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COVER: Confederate General Wade Hampton is surrounded during fighting on the third day at Gettysburg. Painting by Don Troiani, www.historicalimagebank.com. See story page 46.

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At *Civil War Quarterly*, we will strive to remember that the real Civil War was not all moonlight and magnolias.

With this issue, *Civil War Quarterly* joins the roster of other regularly published Sovereign Media publications. Our new issue, appropriately enough, contains a heavy dose of Gettysburg on the eve of the battle's 150th anniversary. We have articles on Richard Ewell's miscarried assault on Culp's Hill, the often overlooked cavalry clash between J.E.B. Stuart and George Armstrong Custer, and Gettysburg's "unknown soldier," Private Amos Humistead of the 154th New York, who achieved in his lonely death a fame he never would have achieved in life. Gettysburg looms large over our inaugural issue, as it does over the entire Civil War.

But since the war was much more than a few set-piece battles in the East, we also include articles on William Tecumseh Sherman's 1864 Mississippi campaign, last-ditch Confederate blockade runners, the savage fighting outside Atlanta, the siege of Pensacola, and life and death inside Civil War prisons. And because much of what we know about the war depends, to a great extent, on what has been written about it, we include the first of a regular series of articles on the written war: General Edward Stackpole's 1958 classic, *Chancellorsville: Lee's Greatest Battle.* Future issues will look at how such famous writers as Stephen Crane, Walt Whitman, and Mark Twain wrote about the war, and how the massive *Official Records of the War of the Rebellion and Battles and Leaders of the Civil War* came to be compiled.

While not stinting on the famous battles that so marked us as a nation, *Civil War Quarterly* will also strive to remember that the war was, at heart, a true civil war. We will look closely at the effect the war had on civilians, both Northern and Southern, and at a whole range of social, political, and economic factors surrounding the conflict. Wars, particularly civil wars, do not take place in a vacuum, but there has sometimes been a tendency to view the American Civil War as an uninterrupted series of battles fought by chivalrous foes on discrete battlefields. The reality was much more prosaic, and much less romantic. As that least romantic of generals, Nathan Bedford Forrest, warned at the beginning of hostilities: "War means fighting, and fighting means killing." There is no room in *Civil War Quarterly* for the "gallant cavaliers/moonlight and magnolias" school of history. The war was far too serious for that.

On a personal note, it is exciting to return to the Civil War after a nine-year run as editor of *Military Heritage*. With the able assistance of our many talented contributors, I was privileged to learn much about the history of men, weapons, and wars, from the Bronze Age to the present. But as a native Chattanoogan, the Civil War remains my first love. In my hometown, the war is almost a civic religion. Generations of schoolchildren grow up reading about the Battle above the Clouds, the spontaneous Union charge up Missionary Ridge, and the ferocious no-quarters Battle of Chickamauga, fought 10 miles away in the deep woods of northwest Georgia. Plaques and monuments are everywhere, and cannons still sit in people's front yards. National Cemetery, midway between downtown and Missionary Ridge, serves as a final resting place for soldiers and their spouses from all the nation's wars since 1863.

In a nation created by one war, solidified by a second and still unfortunately at war today, it is incumbent upon all Americans to remember the valor and sacrifice of the countless thousands of soldiers, living and dead, who gifted us with the freedoms we enjoy today. *Civil War Quarterly* is dedicated to the task of remembering. As Abraham Lincoln reminded us at Gettysburg, it's really the least we can do.

Roy Morris Jr.

CIVIL WAR Quarterly

Volume 1 ■ Number 1

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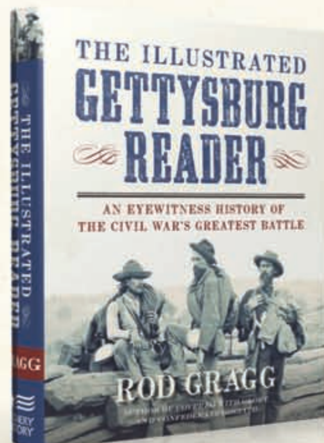

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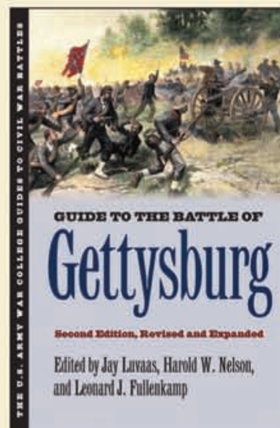

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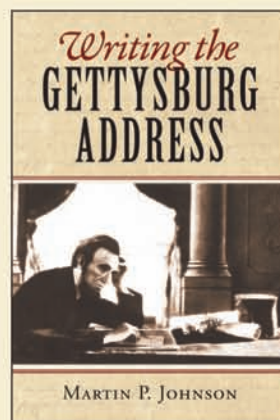

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By Kevin Hymel

The fate of one unheralded New York soldier touched the conscience of thousands of affected Northerners.

TWO BRIGADES of Confederate soldiers crested a slight hill above a wheat field and looked down on the blue clad soldiers waiting for them in the brickyard below. The Union lines fired a swift volley, dropping a number of the Rebels where they stood. The Confederates raised their rifles and fired back.

It was the first day of the Battle of Gettysburg, and the Confederates were trying to force the issue before the Union Army could gather its strength. The men of the 154th New York Infantry, flanked by the 27th Pennsylvania on their left and the 134th New York on their right, held their ground just north of town between Harrisburg Road and York Pike. Facing eight enemy regiments, the Federals fought desperately, but they were outnumbered three to one.

The 134th was flanked first. Devastating fire poured into it as the unit began to flee the battlefield. The 154th was now exposed. Realizing his unit's precarious position and not wanting to get captured, the regiment's commander, Major Daniel B. Allen, ordered a retreat to the left. But not everyone fled—Company C held its ground as Lieutenant Jack Mitchell shouted, "Boys, let's stay right here!" The few men who were beginning to back away returned to the firing line, a slight fence in front of a brickyard. When Mitchell saw that the rest of the unit was retreating, he changed his mind. "Boys, we must get out of here!" he shouted. Company C broke and ran along with the others.

One of the company's soldiers, Sergeant Amos Humiston, joined the headlong rush to the rear, where he saw that some of his fellow New Yorkers had already been captured by the Confederates. All around him soldiers were surrendering or being cut down, either by musket fire or saber thrusts from mounted officers. Humiston took off as fast as he could down Stratton Street and across a railroad track. That was the last time anyone saw Amos Humiston alive.

Fistfighting breaks out on McPherson's Ridge as Federal soldiers attempt to retake their captured colors from Maj. Gen. Henry Heth's Confederates in this painting by artist James Walker.

The remnants of the 154th made it to Cemetery Hill, where they spent the next two days under heavy Confederate artillery fire, observing the enemy's final assault on the Union line on July 3. The 154th went into the Battle of Gettysburg

with 265 men. It came out with 58, a unit loss of 78 percent.

A few days after the two armies left Gettysburg, someone found Humiston's body sprawled in a vacant lot on the corner of York and Stratton Streets. He had been shot once in the chest, just above the heart. Realizing that his wound was mortal, Humiston had staggered into the lot between the railroad tracks and the white clapboard home owned by Judge S.R. Russell. Exactly who found him, or when, has never been definitively determined. David Wills, the Gettysburg lawyer who led the efforts to establish a new national cemetery on the outskirts of town (and later invited President Abraham Lincoln to give what became known as the Gettysburg Address), separately named 31-year-old granite cutter Peter Beitler or one of his three sisters-in-law as the person who discovered Humiston's body. Beitler and his pregnant wife, Emma, were living in the vicinity of Kuhn's brickyard, where the 154th New York made its forlorn stand. At least one of Emma's stepsisters—Jane, Anna, or Louisa Schriver—was staying with the Beitlers when the battle began.

At first it was impossible to identify Humiston's body. Days of rain had drenched the corpse, and there were no identifying letters, numbers, or badges on his uniform, no private papers or primitive dog tags. The only personal item found with the dead soldier was an object clutched tightly in his hand. His eyes were still open, staring at it. The object was an ambrotype, a picture on a piece of glass, of three young children—two boys and a girl. From his death pose, it was obvious that the man had spent the last moments of his life gazing at the photograph. The unknown soldier, still unidentified, was buried in an unmarked grave on Judge Russell's property.

While thousands of men fell in and around Gettysburg during the three-day battle, and many of them were never identified, Amos Humiston would come to symbolize all of them with his final loving gesture. In death, he would have a prominence he never enjoyed in life. By all accounts, Humiston was a typical soldier. Born and raised in Owego, N.Y., on the Susquehanna River near the Pennsylvania border, Humiston was apprenticed to a harness-maker in Tioga County. After five years of study, he abruptly left to become a crewman on the whaling ship *Harrison*, out of New Bedford, Mass. For the next three years, Humiston braved icy seas, giant mammals, and high winds from Hawaii to the Bering Sea off the northeast coast of Russia. For his troubles, the young man earned a grand total of $200—less than 18 cents a day.

National Archives

National Archives

ABOVE: Amos Humiston's death is recreated in this woodcut from Frank Leslie's *Illustrated Newspaper.* BELOW: Union Sergeant Amos Humiston owned a harness shop in Portville, N.Y., before enlisting in the 154th New York infantry.

Returning to Tioga County, Humiston settled in Candor, where his older brother Morris had opened a harness and saddle shop. There he met his future wife, a young widow named Philinda Betsy Ensworth Smith, whose first cousin was married to Morris Humiston. Resettling in Portville, N.Y., in Cattaraugus County, Humiston opened his own harness shop with his boyhood neighbor, George Lillie. He and Philinda soon started a family; their three children—Franklin, Alice, and Frederick—were born four years apart.

When the Civil War broke out, Humiston thought it was wrong to stay home. The local pastor, I.G. Ogden, counseled him on the importance of the Union cause and promised to keep an eye on his family while he was gone. Despite his wife's pleas to stay (she even made him look at their children while they lay sleeping), Humiston joined the 154th New York Regiment.

His unit traveled to Virginia in mid-October 1862 and settled into drab and monotonous camp life. There, the 154th earned the nickname "the Hardtack Regiment" from the men's practice of trading used coffee beans for hardtack. Promoted to sergeant in January, Humiston participated in Maj. Gen. Ambrose Burnside's ill-

fated "Mud March," an attempt to lure the Confederates into the open by marching up the east bank of the Rappahannock River. Rain and snow turned the roads into a quagmire. Humiston put the best face on the embarrassing misadventure, writing his wife that "we started to attact the rebs but the mud was so deep that we got stuck so we had to give it up and wait till the weather is better."

Humiston's next action would be at the Battle of Chancellorsville. The Union Army's new commander, Maj. Gen. Joseph Hooker, sent the Hardtackers across the Rapidan River, where they flushed out skirmishers and bivouacked for the night, awaiting orders for their next action. Those orders would never come. On May 2, Confederate Lt. Gen. Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson flanked the Union line and smashed into its right. Humiston and the men of the 154th were relaxing around 5 PM when they heard shots fired from the west. The unit immediately formed up just in time to see the first Union stragglers run through the line. More followed, including riderless horses and caissons. As the enemy made their way through the woods, Humiston and his comrades stunned them with devastating fire, but it was not enough. Humiston took a spent bullet to the chest, which fortunately only glanced off his short ribs. "If it had not I should not be writing to you now," he informed his wife matter-of-factly.

Soon the Confederates overwhelmed the Union troops, who broke and ran. Men in blue fell to the ground under the murderous fire. Twenty bullets tore through the national flag; three struck the flag's pole. Humiston retreated with the survivors as the sun set. What was left of the regiment would see no more of the battlefield.

Humiston received an unexpected gift when he made it back to camp after the campaign—his wife sent him an ambrotype of his children. "I got the likeness of the children and it pleased me more than eney [sic] that you could have sent me," he wrote back. "How I want to se [sic] them and their mother is more than I can tell. I hope that we may all live to see each other again if this war dose [sic] not last to [sic] long." The picture would take on an importance neither he nor his wife could ever imagine.

Library of Congress

At Chancellorsville, "Stonewall" Jackson flanked Hooker's Union army. Humiston was hit by a spent bullet, but not seriously wounded, as his regiment tried—unsuccessfully—to stop the Confederate assault.

After Humiston's anonymous burial, Graeffenburg saloonkeeper Benjamin Schriver somehow came into possession of the ambrotype of the dead soldier's children. Schriver was a local character, a former sheriff of Adams County who was renowned as a political brawler and all-around scourge of local Democrats. Graeffenburg was 13 miles west of Gettysburg on the Chambersburg Pike, but Schriver presumably had come into town after the battle to check on his daughters, one of whom no doubt gave him the Humiston ambrotype. Schriver took the keepsake home with him and displayed it in his tavern, where it might have faded into obscurity but for a simple twist of fate in the form of a broken wagon axle.

The wagon in question was transporting Philadelphia doctor John Francis Bourns and three colleagues to Gettysburg in the wake of the battle. It broke down in front of Schriver's inn, and the innkeeper showed the ambrotype to the visitors. Bourns offered to find the family of the fallen soldier if the innkeeper would give him the picture. Schriver agreed.

After helping treat some of the 21,000 Union and Confederate wounded, Bourns returned home to Philadelphia, but not before arranging for the unknown soldier's grave to be marked more carefully, on the off-chance that he eventually would be identified.

On October 19, 1863, a story was published in the *Philadelphia Press*, asking, "Whose father was he?" and detailing the final hours of Gettysburg's unknown soldier. No picture was included with the story—newspapers were unable to print photographic reproductions. Instead, the newspaper provided Bourns's address in case anyone wanted to contact him. Soon other papers across the North picked up the story, including the *American Presbyterian*, a religious journal that ran the story along with a description of the picture and the original photo studio's inscription: "Holmes, Booth & Hydens. Superfine."

While waiting for a reply, Bourns had the ambrotype made into a *carte-de-visite*, a hard-backed paper photograph. He sent copies to anyone who contacted him, mostly wives with missing husbands or soldiers with missing comrades. *Cartes-de-visite* of the children went on sale in Philadelphia, with the profits earmarked for the soldier's family, if it could be found. If not, the money would go to "some benevolent institution for the benefit of our soldiers."

In Portville, N.Y., a local townswoman passed the story along to Philinda Humiston, who immediately realized that the description exactly matched the ambrotype she sent Amos. She had the town's doctor write to Bourns, who received the letter in November. He sent Philinda a *carte-de-visite*. When it arrived, she found herself looking at a copy of the picture she had sent her husband. She knew then that she was a widow and that her children were fatherless. A month after the article first appeared, the *American Presbyterian* reported to readers that Philinda had been found and explained

somewhat fulsomely that while the widow was saddened by her discovery, "the severity of the blow was tempered by the dying affection of the father, by the tender romance of mystery which enveloped the facts and by the widespread interest the case had awakened in patriotic minds."

In January 1864, Bourns journeyed to Portville, where he met with town officials and clergymen before being introduced to Philinda and her children and handing her the ambrotype she had sent her husband nine months earlier. Her hands trembled as she received the picture, stained with her husband's blood. At Bourns's suggestion, the party dropped to their knees and gave thanks for their good fortune and the divine providence that helped connect a faceless soldier to his family. Privately, Bourns gave Philinda the proceeds from earlier sales of the children's photograph, stressing that the money was not charity, but rather "an expression of a felt obligation from many warm hearts that sympathized with her in her sorrow."

The dramatic story of the soldier who died looking at a photo of his children and the subsequent identification of his family spread like wildfire through the North, reaching a pinnacle with the publication in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* of a rather fanciful woodcut of Humiston in his death pose. Humiston's story even made it into a book, *Christian Memorials of the War*, which came out in 1864. The picture was also used to raise money for the Sanitary Commission. Sales of the picture were brisk and continued long after the war, as Northerners who identified with the story wanted a *carte-de-visite* for their scrap books. The story was told in innumerable poems and songs, including "The Unknown Soldier" and "The Children of the Battle Field." The latter work, written by popular balladeer James G. Clark, won a special contest sponsored by the American Presbyterian. Clark's piece, set to music, sold thousands of copies throughout the North.

After the war, the money collected from sales of cartes-de-visite and the song was used to build a home for orphans of the war at Gettysburg. Spearheaded by the American Presbyterian and Bourns, the money went to purchase a house on Baltimore Pike in Gettysburg that ironically had been Maj. Gen. Oliver O. Howard's headquarters during the battle. (Howard commanded the XI Corps, in which Humiston served with the 154th New York.) Philinda and her three children arrived on October 25, 1866, soon accompanied by other orphans from Pennsylvania, and moved in with much fanfare. Within a year, there were about three dozen orphans living in the house. The Humiston family lived there for three years, with Philinda serving as wardrobe mistress for the home. In October 1869, Philindia married Asa Barnes, a Methodist preacher from Becket, Mass., whom she had met when he visited the orphanage. She and the children relocated to New England, and the home closed down in 1878 amid charges of fraud, misconduct, and mistreatment of children by staff members.

Today, Amos Humiston and his family are remembered in three places in Gettysburg. Amos is buried in the Gettysburg Soldiers' National Cemetery in grave number 14, section B, in the New York State area. The orphanage, now named Charley Weaver's American Museum of the Civil War, is located just up the street from the National Park Service's Gettysburg Visitors Center.

On July 3, 1993, a permanent memorial was dedicated to Amos Humiston on Stratton Street, at the traditional site of his death. The ceremony included a brass band, readings of Humiston-inspired poems, and a rendition of "Children of the Battle Field." The event was highlighted by the introduction of Humiston's descendants. The memorial, featuring a likeness of Humiston and his children on a bronze plaque affixed to a five-foot-high granite block, is the only one dedicated to an individual enlisted man at Gettysburg. In that, it is somehow appropriate, since the poignant story of Amos Humiston put a human face to one of the Civil War's greatest battles. □

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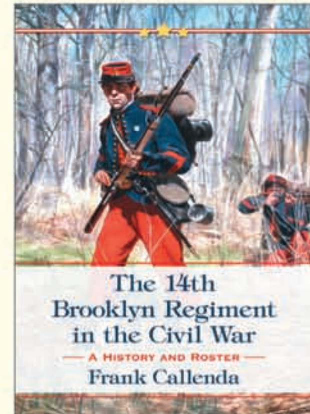

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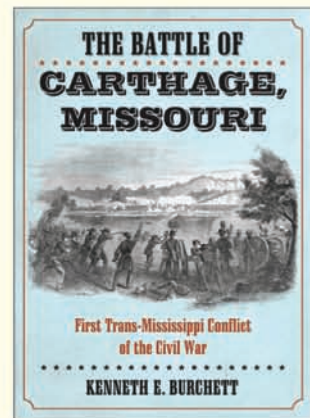

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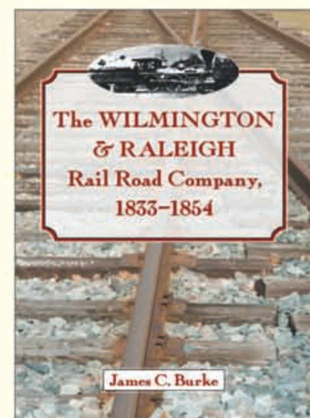

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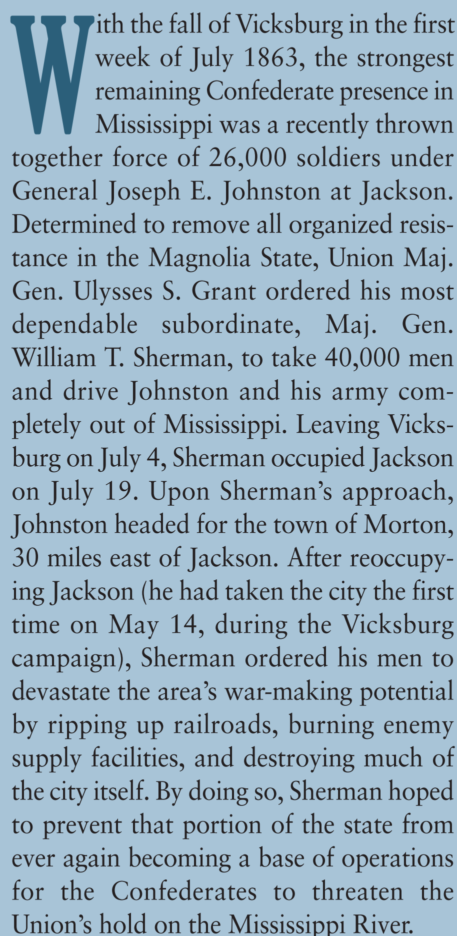
A HARD LESSON IN

After learning of his brother's death in battle, a furious Nathan Bedford Forrest personally leads the attack on General William Sooy Smith's rear in Don Troiani's *Southern Steel.*



With the fall of Vicksburg in the first week of July 1863, the strongest remaining Confederate presence in Mississippi was a recently thrown together force of 26,000 soldiers under General Joseph E. Johnston at Jackson. Determined to remove all organized resistance in the Magnolia State, Union Maj. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant ordered his most dependable subordinate, Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman, to take 40,000 men and drive Johnston and his army completely out of Mississippi. Leaving Vicksburg on July 4, Sherman occupied Jackson on July 19. Upon Sherman's approach, Johnston headed for the town of Morton, 30 miles east of Jackson. After reoccupying Jackson (he had taken the city the first time on May 14, during the Vicksburg campaign), Sherman ordered his men to devastate the area's war-making potential by ripping up railroads, burning enemy supply facilities, and destroying much of the city itself. By doing so, Sherman hoped to prevent that portion of the state from ever again becoming a base of operations for the Confederates to threaten the Union's hold on the Mississippi River.

As Jackson burned, Sherman gazed south and saw another point on the map whose capture might complete his plan for domination of the state. The hamlet of Meridian, 100 miles east of Jackson near the Alabama border, contained one of the largest concentrations of Confederate military stores, maintenance shops, and warehouses in the western Confederacy. Meridian was a hub for Confederate traffic through Mississippi to the rest of the South. Meridian stood at the junction of the Mobile & Ohio, Southern Mississippi, and Alabama & Mississippi River Railroads—crucial lines used to transport vast amounts of men and supplies. It was little wonder that Sherman viewed the seemingly insignificant speck on the map as a prize well worth eliminating.

Although he was eager to move on Meridian in the summer of 1863, Sherman was deterred from doing so for a number of reasons. First, Grant wanted to attack the important port city of Mobile, Ala., and considered any major diversion of Union resources to be out of the question. Second, the Lincoln administration's attention had been drawn southwest to Mexico and the perceived threat from France, which had installed a puppet government in Mexico City. Washington wanted a major effort to reestablish Federal control in Texas as the surest way to keep Emperor Napoleon III from making trouble south of the Rio Grande. Finally, the defeat of the Union Army of the Cumberland at the Battle of Chickamauga on September 19-20 and the subsequent siege of nearby Chattanooga required massive Federal efforts to relieve the city. Grant and Sherman both rushed to Chattanooga, and any further move on the interior of Mississippi was impossible in the last half of 1863.

The defeat of the Confederates at Chattanooga in November 1863 allowed the Federals to look again at the removal of enemy threats on the Mississippi River. To that end, Sherman was given permission at last to implement his Meridian plan. By the time he reached Memphis, Tenn., on January 21, 1864, the general's scheme was ready to be put in motion. Sherman intended to march on Meridian with 20,000 infantry and a brigade of cavalry. Sixty artillery pieces would complete his force. Maj. Gen. Stephen A. Hurlbut would lead 10,000 men from his XVI Corps southward from Memphis to Vicksburg and join a like number of men from Maj. Gen. James B. McPherson's XVII Corps. Colonel Edward F. Winslow's 2,500-man mounted brigade would serve as the expedition's eyes and ears. From Vicksburg, the Union force would move to Meridian and, depending on circumstances, perhaps advance to capture Selma, Ala., as well. To fend off the almost certain interference from the redoubtable Confederate cavalry leader Maj. Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest, then operating in northern Mississippi, a 7,000-man cavalry division under Brig. Gen. William Sooy Smith would depart Memphis just before Sherman's main body left Vicksburg and move south along the Mobile & Ohio Railroad, destroying the road as it went, and meet up with Sherman at Meridian.

