

THE BATTLE OF REED'S BRIDGE

18-19 SEPTEMBER 1863

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PRELUDE TO BATTLE

Throughout the final two weeks of August, 1863, Major General William Rosecrans had successfully outmaneuvered his adversary, General Braxton Bragg. Rosecrans gambled in dividing his force, hoping to deceive Bragg into believing the Union army would cross the Tennessee River above Chattanooga. In reality, the Union main body would move south into Alabama, using the mountains to screen its movements, and cross further downstream. By the time Bragg discovered this hoax, he was already flanked; he was forced to retreat southward to protect his communication and supply lines. The city of Chattanooga, a strategic rail center and the gateway to Atlanta, fell into Union hands.

Colonel George P. Buell would lead the first Union brigade into the city on September 9. Two days later, during a reconnaissance mission into Georgia, Buell would also lead the first Union troops across Reed's Bridge.¹ As Chaplain John Hight of the Fifty-eighth Indiana described it: "The bridge was torn up. A few moments' work repaired it . . . We found extensive signs of the rebel cavalry camps of the preceding night."² John Pegram's cavalry had probably camped near Reed's Bridge on the evening of September 10, and was likely culpable for tearing up some of the bridge flooring.³

Rosecrans believed the Confederate army to be in full retreat for Atlanta. He divided his three corps, hoping to cut off straggling elements of Bragg's command. This left the Army of the Cumberland in an extremely vulnerable position, however, as Bragg quickly ascertained. Instead of withdrawing to Atlanta, Bragg stopped and ordered his army on September 11 to assemble around Lafayette, hoping to destroy the Union army in piecemeal fashion.⁴

Much of Rosecrans' cavalry was deployed on the Union right, in a vain effort to pounce on the supposed Confederate retreat to Atlanta. When reports reached Rosecrans that the cavalry could not locate any fleeing rebels, he realized his predicament. Immediately, the order was given to concentrate the Union army at Lee and Gordon's Mill.⁵

Not all the Union cavalry was in the wrong place. Colonel Robert Minty's brigade, which had earlier helped to mislead Bragg north of Chattanooga, would keep Rosecrans apprised of Confederate movements up until the start of the battle. Little did Minty know, as he crossed Reed's Bridge for the first time on September 15, he himself would soon participate in one of the most critical engagements of the battle of Chickamauga . . . at that very bridge.⁶

FIGHTING AT REED'S BRIDGE
6 A.M. TO 5 P.M., 18 SEPTEMBER 1863

At dawn on September 18, Brigadier General Bushrod Johnson set out from Catoosa Station with a division composed of four brigades which had never fought together before. Per Bragg's orders of September 16, Johnson's division moved three miles towards Leet's Tan Yard before new orders were given to him:⁷

1. Johnson's column (Hood's) on crossing at or near Reed's Bridge, will turn to the left by the most practicable route and sweep up the Chickamauga, toward Lee and Gordon's Mills.⁸

Johnson countermarched to Ringgold and proceeded west towards Reed's Bridge, a three hours' march under normal circumstances. Brigadier General Nathan Bedford Forrest, who would also receive his orders belatedly, would screen Johnson's front and right flank. Together, these two were to lead the Confederate assault on the Union left flank to drive the Federals into narrow McLemore's Cove.⁹

From atop Pea Vine Ridge meanwhile, Colonel Robert Minty recognized the grim importance of blocking any enemy advance across Reed's Bridge to his west. The Chickamauga Creek, while only waist deep, had such steep banks as to render much of it impassible for artillery pieces and wagon trains.¹⁰ Minty must hold the bridge and any nearby fords with his 973 men. He would have to dispute the advance of four infantry brigades, three artillery batteries, and some 300 cavalrymen from Forrest's command -- nearly 5,000 in all.¹¹

Around 6 a.m., Minty sent out scouting parties to determine the route of the expected Confederate advance. He sent 100 troopers from the Fourth United States toward Leet's Tan Yard and 100 troopers from the Fourth Michigan and Seventh Pennsylvania toward Ringgold. Within an hour, both scouting parties reported the enemy advancing, so Minty strengthened his pickets on the Harrison-Lafayette Road and moved the Fourth Michigan, a battalion of the Fourth United States, and his section of the Chicago Board of Trade battery one and a half miles to the east slope of Pea Vine Ridge. Minty also sent couriers to Granger, Wilder, Wood and Crittenden notifying them of the situation.¹²

As the Confederate division approached the Pea Vine Creek around 10 a.m., Johnson became cautious. Area residents in flight, carrying their household goods, had advised him that the Federals were in the area. Halting at Peeler's Mill, Johnson waited while Lieutenant Colonel Watt Floyd rode forward with Adjutant Fitzpatrick to reconnoiter the Pea Vine Creek bridge. As Floyd would discover and later record in his report, Captain Heber Thompson and his troopers were waiting for him in the first Union line:¹³

On reaching the bank of Pea Vine Creek, some 300 yards in advance of my pickets, I discovered two Federal vedettes near a house about 150 yards from me. One of them fired

and I returned to the brigade to report the facts.¹⁴

Private Samuel Walters of Company F, Seventh Pennsylvania, fired the first shot of the battle of Chickamauga but missed his target. Johnson, hearing the shots, formed line of battle but waited nearly an hour for Forrest's arrival before advancing. Thompson, unwilling to wait, led some 15 to 20 troopers in a daring charge down the Reed's Bridge Road. Here, Floyd's infantry would draw first blood at Chickamauga killing John Ward of Company F, Seventh Pennsylvania, then Owen Brennan, Co. F, and Jacob Stroup, Co. H. Thompson's men slipped back to Minty's second line further up the Pea Vine Ridge.¹⁵

When Forrest finally arrived around 11 a.m., he came with only 300 troopers. Johnson ordered him forward with skirmishers from Fulton's brigade to secure the far side of the creek.¹⁶ Having just received a note from Bragg urging him to advance without delay, Johnson ordered his brigades across the creek in line of battle behind Forrest's skirmishers.¹⁷

From the second Union line, Minty's two guns opened fire on the advancing brigades the moment they came into range.¹⁸ In response, Johnson called up his own artillery to silence the Union guns but at the loss of another hour.¹⁹ After this delay, Johnson's men advanced slowly up the slopes of the ridge as Lieutenant Colonel R. B. Snowden of the Twenty-fifth Tennessee recorded:

Our skirmishers very soon became engaged, and drew from the enemy some well-directed shots from his artillery. Our line was ordered to advance, and did so in good order over very rough and broken ground until we came to a deep and muddy stream, which with some difficulty we succeeded in crossing. Our infantry having reformed, an advance was ordered, and our skirmishers, with Forrest's cavalry, made short work of the enemy's strong position, he falling back in confusion, leaving a few horses, many blankets, oil-cloths, boxes of hard bread, &c., in our hands. The difficulty now was to march in line of battle over the very rough and uneven ground, passing briar-thickets, many of the men being barefooted.²⁰

If Minty's men were in confusion, it may have been due more to the dust clouds visible to the north. Minty feared that the Confederates were circumventing Reed's Bridge for undefended Dyer's Bridge one mile downstream. He sent for reinforcements from Colonel John Wilder who was already busy defending Alexander's Bridge a mile and a half to the south. After dispatching couriers to update Crittenden and Granger, Minty began forming a third line behind Pea Vine Ridge while his second line

fell back.²¹

It was high noon when Minty called in his pickets, except for the ones south on the Harrison-Lafayette Road. He mustered his brigade in a cornfield some 400 yards east of Reed's Bridge.²² About 250 yards to his rear, in some shrubs behind the J. J. Reed house, Minty placed his artillery section and a battalion of the Fourth Regulars to protect it.²³ The only escape routes for Minty's men were the bridge and a poor ford 300 yards above it.²⁴

At this point, Minty received Wilder's reply for assistance in the form of two regiments and two mountain howitzers commanded by Colonel Abram Miller. Minty dispatched this force straight away to cover Dyer's Bridge and Dyer's Ford.²⁵ With his left flank now covered, Minty ordered a sabre charge to support his skirmish line still atop the Pea Vine Ridge and drove the Confederate skirmishers back into the valley to their line of battle.²⁶ After reorganizing, the Confederate lines swelled over the ridge once again.²⁷

Forrest was growing tired of the Union harassment in his front and attempted to seize the initiative. He led Floyd's Tennesseans and a section of Bledsoe's battery a half mile south to flank Minty out of the Reed's Bridge Road gap. Forrest also hoped to seize Minty's supplies at a Federal encampment along the Harrison-LaFayette Road. After shelling the woods to their west for awhile, Forrest's men moved forward, but not before Minty's supply wagons had escaped across the creek.²⁸

Minty was feverishly preparing his last stand east of the Chickamauga. Using the Fourth Michigan and Seventh Pennsylvania, he formed a semicircular line around the J. J. Reed house to prevent an enemy charge. His trump card, the two cannon concealed further back in the shrubs, was now ready to be played. The rest of the Fourth United States began crossing the creek to prepare another line west of the bridge, near the McAbee farm.²⁹

Just as the first squadron of Regulars trotted across the bridge, Johnson's lead column appeared at the Pea Vine Ridge gap.

