

# The battle of gettysburg and impact of the 24th michigan infantry regiment

[History](#)



## **Plan of Investigation**

To what extent did the 24th Michigan Infantry Regiment change the course of the civil war at the Battle of Gettysburg? The investigation will include primary and secondary sources that involve letters from the Iron Brigade and historian views on what the Battle of Gettysburg was like for the soldiers of the Iron Brigade and then more specifically the 24th Michigan Infantry. The main sources for this investigation will be *Battlefields of the Civil War*. by James V. Murfin and L. Edward Purcell, as well as *The Civil War Sourcebook*. by P. Katcher to explore the life of the 24th Michigan Infantry and how they came to be a main component in the Iron Brigade at Gettysburg. By investigating the 24th Michigan Infantry Regiment at Gettysburg the change in the attitudes of the North is also found as well as how it impacted the outcome for slavery coming to an end and the victors of the war in America.

## **Summary of Evidence**

The 24th Michigan Regiment was from Detroit and Wayne County Michigan that volunteered as Abraham Lincoln's call for 300, 000 more troops in the late summer of 1862. (C-SPAN, 2013). They were a part in the Iron Brigade which included 5 regiments of the Mid-western region. Three were from Wisconsin, one was from Indiana, and one was from Michigan that were all included into the Iron Brigade.(C-SPAN, 2013). Wednesday July 1, 1863 is the first date of the actual battle in Gettysburg when Lieutenant Marcellus E. Jones (of the 8th Illinois Cavalry) saw confederates from Chambersburg Pike, Cashtown while on their way to Marsh Creek. Lt. Marcellus also had the first shot at was to be a shorter battle a confederate infantry and a federal cavalry that escalated to a battle that lead to the turn of the war with <https://assignbuster.com/the-battle-of-gettysburg-and-impact-of-the-24th-michigan-infantry-regiment/>

approximately 160, 000 casualties between both the confederates and the federals.(Clark, 1997, p. 61-62). The 24th were first tested at the Fredericksburg battle and then went to Gettysburg as their first real battle that started out with 496 men and ended in 363 casualties. (C-SPAN, 2013)

What made Gettysburg a bigger war than what was supposed to be a short battle is the surrounding infantries like Richard S. Ewell and James Longstreet's corps.(Clark, 1997, p. 61) Before this the war was almost certainly the confederates to win at Pennsylvania. (Murfin, 1997, p. 129 ) As well as Major General Henry Heth's confederates were at Herr Ridge yards away from the major sites of the war such as Willoughby Run and McPherson's Ridge. George C. Meade was even gathering around a group of engineers to make a defense line 20 miles from Gettysburg.

As for the Iron Brigade and the 24th Michigan Regiment they had just gained the advantage from the Confederates in Fredericksburg and were then in McPherson's Woods to emerge farther south. The 24th Michigan teamed up with the 19th Indiana and made a major move then by taking James J. Archer's men and made them run back to Willoughby Run without Archer himself.

In response the Confederates felt they had to attack as General Lee allowed Heth's infantry to break down Abner Doubleday's Lines while aligned with a brigade led by Colonel John M. Brockenbrough who was to move the Iron Brigade out of McPherson's Woods and help James Pettigrew's and the remnants of Jefferson Davis' and Archer's brigade (who was being led by Colonel Birkett D. Fry). Heth was unable to break the lines and was struck by

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a Minie ball, thus his troop even went to McPherson's ridge surrounding McPherson's woods. But Colonel Henry A. Morrow of the 24th Michigan saw them attacking giving them an edge that lead them to a victory. When the battle did end there were 1, 153 casualties of the Iron Brigade. (Clark, 1997, p. 62) In the year 1889 Michigan at Gettysburg had over 115 survivors of the 24th Michigan Regiment were wounded or captured at the monument of the 24th returned for the dedication of their monument. 100 men or more died in the fields or of wounds shortly thereafter. (C-SPAN, 2013)