Sherman's raid on Meridian was to be a large-scale attack designed in part to devastate the transportation facilities and resources of the region. Occupation of territory was not an objective and, as a result, the Federal force would not have to depend on lengthy supply lines to sustain itself. Since the expedition was meant to be only a temporary foray into enemy country, Sherman's men would be able to live off the land as they went. Sherman himself was full of confidence. "I think in

WAR

Hoping to ruin the infrastructure of Mississippi, Union General William T. Sherman targeted the town of Meridian for particular destruction.

By Arnold Blumberg

all January and part of February I can do something in this line," he told Grant. "To secure the safety of the navigation of the Mississippi River I would slay millions. I think I see one or two quick blows that would astonish the natives of the South and will convince them that, though to stand behind big cottonwoods and shoot at a passing boat is grand sport and safe, it may still reach and kill their friends and families hundreds of miles off. For every bullet shot at a steamer, I would shoot a thousand 30-pounder Parrotts into even helpless towns on the Red, Ouachita, Yazoo [Rivers], wherever a boat can float or a soldier march."

ON February 3, the Federal advance to Meridian commenced as two long blue columns, Hurlbut on the left and McPherson on the right, departed Vicksburg heading for the Big Black River. Opposing the Union move was the recently created Confederate Army of the Mississippi under Lt. Gen. Leonidas Polk, an Episcopal bishop, West Point graduate, and close friend of Confederate president Jefferson Davis. Polk's infantry division commanders in the nascent army were Maj. Gens. William W. Loring and Samuel G. French, with Maj. Gen. Stephen D. Lee and Forrest leading his cavalry. All told, Polk could muster around 10,000 infantry and 4,000 cavalry to contend with Sherman's threat.

Hearing of the enemy concentration at Vicksburg and fearing that this meant an imminent offensive, Polk began to fortify key positions in Mississippi to block or delay any Federal advances into the eastern part of the state. Loring was instructed to build works at Canton, north of Jackson, while French was to dig emplacements in the state capital itself. Polk made no attempt to concentrate his forces. Instead, he tethered his infantry to several pockets in the Jackson area and allowed Lee's cavalry to remain scattered between Jackson and the Yazoo River, while Forrest's troopers remained in the northern part of the state.

By February 4, the Union cavalry leading Sherman's advance reached the Raymond Road just ahead of McPherson's plodding column. Passing near the old battlefield at Champion's Hill, the horsemen were attacked by two regiments belonging to Confederate Brig. Gen. Wirt Adams. A brisk mounted charge by the graybacks was repulsed, sending the attackers back toward Bolton Depot. Later that afternoon, Winslow's troopers again made contact with Adams's men, driving them back across Baker's Creek east of Bolton Depot. To the south, on the Bolton Road, another outfit belonging to Adams's brigade—Colonel Robert C. Woods's Mississippi cavalry regiment—skirmished with the head of McPherson's infantry column. A day-long running fight developed for more than 10 miles, with the Federals slowly pushing the Confederates back.

South of McPherson's formations, Hurlbut's men spent the day vying with Southern cavalry under Colonel Peter Starke, supported by two artillery pieces, along the Bridgeport Road leading to Bolton Station. Union infantry and a battery of guns finally pried the Confederates out of their blocking position and forced them to retire to Clinton, farther east. Losses on both sides numbered fewer than 20 men each.

The morning of the 5th found McPherson's brigades toiling along the Clinton Road. Ahead of them, Adams had posted his 800 men and several cannon atop a hill about 750 yards east of Baker's Creek overlooking the wooden bridge spanning the water. On reaching the creek, Federal infantry rushed in to the water, gained the opposite shore, and formed a line of battle. Their progress was little hindered by the enemy artillery since most of the fire directed at them fell short. An hour-long artillery and musket barrage then fell on the Confederate position, causing them to move back through Clinton after joining their comrades from Starke's command. At noon the Union cavalry entered Clinton. Jackson, 12 miles away, would be their next objective.

As Sherman's men neared the state capital, French started to move the stockpiled war materiel by rail to Meridian. He also ordered Adams to arrange his command so that his troops could cover French's withdrawal from Jackson east over the Pearl River. Joined by Starke's troopers, the Southern forces under Adams and Starke, numbering about 1,300 men, continued to skirmish with McPherson's and Hurlbut's advancing Federal infantry, which had merged at day's end and was marching in from the west.

Leaving the road to the infantry, Winslow took off across county toward

All photos Library of Congress

ABOVE: Brigadier General Wirt Adams's Confederates are driven off in furious action near Red Bone Church. Such encounters were common during the Union advance on Meridian. LEFT: William Sooy Smith. OPPOSITE: Stephen D. Lee, left, and Stephen A. Hurlbut.

the north, circled Adams's left and got between the Confederate cavalry and Jackson during the night of February 5. Dismounting his 4th Iowa Volunteer Cavalry Regiment to fight on foot and sending his 11th Illinois Cavalry Regiment on a hell-for-leather saber charge, Winslow scattered the unsuspecting Confederate horsemen. Starke fled north and Adams raced into Jackson with Winslow in hot pursuit. By sundown all Confederate forces had abandoned Jackson, and the blue cavalry was soon joined by their infantry comrades.

Surprised by the enemy's rapid approach, Polk directed a concentration of his dispersed forces at Morton, 17 miles east of Brandon on the Southern Mississippi Railroad. Frantic- ally he wired Lee and Forrest, urging them to mount immediate raids on Sherman's supply lines while he gathered his infantry to confront the invaders head-on. After destroying any remaining military stores and rail property, the Federal army

moved out of Jackson early on February 7, crossing the Pearl River on a pontoon bridge and taking the Brandon Road with Winslow's cavalry in the van. They reached Brandon later that day and burned it to the ground.

Meanwhile, French's and Loring's infantry entered Morton and began to dig in, while Lee's and Adams's cavalry dogged the Federals' southern flank and Starke followed in the rear. Polk, who mistakenly believed that Sherman's real objective was Mobile—despite a warning from Lee that Meridian was the Union goal—fired off repeated pleas for reinforcements to Joseph E. Johnston at Dalton, Ga., and P.G.T. Beauregard at Charleston, SC. Beauregard sent back word that he had no aid to give; Johnston never even bothered to reply.

On February 8, Sherman's men departed Brandon for Morton, halting four miles from their objective that evening. Waiting for them in Morton was the combined Confederate infantry of Loring and French, which was entrenched two miles west of the borough. Loring, in overall command, hoped to delay the enemy advance while Lee's cavalry struck the bluecoats from the rear. By the end of the day, however, Loring changed his mind. Realizing that Polk was not going to send him any reinforcements, Loring pulled up stakes and marched his men east toward Newton Station. Early the next morning the Union advance guard entered Morton, burned the town's principal buildings, and demolished railroad tracks and bridges in the area.

The next day Polk joined Loring and French. Still fearing that Mobile was Sher-

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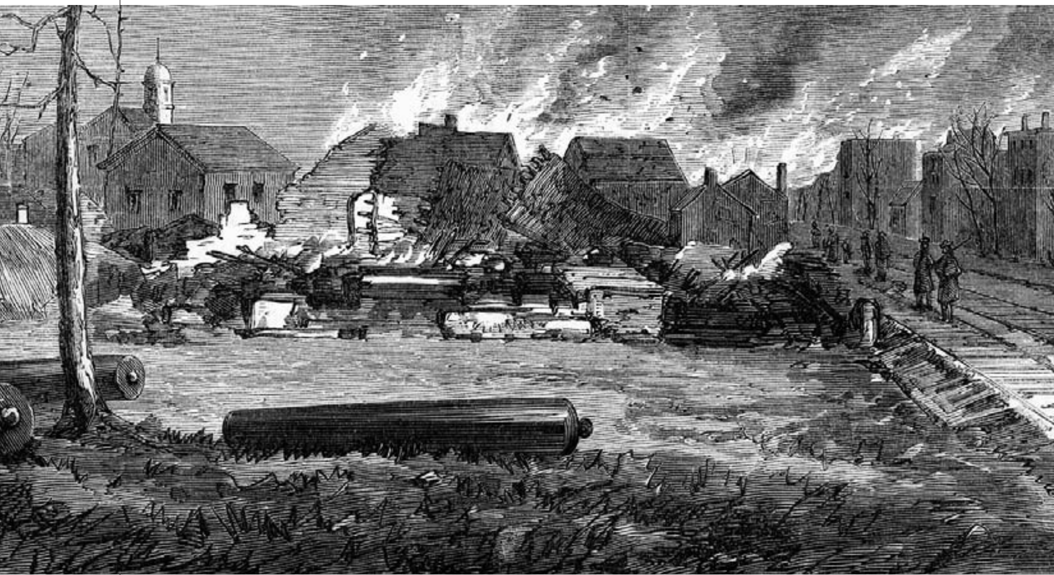

Wherever Major General William T. Sherman's troops went, they left fiery ruins behind them. It was all part of the North's new approach to "hard war."

man's real goal, he directed half his available force under Loring to Mobile, while French was ordered to continue to Newton Station. As the Confederate forces split off in different ways, Winslow's troopers engaged in running skirmishes with the gray rear guard under Colonel W.L. Maxwell along the Brandon-Hillsboro Road. The 11th saw Maxwell's men moving back over an area filled with river bottoms, crisscrossing streams, and low-lying swamplands. Burning causeways and bridges as they retreated, Maxwell's men seriously delayed the Federal advance to Decatur, from which point Sherman intended to quickly move on Meridian, destroying the Southern Mississippi Railroad as he went.

By now even Polk realized that Meridian was in immediate danger. He started moving all the public property he could by rail to Demopolis, Ala. While Polk acted the part of a glorified stevedore, Lee determined to do what he could to halt the Union thrust at Meridian. To that end, he sent Colonel Samuel Ferguson and his small cavalry brigade from Newton Station to add its meager strength and slow Sherman's progress. Ferguson was forced back by Winslow after a short, sharp combat. Seeing that they could not halt the enemy, Lee and Loring headed toward Meridian just in front of the blue juggernaut.

On the 13th, Sherman determined to make a rapid descent on Meridian. Leaving his 600 wagons and their 4,000 horses and mules behind, he ordered the men to carry only the essentials and five days' rations. An early start brought the Northerners to Tallahatta Creek, 15 miles west of Meridian, where they easily pushed back Lee's cavalry. As the main body advanced directly toward Meridian, a column of four infantry brigades and some cavalry headed north to Chunky Station to eliminate the rail line there. In the process they battered Wirt Adams's cavalry and captured three of his artillery pieces. The next morning, Winslow's horsemen crossed Tallahatta Creek, and with the aid of Union infantry from Brig. Gen. A.J. Smith's division, sent Ferguson's and Starke's riders streaming through Meridian in retreat. Smith occupied the town soon after. As the Federals reached Meridian, Loring and French started for Moscow, Ala., to the east.

The Meridian that Smith's men entered on February 14 had a population of 400 souls, 100 homes, four hotels, two churches, two inns, and four small dry goods stores. What made the tiny Lauderdale County town militarily important were the locomotive repair shops, the small arsenal that turned out rifles and pistols, two gristmills, and scores of wooden buildings containing war materials of all descriptions. The town's destruction began the next day and continued for five more days. The machine shops and warehouses were set on fire and the tracks and ties of the rail lines surrounding Meridian were torn up.

The neighboring towns of Enterprise, Marion Station, and Quitman were also hit by Federal burning parties, who consigned vast amounts of lumber and cotton to the flames. Other Federal forces conducted raids on nearby farms, seizing foodstuffs, cattle, and grain. Whatever they could not carry away they burned or slaughtered. Sherman wanted the forage expeditions not only to help feed his men but also to deny the bounty to the Confederates. He drew a biblical parallel to his destruction: "Satan and the rebellious saints in Hell were allowed a continuous existence in Hell merely to swell their just punishment," Sherman said. "To such as would rebel against a government as mild and just as ours in peace, a punishment equal would not be unjust."

Throughout the week Sherman spent bringing hell to Meridian, the Confederate cavalry under Lee could do no more than harass the columns of Federals that roamed the area. A concerted attack on the Federal wagon train left behind at Tallahatta Creek was attempted, but was beaten off. On the 17th, while Lee's cavalry moved north to Lauderdale Springs, Jefferson Davis personally ordered four infantry divisions from Johnston's army at Dalton to join Polk.

The next day, unaware of the Confederate efforts against him and still unclear about the whereabouts of the supporting cavalry force under Sooy Smith, who was to have been at Meridian before him, Sherman decided to return to Vicksburg. He reasoned that without Smith's mounted force he could not proceed into Alabama to destroy more rail lines. Even more pressing, Sherman's men were growing hungrier, despite their foraging at Meridian. The

absence of a supply line was forcing Sherman to pull back—something the Confederates had not been able to accomplish. Sherman's withdrawal began on February 20, passing north of the Southern Mississippi Railroad. As the army marched, Sherman sent patrols to the north, east, and west looking for Smith's errant horsemen. Although Rebel cavalry continued to hang on the Federal flanks as they trudged west, most of Lee's troopers headed north to Starkville to link up with Forrest.

Sherman had expected that after his forces reached Meridian, they would be

WITH A MIXTURE OF RAGE AND DESPAIR OVER HIS SIBLING'S DEATH, FORREST LED A SECOND ASSAULT ON THE ENEMY LINES.

joined by Sooy Smith's 7,000-man cavalry division, which was to have left Memphis for the 250-mile trip to Meridian no later than February 1. Sherman wanted Smith to destroy the Mobile & Ohio Railroad as he advanced as well as protect the army's main column from the unwanted interference of Forrest's cavalry. Smith was scheduled to rendezvous with Sherman at Meridian on February 10. Sherman had warned Smith prior to the raid to avoid any "minor affairs" with the enemy as he traveled south to Meridian.

Instead of promptly departing Memphis as he was ordered, however, Smith remained in the city until the 10th to give a late-arriving brigade time to rest. Leaving Memphis on the 11th, he moved through New Albany, Panola, and Abbeville in the hopes of concealing his true destination and purpose. He could have saved his men the effort. Smith and his men were tracked every step of the way by the wily Southern cavalry leader.

By February 13, Smith's command had

Continued on page 94

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by Robert W. Lull

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PENSACOLA, FLORIDA, WITH ITS SHELTERED HARBOR AND BUSY NAVAL YARD, WAS A PRIZE TARGET FOR SOUTHERN SECESSIONISTS. ALL THAT STOOD IN THEIR WAY WAS ONE YOUNG UNION LIEUTENANT AND A HANDFUL OF SOLDIERS AT FORT PICKENS.

By Eric Niderost

THE ELECTION OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN as president in November 1860 caused a national crisis of unprecedented scope. For years, Southern firebrands had defended slavery and exalted the principle of states' rights. Under this theory, each state had the right to secede from the Union if it didn't agree with national laws or policies. Lincoln and his new Republican party, in their eyes, were abolitionists who wished to free the slaves and fundamentally alter Southern society.

With Lincoln's election, secessionist talk quickly transformed into action. South Carolina, long a bastion of states' rights and a staunch defender of the South's "peculiar institution," seceded from the Union that December. Soon the trickle became a flood as six more states of the lower South joined South Carolina. By early 1861, the Confederate States of America had been founded with former Mississippi Senator Jefferson Davis waiting in the

A SECOND SUMTER: THE STRUGGLE FOR

wings to become its first president.

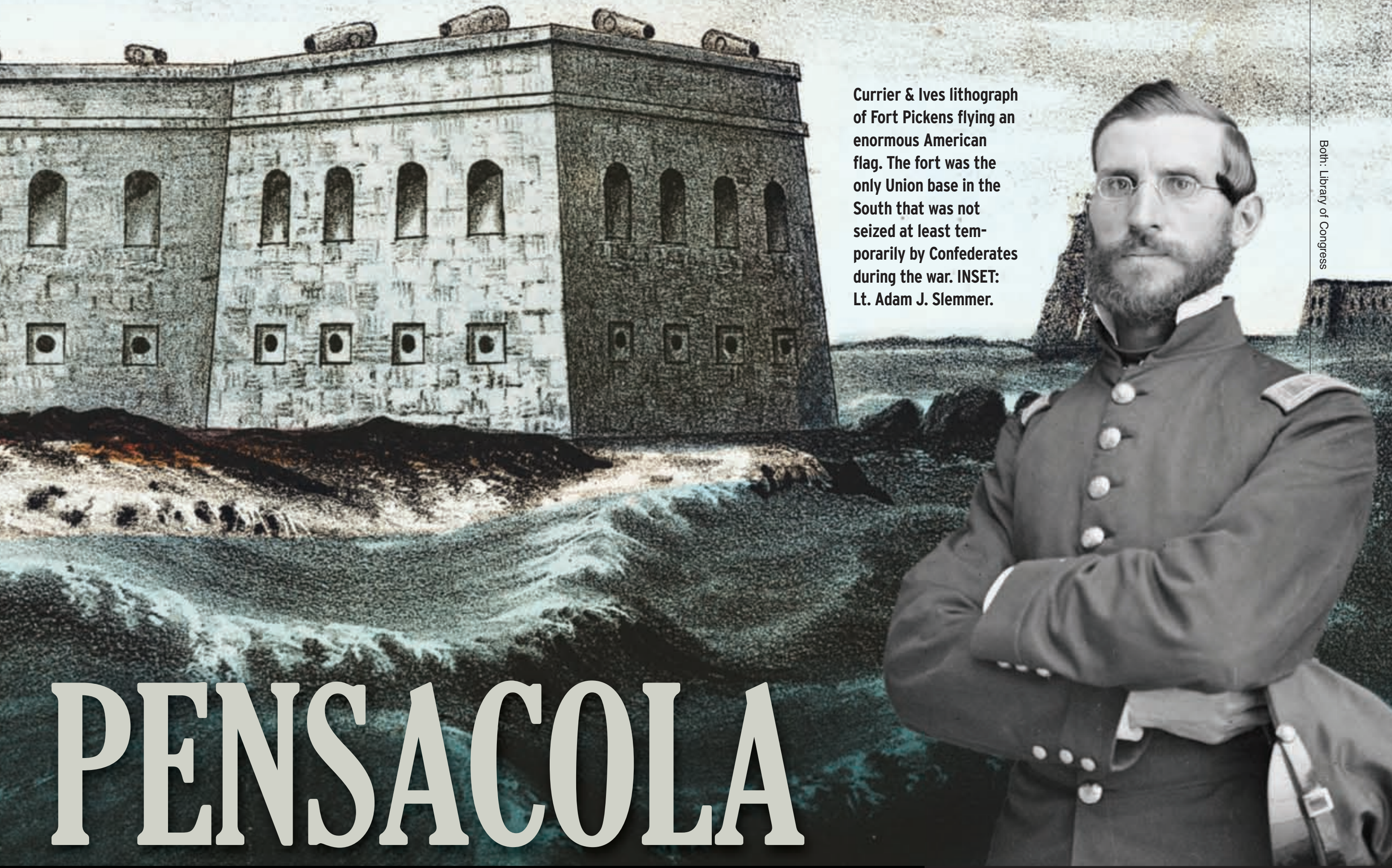
Even before the Confederacy had been formed officially, the Southern states moved to seize all federal property on their soil. This included numerous arsenals, forts, and naval yards. Outgoing President James Buchanan had a major problem on his hands, one that he tried ardently to avoid. Although from Pennsylvania, Buchanan had been generally perceived as pro-Southern throughout much of his tenure in the White House. He was literally marking time—hoping to hand over the secession problem to his successor. He didn't want to seem weak, but by the same token he didn't want to bear the onus of starting a bloody civil war. With Lincoln's inauguration not scheduled to take place until March, Buchanan's shaky hand remained on the tiller of the increasingly storm-tossed ship of state.

Sensing his weakness and vacillation, the Southern states began seizing federal property with impunity. Fort Sumter, in the middle of Charleston Harbor, was destined to become the flashpoint of the Civil War. But in the early, uncertain months after the 1860 election, Pensacola, Florida, was also a major focus of attention. In some respects Pensacola was even more important than Fort Sumter because it was the home of a major naval yard and three powerful guardian forts.

In 1861, Pensacola was the largest town in Florida, with a population of 2,876. Of that number, 957 were slaves. The town had a thriving timber business, and its railroad connection to Mobile's transportation hub meant that goods could be shipped almost anywhere within the United States. But Pensacola proper was of secondary importance to Southern military planners. It was obvious that the naval yard would be vital to any seaborne operations in the Gulf of Mexico, the Caribbean, and the South Atlantic.

Pensacola was only 50 miles east of Mobile and its great bay and 200 miles east of New Orleans and the mouth of the Mississippi River. Pensacola Bay might well become a staging area in any future quest by national forces to seize New Orleans. Once control of the Mississippi was established, the vast interior of the North American continent would be open to invasion. Pensacola boasted a fine harbor, with the long and narrow Santa Rosa Island protecting ships from ocean-borne storms. It would be ideal for mounting such an invasion.

Pensacola's strategic importance had been recognized almost as soon as the United States acquired Florida from Spain in 1819. By the mid-1820s, work was well under-



Currier & Ives lithograph of Fort Pickens flying an enormous American flag. The fort was the only Union base in the South that was not seized at least temporarily by Confederates during the war. INSET: Lt. Adam J. Slemmer.

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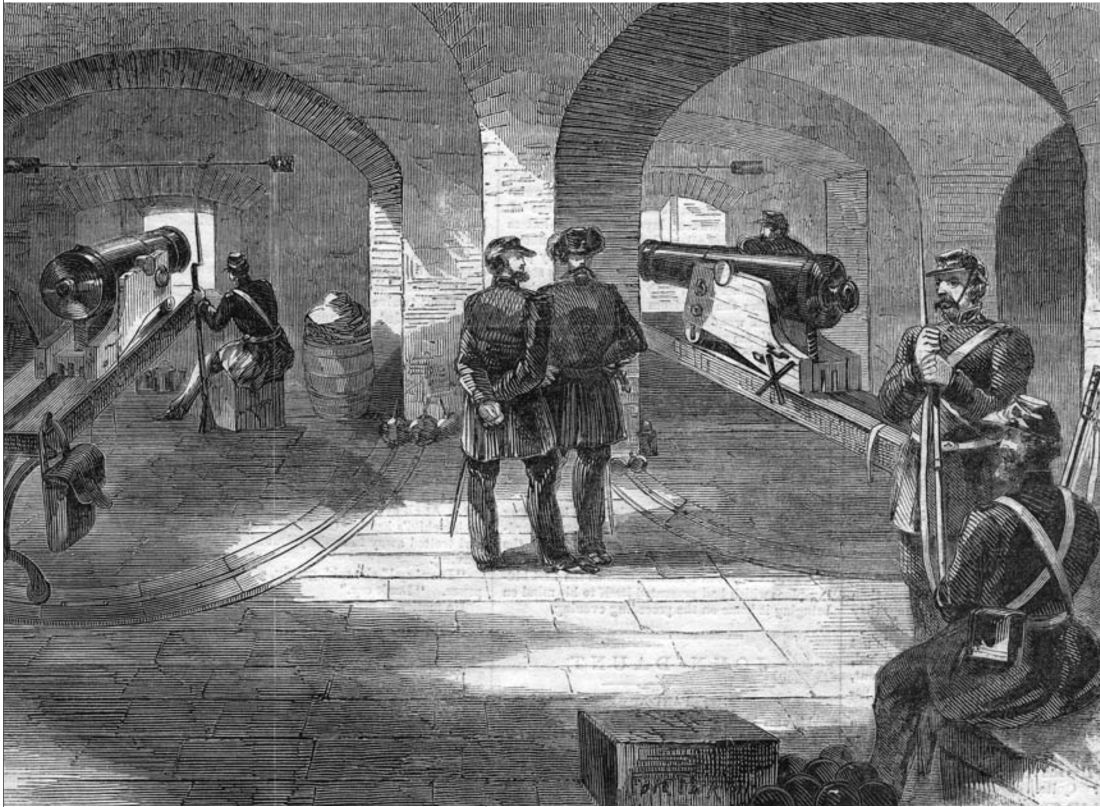

Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection

LEFT: An interior view of two well-manned casements at Fort Pickens was published in the April 13, 1861, issue of *Harper's Weekly,* the same day Fort Sumter was attacked in Charleston Harbor. OPPOSITE: Fort Pickens, at the northern tip of Santa Rosa Island, had a commanding view of Pensacola Bay and the Union naval yard immediately to the east of the fort.

way for both a naval yard and the fortifications needed to protect it. Planning focused on Pensacola Bay's western entrance. Forts Pickens, Barrancas, and McRee were designed to guard the harbor mouth with a triangle of mutually supporting fire. Any enemy ship entering the bay would have to run a gauntlet of heavy fire before it could even get near the naval yard.

