on Sunday, April 6. . . .

CONFEDERATE REPORTS — 1862

*Gen. Braxton Bragg — Second Corps:*⁹

. . . Our right flank, according to the order of battle, had pressed forward ardently under the immediate direction of the commanding general and swept all before it. Batteries, encampments, store-houses, munitions in rich profusion, were ours, and the enemy, fighting hard and causing us to pay dearly for our successes, was falling back rapidly at every point. His left, however, opposite our right, was his strongest ground and position, and was disputed with obstinacy. . . .

Meeting at about 10.30 o'clock upon the left center with Major-General [Leonidas] Polk, my senior, I promptly yielded to him the important command at that point, and moved toward the right, in the direction in which Brigadier-General [T. C.] Hindman, of Hardee's line, had just led his division. Here we met the most obstinate resistance of the day, the enemy being strongly posted with infantry and artillery, on an eminence immediately behind a dense thicket. Hindman's command was gallantly led to the attack, but recoiled under a murderous fire. The noble and gallant leader fell, severely wounded, and was borne from the field he had illustrated with a heroism rarely equaled.

The command soon returned to its work, but was unequal to the heavy task. Leaving them to hold their position, I moved farther to the right, and brought up the First Brigade ([Col. R. L.] Gibson), of [Brigadier General Daniel] Ruggles' division, which was in rear of its first position, and threw them forward to attack this same point. A very heavy fire soon opened, and after a short conflict this command fell back in considerable disorder. Rallying the different regiments, by means of my staff officers and

⁹ Dated April 30, 1862, *ibid.*, 465-6.

escort, they were twice more moved to the attack, only to be driven back by the enemy's sharpshooters occupying the thick cover. This result was due entirely to want of proper handling. Finding that nothing could be done here, after hours of severe exertion and heavy losses, and learning of the fall of our commander, who was leading in person on the extreme right, the troops were so posted as to hold this position, and leaving a competent staff officer to direct them in my name, I moved rapidly to the extreme right. Here I found a strong force, consisting of three parts, without a common head — Brigadier-General [John C.] Breckinridge, with his reserve division, pressing the enemy; Brigadier-General [Jones M.] Withers, with his splendid division, greatly exhausted and taking a temporary rest, and Major-General [B. F.] Cheatham, with his division, of Major-General Polk's corps, to their left and rear. These troops were soon put in motion, responding with great alacrity to the command of "Forward! let every order be forward."

It was now probably past 4 o'clock, the descending sun warning us to press our advantage and finish the work before night should compel us to desist. Fairly in motion, these commands again, with a common head and a common purpose, swept all before them. Neither battery nor battalion could withstand their onslaught. Passing through camp after camp, rich in military spoils of every kind, the enemy was driven headlong from every position and thrown in confused masses upon the river bank, behind his heavy artillery and under cover of his gunboats at the Landing. He had left nearly the whole of his light artillery in our hands and some 3,000 or more prisoners, who were cut off from their retreat by the closing in of our troops on the left, under Major-General Polk, with a portion of his reserve corps, and Brigadier-General Ruggles, with [Brigadier General Patton] Anderson's and [Colonel Preston] Pond's brigades of his division. . . .

*Maj. Gen. B. F. Cheatham — Second Division, First Corps.*¹⁰

. . . Advancing about the distance of a mile I was directed by Major-General Polk to deploy the Second Brigade to the left as a support to General Bragg's left wing, then hotly engaged with the forces of the enemy. Taking the position as ordered, I remained here for half an hour and until ordered by General Beauregard to proceed with the Second Brigade to the

¹⁰ Dated April 30, 1862, *ibid.*, 438-9.

extreme right of our line to ascertain the point where the firing was heaviest and there engage the enemy at once.

At about 10 a. m. I reached the front of an open field lying east of the center of the Federal line of encampments and discovered the enemy in strong force, occupying several log houses. His line extended behind a fence and occupied an abandoned road. He was advantageously located. I here directed Captain Smith to move his pieces forward and open on the enemy, which was done with the utmost promptness and under a fire that disabled a number of his horses before he could unlimber and come into battery. For nearly an hour the firing was kept up with the enemy's battery — superior to ours in the caliber and range of its guns — with a result highly creditable to the skill and gallantry of Captain Smith, his officers and men.

