

Chapter 7

Overnight Activities

February 5, 5:00 p.m. – February 6, 5:00 a.m.

After the failed Confederate assaults during the late afternoon of Sunday, February 5, sporadic clashes between opposing pickets continued overnight. McAllister's pickets buried over 30 Confederates, including a commissioned officer. In the morning, they discovered many fresh Rebel graves. Overnight, Federals rounded up disoriented and demoralized Rebels and escorted them back to headquarters for questioning.

Led by Lt. Thomas Tolson, a party of Confederates from McComb's Brigade volunteered to retrieve their fallen comrade, Lt. Charles W. Hodges. Hidden in the woods and under the cover of darkness, they approached the body; however, upon reaching an opening, the moonlight betrayed them. Federal pickets opened fire, forcing the Rebels to abandon the project, losing three killed, three wounded, and two missing.

West of Rocky Branch, on Olmstead's previously quiet front, some Confederates (origins not stated) overran a portion of the Federal picket line. The 184th Pennsylvania, Lt. Col. Charles Kleckner commanding, supported by men from the 36th Wisconsin and 59th New York, drove the Rebels back from the rifle pits they had seized; the 36th lost two captured and up to three wounded.¹

Union Troop Movements

Despite garnering a comfortable victory, AOP commander Meade felt anxious. Intelligence gathered from prisoners fueled his fear that the Confederates planned to attack Humphreys's 2nd Corps further and isolate it from the main Federal line. Meade decided to consolidate his forces around Humphreys's position. A flurry of messages between Union senior commanders initiated substantial movements in response to the failed Rebel attacks.

At 5:00 p.m., Meade informed Warren that the Confederates had fiercely attacked Humphreys, but he had so far repulsed them. Meade put Warren on alert to support

¹ OR 46/1:218-20, 238-39; James M. Aubery, *Thirty-Sixth Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry: 1st Brigade. 2d Division. 2d Army Corps* (New York, 2015), 209, 214; Driver, *1st and 2nd Maryland*, 313.

Humphreys if required. Warren also learned that Gregg had been ordered to report to him at once. Warren passed on Meade's news to his divisional commanders, preparing them for the possibility of moving back up Vaughan Road. Meade, however, only sent his order to Gregg at 6:25 p.m. as the weary cavalymen returned to Malone's Bridge. Crucially, Gregg didn't receive the message.²

Meade had already summoned reinforcements, Brig. Gen. Hartranft's 9th Corps division at 2:00 p.m., but he wanted more support. Soon after 6:00 p.m., he contacted 6th Corps commander, Maj. Gen. George W. Getty requesting reinforcements. Getty replied that he would dispatch Maj. Gen. Frank Wheaton's division of 4,400 men. At 7:20 p.m., Getty informed Meade that Hartranft's 9th Corps division had just passed by, and Wheaton's troops would follow them immediately.³

At 7:10 p.m., Meade sent an anxious note to Grant informing him that the Confederates had attacked Humphreys, inflicting possibly 300 casualties (a gross overestimation). The AOP commander believed the enemy was concentrating its forces, with intelligence suggesting they planned to turn Humphreys's right. Meade explained that he had summoned reinforcements from the 9th Corps and the 6th Corps, and he'd ordered Gregg to join Warren. Grant responded immediately, telling Meade to bring Warren and Gregg back to Humphreys. However, with a broader strategic assessment of the situation than Meade, Grant saw this as an opportunity to strike. He told Meade to follow up the enemy if possible, "it may lead to getting the South Side [Rail] Road, or a position from which it can be reached. Change original instructions to give all advantages you can take of the enemy's acts."

Over an hour later (8:22 p.m.), Meade replied to Grant, saying that he'd withdrawn Warren and Gregg to the Hatcher's Run-Vaughan Road crossing (neither of which had yet occurred but were in progress). Humphreys awaited developments and would attack if the opportunity presented and push the enemy back into their works. Meade argued against Grant's idea of advancing on the Southside Railroad, saying that the Rebels had extensive fortifications blocking the way; "we can hardly reach the Boydton Plank Road or South Side Railroad without a flank movement considerably to the left." Meade surmised that the Rebels had attacked Humphreys on the right to prevent such a flanking movement.⁴

² *OR* 46/2:402, 404, 409.

³ *OR* 46/1:193, 255; *OR* 46/2:404-06. Getty was standing in as 6th Corps commander, because Maj. Gen. Wright was on leave.