Fort Barrancas, on the site of an old Spanish fortification on the Florida mainland, was perched atop a clay embankment with its main battery pointing in the direction of the harbor's mouth. A four-sided polygon, it featured walls that were 20 feet high and four feet thick. Its battlements sported some 44 coastal and garrison cannon, including columbiads and howitzers. By contrast, Fort McRee was a rectangle surrounded by a dry moat. Access to the fort was via a drawbridge that could be raised at night. The distance between Fort McRee and Fort Pickens, across the channel on Santa Rosa Island, was about 2,000 yards, or 1¼ miles. Because they were situated on the mainland, Forts McRee and Barancas were vulnerable to siege from enemy troops coming in from the landward side.

Fort Pickens, occupying a strategic position on the western tip of Santa Rosa Island, was the crown jewel of the trio and the linchpin of Pensacola's harbor defense. Named for Revolutionary War General Andrew Pickens, the fort had commanding views of the Gulf of Mexico, the mouth of Pensacola Bay, and the bay itself. The fort was a pentagonal structure with four of its five faces close to the water's edge. Strong bastions that thrust out of the fort's main walls were designed to hit the flanks of any attacker who attempted to assemble in the dry moat for a general assault. The walls were 13 feet thick and 40 feet high and were designed to absorb a great deal of enemy punishment as well as supporting the weight of heavy cannon. More than 200 seacoast howitzers and cannon made up its armament. In wartime, at least in theory, the installation was supposed to be garrisoned by 1,200 men.

The Pensacola Navy Yard was the U.S. Navy's pride, a facility that lived up to its early promise. The yard proper covered about 80 acres, the whole protected by a 14-foot-high brick wall. There were a long ship house, several warehouses, a blacksmith shop, a machine shop, a bakery, and four masonry cisterns that could hold 300,000 gallons of fresh water. The iron foundry was capable of producing cannonballs of almost any size. Warrington and Woolsey, two nearby villages, housed 100 civilian workers, and a marine barracks and hospital were located just outside the yard. A massive floating drydock was a key element in the Navy Yard, a facility that had cost the federal government $1 million to construct. The yard had built and launched the steam sloops USS *Pensacola* and USS *Seminole* in 1859.

When the secession crisis began in December 1860, there were few federal troops in the area. The Pensacola garrison consisted of about 46 men of Company G, 1st United States Artillery. There was only a handful of marines and sailors stationed at the navy yard, too few to make a difference. The yard's civilian workers were secessionists to a man, which made them unreliable and untrustworthy. There had been no attempt to reinforce the Pensacola garrison. Because there were far too few men even for a skeleton force in each installation, only Fort Barrancas was manned. The other two forts were virtually abandoned and partly dilapidated due to neglect. The garrison was commanded by Major John Winder, but he was absent on leave, as was his second in command, Lieutenant Asher Eddy. That left 1st Lieutenant

Adam Slemmer in nominal charge of the fort.

Slemmer, a native Pennsylvanian, had little sympathy with secession or states' rights. The first week of January 1861, he heard rumors that Florida Governor Madison S. Perry was poised to order the state militia to seize the forts and all other federal property once the state had seceded from the Union. Alabama state militia had already taken over the forts guarding Mobile Bay. Slemmer consulted with Commodore James Armstrong, commander of the navy yard. Armstrong agreed that, in view of the garrison's small size, only one fort should be occupied. The choice was obvious—Fort Pickens would be the government's main base.

Slemmer did all he could to prepare for the worst. Gunpowder that had been stored in an old Spanish battery out on the beach was brought back into the more secure magazine at Barrancas. Guards were posted, and the drawbridge at the fort entrance was raised at night. These security measures were soon put to the test. On the night of January 8, 20 unidentified men approached the fort. They were spotted by a sergeant of the guard, who raised the alarm. A sentry challenged them, and when he did not get a response he opened fire—perhaps the first shots fired in the Civil War.

After the gunfire, Slemmer transferred his men to Fort Pickens. All arrived safely, but they could not rest on their laurels. Many of the fort's guns were not mounted, so the artillerymen went to work at once preparing Pickens for action. Most of the powder and ammunition were also transferred to Santa Rosa Island to keep it out of enemy hands. Fort Barrancas' guns were spiked as a final gesture of military prudence.

On January 10, a special Florida convention voted overwhelmingly in favor of secession. The rumors were true—Governor Perry did intend to seize the Pensacola arsenal and the forts that guarded it. Alabama Governor Andrew Moore helpfully dispatched some of his own state militia to assist the Floridians, with Colonel Tennent Lomax and 225 militiamen hurrying to Florida to augment Perry's force. Two days later Armstrong was informed that a representative of the state of Florida was at the east gate of the navy yard. The gentleman was not alone. Also on hand were between 600 and 800 uniformed Alabama and Florida militiamen. The commodore destroyed all his signal books—a necessary precaution—and then went to see his unwanted guests. The visitors demanded that Armstrong unconditionally surrender the navy yard. If he did not, they said, the eager militia would be more than happy to take the yard by force.

Armstrong had few options. He had only 38 marines and a few sailors on hand, far too few to mount an effective defense. To avoid pointless bloodshed, the commodore chose to surrender. The American flag was hauled down and the Florida state flag raised in its place. When ordered to perform the distasteful task, Quartermaster William Conway refused. The old salt declared, "I have served under that flag for forty years; I won't do it." Conway was jailed by the Confederates for his impertinence but later received a gold medal and commendation from U.S. Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles. When the American flag was lowered, the action was noticed by a sentry across the bay at Fort Pickens. Two federal ships stationed at the navy yard, USS *Wyandotte* and the storage ship *Supply,* were crewed by loyal Union men. They immediately weighed anchor and sailed to a position five miles off Santa Rosa Island, well out of reach of hostile hands.

As night approached and retreat was sounded, another delegation of Southerners appeared at Fort Pickens and asked for an interview with Slemmer. The men demanded that Slemmer, like Armstrong, surrender the fort. Slemmer stood his ground and refused to be intimidated. "I am under the orders of the President of the United States and I recognize no right of any governor to demand the surrender of United States property," he said. The delegation left abruptly.

Sooner or later the secessionists were

Map © 2013 Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping, Minneapolis, MN

going to try and take the fort—that was a certainty. All Slemmer and his small garrison could do was to continue defense preparations as best they could. It was cold and miserable, and intermittent rain dampened spirits as well as clothes. On January 17, the exhausted garrison mounted a 12-pounder cannon and an 8-inch seacoast howitzer within the northeast bastion facing the landward approaches to the north. Special attention was devoted to the possibility of an all-out attack by ground troops. Several 24-pounder howitzers were mounted within bastion casemates and sited to fire into the ranks of any attackers gathering in the dry moat for such an assault.

The Floridians and Alabamians still hoped to bluff and threaten their way into Fort Pickens. Accordingly, they brought forward Colonel W.H. Chase, who had a unique connection to Fort Pickens. As a young Army engineer, Chase had designed the instillation. Chase was rowed over to Pickens and requested an interview with Slemmer. The young lieutenant was courteous but firm. Chase suggested that they go inside to discuss issues, but Slemmer declined. "It would be improper for me to take you in," he said, "and however well you may have known the fort before, you do not know what it now contains, nor what I have done inside."

Chase produced a paper from his pocket but faltered when he tried to read it. His eyes filled with tears as he explained that it was a "most distressing duty" to demand the surrender of a U.S. Army garrison. But the sentimental moment passed, and Chase and Slemmer resumed their verbal duel. "How many men do you have?" Slemmer asked. "Between eight and nine hundred," Chase replied. "Do you imagine you could take this fort with that number?" Slemmer asked. "I certainly do," the Southerner replied. "I could carry it by storm. I know every inch of this fort and its condition." Chase did concede he might lose half his men in the attempt. Angered by Slemmer's stubbornness, Chase told the lieutenant frankly: "You cannot hold this fort. Florida cannot permit it, and the [Southern] troops here are determined to have it and if not surrendered peaceably, an attack and the inauguration of civil war cannot be prevented."

Slemmer said he would give the surrender letter due consideration, and the meeting ended. Slemmer was still determined to hold out, but by stalling a bit he hoped to gain his tired artillerymen a brief respite. Eventually, Slemmer gave Chase his answer. He would defend the post to the best of his ability. He added, speaking of the Florida and Alabama forces, "We must consider you the aggressors, and if blood is shed, you are responsible therefore."

The secessionists suddenly became more conciliatory. Chase even offered to send fresh provisions to the fort if needed. On January 18, nine pro-secession senators sent a telegram to Chase warning him against a premature assault on Pickens. "The possession of the fort," they declared, "is not worth one drop of blood to us. Bloodshed may be fatal to our cause." Among those signing the document was Jefferson Davis, who in a few weeks would become the first president of the Confederate States of America. Before long Florida Senator Stephen Mallory—later Confederate secretary of the navy—and others brokered a truce with President Buchanan. Both sides pledged not to engage in any aggressive actions.

The informal pact suited both parties. Buchanan was rid of one headache—Sumter was another—and he still hoped to end his presidency in peace. The secessionists, for their part, needed more time to organize an effective government, and they did not want to be blamed for starting a war. Meanwhile, on January 23, Captain Israel Vogdes was directed to take his Company A, 1st U.S. Artillery, to Pensacola Bay aboard the sloop of war USS *Brooklyn.* Vogdes was under strict orders not to start any offensive action, and the troops were directed to stay aboard ship and only land if the Southerners attacked. In general, both sides scrupulously observed the terms of the pact

In March, the fledgling Confederate government decided that Pensacola Bay was too important to be neglected any longer. General Braxton Bragg was sent to Pensacola as its new regional commander and given 5,000 troops to strengthen Confederate positions. Union forces at Fort Pickens immediately noticed the Southern

Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection

ABOVE: Reinforcements from Company A, 1st U.S. Artillery, are ferried from the USS *Brooklyn* to Fort Pickens in January 1861. OPPOSITE: Confederate gunners man a bristling battery of columbiads at Fort Barrancas, directly north from Fort Pickens across Pensacola Bay.

troop buildup. When reports of the move reached Washington, the new Lincoln administration became alarmed. Colonel Harvey Brown was given command of army forces in Florida and sent to Pensacola with an additional four companies of troops. Like Vogdes, Brown was told to stay strictly on the defensive. Two additional warships, the frigate USS *Sabine* and the sloop USS *St. Louis,* joined federal naval forces in the area.

On April 12, Confederate batteries opened fire on Fort Sumter. Lincoln instantly called for volunteers to crush the rebellion. In response, five more Southern states joined the Confederacy. The Civil War had begun, and the Pensacola truce was over. Oddly enough, nothing much happened for the next six months. Both sides strengthened their positions around Pensacola Bay, and Union reinforcements were landed. An unofficial truce continued.

The uneasy truce ended in September, when Bragg decided to transform the navy yard's drydock into a floating gun battery. Once finished, it could be towed into the bay to engage Fort Pickens. This was unacceptable to Brown, who considered it an act of hostility against Union forces. Brown organized a raid of his own to deal with the threat.

On September 2, a party of Union raiders rowed over to the drydock under cover of darkness and managed to set it ablaze. Flames shot into the air, illuminating the navy yard with a lurid, shadowy glow. Brown's next target was the Confederate schooner *William H. Judah,* anchored in Pensacola Bay. No mere peaceful trading vessel, *Judah* was armed with five cannon, which gave her the power to run the Union blockade outside the bay's sheltered waters. It was decided that the raid was a job for the Navy—or more particularly, the United States Marine Corps.

About 100 marines and sailors from the flagship USS *Colorado* were chosen for the task. Navy Lieutenant John H. Russell was the overall commander of the raid; Captain Edward McDonald Reynolds headed the marines. The expedition assembled in four small boats and cautiously approached the target by means of muffled oars. The raiders managed to get alongside *Judah,* but the Confederates were more alert than their attackers anticipated. The crew opened fire at once, spraying the raiders with heavy leaden rain.

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The marines returned fire, fixed bayonets, and scrambled up the ship's sides to the main deck. Russell, sword in hand, led the way. For a few chaotic minutes the ship's crew fought hand to hand with the onrushing marines. *Judah*'s crew was forced to retreat to a nearby dock. But more and more Southerners were arriving on the scene, drawn to the noise of battle and the sounds of alarm.

While the crewmen rallied, Russell found himself in full possession of the Confederate schooner. There was a cannon reportedly on or near the drydock, and Russell ordered Lieutenant John G. Sproston and a party of men to find the gun and spike it. This was no easy task since it was now quite dark. If they used lanterns, torches, or other such devices to light their way, the raiders were sure to draw enemy fire. Groping their way through the inky void, the raiders somehow managed find the cannon, a 10-inch columbiad guarded by only one sentry. The sentry leveled his rifle at Sproston, but Gunner's Mate John D. Barton shot the sentry before he could fire his weapon. The cannon was spiked, and Sproston's group rejoined the main party of raiders.

Judah was put to the torch, orange-yellow flames leaping high into the sky and casting deep shadows on the waters of Pensacola Bay. The crew continued its heavy fire, but the raiders managed to reach safety without further incident. Federal casualties were light, three dead and 13 wounded. A furious Bragg immediately began making plans for a vengeful counterattack. Bragg, a tough, seasoned campaigner and veteran of the Mexican War, refused to be goaded into premature action. He reorganized his forces—some 6,000 strong—into two brigades, one commanded by Brig. Gen. Daniel Ruggles, the other by Brig. Gen. Richard Anderson. It was decided that Anderson would attack Santa Rosa Island.

On the evening of October 9, Anderson assembled his men at the navy yard and had them board the waiting steamer *Time,* which raised anchor and headed for Pensacola, the final staging area for the nocturnal assault. The steamer arrived in Pensacola at 10 PM. The steamers *Ewing* and *Neaffie* joined the expedition. To make the landings go more smoothly, some of Anderson's men transferred to *Ewing*, others to barges that would be towed by *Neaffie*.

Anderson's men had trained for amphibious landings for weeks, and their hard work paid off in spades. The Confederates landed on Santa Rosa Island without undue noise or confusion, about four miles from Fort Pickens. The men were ordered to maintain strict discipline, especially when it came to the premature firing of their rifles and muskets. It was hoped that

Union pickets would be surprised and taken before they could raise an alarm. The immediate target was a Union cantonment located about a mile east of Fort Pickens. The camp was occupied by men of the 6th New York Volunteers, called Wilson's Zouaves after their commander, Colonel William Wilson, a colorful New York politician who had trained the regiment's pet goat to butt and ram on command.

If all went according to plan, Anderson's troops would swing around and place themselves between Fort Pickens and the 6th New York's camp, cutting off their retreat. The Confederates were initially eager for a fight, having waited for this moment for 10 long and tedious months. Their enthusiasm soon waned after they discovered that the island was studded with prickly pear cactus and troublesome sand spurs. A scattering of scouts led the way to take on the Union picket screen. There were about 1,200 Confederates, more of a large-scale raid than a full-blown assault on Fort Pickens. Nevertheless, if they could move fast enough, they might gain access to the fort itself. Failing that, Anderson hoped at least to spike some Union batteries located outside the fort. Suddenly, a shot rang out. A Union picket had spotted an approaching Confederate scout and fired his weapon. He paid for his alertness with his life—the raiders shot him down—but the camp was warned of the enemy threat.

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ABOVE: The burning of the Confederate drydock at Pensacola by Union raiders infuriated General Braxton Bragg, who organized a counterattack on October 9, 1861. OPPOSITE: A predawn Confederate attack on the 6th New York Volunteers caught regimental Colonel William Wilson (seen peering out of tent at far left) badly by surprise.

Wilson tried to organize a battle line—no word on the goat—as his rudely awakened men tumbled from their tents and rubbed the sleep from their eyes. In the darkness, confusion soon gave way to panic. The New Yorkers began to fall back toward the fort, leaving Wilson and a determined handful of men to try to stem the Confederate flood. The Confederates swept forward, but some of them apparently believed the battle was already over. The raiders began to loot the abandoned tents, slowing their advance. The search for booty, coupled with Wilson's stubborn holding action, was fatal to the raiders' plan. The chance for victory slowly slipped from their grasp. In the end, only nine Federals were taken prisoner.

At 3:30 AM, Brown was roused from his sleep and told the sound of firing had been heard in the direction of the 6th New York's camp. Brown ordered a full alert, and the

The Third System of Forts

Fort Pickens was part of a coastal defensive system based on hard lessons learned in the War of 1812. In that conflict America's major coastal cities had been poorly defended, with the exception of Baltimore's Fort McHenry. When the British captured and burned Washington, D.C., it sent shock waves throughout the young nation. After the war, the U.S. Army created a special board to study fortifications and make recommendations. Brig. Gen. Joseph Swift, the Army's chief of engineers, headed the project, along with Lt. Cols. William McRee and Joseph Totten.

All: Library of Congress

President James Monroe felt that Americans didn't have the background and expertise needed for such an important investigation. He asked Paris to send a distinguished engineer to head the board, and the French willingly obliged. Simon Barnard, a graduate of the Ecole Polytechnique, was a military engineer of great distinction. Bernard had been an aide-de camp to Napoleon himself, but Swift and McRee felt insulted that a foreigner was chosen and quickly resigned. Totten stayed on to learn all he could from Bernard. After all, the French had a tradition of military engineering that dated back to the great Vauban in the 17th century.

ABOVE: Fort Point, CA, 1861. LEFT: Lt. Col. Joseph Totten. RIGHT: Fort Point today.

Together, Bernard and Totten created the so-called Third System of forts. Eventually the Frenchman returned to Europe, but his pupil Totten became America's leading military engineer. The forts they designed shared certain characteristics. They were masonry buildings, mainly built of brick. They featured tiers of casemates—vaulted chambers—with

garrison sprang to arms and readied to repel the invaders. The colonel also sent Vogdes and two companies of regulars to bolster the New Yorkers' fight. Strengthened by the regulars, the New Yorkers rallied. After much confusion and seesaw fighting, the Federals gained the upper hand, although Vogdes was captured in the process. (He was later exchanged, served out the war, and became a brigadier general in the postwar Army.) Now it was the Confederates' turn to fall back, and Anderson admitted defeat. His men fled for their barges with the Federals close behind. The bluecoats poured volley after volley into the retreating troops. Many Confederates were killed or wounded, including Anderson, who took a bullet to the elbow while directing the withdrawal. The Southern forces sailed back across the bay to Pensacola proper.

Casualty figures varied widely. The North claimed 14 killed, with another 29 wounded and 14 missing. The Confederates lost at least 18 dead, 39 wounded, and 30 missing. Some accounts placed Confederate losses even higher. The affair was quickly dubbed the Battle of Santa Rosa Island. *Harper's Weekly* on November 9 gave a detailed description of the fight but censured Wilson for alleged "inefficiency and lack of skill" in defending the camp. The publication charged that Wilson had arrived late on the scene and that because of his negligence the cantonment had been torched and looted by rampaging Confederates. Nothing was said of his rearguard action.

On November 22, Federal forces bombarded Confederate emplacements on the mainland. The effort included the guns of Fort Pickens and Batteries Lincoln, Cameron, and Totten on Santa Rosa Island. Additional fire support was provided by USS *Richmond* and USS *Niagara*, steaming offshore. Fort McRee was a major target of the Union bombardment. Its garrison of Mississippians and Georgians was exposed to a hurricane of shot and shell. Part of the fort's woodwork was set ablaze, a conflagration that threatened to engulf the entire building. The fires were soon put under control, but a nearby wooden building also caught fire, and winds blew sparks perilously near the fort's magazine. Colonel John B. Villepique, the commander at Fort McRee, was wounded but refused to abandon his post. The fort's batteries returned fire as best they could.

The bombardment ended after eight ear-

Continued on page 98

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embrasures for artillery. The top tier was usually open and roofless, with the cannons placed en barbette, with their long black snouts poking out of wall embrasures. Bastions jutted out from the main walls to protect the flanks.

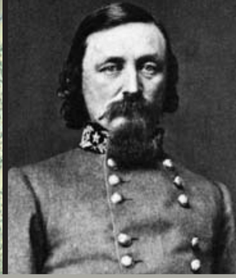
Fort Pickens was built between 1829 and 1834, and utilized 21.5 million bricks in its construction. The fort's northwest bastion was destroyed in 1899 when a fire reached the magazine and blew up 8,000 pounds of gunpowder. In the early 1900s a modern concrete battery was constructed within its walls.

By contrast, Fort Point in San Francisco remains virtually intact, a Third System fort that was a wonder of 19th-century architecture. In the 1850s, California's gold made the state too important to be left unguarded. Fort Point was designed to protect San Francisco, chief metropolis of the West Coast, as well as the Golden Gate and the city's strategically located harbor.

Work began on Fort Point in 1853 and was substantially completed by 1861. As a first step, workers blasted a towering 90-foot cliff down to 15 feet above sea level. This was crucial, because at such a level lower tier fort cannonballs could skip across the bay surface to hit enemy ships at their waterline. The fort's foundations were made of granite shipped in from China, but its bricks were crafted in a local kiln.

The fort's west, north, and east faces looked out onto the Golden Gate. The south side of the fort, nicknamed "the Gorge," contained living quarters for officers and men, as well as powder magazine, kitchens, an infirmary, storage areas, and a jail. In 1861, Fort Point housed 58 officers and men. By 1865, there were nearly 500 troops manning the fort. Armament included 10 8-inch columbiads and an assortment of other cannons.

