

Henry Borrows from Clayton's Heritage

There are many tragedies involving preservation of hallowed ground to commemorate the Atlanta Campaign of the Civil War. Among them are the 160 acres of the Crawford-Dorsey property now used by the Clayton County Water Authority for a spray field; and a trailer park occupying the very ground where the August 1864 Battle of Lovejoy took place.

When a developer bought property and sought a zoning change the Henry County board of commissioners decided to save the property from development. It would not be a seamless zoning denial as there was no sound basis given the county's willy-nilly enforcement of high vs. low density zoning. The district commissioner was faced with the recent Kelo decision wherein the US Supreme Court allowed taking private property for economic development, and a firestorm of discontent raised by the City of Stockbridge's use of eminent domain for redevelopment. The county commission had passed a resolution denouncing Kelo's results, so a simple 'taking' could not be done.

A new position was created, Official County Civil War Historian, and the 204 acres on the county's western border were determined to have historical and cultural significance. Eminent domain was used. By order of a court appointed grand master, the county paid \$8 million for the property – about four times the amount the developer originally paid to purchase it.

The fact that Henry County determined to set aside land and make a significant purchase to commemorate the War of Northern Aggression is admirable. However, the significance of the particular property was presented to the citizens of the county in a way that exaggerated its role in the Battle of Lovejoy's Station on August 20, 1864. It was, in fact, no more significant than the destruction of the McDonough clerk's office, the desecration of McDonough First Baptist Church or the total destruction of Timberridge Presbyterian Church. It was no more historically significant than the cruelty endured by Henry's citizens when Union raiders took everything of value, including food stores, leaving people literally starving in the aftermath.

The tragedy of Nash Farm Battlefield is the arrangement of historical facts to misrepresent actual events. Henry County consistently refers to Kilpatrick's Charge as "the Battle" of Lovejoy's Station, and Nash farm as "the Battlefield." The August 20th battle began about 11:00am at the intersection of Lee's Mill Road and McDonough-Fayetteville Road just north of the depot. The Battle of Lovejoy's Station lasted until about 2:00pm when Union General Judson Kilpatrick decided to charge through Confederate General Sul Ross' dismounted Texas Cavalry and proceed toward McDonough. The breakout charge lasted 30 – 40 minutes. The battle was ended by the cavalry charge and Ross's troops fled the battlefield to the west, scattering into the woods to the east – which would provide the location of significance for today's Nash Farm.

Multiple records of the cavalry charge place the Confederate line to the south and west of their cannon position. Ross's Texan cavalry caissons, led horses and ambulances crowded the narrow road behind the gun and the Union riders slammed into them at a full run. The charge caught Sul Ross in the act of withdrawing the two Texas regiments he had previously sent forward on foot. His skirmishers fled before the Yankee onslaught without attempting to make a stand, while his main line crouched behind a hastily built barricade about half way across the field.

Ross's line was maintained intact for a few seconds, the men emptying their pieces at the heads of the columns. Before the Rebels could reload, the Union horsemen were upon them. The Texans threw down their guns and ran.

Captain Burns reported, "Upon reaching the woods, we could not go so fast and could not keep in column. The troops became scattered, chasing dismounted and demoralized Texans in every direction."

The tragedy is worsened by the Lamar Institute's statement: "*The Battle of Nash Farm is known as the most massive cavalry action in Georgia,*" which completely ignores the action at Waynesboro. Or the Lamar Report's statement, "*This battle should not be confused with the skirmish that took place prior to the forces reaching Nash Farm nor the massive Battle of Lovejoy's Station that occurred a couple of weeks later on September 2-5.*" Mixing historical data between separate Civil War engagements, diminishing the significance of the battle to a "skirmish" and drawing maps that depict a Confederate demoralized retreat as *the historic battle* of the day is academically fraudulent.

Historical references in *War of the Rebellion, Sherman's Horsemen, History of Clayton County, Henry The Mother of Counties*, work in 1980s by the Atlanta Historical Society, Google Earth, Henry County land lot maps of 1820 and 1870, Georgia and Atlanta Campaign maps provided by online map collections, Henry County deeds and tax records ALL AGREE on the facts of the events at Lovejoy's Station on August 20, 1864.

Conflicting Evidence

A deserted plantation

The Lamar Institute, Inc. (*Lamar*) produced a study by Daniel Elliott and Tracy Dean that was presented to Henry County government on August 20, 2007, titled, "*The Nash Farm Battlefield: History and Archaeology.*"

Lamar page 5 states,

[Union Colonel Robert] Minty continued to describe Nash Farm as, "The ground indicated by General Kilpatrick was a deserted plantation creased in every direction by rain gullies. And there were two rail fences between us and the enemy, who were at work building rail barricades."