About this time General Breckinridge, with his command, came up and took position on my right, and opened upon the enemy a heavy fire of musketry, and a few moments afterward I was directed by Colonel [Thomas] Jordan, assistant adjutant-general to General Beauregard, to charge the battery to my front. I at once put the brigade in motion at double-quick time across the open field, about 300 yards in width, flanked on one side by a fence and dense thicket of forest trees and undergrowth. So soon as the brigade entered the field the enemy opened upon us from his entire front a terrific fire of artillery and musketry, but failed altogether to check our movement until we reached the center of the field, when another part of the enemy's force, concealed and protected by the fence and thicket to our left, opened a murderous cross-fire upon our lines, which caused my command to halt and return their fire.

After a short time I fell back to my original position, and moving a short distance to the right, with General Breckinridge on my right, we together attacked the enemy, about 5,000 strong, admirably posted, and were actively and continuously engaged for three hours. . . .

About 2:30 p. m., Colonel [George] Maney, with the left wing of his regiment, the First Tennessee, reported to me in front of the position which the enemy had to this time held obstinately against the efforts of parts of the commands of Generals Bragg, Breckinridge, and my own. General Breckinridge, meantime, had moved his command forward and to my right, and was slowly but steadily pressing it through a dense wood to attack the position on its left, and with the purpose of sustaining him by vigorous co-

operation against its front I directed Colonel Maney to immediately prepare for action, advising him, so far as time permitted, of the difficulties of the position, and instructing him as to where our different forces were located, and, at his own request, giving him the privilege of selecting his command for the purpose. The Ninth Tennessee (Colonel [Henry L.] Douglass) being at hand and having to this time suffered less than the others of the Second Brigade, was, with his battalion of the First Tennessee, selected to move forward with him across the field fronting the wood, while Colonel [David H.] Cummings, Nineteenth Tennessee Regiment (properly of General Breckinridge's command, but which had been with Colonel Maney on his detached service during the morning), was placed to his right and between General Breckinridge and myself, with instructions to move forward in concert with the First and Ninth Tennessee.

With these dispositions I pressed the final attack upon the position in question. Colonel Maney advanced his First and Ninth in excellent order across the field, and was so fortunate as to almost reach the shelter of the woods before the enemy opened fire on him. Pressing forward to this point, he ordered his line to lie down until a general fire from the enemy's line had been delivered, and then promptly resumed his advance. The next instant I knew (from the lively cheering in his direction) that his charge had begun and the enemy routed and driven by it. Judging the enemy now to be in full retreat, I directed Lieutenant-Colonel [John H.] Miller, of the First Battalion of Mississippi Cavalry, now of Colonel [A. J.] Lindsay's regiment, to move forward rapidly in the direction of the retreating column and fall upon him in his flight. This was well executed, and resulted in the capture of a number of prisoners, together with Captain Ross' (Michigan) battery of six guns entire, including officers and men, which had acted vigorously in defending the position. As this position, with regard to my own command, was by far the most obstinately contested by the enemy during Sunday, so it was the last which he seriously contested during the day. . . .

*Col. George Maney — Second Division, First Corps:*¹¹

. . . As I approached the battle quite a number from other commands, who had dropped back seemingly exhausted by fatigue, cheered by the arrival of even this small body of fresh troops, rallied on my rear and advanced with me.

¹¹Dated April 25, 1862, *ibid.*, 454-5.

In a few moments I found and reported to Major-General Cheatham at the time engaged in an effort to dislodge the enemy from a wood a little to the east of his center. My brigade, under Colonel [William H.] Stephens, senior officer in my absence, had been warmly engaged at this position before my arrival, and the Sixth Tennessee, as I was informed, having suffered particularly severely in a gallant charge here, had been temporarily withdrawn when I came up. General Cheatham directed me to immediately attack the enemy's position in this wood, giving me the privilege of selecting my command for the purpose, and advising me of its being a difficult position and of the failure of several previous efforts by our troops to carry it. Colonel Cummings, Nineteenth Tennessee Regiment, being now in sight, and the Ninth Tennessee at hand and comparatively fresh, were, with the First Tennessee Battalion, selected as my attacking force. Observing the ground in advance not to favor an extended line of battle, Colonel Douglass' regiment was formed on the left of the First Tennessee and Major [F. H.] McNairy, aide-de-camp to Major-General Cheatham, was requested to move Colonel Cummings' regiment a short distance to the right, with instructions to advance from that position in concert with the balance of my command upon the enemy in the wood. With the First and Ninth in line, I moved over an open field directly on the enemy in the woods, and on approaching met some of our own troops retiring before a destructive fire. My line of battle was promptly opened by the right of companies to the front, so as to allow our friends to pass to the rear, and at the same time quickening my advance I was so fortunate as to pass the field and gain the cover of the woods before the enemy's attention seemed fairly directed to me. Here my command was ordered to lie down, and a fire was opened mainly for the purpose of ascertaining by the enemy's reply his force and exact position. This was quickly done, and immediately on his fire being delivered my advance was renewed in good order. Observing in a few moments the enemy to give indications of wavering, I on the moment ordered the First and Ninth to the charge. The order was responded to with a cheer, and both regiments sprang forward with enthusiasm worthy of their cause, holding an alignment which would have done credit to veterans.

