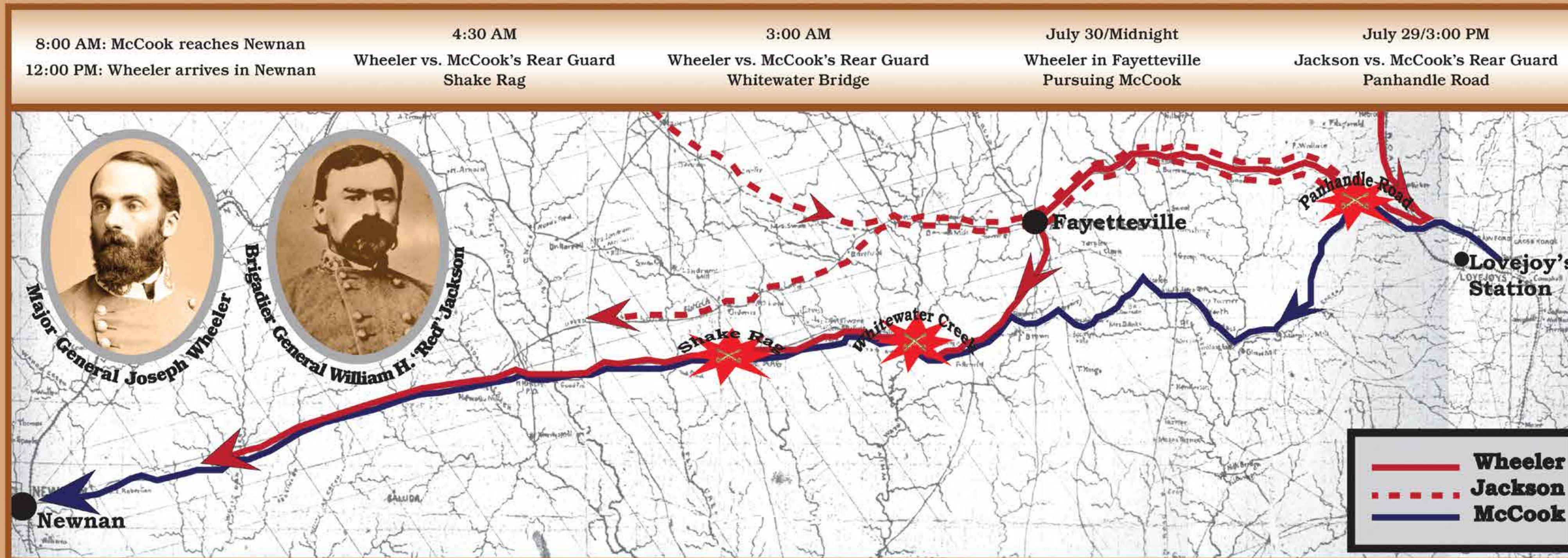


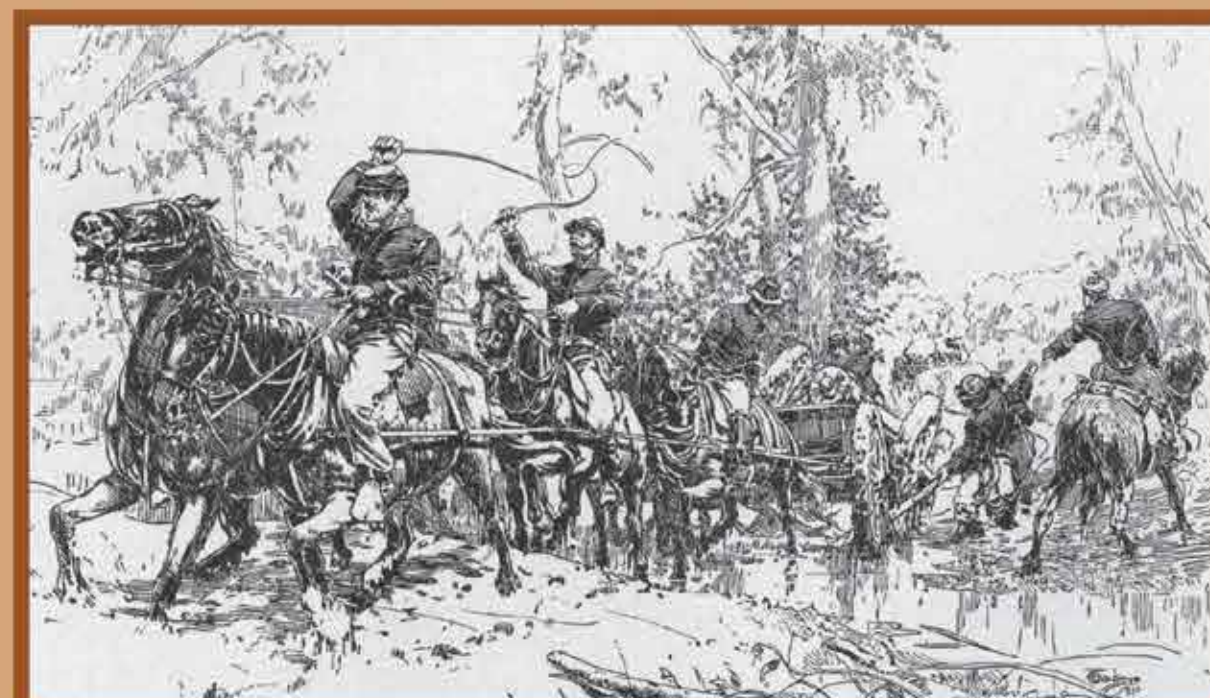
# WHEELER'S PURSUIT



Alarmed at Wheeler's approach and puzzled by Stoneman's absence, McCook conferred with his officers. Some wanted to turn back. Others urged him to ride completely around the Confederate army. After listening to their arguments, McCook issued orders to "return to the Chattahoochee by way of Newnan." Anxious to avoid Rebel cavalry who must have found the smoldering wreckage in Palmetto and Fayetteville, McCook detoured around Fayetteville, steering his column south on the Panhandle Road.

