

The Battle of Perryville October 8, 1862 By Dave Smith

Bibliography:

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Blue and Gray Magazine October / November, 1983.
Time-Life Books; The Struggle for Tennessee

Braxton Bragg
D.C. Buell

This battle chronology provides detail regarding the battle of Perryville, Kentucky, as fought on October 8, 1862. The battle, fought between the Confederate forces of General Braxton Bragg and the Federal forces of Major General Don Carlos Buell, was the culmination of several months of maneuver between the two armies.

2:30

Maj. Gen. Alex. McCook (at Mackville) receives orders issued at 7:00 p.m. the previous day, to march to Perryville.

2:45

Maj. Gen. George Thomas (serving as Buell's second-in-command) receives marching orders issued at 8:00 p.m. the previous day to march on Perryville

3:00

7th Arkansas (of Liddell's Brigade, Buckner's Division) holds Peters Hill.
Col. Dan McCook's Brigade (of Sheridan's division) moves forward along Springfield Pike.

5:00

Dan McCook clears Confederates off Peters Hill.
After breakfast, Alex. McCook marches on Perryville, some ten miles away.

6:00

Maj. Gen. Leonidas Polk informs Bragg that battle will be made "vigorously".

6:30

Brig. Gen. St. John Liddell's 5th and 7th Arkansas try to dislodge McCook from Peters Hill and fail.

7:00

Col. John Wharton's cavalry ordered to cross the Chaplin River to the right.

Col. Joe Wheeler's cavalry ordered to picket the left down the Lebanon Road.

Thomas begins marching.

Brig. Gen. Phillip Sheridan arrives at Peters Hill with two brigades. Maj. Gen. Charles C. Gilbert arrives, and decides to send Capt. Ebenezer Gay's cavalry forward.

7:30

Gay's cavalry fails, and is repulsed just east of Peters Hill.

8:30

Sheridan sends Lt. Col. Bernard Laiboldt's Brigade against the 5th and 7th Arkansas. The Confederates are pushed back across Bull Run.

9:00

Sheridan engages Liddell on Bottom Hill.

9:15

Alex. McCook reaches the Benton Rd / Mackville Pike intersection.

9:45

Brig. Gen. Rousseau's division (of McCook's Corps) reaches the Russell House and sees Sheridan's fight with Liddell.

Bragg arrives from Harrodsburg and sets up headquarters at the Crawford House.

Bragg does not believe Buell's entire army is converging on

Perryville, and decides to make a person reconnaissance.

10:45

Liddell orders his force to back to Perryville main defense line.

Wheeler runs into Maj. Gen. Thomas L. Crittenden's infantry corps on the Lebanon Rd. some three miles from Perryville, and falls back.

Bragg returns to the Crawford House from his reconnaissance.

11:00

Gilbert is astonished to see Sheridan so far forward and orders him to return to Peters Hill. He classifies Sheridan's success as "an unauthorized move."

Buell, at the Dorsey House (one mile west of Peters Hill), is concerned about his planned attack.

Alex. McCook sets out a battle line centered on the Russell House.

Bragg makes plans for a Confederate attack. Maj. Gen. B. F. Cheatham moves to the right to take position near the Goodnight House.

Maj. Gen. Simon Buckner moves forward to occupy Chatham Hill. Darden's Battery goes into position on Chatham Hill.

12:00 p.m.

Rousseau orders Col. William Lytle forward to Doctors Creek to get water. The 10th Ohio is east of Doctors Creek in a skirmish line.

Alex. McCook reaches Buell at the Dorsey House, and is told the attack is called off for the day.

12:10 p.m.

Wharton receives word that substantial and unplanned Federals are proceeding down the Mackville Rd. Polk, at the Goodnight House, concludes to wait for reinforcements. Bragg is becoming more impatient.

12:30 p.m.

The skirmishers from the 10th Ohio fall back from east of Doctors Creek as Buckner engages with the brigades of Brig. Gen. Bushrod

Johnson and Brig. Gen. S.A.M. Wood.

Buell concludes to delay his attack until the next day.

Darden's, Lumsden's, Semple's and Carnes's Batteries open on Rousseau.

Loomis returns fire on the Confederate batteries. Simonson is ordered forward on the left of Loomis.

Rousseau places Col. Leonard Harris's Brigade to the left of Lytle, who was in place astride the Mackville Rd. just behind the Squire Bottom House and overlooking Doctors Creek.

12:45 p.m.

Rousseau orders Col. George Webster's Brigade forward and extends the line to the left and now covers the Widow Gibson Cabin.

1:00 p.m.

Alex. McCook moves forward to the Loomis / Simonson Battery positions and, unable to see Confederate infantry, orders them to cease firing. (Recall he has been told by Buell there will be no battle this day.) McCook becomes aware of the hill on the far left that overlooks the entire Federal position in this sector.

Wheeler moves forward against Crittenden (he has no real idea as to the size of the Federal force in his front).

1:20 p.m.

Bragg reaches Polk, orders Cheatham further to the right to Walker's Bend.