...

The charge was in every way a success. The enemy could not wait to sustain the shock, but broke in disorder and fled precipitately before us. In a few moments we occupied the position which he had perhaps contested

with as much obstinacy as any on that day. It proved to be a small ravine passing diagonally toward the river, fringed with a considerable growth of small timber, thus forming an excellent natural rifle pit. . . .

Col. Randall L. Gibson — First Division, Second Corps:¹²

. . . I was then commanded by Major-General Bragg to attack the enemy in a position to the front and right. The brigade moved forward in fine style, marching through an open field under a heavy fire and half way up an elevation covered with an almost impenetrable thicket, upon which the enemy was posted. On the left a battery opened that raked our flank, while a steady fire of musketry extended along the entire front. Under this combined fire our line was broken and the troops fell back; but they were soon rallied and advanced to the contest. Four times the position was charged and four times the assault proved unavailing. The strong and almost inaccessible position of the enemy — his infantry well covered in ambush and his artillery skillfully posted and efficiently served — was found to be impregnable to infantry alone. We were repulsed. Our men, however, bore their repulse with steadiness. When a larger force of infantry and artillery was moved to flank this position on the right, a part of the brigade formed on the left of the assaulting line, and a part held a position to the rear in the old field near by. The enemy was driven from his position. From this his retreat became precipitate, and in obedience to orders we moved with the main body of the army toward the river. . . .

Col. B. L. Hodge — 19th Louisiana:¹³

. . . Immediately after our line halted a battery of the enemy, posted on an eminence to the left and rear of their front line of camps, opened on us with shot and shell. Although exposed to this fire for fully half an hour, only two of my men were wounded, the guns of the enemy at this point being served with little effect except upon the tree-tops around us. This battery having been captured by the troops of some other command, and our brigade having been moved forward a short distance beyond the outer line of the enemy's camps, my regiment upon the verge of an old field, we for the first time engaged the enemy. Seeing that the distance was too great for our arms to do execution, we ceased firing after two or three rounds.

¹²Dated April 12, 1862, *ibid.*, 480.

¹³ Dated April, n. d., 1862, *ibid.*, 492-3.

The enemy again noticed our presence by a few shells, but with even less effect than before.

From this point we moved about half a mile to the right and a little in advance, passing through a wheat field. We crossed a road leading in the direction of Hamburg.

At this time the First Arkansas and my regiment were well together in line, as I could see while passing through the field. Just after crossing the road my regiment entered a small farm, a log cabin near the center, our line extending across the field. We had advanced midway the little farm, which is about 150 yards in width, when the enemy, lying in ambush about 80 or 100 yards beyond the outer fence and directly in our front, opened fire upon our entire line. Although the fire was not expected at the moment, the advance of the regiment was not checked in the slightest; but moving forward steadily to the fence the men commenced to deliver their fire at will. Owing to the impenetrable undergrowth between the enemy's position and ours I was unable to see him, and from the manner of the men looking through the bushes, as if hunting an object for their aim, it was apparent that they too were unable to descry the concealed foe, and were only firing at the flash of the enemy's pieces.

Seeing that my men were being rapidly shot down, and having no reason to believe that we were inflicting equal injury upon the enemy, I gave the order to cease firing and to charge bayonets. Officers and men alike obeyed the order promptly. So dense and impenetrable became the thicket of undergrowth that after my men had boldly forced their way 20 or 30 steps into it, and it seeming impossible to make further progress, I again gave the order to commence firing.

The regiment now gradually fell back to the fence. Finding that the enemy were now opening a cross-fire upon us from our left, and seeing a large number of my small command killed and wounded, I deemed it my duty to order the regiment to fall back to the other side of the little farm, which was accordingly done in good order.