Advancing technology meant that Third System forts like Fort Pickens and Fort Point had a short period of glory. Rifled cannons could pulverize brick masonry forts, turning them into pock-marked ruins within hours. Fort Point remains largely intact because it was 2,000 miles away from the main theaters of the Civil War. □



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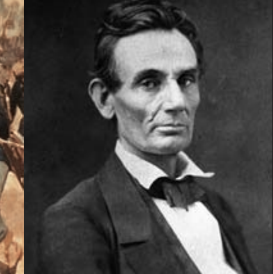

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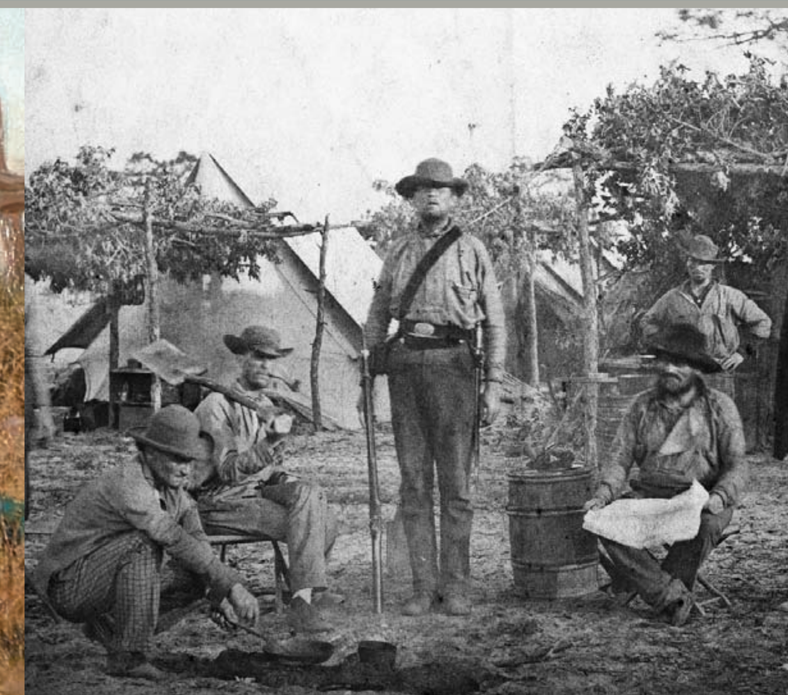

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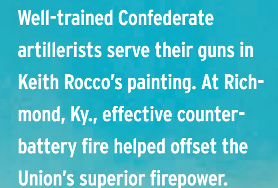
BATTLE *for the* BLUEGRASS

ON September 7, 1862, Colonel Walter Taylor of General Robert E. Lee's staff wrote to his sister: "The Yankee papers of the 6th exhibit a gloomy picture for our enemy. Just now it does appear as if God was truly with us. All along our lines the movement is onward." The colonel was correct in believing that the Confederacy was reaching its apogee. One week after Taylor's letter, the Confederate Senate passed a resolution calling on President Jefferson Davis to reaffirm free trade on the Mississippi River, a move that, by bringing war to the doorsteps of Union voters for a change, it was hoped would persuade them to vote for less resolute candidates. The catch, however, was that these operations would have to produce tangible military results.

Yet despite various successes in the summer of 1862, the clock was already ticking for the Confederacy, compelling its military leaders to take unavoidable risks. The Southern states enjoyed the best odds they had faced since the opening months of the war, nearing the peak number of men they could field at any one time, while the North was just beginning to tap its potential. The 477,000 men the South had in the field in July and August represented 76 percent of the 624,000 of the North, giving it a disparity of slightly better than three to four. Confederate leaders also



Well-trained Confederate artillerists serve their guns in Keith Rocco's painting. At Richmond, Ky., effective counter-battery fire helped offset the Union's superior firepower.

In the summer of 1862, Confederate forces mounted an ambitious invasion of Kentucky aimed at freeing the Bluegrass State of Union "occupiers." At Richmond, the Southern advance would reach its high-water mark. By Pedro Garcia

knew that President Abraham Lincoln on July 1 had called for an additional 300,000 three-year volunteers. When mobilized, this would increase the North's total to 924,000 men, and tip the scales even more heavily against the South.

Even with the new volunteers, the North would still have mobilized scarcely 20 percent of its potential military manpower. The South, on the other hand, had already put in the field almost twice that proportion (39.8 percent) from its pool of white males between the ages of 18 and 45. Furthermore, the Union War Department, on August 4, had drafted an additional 300,000 men from the state militias for nine-month service. This would raise the odds against the South to nearly three to one. Confederate leaders could not have known that the Lincoln government was also fast approaching the decision to enlist African Americans as soldiers, but they clearly knew that the moment was ripe for aggressive military action.

The drumbeat for such action rolled with rapidity. On August 16, as Robert E. Lee planned to outflank Maj. Gen. John Pope on the Rapidan River in Virginia, fellow Confederate Maj. Gen. Edmund Kirby Smith's vanguard crossed into Kentucky. On August 22, as Lee danced with Pope on the Rappahannock, Maj. Gen. William Loring, in West Virginia, sent Brig. Gen.

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Hand-colored photo of an unidentified Kentucky Confederate. The home state of both Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis was even more divided than most border states.

Albert Jenkins on an audacious cavalry raid to the Ohio River. On August 25, as Maj. Gen. Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson set out for Thoroughfare Gap, General Braxton Bragg put the columns of Maj. Gens. Earl Van Dorn and Sterling Price in motion in western Tennessee. On the 28th, as Jackson fought the skirmish at Brawner's farm, Bragg left Chattanooga for Kentucky. A surgeon in Bragg's army wrote: "Our army is in fighting trim and Bragg is anxious to strike a blow, and will surely do it. I have strong hopes of watering my horse in the Ohio before long." Finally, on the 30th, as Maj. Gen. James Longstreet smashed Maj. Gen. Fitz-John Porter's flank on the plains of Manassas, Smith moved to confront Union forces at Richmond, Kentucky. England and France were seemingly as close as they ever would be to intervention on behalf of Southern independence. For one brief moment, the Confederate star shone brightly.

As director of major Confederate operations in the West, Bragg was in titular command of five of columns—his own, the armies of Van Dorn and Price in northern Mississippi, Smith's column, and a smaller force in southwestern Virginia under Brig. Gen. Humphrey Marshall. In the meantime, Loring launched his own army, and a separate cavalry raid under Jenkins, to clear the mountainous counties of western Virginia. "Bragg ought immediately to advance," the ever-aggressive Lee had written to Secretary of War George Randolph on June 19. Ten days later, Randolph ordered Bragg to "strike the moment opportunity offers." On September 4, Davis, a good friend of Bragg's, advised, "You have the field before you and I rely on your judgment."

Preoccupied with focusing on the Union army of Maj. Gen. Don Carlos Buell, which had set out from Corinth, Mississippi, and was working its way eastward to Chattanooga, Tennessee, Bragg was never able to exert more than marginal coordination over his command. Even in Kentucky, the three armies of Bragg, Smith, and Marshall never physically united. In consequence, the grand Confederate offensive was a web of nearly random design held together by the most diaphanous of threads.

THE plan called for Bragg's 35,000-man army and Smith's 18,000-man force to move in concert against Buell in middle Tennessee, and catch him in a pincers movement. After he was crushed, they would advance into Kentucky, being supported on their right flank by the forces of Marshall and Loring in western Virginia. As Bragg moved north through Tennessee and into central Kentucky, Smith would knock out a small Union post holding Cumberland Gap on the border of Tennessee and Kentucky. "The junction with Bragg if effected in time will I trust enable the two armies to crush Buell's column and advance to the recovery of Tennessee and the occupation of Kentucky," Davis wrote to Kirby Smith. For his part, Kirby Smith agreed to cooperate with Bragg. "There is yet time for a brilliant summer campaign," he assured the other general. "I will not only cooperate with you, but will cheerfully place my command under you subject to your orders." Unfortunately for the South, there would be no unified movement. The plan was weakened from the start by Bragg's characteristic vacillation and timidity, coupled with Smith's boldness and independent command. Neither was truly in command of the invasion.

Enthusiasm for the campaign was fueled by native-born Kentucky cavalry leader John Hunt Morgan, who asserted that central Kentucky was riddled with secessionist feeling. "I am here with a force sufficient to hold the country outside Lexington and Frankfort," Morgan reported. "These places are garrisoned chiefly with home guards. The ridges between Lexington and Cincinnati have been destroyed. The whole country can be secured, and 25,000 to 30,000 men will join you at once." Smitten with "Kentucky fever," as he put it, Smith made an alternate proposal to march directly on Lexington. The proposal drastically changed—indeed undermined—the original plan he and Bragg had agreed upon. Surprisingly, Bragg, who could have stopped him early on, acquiesced enthusiastically. The ensuing campaign was to become one of the war's most glaring examples of what can happen when command is not unified and there is no clearly defined military objective.

Marching out of Knoxville on August 14, the Confederates entered Kentucky without significant opposition. A foot soldier observed in his diary: "And now we have crossed Tennessee and have advanced 50 miles into Kentucky without firing a gun at Yankees. I certainly expected we would encounter Buell and have one desperate battle before leaving Tennessee, but that gentleman seems to have taken wings and left the country in double quick time." Electing to bypass the Union garrison at Cumberland Gap, Smith's army passed through gaps in the mountains west of the fortified place.

Plunging deeper into the Bluegrass State, the Confederate force found it to be in the midst of a devastating three-month drought and the countryside as "poor as Job's turkey." Contrary to Morgan's boasts, the locals viewed secessionists with hostility. Typical of their attitude was the response one of Smith's troopers received from a Kentuckian sitting on a porch. "Where does this road go?" inquired the cavalryman. "Don't go nowhere, dammit, it stays right here," he was told. Many Kentuckians were unenthused by the Confederates' arrival. One unwelcoming citizen described them as "ragged, greasy and dirty, and some barefoot and looked more like the bipeds of pandemonium than beings of this earth. They surrounded our wells like the locusts of Egypt and struggled with each other as if perishing with thirst, and they thronged our kitchen doors and windows, begging for bread like hungry wolves." The Confederate commander put it succinctly in a letter to his wife. "The people are bitterly and violently opposed to us," wrote Smith.

Library of Congress

A saber-flourishing Federal trooper in the 10th Kentucky cavalry reflected the steely determination to hold the Bluegrass State in the Union.

Smith had four divisions under him. Three of them, commanded by Brig. Gens. Thomas J. Churchill, Patrick R. Cleburne, and Harry Heth, contained about 3,000 men each. The remainder of the army (9,000 men)—about the same size as the Union garrison at Cumberland Gap—was organized in one large division under Brig. Gen. Carter L. Stevenson. Unwilling to leave such a large force in his rear unattended, Smith left Stevenson behind to keep an eye on the Federals. By August 26, the divisions of Cleburne and Churchill had started north toward Richmond and Big Hill, while Heth's remained near Stevenson to await reinforcements and the army's wagon train.

It was a terrible march, the roads winding through almost impassable mountains in ankle-deep dust. The weather was dry, with temperatures in the 90s, and water

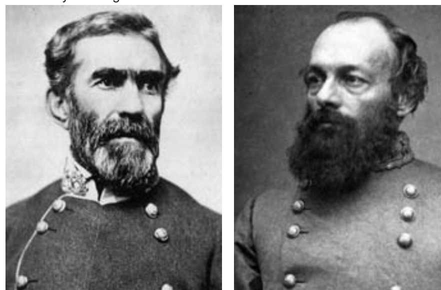
was almost unobtainable. The infantry quickly outdistanced its supply wagons and had to live off the countryside as best they could. Yet Confederate morale remained high, and the two lead divisions completed the march in three days. Smith's unilateral thrust into central Kentucky wrested control of the campaign away from Bragg and made it doubly difficult to coordinate movements. With Smith so far north of him, Bragg moved out of Chattanooga, feinted toward Nashville, and moved north into Kentucky along the Louisville and Nashville railroad. Outflanked, Buell's Army of the Tennessee was obliged to do likewise.

Meanwhile, a growing collection of men comprised almost entirely of green troops—6,500 men in two divisions styled rather grandly the Army of Kentucky—was assembled and placed under the command of one of Buell's division commanders, Maj. Gen. William "Bull" Nelson, a native Kentuckian whose headquarters were at Lexington. Maj. Gen. Horatio Wright of the Department of the Ohio had little confidence in the new recruits, telling leaders in Washington, "If you say go, they go, but I shall not expect success except by chance." Wright believed the Kentucky River offered the most favorable terrain to set up a line to meet the advancing Confederates, and with that in mind he ordered Nelson to Lexington. With formidable granite bluffs that rose from the water literally at a 90-degree angle, Nelson was advised to make the river his line of defense.

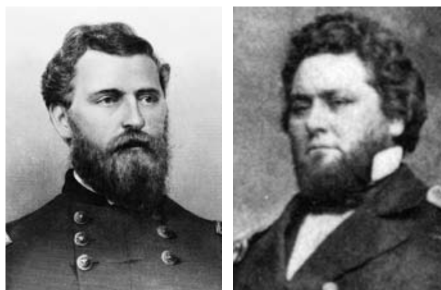
Temporarily in charge of the green recruits until Nelson arrived was Maj. Gen. Lew Wallace, who would later become famous for writing the biblically inspired novel *Ben Hur.* Smith's intended target remained unclear, so Wallace advanced some troops and artillery to the Kentucky River, while dispatching others south to Lancaster and Richmond. Union cavalry was sent to scout below Richmond toward Kingston and Big Hill.

On August 24, Nelson arrived in Lexington and relieved Wallace. It soon became apparent that he had his own ideas. A loud, brassy, profane soldier who had served in the Navy in his youth, Nelson was disdainful of the opinions and feelings of others. He was determined to fight Smith south of the Kentucky River line, forwarding forces from the river to Richmond. Nelson kept some troops in Lexington and moved others to Lancaster and Danville, west of Richmond, to threaten Smith's flank if he ventured farther north. Nelson also ordered three infantry regiments and artillery to move from Nicholasville to join the five regiments already in Richmond. His plan, he said, was "to mass the troops, knowing that the enemy would not cross the Kentucky River while 16,000 men were on their flank." He scorned Smith as "a much smaller potato than I took him for."

All: Library of Congress



ABOVE: Braxton Bragg, Edmund Kirby Smith
BELOW: Charles Cruft, William "Bull" Nelson.



When Smith entered Kentucky, his cavalry screened his movements and scattered several Union units along the way. On August 23 at Big Hill, they captured a wagon train headed to Cumberland Gap from Richmond, utterly routing its green and panic-stricken escort. The victorious Southern troopers rode on to Richmond and demanded its surrender. Unable to force the issue when their demand was refused, the horsemen withdrew to Big Hill to wait for Smith. Union cavalry, on the 25th, was sent west and south of Big Hill on a reconnoitering mission to see if they could learn something of Smith's location and intentions. By the evening of the 28th, they were able to report a growing Confederate strength in the Big Hill area. From that point on there would be a serious breakdown in field intelligence that jeopardized Nelson's plans. The report was forwarded to Nelson in Richmond, but the cavalry was unaware that he had just left for Lexington. Consequently, he never saw the report, and it is reasonable to assume that had he known that Smith was concentrating near Big Hill, he quite probably would have reunited his badly divided forces the next day.

The regiments in Nelson's Provisional Army of Kentucky were organized into two brigades commanded by Brig. Gens. Mahlon Manson and Charles Cruft. Both men had commanded brigades in Nelson's former division in Buell's army. Both men were political appointees with no combat experience, and neither man had confidence in his troops. Cruft could have been speaking for all eight regimental commanders when he expressed the view, "It was a sad spectacle for a soldier to look at these raw levies and contemplate their fate in a trial at arms with experienced troops." He further lamented that his troops "could but indifferently execute some of the simplest movements in the manual of arms."

The lack of any telegraph line between Lancaster and Richmond left Nelson without direct contact with his other forces in Lancaster and Danville, so he left Manson in command at Richmond in his absence, instructing him to remain where he was rather than starting west to join his planned concentration at Lancaster. In this manner, Nelson compounded his error of remaining below the Kentucky River. The next day, Nelson telegraphed Wright that "Kirby Smith's game is now clear. He will assail Buell in left and rear." Nelson now concentrated his total force, including troops from the Department of the Ohio and central Kentucky, 16,000 men in all, southwest of Richmond at Lancaster. If Smith moved back toward Buell in Ten-

National Archives

Main Street in Richmond, Ky. Braxton Bragg and Edmund Kirby Smith held a council of war in the Phoenix Hotel in the center of the photo. It did neither of them any good.

nessee, Nelson reasoned, he would be on Smith's flank. If Smith moved straight up toward the Bluegrass region of Kentucky, he stood in his path. Given the information he had, the speculation was reasonable and sensible—but it was wrong.

August 29 saw the Confederates complete a grueling three-day march that pushed the limits of human endurance. "Ragged, bare footed, almost starved, marching day and night, exhausted from want of water," Smith wrote. "I have never seen such suffering, and there is not a complaint, not a murmur. Such fortitude, patriotism, and self control has never been surpassed by any army that ever existed." Marching on nearly impassable roads, in a drought-plagued country, the Confederates penetrated deeply into Kentucky and reached Big Hill, 16 miles south of Richmond. In the van was Cleburne's division, with Churchill's division stretched out behind him on the Richmond road. The cavalry, scouting well beyond the infantry, had been in constant contact with the enemy for the last six days, and had kept Smith informed of the gathering forces around Richmond, far below the strong line of the Kentucky River.

DRIVEN by the thought that the enemy force of green levies was largely unaware of the strength or speed of his advance, Smith was champing at the bit for a fight. If they had known his strength, he later wrote, they would have "opposed us in the passes and strong positions of the Cumberland mountains, or would have posted themselves along the high bluffs and precipices of the Kentucky River, where they could have resisted the passage of even a greatly superior force."

That morning Union cavalry had stumbled onto the Confederate advance and sent back a report to Manson, who was camped a few miles away, that reached him at 11 AM. The report was then forwarded to Nelson who, in another striking failure of field intelligence, did not see it for nearly 16 hours. Three hours after Union troopers sent the first report to Manson, they sent a second one informing him that 4,000 to 5,000 Confederates were advancing in earnest. "The only question for me now to determine was whether I should allow the enemy to attack me in camp, or whether I should advance to meet him," Manson recalled. "To retreat would be to be considered a coward, dismissed in disgrace."

A ridge dominated the high ground 1½ miles south of his position, and Manson feared that the Confederates would occupy it if he did not. Disregarding Nelson's instructions to stay where he was, Manson aggressively pushed his brigade forward to occupy the high ground, and almost immediately his artillery drove off the probing Confederate cavalry. In fact, advancing with surprising ease, Manson's van was able to capture a handful of prisoners and some horses as well as a few

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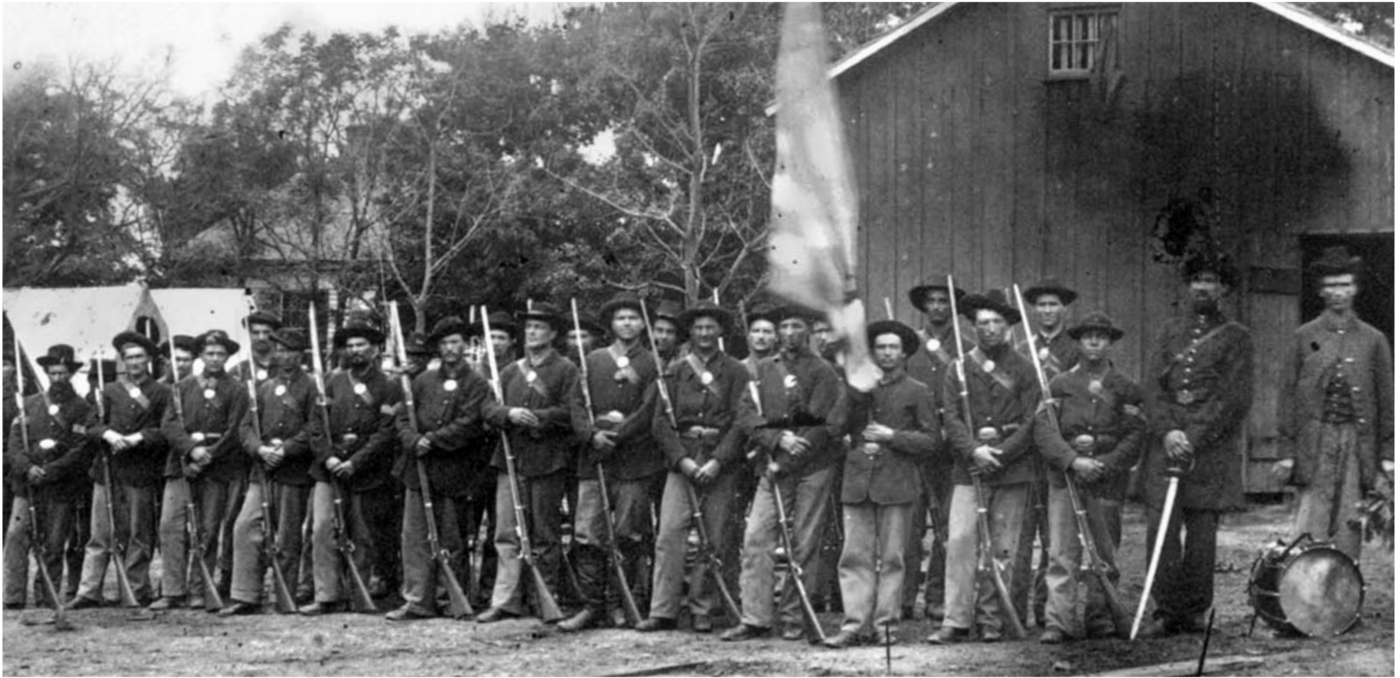


cannons. Union artillery continued to keep Confederate horsemen at bay, and by nightfall he had advanced farther south along the ridge to the sleepy hamlet of Rogersville. Feeling good about his prospects, Manson went into camp after pushing forward his cavalry.

That night, Smith became convinced that his proper course of action was to march on Lexington; he ordered Cleburne to attack the next morning. Smith had reached that conclusion because of a clash of arms that occurred that evening. Shortly after Manson had thrown his cavalry forward to reconnoiter, they encountered Confederate horsemen who were chased pell-mell back to Cleburne's carefully deployed lines. Volleys of gunfire erupted that tore into the ranks of the Union troopers, who were driven as badly as they had been at Big Hill. That ended the day's fighting, and Manson sent word to Cruft at Richmond to be ready to march to his support in the morning.

In the predawn darkness the next morning, Manson's troops fixed their coffee and stumbled about trying to find water for their canteens. It was not long before scouts detected Cleburne's division marching north through the village of Kingston. After dispatching orders to Cruft to join him, Manson immediately deployed his brigade one mile beyond Rogersville just south of Mount Zion Church. The Union troops would establish themselves in a defensive line on either side of the church, which was on high ground facing the Richmond road, and about 5½ miles below Richmond. The 55th Indiana was deployed east of the road, the 69th west of it, the 71st behind the 55th in reserve.

BEFORE long, the Union artillery unlimbered and began to rake the head of Cleburne's column. Cleburne responded to this destructive fire by deploying his division east of the Richmond road and the Irving-Lancaster Pike, which ran east and west just north of Kingston. He also put his own artillery on the front line, employing them in a methodical counterbattery fire, directing them to fire slowly and not waste a round. Indeed Cleburne, who was in command pending Smith's arrival, aggressively sought to bring the fight to the enemy by maneuvering his division into an extended line beyond the Federals' eastern flank.

Kirby Smith told Cleburne to delay the bold flank attack, advising him not to advance on Manson's strong position until Churchill's brigades arrived on the scene. Once in position, one of Churchill's brigades would hit Manson's right flank, while Cleburne advanced east of the road against the Union center. Colonel Preston Smith's brigade would be held in reserve to exploit any breakthrough, or slide off to the east and hit Manson's left flank—exactly the scenario Manson most feared. That fear would drive him to make a series of calamitous miscalculations. The last of Manson's four regiments, the 16th Indiana, arrived in the midst of the furious artillery duel. The 16th was put front and center between the 55th and 69th Indiana Regiments. In effect, the Union left flank had been extended beyond Cleburne's right.

