

John Enos Lanning 1843 - 1864

Born in 1843 in Buncombe County, N.C., Enos was about three or four years old when John and Annie came to Turniptown. Little is known about his childhood years, except he went to school at Upper Turniptown and helped on the family farm.



John Enos Lanning, Confederate soldier, killed in the Battle of the Wilderness in Virginia, during the Civil War. Born in North Carolina, he came to Turniptown at the age of one year in 1840.

When the Civil War began in April, 1861, Enos was eighteen years old. Three months later on July 3, Enos went to Atlanta and enlisted for the duration of the war. Another young Turniptown man enlisting the same day was Seaborn Plemmons, a neighbor to Enos. One month later, Seaborn's brother, Levi, joined also. These two men were the sons of William Plemmons, of Turniptown.

Shortly after his enlistment, Enos was put on a troop train bound for Virginia. He was inducted as a private in the 11th Regiment, Company D, of the Georgia Volunteers. This Regiment was made up of Gilmer County men, and was known as the "Gilmer Boys".

The 11th Regiment, along with the 7th, 8th, 9th and 59th Ga., was in Brigadier General George T. Anderson's Brigade, which served at different times in Jones's, then later Field's and Hood's Division, Lt. General James Longstreet's First Army Corp of the Army of Northern Virginia under General Robert E. Lee.

Shortly after organization, the 11th Regiment was ordered to Center Hill, Virginia, where the men went into winter quarters. Most of the days were spent drilling. The following spring and summer the "Gilmer Boys" saw action in several battles and skirmishes: 2nd Manassas, Shenandoah, Fredricksburg, and Chancellorsville among others.

On October 7, 1862, Enos was camped near Winchester, Virginia. Military records describe him as age 19, blue eyes, dark hair, and dark complexion. He was a small young man, standing only 5

feet and 8 inches tall. While camped in Winchester, Company D elected Enos to the rank of 4th Corporal. This action tells us that Enos was popular and well liked by the men in his Regiment. (Field officers were the only ones appointed during the Civil War. All other officers were elected by their companies).

Religion played an important part in the activities of Anderson's Brigade. In the Brigade there were three Chaplains, and Sunday School was held every Sunday morning. Chaplain for the "Gilmer Boys" was Rev. W.A. Simmons. We don't know if he was the Chaplain that showed a bit of yellow when actual fighting began or not, but one of the Chaplains in the Division did. One morning before a battle the preacher went among the troops encouraging them. "Remember, boys! Those who fall in battle shall sup tonight in Paradise!" One soldier, knowing the Chaplain would retreat to the rear as soon as the shells started raining down on them, called out: "Then Reverend, how about coming along and having supper with us tonight!"

In 1863 a great revival swept Longstreet's Army. Services were held morning and night in Anderson's Brigade. A Rev. Gwin of Rome, Ga. was in charge of services in the 11th Regiment and 80 souls were saved.

In the fall of 1863, Longstreet was ordered to Chickamauga, Ga., to reinforce Bragg's Army of the Tennessee. The 11th Regiment was left in Charlestown, S.C. until the siege of Knoxville began. Then it was called to Tennessee to join their Brigade there. Once again on a train, Enos, with his company were routed through Augusta, Atlanta, and Dalton. (Yankees were in possession of the railroad from Richmond to Tennessee). Throughout the winter, the 11th was quartered in Morristown, Tennessee. The soldiers were ragged, half-starved, and while there they endured every form of hardship and exposure that can be imagined.

NOTE: (Soldiers were allowed furloughs if at all possible whenever they were near their homes. We wonder if Enos was allowed this privilege, or, was there time under the circumstances?)

Fighting that winter in freezing rain and in slippery mud so deep horses mired to their knees, the barefoot soldiers left bloody stains on the frozen ground as they marched. They lived off the countryside, foraging the rugged mountains for food. For their daily rations, details were sent to raid orchards, old fields, and farmhouses for any scant offering they might provide. It was later written, of these soldiers, "They took their privations cheerfully, and complaints were seldom heard."