1:30 p.m.

Federal skirmishers reach the bluffs overlooking Walkers Bend, encounter Confederate skirmishers, but do not realize the Confederate strength behind the skirmishers.

Wharton moves out of Walker's Bend to secure the Confederate right.

Buell, at the Dorsey House, is informed of the "arrival" of Crittenden's Corps.

1:45 p.m.

Brig. Gen. James Jackson, with Brig. Gen. William Terrill's Brigade, is in position on the left, anchored on Open Hill. Parson's Battery covers them. Terrill prepares to move forward to get water.

Brig. Gen. Dan Adams's Brigade (of Anderson's Division) goes into position on Bottom Hill, just north of the Springfield Pike. Brig. Gen. Preston Smith arrives on his right. Adams sees no Federals in his front on the Springfield Pike.

Polk and Cheatham see smoke from battery fire, and conclude they are already on the flank of the Federal line. They are wrong. They order Donelson's Brigade (under Col. John Savage) to move forward.

2:00 p.m.

Terrill's Brigade reaches Open Hill and anchors the Federal left.

Buell and Gilbert, still at the Dorsey House, hear artillery fire. Buell has Gilbert send a message forward "to stop that useless waste of powder." Buell has Gilbert stay for dinner rather than move to the front as Gilbert desired.

2:15 p.m.

Donelson moves to the attack, but is not on the Federal flank. He is opposite Webster's Brigade, with Terrill and Lytle on both flanks.

Sheridan receives the order from Gilbert, and chooses subsequently to literally obey the order.

2:30 p.m.

Savage's 16th Tennessee seems to appear out of nowhere to attack Webster. Col. Thomas Jones's Brigade is forming on the left of Donelson. Brig. gen. A.P. Stewart's Brigade of Cheatham arrives on top of the bluff at the Dug Road.

Crittenden has all of his forces up, works to extend his lines north to link up with Gilbert on the Springfield Pike.

2:45 p.m.

Rousseau orders up Harris in support of Webster. Loomis has exhausted his long-range ammunition and falls back near the Russell House.

Jones assaults the 10th Wisconsin and the 10th Ohio on the left of

Lytle's position. Bushrod Johnson is moving down Chatham Hill, with A.P. Stewart forming in reserve. Brig. Gen. George Maney's Brigade is moving to the Confederate right to confront Terrill.

2:50 p.m.

Brig. Gen. James Jackson is hit twice and dies shortly after.

Bushrod Johnson comes under fire from Slocumb's C.S.A. battery while moving down Chatham Hill. Johnson's advance is completely disorganized.

Maney begins his assault on Open Hill. He gets about halfway there, but is pinned down by Parson's Battery and the infantry of Terrill.

3:00 p.m.

Buckner or Hardee orders Adams's Brigade forward.

Bushrod Johnson is in the middle of a nasty fire-fight at the Squire Bottom House with Lytle's Brigade.

Slocumb's Battery moves forward, crosses Bull Run and Doctor's Creek and goes into action on the hill 200 yards south of the Bottom House (current site of the barn).

H.P. Bottom House

Preston Smith is ordered to Perryville to watch the Mitchellsburg and Lebanon Roads. Bragg is still unaware of the potential size of Buell's force.

Buell is still unaware a major engagement is underway.

3:10 p.m.

Adams is moving forward, up a ravine and cannot be detected by Lytle. Sheridan, on Peters Hill, can see Adams but chooses to do nothing.

Polk and Bragg, stationed on the bluffs overlooking Walker's Bend, order A.P. Stewart forward.

Sheridan spots Col. Samuel Powell's Brigade forming just south of the Springfield Pike.

3:15 p.m.

Simonson, almost out of ammunition, has to withdraw on the left of

Lytle's line.

Terrill, fearful he cannot hold Open Hill, orders Parson to withdraw.

Cheatham orders Brig. Gen. John C. Brown and Cleburne forward.
Cleburne moves to replace Johnson and Brown moves to the areas
vacated by Jones.

3:20 p.m.

Col. Thomas Jones's Brigade is repulsed by the left of Lytle's line.

Stewart aims for a gap between Donelson and Maney.

Maney forces the crest of Open Hill. Parson can only bring off one
gun.

3:30 p.m.

Stewart and Maney have taken Open Hill. Terrill's Brigade is in
retreat on McCook's left.

Maney prepares to move on Terrill's second line, attacking through a
cornfield located in a depression to reach the Benton Road.

Col. John C. Starkweather's brigade is in position behind the Benton
Road.

3:40 p.m.

Cleburne attacks Lytle at the Squire Bottom House while Adams falls
on the right flank protected by the 15th Kentucky.

Sheridan, after a request from Alex. McCook, orders a battery to fire
on Adams.

3:45 p.m.

Lytle's line collapses.

Donelson is out of ammunition and falls back.

3:55 p.m.

While trying to rally his brigade, Terrill is struck by a shell
fragment and mortally wounded.

4:00 p.m.

Maney is attacking Starkweather across the Benton Road. Stewart is battling Webster and Harris in the center of McCook's line.