In this unequal conflict — unequal on account of the enemy's local position — the regiment sustained heavy loss. In this one action, out of little less than 300 we had lost in killed and wounded between 40 and 50 as brave and gallant men as ever risked their lives in the defense of a righteous cause. . . .

Having fallen back beyond the small farm, I halted the regiment and

waited in the hope that the enemy would leave his covert and give us a fair fight. But he too fully appreciated his great advantage of position to give it up.

Remaining in this position a short time, having had no order from your or our division commander, I received an order from General Bragg, transmitted through one of his staff, to advance again and attack the same position from which we had just withdrawn. Of course the order was obeyed without delay; but I requested the officer to say to the general that I thought it impossible to force the enemy from this strong position by a charge from the front, but that with a light battery playing on one flank and a simultaneous charge of infantry on the other the position could be carried with but small loss.

Again we advanced into the little farm, and again, when midway the clearing, the enemy opened fire upon us. Again we pressed on to the other fence directly in front of his ambushade. Here we remained exposed to his merciless fire for over half an hour, without the power to inflict any apparent injury upon the hidden foe. In justice to my command I again ordered them to fall back, which was done in as good order as before. . . .

I may be permitted to add, sir, that this formidable position of the enemy, after having withstood the repeated attacks of various regiments, was only carried at last by a charge upon the right flank, supported by a battery on the left. . . .

IOWA REPORTS — 1887

*Gen. J. M. Tuttle:*¹⁴

In reviewing, in form of amended report, the part taken by the First Brigade, Second Division, Army of the Tennessee, in the first day of the battle of Shiloh, I deem it not out of place to explain that the reason why my official report was so abbreviated and did not state in full all that took place that day, was that I was quite sick when the battle began, and the fatigue and exposure during the three days compelled my confinement in bed for fully two months thereafter. What I did report was written by the Adjutant from notes dictated by me while in bed and was not so full of detail as I now wish it had been. Some histories from a Union standpoint do us nearly justice — some partial justice and some rank justice [sic. in-

¹⁴ *First Reunion of Iowa's Hornet's Nest Brigade . . . 1887* (Oskaloosa, Iowa, 1888), 12-15.

justice] — but since the publication of the official reports of rebel officers and their histories of that battle, the importance of our position, and the tenacity with which we held it, have attracted more of the attention of historians than formerly, and let us now hope that if a true history of that battle shall ever be written, we will have full justice done us. One reason for not having our full share of the credit that we were entitled to, was that for the eight hours that we held our ground there was no officer visited us to see what we were doing, except General Wallace, our division commander, and he having been killed, what knowledge he had was never reported.¹⁵

The name of "Hornet's Nest" was given to our position by the rebels themselves, and the identification was made complete by some rebel officers in the fall of 1884, while making a survey for the picture at Chicago. These soldiers had been in some of the charges made against our lines, and their decision in the matter is not disputed. . . .

On awakening about sunrise on the morning of the 6th of April, 1862, my attention was attracted by severe firing at the front, and the impression was made on my mind at once that it was the commencement of a great battle, and that we were surprised and in no condition to receive an enemy who, I believed, was attacking us in force. I ordered my horse immediately and rode to General Wallace's tent to report myself ready to take command of the brigade. He did not seem to think that a general engagement was on, but that it was only some picket firing, such as we had experienced a day or two before.¹⁶ I ordered the brigade under arms, however, and rode out to the main road, which I found full of fugitives, among whom were quite a number of wounded men belonging to the regiments first engaged. I reported this to General Wallace, as well as that the brigade was ready to move, and that I thought we were needed badly at the front. He then directed me to proceed to the front and take with me the artillery of the division under Major [J. S.] Cavender [1st Missouri Light Artillery], which was then on its way to a field near by for inspection, and that he would

¹⁵ This is not correct. Grant visited the position at least once. Prentiss showed him the disposition of the troops, of which Grant approved and instructed Prentiss to "maintain that position at all hazards." *Official Records*, 278-9.