As the rebels advanced at the double quick down the Reed's Bridge Road, Minty played his trump, as First Lieutenant S. H. Stevens of the Chicago Board of Trade Battery recalled:³⁰

The first squadron of cavalry had hardly crossed the bridge when the rebel advance came in view not five hundred yards away. The unexpected uncovering of the artillery on the flank threw the head of the column into confusion and a continued concentrated fire held the enemy in check until the brigade gained a position on the west side of Chickamauga. In the mean time a detachment of the enemy, by a flank movement through a thicket, reached the battery and were entertained by a hand to hand contest, while the guns were limbered to the rear and run across the ford.³¹

Forrest returned the surprise by flanking Minty from the south.³² At the same time, Davidson's brigade made its debut from the north, sweeping up the east side of the Chickamauga with its artillery in tow.³³ Time was quickly running out for those Federals still east of the bridge. The Fourth Michigan was now across, but the Seventh Pennsylvania was still in the process of crossing. While Minty's artillery crossed at the poor ford, Lieutenant Wirt Davis of the Fourth Regulars delivered a sabre charge upon the advancing rebels, buying enough time for the Seventh's and his own escape. Davis' men, last to cross the bridge, stopped briefly to throw some of the loose planks into the creek. As the planks floated slowly down the Chickamauga, Minty formed his brigade on the rise west of the creek, and the Chicago guns began bombarding the bridge and ford approaches.³⁴ Not all the Federals made a clean escape. Pickets from the Fourth Michigan on the Harrison-Lafayette Road, led by Lieutenant J. H. Simpson, were cut off by the rebel advance and forced to escape by swimming the creek.³⁵

At this point in the battle, the tragic and mysterious story of a Mrs. Reed's death is said to have occurred. According to Captain Joseph Vale, Minty's brigade inspector, Mrs. Reed's house lay about 150 yards east of the bridge and along the Harrison-LaFayette Road. Minty had established his headquarters near the home; he and his staff had come to know this Mrs. Reed and her two or three small children. During the Union withdrawal from Pea Vine Ridge, when it became clear a fight would ensue at the bridge, Minty entreated Mrs. Reed to take her children and leave the area. She adamantly refused to leave, however, and ignored Minty's requests to remain inside the house. As Minty's brigade withdrew across the bridge, she yelled from her porch, "You Yanks are running! Our army is coming! Our friends will not hurt me!"

At that moment, Bledsoe's battery opened with canister, in an effort to sweep the bridge approaches. The shrapnel killed Mrs. Reed where she stood. What became of her children is unknown.³⁶

Such a terrible story should appear in other records, both Confederate and Union, yet it does not. There are other questions as to the credibility of the story. According to the story and to the picture inscribed on the Fourth Michigan Monument, Mrs. Reed's house is virtually next to the bridge. However, according to battlefield maps drawn by Edward E. Betts during the 1890s, the J. J. Reed home was nearly 400 yards east of the bridge and the Harrison-LaFayette Road 200 yards beyond that. The only building which might satisfy the story's description was an old Cherokee log cabin resting beside the creek. It was there in 1842 that Jacob Reed settled his family before building a house two-tenths of a mile east of the bridge. This house would be sold to his son, J. J. Reed, in 1851. If this Cherokee cabin did burn during the fighting, that might explain why it fails to appear on Betts' maps.

Another question concerns who, if anyone, was living on the Reed property during the time of the battle. According to a family history, there were only three Reed women living on the land at the time of the war. Of these three women, two refugee to

Ellis Springs for a short time after the battle. The family history mentions little about the third woman, Parentha Dalton Reed, wife of T. N. Reed, except that she had five young children at the time of the battle. On cross-referencing the 1860 and 1870 Catoosa County census records, I was able to account for all three of the Reed women and all of Parentha's children. The only remaining possibility is if another family, perhaps renting land from the Reeds, was stricken by this misfortune.³⁷

Despite the withering artillery fire from the ridge to the west, Johnson's men were able to seize the bridge at about 3 p.m., nearly seven hours later than Bragg had intended.³⁸ The Twenty-third Tennessee rushed the bridge with a yell, driving off Davis' Regulars before they could seriously damage the bridge. Five of the Tennesseans were wounded in this charge, among them Private A. Melton, the color bearer, who wept when he handed off the colors and told his successor, "Carry them through the thickest of battle ahead of everything else."³⁹

With a foothold established on the west bank of the Chickamauga, Johnson's division surged across. The Twenty-fifth and Forty-fourth Tennessee joined the Twenty-third and formed line of battle some 300 to 400 yards to the north through a cornfield.

Minty was content to hold the high ground, however; his artillery pounded the bridge and severely wounded Lieutenant Hastings of the Seventeenth Tennessee, which was moving to join the rest of Johnson's division after having been detached to Forrest's command.⁴⁰

While the Confederate infantry and artillery struggled across the bridge, Davidson's cavalry brigade, under the command of Brigadier General John Pegram, began fording the Chickamauga about a mile below Reed's Bridge. Forrest's men, meanwhile, crossed the creek at Fowler's Ford, a half-mile south of Minty's right flank.⁴¹

At noon, Major General John Bell Hood had arrived at Catoosa Station and was ordered by Bragg to take command of Johnson's division, to which his Texas Brigade had already been assigned. Arriving at Reed's Bridge around 3 p.m., Hood relieved Johnson of his command and took steps to relieve Minty of his tactical advantage. He ordered artillery fire to be directed on Minty's guns. Soon afterward, but by coincidence, the Chicago guns were driven from their lethal position and the rebel division advanced toward Jay's Mill.⁴²

Minty's brigade disputed the Confederate advance for at least an hour after yielding the bridge. Meanwhile, his supply wagons were sent to Lee and Gordon's Mill, under the guidance of Captain Joseph Vale. On the way there, Vale spotted Forrest's troopers near Fowler's Ford and concluded that Wilder had withdrawn from Alexander's Bridge. He sent this dispatch to Minty: "Colonel Wilder has fallen back from Alexander's Bridge to Gordon's Mills and the enemy are crossing at all points in force." This information was not entirely accurate, however. Wilder and his Lightning Brigade had successfully held off an entire Confederate corps at Alexander's Bridge. Nevertheless, Forrest's crossing did pose a threat both to Minty and Wilder. Upon receiving this

message around 4:30 p.m., Minty sent word to Colonel Miller at Dyer's Bridge to fall back. This retreat would not be a smooth operation as Stevens detailed:⁴³

Neither the cavalry or postillions of artillery caissons stood on the order of their going. Not so the guns, as it required a few moments to bring up the teams, yet, before it could be done a rebel shot carried away a wheel and dropped the end of the axle and the muzzle of one of the guns to the ground. The sergeant limbered up and dragged the gun from under a running fire and reported with both guns to the command four miles away. While the command considered the section practically lost, a spare wheel placed on the axle of the one gun, enabled it to do valiant service on the two days following.⁴⁴

Minty formed a second line southwest of Jay's Mill, and held here for an hour before falling back along the Brotherton Road toward the Viniard House.⁴⁵ Meanwhile, Hood and Johnson debated as to which was "the most practicable route" to follow along the Chickamauga, as Johnson remembered:

. . . the command advanced to Jay's steam saw-mill, about 1 mile west of Reed's Bridge, where there are two roads leading to Alexander's Bridge. I ordered the formation to be preserved and the line of battle, extending across the right-hand or western road, to move forward. General Hood, however, here took command, and directed one regiment of Gregg's brigade to be marched in line of battle, extending across the left-hand or eastern road, and the other regiments of the command to be moved in the rear along that road in column of companies.⁴⁶

Hood led his division south on the Jay's Mill and Alexander's Bridge Roads before cutting west on Viniard-Alexander Road.⁴⁷ This route did provide the shortest means to Lee and Gordon's Mill. However, if Hood had followed Johnson's recommendation to take the Brotherton Road, or had he followed Reed's Bridge Road to the LaFayette Road, he could have effectively cut off the Union Army from any direct access to Chattanooga.

