

The Story of the Civil War in Chattahoochee Hills and surrounding areas – told by resident James Robinson.

There were several raids in and around the Chattahoochee Hills areas before the Union occupation of Atlanta on September 2, 1864.

When Sherman attacked Atlanta (siege of Atlanta from July 23 – August 25) he had 110,000 men and three armies but he still couldn't encircle the city. He could only cover half of it. That's why he used his cavalry to come down here (Chattahoochee Hills and surrounding area). He could not stop the supplies coming in to Atlanta so he sent his cavalry down here. He thought, even at the beginning, that his cavalry couldn't do the job because it was going to take a lot of men to cut this area off and stop supplies for the Confederates from coming into Atlanta.

One of the first raids in the Chattahoochee Hills area was when Union Major General Stoneman went down the west side of the Chattahoochee River on July 10, 1864. He went down the west side of the river as far as Moore's Bridge. It was the only bridge between here and Sweetwater Creek and Sweetwater Town they called it at that time. Moore's Bridge was right down here at Whitesburg. The bridge was a covered bridge. It was over four hundred and fifty feet across. His objective was to go from there into Newnan and burn the town down and destroy the railroad. He never made it across the river. He got down to Moore's Bridge and the confederate soldiers that were guarding the bridge were skinny dipping in the river. This was in July and it was hot. The Confederate guards weren't paying too much attention and the Union soldiers slipped-up on them and captured them all but one. That one man got back to Newnan and told them that the Yankees were coming. He got back to Newnan, whether he was naked or not I'm not sure. The news scared everybody in Newnan. There were four hospitals down there around the square. There were a lot of wounded men, probably about 4000 men down there in those hospitals. Actually what they were, were big large tent camps all around the square that were called four hospitals. The bridge guard warned them and of course the soldiers that were still able to get up and move about got their guns and headed to Whitesburg to make the Union soldiers slow down or stop. The rest of the town began to evacuate. People were scared to death.

What General Stoneman didn't know, when he came by Campbellton going west down the river, that Brigadier General Armstrong of the Confederate Cavalry, also a cavalry unit, followed them down this way. They were on this side of the river going right through this area (Chatt Hills) until he got down to Phillips Ferry later called Hutcheson Ferry. He got down to Phillips Ferry where White Oak Creek is, and there was a bridge. The Confederate army crossed that bridge and at the same time Stoneman was on the other side of the river but they couldn't see each other. Stoneman could hear them. He could hear the Confederate cavalry horses going across the bridge and it had him sort of scared. He finally decided that they weren't down in his area, but they were. When he got to Moore's Bridge and he thought they would take it over the Confederates already had pine knots and stuff stuck all over the bridge ready to burn it if they had to. So when he got to the other side he decided to just wait until the next day to cross the bridge and go on the Newnan. And he made a mistake when he did that because General Armstrong came up with the Mississippi riflemen and Texas cavalry and they stopped them. The Confederates were on this side of the Chattahoochee River (east) and the Union Army was on the other side of the river (west). They began to fire at each other. General Stoneman managed to send a man out on the bridge and set it on fire. The bridge was burned completely down. But they did not cross and they did not commit to make the mission. They didn't get to burn the town of Newnan or destroy the railroad. So he went back and on his way back he sent part of his cavalry to Carrollton. They looted and sacked Carrollton. While they were down there they went in all the farmhouses and took the horses and all the food and everything that people had. They took all their hams, bacon, everything that they had stored, syrup, all that kind of stuff.

The next raid started right here in Chattahoochee Hills at Smith's Ferry and came this way. There were about four big raids that took place by the Union Army, different groups, that happened while Sherman was surrounding the city. He couldn't break into Atlanta, he had to do away with the railroads because that's how the supplies came in. And as long as the supplies came in he could never enter the city, it was too well fortified. The Confederates fortified it for four years.

There were ferries all the way down the Chattahoochee River at that time. Smith's Ferry was a little known ferry and wasn't used heavily. They actually were

going to cross at Campbellton but Campbellton was fairly heavily defended. They didn't know how many Confederates were there and they didn't want to engage them. Their job was to destroy the railroad. They didn't come down to fight anybody. They wanted to destroy the railroad to stop the supplies from coming in to General Hood in Atlanta.

