

ROSE FARM

THE WHEATFIELD

JULY 2, 1863

4:20 P.M.

"The Brook Soon Became Red with Blood!"



Signal guns fired, marking the beginning of Hood's Division's advance. Quickly, long-range artillery fire put Hood out of action, but his brigades pushed forward and were joined by McLaws' Division.

Brigades under Kershaw, Semmes, and Anderson attacked the Union line in the fields and

woods owned by a farmer named George Rose. Heavy casualties were taken in both armies as they struggled to control key terrain features.

Passing near the Rose farmhouse, Kershaw's brigade of South Carolinians survived flanking artillery fire and eventually pushed back Union V Corps troops under Tilton and Sweitzer from the Stony Hill. G.T. Anderson attacked the Rose Woods area, defended by portions of DeTrobriand's and Burling's Brigades. As Confederate successes began to be achieved and with Semmes' men coming forward, Union commanders scrambled to find troops to fill in the gaps

and hold off the onrushing Rebels. Rose's wheatfield to the north of Houck's Ridge became a focal point of the bitter struggle as more brigades from both armies were committed to the battle.

Around 5:40 p.m., Caldwell's Division, including the famed Irish Brigade, counter-attacked the Southerners on the

Stony Hill and in Rose's Woods, as well as near the Wheatfield. Kelly, Zook, Cross, and Brooke of II Corps all led Union attacks, with the latter three officers being shot as their men fought to hold the bloody ground.

As additional Rebel troops under Barksdale broke III Corps infantry and artillery line at the Peach Orchard,

Wofford roared down Wheatfield Road and began to flank Caldwell's Division, which fell back in disorder. Sweitzer's V Corps brigade fought their way into the Wheatfield, but could not hold the position. Then Ayres sent two brigades of Regulars from his V Corps division into the Wheatfield.

Finally, PA Reserves under Crawford were able to drive the last of the Confederates from the area as darkness enveloped the battlefield. Thousands of dead or wounded men littered Rose's farm and woods.



Wheatfield & Opening Day Volley / Bernie Kempinski