Hood led his troops past the burning Alexander house, which had caught fire during the fighting between Wilder and Walker, to a point 800 yards east from the Viniard house. It was long after dark, before this rebel division attacked the Union left around 9 p.m. This attack was quickly repulsed by Minty's and Wilder's tired men and part of Colonel George Dick's infantry brigade.

Hood stopped his attack and decided to wait for daylight before pressing on over strange ground. Forrest rode back to camp for the night near Alexander's Bridge.⁴⁸

Minty's brigade, which had fought so valiantly to delay the Confederate advance, would be relieved from its position by Major General John Palmer. Minty led his exhausted brigade to the rear; both man and horse had gone without food since the previous morning. They would be spared the worst of the fighting over the next two days.⁴⁹

FIGHTING AT REED'S BRIDGE

5 P.M., 18 SEPTEMBER

TO

7 A.M., 19 SEPTEMBER 1863

The military action at Reed's Bridge did not end on the afternoon of September 18. Later that night, Benning's and Law's brigades would cross the bridge and follow the path of Hood's division toward the Viniard House. It was shortly after their crossing that Colonel Daniel McCook's brigade would arrive near the bridge.⁵⁰

At 4 p.m., September 18, Major General Gordon Granger, having received Minty's messages of the predicament at Reed's Bridge, ordered McCook to march from Rossville to Reed's Bridge and reinforce Minty. By 5 p.m., McCook was on the road; Colonel John Mitchell's brigade would follow one hour later. Both brigades marched east on Reed's Bridge Road and came within one mile of the bridge before halting for the night, between 9 and 10 p.m.⁵¹

Before halting, the head of McCook's column virtually ran into the rear of a Confederate brigade marching south on Jay's Mill Road to join Hood's division.⁵² McCook believed he had stumbled upon an isolated Confederate brigade and planned to engage this phantom brigade at dawn. He ordered line of battle to be formed perpendicular to and south of the Reed's Bridge Road. Skirmishers were stationed just inside a thick woods facing the Jay field to the south, the sawmill being in plain view.⁵³

Bringing up the rear of this Confederate brigade, was a ragtag crew of surgeons, privates, and a brass band. It was near Jay's Mill, perhaps at the fork of the Jay's Mill and Brotherton Roads, that some of these men became confused about the direction to Hood's camp. In the darkness of night, the unsuspecting rebels asked directions from some of McCook's advance scouts. The Federals were all too happy to give directions -- back into the Union lines as prisoners.⁵⁴ Shortly thereafter, some Confederate medical officers would also be captured as W. L. Gammage, a Confederate brigade surgeon, narrated:

[These six officers] happening to remain behind to procure rations, attempted to join their commands, when they were halted by a picket and required to tell who they were, which having done, they were ordered to dismount and advance, one at a time. They, supposing the challenge to be a Confederate vidette, complied, one going forward at a time. Dr. DeBerry, being the hindmost one of the group, halted, and having a suspicion that there was something wrong, turned his horse and galloped furiously back down the road. The others were no sooner within the picket lines than they were robbed of their horses and hurried back to Chattanooga under guard, where they were kept as prisoners until the fight was over . . . The medical officers were then exchanged and sent through the lines to join the command. Captain Ohlson was retained as a prisoner of war, and the boys who shared his captivity for a short

time report that the last time they saw him, he was keeping step between two lusty musketeers and cursing the "D--d wagabones."⁵⁵

McCook's skirmishers were kept on their toes that night by the sound of couriers on horseback and wagon trains moving south along Jay's Mill Road. Company F of the Sixty-ninth Ohio, stationed near the road, would capture one horseman and skirmish with a cavalry detachment around midnight. Company B nearly captured an orderly to Colonel Ashby of the Second Tennessee, but the trooper escaped on foot after his horse was shot out from under him. The night skirmishing would continue sporadically until about 2 a.m.⁵⁶ In all, twenty-two rebels were taken prisoner by the Union pickets.⁵⁷

Brigadier General James Steedman, a division commander under Granger, had ordered the burning of Reed's Bridge to deny that vital crossing point to the Confederates.⁵⁸ Before dawn, McCook dispatched Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Brigham and his Sixty-ninth Ohio to accomplish this. Brigham was not enthusiastic about this raid behind enemy lines, especially since he was only temporarily attached to McCook's command.⁵⁹ Brigham and his Buckeyes marched down the Reed's Bridge Road a short distance before angling into the forest north of the road. Guiding these raiders, was an old farmer who had been captured near Jay's Mill. McCook had told Brigham to warn the old man that if his regiment ran into any trouble, he would be the first one shot. The old man led the Federals unwillingly, through the forest, over a hill, and into his own cornfield; the regiment halting when the vanguard halted, advancing when it advanced.⁶⁰ In this field, the regiment passed hundreds of smoldering campfires, suggesting that an enemy unit of some number had just left.⁶¹ By this route, the Sixty-ninth Ohio successfully reached the bridge, as Captain L. E. Hicks remembered:

By our swift and stealthy approach we succeeded in taking the Confederate pickets completely by surprise. Some of them lying by a fire on our side of the river were captured; those on actual duty at the bridge-head ran away closely followed by our vanguard charging across with fixed bayonets.

This charge is depicted in relief on the monument of the Sixty Ninth near Reed's Bridge. The main body of the regiment did not cross the river. I threw out a few pickets, and with my vanguard alone held the farther bank till the fire was well started.

The planks were torn up and piled upon the beams together with some of the dry cedar rails from the cornfield fence. Then calling in my pickets we re-crossed on the stringers in the full blaze of the flames already leaping high in the air.⁶²

In truth, this detail had some difficulty getting the bridge to catch fire. Meanwhile, the rest of the Sixty-ninth waited, taking position behind a fence along the Reed's Bridge Road. Here, Soldier Gam Pease found a reminder of the previous day's bloodshed -- a dead soldier of the Fourth Michigan. Pease found the trooper's watch still running; it read 5:30. The soldier's watch and other personal effects were collected and given to a captain to be returned to the soldier's family.⁶³

Meanwhile, Davidson's cavalry brigade, having camped overnight at Alexander's Bridge, was ordered toward Jay's Mill early on the 19th to patrol beyond the Confederate right. Davidson, having only joined his brigade six hours earlier, was accompanied by his division commander, John Pegram. The troopers stopped in the woods just south of Jay's Mill to fix breakfast while a detachment of the Sixth Georgia cavalry probed forward.⁶⁴

Until this point, no shots had been fired at Reed's Bridge since Bushrod Johnson's arrival the previous afternoon. The Buckeyes were fixing their breakfasts, enjoying the warmth of the fire on that cold morning, when the rebel guards returned and began firing from the east bank; one man from Company B was hit in the shoulder. The bright flames from the bridge and the sounds of skirmishing alerted nearby Confederate camps -- one being at the creekbend a few hundred yards south. To make matters worse, skirmishers from Davidson's cavalry threatened to cut off the Sixty-ninth from the rest of McCook's brigade. Nearly surrounded, Brigham ordered a hasty withdrawal to McCook's position. Three Ohioans were taken prisoner while covering the retreat.⁶⁵

