

## The Twelfth Corps

The failure of General Bragg to drive Hooker out of Lookout Valley enabled Thomas to maintain communication with Bridgeport, and relieve his starving army. The "cracker line," as his soldiers called it, was open again. The Confederates still held Lookout Mountain in force, and hence the railroad and highway at its northern point remained in the enemy's hands. But, owing to the loop in the river, Brown's Ferry was only four miles from Chattanooga, and steamboats could ascend the stream to this point unmolested, while the wagon road by way of this ferry was now free all the way to Bridgeport.

The battle of Wauhatchie was a brilliant affair, to say nothing of the important results gained by it. General Thomas was a man of few words, not given to flattery, or the bestowal of unmerited praise. Hence, it is well to note the strong words in his General Order, No. 265, wherein he describes the fighting done by the commands of Geary and Smith, and adds that it "will rank among the most distinguished feats of arms of this war."

### Lookout Mountain.

In October, 1863, the War Department issued an order creating the Military Division of the Mississippi, composed of the Department of the Ohio, the Cumberland and the Tennessee, the command of which was given to General Grant. On receiving notice of this appointment he proceeded immediately to Chattanooga to acquaint himself with the condition of affairs in that Department, and after a few days he established his headquarters there. The battle of Wauhatchie having solved the question of supplies he decided on an offensive movement, planning a battle that would either destroy Bragg's army or drive it southward into Georgia, and, at the same time, relieve Burnside, who was besieged at Knoxville. To this end he ordered the Army of the Tennessee, under General Sherman, to move from Memphis to Chattanooga to reinforce the Army of the Cumberland. Sherman, with three divisions of the Fifteenth Corps and one of the Seventeenth, arrived at Lookout Valley on November twenty-second, where the Confederates, from their eyrie on Point Lookout, could watch the long columns and wagon trains as they moved on toward Chattanooga.

The Fourth and Fourteenth corps, of the Army of the Cumber-



LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN FROM WAUHATCHIE VALLEY.

Geary's Division and Whitaker's Brigade advanced from the ground on the extreme right, in two lines reaching from the base of the palisades transversely down the slope, and, wheeling around the point of the mountain, carried the Confederate works on the ridge at the left.

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land — the troops that fought under Rosecrans at Chickamauga — were encamped on the southern outskirts of Chattanooga, in the valley bounded by Missionary Ridge on the east and Lookout Mountain on the west. Beyond the latter range, to the west, is situated Lookout Valley, in which Hooker's army was stationed.

General Grant's first plan did not contemplate the storming of Lookout Mountain, his intention being to drive Bragg's forces off Missionary Ridge, combined with an attack on the Confederate lines that stretched across Chattanooga Valley near the town, which if successful would necessitate the evacuation of Lookout. With the seeming intention of giving Sherman an opportunity to win a full share of the honors of this battle, he planned that the latter should assault Missionary Ridge at its northern end, while Thomas should cooperate by attacking the enemy's line in the valley. To enable Sherman to accomplish this successfully Grant took the Eleventh Corps away from Hooker and ordered it, together with some other reinforcements from Thomas's command, to report to the commander of the Army of the Tennessee.

On November twenty-third Thomas advanced a part of his forces, and, in a brief but brilliant affair, seized Orchard Knob, a slight elevation near the base of Missionary Ridge. But on the twenty-third the high water and driftwood in the river broke up the pontoon bridge at Brown's Ferry before Osterhaus's Division of Sherman's army could cross, leaving these troops behind in Lookout Valley. Grant then issued orders to Hooker to take the forces remaining in his command and, with Osterhaus's Division, make a threatening movement against Lookout Mountain, and to carry that position if the "demonstration should develop its practicability."\*

Hooker had now at his command in Lookout Valley Geary's Division of the Twelfth Corps; Cruft's Division of the Fourth Corps (Army of the Cumberland), consisting of two brigades, under Whitaker and Grose; and Osterhaus's Division — two brigades under Woods and Williamson.

Lookout Mountain is a long ridge, running north and south, with an elevation of 2,200 feet above tide, and 1,580 feet above the Tennessee River, which flows around its northern point. From the river the dividing line of its wooded slopes rises steeply to the base

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\* Hooker's official report of the battle.

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of Point Lookout, where that end of the ridge terminates abruptly in a perpendicular wall of rock. A short distance down the slope from the foot of this palisade is a farm on which stands the building known as Craven's house, or the White House, as sometimes called.

Near this house were posted two brigades of Stevenson's Division — Walthall's Mississippians, six regiments, and Moore's Alabamians, three regiments. During the battle they were reinforced by three regiments of Pettus's Alabama brigade. Other troops were on the summit of the ridge; but owing to their position above the palisades they took no part in the fighting, and received no orders to reinforce those on the lower slope. A line of Confederate pickets was stretched along the bank of Lookout Creek at the base of the mountain.