In April, 1864, Lee ordered Longstreet back to Virginia to help in the conflict there. The "Gilmer Boys", along with the other Regiments, moved forward confidently to the grim death-grapple

awaiting them in the Wilderness. At Gordonsville, Virginia, the Army halted, waiting orders from General Lee.

Battle Of The Wilderness

On the morning of May 4th, 1864, two divisions of Longstreet's Corps encamped at Gordonsville, were ordered to move rapidly toward the Wilderness, thirty miles away. In one of these divisions was the 11th Regiment, the "Gilmer Boys".

Fighting commenced in the Wilderness on May 5th. That evening, Longstreet, some distance from the scene of battle, received orders to make a night march so as to arrive upon the field at daylight the next morning. On Friday, the morning of the 6th, at one a.m. they started to move. At daybreak they were within three miles of the rear of the battlefield.

At five a.m. on the morning of the 6th, the battle was renewed with unabated fury. The Wilderness was a tangled thicket of pine, sweet-gum, and scrub oaks. Opposing lines could only be discerned by the noise of their treading the underbrush and the flashing of their guns. Fires broke out in the dense undergrowth, and smoke was so thick comrades shot comrades, mistaking them for the enemy. Dead and wounded were consumed by the raging fire that shortly engulfed the entire battlefield.

General Lee sent a messenger to hasten Longstreet just about the time his corps, in double column, came swinging down the Orange Plank Road at a trot. The soldiers were tired, having just marched thirty miles in one day; yet, the corps was described by eyewitnesses as splendid, in perfect order, ranks well closed, and no stragglers. The "Gilmer Boys" took the right of the road, coming into line under heavy fire, separated from the combatants by a wall of fire and smoke.

Company H was in charge of the flag in the 11th Regiment that morning in the Wilderness. The flag was proudly carried in front of the army by sturdy standard-bearers. When one of these soldiers fell in battle, the emblem was snatched up immediately by another, and borne on. This honored position was the most dangerous, and most important, in any battle. To plant the Colors on enemy lines was a victory, and those carrying the flag were the most sought after target on the field. These men were called the bravest heroes during the war, and those killed while bearing the Colors paid for the privilege with their lives.

In front of Anderson's Brigade, the Texas Brigade, with 15 - 20 paces separating them from the enemy, were firing hot and heavy. For twenty five minutes the Texans held steady until half of the men were dead or wounded. Then they were ordered to fall back. This was what Anderson's Brigade was waiting for.

Just then, a deafening yell, the all-frightening Rebel Yell the enemy had come to fear, was borne upon the air as Anderson's 11th Georgia Regiment, the "Gilmer Boys", along with their brigade charged, and with a valor that stands unrivaled swept everything in front of them for three long miles.

It was sometime during that morning's battle, when John Enos Lanning, fighting on the front line, saw the flag bearer of the moment, fall mortally wounded and the flag going down. Throwing his musket to the ground, Enos dashed quickly to raise the South's Colors. Instantly, Enos became the most prized target on the battlefield. It was in this position, as he held the banner proudly aloft, a Yankee sharp shooter across the battle line took aim, fired, and Enos fell, holding the emblem he had faithfully defended for three long and hard years. Enos was twenty one years old, and had been killed in action. Reports that later came home to John J. and Annie on Turniptown told how Enos had gripped the flag so tightly in death it had to be pried out of his hands.

The Wilderness dead were buried on the battlefield in a common grave with their caps covering their faces. If anything was found on the dead to identify the person the name and regiment would be written in pencil on little pieces of board, usually cracker boxes, and placed at the head of the makeshift grave. Rain and snow quickly obliterated the writing, or the board would tumble down, and those lying on the battlefield became numbered with the "unknown". Later the dead were removed from the battlefield to Fredricksburg, Virginia. [Of the 15,273 men of the Blue and Grey interred in the National Cemetery at Fredricksburg, 12,785 are unknown.] Our request for the grave number of Enos Lanning has brought no response from the National Park's Supt., therefore it is almost certain Enos lies in one of the many graves "Unknown but to God".