Scoop magazine, December 2007-January 2008, featured an article, "The Battlefields of Nash Farms" by Mark Pollard. Pollard is Henry County's Official Civil War Historian, who resides at 24 Babbs Mill Road on the Nash Farm property. The article includes the following passages:

The Union cavalry broke through Ross's Texas brigade on the northern quadrant of the Nash property. A 12-pound howitzer used in the battle was situated on the property, atop the knoll just slightly northwest of the present Nash farmhouse.

The property remained in the Nash family until 1941. Study of the one and a half story wood frame cottage failed to definitively identify the date of construction, but some family records indicate the date the house was built to be around 1855. Civil War veteran John Pleasant Shaw Nash occupied the house until his death in 1924.

No battle record for late July, late August or early September of 1864 mention a house at the location of the charge away from the Dorsey property. Rather, descriptions included the corn field south of Lee's Mill Road, a cane field north of Lee's Mill Road, a stand of walnut trees atop a knoll at the end of the field and to the left of the Union troops, fences on both sides of the road and fences the south side of the corn field.

The farmhouse owned by J. P. S. Nash was not indicated on a hand-drawn map by Captain Burns (1864); any official Civil War Atlas map (1877, 1895). The only references to dwellings on the south or east of the engagement were slave cabins (on the Dorsey property) that were dismantled for barricades.

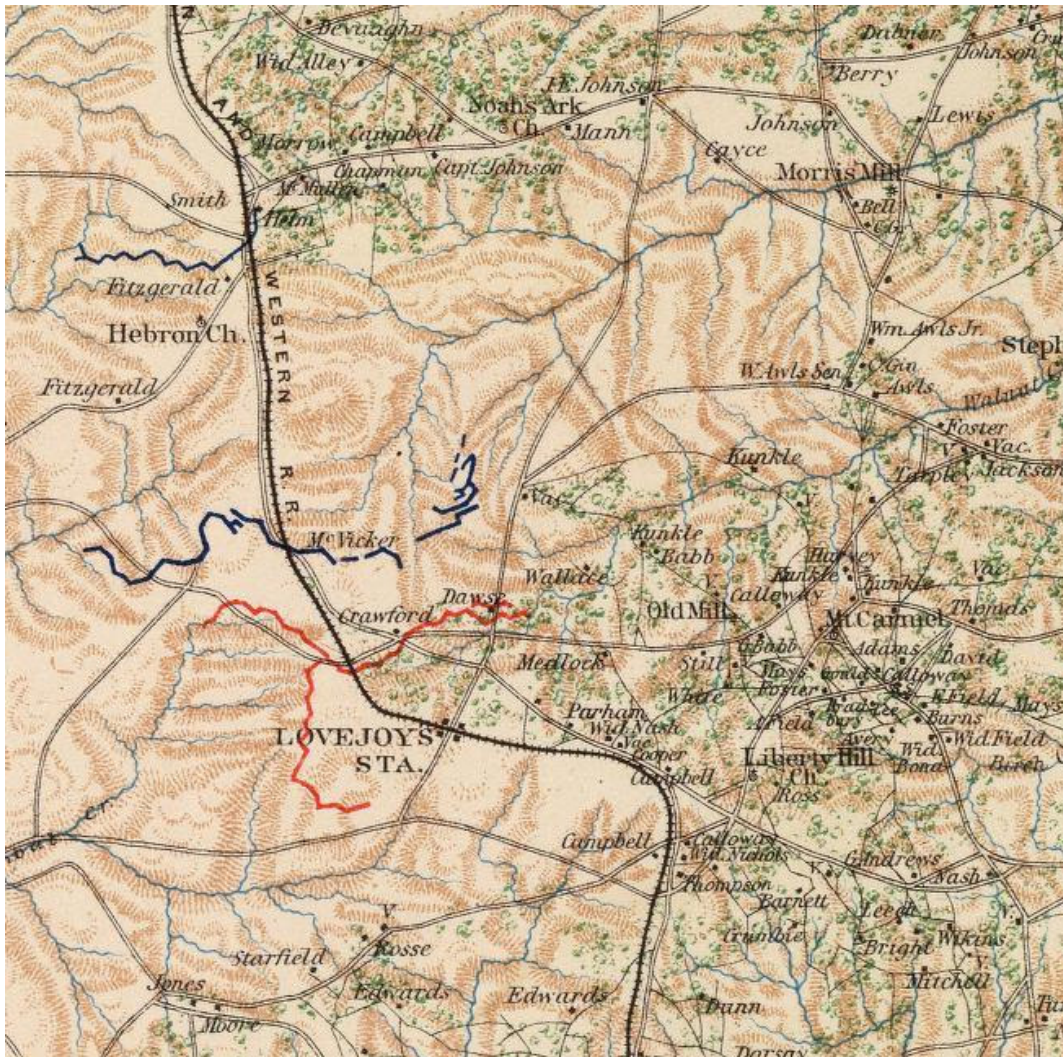
It is true that Thompson E. Nash bought property in land lots 90, 103 and 122 on March 8, 1847. (*When Clayton County was formed in 1858, ALL these land lots remained in Henry on its western border with Clayton, with 122 as the southern-most*) J. P. S. Nash owned the property purchased by Henry County, once part of the T. E. Nash farm. However, statements that the Kilpatrick Charge "ran over" Ross's Texans at the Nash property are not supported. Further, the statement the "*deserted plantation*" was on property owned by T. E. Nash does not stand up to scrutiny.