Hooker's plan of battle was complete: Geary's Division and Whitaker's Brigade were to cross Lookout Creek above Wauhatchie, ascend the western side of the mountain, and attack the position near the Craven house. Grose's Brigade (Fourth Corps) was to rebuild the bridges near the railroad, over which Osterhaus's Division could cross and climb the hill to the support of Geary, or by swinging to the left establish connection with Thomas's line in Chattanooga Valley. The artillery, under Major John A. Reynolds, Twelfth Corps, was placed where it could direct an effective fire against the enemy's position on the mountain and cover Geary's advance.

Early on the morning of November twenty-fourth Geary's command left its camps at the foot of Lookout Valley and marched to Wauhatchie Junction, two and one-half miles distant, leaving four regiments on guard duty — the Seventy-eighth New York, One Hundred and Ninth Pennsylvania, Fifth and Twenty-ninth Ohio. The troops were massed behind a wooded hill where their movements could not be seen by the Confederates on Point Lookout. Geary then assembled his brigade and field officers and informed them that he had orders to assault the enemy's works on the mountain. He explained in detail the movements to be made, and gave instructions that the same information should be communicated to the company officers.

The weather was damp and misty. A mass of drifting fog enveloped the summit of the mountain and upper slopes. Although it lifted at intervals the clouds obscured the outlook of the enemy's signal corps and enabled the movement to assume the nature of a surprise. Owing to the active work in view the men were in light



**BATTLEFIELD OF LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN.**

The Craven House and monument to Ireland's (Greene's) Brigade in the center. The other buildings were erected since the battle. Tennessee River and Moccasin Point in the distance.

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marching order, having left their overcoats, blankets, and knapsacks in camp.

The pioneers soon bridged the creek at this point, and the troops began crossing at eight-thirty a. m., the skirmishers capturing the entire picket post stationed there before it could give an alarm. Moving by the right flank the column ascended the mountain until its advance reached the base of the high, rocky wall that forms the crest of the ridge. No opposition was encountered, for the enemy were not expecting any movement from this direction; the summit of the mountain was inaccessible at this place. The Confederate position, with its rifle pits and other defenses, was over two miles distant, around the point of the mountain and on its northern slope. The attention of the Confederates was diverted by the operations of Osterhaus's men who were engaged in bridging the creek at different points near the front, during which they were massed in full view of the enemy.

Geary's troops now faced to the left and front, and formed line of battle with Cobham's Brigade—two regiments only—on the right; Greene's Brigade, four regiments—now under command of Colonel Ireland—came next, forming the centre; Candy's Brigade held the left. Whitaker's Brigade, six regiments, was placed 350 yards in the rear in a second or supporting line. The command as now formed faced the north and extended from the foot of the mountain up its western slope to the base of the precipice or crest. Shortly after nine o'clock the division advanced, the second line moving steadily and at proper distance in its support.

The ground along which the troops moved has a slope of about forty-five degrees, is broken up transversely by ravines, and is covered with bowlders, loose stones, and patches of tangled undergrowth. The sides of the ravines are so steep in places that the soldiers had to climb on their hands and knees, or pull themselves up by clinging to roots or saplings. Progress was laborious in the extreme, and the men were soon dripping with perspiration. Still the line advanced rapidly along the side of the hill despite these disadvantages and preserved an alignment with proper connection that was most remarkable under the circumstances.

After going a mile or more the enemy's skirmishers were encountered, but they were driven back without lessening the rapidity of the advance. As the line moved on, the right kept

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closely to the base of the precipice while the left, or lower end of the line, using the right as a pivot, swung around the base of the mountain, driving the Confederates out of the rifle pits there and uncovering the fords on Lookout Creek where Osterhaus's Division and Grose's Brigade were to cross as soon as the bridges could be constructed.

As the long line swept around the end of the mountain, the centre reached the plateau under Point Lookout where Walthall's Brigade was awaiting attack in an intrenched position. There was a brief interchange of shots by the skirmishers, and then the division, with fixed bayonets, charged on the double quick over the outer works. A few rapid volleys were delivered, and then Walthall's men, after a short but spirited resistance in which the fighting was very close, abandoned their position. The attack was so sudden and vigorous that a large number of the enemy were captured, Walthall reporting a loss of 853 prisoners from his brigade alone. Many of the Confederates who had started to retreat were stopped by the fire of Reynolds's batteries posted in the valley beyond Lookout Creek, which exploded their shells so rapidly on the line of escape that these men preferred capture to running this deadly gauntlet. Geary states that this first success was gained in less than fifteen minutes after the troops became engaged.