¹⁶ This is questionable. Prentiss had sent word to both Hurlbut and Wallace of the attack before 6 o'clock. Prentiss, *ibid.*, 278. One can only surmise that Tuttle here is taking more credit than he deserves. Probably 25 years had blurred his memory, or expanded it.

join me with the other two brigades in a short time. I directed the march on the main road, which was filled with fugitives consisting of men from the divisions of Sherman and Prentiss, camp followers of all kinds, who were making their way to the river as fast as possible. By the time we arrived at the junction of the Corinth and Hamburg roads the roads were clear of fugitives, and I took the Corinth road for the reason that as the firing was heavy on both flanks, it occurred to me that our center was unprotected. On crossing the ravine a short distance from the junction the main road led through low ground, so I took an old road that led to the left and over higher ground. After following this road for about a quarter of a mile or more without seeing any person or hearing a sound of any kind in our front, we came to the corner of Duncan's field, at 8:30 o'clock. On looking across the field with a glass I could see the bayonets of soldiers, marching in line, apparently towards us. We did not wait long until I could make out that they were the gray. I immediately ordered the brigade to deploy in the following order: Second Iowa on the right and extending across the main Corinth road, which was about 300 yards from the one we had marched out on; the 7th Iowa on the left of the 2nd and in the rear of the field, and the 12th Iowa on the left of the 7th, with two companies also in rear of the field, and the other seven companies extending out into the wooded ground to the left; the 14th to the left of the 12th, also in the woods and forming the left flank of the brigade. Both flanks were in the air and without support. All were in an old sunken road, running across the other roads and close to the fence of the field.¹⁷ The artillery was placed on higher ground in the rear of the infantry. These dispositions were no sooner made than the enemy could be plainly seen bearing down upon us in two lines and in large force, which afterward proved to be Ruggles' Division. While deploying, the importance of the position was forced upon me. Sherman and McClelland were fighting hard far on the right, Prentiss and Hurlbut the same on the left, and but for what opposition we could present there was nothing to prevent the enemy from marching unobstructed to the camp of our division near the landing, and, thus dividing our army into four parts, destroy us in detail. I therefore determined to hold this position at all hazards until the rest of the division came

¹⁷ Later at this same reunion, in replying to a toast to the "Iowa Hornet's Nest Brigade," Tuttle took credit for finding the sunken road, although admitting that he "did not know the old road . . . until he had taken his position." *First Reunion* . . ., 30.

up. Cavender opened upon them at once with two of his batteries, which soon silenced the same number of the enemy's batteries that had gone into position on the opposite side of the field, but their infantry pushed on, when I ordered Baker and Parrott, of the 2nd and 7th, to open fire on them, which they did with great vigor and terrific effect. They were driven back with great loss, after getting about half way across the field. I could see many of them were going in an oblique direction across the corner of the field to the woods in front of the 2nd and 4th [sic. 7th], when another brigade was advancing on Woods and Shaw, and in a very short time their lines were attacked with great vigor and determination, but they nobly held their ground, and the enemy were compelled to retire with heavy loss. Soon after another strong force attacked Woods and Shaw with the same result. About this time Sweeney [sic. Col. Thomas W. Sweeny] appeared on my right with all his brigade except the 8th Iowa, Colonel Geddes, who marched to our left, and formed on the left of Colonel Shaw and took position by his direction. Colonel Sweeney reported to me that he had formed his brigade on my right. This was about noon.¹⁸ Soon after this Colonel Shaw reported to me that a portion of Prentiss' Division was in line about 200 yards to the left of the 8th Iowa. I could tell from the firing that Sherman and McClelland on the right and Prentiss and Hurlbut on the left were being steadily driven back. I could see, therefore, that we were breaking the enemy's center by holding our position, and I expected a renewed and more vigorous attack, which soon came along my whole front. This was the most terrific assault of the day. That in front of the 2nd and 7th was soon repulsed, but in front of the 12th, 14th and 8th the fighting was stubborn and determined and lasted for over an hour. Shaw sent for artillery, which was given him and was used to excellent effect. Geddes got a section of artillery from Prentiss, who had connected with his left. The fighting was hardest in front of the 8th, or rather, it lasted the longest there. The rebels had got on their mettle on account of this "Hornet's

¹⁸ Tuttle's memory of the time of Sweeny's arrival seems faulty. Col. Sweeny was wounded at Shiloh and made no report himself, but according to Col. Geddes, 8th Iowa, Sweeny's brigade had been fighting an hour before, "At 11 a. m.," Sweeny ordered the 8th Iowa into position on Tuttle's left. *Official Records*, 165. This is one of several places in this report where Tuttle seems to be taking far more credit than he deserves. He says little about Wallace, whereas Wallace, with Prentiss and Hurlbut, co-operated all during the day in the defense of this position. See Prentiss, *ibid.*, 279. These three generals commanded divisions; not until Wallace's death during the retreat late in the afternoon did Tuttle become a division commander.

