



After the Confederate victory at Chickamauga, General Braxton Bragg dispatched Major General Joseph Wheeler on an expedition into Middle Tennessee with the mission to disrupt Union lines of communications and supply between Chattanooga and Nashville.

Forces under Union General George Crook, with the Wilder Lightning Brigade forming the vanguard, were dogging Wheeler and several skirmishes had ensued.

Wheeler's troops had pillaged Shelbyville, Tennessee on 6 October 1863. Shelbyville was predominately pro-Union and thus the Confederate forces felt justified in raiding the town.

On the night of the 6th, Wheeler's three divisions, Davidson's, Martin's, and Wharton's had encamped a few miles from each other along the Duck River.

Crook's force camped for the night a few miles east of Shelbyville, and upon gaining Shelbyville at first light on the 7th, discovered they were not far behind the rebel force. By 7am, Crook's lead unit, the Wilder Brigade, had passed through Shelbyville and was moving east on the Farmington Pike.

The Wilder Brigade and Wheeler's divisions engaged in running skirmishes for about 7 miles.

Moving on secondary roads that paralleled the Farmington Pike, Wheeler was able to concentrate his divisions into a line of battle four ranks deep about a mile outside of Farmington. Wheeler's command had 4 artillery pieces that were deployed in pairs on each side of the Farmington Pike. Wheeler's line and artillery was in a dense thicket of cedars.

The lead elements of Crook's force were the 123rd Illinois and the 17th Indiana. Colonel Abram O Miller was commanding the Wilder Brigade in the action, as Colonel John T Wilder was on convalescent leave, and he directed Colonel Monroe to deploy to the left side of the Pike and the 17th Indiana deployed to the right.

During the heavy fighting, Colonel Monroe, leading his men on an assault of the rebel gun battery was shot through the heart. He was reported to exclaim: *"Don't yield, boys!"*

Seeing the strength of the Confederate forces, Colonel Miller ordered up his 72nd Indiana to the left of the 123rd and the 98th Illinois to the right of the 17th.

What had been several skirmishes during the day became a pitched battle by evening and only the arrival of Colonel Eli Long's 2nd Ohio Cavalry Brigade forced the issue in favor of the Federals. Colonel Long was wounded in the fight.

Wheeler withdrew his force to the south as darkness fell and General Crook's men occupied Farmington for the night.

After marching through the night and avoiding any other engagements, Wheeler crossed the Tennessee River into Alabama on the 9th.

During Wheeler's failed raid, he lost nearly half his force, killed, wounded and captured.