As it would be dangerous to weaken the line by detaching a sufficient force to guard the large number of prisoners taken at this time, the captured men were turned over to the care of some troops in the rear. Four battle flags were wrested from the hands of the enemy's color bearers in the fight — three by the One Hundred and Forty-ninth New York, and one by the Sixtieth New York.

The advance was quickly resumed, with orders to sweep everything before it. The remainder of Walthall's regiments fell back to a second line of works, held by Moore's Brigade, where they were joined shortly after by General Pettus, with his three regiments of Alabamians. But Geary's men, fairly wild with enthusiasm, drove the enemy back from each successive position where he attempted to make a stand. The Confederates on the top of the palisades opened with the artillery posted there; but as they were unable to depress their guns sufficiently their shells burst in the air high above the heads of the attacking line, inflicting but little loss. Failing to accomplish anything with their artillery fire they used



**THE CRAVEN HOUSE.**

Scene of the successful charge made by Ireland's New York Brigade. The hotel at the base of the Palisades was erected since the war.



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shells as hand grenades, and lighting the fuses hurled them over the cliff. Their sharpshooters on the summit kept up an annoying fire for a while; but the clouds which were drifting around the mountain soon obscured their view.

Ireland's Brigade followed the Confederates closely as they gave ground, and drove them through a peach orchard and past the Craven house. As the One Hundred and Thirty-seventh New York dashed through the garden it captured two pieces of artillery planted there, taking the gunners prisoners. The regiment did not halt to place a guard over the guns, but, sweeping its colors over them to establish its claim as captors, this gallant command swept forward, eager to keep in front.\* The returns for Moore's Brigade (Confederate) show that it lost 206 captured, most of whom were taken at this stage of the fighting.

The three Confederate brigades, or their remnants, now fell back to a position on the east side of the mountain, where they formed a line to defend the Summertown road which leads to the summit. The attack was not continued because orders were received from Hooker at twelve-thirty p. m. to cease pursuit when the dividing line of the ridge was reached and to strengthen the position there. Geary had advanced considerably beyond this line, however, before he received the order. About one o'clock the enemy made a feeble effort to regain some of the lost ground, but they were easily repulsed by the One Hundred and Forty-ninth New York, under Lieutenant Colonel Randall, and a force of skirmishers, under Captain Stegman, of the One Hundred and Second New York. The fighting was now over; the battle of Lookout Mountain was won.

During the forenoon the troops in the Army of the Cumberland, stationed in Chattanooga Valley, had listened anxiously to the tumult of the battle far above them; but owing to the clouds that hung low upon the mountain they could only judge of its progress by the sound of the firing as it grew louder and nearer. At noon a rift in the fog disclosed Geary's headquarters flag, with its white star on a blue field, waving proudly from the heights near the Craven

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\* These two guns are claimed in the official report of another command that followed in Ireland's rear. The prisoners captured by Geary's men and sent back were also claimed by regiments in whose care they were placed. This duplication of accounts compelled Grant to call Hooker's attention to the fact that in "the reports of his subordinate commanders the number of prisoners captured" was "greater than the number really captured by the whole army." [Official Records, Vol. XXXI, part II, p. 325.]