NOTE: Many references were cited for the all too brief accounts of the 11th Regiment we have recorded here. For those who wish to follow up on Enos and the "Gilmer Boys", more details follow.

1. There were two distinct battles fought on the Wilderness site. The first, the Battle of Chancellorsville, took place in May, 1863. The second, the Battle of the Wilderness in which Enos was killed, was on the same ground the following year. Both battles were fought during the month of May and it is easy to confuse one with the other.
2. Enos was in G.T. Anderson's Brigade, not R.H. Anderson's Division. History overlaps these two names and the researcher has difficulty at times separating these two commanding officers.

3. When Enos enlisted in 1861, Johnston was the Commander-in-Chief, of the Army of Northern Virginia, and Enos was in Jones Division under John Magruder. This division was reorganized when Longstreet became Commander of the Army, and became the division of Field's - Hood. The 11th Regiment remained in G.T. Anderson's Brigade throughout the war years, and was at Appomattox when General Lee surrendered the Army of Northern Virginia.

Wilderness as it looked in 1864—the
in the thickets, with the forest
littered and scarred and hacked and
by the galling musketry fire,
the dead still outnumbered the liv-
here the woods bordering the Orange
Road were thickly strewn with the
of Hancock's men who had so
ly assailed Hill and Longstreet on
the. The underbrush, withered
and by the summer's sun, lay
angles as the bullets had cut it
as if someone had gone over the
with a *machete* and given each
a slash or sapping a stroke. In all



logs, that anything that might
to stop a bullet. But nearly half a cen-
tury later, a visitor could find here the
deep significance of peace; as Captain
Redwood records in his accompanying
reminiscence: "The bark has closed over
the bullet scars on the trees; a new
growth has sprung up to replace that
leveled by the musketry; goodly trees,
even, are standing upon the diminished
earthworks. The others have long since
rotted into mould. The traveler might
easily pass along that quaint road, so
hotly contested, with never a suspicion
of what befell there—'grim-visaged war
has smoothed his wrinkled front' indeed."

THE ORANGE PLANK ROAD
AS IT LOOKED IN 1864



use with John E. Page

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"THE GRIM HARVEST" OF THE WILDERNESS—SOLDIERS' GRAVES

DIXIE CALENDAR

Confederate Photos Come To Museum

By B. C. YATES
Superintendent
Kennesaw M'tn. Park

Photographs continue to come in. The latest is that of a member of the "Gilmer Boys" from Gilmer County; John Enos Lanning who served in Company D of the Eleventh Georgia Infantry.

Enlisting July 3, 1861, at the ripe age of seventeen, on November 10, 1862 he was elected (yes, in the Confederate Army, men elected their officers) Fourth Corporal.

Then, fighting at the Wilderness in Virginia, he was the fourth man to pick up his regimental colors. Three other flag bearers had already fallen. Through the thick underbrush he moved forward, while bullets whined and pattered against trees. One bullet found its mark. Enos Lanning had fought his last battle.

Fortunate we are to have his photograph in battle dress, white gloves and cap marking him as the well-dressed soldier. Steady blue eyes look into the camera, the eyes of a man who would not fail his trust. We are indebted to Mrs. R. L. Garner of Acworth for this photograph. Enos Lanning was her uncle.

Another photograph is on the way—that of Mr. Green who operated the Wood and Water Station on the railroad at the foot of Kennesaw Mountain. It comes from his son, and the Park's good friend, Homer Green, of Cartersville.

Few people are better versed in Cobb County history than Mr. Green. En route from Cartersville to Lost Mountain, he often stops for a visit at the Park Museum.

Confederate belt buckles are varied and interesting. One featured a lion's head, raised high in relief. Made in England for the South, some doubted that any got through the blockade during the War.

Several weeks ago I borrowed a photograph from Mrs. Tom Hamby. It was a photograph of her mother and aunt, Roswell belles during the War. They were dressed in homespun, tediously woven and spun at home.