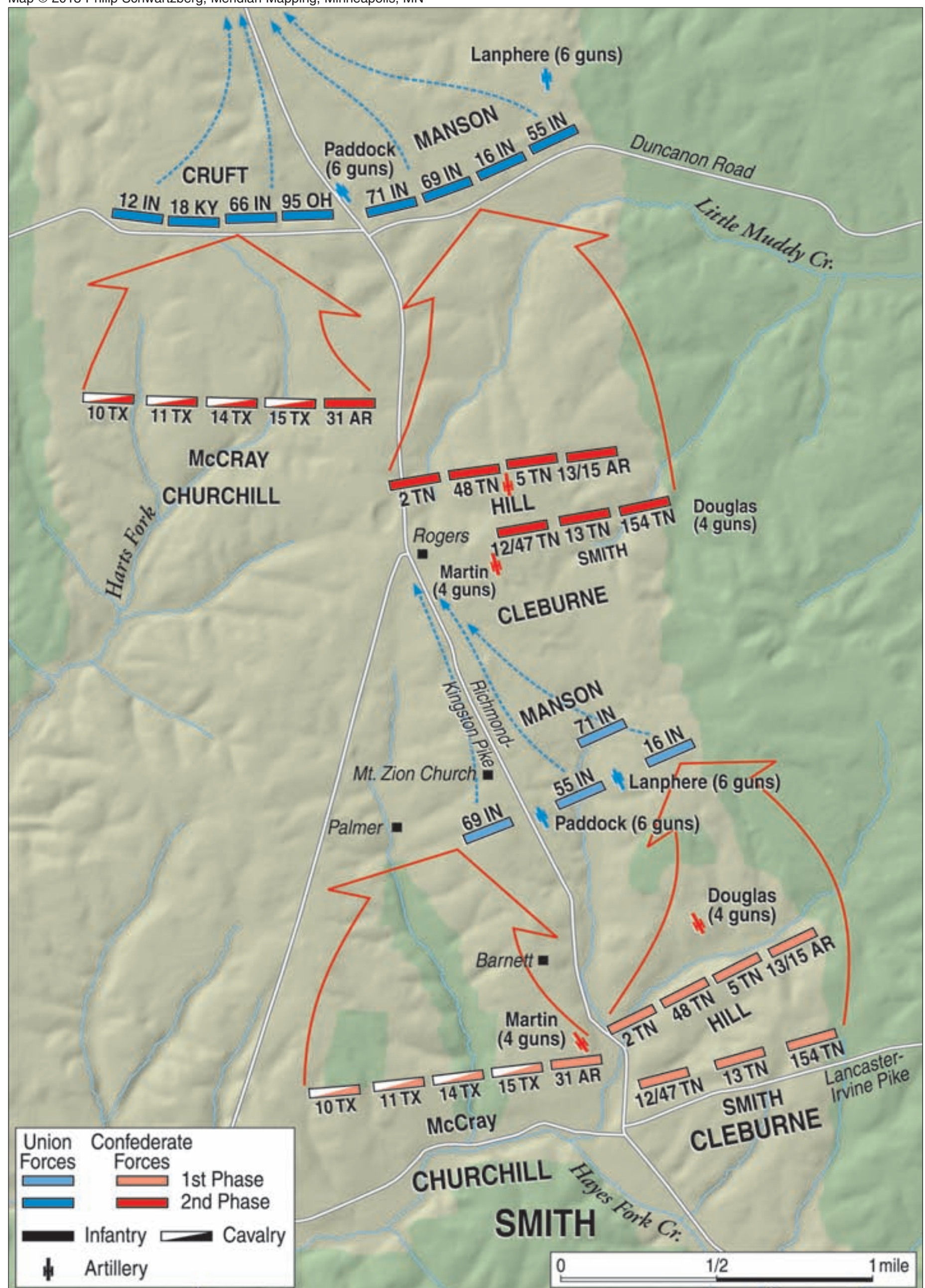
About 10 AM, the leading brigade of Churchill's division, under Colonel Thomas McCray, began arriving in the woods east of the Richmond road, and soon a very spirited exchange of small-arms fire erupted. The skirmish convinced Kirby Smith and Cleburne that Manson was planning to turn the Confederate right. Cleburne countered by moving the 154th Tennessee, the regiment that held the extreme right of Preston Smith's reserve line, forward and east to extend Hill's line. As McCray's brigade deployed in the vicinity of Mount Zion Church preparing for their advance on the Union right flank,

Manson remained convinced that the true threat was to his left flank. He responded by sending his reserve regiment, the 71st Indiana, as well as seven companies of the 69th Indiana that had been posted on the right flank, to support his left. Only three companies of the 69th remained on the right to confront McCray's brigade, now forming to attack.

A hot skirmish erupted along the whole front of Manson's line east of the Richmond road, as the 55th, 16th, and 69th Indiana advanced to within 100 yards of Confederate line. This, in turn, provoked an immediate response from Cleburne, who dispatched Colonel Lucius Polk's 13th and 15th Arkansas Regiments to the support of the 154th Tennessee on the eastern flank. When far enough into the woods, Polk's men would be at a 90-degree angle to the end of Manson's line. It had become evident to Cleburne that the enemy "had staked everything on driving back or turning our right flank and that they had weakened their center to effect this object."

Still unaware of McCray's impending attack, Manson, by overloading his left had triggered the response he feared the most, an attack against that portion of his front. Furthermore, a trick of the terrain led him to make a series of tactical blunders. From his position with the 55th Indiana behind and in center of the Union line, he could not have possibly seen McCray's column approaching his right flank. Less than a quarter of a mile west ran a creek known as Hayes Fork, and a mile beyond it was a big cornfield, north of which a ravine cut beyond his right flank, none of which was visible to him. Proceeding cautiously through a cornfield and a ravine, the Confederates exploded like a thunderbolt on the few Union troops who could not see them coming either. As McCray hit the right at the church, Preston Smith's brigade nimbly executed Cleburne's wishes by forming a 90-degree angle to Manson's left, achieving a deadly enfilade from which they unloosed massive volleys. The raw Federals quickly went to pieces and began to dissolve into something close to chaos.

Map © 2013 Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping, Minneapolis, MN



ABOVE: Confederate divisions under Brig. Gens. Thomas Churchill and Patrick Cleburne mounted a two-pronged assault on the inexperienced Union forces at Richmond. Cleburne, shot in the face, lost four teeth in the fighting. OPPOSITE: These well-armed troops in the 44th Indiana were typical of the hard-fighting Midwestern boys who rushed to the Union banner in the first months of the war.

Meanwhile, Cleburne was preparing to personally lead Hill's brigade straight ahead toward Manson's center. As he rode over, Cleburne stopped to talk to Polk, who had been wounded, and was himself hit by a ball that took out four teeth and passed out his open mouth, depriving him of "the powers of speech, and this rendered my further presence on the field worse than useless." By that point, Cleburne didn't really need to talk. Despite the wound and his subsequent absence from the field, his earlier tactical dispositions had set in motion a bold blueprint for victory that was an early indication of the skills that would make Cleburne one of the Confederacy's best battlefield generals. His maneuvering had brought much of his

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Battlefield artist Edwin Forbes sketched this iconic scene of Union troops making a stand around their colors at Richmond. Brig. Gens. Mahlon Manson and Charles Cruft organized a last-ditch defense at the city cemetery.

division into an extended line beyond the enemy's eastern flank, and by observing that the enemy was reinforcing that flank, he correspondingly made plans to quickly strike at the exact point where Union troops were being removed.

Into the desperate situation Cruft's brigade, with the 95th Ohio in the vanguard, began arriving on the field, marching at the double-quick from its camp site at Richmond. Colonel William McMillan, commanding the 95th, was directed to position the regiment on the right flank reinforcing three companies from the 69th Indiana and ordered to quickly charge a Southern battery that was unlimbering to support McCray's advance against Mount Zion Church. The order should never have been given, and McMillan should have questioned it. With no time to deploy, the scattered regiment would have to advance squarely in front of McCray's troops, which were then spilling out of the ravine toward the church.

The Confederates ripped into the Ohioans. "Whilst we were thus engaged," reported McMillan, "the enemy advanced his right and left wings, outflanking and driving our forces before him. Seeing that it would be reckless and useless to continue our assault upon the battery, I ordered the regiment to halt and fall back, which they did, for a time, in good order, losing, however, in addition to our killed and wounded, 160 men and a large number of officers at this point." Lt. Col. J.B. Armstrong, who assumed command when McMillan inexplicably left the field, had a different version. Armstrong claimed that McMillan's actual order was, "Every man to save himself"—beginning with McMillan. Armstrong put the number of men captured at 200.

As Manson recalled tersely, "The rout had become general." Next up was the 18th Kentucky, establishing a line behind which the bloodied 95th and Manson's broken units could reform. In the face of the persistent Confederate advance, the 18th bravely stemmed the tide. Yet after a short time the regiment retired with severe losses. Cruft commended the 18th for having prevented the retreat from becoming a rout but acknowledged that "the panic was well-nigh universal. The whole thing was fast becoming shameful."

The 12th and 66th Indiana were left of Cruft's brigade, and these troops were moved back two miles in the rear of the original battle line in a attempt to rally the rest of the command. Cruft cobbled together a new line west of the Richmond road, and Manson's shattered regiments

formed east of the road, not far from where Manson's infantry had driven off Confederate cavalry the previous afternoon.

As Manson and Cruft were watching the Confederates forming to advance on the new line, a courier arrived from Lexington and handed Manson an order from Nelson—a directive that should have been sent two or three days earlier. It instructed Manson not to fight at Richmond but instead to march west to Lancaster. Nelson had sent the order 10 hours earlier, at 2:30 AM, in response to the cavalry report the previous day.

Within minutes, the confident Rebels, intent on finishing the battle, advanced on McCray's column. Spearheading the drive toward Cruft's position, Preston Smith moved on Manson's position. When they were within 400 yards, a Union battery of six guns belched canister, followed rapidly by volleys of musketry, "the most incessant firing of cannon and musketry I have ever heard," reported McCray. Cruft's troops fought with astonishing determination to check the Confederate assault. Nevertheless, the butternuts pressed forward until they reached a thickly overgrown fence about 200 yards from Cruft's line. McCray, finding the air literally filled with canister and minie balls, ordered his troops to lie down under cover.

Emboldened by their defense and perhaps thinking the tide had shifted to them, the Union forces counterattacked. When they had closed to within 50 yards, McCray gave the order to rise and fire. A terrific storm of bullets buzzed through the air like angry insects knocking down men with fearful effect, driving the Federals back "in the wildest confusion and disorder." Confederates up and down the line relentlessly pushed forward, both Union brigades melting away before them. The second Union battle position had been broken, and as Manson and Cruft worked furiously to regain and retain unit cohesion, they determined to make another stand on the southern outskirts of Richmond, at the city cemetery.

As the new position was being organized, sudden cheers erupted that signaled the arrival of the army's commanding general. No doubt some who cheered him soon regretted it, as the enraged Nelson attempted to restore order by beating soldiers over the head with the flat sides of his sword. Words were exchanged between Nelson and Manson when they met on the field, and Nelson later bitterly accused Manson of disobeying his order to avoid a fight and take the army to Lancaster. Now, Nelson, Manson, and Cruft managed to rally 2,500 troops on the crest of a low-lying ridge, where they deployed behind a stone fence and the tombstones of the cemetery. Meanwhile, Kirby Smith let his enervated Confederates rest for about an hour. By then, the fight had been going on for eight hours under a punishing sun and had covered miles of ground.

WHEN reorganized, the plan of attack would go forward unchanged, strike the flanks, with Churchill advancing on the left and Preston Smith on the right. On the cusp of a complete success, Kirby Smith added a new wrinkle, sending his cavalry on a sweep around Richmond to cut off the expected Union retreat. At 5 PM he ordered a general advance. Union artillery opened first, firing shells and then canister at the disciplined Confederates. The soldiers waiting for Smith's men were not quite as green as they had been earlier in the day. The pair of spankings they had received had quickly taught them a great deal about combat, and now they were delivering a withering fire and exacting a heavy price. A Southerner recalled that "we quickly formed our lines and moved on the cemetery, and in 20 minutes 140 men of the 2nd Tennessee and 128 of the 48th Tennessee were killed and wounded."

With the setting sun's rays wreathed in sulfurous smoke, presenting a blood-red hue, Nelson rode among the troops, attempting to inspire them and threatening them with bodily injury if they failed to do their duty. Referencing his huge bulk, he shouted, "Boys, if they can't hit something as big as I am, they can't hit anything!" His personal entreaties worked and the Union line momentarily held firm. Within seconds, however, another deadly volley ripped into the Union lines, and those who were not killed or maimed broke for the rear. Nelson, who was struck by a pair of balls that smashed into his thigh, observed later that his troops "stood about 3 rounds, when struck by panic, they fled in disorder." The panic-stricken mob that had been the Union army fell back in utter disorganization through the streets of Richmond and onto the Lexington road.

Kirby Smith's cavalry was waiting for them. His troopers shot down a good many men, and by the hundreds they surrendered. One Confederate major wrote that the "havoc was frightful, and the Federals threw down their arms and surrendered in crowds, and of the few who escaped not one in ten carried his musket with him." Concealing himself in a cornfield, Nelson managed to sneak away. There were so many prisoners that the cavalry commander could not give Smith an accurate estimate, he simply reported that he "had a ten acre lot full."

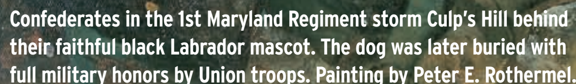
The Battle of Richmond could not truly compare with the numbers engaged at the ancient Battle of Cannae, yet the tactics and sheer onesidedness of the battle were eerily reminiscent of that earlier clash. The Union loss was 206 killed, 844 wounded, and 4,304 missing, with only between 800 and 900 managing to escape. Confederate losses were 98 killed, 492 wounded, and eight missing. Kirby Smith pushed on to occupy Lexington on September 2, where he wrote his wife: "I am well and have the most enthusiastic reception in Kentucky—the whole population is turning out in mass. Recruits are flocking to me by the thousands. All of Kentucky to the Ohio is at our feet." Feverish enthusiasm abounded throughout the South. "We think we may safely say that the day of Kentucky's deliverance from the hateful thrall of abolition despotism has brightly dawned," wrote the *Richmond Dispatch*. Vast military opportunities did indeed lay before the Confederates, but it remained to be seen if they would reap the harvest. □

AS THEY FORMED RANKS ON THE Hanover Road one mile east of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, on the afternoon of July 2, 1863, the men in the II Corps of the Army of Northern Virginia stared anxiously at the giant boulders and towering oak trees dotting the humpbacked prominence known as Culp's Hill, three quarters of a mile southeast of town. The 630-foot hill, the highest ground in the vicinity, had long been a popular picnic site for Gettysburg residents. The trees gave welcome shade in summer, and the rocks served as handy seats and dining tables. Many a romance had begun on that hill.

On this day, however, there would be no picnics on Culp's Hill. As the northernmost tip of the embattled Union Army's four-mile-long, fishhook-shaped defensive line at Gettysburg, Culp's Hill was a vital piece of military real estate. Its heights overlooked the eastern approach to the town, which had suddenly become the focus of the entire war effort in the east. If the Confederates could seize the hill, they could potentially roll up the entire

No Picnic at Culp's Hill

BY ROY MORRIS JR.


Confederates in the 1st Maryland Regiment storm Culp's Hill behind their faithful black Labrador mascot. The dog was later buried with full military honors by Union troops. Painting by Peter E. Rothermel.

Union line from north to south. The battle, and perhaps the war, could be won in a single day.

The day before, Robert E. Lee's Confederates had stumbled into battle at Gettysburg before the general was ready or willing to engage. Lacking effective intelligence from his cavalry—Maj. Gen. J.E.B. Stuart was off on another ill-advised ride around the Union rear—Lee's advance force, under Maj. Gen. Henry Heth, had headed toward Gettysburg in search of shoes. (The always equipment-challenged graycoats had heard that there was a bulging shoe warehouse in the town.) Expecting to find only local militia and civilians on hand to oppose them, Heth's men instead had run smack into an alert Union cavalry brigade commanded by Brig. Gen. John Buford. Soon, what began as a general skirmish had swelled into the largest battle of the war, as both sides funneled quick-arriving forces into line.

Among the Confederate forces converging on Gettysburg was Lee's II Corps, commanded now by Lt. Gen. Richard Stoddert Ewell in the wake of Lt. Gen. Thomas

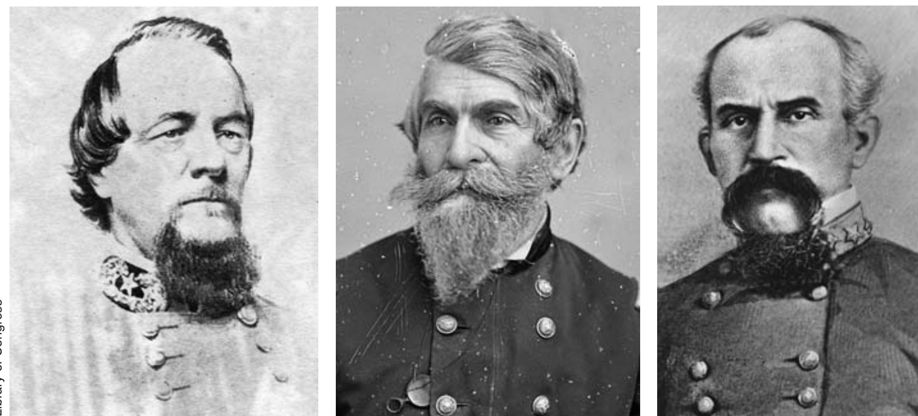
The popular picnic ground at Culp's Hill would find itself the focus of much grimmer activities during the Battle of Gettysburg. The giant oak trees and huge boulders dotting the hill would be used for far less peaceful purposes.

State Museum of Pennsylvania

"Stonewall" Jackson's death at the Battle of Chancellorsville two months earlier. Ewell, whose army-wide reputation for eccentricity—if not necessarily his battlefield brilliance—rivaled that of his dead predecessor, seemed on paper a good choice to succeed Jackson. Ewell, like Jackson, was a native Virginian, a graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, and a decorated hero in the Mexican War. He had successively commanded brigades, divisions, and corps in Lee's army. But "Old Bald Head," as Ewell was more or less affectionately known by his men, had only recently returned to duty after losing a leg at the Battle of Groveton. Wearing a cork artificial leg, he had to be strapped into the saddle and needed crutches to walk. The injury had not affected his voice, however. Ewell was still capable of spouting obscenities left and right in the heat of battle. His hyper-nervousness, prominent eyes, and wasted frame gave him the appearance of a spectral bird of prey.

Ewell's men, at least initially, had performed well at Gettysburg, crashing into the Union XI Corps northeast of town and sending the Federals scampering ignominiously through the streets to the temporary safety of Cemetery Hill. But Ewell's attack, like that of III Corps commander A.P. Hill west of Gettysburg, had bogged down by the late afternoon of July 1. Luck, in the form of Culp's Hill and a scattering of other hills and ridges to the south, had allowed quick-thinking Union officers to cobble together a curving defensive line on the always crucial high ground. From Culp's Hill to Cemetery Hill, Seminary Ridge, and Little and Big Round Tops, blue-clad defenders had moved into positions they would defend grimly and desperately for the next two days.

With his trained engineer's eyes, Robert E. Lee could see the battle unfolding before him. Late in the afternoon on July 1, he sent Ewell a politely worded message urging him to attack Cemetery Hill, just west of Culp's Hill, if Ewell felt that he "could do so to advantage." This was as peremptory as Lee got; he habitually couched his orders in a courtly patrician politesse that left their recipients a great deal of wiggle room. It was a command style that depended greatly on the individuals receiving the commands. Had Stonewall Jackson been alive, such an order would have been swiftly understood and instantly carried out. But Ewell was no Jackson—who was?—and despite repeated urging from his subordinates, Old Bald Head hesitated to order a new attack until his last division, commanded by Maj. Gen. Edward Johnson, had reached the field. Ewell's senior division commander, Maj. Gen. Jubal Early, did not want to wait. Pointing to the dark form of Culp's Hill, half a mile away, Early warned, "If you do not go up there tonight, it will cost you ten thousand men to go up there tomorrow." Early's figures were off, but his underlying assumption was all too correct. Hundreds of II Corps soldiers would lose their lives proving the rightness of his perceptions.

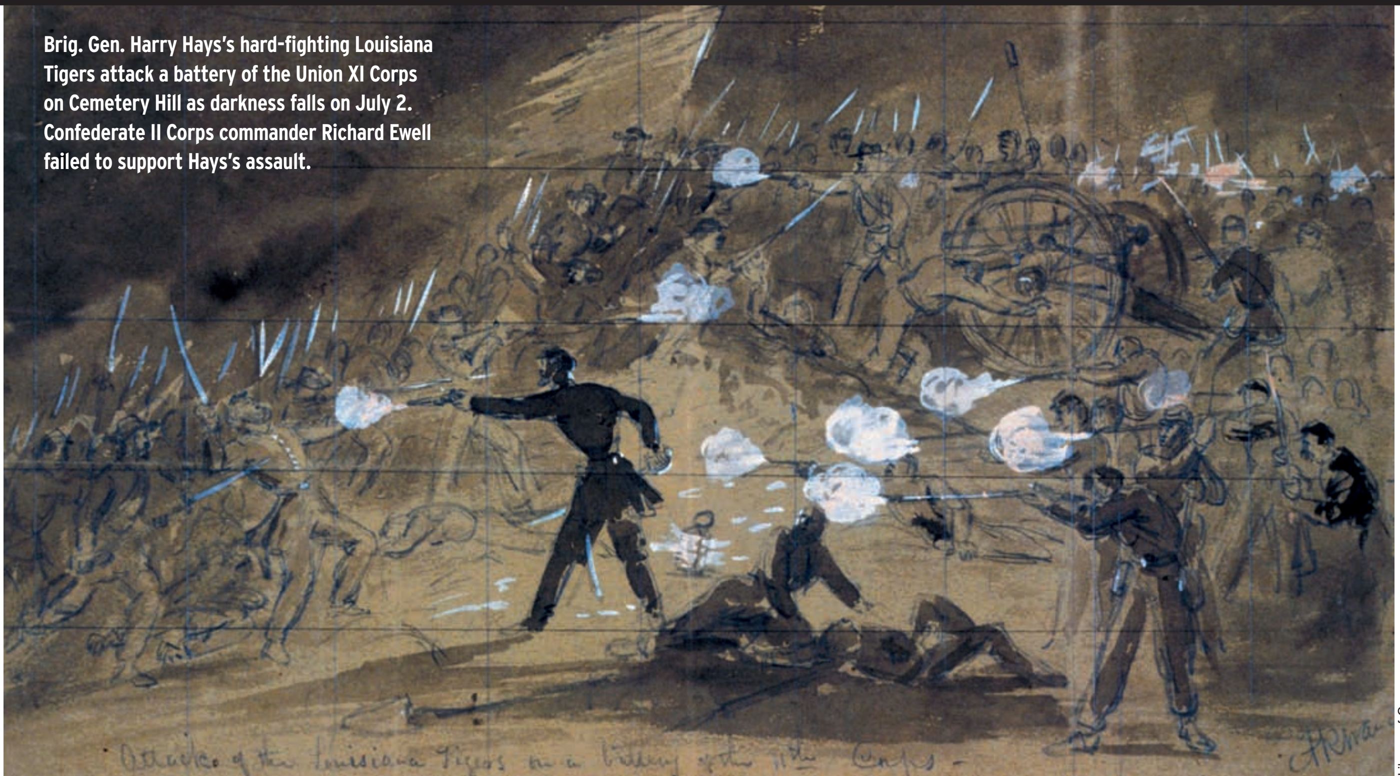

Library of Congress

Left to right: Confederate Maj. Gen. Edward Johnson; Union Brig. Gen. George S. Greene; Confederate Maj. Gen. Isaac Trimble.