From *First Families of Henry County* we learn that John Dorsey moved to Henry County in 1824 and owned 954 acres on the waters of Flint River and Shoal Creek in land lots 191, 195 and surrounding lots. About 1870 this land became part of the Thomas Shanklin Crawford plantation now owned by Mrs. Betty Talmadge and known as Lovejoy Plantation. By 1860 John Dorsey owned about 1,400 acres in Henry County. After the death of his first wife, Mary Phillips Dorsey, John married his second wife Eveline who died in 1870. A son of John and Mary Dorsey was Stephen Green Dorsey.

The William Crawford plantation consisted of 480 acres in land lots 124, 133 and 102 of the 6th District in Henry, now Clayton County. (*Note: Land lot 102 rests on Clayton's eastern border and adjoins the T. E. Nash property in Henry County Lot 103*) After Mrs. Crawford's death in 1850 the property was sold to Stephen G. Dorsey. About 1858 Stephen enlarged the size of this house by having his own house, a two-story Greek

Revival dwelling on a neighboring lot, rolled approximately one-half mile and attached to the older Crawford house.

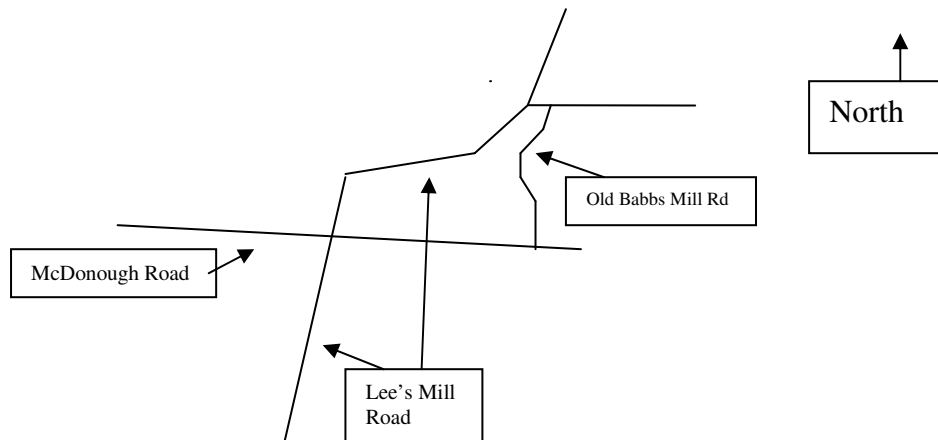
John Dorsey's will, dated April 4, 1868, notes, "To son S. G. Dorsey, 202 ½ acres in District 6 known as the "Nash Lands." This property in land lots 123 and 134 was owned by John Dorsey before the war and his son Stephen Dorsey had lived there in the two-story Greek Revival home. To avoid confusion, this analysis will refer to the house in LL123 as the "John Dorsey" house.



This map was commissioned in **1895** by the US Secretary of War to depict the battles and engagements at Jonesboro and Lovejoy's Station. Map compiled by Edward Ruger. Map depicts "The Fifth Epoch" of the Atlanta Campaign.

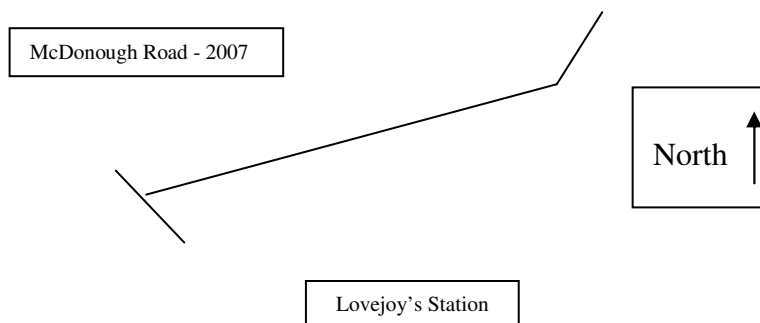
This map shows the lines of works erected by the contending forces and the lines of marches traversed by the United States Forces in approaching the several positions held by the Enemy and their relative positions in the line of battle.