⁴ *OR* 46/2:389-90; *OR* 46/1:150.

At 8:45 p.m., Humphreys told Mott (one of his division commanders) that Warren would relieve him (Mott) and that Mott should move back over Hatcher's Run and go behind McAllister and Ramsey, adding the latter brigade to his command. Mott should support Smyth as required. At his new position, Mott would find a strong 9th Corps division (Hartranft) to his right and Wheaton's 6th Corps division to their right, connecting to Fort Cummings, part of the main Union line.⁵



Brig. Gen. John F. Hartranft
uniongenerals.org



Maj. Gen. George W. Getty
wikipedia.org

Warren eventually (9:00 p.m.) received orders to join Humphreys at the Vaughan Road-Hatcher's Run crossing and to prepare for any enemy concentration in the morning. Gregg's cavalry division was to join him (Warren), although AOP headquarters had proven unable to contact the cavalry commander. Meade also informed Humphreys that he'd ordered Warren and Gregg back to support him. Humphreys received orders to stay put, resist further attacks, and, if possible, drive any Rebels back into their works. Once in position, Gregg's cavalry would protect Humphreys's rear from the Confederate cavalry that Meade soon expected to appear from Belfield.

At 9:30 p.m., Warren informed Maj. Gen. Griffin, one of his division commanders, that the corps would march back up Vaughan Road, and he wanted Griffin to move his troops as soon as possible. On arriving at Hatcher's Run, unless instructed otherwise, Griffin should relieve Mott's division, holding the line at the Hatcher's Run crossing. Warren added, "all my

⁵ OR 46/2:399-400.

wagon train will follow you, and I wish it parked as near the crossing of Hatcher's Run as possible and set the pioneers to repairing the bridge, if necessary.”⁶

At 10:00 p.m., Meade messaged Grant and Humphreys, reporting that Rebel cavalry had attacked Gregg’s rear guard, and he feared they might get between Warren and Gregg. Meade also wanted to know if Humphreys had heard from Warren. Half an hour later, Humphreys replied that he’d just learned that Warren was sending his trains back promptly and his soldiers would be arriving soon. He also reassured Meade that only a small Rebel force had cut off a few of Gregg’s men.⁷

At 10:25 p.m., Grant asked Meade for an update on the situation and what he planned to do in the morning. He strongly counseled Meade against any withdrawal and to engage with any enemy outside of their trenches. Before replying, Meade sent another order to Gregg (10:30 p.m.), from whom he had heard little for hours. He wrote, “at 6.25 p.m. today, orders were sent to you to report with your command to Major-General Warren.” Meade reiterated that Warren was moving to join Humphreys at the Hatcher’s Run crossing and that he (Gregg) would guard Warren’s trains. He explained that A. P. Hill's Corps had attacked Humphreys's right and that they would drive in Hill tomorrow. Gregg would be under Humphreys’s command while supporting the 2nd Corps.⁸

Meade eventually replied to Grant at 11:15 p.m., giving him a complete summary of the *entire* day’s events, again (incorrectly) saying that Humphreys had lost 300 men in the Rebel attacks. He only addressed his plans for the morning in the final two lines: i.e., he would attack any enemy forces outside their defenses and drive them back. Meade displayed concern about the likely arrival of Rebel cavalry. In a message to Humphreys (11:30 p.m.), he reported that Rooney Lee’s entire cavalry force had reached Malone’s Crossing, and a courier (Major Jay) sent to Gregg had gone missing. Meade asked Humphreys to inform Warren of this situation and for some of Humphreys’s infantry, supported by his cavalry regiment, to move to the Wyatt house and cover Halifax Road.⁹

At 1:15 a.m., Meade sent another panicky message informing Grant of the missing escorted courier and that Rebels had fired upon Gregg’s force. Convinced that these were the

⁶ OR 46/1:254; OR 46/2:396, 404.

⁷ OR 46/2:391, 396-97.

⁸ OR 46/2:410.