Major General Isaac Trimble, another of Ewell's aides, was even more vociferous in calling for a renewed attack on the Union troops. "General," demanded Trimble, "don't you intend to pursue our sweep and push the enemy vigorously?" Pointing to Culp's Hill, he advised: "You should send a brigade with artillery to take possession of that hill. Give me a division and I will engage to take that hill." When Ewell declined, Trimble persisted. "Give me a brigade, and I will do it," he said. Still no reply. "Give me a good regiment and I will take that hill." Ewell, tiring at last of the unsought advice, spluttered, "When I need advice from a junior officer, I generally ask for it." Trimble, disgusted, threw down his sword and stalked away.

While the Confederates were arguing among themselves, the Union defenders atop Culp's Hill were taking full advantage of the heaven-sent respite. The first Federal troops on the hill were remnants of the famed Iron Brigade, which had been badly cut up in the day's fighting. Elements of the 7th Indiana Infantry joined the Iron Brigade on the west brow of the hill along with a lone Union battery that Maj. Gen. Winfield Scott Hancock had personally dispatched to help hold the rise. While Johnson's men, slowed by a III Corps wagon train that blocked the road, straggled onto the field, Ewell allowed Early's men to bivouac for the night and departed the front himself, leaving behind a rather casual order for Johnson to occupy Culp's Hill when he arrived. Instead, Johnson postponed any further action after a scouting party ran into Union skirmishers at the base of the hill. All that night, the ringing of Federal axes indicated to the veteran Confederates below that the position was being fortified.

Johnson's indecisive actions did not endear him to his men, who were not quite sure what to make of their new commander. Johnson was as profane as Ewell and nearly as eccentric. A serious foot wound incurred at the Battle of McDowell caused him to



Brig. Gen. Harry Hays's hard-fighting Louisiana Tigers attack a battery of the Union XI Corps on Cemetery Hill as darkness falls on July 2. Confederate II Corps commander Richard Ewell failed to support Hays's assault.

Library of Congress

carry a large, stout cane—the men called him "Old Clubby" as a result. They also called him "Allegheny Ed" and "Fence Rail Johnson" in honor of his slender figure. Johnson's booming voice, oddly shaped head, and peculiar habit of winking incessantly with one eye unnerved some of the soldiers. One young private termed him "one of the wickedest men I ever heard." Another called him, not entirely unfondly, "a stirring old coon, always on the alert." Perhaps, in calling off the evening assault, Johnson had been too alert.

At daybreak on July 2, Brig. Gen. John Geary's division from Maj. Gen. Henry Slocum's Union XII Corps moved into place on Culp's Hill. Veteran soldiers to a man, Geary's experienced troops immediately began cobbling together a long line of breastworks along the crest of the hill. There were actually two peaks on the hill, located 400 yards apart. The higher peak bearing the general place name, overlooked Rock Creek, which flowed to the east; the lower peak, called Stevens Knoll, was separated from the summit by a narrow saddle notching the hill from east to west. Bordering the hill on the southeast was a marshy meadow with a stone wall running from Rock Creek to the saddle of Culp's Hill 850 yards away. On the northwest, a cleared field lay adjacent to Spangler's Spring, a popular picnicking spot for residents before the war.

The ever-aggressive Lee had wanted Ewell's corps to attack at daybreak, timing the assault to coincide with that of Lt. Gen. James Longstreet's I Corps attack on the Union left. The joint assault had already been pushed back. The methodical Longstreet was typically slow to move into place, and an impatient Lee went over to personally survey Ewell's position at 9 AM. From the cupola of the nearby Adams County poorhouse, Lee surveyed the Union position on Culp's Hill. "The enemy have the advantage of us in a shorter and inside line and we are too much extended," Lee observed. In gently veiled criticism of Ewell's failure to attack the night before, he added, "We did not or we could not pursue our advantage of yesterday, and now the enemy are in a good position." Reluctantly, he postponed the attack until 4 PM.

Further delays pushed back the attack another three hours. Ewell's men, growing bored and restless, rummaged for food at nearby farms, helping themselves to a rich array of flour, bacon, butter, milk, and preserves. Some, falling back on their rural southern backgrounds, obligingly helped the frowning Gettysburg farmers milk their own cows. Others took advantage of the delay to write letters to their loved ones back home. Sergeant David Hunter of the 2nd Virginia dashed off a few lines to his mother. "We are in all probability on the eve of a terrible battle," he wrote. "The two contending armies lie close together and at any moment may commence the work of death. We trust in the wisdom of our Gens. and the goodness of our Father in Heaven who doeth all things well. Although we may be victorious, many must fall, and I may be among that number. If it is the Lord's will I am, I trust, prepared to go." It was not the sort of letter a worried mother wants to receive from her soldier-son.

Finally, at 7 PM on July 2, Johnson gave the order to advance. Leading the attack was Brig. Gen. John M. Jones's brigade, which advanced west from its position near Benner's Hill. Feeling their way toward Culp's Hill alongside a rail fence bordering the eastern edge of the woods at the base

of the hill, Jones's men waded across chest-deep Rock Creek and slogged onward in the face of largely ineffective fire from the Union artillery battery atop the hill. Following directly behind Jones's brigade were the brigades of Brig. Gen. George H. "Maryland" Steuart and Colonel Jesse M. Williams. Like Ewell, the rather handsome Steuart, nicknamed "Maryland" to differentiate him from the more famous "Jeb" Stuart, had only recently returned to duty after spending a year recuperating from a serious wound received at the Battle of Cross Keys. Williams was commanding a brigade in the absence of Brig. Gen. Francis R.T. Nicholls, who had lost his left foot to a Union artillery shell at Chancellorsville. (The unlucky Nicholls had already lost an arm at Winchester. His luck would improve after the war, when he was elected the Democratic governor of Louisiana during the bitterly contested "stolen election" of 1876.)

In all, the three Confederate brigades totaled about 4,000 men arranged in a double line of assault. As they neared Culp's Hill, the lines were funneled through a narrow opening between the smaller knobs to the south. In the deepening gloom, officers had to dismount and guide their men through the massive boulders in small groups. "All was confusion and disorder," Captain Thomas R. Bucker of the 44th Virginia recalled. Red and orange muzzle flashes erupted as Union skirmishers withdrew up the hillside.

Williams's men halted 100 yards from the enemy breastworks; no one could see where they were going. Sergeant Charles Clancy of the 1st Louisiana, carrying the regimental colors, realized to his chagrin that he had advanced too far. Before the Federal soldiers could surround him and take him prisoner, Clancy removed the flag from its staff and wrapped it tightly around his body. Somehow he managed to keep the flag concealed throughout his subsequent six-month-long imprisonment and returned it proudly to the regiment after he was exchanged that winter.

Steuart's brigade, advancing on the left, had an easier time. The troops passed through a cornfield, waded across Rock Creek, and began climbing the eastern slope of Culp's Hill. There was surprisingly little fire from the enemy to their front. Unknown to the Confederates, the hill had been systematically stripped of defenders as the fighting became general across the battlefield. Only a single Union brigade, under the command of 62-year-old Brig. Gen. George S. Greene, remained in place to hold the high ground at Culp's Hill.

Had Johnson's division made a concerted push, the Confederates might well have taken the hill. Instead, the attack continued piecemeal, degenerating into a series of isolated small-arms fights that amounted to little more than individual sniping contests between soldiers firing blindly into the darkness. The Federals, safely concealed behind their breastworks,

Library of Congress

had the upper hand, and Greene took full advantage of the edge. Despite being the oldest Union general on the field—he had graduated from West Point six years before Robert E. Lee—the white-bearded, Rhode Island-born general handled his men superbly. As a trained engineer, he had prepared a formidable defensive position, and he skillfully rotated the men in and out of the trenches to maintain an incessant fire on the attackers. By the end of the battle, it was estimated that the 1,400 men in Greene's brigade had fired an astonishing 277,000 rounds at the Confederates, in the process destroying many of the ancient oak trees at the old picnic grounds. Greene, who bore a passing resemblance to the fanatic John Brown, was described similarly by one of his officers as "a grim old fighter." He would not give up Culp's Hill without a fight.

In the confusion and darkness, there were predictable incidents of friendly fire. Lieutenant Randolph McKim of the 1st Maryland, temporarily attached to Steuart as an aide-de-camp, led eight companies of the 1st North Carolina Regiment up a concealed draw in the hillside. Seeing muzzle flashes to his front, he carefully prepared an ambush, crying, "Fire on them, boys, fire on them!" Only after Major William M. Parsley of their brother regiment, the 3rd North Carolina, rushed up and shouted, "They are own men!" did McKim realize his mistake. In another incident, Major William Goldsborough of the 1st Maryland was directing part of the fighting when an officer on horseback rode up and asked casually, "How's the fight going?" "I don't know," said Goldsborough noncommittally, taking hold of the horse's bridle. "What corps is this?" the stranger wanted to know. "A Confederate corps and you are my prisoner, sir," said Goldsborough. The rider, Union Lieutenant Harry C. Egbert, immediately dismounted and surrendered his sword.

Battlefield artist Edwin Forbes sketched a misleadingly peaceful scene behind Union breastworks on the morning of July 3 at Gettysburg. It was much bloodier and more chaotic than that.

Goldsborough asked one of the men, Major William Parsley, if he had suffered many casualties to that point. "Very much indeed," Parsley responded. "I have but thirteen men left." At that moment a Union bullet zipped through the air, taking down another Tarheel. "And now I have but twelve," Parsley added laconically.

As night came on, Steuart's men gratefully occupied some abandoned Union breastworks at the base of Culp's Hill. There they waited out the night, snapping off occasional rounds at the enemy but taking care not to fire again on their own comrades. Goldsborough, who knew the area well, told Johnson and Steuart that his scouts had seen wagons moving onto Baltimore Pike, the main Union line of retreat, 600 yards to the west. Johnson, putting his ear to the ground Indian-style, listened to the low rumble of wheels in the distance, which he said "would indicate the enemy is retreating." He told his staff they had carried the hill. He was wrong. What he had heard instead was two more Union brigades from Geary's division returning to Culp's Hill after their premature removal earlier that day. The lead regiment, the 29th Pennsylvania, marched confidently up the turnpike and reentered the woods at the base of the hill, intending to reoccupy their old position. Someone in the ranks called out a Union "Hurrah!" to announce their return. In response, a withering volley of musket fire erupted from Steuart's men posted a mere 25 paces away.

The Keystone State commander, Colonel William Rickards, believing that the fire was coming from their own men, had his men hold their fire while he rode toward the low wall and called out his identity. This was met by another Confederate volley, which somehow missed hitting Rickards but convinced him without a doubt that the enemy was in force an uncomfortably short distance away. The Pennsylvanians spent the night clinging to the ground within uneasy proximity to the Rebel line.

An order passed down the chain of command from General Slocum for the men to drive out the enemy at daybreak. The order, said Brig. Gen. Alpheus S. Williams, commanding Slocum's 1st Division, was "more easily made than executed." The 53-year-old Yale University graduate, called "Old Pap" by his soldiers, was reluctant to mount a headlong frontal attack on the Confederates now thronging the lower slope of Culp's Hill. Instead, he told his men to hold their position until morning, "then, from those hills back of us, we will shell hell out of them." With that, Williams casually stretched out on a flat rock beneath an apple tree for a half-hour nap. He would need all the rest he could get for the day ahead.

While Union forces continued to return piecemeal to Culp's Hill, Confederate commanders were arguing among themselves about the failure to drive the enemy off neighboring Cemetery Hill. Recriminations flew fast and hard, but it was too late to change the day's outcome. Lee's headquarters sent out new orders to attack again the next morning, and Ewell, deciding that Cemetery Hill was too strongly held to take, turned his attentions back to Culp's Hill. Johnson's lodgment at the base of the hill was promising. Ewell dispatched reinforcements, including the vaunted Stonewall Brigade under Brig. Gen. James A. Walker. With twice as many men as he had commanded at the beginning of the attack, Johnson was ordered to attack again at dawn.

As the first light of morning streaked the sky on July 3, the woods beyond Culp's Hill erupted in cannon fire. In accordance with Williams's plan, the 26 guns from XII Corps' assorted batteries unleashed a skull-pounding, teeth-rattling barrage. "The whole hillside seemed enveloped in a blaze," Goldsborough reported, "and the balls could be heard to strike the breastworks like hailstones upon the rooftops." Withdrawing his battalion from the line of fire, Goldsborough had the men scamper for cover. All anyone could do was hunker down and wait out the Union bombardment. Then, when the fire lifted, the gray-coated brigades surged forward with a shout, bolting across terrain studded by large gray boulders that one Union officer thought resembled a herd of sleeping elephants.

Steuart's men, leaving the relative safety of the abandoned Union breastworks, pressed forward gallantly, running into heavy fire on their right. The 2nd Virginia Regiment from the Stonewall Brigade rallied to support them, peppering the offending Union regiment, Colonel William Maulsby's 1st Maryland, which had advanced to within 20 yards of the stone wall alongside the meadow at the base of Culp's Hill. Maulsby's men, from the Potomac Home Brigade, fell back to the Baltimore Pike with the loss of 80 comrades.

As Steuart's brigade climbed the slope toward the second summit of the hill, they ran into more heavy fire. Goldsborough, at the head of his 1st Maryland Battalion, came across two 3rd North Carolina officers taking cover behind a large rock. Goldsborough asked one of the men, Major William Parsley, if he had suffered many casualties to that point. "Very much indeed," Parsley responded. "I have but thirteen men left." At that moment a Union bullet zipped through the air, taking down another Tarheel. "And now I have but twelve," Parsley added laconically. Goldsborough himself was stuck in the forehead by a ball a few seconds later, but the spent round only dazed him momentarily. When he ran into General Steuart, Goldsborough warned him that the men were running dangerously low on ammunition. Steuart called for a volunteer to bring up more rounds, and Lieutenant McKim, perhaps feeling guilty for having mistakenly ordered his men to fire on their own battalion the day before, immediately offered to do so. With the help of three other men, McKim emptied two boxes of cartridges into an improvised litter made from blankets and fence rails and carried them back up the hill.

Firing was general all along the front. On the Confederate left, Lt. Col. John Zable heard a great yell arise from his rear as the men of Colonel E.A. O'Neal's brigade rushed to their aid. Unfortunately for them, the enormous Rebel yell attracted the unwanted attention of Union marksmen and "served no other purpose," said Zable, "but to intensify a more galling fire in our front." As it was, Zable's men were safer than their would-be rescuers, since they were now so close to enemy lines that the Federals fired over their heads into the ranks of the Rebel reinforcements. For three hours the southerners withstood the murderous fire, "the most terrific and deafening that we ever experienced," said Zable.

In the midst of the battle there were unaccountable moments of grim humor. Captain William May of the 3rd Alabama was crouching behind a rock with some comrades when one of the other men, Private Tom Powell, jumped behind another rock. Suddenly Powell leaped up again, "slapping, stamping and cursing"—he had jumped into a nest of yellow jackets. The much-afflicted private would alternately drop behind a rock to avoid enemy bullets, then leap up again when the stinging wasps became too much to bear. Somehow Powell managed to avoid being hit by bullets or dying of anaphylactic shock from the stings. For the rest of his life, May could not recall Powell's tribulations without laughing.

Johnson's division made three separate assaults on Culp's Hill that morning, even though Ewell had received word 30 minutes into the first attack that Longstreet's planned assault on the Union left had been postponed until mid-afternoon. Unaccountably, Ewell had decided to continue the attack—perhaps he did not want to seem lacking in Lee's eyes for the second day in a row. "Too late to recall," he responded tersely when a messenger from

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Confederates in Colonel Jesse M. Williams's brigade take cover behind some of the huge boulders on Culp's Hill, trading potshots with two New York regiments. The final assault on the hill came before Pickett's Charge on the other end of the battlefield.

Lee's headquarters urged him to call off the attack.

As the men in the 1st Maryland prepared to rush the Union position for the last time, their regimental mascot, a black Labrador retriever, broke ranks and sprinted to the front. Union Brig. Gen. Thomas Kane, commanding the 2nd Brigade of Geary's 2nd Division, watched with horrified fascination as the dog charged straight into the blue ranks, "competing for precedence with his masters in the smoke." The dog, said Kane, "barked in valorous glee," but was soon limping on three legs, looking for his dead master between the two lines "or seeking an explanation of the tragedy he witnessed, intelligible to his canine apprehension." The dog gave a last lick to a fallen soldier's hand before being "perfectly riddled" by gunfire. Kane, who had gotten out of a Baltimore hospital bed with a bad case of pneumonia, ordered the dog buried with full military honors, since "he was the only Christian-minded being on either side."

Despite all human and canine efforts, Steuart's men reeled back in defeat and disarray, rallying on the far side of the Union breastworks they had occupied the night before. Steuart himself was inconsolable. Wringing his hands, he cried again and again: "My poor boys! My poor boys!" One of those boys, lying mortally wounded between the lines, struggled laboriously to load his rifle. Union soldiers held their fire, fascinated by his macabre exertions. At length the young Confederate withdrew his ramrod, cocked his rifle, placed it under his chin, and pulled the trigger. Someone joked that it had saved them a bullet.

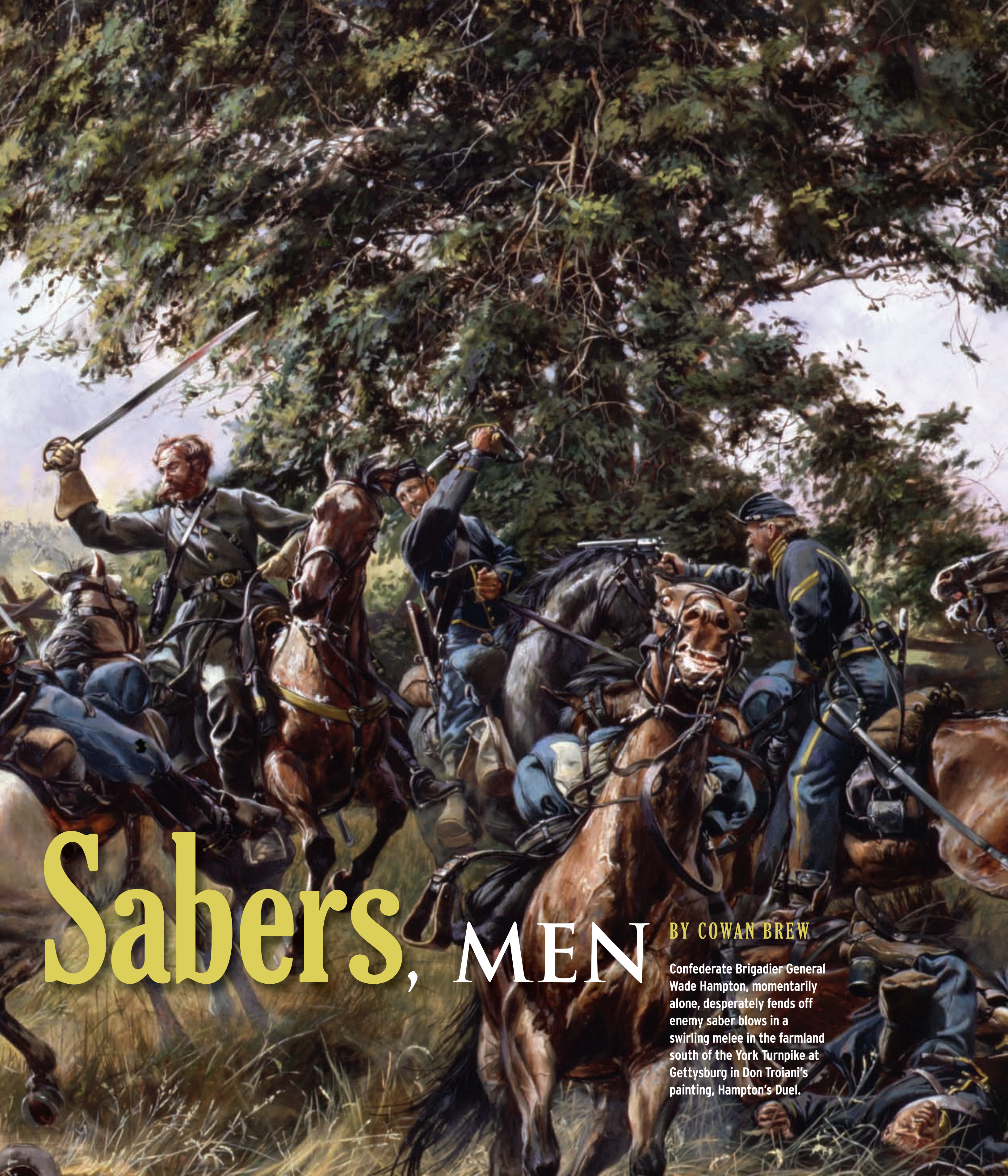
Finally, Johnson called off the attack. "The enemy were too securely entrenched and in too great numbers to be dislodged by the force of my command," he reported. "All had been done that it was possible to do." Union General Alpheus Williams concurred, observing, "The wonder is that the Rebels persisted so long in an attempt that the first half hour must have told them was useless." As Jubal Early had predicted the day before, Ewell's delay had cost the corps severely. Forced to charge a now-strengthened position, the Confederates at Culp's Hill had suffered some 2,100 casualties. One of those was Private John Wesley Culp of the 2nd Virginia, who died on the very hill owned by his uncle. The Union defenders lost half that number, many coming in a misguided and unnecessary attempt to retake the soon to be abandoned breastworks by the 2nd Massachusetts and 27th Indiana Regiments. Once again the ancient military maxim "Take the high ground" had been proven all too correct. Most maxims are. □

WHILE ROBERT E. LEE'S CONFEDERATE INFANTRY PREPARED A LAST DESPERATE CHARGE ON THE UNION LINES AT GETTYSBURG, CAVALRY COMMANDER J.E.B. STUART PLANNED HIS OWN ELEVENTH-HOUR GAMBIT—A DARING ATTACK ON THE ENEMY REAR.

AN angry gloom hung like dust over the 6,000 Confederate cavalrymen trooping up the York Turnpike in the early dawn of July 3, 1863. After eight long and largely unproductive days in the saddle, the horsemen were setting out on a last-ditch effort to disrupt and disarrange the rear of the Union Army confronting General Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia at the tiny crossroads town of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. A blood-red sun—always an evil portent to experienced campaigners—shone directly into the men's eyes, and the damp summer heat was already soaking through their short, gray uniform jackets. It was clear to everyone that the day would only get hotter, literally and figuratively, before it was over.

No one was angrier or gloomier than the troopers' famous commander, James Ewell Brown Stuart. The day before, the flame-bearded young general had sauntered into Lee's headquarters tent on Seminary Ridge at Gettysburg, expecting the usual courtly greeting from his old friend and mentor. Instead, an obviously angry Lee, worn and distracted by two days of unparalleled savagery with nothing to show for it but a bloody stalemate, glanced sharply at Stuart with cold, dark eyes. "General Stuart, where have you been?" he asked brusquely. When Stuart attempted to describe his recent whereabouts, Lee cut him off with a withering look. "I have not heard a word from you

KEEP TO YOUR



Sabers, MEN

BY COWAN BREW

Confederate Brigadier General Wade Hampton, momentarily alone, desperately fends off enemy saber blows in a swirling melee in the farmland south of the York Turnpike at Gettysburg in Don Troiani's painting, Hampton's Duel.