Nest," and they performed prodigies of valor in trying to take the position. They charged up to within a few rods of our lines and would hold their ground until most of them fell. This charge was scarcely off until another was on, for three or four hours of almost continuous fighting. But they were repulsed on all of them with heavy loss. According to rebel reports, they were beaten away from this position seven times. I reported it five times. It was hard to tell when one charge ended and another began, for during four hours there was fighting on some part of my line all the time. The effect of the desperate fighting here could best be seen the next day. The ground was literally covered with the enemy's dead, the wounded having been taken away. In several places could be seen dead men and horses piled up with dismounted cannon and small arms promiscuously, presenting a horrid scene of the cruelties of war, always liable to occur during great battles. During this time Prentiss and Hurlbut had been doubled back and were in line 800 yards in my rear, with backs to us, and still fighting in their front. Geddes had to change the front of half of his regiment to conform to Prentiss' line, and at times there were intervals between him and Shaw, and at other times between Shaw and Woods, but they were only temporary for the purpose of meeting some more than usually determined charge at a given point, and were not forced. Sweeney, for some cause unknown to me, had allowed his brigade on my right to get into confusion and go to pieces as a brigade, but I understand the regiments kept their organizations. This left my right exposed. About this time, 4:30 p. m., General Wallace came to me and while I was explaining to him what I had been doing during the day, Lieutenant [George L.] Godfrey, of Company D, 2nd Iowa, who was at the extreme right of my line, at the right corner of the Duncan field, came and reported that the enemy was passing my right flank and that the woods on my right were full of rebels. We realized at once that we soon would be, if we were not already surrounded, and after a short consultation we determined to retire the brigade. Wallace was to take the 2nd and 7th down the Corinth road to the junction, where the old road came into it, and I was to take the 12th, 14th and 8th to the same place by the old road. I sent staff officers at once to give the order to fall back in line to the top of the high ground in the rear. The 2nd and 7th got back first and started down the road by the flank with Wallace at their head. They went but a short distance when they were fired upon by a heavy force and Wallace fell from his horse at the first fire. Seeing him

fall I gave hasty instructions to staff officers to direct Woods, Shaw and Geddes to move rapidly down the old road and form a junction with me. I rode forward to the head of the column, and on arriving at the junction of the road I saw a force of the enemy in line in front of me in the camp of the 3rd Iowa. I immediately deployed the two regiments, expecting the others up by the time the deployment should be completed, but they not coming, and the firing being exceedingly heavy on both flanks and the front, I ordered a charge in which we drove the enemy before us and got through, but with heavy loss. I learned afterward that the last orders to Woods, Shaw and Geddes were not delivered, and they, not knowing where we had gone nor what they were expected to do, commenced, each one, to fall back as best he could, and when they reached the place where we got through, found it closed up again with a stronger line, and they were compelled to surrender. After we had got through and gone a short distance, I halted the two regiments and was soon joined by Colonel Crocker with the 13th Iowa. I then heard heavy firing in the rear and correctly concluded that the other Iowa regiments were fighting to get out, and so I determined to go back and help them, but after going a short distance the firing ceased, which caused me to conclude that they had surrendered, which conclusion was correct, as we found out afterward. . . .

*Col. W. T. Shaw — 14th Iowa:*¹⁹

The report made to Samuel J. Kirkwood, Governor of Iowa, October 26th, 1862, of the operations of the 14th Iowa in the battle of Shiloh, a few days after my release from prison, is probably as correct and complete as anything I can give you now. . . . On the morning of April 6th, 1862, heavy firing was heard about sunrise, and its rattle and boom increased until about 8 a. m., when the wounded and stragglers began to come in from the front. Between 8 and 9 a. m. Tuttle's brigade, to which the 14th Iowa belonged, and which was a part of the reserve, was ordered to move towards the front. Marching out on the Corinth road we met crowds of men belonging to Prentiss' and Sherman's divisions fleeing towards the Landing, who said their regiments were all cut to pieces and that the enemy was close upon us. . . . The brigade soon came in sight of the enemy, [and] formed in line of battle along an old road that lay in front of a cleared space and extended to the left into the thick timber and brush. The

¹⁹ *First Reunion . . .*, 21-5.

2d Iowa was on the right, the 7th, 12th and 14th in order to the left. The 2d, 7th and right wing of the 12th had the open field in front of them, and the left wing of the 12th and the 14th extended into the timber with a dense thicket in front of them.