⁹ OR 46/2:391-92, 396-97; OR 46/1:150-51.

actions of the Confederate cavalry moving up from Belfield, Meade feared for the safety of Gregg's cavalry. However, shortly afterward, he sent Grant another message stating that their own men had shot at and captured the courier and that the Rebel cavalry wasn't near Malone's Crossing after all. As we shall discover, the bulk of Rooney Lee's cavalry remained over 30 miles away.¹⁰

Warren's Night

Although ordered to move back to the Hatcher's Run crossing at 9:00 p.m., Warren needed time to organize, coordinate, and execute this tricky maneuver, especially at night. The first of Warren's divisions (Griffin's) began moving out around 11:00 p.m. Ayres's division departed about midnight, while Crawford's men only started marching around 4:00 a.m. Major General Griffin's men relieved Mott's Federals on the west side of the Hatcher's Run crossing at 3:00 a.m. As instructed, Mott marched his men to the rear of the Tucker house, near the line held by McAllister's and West's brigades of his division and Ramsey's Yankees of Miles's division. Once in position, as previously ordered, Mott added Ramsey's brigade to his command.¹¹

Amongst the first to depart camp was Sgt. Marshall, 155th Pennsylvania, Brig. Gen. Alfred L. Pearson's brigade, Griffin's division. He recalled, "it was now sundown and it had been freezing hard all day but . . . we soon had good fires to warm us, but lying down on the frozen ground to sleep with only a few pine tops and gum blankets under us was different from the comfortable quarters we had left." They did not lie long enough to warm the ground as between 10:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m., they received orders to move out on Vaughan Road towards Hatcher's Run.¹²

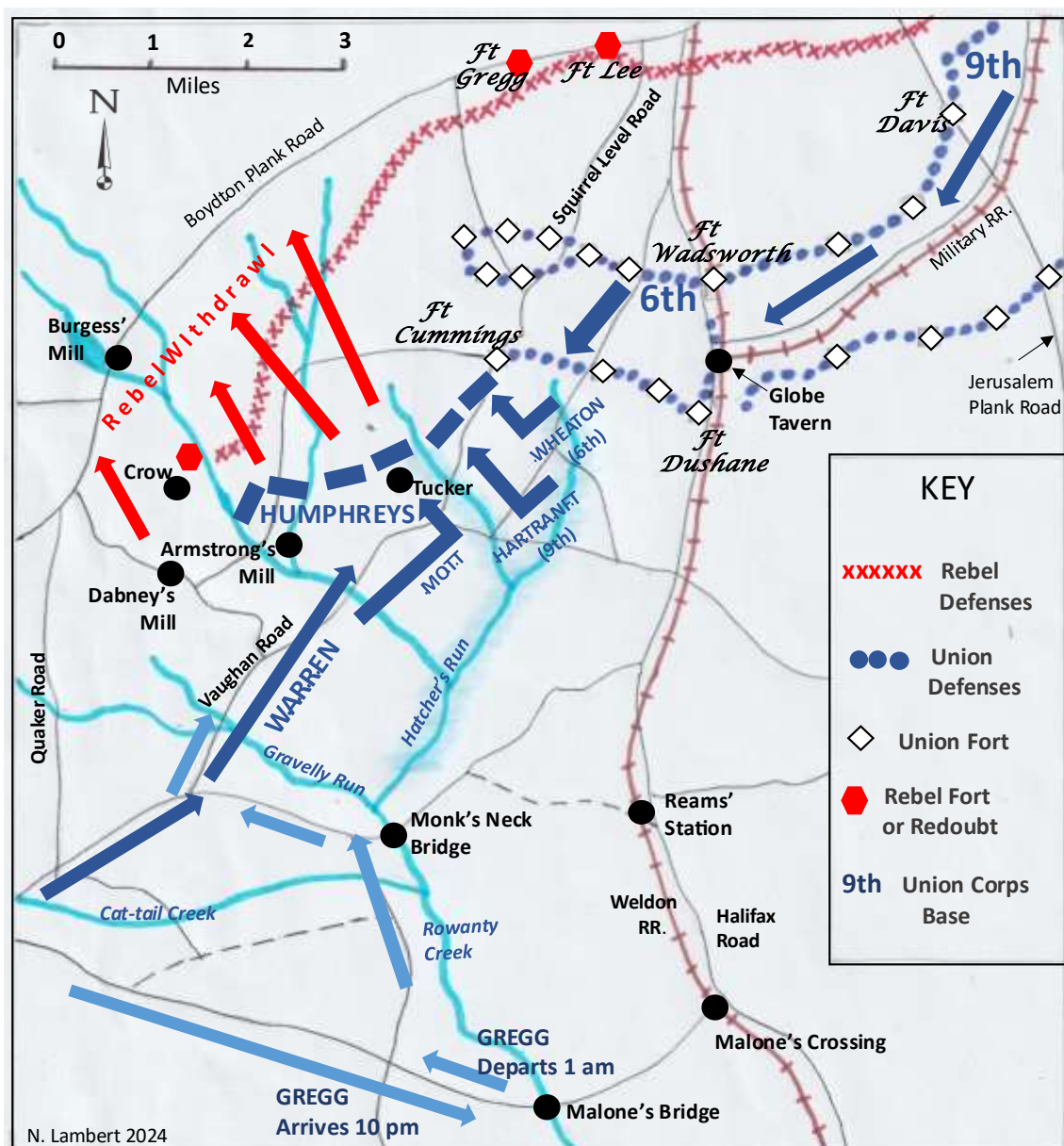
Ordered out last (4:00 a.m.) proved a mixed blessing for Crawford's division. While potentially gaining an extended rest, they had to endure the cold camp for longer. Chaplain William H. Locke, 11th Pennsylvania, Brig. Gen. Henry Baxter's brigade, remembered the night as "a strange sight of men crowded together around the campfires, with no other protection than overcoats, and an occasional gum blanket." Many voiced their wrath at sleeping on the ground in a winter rainstorm. Whereas others simply "covered up their heads