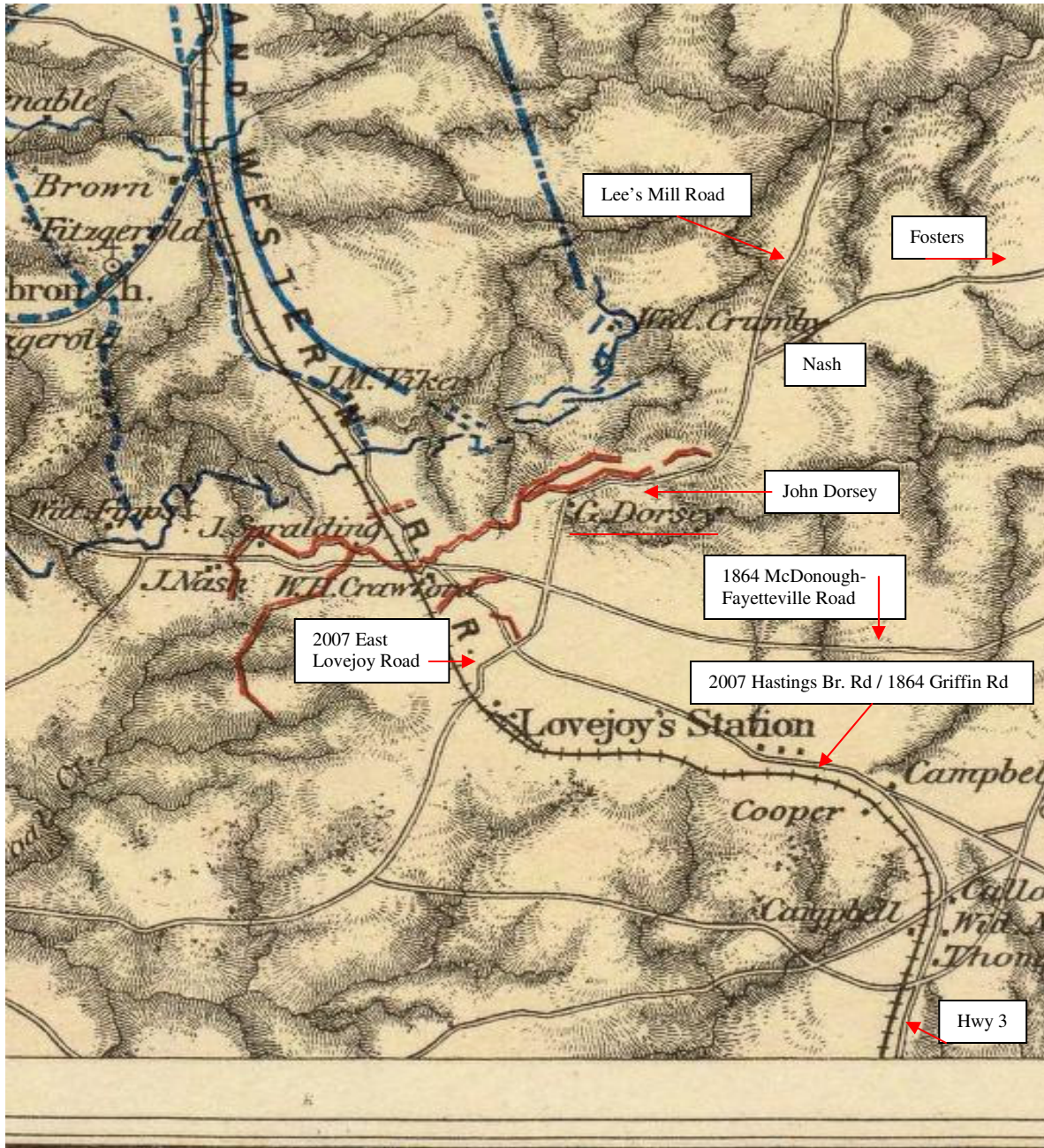
Earlier maps such as Ruger's commissioned work in 1877 and the 1851 Bonner Map show a westerly turn before turning south toward Lovejoy's Station. And Babbs Mill Road was farther to the east, nearly parallel to present Jonesboro Road.



The Ruger maps depict the intersection of three roads, with one leading to Babbs Mill, shown in the Ruger map as "Old Mill," one leading north and east toward Fosters, and the third being Lee's Mill Road. Babbs Mill Road shown as depicted on 1919 US Department of Agriculture Soil Survey Map for Georgia.