General McCook brought his cavalry and about 4000 men and crossed the river at Smith's Ferry on a pontoon bridge. Then he divided into two groups, one group went out Hwy 92 and the other group came up Rico Road that way to Palmetto and burned the town, then went on up toward Fayetteville. While they burned Palmetto they destroyed two miles of railroad tracks north and south of town, two warehouses full of cotton bales and food stuff, and all the telegraph wires. That was on the 28th of July 1864. They left Palmetto after they burned it, the main part of the business section, then they went to Fayetteville to join up with another cavalry group, Major General Stoneman who was going toward Macon. But before they got to Fayetteville they found General Hood's wagon train, a supply wagon train, that the army of the confederacy had. They destroyed it and it had about 500 brand new wagons all loaded with all the gear and everything of all the officers and all the men in the army. They burned that train, the mules hooked up to it, and all the mules they didn't take they took their sabers and ran them through their stomachs and killed them. The Confederate cavalry entered the scene and started chasing them and they ended up going toward Newnan. They went on to Newnan and were going to burn Newnan down. In Newnan when they got down there, they were going to enter the town but there was a train sitting on the track with 500 soldiers waiting to go to Atlanta to help relieve the troop losses during the Battle of Atlanta. The Union army entered the edge of the town where you buy your tags down in Newnan, that parking lot just to the side there, is where they entered. They saw that train down there on the track with the soldiers and decided it wasn't a good idea to enter there so they had a little skirmish and went around town and went below Newnan to Brown's Mill. In the meantime, Major General Wheeler of the Confederate Army and Brigadier General Ross and the Texas Brigade chased them on down and they took a road running between Greenville and Corinth Road on Ricketty Back Road. They got trapped in there, the whole outfit of the Yankee Brigadier General McCook. They had a battle right there and there were a lot of them killed. Brigadier General McCook just about lost his whole command. He lost about 2000 men. The Confederates locked prisoners up in Newnan Square and later transferred them

to Andersonville and Macon (the officers went to Macon and the soldiers went to Andersonville).

Sherman gave up on capturing Atlanta when his cavalry failed to shut down the railroads into Atlanta. He decided the only way to defeat the Confederates was by using his whole army to shut down their supplies coming in. In order to do this, it would be necessary to move his whole army around to the west side of Atlanta from the north and east sides. He did this on the night of Aug. 25, 1864 and Confederate General Hood was fooled for a few days, thinking Sherman had retreated north to Chattanooga where his supplies were coming from. In a few days, Sherman had moved his troops to the west side and he began attacking General Hood at East Point to about Red Oak. There he destroyed the AWP Railroad then moved to Jonesboro. This brought General Hood's army out from the trenches of Atlanta and they moved to stop General Sherman at Jonesboro, leaving Atlanta, and burning all they could not take with them. At Jonesboro, there was a big battle, but the Confederates were outnumbered by General Sherman. General Sherman heard the loud explosions coming from Atlanta (it was the Confederates blowing up the ammunition that they could not carry with them) and thought the part of his army that he left in Atlanta had gotten into a battle with the Confederates he believed to be there. So he took his army that was in Jonesboro and moved them back to Atlanta to occupy the city. In doing this General Hood's Confederate army moved to Lovejoy and regrouped for a few days.

On Sept. 19th, 1864 the Confederates moved to Palmetto, GA. 28,000 men camped in the town. President Jefferson Davis, on Sept. 23, 1864, came from Richmond, VA to Palmetto. He made a speech to the Confederate army. He met with General Hood and his generals, Governor Brown of GA, Howel, Cobb, and other leaders. They made their plans in the Palmetto Stage Coach House (now Barfield's Law Office on Main St.) Their plans were to cut off Sherman's supply line north of Atlanta and to move north, capture Nashville, TN, then to move into Ohio or join up with General Lee in Virginia. They left Palmetto on Sept. 29th & 30th 1864. They marched out Phillips Ferry Rd. (now Hutcheson Ferry Rd.) through Chattahoochee Hills. The line of soldiers, mule wagon's, and cannons were 5 miles long stretching from Palmetto to the Chattahoochee River. They stopped at the Andy Weaver House (Randy Hearn's house on Hearn Rd.) and picked up 44 bushels of corn. They also had their other supplies transferred from

Macon, GA to this area across the Chattahoochee River. The crossed the Chattahoochee River at Phillips Ferry (later Hutcheson Ferry) and began their trip north of Atlanta and on to Nashville, TN where they were defeated by Union General Thomas. The remnants of the Confederate Army then went to North Carolina and fought their last battle of the war with General Sherman, General Lee had already surrendered in Virginia.

Sherman made his march through Georgia, Nov. 15, 1864, and foraged off the land taking what he wanted and destroying much in his path. General Hood cutting his supply line did not hinder him. Confederate General Johnston was restored to the army of Tennessee as its leader for the last battle of the war. There were only a few small battles in the west and that was the end of the War Between the States.