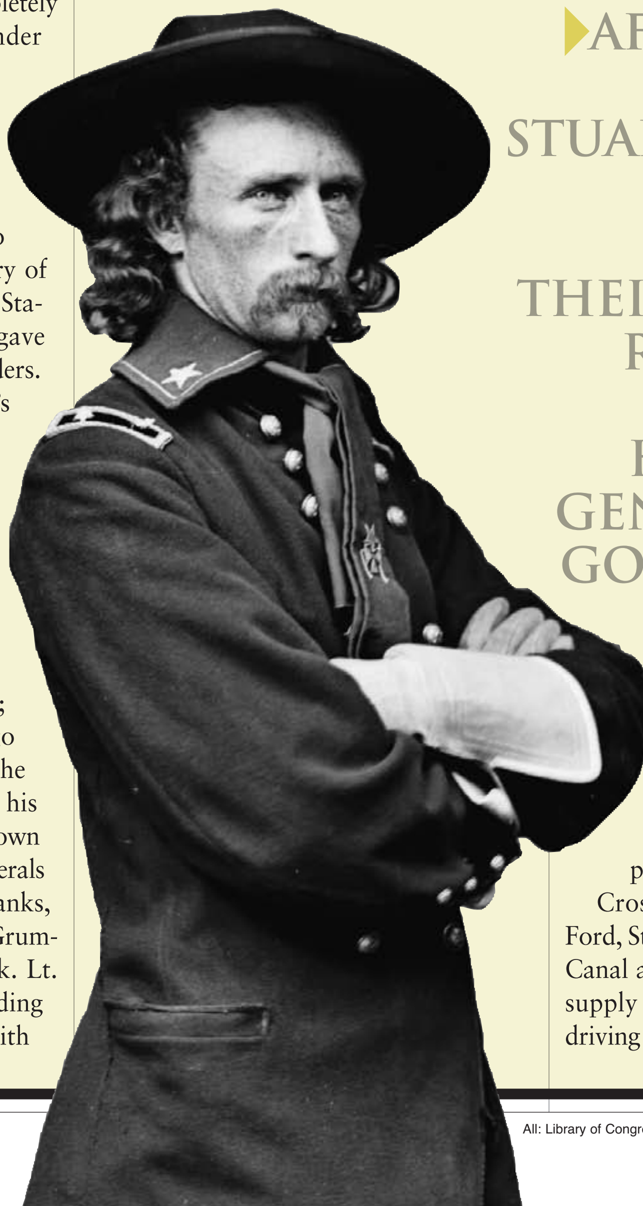
Painting by Don Troiani, www.historicalartprints.com

for days," he seethed, "and you are the eyes and ears of my army." Embarrassed observers said later that Stuart looked as though he had been slapped in the face. He accepted the rebuke with a lowered head.

The fact that both men shared the blame for Stuart's untoward absence made the meeting no less uncomfortable. Lee, as was his increasing habit, had given Stuart a vague, all-encompassing order to "pass around" the Union Army massed below the Potomac River in northeastern Virginia and "collect all the supplies you can for the use of the army." At the same time, he had directed his 30-year-old cavalry commander to screen Lt. Gen. Richard Ewell's II Corps as it advanced into Maryland and to break off his expedition if he ran into any "hindrance" from the Federals. Having made a household name for himself a year earlier by riding completely around a similar Union Army under Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan in Virginia, Stuart intended to duplicate that noteworthy raid. He and his men never considered Union soldiers, whether cavalry or infantry, a particular hindrance to their plans. The still-painful memory of the drawn cavalry battle at Brandy Station, Virginia, three weeks earlier gave added motivation to the southern riders.

Beginning on June 25, Stuart's horsemen rode east from Salem, Virginia, intending to turn north and link up with Ewell around York, Pennsylvania. In the meantime, Lee's massive army began moving northward as well, mounting its second invasion of enemy soil in nine months. The first invasion had ended badly at the Battle of Antietam; Lee intended the second one to go much better. For that to happen, he needed accurate information from his cavalry arm, but for once he was let down in his expectations. The brigadier generals Stuart left behind to guard Lee's flanks, Beverly Robertson and William "Grumble" Jones, were not up to the task. Lt. Gen. James Longstreet, commanding Lee's I Corps, complained later with some justice that Stuart had left them his least favorite officers. Stuart could scarcely argue with that assessment. He considered Robertson "by far the most troublesome man I had to deal with," in no small part because Robertson had been a former suitor of Stuart's wife, Flora, and a protégé of his much-despised father-in-law, Union Brig. Gen. Phillip S. George Cooke, in the Old Army. The irascible Jones had more than lived up to his nickname of "Grumble" on numerous occasions, and, although he was a better general than Robertson, he was outranked by the other officer. In the confused command situation, each failed to notify Lee that the Union forces had broken camp and set out after him. As long as Stuart was out of touch, Lee was effectively flying blind—hardly the best way to begin the most crucial campaign of the war.

Meanwhile, free of his unlikable subordinates, Stuart galloped east with his battle-tested troopers. Stuart sent his most reliable scout, John Singleton Mosby, ahead to map out the best route across Maryland into Pennsylvania. Mosby, who would later win fame as the "Gray Ghost," leading the 43rd Battalion of Virginia cavalry on numerous independent raids in northern Virginia, reported back that Stuart could pass easily around the widely dispersed Union Army in western Maryland. It was a dangerously upbeat assessment, and it cost Stuart several hours when he discovered that the Federals had already moved out and occupied the road at Haymarket, Virginia, on which Stuart had expected to move. Had Stuart returned to Lee then, or



AFTER HELPING BEAT BACK STUART'S ADVANCE AT HANOVER, CUSTER WON THEIR GRUDGING RESPECT. NOW THEY CALLED HIM "THE BOY GENERAL OF THE GOLDEN LOCKS."

at any rate reported the enemy movement, it might have changed the entire course of the campaign. Instead, Stuart was content to graze his horses in a field nearby while the unsuspecting Federals passed unimpeded.

Crossing the Potomac at Rowser's Ford, Stuart tore up a portion of the C&O Canal and swooped down on 125 enemy supply wagons at Rockville, Maryland, driving the fleeing teamsters all the way to

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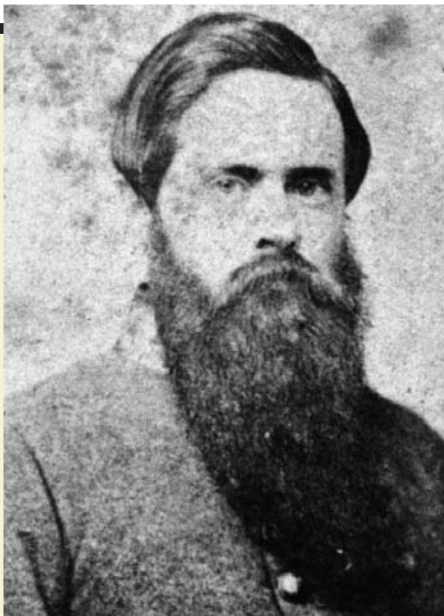
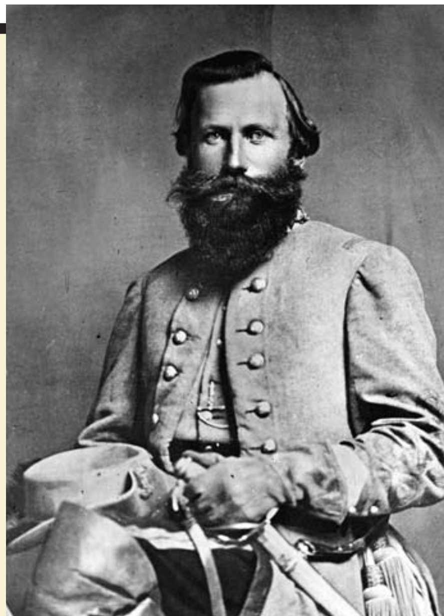
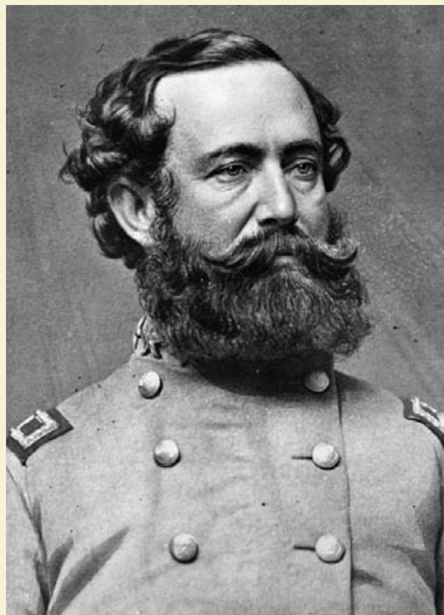




ABOVE LEFT: Brigadier General Fitzhugh Lee. ABOVE RIGHT: Major General James Ewell Brown (Jeb) Stuart, beau ideal of the Confederate cavalry, saw his stars tarnished by his late arrival at Gettysburg. BELOW LEFT: Brigadier General David M. Gregg. BELOW RIGHT: Brigadier General Wade Hampton. OPPOSITE: Brigadier General George A. Custer.



the outskirts of the nation's capital at Washington. Instead of burning the wagons and continuing with all haste to join Ewell's vanguard, Stuart wrongly decided to hold onto the bulky wagons and their treasure trove of hams, sugar, and whiskey. This was the very definition of a hindrance, but Stuart blithely ignored Lee's injunction and continued northeastward—farther and farther away from Lee's army. Two days later, Lee was still telling Brig. Gen. Isaac Trimble, "I have not yet heard that the enemy have crossed the Potomac, and am waiting to hear from General Stuart." He would continue waiting for several days.

While their infantry comrades stumbled blindly into a major confrontation with the Union Army of Maj. Gen. George Gordon Meade south of Gettysburg, Stuart's horsemen wasted precious hours tearing up a six-mile stretch of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad and paroling the 400 prisoners taken at Rockville. The hungry and thirsty mules pulling the captured wagons became increasingly unmanageable, a "source of unmitigated annoyance," according to Stuart aide Lieutenant William Blackford. Repeated clashes with screening Union cavalry further impeded Stuart's progress. In one close-run encounter near Hanover, Pennsylvania, Stuart had to leap his horse, Virginia, across a 15-foot-deep gully to avoid capture or death. Meanwhile, an anxious Lee paced about his tent, asking new arrivals: "Have you heard anything about my cavalry? Any news to give me about General Stuart?" For several days, the answer to both those questions was a dispiriting "no."

At last, on the afternoon of July 2, Stuart's column finally reached the outskirts of Gettysburg. Locating Lee's headquarters on Seminary Ridge, the weary cavalryman entered and saluted his commander. "Well, General Stuart, you are here at last," said Lee, before delivering his terse, devastating rebuke. With Lee's clipped words ringing in his ears, Stuart headed out again the next morning, marching northeast, then south, across the open countryside between the Hanover Road and the Baltimore Pike. Colonel Milton Ferguson's brigade led the advance. At Cress's Ridge, a long, low hill overlooking the farmland south of the York Turnpike, Stuart stopped to take stock of the situation. After scanning the surrounding countryside, he sent Lt. Col. Andrew Witcher's 34th Battalion forward to seize a nearby farm and fence line owned by local farmer John Rummel, half a mile to the east.

While Stuart's skirmishers were creeping forward, his blue-clad counterparts in the Federal cavalry had not been inactive. Brig. Gen. David McMurtrie Gregg, a native Pennsylvanian commanding the 2nd Division, moved swiftly to block the dangerously open terrain north of the Baltimore Pike, asking cavalry commander Brig. Gen. Alfred Pleasonton for an additional brigade to help safeguard the position. Pleasonton agreed, sending Gregg a grass-green young brigadier named George Armstrong Custer from the 3rd Division to assist in the defense.

Painting by Don Troiani, www.historicalartprints.com

Custer, the goat of the 1861 graduating class at West Point, had worn his general's stars only for a few days, but already he had made a name for himself among Union horsemen. One of three "boy generals" promoted by Pleasonton in early June (Elon Farnsworth and Wesley Merritt were the other two) to give more youthful élan to the cavalry, the 24-year-old Custer was a natural-born self-dramatist. Wearing a gaudy nonregulation uniform that he had designed himself of black velvet trimmed with interlocking gold lace on the sleeves, a wide-collared navy blue shirt, and a bright red necktie, Custer ensured that he would always be the most colorful officer on any battlefield. Long blond hair falling nearly to his shoulders completed the corsair look. His new command greeted his arrival with veteran humor. "Who is the child?" they joked. "Where is his nurse?" After helping beat back Stuart's advance at Hanover, Custer won their grudging respect. Now they called him "the Boy General of the Golden Locks."

Gregg placed Custer's division, composed of all Michigan troops from the

George Armstrong Custer, sporting his trademark red necktie, exhorts, "Come on, you Wolverines!" in Don Troiani's painting of the same name. He and his Michigan brigade made their reputation at Gettysburg.

1st, 5th, 6th, and 7th Regiments, at the intersection of the Hanover and Low Dutch roads. Custer positioned the 5th and 7th Regiments, facing north, in an open field where the two roads crossed; the 6th was farther west along Little's Run, a shallow stream flowing south from the farm. Dismounted scouts reached the base of Cress's Ridge and dashed back to report that two brigades of Rebel cavalry, supported by artillery, were moving through the trees on the high ground, little more than a mile away. Custer immediately wheeled about six mounted artillery pieces served by his old West Point friend, Lieutenant Alexander Pennington. Four quick rounds from a Confederate Parrott rifle ripped through the air. Union Colonel John McIntosh, commanding Gregg's 1st Brigade, rode up to Custer and asked for a summary report of the enemy's location. "I think you will find the woods out there full of them," Custer replied with a smirk, pointing toward Cress's Ridge. McIntosh dismounted skirmishers of his own from the 3rd Pennsylvania, 1st New Jersey, and Purnell (Maryland) Legion.

Custer and McIntosh were in the process of organizing a defensive line when a literally earth-shaking blast began two miles away. Seeking to soften up the Union center preparatory to the desperate frontal assault that would become known as Pickett's Charge, massed Confederate cannons had just unleashed the largest display of concentrated artillery fire ever heard on the North American continent. The ground shook beneath the Union cavalrymen and smoke rolled across the valley beyond. It appeared as though the very woods around them had been set on fire. The world seemed to be coming to an end.

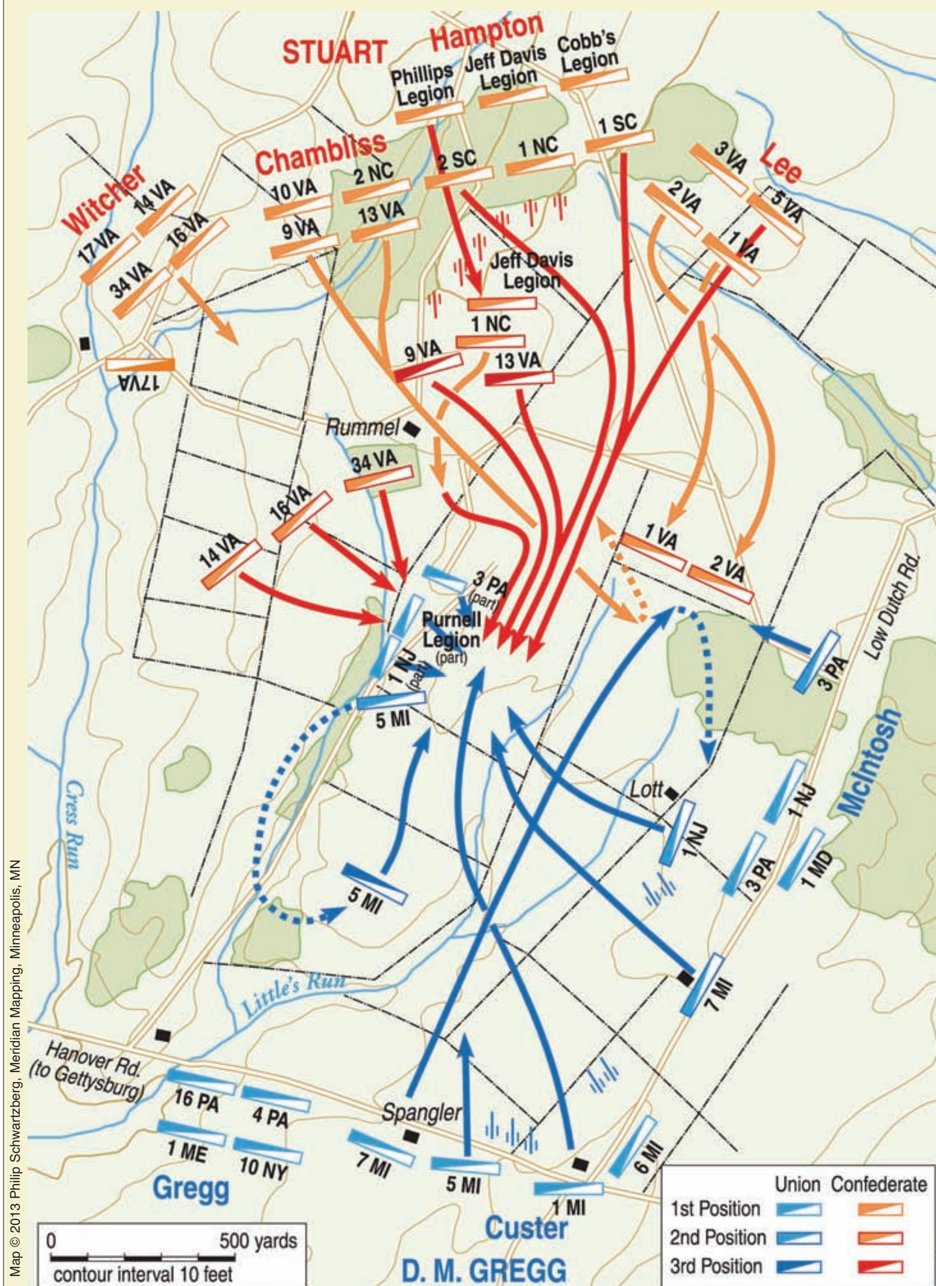
Whether by coincidence, design, or sheer inspiration, Stuart launched his own attack shortly after the ear-splitting cannonade began. His plan, he explained later in an after-battle report, was to keep the enemy pinned down in the front by sharpshooting skirmishers while sending his mounted forces around to attack the enemy left. The strategy began unraveling almost as soon as it began. By an oversight on the part of their acting brigade commander (Brig. Gen. Albert Gallatin Jenkins, the regular commander, had been wounded by a sniper the day before), Witcher's men had advanced with only 10 rounds of ammunition apiece. They quickly expended all their rounds in a nasty firefight with members of the 5th Michigan and 1st New Jersey, and pulled back to the Rummel farm to await reinforcements.

Stuart had been hoping to keep his mounted brigades hidden while they formed ranks and drove into the Union

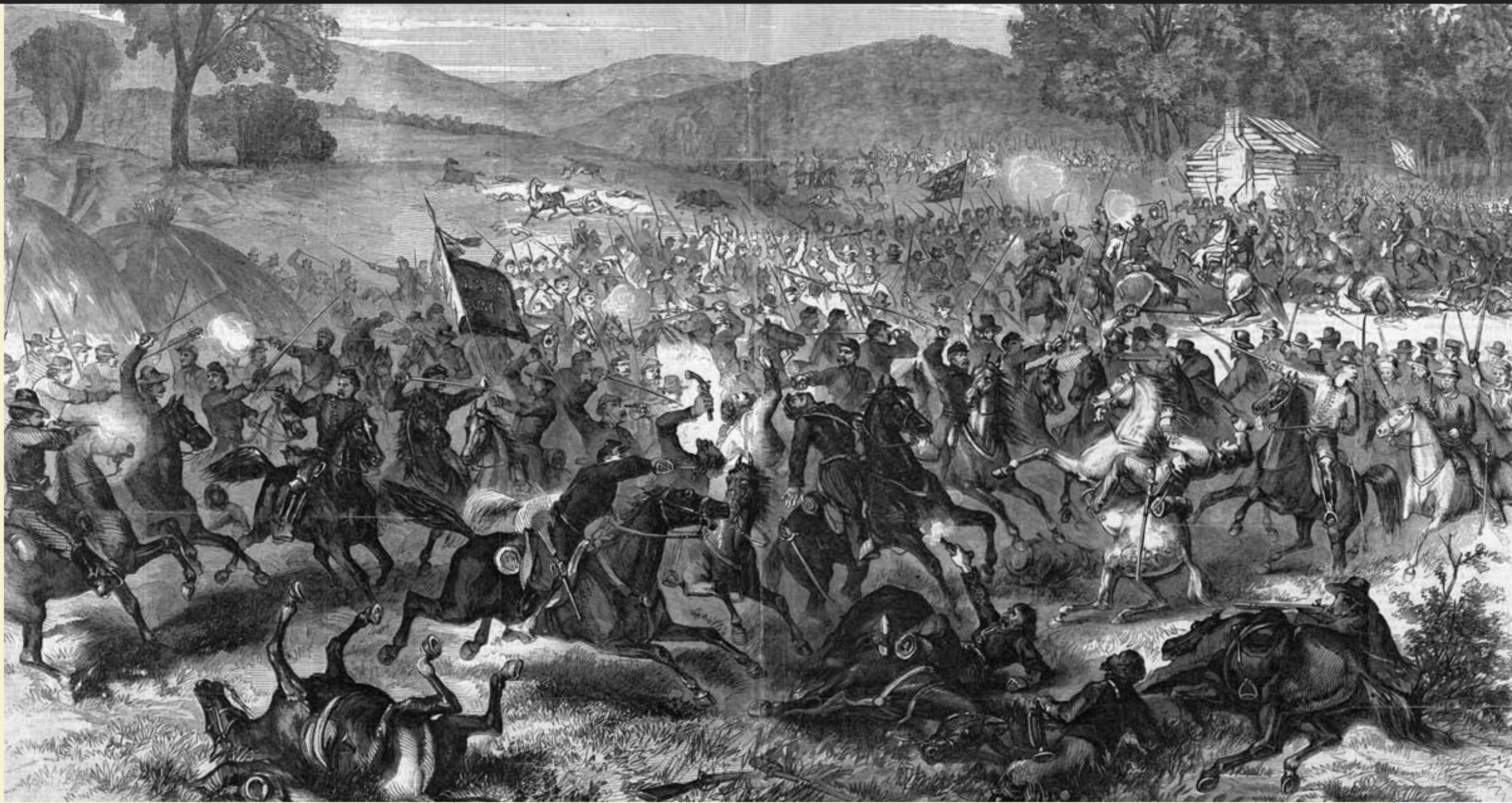
flank, but the battle seemed to be quickly getting away from him. Shoring up Witcher's skirmish line, he sent Brig. Gens. Wade Hampton and Fitzhugh Lee into the fray. The southern horsemen, in columns of four, galloped across the open field below Rummel's farm and crashed into Custer's right flank. Peppered by fire from Witcher's newly replenished battalion, the 5th Michigan fell back in disarray toward their artillery. Gregg, watching the battle unfold, ordered the 7th Michigan, which had been standing in reserve, to mount a counterattack. Custer, reacting swiftly for a neophyte brigade commander, drew his sword, reared up in his saddle, and cried, "Come on, you Wolverines!"

Spearheaded by 21-year-old regimental commander Colonel William D. Mann, the 7th Michigan troops directed a relentless pistol fire at the Confederates, who had taken cover behind a low post-and-rail fence. The retreating members of the 5th Michigan stopped dead in their tracks to watch the attack. The two sides came together with a sound like falling timber. "So violent was the collision," reported Captain William E. Miller of the 3rd Pennsylvania, "that many horses were turned end over end and crushed their riders beneath them." Miller himself reported receiving "a slight scratch"—actually a bullet through his arm. The fence broke up the charging Union column "into jelly, mixing us up like a mass of pulp." The two sides flailed at each other with sabers and blasted away with pistols and carbines. It was literally hand-to-hand combat. When farmer Rummel returned to his home after the battle, he found two dead men lying in the lane amid 30 dead horses, their stiffened fingers still embedded in each other's lifeless throats.

