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# THE TRUTH ABOUT THE

Major Waller Produces Documentary Evidence in Support of His Story of this Celebrated Fight.

BATTLE OF THE CRATER

course the balderdash and buncombe to volunteer officers of both

Since writing the sketch and report printed in The News and Courier last fall this writer's attention has been called to an article in a late magazine which has led him to go into the whole matter in relation to the Crater as well as to the rallroad wrecking. He was glad to note that its author, in the first place, was absent from command from 30th June to August the 18th and that during that time Lieut Col Huger A and I. G., of Johnson's division. (See War of Rebellion, series No 80, page 795.) Also that possibly he relied on information he himself had furnished based on report of W. H. Whiter, A. A. and I. G., of Johnson's division. See War of Rebellion, No 80, page 795.

"There is a great diversity of opinion as to the time the first charge was made by Gen Mahone. But one officer of the division spoke with certainty—Col McMaster, 17th regiment S. C. Troops." Real statement lost, but we get it from letter of Lieut Col McMaster that of the virginians. all this writer's attention has been

In behalf of the truth of history I wish to verify and to support by documentary evidence the sketch of the 64th Georgia and semi-official report of Wright's brigade at the Crater, July 20, 1864, found in The News and Courier of September 2, 1906.

I do this the more readily in view of the many discordant statements uttered or written by parties laboring under illusions in regard to that battle. The careful historian of the future will find it very difficult to wend his way along the true path amid the mazes and intricacies of all the halucinations and vagartes extant in regard to that event. He accepted, but willist I was a for the participants themselves as to fithe participants themselves as to the participants themselves as to controverted facts of which they have, to say the least, the most misty recollection.

4t is well to note that during the siege of Petersburg and Richmond there were very few Confederate reports. In fact, there were scarcely and from regimental officers and, outside of Beauregard's forces, very few from general officers. Those made were limited mostly to mere statements of results. When, therefore, we see or hear conflicting accounts from Confederates, we must resort to the more disinterested reports of the Federals, rejecting, of course, the balderdash and buncombe so common to volunteer officers of both

3d, the 22d and the 64th Georgia were not in the crowd as regimental organizations. He cannot say positively as to the 48th and 2d Georgia battalion. Now we all agree, Mahone, McMaster, Bernard and this writer, that the time of this meeting of Johnson and Mahone was 10 o'clock or a little after (if at all) and that the next and last charge, (whether by Alabamians or any athres were the last

of the division spoke with certainty—
col McMaster, Tith regiment S. C.
Troops." Real statement lost, but we "see it from letter of Lieut Col McMaster (February, 1872.) found on 889, Vol. 2.
Roman's Beauregard". A short time after 1 met Gen J. (Johnson) Gen Mahone came up with a few men. From my present recollection it would say this war, at the earliest, 16 o'clock A. M. 34 was a considerable time before and developed the common of the state of the common of the common of the state of the common of the common of the state of the common of the state of the common of the c

on the south." But Godwin's flag, into the crater, but they were driven hough out of sight of Hartranft, is off by the bayonet. They succeeded in the distance by Gen Warren and killing and wounding a great many of seen in the distance by Gen Warren and reported at 9.15 A. M., while Hartranft, having examined his ammunition, asks more, thus: See No 82, page 668, Gen Wilcox; July 30; 64, 9.18 A. M: "Will you please send us ammunition for rifle musketis? We can held this position, but cannot advance. We have two guns of the enemy; one firing to our right, the other to our left. I am. General, etc. J. F. Hartranft, Brig Gen of Vols."

WITH HANDLES,

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-VASES-

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As to Godwin's flag being on the edge of crater, we have Gen Warren, of the United States, 5th corps, Col Hall, com-mander of the brigade. This writer, promoted "for distinguished valor and valuable assistance, sortel was aways in sight of his brigade in battle and at the right spot at the critical moment, with Perry close at hand or at another. A splendid team. This writers are one or both in every fight. On that bleak day, the 7th February, 1865, this writer's little Yankee tent (about 4 feet high) had been pierced by two balls, when it was "struck." Gen Sorrel passing along on tour of observation had ordered a detail made to dislodge some worrying sharpshooters from his front, with Perry close by, and had been requested by this writer to allow the detail of the 64th Georgia to be placed under the officer of the 22d on account of paucity of officers, which being granted, he (Sorrel) was standing most coolly inquiring after comfort of the nen whilst shot after shot was fred at him, when suddenly one went with muffling sound through his body and he

coolly inquiring after comfort of the men whilst shot after shot was fired at him, when suddenly one went with muffling sound through his body and he fell on the tent. In a jiffy the ever alert Perry was at his side receiving his (as he then thought) last words as to the care of his brigade and disposal of his military mementoes among his sister and brothers.