¹⁰ OR 46/1:151-52.

¹¹ OR 46/1:269-71, 280, 282, 291-92; OR 51/1:288, 290.

¹² William H. Locke, *The Story of the Regiment* (Philadelphia, 1868), 373-74; John D. Vautier, *History of the 88th Pennsylvania Volunteers in the War for the Union 1861-1865* (Philadelphia, PA, 1894), 205; Marshall, *Company "K,"* 222. By the war's end, Marshall had achieved the rank of major.

in the capes of their overcoats, and with feet to the blazing camp-fire - that was made to burn despite the rain - slept on until morning.” Another of Baxter’s soldiers, Pvt. John D. Vautier, 88th Pennsylvania, recalled how “the boys had to walk around all night to keep from freezing.”



Map 7.1: Overnight Activities February 5-6, 1865.

Gregg's Night

Gregg had departed Dinwiddie CH in the early afternoon, traveling back to Malone's Bridge along treacherous roads. The 16th Pennsylvania Cavalry, Lt. Col. John Robinson commanding, acted as rear guard, with Capt. Henry H. Oliphant's squadron, Companies G and H, at the tail end of the column. About twelve Rebels followed closely, occasionally firing into them. No Federals were injured, but the Confederates captured two men of G

Company. The Federal cavalymen eventually reached Malone's Bridge around 10:00 p.m. and bivouacked.¹³

Because he missed Meade's 6:20 p.m. message, Gregg only learned of his recall to Warren's new position at 11:00 p.m. Imagine his dismay and the reaction of his cavalymen to this news. They had been on the move in the freezing cold and wet weather since 3:00 a.m. Lieutenant Cormany, 16th Pennsylvania Cavalry, recalled how, once in bivouac, they managed to eat and doze between 10:00 p.m. and 2:00 a.m. A Yankee in Knowles's brigade (Sgt. Maj. Edward P. Tobie, 1st Maine Cavalry) remembered Rebels unsuccessfully trying to capture some of their pickets. The regiment moved out around 1:00 a.m. into the cold, dark landscape. Gregg's cavalry eventually met up with Warren's 5th Corps near the Vaughan Road-Gravelly Run crossing around dawn on February 6, with Rebel cavalry harassing them all the way.¹⁴

Confederate Overnight Activities

Although having no direct testimony, it's safe to assume that a dark cloud hung over the Rebel high command. They had easily surrendered significant territory, and their early evening counter-offensive had been a dismal failure. Lee's Petersburg right flank looked vulnerable, and the army's morale was questionable. After placing pickets, Lee pulled his men back into the Confederate works protecting Boydton Plank Road, where they endured a cold and miserable night under arms, hoping that they could repel any potential Union attack on these positions.

On the Confederate far right, Col. Lea, commanding Johnston's Brigade, received orders from his divisional commander, Pegram, to retire his pickets from beyond Dabney's Mill to in front of the Crow house, where they should remain throughout the night. The rest of the brigade returned to their camps behind the Crow house on the understanding that they would return before dawn.¹⁵

Recall the earlier adventures of Confederate Capt. Esten Cooke. While endeavoring to return to Petersburg, he had encountered Rooney Lee with the 13th Virginia Cavalry.