In each map Lee's Mill Road runs a straight north/south route from above McDonough Road to Lovejoy's Station. Present day Jonesboro/McDonough Road follows a diagonal northeast to southwest route, passing the Crawford-Dorsey house and intersecting with present Hastings Bridge Road. In so doing its diagonal route begins in land lot 122 at Babbs Mill Road, crosses land lots 123 and 124, and terminates in land lot 132. Neither this road, nor Freeman Road existed in 1864.





This map was commissioned in **1877** by the US Secretary of War to depict the battles and engagements at Jonesboro and Lovejoy's Station during the Atlanta Campaign. Surveys made by J. T. Dodge and Edward Ruger, civil engineers.

This 1877 depiction of the area surrounding Lovejoy's Station is most consistent with physical locations of the T. E. Nash Farm, Stephen G. Dorsey's house, present-day East Lovejoy Road and the geography of the area. Note the intersection Lee's Mill Road with Foster's Road is shown in both this and the 1895 Ruger map, which marks the location of the Thompson E. Nash property.

Note that present-day East Lovejoy Road is the same section of Lee's Mill Road as depicted in the 1877, 1895 and 1851 maps. Traveling north from Lovejoy's Station this road intersects 2007-McDonough Road at the S. G. Dorsey house location at the SW corner of LL 124. Traveling east into LL123 the road would pass the John Dorsey house. The road would then pass the present Nash Farm property.

Henry/Clayton County Deeds and Wills are important to this analysis to show who actually owned property along McDonough-Fayetteville Road, and particularly at the intersection of Lee's Mill Road.

* Will Book A, page 374, April 4, 1868: John Dorsey.

To my wife, Eveline, 202 ½ acres, Lot 162, District 6.

To daughters Alice Crawford and Martha Johnson, household furniture and 300 acres in District 6 in Henry County.

To son S. G. Dorsey, 202 ½ acres in District 6 known as the "Nash Lands".

* Book C, page 502. S. G. Dorsey to Idah Dorsey. 3-24-1883, 250 acres. Dist 6, Lot 123, 134

* Book G, page 130. Idah Blalock to J. S. (Joseph) Dorsey Trust. 4-20-1894, 250 acres. Dist 6, Lot 123, 134

The 1877 Ruger map depiction of the south and west direction of Lee's Mill Road and record of the two-story Greek Revival home "one-half mile" away from the Crawford-Dorsey house, would position the John Dorsey house in land lot 123 on Lee's Mill Road, and west of the Nash property. One story tells that Stephen "removed the wings" from the old house. In any case, that location was "deserted" in 1864.

That road location is consistent with descriptions of the battle orders. Based on the Ruger map, the Burns sketch and every historical reference, the 1864-Lee's Mill Road was the path of Kilpatrick's Charge. It therefore places the location of Young's Confederate cannon nearby John Dorsey's house. The Ruger map may, as some have suggested, "have many inaccuracies and lack detail to overlay them with 100 percent accuracy." However, that is the map we find in the *Official Atlas of the Civil War*. Mr. Ruger's work includes many battlefields and engagements across the entire theatre of the war.

In agreement with *Lamar*, the Edward Ruger maps are no doubt the most reliable cartographic evidence available. He was a surveyor and engineer hired to map the battlefields and military engagements. Ruger designated property owners and physical land marks with great detail.

The 1895 inscription “Vac” at the corner of Lee’s Mill and Fosterville roads could validate the location of the Nash farm, especially since T. E. Nash died on February 19, 1889. In any case, the “deserted plantation” would have been the John Dorsey house, which was in a direct northeast route, and about one-half mile, from Stephen Dorsey’s house.

It must be noted there is no record that a dwelling, farmhouse or plantation existed along Lee’s Mill Road at the location of the present Nash farmhouse. Henry County tax records set the date of construction of that dwelling in 1920. Mr. Charlie Crawford, president of the Georgia Battlefields Association stated, “The Nash Farm buildings are post war.” This analysis, therefore, will reference the property of Thompson E. Nash, and not accept the county’s claim the J. P. S. Nash farmhouse was constructed prior to the Civil War.

Given the width of Land Lots and the separation between the Nash farm and Stephen G. Dorsey’s house; at least 2,000 yards would have been crossed during the Charge. Since the old two-story Greek Revival house was about 1,000 yards (one-half mile) from the Crawford-Dorsey house, its location was in Land Lot 123 to the west of the present Nash Farm.

It is important to note that no account of the day’s actions indicates a Charge of one mile or greater distance. A distance of about 1,000 yards between the respective houses places the ‘deserted plantation’ about one-half mile east of the Crawford-Dorsey house, and therefore one-half mile west of the present Nash Farm. Confederate troop positions shown by the county to depict “Ground Zero” for the Cavalry Charge are not supported.