This writer readily admits that Girardy was a brave and gallant officer. He saw him at Deep Bottom trying to accomplish a most difficult manoeuvre in 50 yards of the enemy, when he in a span new brigadier's uniform fell with

on the 5th of April and Mules on the 7th and was forever furled at Appomattox.

The regimental formation from the richt at Deep Bottom was first. 2d Georgia. 22d. 64th. 10th. 2d battalion and 48th on the left. Under Sorriel it was the 3d. 64th. 23d. 16th. 2d battalion and 48th Georgia on the left. At Appomattox it was exactly reversed.

Lee us return to the remnant of the 6th. between the crater and that hich traverse on the north (it was really that part of the retreached cavalier, about 76 feet long, not blown up on the north.) After the severe hammering given it by the eight regiments of Hartranft it now seeks protection at the muzzles of its rifles and end of the bayonets. Let us quote Gregg, who, in command of the 48th Pennsylvania, had killed Capt Broadbent or perhaps Major Luckie, of the 3d Georgia, and whose man Frank Hoean had coutured the flag of the 6th Virginia and who, when the 3d Georgia and 22d had bursted the flag of the 6th Virginia and who danger of being slaughtered by the Carolinians, vinioned on the fixed bayonets carelessly handled by the frightened in expose, or surrender to the gallant Virginian. On page 555, Series No. 50, he says, after an account of hand to hand fighting in the trenches north of the crater: "Many of our men being killed and wounded and the enemy pressing us hard, we were compelled to fall back into the crater in order

stance. No soldier whilst fighting for life can keep time for or attend to the business of another organization.

Now bear in mind that the Georgia brigade had to go back to its trenches that night and left the Virginians, the Alabamians and the Carolinians in the works and on the field—hence the reporters got in all the balderdash and ex-parte braggadocio of vauntful heroes who, perhaps, were not in gunshot of the battle.

Mahone flatly asserts that he made the Georgia brigade in position to meet any possible reverse to which the Virginia brigade in position to meet any possible reverse to which the Virginia brigade might be subjected. He was only obtuscated as to time, manner of disposition and position. He or come per an in forty steps of the man speaking that morning sent the 64th up south to blace opposite the crater."

Now as to time, Johnson in his report says: (See "War of Rebellion," So, page 789.) "As soon as I was aware the enemy had sprung the mine and broke my line, etc. at the same time I dispatched staff officers to the divisions on my flanks for the reinforcements. From the left I received response that none could be sent, as Gen Hoke's line was already too weak. Capt Smith, who went to the right, promptly reported that Gen Mahone was moving up to our support with two brigades, (Mahone's and Wright's.)" Gen Humphreys, in his book, notes this time as before 6.30 in a dispatch from Duff, signal officer, who reported them as passing 20 minutes before 8.20 A. M. Mahone in a letter says that when the head of the column of the two brigades reached the centrance of the covered way leading from the Hannon pond to and across the Jeruselem plank road, "I rode over the Jeruselem plank road, "I rode over the Georgia brigade in the proper state of the Geological Society of America, a member of the centrance of the covered way leading from the Hannon pond to and across the Jeruselem plank road, "I rode over the Jeruselem plank road, "I rode over the Jeruselem plank road, "I rode over the Jeruselem plank road,

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into the crater, but they were driven off by the bayonet. They succeeded in killing and wounding a great many of our soldiers and the negroes were almost destitute of ammunition."

The want of men behind his rifes and the slacking of fire from the crater by want of ammunition caused this writer to think of the situation between 9.30 and 10 o'clock, and becoming convinced that 600 men could end the affair he sought the commanding officer. (See his article.) Now as to part of Wright's brigade going on right of Mahone's we have, first, the letter of Col Hall; commander of the brigade, written August 2d and published in the Express on August 3d, saying a regiment and a half went in on Mahone's right, and J. E. Laughton, 1st Lieut Virginia Sharpshooters, says: "I distinctly remember that a small number of Wright's brigade made the charge along with our brigade and was immediately on the right of the battalion of sharpshooters. This writer affirms it, and the fact of Corpl Herndon, of the 3d Georgia, getting the 58th Mass-sachusetts State flag verifies it. That, Negari non potest, and no hazy recollection can upset the

no hazy recollection can upset the fact."

That the 22d Georgia went in along with the 3d Georgia is claimed by Wm Mounteastle, of Cartersville, Ga, and corroborated by many Georgians. He says it was a hand, fight that was hand to hand to the death and cites the deaths of Adjt Levy and Capts Logue and Rush, with Capts Thomas and Forsythe wounded among many others. I believe it did, and think the balance rushed soon to the ald of their comrades, but of this I am not certain. The right of the Virginia brigade was, according to acutal measurement, as said, 441 yards from the northern edge of the crater, and extending to its left; it covered only its front according to Gen Weisiger, its commander. Thus Wright's had more to cover north of the crater than the Virginians, leaving out the crater itself. Hartranft's, a triangular fort, and the flankers north and south.