¹³ OR 46/1:370; OR 46/2:409-10. The Rebels were probably from the 13th VA Cavalry.

¹⁴ Mohr, *The Cormany Diaries*, 517; Edward P. Tobie, *History of the First Maine Cavalry, 1861-1865* (Boston, 1887), 378-79; OR 46/1:366-68, 370; William B. Hyndman, *History of a Cavalry Company. A Complete Record of Company "A," 4th Penn'a Cavalry* (Philadelphia, PA, 1870), 275.

¹⁵ Horn, *The Petersburg Regiment*, 358; Sloan, *The Guilford Grays*, 110; Bingham, "From New Bern to Bennett Place" 416-17; ORS 7, 805.

Subsequently, they rode to Dinwiddie CH, which David Gregg's Yankees had recently vacated. At nightfall, Rooney gave Cooke an escort and directed him up Boydton Plank Road with some verbal information to relay to any Confederate officers he met. After three miles, he reached the Gravelly Run crossing, guarded by pickets. Uncertain whether they were friends or foes, he approached anxiously. Thankfully for Cooke, they belonged to Pegram's division, and they directed him to Pegram's headquarters at the Quaker Road intersection. Cooke shared a warm reunion with his old school friend and newlywed John Pegram. They rode further north to Gordon's headquarters beyond Burgess's Mill. Cooke relayed his information from Rooney Lee, and Gordon told his story of the day (sadly not recorded). Gordon opined that the Federals wouldn't attack north of Hatcher's Run but would make a heavy assault on Pegram's line in the morning, south and west of the Run. Cooke recalled that Pegram appeared melancholic and preoccupied. After carefully studying a map (no details given), the meeting broke up, and Cooke continued to Petersburg.¹⁶

The Rebel Cavalry

Esten Cooke stated that the lack of Rebel cavalry support, particularly for the exposed right flank, "was a most unfortunate yet unavoidable situation." With no local forage, they had set up camps at Belfield, 40 miles away. The role of Rooney Lee's cavalry in the battle is intriguing and mostly misrepresented in accounts. In his post-battle report, Robert E. Lee stated that he "had to bring William H. F. [Rooney] Lee's division forty miles Sunday night [February 5] to get him in position." Recall how Gregg had learned at Dinwiddie CH that a Confederate courier had passed through heading for Belfield to call up the cavalry.¹⁷

What is known of the Confederate cavalry at Belfield? The division comprised three brigades, each commanded by a flamboyant officer. Brigadier General Rufus C. Barringer's North Carolina brigade, Brig. Gen. Richard L. Beale's Virginia Brigade, and Brig. Gen. James Dearing's mixed brigade, which also included Graham's Virginia Battery. Barringer and Beale were both favorites of the iconic JEB Stuart and possessed distinguished war records. A successful artillery commander, Dearing had taken command of a cavalry brigade

¹⁶ Cooke, *Wearing of the Gray*, 560-63.

¹⁷ OR 46/2:409, 1210; Lambert & Suderow, "The Battle of Hatcher's Run," 42; Cooke, *Wearing of the Gray*, 553-54.

in April 1864.¹⁸

The strength of Rooney Lee's cavalry division is uncertain owing to irregularities in the End of January 1865 Inspection Report. It was somewhere between 3,000 and 4,100 men. The report revealed a shortage of weapons and horseshoes, and that many of Barringer's Tar Heels had no footwear. A lot of Dearing's horses suffered from "scratches," limiting their mobility. On February 2, the troopers had entertained themselves by staging a mock jousting contest. In Barringer's Brigade, at least, morale was low due to their incessant fighting and marching over the previous six months, as well as enduring a freezing winter with minimal food.¹⁹



Brig. Gen. Rufus C. Barringer
wikipedia.org



Brig. Gen. James Dearing
wikipedia.org

¹⁸ Lambert, "Rebel Units and their Commanders at the Battle of Hatcher's Run," Part 4. After Barringer's capture on April 3, 1865, he gained notoriety for being the first Confederate general to meet President Abraham Lincoln. Beale had achieved recognition for his role in intercepting the Federal Kilpatrick–Dahlgren raid in March 1864. In this raid, Dahlgren was killed, and papers found on his body revealed a plot to burn Richmond and kill the Confederate president. Beale took over the brigade in October 1864, but administrators misplaced his promotion paperwork, these only came through on February 6, during the battle. Three of his sons served in his brigade. When given command of a cavalry brigade, Richmond failed to ratify Dearing's promotion, although official reports always referred to him as a brigadier general. On Feb 21, after months of conspiring, Dearing transferred to his close friend Maj. Gen. Thomas L. Rosser's Division to lead the renowned Laurel Brigade. Shot at the battle of High Bridge (April 6, 1865), Dearing died of his wounds on April 23 and is regarded as the last Civil War general to die from combat.