Confederate Brigadier General William H. "Red" Jackson had been in the saddle since daylight. Following the Atlanta & West Point Railroad from Fairburn down to Palmetto, his two brigades soon found hundreds of burned-out wagons and bloating mule carcasses lining both sides of the road. Eager for revenge, they hurried through Fayetteville and reached the intersection of the Panhandle and McDonough roads, just as McCook's rear guard approached from the opposite direction.

Seeing the Rebel riders, Colonel John T. Croxton ordered the 8th Iowa Cavalry to charge. Drawing pistols, the Iowans spurred forward, their starry guidon nearly touching the red Rebel battle flag of the 9th Texas Cavalry as the two columns collided.



For the next 3 hours, charge met counter-charge before Croxton's men finally fought their way through the Rebel roadblock and caught up with the rest of McCook's column at Glass Bridge on the Flint River.

With darkness fast approaching, McCook found himself far behind Confederate lines with no reliable maps. After some hesitation and delay, he found a slave familiar with the maze of narrow rutted roads and ordered his column forward, leaving Croxton's battered brigade to bring up the rear.



Convinced the raiders were trying to reach the Chattahoochee, "Red" Jackson hurried his 2 brigades back to Fayetteville, hoping to get ahead of them. Joe Wheeler was not far behind. A 20-mile ride from Flat Shoals had brought him and about 500 men to the scene of the recent skirmish on the Panhandle Road. They followed Jackson as far as Fayetteville, then turned southwest.

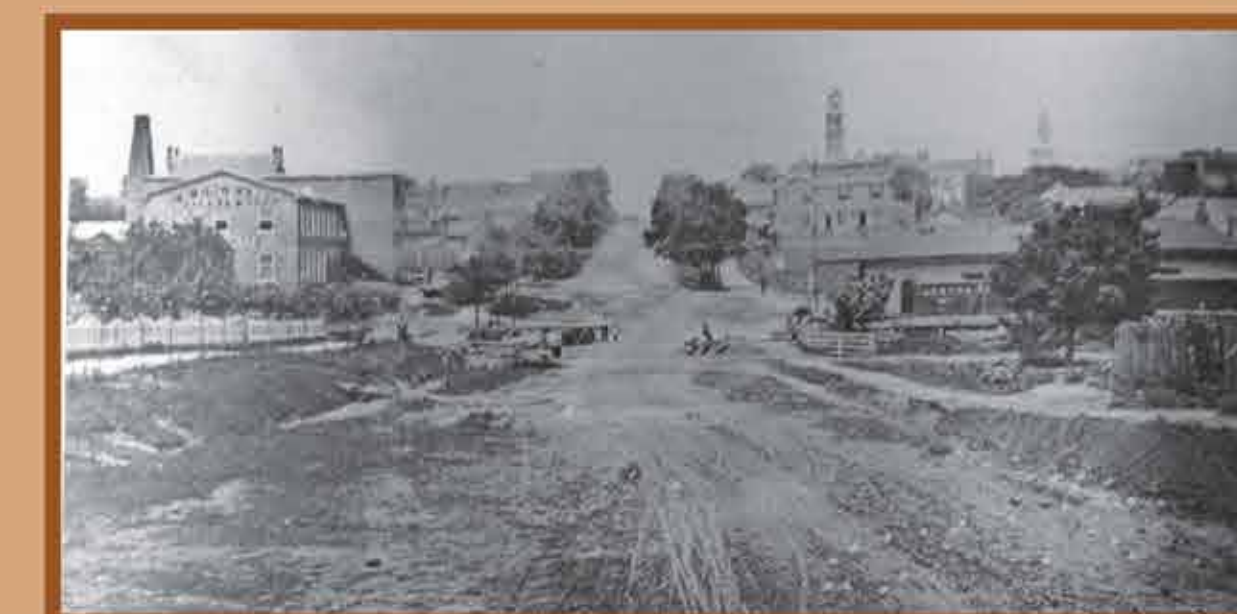
That night, gunfire blazed in the darkness at Whitewater Creek and Shake Rag as Wheeler repeatedly savaged the rear guard of the Yankee



column toiling along the Lower Fayetteville Road.

About 8:00 a.m. on July 30, Companies D and E of McCook's 8th Indiana Cavalry crested the hill overlooking the railroad depot at Newnan. Sleepless and exhausted after 3 days and 3 nights in the saddle, they were just 9 miles short of the Chattahoochee.

They saw the northbound train stopped at the depot because of the broken tracks at Palmetto. Without hesitation, the Hoosiers dashed downhill just as the locomotive's whistle shrilled, alerting Brigadier General Philip D. Roddey and 550 dismounted Alabama cavalrymen clustered around the freight cars. "Yonder comes the Yanks now," exclaimed a startled Confederate. Grabbing their guns, Roddey's men



View ca. 1885 of depot from hill on what is now called East Broad Street.

aimed a flurry of shots up the hill and according to one Yankee cavalryman, "We charged out a damn sight faster than we charged in."