Notes on the Crawford-Dorsey House

References: *History of Clayton County*, Henry County Land Deeds

William Crawford (1778-1841) and Mary Shanklin Crawford (1778-1850) settled on a plantation about a mile north of where Lovejoy's Station later grew up on the Macon & Western Railroad. This house was a regular stop on the old stagecoach line running from McDonough to Fayetteville. The plantation stood about half-way between McDonough and Fayetteville and coaches stopped there for the noon meal and to water the team.

In later years the William Crawford house was to become a landmark in the fighting which took place around Lovejoy's Station during the War Between the States. Following the deaths of William and Mary Crawford, their plantation passed into the hands of Stephen Green Dorsey. (*Execution of deed for 160 acres in land lot 124, 1850*)

Stephen G. Dorsey was a son of John (1780-1870) and Mary Phillips Dorsey (1791-1851), whose plantation stood nearby. John Dorsey was alive for the 1850 Census. In that year he owned thirty-four slaves, a number sufficient to tank him among the most substantial planters in Henry County. John and Mary Dorsey became ancestors of an illustrious family which included the Honorable Hugh Manson Dorsey, Governor of Georgia from 1917-1921. Governor Dorsey was a son of Rufus T. Dorsey and Sarah Bennett Dorsey of Fayetteville and Atlanta, where Rufus Dorsey practiced law. Rufus Dorsey was a son of Solomon Dawson Dorsey and Sarah Glass Dorsey, who moved from the old John Dorsey plantation near Lovejoy's Station to the town of Fayetteville. Solomon Dorsey was a son of John and Mary Dorsey, and a brother of Stephen G. Dorsey and of Althea Frances Dorsey who married Thomas Shanklin Crawford. Thomas S. Crawford was a son of William and Mary Shanklin Crawford.

The marriage of Thomas Crawford and Althea Dorsey was solemnized on September 13, 1832, by E. E. Vaughn, a local Justice of the Peace. The ceremony took place at the John Dorsey plantation, which stood nearly within sight of the William Crawford house. The marriage represented the union of two of Henry County's leading plantation families.

Thomas Crawford began to amass a large tract of land near his father's plantation in 1835, where he built his own house shortly thereafter. The connection between the Thomas Crawford home and Georgia politics was to be repeated in later years when his plantation was acquired by Governor Eugene Talmadge, and was given to his son Herman Talmadge, who served Georgia as both Governor and as United States Senator.

(Notes: It is not conceivable that historical research into the area, families and history of Lovejoy's Station would not reveal the existence of the Crawford and Dorsey families, and their respective houses which were built long before the Civil War. The Crawford-Dorsey House and Cemetery – #84000972 - was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1984.)