Back behind Federal lines, Lieutenant Colonel David Magee of the Eighty-sixth Illinois was trying to manage a small riot. Magee's pickets had discovered a spring near Jay's Mill during the night, and soon the whole thirsty brigade knew about it. Magee sent Lieutenant William Faulkner with two men from each company to fill the regiment's canteens. Soldiers from other regiments sneaked out to join the water detail, adding to the commotion and confusion.⁶⁶

It was this water detail that the Sixth Georgia first spied upon. Both sides began taking pot shots at the other; the Federal water detail fell back when more of Davidson's cavalry rode up, accompanied by one of Gustave Huwald's guns. Private Andrew Peters waited too long, however, and was taken prisoner by the advancing Confederates.⁶⁷

McCook, believing that he would initiate the day's fighting in his sector, was taken aback by Davidson's appearance. He was even more surprised to receive a dispatch copy, around 7 a.m., from Rosecrans to Granger: "Withdraw McCook and Mitchell if not already too late." McCook, dejected that he would not earn his coveted brigadier general's star this day, ordered Mitchell's brigade back to the LaFayette Road.⁶⁸

Spotting a dust cloud to the west, McCook galloped to its source, hoping that his orders might be countermanded. He met Major General George H. Thomas, who was positioning his corps along the LaFayette Road after an all-night march. Still believing there was a lone rebel brigade trapped west of Reed's

Bridge, McCook requested permission to go back. Thomas declined to override Rosecrans' order, but decided instead to send John Croxton's brigade forward to probe the enemy's disposition.⁶⁹ McCook, while riding back to his command, passed Colonel Croxton and stopped long enough to snarl: "had it not been for the inopportune receipt of this detested order [I] would have moved on and whipped the indiscreet rebel command, and thus deserved promotion."⁷⁰

Without waiting to call in his skirmishers, McCook sent back the Second Illinois Light Artillery, Battery I, and the Eighty-sixth Illinois, which was already under fire from Huwald's gun. The Fifty-second Ohio, also on the front line, quickly followed suit. By now, Confederate cavalry were harassing the brigade from the front, right and left flanks.⁷¹

Colonel Oscar Harmon of the One hundred twenty-fifth Illinois, not yet aware of the withdrawal order, nervously watched the Eighty-sixth fall back. Nevertheless, he held his position until a courier from McCook delivered the order to retreat. The Eighty-fifth Illinois brought up the rear, sustaining some losses.⁷²

Faulkner's water party scurried back toward Reed's Bridge Road while the Federal skirmish line struggled to hold off the Confederate advance, not knowing their brigade was no longer behind them. The skirmishers also covered the retreat of the Sixty-ninth Ohio behind them. McCook's Inspector had informed the Buckeyes of the order to retreat, but failed to deliver the withdrawal orders to the skirmishers, later citing the severity of the firing.⁷³ Captain Fahnstock, commanding one of two companies of skirmishers from the Eighty-sixth Illinois, recorded the fighting in his diary:

As we were ascending the hill the rebel Skirmish Line was running down on the other side. two rebels in the line ordered me to surrender you yankee Son of a B. I did not appreciate such language for they both drew their guns on me and fired one ball struck close behind me the other in front, and Exploded. I jumped behind a Small tree and leveled my Henry rifle 16 shooter at the Small man. he jumped behind a bush so shott at large man with a frock coat on. Barney Frices on my left says to me you got him. My men fired 10 rounds cartridges and when we got back were we left the Brigade it was gone. So I put my men in two ranks and marched back, and never lost a man. Marched back one mile when we found the Brigade.
(sic)⁷⁴

Fahnstock's company had only one man slightly wounded in the fighting. The other company of skirmishers from the Eighty-sixth was not so lucky: one man dead, four others captured.⁷⁵ Three

skirmishers from the Fifty-second Ohio were also taken prisoner.⁷⁶

The order given from McCook was to withdraw at the double-quick. As Pease remembered, "it was a grand run, nothing ever saved McCook's Brigade and the 69th but their legs."⁷⁷ McCook's men literally scampered west along Reed's Bridge Road, not stopping until they met John Brannan's division, part of Thomas' corps which had just arrived in the area. Captain Hicks recalled:

We were closely pursued till we reached the line of battle of Brannan's division, Thomas' corps. Brannan's artillery was lined up athwart our course, and I recall very vividly my feeling of relief and satisfaction as we filed through between his guns and heard them begin to bark at our pursuers the moment we passed. Not till then did I feel any assurance that we were not booked for Andersonville.⁷⁸

It was Brannan's division that would continue the fighting with Forrest's cavalry that morning, fighting which would initiate the two-day battle of Chickamauga. McCook's men marched back to Rossville, but would meet Forrest again on the 20th. Mitchell's brigade, which had tagged behind McCook's during the night of the 18th, would lose one-third of its number on Snodgrass Hill during the 20th.⁷⁹

Colonel Dan McCook would eventually win the silver star for which he lusted. He received the promotion after being wounded in battle at Kennesaw Mountain, Georgia, on June 27, 1864. McCook died three weeks later, a brigadier general at last.⁸⁰

The wooden Reed's Bridge survived three attempts to render it impassible, including the fire of September 19. After extinguishing the flames, the rebels simply appropriated some planks from the Reed barn and repaired the bridge for use that same day.⁸¹ Although the original wooden bridge has long since disappeared, today, a modern concrete structure spans the Chickamauga only a few yards upstream from where its ancestor lay.

During and after the battle, the J. J. Reed house would serve as a small field hospital for wounded rebels.⁸² According to the Reed family history, some wounded Yankees also wound up there:

Tradition tells us that Monroe Reed was sick with the flu and resting at LaFayette, Georgia on the eve of the Chickamauga Battle and asked for leave to go home. On being told he couldn't go, said "That fighting at Reed's Bridge is at my home and I am going."

When he arrived he found some wounded Yankees outside and asked Sally, his sister, what those Yankee's were doing on the porch.

Sally told him they were wounded and he told her he knew what to do with wounded Yankees.

He went outside and when he approached, one

of the Yankees held up his hand to shake -- of course, the hard hearted Rebel shook his hand and let the Yank die in peace.⁸³

According to another account, it was also at the Reed house that Confederate Brigadier General Benjamin Helm died, deeply grieving his brother-in-law, Abraham Lincoln.⁸⁴ After the battle, a cemetery of 102 graves was established on the Reed property, southwest of the Reed's Bridge Road and Harrison-LaFayette Road junction.⁸⁵ The remains were later exhumed and transferred to other cemeteries, probably around the turn of the century.

WORKS CITED

This bibliography is divided into three sections. The first section lists all sources used in this related lands study. The second details those sources that were unavailable. It also notes sources which made minor references to the Reed's Bridge engagement but were not used in writing this paper; they are annotated as **NU**, for not used. The final section lists those sources determined to be of no value to our study.

In researching potential newspaper sources, I have used: Newspapers in Microform and Helen Ellis' A Guide to the Material in Detroit Newspapers, 1861-1866.

I have also endeavored to use soldiers' manuscripts in this study whenever possible. The National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections and Ida Brown's Michigan Men in the Civil War have been extremely helpful in locating some of these sources. When applicable, I have listed the MS number for those items appearing in NUCMC.

C. E. Dornbusch's Military Bibliography of the Civil War was used extensively to locate books and journal articles about each regiment in Minty's and McCook's Union brigades and in Johnson's Confederate division.

Much information has come from the Official Records of the War of the Rebellion, Series 1, Vol. 30, Parts 1 and 2. In my endnotes, I have abbreviated these references as OR followed by the appropriate part number and page number. This abbreviation is also used in my bibliography following the first full reference.

The United States Army Command and General Staff College (USACGSC) at Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, has greatly assisted my efforts in this project for which I am indebted. Its staff has sent typed copies of soldiers' manuscripts and National Tribune articles, which are duly noted in the bibliography. Because these were not the original copies, I have not listed any page numbers for those manuscript or Tribune references in my endnotes.