¹⁹ NARA M935, Roll 15, 1-P-58, 2-P-58, 3-P-58, 4-P-58. The cover page of the "End of January 1865 Inspection Report" recorded 3,093 men, while, inside the document, the aggregate of column 11 (those present for duty) added up to 4,152! The usually reliable columns 42 and 43 were empty as they related to infantry only; Daughtry, *Gray Cavalier*, 242-43. "Scratches" or "greased heel" was a severe inflammation above the hoof caused by prolonged standing in wet, muddy areas. Raiford, *The 4th North Carolina Cavalry*, 83; Roger H. Harrell, *The 2nd North Carolina Cavalry* (Jefferson, NC, 2011), 346-47; *The Wadesboro [NC] Argus*, February 23, 1865, page 2.

It is unknown when the orders arrived to move to the scene of combat. How long would it take a courier to travel to Belfield? Private Milas Cavin in Barringer's Brigade recalled an order for all men with serviceable horses to ride out and defend the supply line. He declined the order, claiming that his horse was sick. The tone of his memoir suggested that others responded similarly. How many troopers carried out the order is unknown. Cavin wrote that elements of the command left camp and only returned on February 11. However, *no evidence* supports Barringer or Dearing's brigades participating in the Hatcher's Run battle. Seminal texts on these cavaliers and regiments do not mention the battle. Records showed that they suffered no casualties during that time. No battle account is consistent with 4,000 or even 3,000 Rebel cavalry being present at the fight. Current evidence indicates that these two brigades did *not* substantially contribute to the battle.²⁰

In contrast, testimony demonstrates that most of Beale's Brigade did make the long and arduous 40-mile journey overnight, reaching Hatcher's Run by the morning of February 6. Possibly, a few troopers from the other two brigades also went along. Reunited with Rooney Lee and the 13th Virginia Cavalry, this cavalry force played an active role in the following two days of combat.²¹

Analysis of February 5, 1865

With day one of the Union offensive concluded, how had the opposing armies fared?

Union Reflections

The day produced mixed results for the Union. Grant's stated goal of disrupting the Confederate Boydton Plank Road supply line proved futile because no significant supply line

²⁰ Harrell, *The 2nd North Carolina Cavalry*, 347; A cavalry memoir claimed that orders to move to Hatcher's Run were received at noon; however, the timings in this text are unreliable (Driver, *10th Virginia Cavalry*, 69). Sheridan Barringer, *Fighting for General Lee: Confederate General Rufus Barringer and the North Carolina Cavalry Brigade* (El Dorado Hills, CA, 2016); William L. Parker, "Brigadier James Dearing, CSA," M.A. Thesis, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, 1969. Neither of these two texts mentioned the Hatcher's Run battle. I exchanged emails with Sheridan Barringer (a descendant of the Confederate general), Mary Daughtry (who wrote the Rooney Lee biography), and Cheri Todd Molter, NC Civil War & Reconstruction History Center, none knew of any evidence that placed Barringer or Dearing at the battle. The accounts in Clark, *Histories of the Several Regiments and Battalions from North Carolina*, from the six NC cavalry regiments in the division do not mention the battle. Lambert & Suderow, "Hatcher's Run," 42.

²¹ Krick, *9th Virginia Cavalry*, 43; Driver, *10th Virginia Cavalry*, 69. Beale's own memoir reserved one sentence for the battle: Beale, *History of the 9th Virginia Cavalry*, 147. His son's memoir in contrast provided a detailed account of the battle and his wounding; George W. Beale, *A Lieutenant of Cavalry in Lee's Army* (Boston, 1918), 197-205.

existed to disrupt! The intelligence underpinning Grant's mission was inaccurate. The Federals endangered a cavalry division and virtually two infantry corps on a pointless mission, just as Meade initially feared.