Dorsey

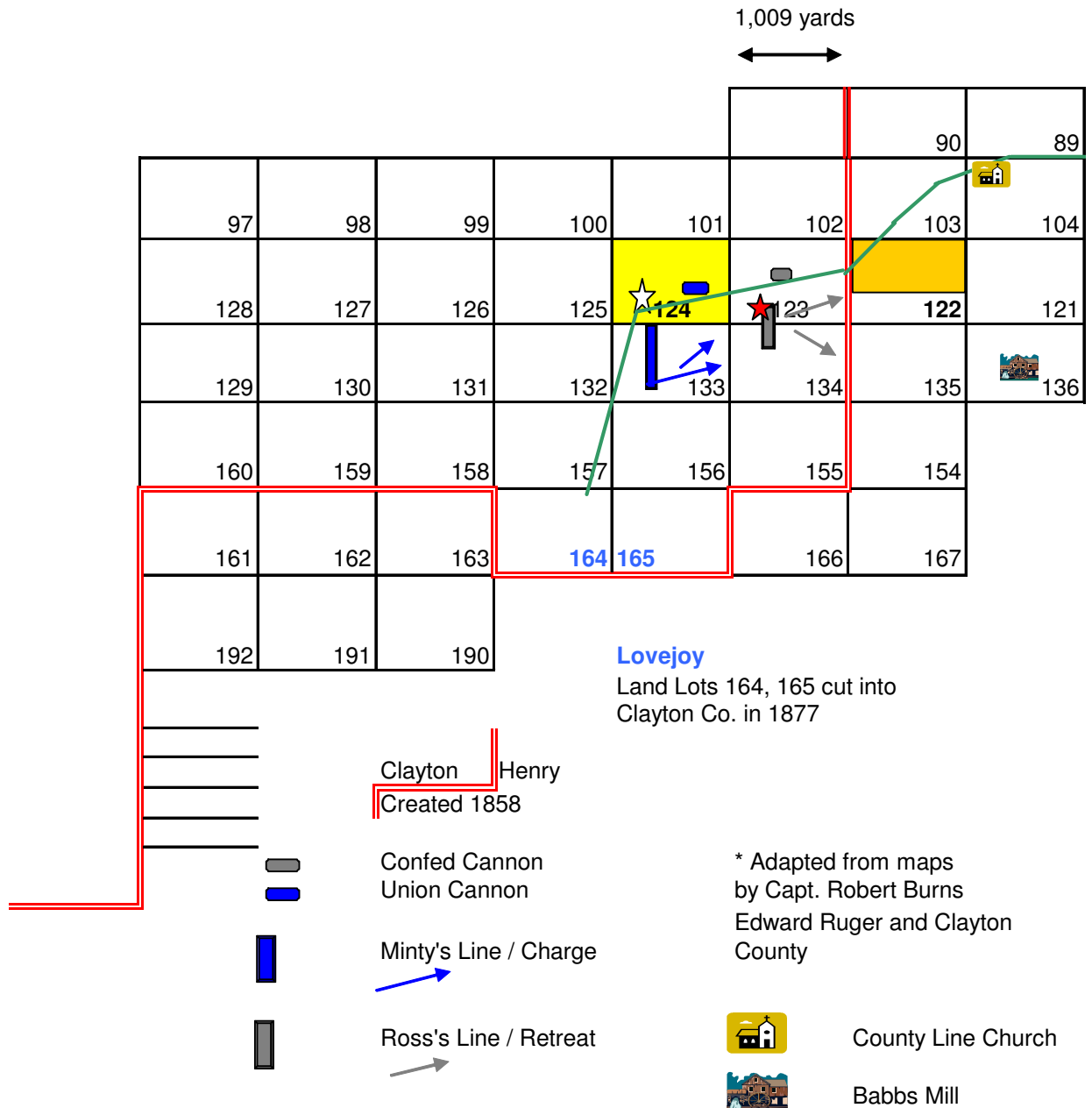
John Dorsey ★, Stephen G. Dorsey ☆

Lovejoy

About 1 mile from Dorsey House

Nash Farm

204 Acres in Land Lot 122



The greatest cavalry charge recorded in Georgia's history

The Henry County Battlefield website, <http://www.henrycountybattlefield.com/NashCavalry.htm> states,

The greatest cavalry charge recorded in Georgia's history took place in Henry County. This incredible charge began in a large field just off the McDonough Road, and ended just north of Babb's Mill Road at County Line Church.

His [Kilpatrick's] only route of escape would be to retreat on the McDonough Road towards McDonough. But first, they would have to cut their way through Confederate Sol Ross' Texas Cavalry Brigade who was spread out on the McDonough Road and southward into a large field.

Historical perspective is possibly influenced by many factors. However, the field reports of the day's events indicate engaged cavalry action occurred south and west of the Confederate cannon position, and particularly not the distance to County Line Church, which was actually formed in 1888.

Referencing the hand-drawn sketch by Captain Robert Burns, 4th Michigan, and accounts provided in *Sherman's Horsemen*, the lines of engagement were placed south and west of Young's Confederate 12-pound howitzer positioned atop a knoll in a stand of walnut trees. That knoll was on the left (north) of the road.

A fence line was at the bottom of the knoll, the road was lined with fences on both sides, and a fence line across the field south of the road was even with the bottom of the knoll. This eastern-most fence across the field was bordered to the rear by wooded area. In the field, some yards west of the first fence line was another fence line, and then Ross's dismounted troops aligned north to south, behind barricades, to the southern tree line that bordered the field of engagement.

This onsite account places Ross's line west and south of Young's cannon, not within the wooded area "50 yards from the front yard of today's Nash farmhouse." Rather, the county's official rendering of the battle lines moved the action to the north and east, while Captain Robert Burns placed Ross's line well into land lot 123 and 134 in Clayton County.



The battle map depicting Kilpatrick's Raid used at the Henry County Battlefield website references the firsthand account of Captain Robert Burns. The depiction ignores the actual location of the Crawford-Dorsey house where the Charge was formed, and the distance from that location to the present Nash property. The Confederate battle line is shown across the road curve, adjacent to the cannon position, and stretching toward the present farmhouse. That line would extend into the wooded area shown on Burns's map as provided on page 439 of *Sherman's Horsemen*. The map depiction used by the county is not consistent with the Burns rendering of the battlefield, as it places the engagement about one-half mile to the east of its actual location. The county's depiction further omits the presence of caissons, led horses and ambulances crowding the narrow road behind the gun (cannon atop the knoll). Instead the county depiction places two Texan cavalry units in a position behind the cannon position, which is not consistent with any account of the charge.