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1. OR, pt. 1, 653.

2. Stormont 178.

3. Stormont 178; OR, pt. 2, 528.

Hight's record coincides almost perfectly with Pegram's official report of the Confederate attack on Palmer's division, September 10. It is highly likely that Pegram's cavalry was the last Confederate unit near Reed's Bridge until September 18. It is also likely, although impossible to prove, that Pegram's men tore up some of the bridge's flooring in an attempt to render it impassible to the Union army.

4. Cozzens 81.

5. Cozzens 78-79.

6. Belknap 90, 275; Minty, narrative; Robertson 654-55; Vale 216; OR, pt. 1, 922.

7. Cozzens 102; Connelly 197; OR, pt. 2, 451, 471.

8. Cozzens 102-103; Belknap 86, 279, 282; National Tribune 14 Nov. 1895; Robertson 657; Skinner 302; Vale 241; OR, pt. 2, 31.

9. Cozzens 102; Connelly 197; National Tribune 14 Nov. 1895; OR, pt. 2, 451.

10. Hicks 6.

11. Cozzens 105; Minty, account; National Tribune 14 Nov. 1895; Robertson 656; Shuster, letter; Skinner 307, 309; Vale 227; OR, pt. 1, 923; OR, pt. 2, 451, 524.

There are widely varying estimates as to the strength of Johnson's provisional division ranging from 3,600 to 10,000. The discrepancy can be attributed to the fact that Johnson was reinforced en route to Reed's Bridge. Minty reports there being 7,000 Confederates, and several of his junior officers give the same approximation. This is probably the best estimate of Confederate strength after Forrest's cavalry and Major Felix Robertson's batteries arrive at Pea Vine Creek about 11 a.m. and after Brigadier General H. B. Davidson's cavalry brigade arrives at Reed's Bridge in the early afternoon.

12. Belknap 276, 283; Burns, letter; Haines, diary; Minty, account; National Tribune 14 Nov. 1895; Robertson 655; Shuster, letter; Vale 224-25; OR, pt. 1, 922.

13. Cozzens 103-04; Simpson 308; Skinner 309; OR, pt. 2, 451, 479.
14. OR, pt. 2, 479.
15. Cozzens 104; Minty, account; Shuster, letter; Skinner 303-04, 309; Stevens, letter; OR, pt. 2, 452, 479.
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17. Skinner 304, 309; OR, pt. 2, 451, 467.
18. Cozzens 104; Belknap 91, 276; Burns, letter; Minty, account; National Tribune 14 Nov. 1895; Potter, diary; Robertson 655; Skinner 304, 309; Stevens, letter; Vale 225; OR, pt. 1, 922.
19. Cozzens 104; Burns, letter; Potter, diary; Skinner 304; OR, pt. 2, 452, 471.
20. OR, pt. 2, 488.
21. Cozzens 104-05; Belknap 91, 277; Burns, letter; Haines, diary; Minty, account; National Tribune 14 Nov. 1895; Potter, diary; Robertson 655; Skinner 304, 309; Vale 225; OR, pt. 1, 922-23.
22. Cozzens 104; Belknap 91, 277; Robertson 655; Skinner 304; Vale 225; OR, pt. 1, 922.
23. Cozzens 104-05; Belknap 91; Haines, diary; Minty, account; Robertson 655; Stevens, letter; Vale 233; OR, pt. 1, 923.
24. Belknap 91; Haines, diary; Minty, account; Robertson 655; OR, pt. 1, 923.
25. Cozzens 105; Belknap 91, 277; Burns, letter; Minty, account; Robertson 655; Skinner 310; Vale 225; OR, pt. 1, 447, 451, 922-23.
26. Cozzens 105; Belknap 91, 283; Haines, diary; Minty, account; National Tribune 14 Nov. 1895; Potter, diary; Robertson 655; Shuster, letter; Sipes 79; Skinner 304; Vale 225; OR, pt. 1, 923.
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27. Cozzens 105; Belknap 91; Robertson 655; Shuster, letter; Vale

226; OR, pt. 1, 923.

28. Belknap 283; Potter, diary; Skinner 304-05, 309; Stevens, letter; Vale 226; OR, pt. 2, 472, 479.

29. Cozzens 105; Belknap 91, 277; Minty, account; Robertson 655-56; Skinner 304, 310; Vale 226; OR, pt. 1, 923; OR, pt. 2, 488.

30. Cozzens 105; Haines, diary; Robertson 655; Stevens, letter; OR, pt. 1, 923.

31. Stevens, letter.

32. Skinner 304-05; OR, pt. 2, 472, 479, 484, 492, 524.

33. Belknap 283; Henry 182; Skinner 304; Vale 226; Wyeth 245-46.

34. Cozzens 105, 108; Belknap 91-92, 277, 283; Braley, letter; Haines, diary; Minty, account; National Tribune 14 Nov. 1895; Potter, diary; Robertson 656; Shuster, letter; Sipes 80; Skinner 305; Vale 227; OR, pt. 1, 923; OR, pt. 2, 452, 472, 479, 484, 488.

35. Belknap 92; Haines, diary; Minty, account; Robertson 656; Skinner 305; Vale 227; OR, pt. 1, 923.

36. Cozzens 105; Vale 233-34.

As Vale admits in his book, this account is "narrated with such circumstantial minuteness, by eyewitnesses at the time," but that he has no means of verifying or contradicting the story. I have not found any other primary or secondary sources to document this story.

37. Cozzens 105; Chickamauga map; Monument to Fourth Michigan; Ringgold Road map; Shirley 3-5; United States, 1860 Census, 97; United States, 1870 Census, 39; Vale 233-34.

38. Cozzens 108; Connelly 198; Simpson 308; Skinner 310; OR, pt. 2, 452.

39. Cozzens 108; OR, pt. 2, 452, 472, 484, 488.

40. Cozzens 108; OR, pt. 2, 452, 472, 479, 484.

41. Cozzens 111; Hicks 7, map; Shuster, letter; Skinner 305-06; Wyeth 245; OR, pt. 2, 452, 524.

There is room for debate on what other elements of Forrest's cavalry corps participated in the Reed's Bridge skirmish. Several accounts suggest Forrest's cavalry fording both above and below the Chickamauga. Some accounts refer to Brig. Gen. Pegram's division reinforcing Forrest, however, Col. Scott's brigade was busy engaging Granger at Red House Bridge on Sept. 18. It's

likely that only Davidson's brigade reinforced Forrest and that it crossed the Chickamauga just north of Reed's Bridge.

42. Cozzens 111; Connelly 199; Hicks 7-8; Polley 201; Simpson 308-09; Skinner 305, 310; OR, pt. 2, 452, 472.

43. Cozzens 111; Belknap 92, 277, 284; Minty, account; National Tribune 14 Nov. 1895; Robertson 656; Skinner 305-06; Stevens, letter; Vale 228; OR, pt. 1, 923.

44. Stevens, letter.

45. Belknap 284; Minty, account; Skinner 305, 310; Vale 228.

It is open for debate whether or not Minty's brigade moved down the Brotherton Road. Minty states that he "was closely followed by the enemy, and had to continually turn and check them." This might suggest that his brigade moved along the Alexander-Viniard Road, but I am still inclined to believe Minty travelled the Brotherton Road.

46. OR, pt. 2, 452.

47. Cozzens 112; Simpson 309; Skinner 306; OR, pt. 2, 452, 472.

48. Cozzens 114; Belknap 92-93, 278; Minty, account; Robertson 656; Simpson 309-10; Skinner 306, 310; Vale 228, 230; OR, pt. 1, 923; OR, pt. 2, 452-53, 524.

49. Belknap 93-94, 278-79; Burns, letter; Haines, diary; Minty, account; National Tribune 14 Nov. 1895; Robertson 656; Sipes 81; Skinner 310; Vale 234; OR, pt. 1, 923-24.

