

## **The War Comes to Atlanta**

**<http://civilwar150.longwood.edu>**

The week of July 20 to 26, 1864, was a very eventful week for the Confederate and Union troops. This week includes the Battle of Peachtree Creek, the Battle of Atlanta, the second Battle of Kernstown, and the beginning of Stoneman's Raid in Georgia. All of these events took place in Georgia.

During the Battle of Peachtree Creek on July 20, 1864, the fighting started when George Thomas crossed the Peachtree Creek with the Union army heading in Atlanta's direction. When Hood caught wind of this, he started to organize his army to attack. The Confederates attacked but the Union army held them off. Another skirmish during the day occurred at Leggett's Hill.

There was also fighting in the Shenandoah, where the Union troops tried to drive the Confederates out of the Valley of Virginia. There were engagements at Stephenson's Depot but the bulk of the Confederate army pulled out and marched towards Strasburg. There were also skirmishes in Tennessee, Missouri and in Idaho Territory.

On Thursday, July 21, 1864, the Union troops moved for Atlanta. Sherman's army had the place surrounded as they prepared to fight. The Union troops took Leggett's Hill despite Cleburne's heroic attempts to defend it.

On Friday, July 22, 1864, the famed Battle of Atlanta took place. When the Confederates arrived, William Hardee's men hit the flank of McPherson's men before getting to Atlanta. They were able to stall McPherson's advance. McPherson's line was reinforced where Hardee was attacking. Hood was not present on the field of battle and Gen. W.H.T. Walker died that day as

did Gen. James McPherson. The fighting was very hard and both sides suffered many casualties. Atlanta was still mainly under Confederate control, thus beginning the Siege of Atlanta.

Hood, again not present on the field, had failed a second time; his policy of hard fighting at whatever cost was not paying off. For the Federals casualties included 430 killed, 1559 wounded, and 1733 missing for a total of 3722 out of more than 30,000 engaged. For the Confederates, of nearly 40,000 engaged, estimates of casualties run from 7000 to as high as 10,000.

Sherman and the Federal armies mourned at the loss of McPherson. Maj. Gen. John A. Logan, the “Blackjack” Logan whose action that day was ferocious and able, took over on the field as commander of the Army of the Tennessee. On the fringes of the gigantic battle, fighting occurred near Decatur, at Beachtown, and along the Chattahoochee. Kenner Garrard and Federal cavalry spent three days on a raid to Covington, GA. But in the main the Confederates still held Atlanta and the Federals still ringed it with unrelenting force. The Siege of Atlanta may be said to have begun.

That day there was a Federal Cavalry raid in Covington, Georgia and fighting in Missouri, Arkansas, Mississippi, Tennessee and Louisiana. There was also a skirmish in Newtown, Virginia, as part of the second Shenandoah Valley Campaign.

On Saturday, July 23, 1864, there was a major battle in the Shenandoah Valley between Early’s men and the Union troops in Kernstown. At Atlanta, while forces were collecting the dead and repairing the damages that had been brought on because of the fighting, the Louisiana Constitutional Convention ended slavery in the state of Louisiana so that they could rejoin the Union.

Sunday, July 24, 1864, was the Second Battle of Kernstown, Virginia. Early sent his army to the Union right and left dividing them into two sections. Because of all the momentum behind the attack, the Union line broke and retreated towards Harper's Ferry. By night fall, the Union regrouped at Bunker Hill, Virginia.

Monday, July 25, 1864, there was fighting onwards toward West Virginia and Maryland as Early followed retreating Union troops.

Tuesday, July 26, 1864, was the first day of the Calvary raid lead by George Stoneman against Macon, Georgia. There was also fierce fighting as Union troops retreated still being followed by Early in West Virginia and Maryland.