It is worthy of note that the Lamar Institute reproduced the Robert Burns sketch for their August 2007 final report on page 90. It is not identical to the sketch found at page 439

of *Sherman's Horsemen*. It does, however, depict the same troop alignments. This sketch reveals handwritten notations and shows "Rebels" within the tree line behind the fence line at the eastern end of the field and immediately south of the Confederate cannon position. The two fences and rebel barricade are shown in the open field, just as the sketch used in Evans's book. Also, the notation, "Rebel line behind barricade," exactly matches the depiction used in *Sherman's Horsemen*.

The sketch used by *Lamar* clearly illustrates the positions of Union cavalry and artillery directly east and south of the Crawford-Dorsey house. The fork at McDonough-Fayetteville Road to the south, and "Led Horses and Ambulances" to the north behind the Rebel cannon on Lee's Mill Road confirm written accounts of the area during the historic charge.

The Union Charge

As the Rebel infantry withdrew Yankee troopers heard the rattle of musketry in the rear. The echoes grew sharper and more insistent. It was hard-riding Sul Ross and his Texans storming down the road from Lee's Mill.

While two of Ross's regiments dismounted to advance on foot, Union Captain Lyon took command of a squadron of the 10th Ohio and barricaded the road. Loading and firing these troopers held the Texans long enough for Jones to get his brigade into line in a field on the right side of the road and face the rear.

Cannoneers and cavalymen began pulling down some nearby slave cabins. While they barricaded Captain Beebe's 10th Wisconsin Battery behind planks and fence rails, Jones deployed the remaining companies of the 8th Indiana on the battery's left and ordered the 10th Ohio into line on the right. *(Note: the 10th Wisconsin setup west of Lee's Mill Road and east of the Dorsey house. The 8th Indiana was formed west and east of the 10th Wisconsin; the 2nd Kentucky blocked the road; and, the 10th Ohio was on the east side of the field. This was the Union's eastern line)*

A deafening blast boomed from Beebe's cannon. The rattle of carbines rose to a steady roar. Ross's Texans answered with small arms and artillery. Bullets began smacking into the side of the Dorsey house. A fierce battle seemed now to be going on in every direction. Lt. William Webb reported, "Artillery and musketry were pouring their deadly missiles into our front, rear and both flanks.

The Union forces were surrounded. Judson Kilpatrick was positioned near the Dorsey house. As Captain Burns reported, Kilpatrick told Minty, "We will form here, facing our present rear; you will form line on the right of the road, Colonel Murray will form on the left; you will charge simultaneously.

The next few pages of *Sherman's Horsemen* tell of the carnage that occurred during the Union charge through Ross's troops. Is it important that some details are included for the purposes of clarity:

- * The charge began at 2:00pm in front of S. G. Dorsey's house. It lasted 30 minutes.
- * The charge followed Lee's Mill Road, then north toward McDonough.
- * The "deserted plantation" would be the John Dorsey house.
- * Jones's brigade and Beebe's artillery were keeping Ross's men at bay.
- * In front of the Union columns was a Rebel howitzer positioned on the left of the road.
- * Ross's caissons, led horses and ambulances crowded the narrow road behind the gun and the Union riders slammed into them at a full run.

Both the Crawford-Dorsey house and the "deserted plantation" provide landmarks valuable for pinpointing the actual location of Kilpatrick's Charge.

The charge caught Sul Ross in the act of withdrawing the two Texas regiments he had previously sent forward on foot. His skirmishers fled before the Yankee onslaught without attempting to make a stand, while his main line crouched behind a hastily built barricade about half way across the field.

Ross's line was maintained intact for a few seconds, the men emptying their pieces at the heads of the columns. Before the Rebels could reload, the Union horsemen were upon them. The Texans threw down their guns and ran.

Captain Burns reported, "Upon reaching the woods, we could not go so fast and could not keep in column. The troops became scattered, chasing dismounted and demoralized Texans in every direction."

Eli Long's Ohio Brigade dismounted and held the Rebels at bay while the rest of the Union column moved off toward McDonough.

A key quotation from *Lamar*, page 5, states:

John Sherk, a surgeon, described it in a letter as, "The ground from which the start was made and over which they charged was a plantation of about two square miles."

Stephen Green Dorsey owned 1,900 acres in Clayton County. His home was located in land lot 124. *History of Clayton County* states his property included Lovejoy's Station. Union troops were spread from just north of the Station, north and south of McDonough-Fayetteville Road, to eventual charge positions in front of the Dorsey house on Lee's Mill Road.