50. Cozzens 119-20; Hicks 10-11; Polley 200; Simpson 310, 315; OR, pt. 2, 451, 453.

Law's brigade, under the command of Colonel James Sheffield, was cooking its rations when Bushrod Johnson left for Reed's Bridge. It was ordered to follow Johnson as soon as possible, but did not rejoin the division until early the next morning. Benning's brigade was left at Ringgold to guard the railroad depot, but later moved to join Johnson by early morning on the 19th.

2. Fahnestock, diary, 18 Sept. 1863; Green, letter; Hicks 3; History of . . . Battery M 83; McAdams 41; Magee, letter; Ross, diary, 18 Sept. 1863; OR, pt. 1, 853-54, 860, 867, 871.

52. Cozzens 121; Benedict, letter; Brigham, letter; Fahnestock, letter; Faulkner, letter, 17 Mar. 1894; Hicks 3; Magee, letter; OR, pt. 1, 871.

McCook claims to have bumped into the rear of McNair's brigade, part of Bushrod Johnson's division, which fought Minty's

cavalry earlier on the 18th. This is extremely unlikely, however, since McNair was probably near the Viniard house by the time McCook arrived near Jay's Mill. It is far more likely that the Confederate brigade belonged to Law or Benning, who both left Ringgold late and were trying to catch up with Johnson.

53. Cozzens 121; Aten 103; Benedict, letter; Brigham, letter; Brown 60; Fahnestock, diary, 18 Sept. 1863; Fahnestock, letter; Faulkner, letter, 7 Apr. 1894; Faulkner, letter, 17 Mar. 1894; Hicks 3-4; Magee, letter; Rogers 77; Ross, diary, 18 Sept. 1863; OR, pt. 1, 871, 873, 875, 878, 880.

The accompanying map gives the positions of McCook's brigade. No documentation has been found regarding the position of the Sixty-ninth Ohio before their mission to Reed's Bridge. Hicks and Benedict both claim the Sixty-ninth led McCook's advance. When line of battle was formed, the Buckeyes may have been posted in advance of the rest of the brigade, perhaps along the Jay's Mill Road. They were only temporarily attached to McCook's brigade and perhaps considered expendable.

No information is available about the position of Mitchell's brigade either, except that battlefield markers place Mitchell behind McCook, along the Reed's Bridge Road during the night of 18 Sept.

54. Brigham, letter; Chenoweth and Rutman, letter; Hicks 3; Magee, letter; Pease, letter.

55. Gammage 96-97.

56. Benedict, letter; Fahnestock, diary, 18 Sept. 1863; Hicks 5-6; Magee, letter; Ross, diary, 18 Sept. 1863; OR, pt. 1, 873, 875.

57. Aten 103; Thompson, letter; OR, pt. 1, 853, 871.

58. OR, pt. 1, 854, 860.

59. Cozzens 121-22; Benedict, letter; Brigham, letter; Chenoweth and Rutman, letter; Hicks 9; Homer, letter, 26 Mar. 1896; Pease, letter; Thompson, letter; OR, pt. 1, 854, 871.

Homer insisted that other regimental commanders turned down McCook's request to burn Reed's Bridge and claimed his commander, Col. Brigham, requested the honor for the Sixty-ninth Ohio. If this is this case, no one else, including Brigham himself, took due credit after the raid.

60. Cozzens 122; Hicks 9-10, 18; Pease, letter; United States, 1860 Census, 95.

The "old farmer" Hicks mentions is unknown. According to Hicks, the old man led the Sixty-ninth Ohio "through his own cornfield which extended close to the bridge." Battlefield maps and Colonel Minty's recollection suggest (Skinner 277) that the

field might belong to the McAbee family. Census records confirm that a 53-year old male, by the name of McAbee, lived in Catoosa County in 1860. However, Mr. McAbee owned no real estate whatsoever according to census and Catoosa County deed records.

According to deed records, Jesse Jay, who owned the nearby sawmill, also held some land near the position of McCook's brigade. The deed records indicate that he purchased the property in 1862 and sold out in 1868. His name does not appear in either the 1860 or 1870 Catoosa County census. In 1870, a John Jay is living in the county, but he is only 31 years old and owns no real estate. Thus the age of Jesse Jay and the true identity of the "old farmer" remain a mystery.

61. Pease, letter.

62. Hicks 10.

Benedict, in his Oct. 4, 1863, letter observed four Confederate pickets about 100 yards down the Reed's Bridge Road. He also notes that for quite some time, no shots were fired.

63. Bradner, letter; Burns, letter; National Tribune, 8 Apr. 1915; Pease, letter; Rea, letters, 15 Oct. 1914 and 10 Dec. 1914; Thompson, letter.

Pease claims this fence ran northwest from the bridge to a piece of timber. It is difficult to be certain, but I believe he is referring to the fence which ran parallel to and north of Reed's Bridge Road.

Pease also states: "that 4th Mich. soldier found along the fence was buried by Reed, a Confederate, and also another one that died at Reed's house, not far from the bridge. Reed is still living there, and says both soldiers have been taken to Chattanooga Cemetery." Pease claims that a George Belt collected the soldier's effects and gave them to a captain to be mailed. The National Tribune of 8 Apr 1915, credits F. E. Wilson as being that captain.

Thompson tells a similar story about a dead trooper from the Fourth Michigan lying near the timber, across a small open space.

He says he and his brother took the watch and a picture of the soldier's wife and two children and sent them to the soldier's family. He also mentions he later received a letter of thanks from the soldier's wife.

Rea, on the other hand, claims to be sure the dead trooper was from the Seventh Pennsylvania. He places the body at a fence corner in some bushes. In a Dec. 10, 1914, letter to the Tribune, Rea writes that a Samuel Quarter of Pottsville, Pennsylvania asked him to identify the body of the Pennsylvanian. Quarter said that two men from his company F, Seventh Pennsylvania, were killed near the bridge. According to Bates' History of the Pennsylvania Volunteers, however, the only deaths in Company F were those three who had died early in the fighting at Pea Vine Ridge.

Burns of the Fourth Michigan writes in a letter shortly after

the battle that the dead Michigander's last name was Richard and that he was in company C.

Bradner, also of the Fourth Michigan, claims that the trooper's body was never buried, but that it was discovered by other members of his company around November 18-20, 1863, with his watch and letters undisturbed.

Not having access to the official roster of Michigan units, reconciliation of these accounts is impossible.

64. Cozzens 124; Henry 182; Wyeth 246; OR, pt. 2, 524, 528.

65. Cozzens 124; Benedict, letter; Brigham, letter; Chenoweth and Rutman, letter; Hicks 10-12; Homer, letter, 5 Jan. 1905; Pease, letter; Rea, letter, 15 Oct. 1914.

Hicks claims an entire rebel brigade was bivouacked just south of the bridge. It could have been Law or Benning's brigade there, or merely a Confederate squad detailed to guarding the supply route. There is no way to verify either of these suppositions.

Brigham, in his post-war letter, claims that four men from his regiment were lost, and that two rebels were captured during the raid. Most other sources, however, report only three prisoners taken from the Sixty-ninth.

66. Cozzens 122; Faulkner, letter, 7 Apr. 1894; Faulkner, letter, 17 Mar. 1894; Hicks 13; Magee, letter; OR, pt. 1, 875.

67. Cozzens 124; Fahnestock, diary, 19 Sept. 1863; Fahnestock, letter; OR, pt. 1, 875, 878, 880; OR, pt. 2, 524, 528.

68. Cozzens 122-24; Aten 104; Brown 60; Fahnestock, diary, 19 Sept. 1863; Faulkner, letter, 7 Apr. 1894; Hicks 13; Ross, diary, 19 Sept. 1863; OR, pt. 1, 854, 860, 867, 871, 873, 876, 878.

69. Cozzens 123; Brown 61; Hicks 13; Simpson 315; OR, pt. 1, 249.

70. Cozzens 123.

71. Cozzens 124; Aten 104; Brown 60; Magee, letter; Ross, diary, 19 Sept. 1863; OR, pt. 1, 871, 876, 880.

On the regiment's order of withdrawal, I must beg to differ with Peter Cozzens. He claims the order of march to be: Eighty-sixth, Eighty-fifth, One Hundred Twenty-fifth, and finally the Fifty-Second Ohio as the last regiment to withdraw (124). From reading the reports and letters listed above however, I must conclude the order to be: Eighty-sixth, Fifty-second, One Hundred Twenty-fifth, and lastly the Eighty-fifth.