Lytle is falling back along the Mackville Road towards the Russell House. Loomis and Simonson have replenished ammunition and are covering Lytle's retreat.

Alex. McCook is directing his front at the Russell House. He asked for support from Brig. Gen. Albin Schoepf's reserve division of Gilbert's Corps, and sends a courier to Buell to ask for reinforcements.

Lytle is severely wounded and captured.

Gilbert and Buell hear cannonading to Sheridan's front, and finally conclude a battle must be going on.

4:05 p.m.

Adams and Cleburne collapse Lytle's line.

4:10 p.m.

Maney has battery support in place, and forces Starkweather to pull back his guns. Two more field pieces are lost in Bush's Battery.

Crittenden is still extending towards the Springfield Pike.

Powell's Brigade is about to attack Gilbert's entire corps just south of the Springfield Pike.

Gilbert agrees to reinforce McCook, and orders Schoepf to move up the Benton Road. This also protects Gilbert's left flank.

Buell finally hears of the problems of McCook's Corps. Crittenden is ordered to send a division to the center.

4:15 p.m.

Powell's single brigade attacks three Federal brigades. Sheridan's forced inactivity has led the Confederates to incorrectly conclude Federal presence is weak here.

4:20 p.m.

Adams presses the Russell House position. Cleburne pushes northwest

from the Mackville Road towards the rear of Webster's Brigade. The remnants of Lytle's Brigade are frantically trying to replenish ammunition.

4:25 p.m.

A.P. Stewart falls back from Webster's front. Webster sees Cleburne coming in on his flank and rear and changes front to face Cleburne.

Maney crosses the Benton Road to attack Starkweather; without the support of A.P. Stewart, he fails.

4:30 p.m.

Powell pushes Sheridan hard enough to cause Sheridan to note he "was hard pressed."

Webster is killed. His brigade abandons its position and falls back.

Cleburne is stopped by remnants of Lytle's and Webster's brigades.

S.A.M. Wood ordered to cross Doctor's Creek to support Cleburne.

4:45 p.m.

Donelson reforms to support A.P. Stewart's retreating brigade.

With Cleburne repulsed, Rousseau forms a strong defense line around the Russell House.

Starkweather's line holds against Maney.

5:00 p.m.

Hardee orders his last reserve, the brigade of Liddell, forward.

Powell finally realizes he is greatly out-manned and retreats along the Springfield Pike.

Harris loses four guns to the Confederates.

5:10 p.m.

Col. William P. Carlin's brigade pursues Powell back into Perryville.

5:10 p.m.

The sun begins to set. Donelson, Wood, and parts of Stewart are moving forward towards the Federal center. Adams attacks the Russell House position to the south of the Mackville Road.

5:25 p.m.

The brigades of Col. Michael Gooding and Brig. Gen. James Steedman are moving to support McCook.

5:30 p.m.

Wood pushes forward in the center but cannot make progress. Adams, Cleburne and Maney have fallen back.

Gooding forms a line in support of McCook.

5:45 p.m.

Sheridan's artillery on Peters Hill fires on Adams.

6:00 p.m.

Powell forms in Perryville on the east bank of the Chaplin River. Carlin realizes he cannot push the issue as darkness closes in.

6:10 p.m.

Crittenden (somehow) believes a large Confederate force is still in his front on the Lebanon Road.

6:15 p.m.

Wood crashes against Gooding's line and cannot break it.

6:30 p.m.

Wheeler pulls in his cavalry to the east side of the Chaplin River.

6:45 p.m.

Liddell attacks Gooding as Steedman is placed behind in a second line behind the Russell House. Wood is falling back. It is now almost dark.

Polk is at the front near the Russell House and is nearly captured when he rides up to an Indiana regiment.

7:00 p.m.

Liddell clears Gooding off the Russell House / Mackville Pike line, but cannot move farther.

Gilbert, Sheridan and Buell dine at the Dorsey House. In spite of dinner, Sheridan later claims Buell didn't know what was going on.

7:30 p.m.

Battle ends.

8:00 p.m.

Bragg returns to the Crawford House and begins to have second thoughts about his position. He asks to see his army commanders.

9:00 p.m.

Rousseau reports to Buell in person; later reports Buell did not "appreciate the severity of the fighting."

9:30 p.m.

Alex. McCook reviews Rousseau's line and doesn't like what he sees. He determines to find a better position. The Federals are fearful of a night attack.

Bragg finally realizes Buell's entire army is in front. Realizing Buell would move to cut him off from Danville, he orders Brig. Gen. Humphrey Marshall and Maj. Gen. E.K. Smith to concentrate their forces with him. Bragg determines to retreat.

10:45 p.m.

Alex. McCook reports to Buell. He asks for two brigades to reinforce him because his corps is badly cut up, but is refused. McCook is "vexed" with Buell.

10:45 p.m.

Confederate forces fall back behind the Chaplin River. The retreat to Tennessee commences.

Casualties:

US: 4,211

CS: 3,396