Our line was scarcely formed when the enemy opened a heavy fire of artillery upon us. Soon their infantry advanced through the timber to the left of the field upon the 14th and the left wing of the 12th. Reserving their fire till the enemy was within thirty paces, the 14th and 12th opened upon them and drove them back with heavy loss. They soon rallied, however, attacked us a second time and were a second time driven back, leaving many of their dead and wounded in the timber and brush. These troops, after their second repulse, withdrew out of sight. Then a large body of the enemy was seen to enter the open ground in front of the 2d and 7th regiments, who opened upon them at long range; but they continued to advance until they had reached the middle of the clear ground, when they broke in confusion and retired to the rear. There was now a short pause in the rattle of musketry in our front. The artillery continued to send shot and shell over our heads, doing little harm. At this time my commissary sergeant, Robert Dott, whom I had sent to the front and left to ascertain if the enemy was in that direction, reported a heavy force approaching which overlapped my left, and there being no federal troops in sight in that direction, I reported the situation to Colonel Tuttle, commanding the brigade.

At my request he sent me two brass six-pounders which I immediately trained into position on the old road in front of my line so as to sweep the space to the left. Colonel Geddes, 8th Iowa, whose regiment was about 200 yards in our rear, now came to me and offered to place his men on my left, and to my great satisfaction I saw his fine regiment form on my left, making a slight angle to the rear across the ridge at the head of the hollow. The disposition of the forces was scarcely made when the enemy dashed furiously upon us. They were well received by the 8th and 15th [sic. 14th] Iowa, our two brass six-pounders (of the First Minnesota battery) sending canister down the old road, giving them an enfilading fire, which, with the steady work of the muskets of the 8th, 14th and 12th, soon sent them flying to the rear. Again and again they rallied and returned to attack, but they were repulsed every time and retired to cover.

This was the severest fighting of the day and seemed to fall most heavily upon the 8th Iowa, but this I imagine was due more to their exposed posi-

tion on the ridge above the hollow, while the 12th and 14th were partially protected by a slight rise of ground in front of them. However this may be, the 8th suffered very severely, and the 14th at this hour had met with very few casualties. The enemy vainly attempted to force us from our position and finally withdrew beyond musket range. Then, about 3:30 P. M., Colonel Geddes withdrew from the position he had held and I moved into his position, as the fighting seemed to be working around to our left. But, looking across the open space in front of the right of our brigade, I saw a body of the enemy moving around to the left of the field and approaching the position I formerly occupied. I immediately moved back, getting into position just in time to receive the attack and repulse them. Glancing toward the 12th Iowa I perceived it had faced about and was moving toward the rear, and still further down the line I saw the 7th and 2d had moved their position and were not in sight from where I was standing. I went to Colonel Woods, 12th Iowa, and asked him what it meant; he replied that they had received orders to about face and fall back, or something to that effect. Considering the order as also applying to me, or perhaps not being willing to be left alone, I faced about, too, and moved toward the top of the ridge in our rear.

On reaching the top of the ridge I perceived a crowd of men in federal uniforms approaching in great confusion. Moving obliquely to let them pass, my left flank (former right) became separated from the 12th. The disorganized column that had come upon us, instead of passing on, halted and made no attempt to form in line. After trying with my field and line officers to rally them, and finding I could do nothing, and the enemy who had driven them back having opened fire upon us, I left this disorganized mass and returned to my own men. In the meantime they continued to follow along the side of the ridge and were soon out of sight. . . . The troops I had repulsed were now approaching across the open ground, there being nothing to obstruct them. The heaviest artillery fire I ever heard opened from the timber beyond the field and timber, and the enemy who had driven in Prentiss opened in front of me. For the first time that day, I saw my men falling rapidly around me. This was no fault of mine; I had no choice of ground; the enemy were on all sides of me; no other federal troops were in sight. It was necessary to take prompt action. I ordered an advance, and the regiment gallantly responded to the order. We drove the enemy before us causing him to fall back rapidly. Hoping to reach the

road leading to the Landing, I moved by the flank along the face of the ridge, and as I did so perceived ahead of me among some tents another confused mass of federal blue, confederate gray, and a good deal more gray than blue.

Changing the direction of my column I moved rapidly down the face of the ridge and across the hollow, and ascending the rising ground, I ran into Gen. Chalmers' confederate brigade. After exchanging the compliments usual on such occasions with Maj. F. E. Whitfield, commanding the 9th Mississippi, and being informed by him that I was entirely surrounded (a fact that I was tolerably well satisfied of before) and that the rest of our troops had surrendered, he advised me to surrender. I accepted his advice, and turning to the boys who up to this time had preserved their line in good order, I gave the command: "Right, dress! shoulder arms! stack arms!" and that ended our fight for April 6th, 1862. . . .