72. Magee, letter; OR, pt. 1, 873-74, 878.

73. Fahnestock, diary, 19 Sept 1863; Fahnestock, letter; OR, pt.

1, 875-76.

The timing of the Sixty-ninth Ohio's retreat cannot be determined, only that they did escape complete capture.

74. Fahnestock, diary, 19 Sept. 1863.

75. Fahnestock, diary, 19 Sept. 1863; Magee, letter; OR, pt. 1, 876.

Magee notes only four men captured in his report and letter.

76. Holmes 125.

Levi Adolphus Ross, in his Sept. 19 journal, records that there were two killed, four wounded and four prisoners. It is not clear, however, whether he is referring to his regiment, the Eighty-Sixth Illinois, or to the entire brigade.

77. Pease, letter.

78. Hicks 13. For the record, Andersonville was not established as a Confederate prisoner of war camp until February, 1864.

79. Henry 183; Hicks 13-14; Simpson 315; OR, pt. 1, 868, 871.

80. Hicks 20-21; Official Roster of the Soldiers of the State of Ohio . . ., vol. 4, 804; Reid, vol. 1, 905; vol. 2, 319.

81. Pease, letter; OR, pt. 2, 525.

82. Davis 191; Shirley 5.

83. Shirley 5.

84. Davis 191-92.

85. Ringgold Road, map of lot 128; Braley, letter; National Tribune, 14 Nov. 1895; Minty, account; Skinner 96, 277; Vale 231.

APPENDICES

ORDER OF BATTLE¹

Army of the Cumberland
Major William S. Roscerans, Commanding

CAVALRY CORPS

Major General David S. Stanley
Brigadier General Robert B. Mitchell

Second Division

Brigadier General George Crook

First Brigade

Colonel Robert H. G. Minty

4th Michigan - Maj. Horace Gray
7th Pennsylvania - Lt. Col. James J. Seibert
4th United States - Capt. James B. McIntyre
Chicago Board of Trade Battery (section of 2 guns)
Capt. James H. Stokes
3rd Indiana battalion (in Chattanooga)

RESERVE CORPS

Major General Gordon Granger

First Division

Brigadier General James B. Steedman

Second Brigade

Colonel John G. Mitchell

78th Illinois - Lt. Col Carter Van Vlecke
98th Ohio - Capt. Moses J. Urquhart
113th Ohio - Lt. Col Darius B. Warner
121st Ohio - Lt. Col Henry B. Banning
1st Illinois Light Artillery, Battery M
Lt. Thomas Burton

¹ OR, pt. 1, 46-47; OR, pt. 2, 15, 17-18, 20. Major General John Bell Hood assumed command of Johnson's division late in the afternoon of 18 September. The next day, the division was attached to Longstreet's corps.

Second Division - Second Brigade
Colonel Daniel McCook

85th Illinois - Col. Caleb J. Dilworth
86th Illinois - Lt. Col. David W. Magee
125th Illinois - Col. Oscar F. Harmon
52nd Ohio - Maj. James T. Holmes
69th Ohio - Lt. Col. Joseph H. Brigham
2nd Illinois Light Artillery, Battery I
Capt. Charles M. Barnett

Army of Tennessee
General Braxton Bragg, Commanding

JOHNSON'S PROVISIONAL DIVISION
Brigadier General Bushrod R. Johnson

Gregg's Brigade
Brigadier General John Gregg
Colonel Cyrus A. Sugg

3d Tennessee - Col. Calvin H. Walker
10th Tennessee - Col. William Grace
30th Tennessee - Lt. Col. James J. Turner
41st Tennessee - Lt. Col. James D. Tillman
50th Tennessee - Col. Cyrus A. Sugg
1st Tennessee Battalion - Maj. Stephen H. Colms
7th Texas - Col. H. B. Granbury
Bledsoe's (Missouri) Battery - Lt. R. L. Wood

Johnson's Brigade
Brigadier General Bushrod R. Johnson
Colonel John S. Fulton

17th Tennessee - Lt. Col. Watt W. Floyd
23rd Tennessee - Col. R. H. Keeble
25th Tennessee - Lt. Col. R. B. Snowden
44th Tennessee - Lt. Col. John L. McEwen, Jr.
Maj. G. M. Crawford

McNair's Brigade
Brigadier General Evander McNair
Colonel David Coleman

1st Arkansas Mounted Rifles - Col. Robert W. Harper
2nd Arkansas Mounted Rifles - Col. James A. Williamson

25th Arkansas - Lt. Col Eli Hufstedler
4th and 31st Arkansas and 4th Arkansas Bataillion (consolidated) -
Maj. J. A. Ross
39th North Carolina - Col. David Coleman
Culpeper's (South Carolina) Battery - Capt. James F. Culpepper

Robertson's Brigade
Brigadier General Jerome B. Robertson
Colonel Van H. Manning

3rd Arkansas - Col. Van H. Manning
1st Texas - Capt. R. J. Harding
4th Texas - Lt. Col. John P. Bane
5th Texas - Maj. J. C. Rogers

FORREST'S CORPS
Brigadier General Nathan B. Forrest

Escort
Jackson's Company Tennessee Cavalry
Capt. J. C. Jackson

Pegram's Division
Brigadier General John Pegram

Davidson's Brigade
Brigadier General H. B. Davidson²

1st Georgia - Col. J. J. Morrison
6th Georgia - Col John R. Hart
6th North Carolina - Col. George N. Folk
Rucker's (1st Tennessee) Legion - Col. E. W. Rucker
Huwald's Tennessee Battery - Capt. Gustave A. Huwald

² Davidson's brigade was commanded by John Pegram, division commander, until Davidson arrived early on the morning of 19 September.

CASUALTIES OF FIGHTING AT REED'S BRIDGE

SEPTEMBER 18, 1863

<u>Union Regiments</u>	<u>Killed</u>	<u>Wounded</u>	<u>Missing</u>
Chicago Board of Trade Battery	0	0	0 ³
4th Michigan Cavalry	1	10	3 ⁴
4th United States Cavalry	?	?	?
7th Pennsylvania Cavalry	4	2	0 ⁵
 <u>Confederate Regiments</u>			
17th Tennessee Infantry	0	1	0 ⁶
23rd Tennessee Infantry	0	5	0 ⁷

No other Confederate losses are mentioned in the official records for Johnson's division during September 18.

³ Report of the Adjutant General of the State of Illinois, vol. 8, 732-43.

⁴ Robertson 656.

⁵ Bates, vol. 2, 1114-1166; Skinner 309.

⁶ OR, pt. 2, 452, 472, 479.

⁷ OR, pt. 2, 452, 472, 484.

CASUALTIES OF FIGHTING (continued)

SEPTEMBER 19, 1863

<u>Union Regiments</u>	<u>Killed</u>	<u>Wounded</u>	<u>Missing</u>
2nd Illinois Lt. Art., Batt. I	0	0	0 ⁸
52nd Ohio Infantry	0	0	3 ⁹
69th Ohio Infantry	0	1	3 ¹⁰
85th Illinois Infantry	0	0	2 ¹¹
86th Illinois Infantry	0	1	5 ¹²
125th Illinois Infantry	0	0	0 ¹³

Mitchell's brigade, which was positioned to the rear of McCook's, suffered no casualties at the Reed's Bridge action. During the night of September 18-19, McCook's men took 22 Confederate prisoners from mixed units.¹⁴

⁸ OR, pt. 1, 882-83.

⁹ Holmes 125; OR, pt. 1, 882.

¹⁰ Benedict, letter; Hicks 12.

¹¹ OR, pt. 1, 874.

¹² Fahnestock, diary, 19 Sept. 1863; Fahnestock, letter, 24 Feb. 1894; OR, pt. 1, 875-76. Fahnestock reported in his 1894 letter that one of the captured soldiers, Bennett, was killed. The official record mentions only that an Alexander Bennett was missing, condition unknown.