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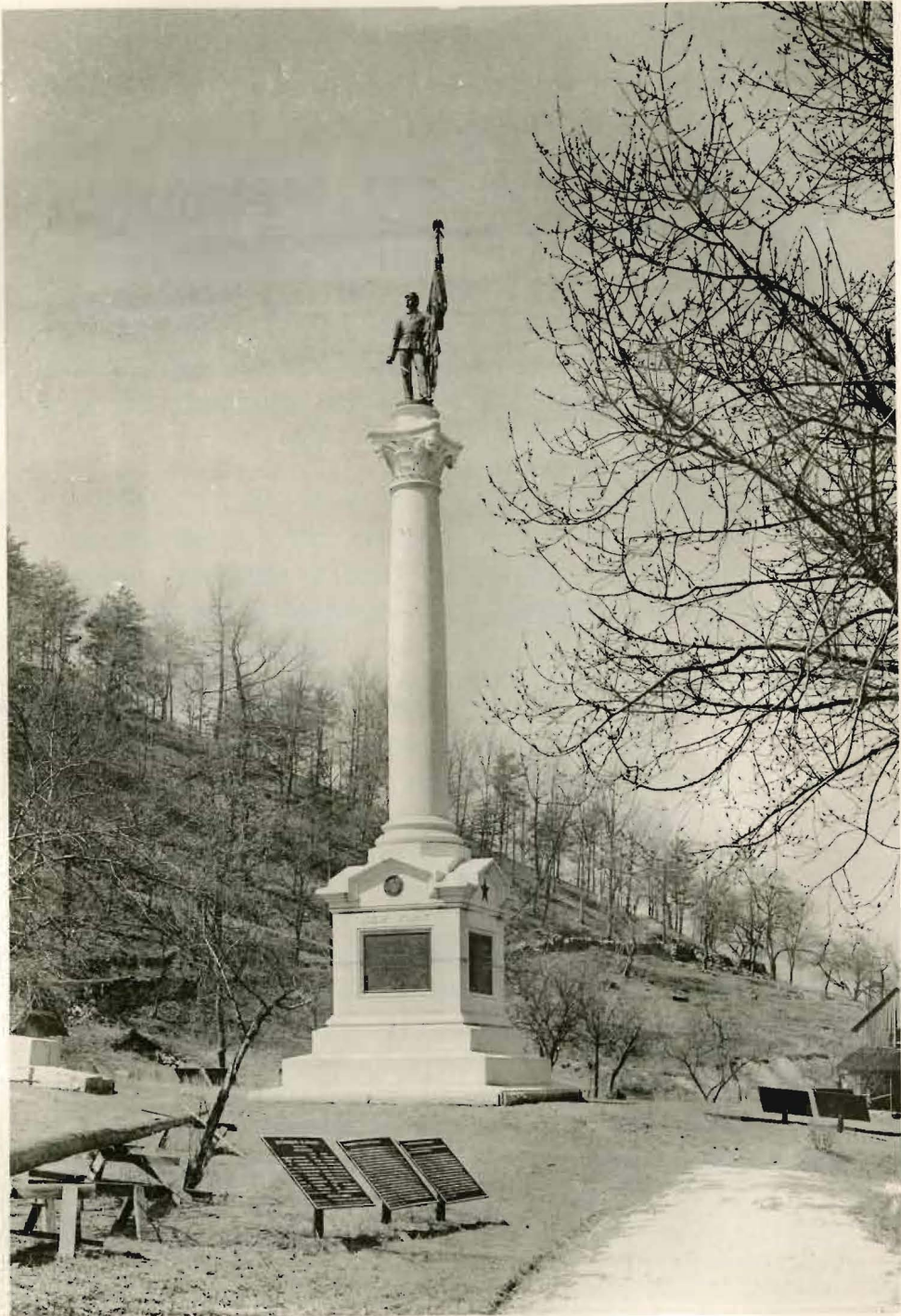
house, and a cheer went up from the waiting, watching thousands that reached the victorious fighters on the mountain, who sent back a loud enthusiastic greeting in reply.

Geary's troops were now relieved by regiments from the commands of Osterhaus and Grose who had effected a crossing, seized the road connecting with Thomas's right in the Chattanooga Valley, and ascended to the plateau at the Craven house. A dense fog now covered the hostile lines, and it prevailed during the remainder of the day. Objects could not be distinguished at a few yards distance, and all was quiet for awhile. But the enemy resumed its firing within an hour, continuing it in an irregular, desultory way until night.

In the evening, about seven o'clock, Carlin's Brigade of the Fourteenth Corps reported to General Geary. These troops were assigned a position on the eastern side of the mountain where they commanded a portion of the Summertown road, and repulsed a night attack which was made from that direction.

A drizzling rain had been falling, which with the cold wind that swept across the mountain rendered the men uncomfortable in the extreme. Wet to the skin, without blankets, and forbidden to make any fires, they suffered not a little. But they bore the exposure with fortitude, making no complaint. During the night the enemy evacuated the mountain, and the next morning the colors of the Eighth Kentucky and Twenty-ninth Pennsylvania were unfurled from the summit of Point Lookout.

In view of the natural strength of the position the casualties in the ranks of the assailants were less than would be expected. The dash and discipline of the troops, combined with their high enthusiasm and morale enabled them to carry the works of the enemy with a minimum of loss. Had there been any hesitation or unsteadiness, the loss of life would have been much greater. As it was, many brave men lost their lives. Major Elliott, of the One Hundred and Second New York, who was killed, was the first to fall. Lieutenant Colonel Avery, of the same regiment, was wounded, and suffered amputation of the thigh. Colonel Barnum, of the One Hundred and Forty-ninth New York, who went into the fight suffering from an unhealed wound received at Malvern Hill, was again struck down while cheering on his men.



**MONUMENT TO IRELAND'S NEW YORK BRIGADE, LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN.**

This brigade was commanded by Gen. Geo. S. Greene prior to the battle of Wauhatchie, in which he was severely wounded. It was commanded at Lookout Mountain and on the Atlanta Campaign by Col. David Ireland.