### **Evaluation of sources**

The first source of the investigation is used the most is Battlefields of Civil War by James V. Murfin who was a from Hancock, Maryland and was raised in Hagerstown, Maryland. He later became a founding member of the Hagerstown Civil War Round Table in the 1960s then in 1967 he began a 18 year career in the National Park Service. He wrote this piece to summarize the importance of the land to the war and evaluate where the soldiers went to fight during wartime and why they went there as well as how did these battles end in terms of who won and who was defeated. Uninformed people that wish to discover what battlefields people fought on in the civil war and why were the audience of which he was trying to reach. The value of the book is how it shows how many casualties and victors of war to place just the amount of loss. It also provides maps and pictures of the places in which people fought and what they once looked like, letters from the soldiers and analysis on why the confederates or the union went to these battlefields, what the places look like now and the graves of the soldiers to show the effect of these battles, and what weaponry and uniforms were used/looked

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like to give a full picture of the battle of Gettysburg as well as how the weapons were used. The limitation of this source is that it is only second hand knowledge that could have been picked and chosen to get the reader to listen and participate in the reading.

The second source primarily used was the book *The Civil War (Gettysburg: The Confederate High Tide)* by the author Champ Clark who wrote multiple books on the subject of the civil war that he has studied intently. Otherwise there is very little information on the author. The book itself is used to introduce the Civil War's history using first hand sources with analysis from the author as to why they did these things with background Gettysburg knowledge. This then gives perspective to the war as it goes from the start and cause of the war to the casualties lost and maps to where the regiments were and what the geography of the battle was like. However its limitation is that it is second hand knowledge with evidence so it might not give everything that was included into the war and certain facts could be tainted but does have information of the 24th Michigan Regiment and who they fought specifically as if the author was in the battle at Gettysburg.

### **Analysis**

If not for the 24th Michigan Infantry Regiment there would not have been an advantage in McPherson's woods at all and the line would have surely fell. They started as a call to arms by Lincoln and ended as heroes and an Iron Brigade. The 24th is now considered the most important regiment to fight the battle of Gettysburg. The 24th was tested at first as stated before by the battle of Fredericksburg which was not a prominent battle within the Civil War's history because the Confederates won it but they had proved <https://assignbuster.com/the-battle-of-gettysburg-and-impact-of-the-24th-michigan-infantry-regiment/>

themselves because they ended up fighting the most important battle in history and damaging James Archer's regiment, which was very strong at the time, and slowly fighting toward the center of the battle to capture and destroy the other confederates.

The source that showed this was *The Civil War (Gettysburg: The Confederate High Tide)* which is again not directly from the source because not much was recorded of that time by the 24th Michigan Regiment. It is credible due to its alignment with other sources and Clark's background however. He gives good analysis and evidence to the war as well about how the 24th Michigan helped defeat the Confederate army and was important to know exactly where they attacked from in McPherson's woods and ridge. By knowing this understanding the advantage the 24th Michigan had before attackers had invaded their territory becomes easier to translate it back to how they began to win this battle that was a turning point within the war as it comes to battle winnings. (Clark, 1997, p. 49, 61-62)

However, the 24th Michigan was only a small part of the Iron Brigade and had no part in the actual battle in helping the Federal army win if not for this evidence due to its physical obviousness that if they had sight of their enemy before their enemy knew they gave the Iron Brigade the advantage. If they had not seen the enemy before they were coming the battle might have been lost to the confederates, which at that point the federals could not afford to let happen due to the fact that almost every major battle up to this point was lost to the Confederates and so would cause a Federal surrender

not long after the loss unless they were to win another battle. (Clark, 1997, p. 45)

However, many casualties were lost to the battle and the Confederate army attacks. Overall the 24th Michigan lost over three fourths of their original troops. (C-SPAN, 2013) They were never prepared when volunteering on losing that many troops and so can be called the losers of the war when losing their friends and brothers in arms. The number of casualties in the confederate regiments were few to none compared to the loss in the 24th Michigan regiment and therefore are left in history to be known as a good regiment but not many are well known within the regiment. (Murfin, 1997, p. 129)

### **Conclusion**

The impact the entire 24th Michigan regiment did make, however, was due its reputation and progression in the war with a volunteer group that started not so much soldiers and ended up with 115 men in various other battles that made a difference too. Gettysburg was really just what they started with to begin a progression in nationalism and fighting the war itself. Due to this battle the 24th Michigan Regiment changed the course of the civil war through hope and victory. The 24th Michigan Infantry Regiment gave the Federal army an advantage in McPherson's woods and if they were not there the line would have surely fallen. The start of the 24th Michigan was a call to arms by Lincoln and ended as heroes and an Iron Brigade as well as the most important regiment to fight the battle of Gettysburg.

### F. List of Sources

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