It is well to note that Col Humphrey.

fankers north and south.

It is well to note that Col Humphrey, commander of the 2d brigade of the 3d division of the 9th corps, says that his Michigander shorpshooters and the 20th Michigand took the works of the 22d and 23d, capturing 30 or 40 prisoners. These works were occupied by the enemy when they opened on the 64th with such terrible results in addition to Hartranft's eight regiments and Stanley's cannon. Also, to note that Mahone filed no official report at the time, but wrote from a very hazy recollection 28 years after; he, in the meantime, having been under fire from the Richmond papers and Gen Weisiger on account of a remissness in duties and an insufficient display of courage on that occasion.

It is well to note also, the variout

"When at 10 o'clock Mahone arrives with a few men." This is his last sentence. "At about 9.30 A. M. old Virginia-that never tires in good works—with 800 heroes rushed into the trench of the 17th and slaughtered hundrels of whire; and blacks, with decided preference for the Ethiopians."

Thus his certainty passes away as a summer cloud, but not so the damage to historical accuracy. But McMaster was a brave man and he LaMotte and the other noble Carolinlans fought well but as he himself said in his speech and paper of December 16, 1895, in substance, no soldier whilst fighting for life can keep time for or attend to the business of another organization. ousiness of another organization.

to Johnson's headquarters \* \* \* to see Gen A. P. Hill, my corps commander, but he not being there, (not expecting to see Gen J.) I saw Gen Beauregard and said, 'General, I have, by direction of Gen Lee, two brigades on the way near at hand for the reinforcement of Gen Johnson.' \* Calling up Gen J., who appeared about ready to take his breakfast, Gen B. said; 'General, you had better turn over,' etc. I then asked Gen J. to show me the way to the crater. Turning to a lieutenant staff officer, he said, 'Show Gen M. the way to Elliott's salient or Pegram's battery.' I hurried back, etc."

At 8.20 A. M. Col Evans, was not living. The stars from his collar were kept by Mrs Evans (nee Overby, and first husband a Lenoir,') until her death, when they were divided between the Lenoirs and Middlebrooks, her children by her first and third husbandathere being none by Col Evans. This writer hopes that the wife or descendants of Capt Peabody (Edward R.) or one of the Lenoirs or "Middlebrooks www.mtie to him in regard to this.

the 64th instead of Mahone's brigade in his letter of April 24, 1892, to McMaster, which he readily admitted when his attention was called to the fact that the charge was made on the crater, and Mahone's Virginians never charged the crater proper, as was confirmed by a Mr Hadley, who saw the same charge. (See "War Talks," page 200.)

charged the crater proper, as was confirmed by a Mr Hadley, who saw the same charge. (See "War Talks," page 200.)

Meade says (No 80, page 165.) that it was between 819. Burnside says, (page 528.) "The enemy gained a portion of his line on the right; this was about 8.45 A. M."

Gen J. B. Carr, in his testimony hefore Court of Inquiry, says: (See No 80, page 120.) "About 8.30 o'clock Turner, of the 10th corps, was ordered, etc." (See also same page, 127.) The finding of the Court of Inquiry: "At 9 A. M. Gen Burnside reported many of the 9th and 18th corps were retiring before the enemy, and then was the time to put in 5th corps. It having just been reported, however, by two staff officers (not Gen Burnside's) that the attack on the right of the mine had been repulsed and that none of the Union troops were beyond the line of the crater—the commanding general thought differently, and the lieutenant general concurring—Gen Burnside was directed at 9.50 A. M. to withdraw immediately or at a later period." This was signed as the opinion of Major Gen Hancock, Brig Gen N. N. A. Miles, Brig Gen Ayres and the inspector general of the United States armies. Shriver.

This is enough for the charge or charges of Virginia and Georgia, partly or jointly, with exception of that of the 64th charged, or claimed to have, directly on the crater, that is, front is from squarely and next to the

comes around with a message and at about 10 o'clock Mahone meets Johnson and plans attack of Alabama, which takes place-at 2 P. M.

It is elementary to say that the first assaulting column was Ledlie's with Wilcox's to support him on his left and Potter's on the right and the 4th, the negro di-ision, last and assaulting. It bore altogether to the right four left) with the exception of the 19th colored, which touched the crater on its north. They were mainly in and about it and the traverse. There were no negroes on our right of crater, nor did any fire at approaching Alabamians from the crater.

Gen Girardy, who had been select-

from the crater.

Gen Girardy, who had been selected by Gen Mahone to be brigadier by request forwarded July 20, recommended by A. P. Hill and Lee, took command August 3. He instructed that no communication on the subject be published on account of harmony.

C. A. Waller.

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