¹³ OR, pt. 1, 871, 878.

¹⁴ OR, pt. 1, 867, 871.

REFERENCE LIST OF GEOGRAPHICAL TERMS

Alexander's Bridge - The next bridge upstream from Reed's Bridge, three miles away by water, only one and a half miles away by air. Named for J. P. Alexander who owned a large area of land around the bridge.

Alexander's Bridge Road - That road extending from the Alexander's Bridge north and west, intersecting the Brotherton Road, and stopping at the LaFayette Road. Total length of road inside the battlefield: 2.75 miles.

Brotherton Road - The road extending from Jay's Mill south and west to the LaFayette Road, where the Brotherton house lay. Total length of road: 1.9 miles.

Byram's Ford - See Lambert's Ford.

Catoosa Station - A railroad platform 1.5 miles southeast of Ringgold, Georgia, on the Western & Atlantic Railroad line.

Cherokee Spring - See Peeler's Mill.

Chickamauga Creek - Properly called the West Chickamauga Creek, it flows from Dougherty Gap, at Lookout Mountain, north to the Tennessee River. Though only 75 feet wide at Reed's Bridge, its banks are exceptionally steep and the water waist deep. The only means of crossing wheeled vehicles were at a handful of bridges and fords.

Crubb's Mill - See Peeler's Mill.

Dyer's Bridge - The next bridge downstream from Reed's Bridge, about one and a quarter miles away by air. Named for the Dyer family which owned property and operated a mill near the bridge.

Dyer's Ford - Only a half mile west from the Dyer's Bridge by air, but over a mile upstream from it; this ford was also named for the Dyer family.

Ellison's Mill - See Peeler's Mill.

Fowler's Ford - A ford crossing the Chickamauga Creek almost one-half mile south of Reed's Bridge. Not to be confused with the "bad ford about 300 yards higher up" reported by Minty where the

Chicago Board of Trade battery crossed the creek on September 18.¹⁵ This is the likely site of Forrest's crossing the Chickamauga. Named for the nearby Fowler farmstead.

Graysville Road - See Harrison-LaFayette Road.

Graysville-LaFayette Road - See Harrison-LaFayette Road.

Harrison-LaFayette Road - The road extending from Harrison, Tennessee, through Graysville to LaFayette, Georgia. This road lies between Pea Vine Ridge and the Chickamauga and intersects the Reed's Bridge Road. Also referred to as Graysville-LaFayette Road, Graysville Road, and LaFayette Road. Today, it is referred to as Dietz Road, north of the Reed's Bridge Road, and Burning Bush Road to the south.¹⁶

Jay's Mill - A steam-powered saw mill located near the intersection of Brotherton and Jay's Mill Roads. Just outside the mill, on the north side, was a small spring which has since been lost. An open field extended north from the mill to Reed's Bridge Road, the wood having been cleared for processing. Less than 100 yards northwest of the mill, lay the Jay cornfield.

Jay's Mill Road - The road extending from Reed's Bridge Road south to the Alexander's Bridge Road. Total distance of road: 1 mile.

Keeler's Mill - See Peeler's Mill.

LaFayette Road - Used to describe a number of roads leading to LaFayette, Georgia. In most official reports and in this paper, the term refers to that road leading from Rossville, by Lee and Gordon's Mill, to LaFayette. Used erroneously to refer to the Harrison-LaFayette Road or Graysville-LaFayette Road.

Lambert's Ford - A ford crossing the Chickamauga Creek about three-quarters of a mile upstream from Fowler's Ford. Also called Byram's Ford. Walker's corps crossed here after being delayed at Alexander's Bridge by Wilder on September 18.¹⁷

Lee and Gordon's Mill - A mill co-owned by the Lee and Gordon

¹⁵ OR, pt. 1, 923.

¹⁶ The Harrison-LaFayette Road designation was used most by Minty: OR, pt. 1, 922.

¹⁷ OR, pt. 2, 239.

families; it lay at a point where the LaFayette Road crossed the West Chickamauga Creek.

Leet's Mill and Tan Yard - The Leet property, which lay 6 miles southwest of Ringgold, along the Ringgold-LaFayette Road.

McAbee buildings - The farm home of the McAbee family, located one-half mile directly north of the junction of Reed's Bridge and Jay's Mill Roads. The McAbee cornfield was described as a deadening, meaning it was still dotted with dead, girdled tree trunks.

McLemore's Cove - A narrow cove bounded to the east by the Pigeon Mountains and to the south and west by Lookout Mountain. The West Chickamauga Creek has its source here.

Pea Vine Creek - A small stream flowing generally south to north through a valley two miles wide.

Pea Vine Ridge - Referred to in this paper and in most official reports as that hill range west of the Pea Vine Creek. Today, this range is referred to as Boynton Ridge. The hill range east of the creek is now name Pea Vine Ridge.

Peeler's Factory - See Peeler's Mill.

Peeler's Mill - A water-powered (overshot) mill located near the intersection of Reed's Bridge Road and Pea Vine Creek.¹⁸ Area also referred to as Cherokee Spring, Crubb's Mill, Ellison's Mill, Keeler's Mill and Peeler's Factory.

Red House Bridge - A bridge approximately three miles north of the Reed's Bridge, it spanned the Chickamauga Creek along the Ringgold Road. Also called the Ringgold Bridge.

Reed's Bridge - A frail wooden structure, about 75 feet in length, which spanned the Chickamauga Creek. Named after the Reed family, which owned property at the east bridgehead. The bridge was only wide enough to permit two horses to cross abreast, and Minty recorded that the bridge was "planked with loose boards and fence-rails," at the time of the fighting there.¹⁹

¹⁸ OR, pt. 2, 471.

¹⁹ Belknap 91; Burns, letter; Minty, account; Vale 227; OR, pt. 1, 923.

Reed's Bridge Road - That road beginning in Ringgold, Georgia, crossing the Chickamauga Creek at Reed's Bridge, and continuing to the LaFayette Road. Sometimes erroneously referred to as Ringgold Road, Ringgold-Leet's Road or Ringgold-LaFayette Road. Total length of road: 10 miles.

Reed house - The home where Mrs. Reed and Brigadier General Helm met their deaths, according to legend. The home, belonging to James Jasper Reed, was located 400 yards east of the bridge, on the south side of the road. Another "Reed house," belonging to Thomas Newton Reed, was built before the war 700 yards further down the road. The location of the J. J. Reed house would better satisfy legendary accounts, however. Being closer to the bridge, it would have been directly in the line of fire, thus, more likely that the fabled Mrs. Reed died here. Maps also place the Confederate cemetery right next to the J. J. Reed house, conveniently located near the rebel hospital where Brigadier General Helm may have died.

Ringgold Bridge - See Red House Bridge.

Ringgold Road - That road beginning in Ringgold, Georgia, crossing the Chickamauga Creek at Red House (or Ringgold) Bridge, and continuing to Rossville. Sometimes used erroneously in reference to Reed's Bridge Road. Also called the Rossville-Ringgold Road. Total length of road: 11 miles.

Ringgold-LaFayette Road - See Reed's Bridge Road.

Ringgold-Leet's Road - See Reed's Bridge Road.

Rossville-Ringgold Road - See Ringgold Road.

Viniard-Alexander Road - The road extending from the Alexander house west and slightly south to the Viniard house. Total length of road: 2 miles.

Viniard House - The Viniard house and farm lay along the east side of the LaFayette Road, approximately six miles out of Rossville.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jon Ritterbush wrote this paper as part of his internship with the National Park Service at Chickamauga-Chattanooga National Military Park in Spring 1994. Jon graduated from Albion College in 1995 with a Bachelor's in History, and later earned a Master's in Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois and a Master's in Education from Regent University.

This paper has been slightly reformatted for conversion to newer digital formats, with page numbers, section headers, and a table of contents added or modified for the reader's convenience. The text, works cited, notes and appendices have not been altered since this report's 1994 publication.

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Jon Ritterbush
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