And yet, the Federals captured the Rowanty crossings at Malone's Bridge and Monk's Neck Bridge and reached as far west as Dinwiddie CH while facing minimal resistance. They also easily gained the strategically important Hatcher's Run crossings at Armstrong's Mill and Vaughan Road. Union troops had previously captured these crossings in late October 1864, during Grant's 6th Offensive, and on December 9, 1864. On both occasions, the Federals had soon withdrawn. If Grant's men could now hold these crossings, that would represent a significant achievement.

In addition, the Federals had forced the Confederates out of their fortifications and compelled them to attack a defended Union line, which the Federals soundly repulsed with minimal losses. Grant's assault had stretched Rebel resources, resources they could ill afford to expend.²²

Despite the late afternoon Union victory, the ineffectual Confederate assaults profoundly affected Federal strategy for the following days. Meade had encountered Rebels from the divisions of Heth, Evans, Mahone, and Pegram (i.e., the pickets defending the Hatcher's Run crossings). That constituted a sizeable force, and Meade understood Humphreys's and Smyth's assessment that things could have turned out very differently. Without the crucial artillery support and the tenacity of McAllister's brigade, the AOP might have lost Smyth's division. Meade also feared that Rooney Lee's cavalry division would appear at any time from their Belfield base. By seeing events in this light, one can comprehend why Meade consolidated his forces around Humphreys's position at the Hatcher's Run crossings. However, in doing so, did he surrender the initiative?

From an armchair in a warm room over 150 years later, it is easy to suggest that if Meade had been bold, he could have ordered Warren and Gregg up Quaker Road and attacked Lee's right flank. Only rudimentary fortifications and Pegram's small division guarded this location. Further west lay the undefended White Oak Road and a gateway to the Southside Railroad, the capture of which would doom Richmond. With reinforcements arriving from 9th Corps and 6th Corps divisions, Meade probably had enough men to hold off any Confederate assaults on Vaughan Road. Furthermore, the Rebel cavalry was in no

²² OR 42/1: 263-64, 267-68, 272-76; OR 42/3: 890-91, 898, 900-902. Hampton Newsome, *Richmond Must Fall* (Kent, OH, 2013), Loc 4834-5414.

position or state to influence affairs. Although Grant had this offensive idea in mind, it is understandable why Meade chose the cautious option. With the benefit of hindsight, however, the Yankees may have been generous in abandoning the Vaughan Road-Quaker Road junction.

Confederate Reflections

The Rebels appeared unprepared for the Union offensive, thinking perhaps there would be no substantial action until the Spring. Usually, the winter months proved relatively quiet, with the roads in no condition to facilitate mass troop movements. A newspaper report claimed that the Confederates were not expecting an attack, as their Peace Commissioners had not returned.²³

With over 30 miles of Petersburg trenches to occupy and dwindling numbers of soldiers, Lee's logistics and supply demands became increasingly challenging. The Confederates also faced a period of reorganization. After arriving from the Valley less than two months earlier, Gordon's men needed to familiarize themselves with protecting Lee's vulnerable right flank. The recently reorganized Rebel cavalry was in a bad state. Inadequate supplies of food, forage, and equipment for both men and mounts resulted in low morale and ailing horses. Camped far away from the area of operation, they couldn't provide Lee with the support and intelligence he desperately needed.

The important Rowanty crossings at Malone's Bridge and Monk's Neck Bridge required better defending. The main Rebel forces were too distant to support the few guarding Rebel pickets. Pegram's remit involved protecting Dinwiddie CH, an important site on the crucial Boydton Plank Road. He especially had to defend the two vital crossings of Hatcher's Run. The Federals captured all three locations, meeting little resistance. Indeed, throughout the entire day, Pegram's division hardly inconvenienced the Yankees.

Humphreys captured the crossings at Armstrong's Mill and Vaughan Road at around 10:00 a.m. It took the Rebels an additional *six hours* to contest the advancing Federals. Six hours for the Federals to organize their forces, summon reinforcements, and even create basic earthworks. The attacks, when they came, could have reversed Lee's fortunes, but the timidity of Evans's division in particular blunted any chance of success.

February 5 had been a black day for the ANV. Devoid of any meaningful cavalry support and with infantry so low on morale, many either refused to fight or deserted; the

²³ *Pittsburg [PA] Daily Post*, Feb 10, 1865.

Confederates may have feared that their right flank could collapse the following day. No wonder Lee “wept like a child.”

The hungry and exhausted Yankees and Rebels endured a wet and bitterly cold night, with sleep hard to achieve. As the sun rose on Monday, February 6, they could little imagine what the day might hold.