*Col. W. B. Bell — 8th Iowa.*²⁰

. . . About 11 o'clock A. M. the regiment was ordered . . . to leave this position. . . . On arriving at the point designated, the regiment was placed in line of battle, facing a little south of west, the left wing of the regiment resting in, and the right wing a few rods in advance, of a road, and an abandoned road crossed our line at our center and angled somewhat to our right and front, with heavy timber all along our front and considerable underbrush and small timber, the line being at the crest of rising ground. Altogether it was a strong position. In this position we immediately engaged the enemy, and after about an hour's duration the enemy was driven back with heavy loss. About one o'clock P. M. General Prentiss placed a battery in position in front and near the center of the regiment, with instructions to defend it to the last. The fire of this battery made great havoc in the advancing columns of the enemy. It therefore became an object of great importance to them to gain possession of the battery. To this end they concentrated and hurled a heavy column on our position. Our men, lying down on the crest of the high ground, met the enemy and, after a severe and prolonged struggle, our men again had the satisfaction of driving back the enemy. Seemingly not discouraged, our brave enemy re-

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 17-18. Geddes, colonel of the 8th Iowa at Shiloh, was no longer living in 1887; therefore, this report was written by Col. W. B. Bell, who was captain of Co. C during the battle.

turned to the charge, with increased numbers and fury, and a struggle then commenced for the retention and possession of the battery, of a terrific character. The enemy charged upon our center to the very muzzles of our guns, and beat back our center about one rod and captured the guns and had taken them at least four or five rods when our men closed up our center and rushed forward and recaptured the guns and triumphantly sent them to the rear. In this third and grandest struggle the 8th ever made in battle, all the horses and all the men in this battery were killed, except possibly two men, and the commanding officer of the 8th, at this time, reported our loss in this charge at one hundred in killed and wounded.

Between 3 and 4 o'clock P. M. it became evident that the enemy were turning our right and left flanks rapidly. . . . The appearance of the enemy's lines at this time, having so far turned our flanks, that they might be compared to an "ox bow" with the operation of bending about two-thirds completed, with the bow to the south and the ends to the north. At this time the regiment changed front to the left. The new formation completed, our right now rests within a few rods of our late left and at right angles with our former line and facing nearly to the east. After remaining in this position for, say nearly half an hour, the enemy came pressing on and the regiment became hotly engaged. The enemy all the time could be seen pressing back our flanks. After having been engaged in this position for half an hour or more we were now attacked on three sides — front, right flank and rear — and the enemy's lines at this time might be compared to the "ox-bow," with the bend completed, the sides being parallel; or to a hornet's nest laid on the ground horizontally, with the apex to the south. Accepting this description of the ground held by our center at this particular time, I locate the 8th on the east side of the "hornet's nest," with its right resting near the apex, or south end, and as before stated, under fire from three directions. The position of the regiment was no longer tenable, and we retreated by the left flank, coming down a ravine, and still hoping to escape, but when the regiment arrived at a point near the camp of the 3rd Iowa Infantry it discovered that the "ox yoke" had been slipped onto the "bow," or that the main entrance to the "hornet's nest" was closed by great swarms of rebels, and that exit by the only route was cut off, and the regiment found itself, with many others, prisoners of war. From the foregoing the inference is unavoidable that the 8th was the last to come away from our advanced line.

I . . . quote from the report made to the Governor of Iowa, November 13th, 1862, by the late lamented Geddes, who commanded the regiment during the engagement: "To prevent annihilation it became absolutely necessary to leave a position which my regiment had held for nearly ten consecutive hours of severe fighting." Again I quote: "Myself and the major portion of my command were captured at six o'clock P. M., and I claim the honor for my regiment of being the last to leave the advance line of our army on the battlefield of Shiloh, on Sunday, the 6th day of April, 1862."

The question arises, if the foregoing quotations from the record are correct, why is it necessary to reproduce them or to refer in any way to the part taken by the regiment in that battle? I answer, the report was current all over the country, immediately after the battle, that the regiment with others was taken prisoners early in the morning in its camp and that the regiment was a part of Prentiss' Division. The report from which I have quoted was not made until seven months after the battle; the war still in progress, the report, it seems, did not arrest the attention of either army or the public, generally, and the impression yet prevails to some extent that the regiment was captured in the morning. . . .

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