Thinking quickly, some of the Michiganders leaped off their horses and leveled a piece of the fence, allowing the rest of their mounted comrades to pour through. "Kill all you can and do your best for each other," Mann urged. Custer led the 7th Michigan forward, aiming at a Rebel battery posted just below the Rummel farm. "At them we went, every man for himself," boasted coincidentally named Captain George Armstrong. The 7th Michigan, from the Grand Rapids area, was the least experienced regiment in Custer's brigade; most of the men had seen only patrol duty since arriving at the front two months earlier. They soon got the worst of it with the more battle-savvy Confederates, who clung to the necks of their horses like Apache Indians and fired at them from below with their pistols. Everyone was screaming like banshees. Sabers thudded into skulls with the sickening sound of a stick bursting a ripe watermelon. The fight, "desperate but unequal," according to Mann, lasted for 10 minutes—it seemed longer to those in the midst of it—with the 7th Michigan losing more than 100 men in the fray. Private Allan Price of the 6th Michigan,



BELOW: The Confederate cavalry held the high ground at Cress's Ridge overlooking the York Turnpike, but quick-moving Union cavalry blocked the roads back to Gettysburg. OPPOSITE: Union Brigadier General John Buford fought a follow-up battle with Stuart's cavalry at Boonsboro, five days after Gettysburg. From Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper.



Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection

observing the contest, recalled later: “The 7th Michigan made a charge and got all cut to pieces. It was the first charge they ever made and it was awful work.”

Custer disagreed. “I challenge the annals of warfare to produce a more brilliant or successful charge of cavalry,” he wrote later. Those who had been in the charge agreed wholeheartedly with that assessment. “This is the most furious dragoon fight I ever saw or engaged in,” Dexter M. Macomber of the 6th Michigan noted in his diary. A comrade in the same unit, Andrew Newton Buck, called it “the hardest battle of the war. Cavalry never did such fighting before in America.” Edward Corselius of the 5th Michigan combined the sentiments. “Such fighting I never saw before,” he wrote to his mother. “It is an honor to belong to Mich[igan] Cavalry.”

At the time, carried away by excitement, Custer dashed forward into the open field beyond the fence, only to look back in horror and see the rest of the regiment still bogged down behind him. Hastily ordering the bugler to sound retreat, Custer had his men wheel about just as two fresh Confederate regiments, the 1st North Carolina and the Jeff Davis Legion, rode down to meet them. Fitzhugh Lee’s vaunted 1st Virginia joined the charge. Custer was suddenly in danger of being cut off. “We must get back behind the guns,” he rather needlessly advised Captain Armstrong. The two rode for their lives. Colonel McIntosh arrived on the scene, exhorting the retreating soldiers to hold their positions. “For God’s sake, men, if you are ever going to stand, stand now, for you are on your own free soil!” he shouted. Colonel Russell A. Alger, 5th Michigan commander and later secretary of war under President William McKinley, organized a volley into the enemy’s onrushing flank. The southerners recoiled and withdrew to the comparative safety of Cress’s Ridge.

Watching from the crest, Stuart worried that his men’s inherent aggressiveness had carried them too far. “The charge being very much prolonged, their horses, already jaded by hard marching, failed under it,” he reported later. “Their movement was too rapid to be stopped by couriers, and the enemy perceiving it, were turning upon them with fresh horses.” Brigade commander Wade Hampton of South Carolina shared Stuart’s concern. Grabbing his personal colors, Hampton spurred his enormous war horse, Butler, down the ridge toward his imperiled troopers, shouting for them to fall back. Major T.J. Barker, Hampton’s adjutant, saw the colors waving through the smoke and mistakenly believed that he had signaled an all-out advance. Barker gathered up the 1st and 2nd South Carolina Regiments, along with Phillips Legion, and followed Hampton into the maelstrom. Looking back over his shoulder, Hampton was shocked to see the entire brigade dashing after him. Nevertheless, his own blood was up. “Charge them, my brave boys, charge them!” he cried.

The Union troopers watched the advance in open-mouthed wonder. Captain Miller of the 3rd Pennsylvania recorded the scene for posterity in awestruck terms: “A grander spectacle than their advances has rarely been beheld,” he wrote. “They marched with well-aligned fronts and steady reins. Their polished saber-blades dazzled in the sun. All eyes turned upon them. Shell and shrapnel met the dancing Confederates

and tore through their ranks. Closing the gaps as though nothing had happened, on they came. As they drew nearer, canister was substituted by our artillerymen for shell, and horse after horse staggered and fell. Still they came on." Southern officers sought to maintain order amid the chaos. "Keep to your sabers, men, keep to your sabers," they urged.

The Union gunners opened on the approaching horsemen, trying to slow them down. Horses and men fell, head over heels, but the mass of Confederate riders kept advancing. There were simply too many of them to stop. The artillerymen rammed double shots of canister—one-inch steel balls packed tightly in cylinders—into their guns and fired point-blank at their attackers. Custer's old West Point comrade Alexander Pennington directed a "dreadful havoc" of shells into the Confederate ranks. "On came the Rebel cavalry, yelling like demons, right toward the battery we were supporting, sweeping everything before them," Union cavalryman George Kidd remembered.

Gregg, taking personal charge of the battle, ordered a countercharge. Custer was quick to oblige. Riding up to his only uncommitted regiment, the 1st Michigan, he approached its commander, Colonel Charles H. Town. Speaking with elaborate formality, perhaps as a way of keeping his own nerves steady, Custer said, "Colonel Town, I shall have to ask you to charge, and I want to go in with you." Town, who was dying of tuberculosis, had to be strapped into his saddle before the battle. Some said he was courting a soldier's death on the battlefield to avoid wasting away in a consumptive's bed. Whatever his motivation, he obeyed immediately and got the regiment moving. It was now 3 pm.

Private Cassius Norton of Company M described the ensuing charge. "We went out with a trot in columns of squadrons," he recalled. "At the time the command 'charge' was given we bounded from a trot into a gallop, the hill and its sides towards us crowded with screaming advancing rebels headed for us, 3 or 4 columns of them, while beyond our right was the shattered 7th rallying as best they could here and there." "Come on, you Wolverines!" Custer shouted again, vaulting from his stumbling charger, Roanoke, onto a nearby riderless horse and swiping at an oncoming Rebel with his saber.

Where a narrow lane crossed the farmland, the fighting peaked in intensity. Hampton, a strapping 6 feet, 2 inches tall, towered over the battlefield. Several Union troopers, attracted by Hampton's massive figure and the glinting gold stars on his collar, raced to surround him. Hampton unhorsed one attacker with his sword, unloading his revolver at the others. Hemmed in against a fence, the general faced sure capture or death. Two Mississippians from the Jeff Davis Legion rode to his rescue but were sabered off their horses by the milling Federals. Other swords sliced open Hampton's forehead and ripped through his uniform. With all his fast-ebbing strength, Hampton raised his heavy sword and brought it down on an attacker's head, splitting him open from crown to chin. Literally soaked in blood, the general reeled in the saddle while wary Federal troopers circled him, looking for an opening to finish him off.

> "IT WAS ABOUT AS BLOODY AND HOT AN AFFAIR AS ANY WE HAD YET ENCOUNTERED," BLACKFORD WROTE. "THE CAVALRY OF THE ENEMY WERE STEADILY IMPROVING, AND IT WAS ALL WE COULD DO SOMETIMES TO MANAGE THEM."

At the critical moment, Sergeant Nat Price of the 1st North Carolina galloped into the melee, shooting down one Yank who was aiming a killing blow at Hampton's head. Other Confederates dashed to the general's aid as well. "General, they are too many for us!" Price cried. "For God's sake, leap your horse over the fence; I'll die before they have you!" Although stunned by the near-fatal blows, Hampton leaped the fence to safety. In midair, a piece of shrapnel smashed into his side, almost unhorsing him, but the lifelong horseman kept to the saddle and dashed up Cress's Ridge to safety, relinquishing command to Colonel Laurence Baker of the 1st North Carolina as he was helped from the saddle. It would be several months before Hampton could return to active service.

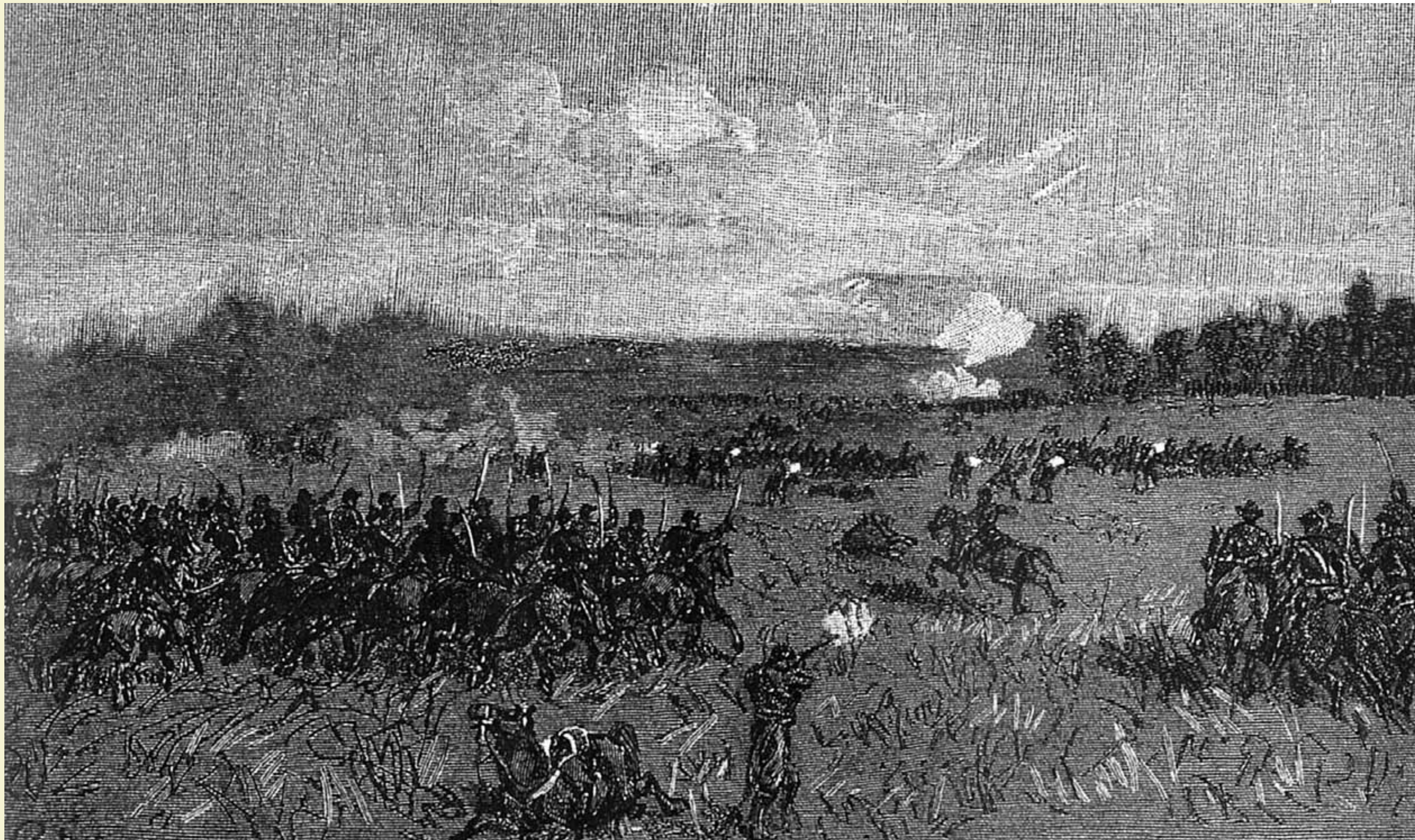
Intense personal combat was taking place all over the battlefield. Captain Walter Newhall of the 3rd Pennsylvania spurred his mount toward a flag-bearer from Hampton's brigade. Reaching out to seize the standard, Newhall was smashed in the face by the flagstaff, opening a hideous wound in his jaw. (He would survive the war and become a longtime aide to General Phil Sheridan in the Indian wars out West.) Of the 22 men Newhall led onto the field that day, 18 were killed or wounded.

Small groups of Federals continued pecking away at the Rebel flanks. One battalion, led by Captain Miller of the 3rd Pennsylvania, managed to penetrate the gray ranks and get into their rear, sowing more confusion in an already out-of-control situation. With the main thrust of the attack now blunted and more and more Union riders appearing on their flanks and in their rear, the Confederates broke off the fight and galloped back toward Cress's Ridge. Miller's men pursued them as far as Rummel's farm, where one Union trooper had the top of his scalp sliced off as quickly and easily by a southern swordsman as if he had been scalped by an

Indian, leaving him, said Miller, “as neatly tonsured as a priest.” For his leadership, Miller would later be awarded the Medal of Honor—making him the only Union soldier to win the nation’s highest honor that day at Gettysburg.

Stuart withdrew his forces from the ridge at sunset and reformed along the York Turnpike. Although inflicting 254 casualties—some 219 in Custer’s brigade alone—to 181 of their own, Stuart’s riders had failed to reach the Union rear. It would not have made any difference if they had; Pickett’s Charge had failed and the entire Confederate Army was in retreat. The Battle of Gettysburg was lost. Almost immediately, a second battle began—this time in the court of public opinion. Stuart was pilloried unmercifully for his absence prior to the start of the battle, and many southerners (including, by implication, Robert E. Lee) blamed Stuart for the disastrous defeat. Said a well-connected journalist in the *Mobile Daily Advertiser*: “His [Stuart’s] vanity seems to have controlled his actions, and the cavalry was used frequently to gratify his personal pride and to the detriment of the service. At the Battle of Gettysburg, he was not to be found, and Gen. Lee could not get enough cavalry together to carry out his plans.”

Stuart’s supporters leaped to his defense. “It was not the want of cavalry that General Lee bewailed, for he had enough of it had it been properly used,” wrote Stuart’s adjutant, Major Henry McClellan. “It was the absence of Stuart himself that he felt so keenly.” John S. Mosby, the scout whose initially misleading report had contributed much to Stuart’s decision to continue his raid, blamed Brig. Gen. Beverly Robertson for not moving quickly enough to support Lee’s infantry. “The only thing I blame Stuart for was not having him [Robertson] shot,” wrote Mosby. The debate raged on for years after the war, and most historians have apportioned some of the blame to Stuart for the Confederate defeat at Gettysburg, while conceding that he had been given just enough autonomy by Lee to absolve him from any official misconduct. Stuart aide William Blackford probably best summed up the cavalry battle at Rummel’s farm. “It was about as bloody and hot an affair as any we had yet encountered,” Blackford wrote. “The cavalry of the enemy were steadily improving, and it was all we could do sometimes to manage them.” In the rolling farmland east of Gettysburg, on the third day of the largest battle of the Civil War, they had scarcely managed them at all. □



Battlefield artist Alfred Waud sketched the charge of the 1st Virginia Cavalry and the countercharge by the 1st Michigan in the rolling Pennsylvania farmland.

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a tale of 2 generals

Retired U.S. Army General Edward J. Stackpole trained his experienced eyes on Confederate General Robert E. Lee's performance at the Battle of Chancellorsville. He found much to admire in the Rebel commander.

BY JON DIAMOND

Historians began writing about the Civil War even before it had become history. Battlefield accounts by traveling correspondents were a staple of Northern and Southern newspapers during the war, and a flood of memoirs, letters, official records, and unit histories followed in the decades after the war. Novelists, short story writers, and poets such as John W. De Forest, Ambrose Bierce, and Sidney Lanier, who had served in the war, and the brilliant 24-year-old prodigy Stephen Crane, who was not even born until six years after the Civil War ended, added their voices to the mix. In the ensuing century and a half, American libraries have filled countless shelves with books devoted to the most pivotal event in the nation's history.

Inevitably, many of those books have faded from view, while others have stood the test of time to become acknowledged classics of Civil War history. Among the latter

This fanciful Kurz & Allison print shows Stonewall Jackson being fatally wounded at Chancellorsville on May 2, 1863, while the battle rages in the background. Actually, he was shot later that night while reconnoitering the now-quiet battlefield.

is retired U.S. Army General Edward J. Stackpole's 1958 study, *Chancellorsville: Lee's Greatest Battle*. Published by his family-owned company, Stackpole Books, just prior to the Civil War centennial, Stackpole's meticulous and incisive study was instantly successful, both critically and popularly. Considered by many to be Stackpole's greatest contribution to Civil War literature, the work remains a favorite of Civil War enthusiasts and a textbook example of how to think and write about the war.

Stackpole was born in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, in 1894 and graduated from Yale University in 1915. During World War I he served as a company commander of the 28th "Keystone" Division, 110th Infantry, in France in 1918 and was wounded three times. The author's dedication in *Chancellorsville* reads: "To the men of my Company M, 110th Infantry, 28th Division, American Expeditionary Forces, World War I, of Latrobe, Pennsylvania, who fought and died on the battlefields of France." Stackpole recovered from his wounds at Walter Reed Army Hospital and reentered the National Guard as commanding officer of the 104th Cavalry. He later commanded the 52nd Cavalry Brigade and ultimately the 22nd Cavalry Division.

In 1940, at his own request, Stackpole took a reduction in rank to return to active duty, heading a brigade during World War II before being sent to Panama to serve as commanding general of the Canal Zone. In 1943, he returned stateside to serve as

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chairman of the War Department Manpower Board Office for General George C. Marshall. After the war, Stackpole commanded the 28th Division. He retired as commander of the Pennsylvania National Guard in 1947 following his reorganization of the division in 1946. His military honors included the Distinguished Service Cross, the Purple Heart with two clusters, Legion of Merit, and the Pennsylvania Distinguished Service Medal, in addition to campaign ribbons for service in the two world wars.

Stackpole Books had its origins in the *Evening Telegraph,* a Harrisburg newspaper dating back to the early 19th century. In 1901, E.J. Stackpole, Sr., the general's father, acquired controlling interest in the Telegraph Press. In 1930, the National Service Publishing Company of Washington, D.C., which had been established in 1921, was acquired by the Telegraph Press. Under Stackpole's direction, it was renamed Military Service Publishing Company and began publishing military textbooks. In that same year Stackpole and his brother, Albert, founded Stackpole Sons, which published books on a variety of subjects, both fiction and nonfiction. During World War II, it produced a popular series of paperbacks for GIs to read in the foxholes. Both Stackpole Sons and Military Service Publishing Company were subsidiary divisions of the Telegraph Press organization. In the 1950s, Stackpole Sons continued its strong emphasis on nonfiction books, especially historical works and outdoor titles. In 1959, Stackpole Sons and Military Service Publishing Company merged into Stackpole Books.

In time, General Stackpole would author five books on the Civil War, receiving an honorary degree from Gettysburg College in 1961 for his historical contributions. When his grandson, M. David Detweiler, was asked what had initially stimulated Stackpole's interest in the Civil War, he answered: "The General was searching for a book on the Battle of Gettysburg that was not a highly-detailed military text but rather a very readable book in a popular style. When he could not find one, his son-in-law, Meade Detweiler III, suggested that the General write it himself and, thus, began his prolific output of Civil War books." Stackpole's first book, *They Met at Gettysburg,* was published in 1956. *Drama on the Rappahannock: The Fredericksburg Campaign* appeared a year later.

In 1958, the general completed his book on Confederate General Robert E. Lee's Chancellorsville campaign. He began by noting that in early 1863 Lee faced a dilemma. As Stackpole wrote: "While the Union defeat at Fredericksburg was a clearcut military success for the Confederacy, it

RIGHT: First edition copy of Stackpole's 1958 book on Chancellorsville. BELOW: Battle artist Edwin Forbes sketched Union artillery firing into the oncoming Confederates at Chancellorsville on May 1.

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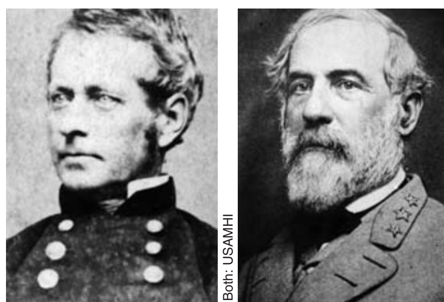
was in a sense just as barren a victory as Chancellorsville would prove to be, for Lee's army was unable to exploit either success and could ill afford the cumulative loss of manpower suffered in the two great battles." It was this manpower issue that would force Lee to act with such offensive spirit, repeatedly dividing his forces to deal blows to the overwhelming size of the Army of the Potomac, under Maj. Gen. Joseph Hooker. Lee's defensive line extended for more than 25 miles, Stackpole noted, "and so [he] disposed his troops [so] that he could quickly concentrate a sufficient number anywhere along the line to seal off or drive back any attack" by Hooker. Part of this manpower deficiency stemmed from Lt. Gen. James Longstreet, Lee's I Corps commander, being sent in mid-March to forage for supplies around Suffolk. Accompanying him were the 13,000 troops in the divisions of Maj. Gens. John Bell Hood and George Pickett.

According to the author, "Lee's hard-hitting divisions had learned well the lesson of flexibility. The capabilities of his corps and division commanders were such that

Stackpole Books



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ABOVE: General Edwin Stackpole photographed during Army maneuvers in 1942. He also served in World War I. BELOW, LEFT TO RIGHT: Maj. Gen. Joseph Hooker; Gen. Robert E. Lee.

Lee was better able than the Federals to utilize to advantage the principle of mass, which simply means the capability to bring to bear at the right place, at the right time, the number of divisions necessary to accomplish the mission." The 20th-century general regarded Lee with a measure of awe: "The more one studies Robert E. Lee's character and leadership qualities, the greater does his stature grow. Many thoughtful, historically minded persons have rightly appraised him as the most eminent of American military commanders, collaterally according him a place in the roster of great captains of all time." Stackpole placed a premium on Lee's superior intellect as well: "This was clearly demonstrated in all his planning, in his decisions, and above all in his analysis of military intelligence. He was especially adept in divining the most probable line of action of his opponents and in devising countermoves best calculated to nullify those actions."

As a combat infantry officer and division commander himself, Stackpole chose to write about the May 1863 Virginia battle in which the overwhelmingly outnumbered Lee audaciously continued to divide his forces as "tactical equalizers" to defeat the larger Union Army of the Potomac under Hooker. Stackpole carefully discerned the situational nuances between Lee and Hooker: "Lee had elected to remain on the tactical defensive for the time being to see what his new opponent might be planning. If by that date [first of May] Hooker had not put his army in motion or given a clear indication of his intentions, Lee would take the offensive himself to bring matters to a head." Lee's thinking centered on the military maxim that when one is too weak to defend, attack instead. Hooker incorrectly thought that Lee would remain on the defensive or withdraw when attacked. Instead, said Stackpole, Lee "had an uncanny knack, which many regarded as intuition, of anticipating just about how his opponents would react under varying conditions."

Stackpole sketched the battle's start as it was on April 29: "Hooker's army had more than a two to one advantage in numbers. [Lee's] own cavalry had less than half its normal strength, while an entire corps of enemy cavalry, 10,000 strong and more aggressive than usual, was cutting in on the rear. His opponent had just sprung a surprise on him by a concealed march of three army corps in a wide swing, miles to the west of the fords where Lee had anticipated a crossing. This enemy was now on his left rear while another large troop concentration was threatening Fredericksburg." On April 30, Hooker arrived at the Chancellor House and set up camp. In Fredericksburg, Lee tried to determine if the greater threat lay on his left flank with Hooker or with Maj. Gen. John Sedgwick's VI Corps, Federal troops stationed opposite him at the site of his previous December 1862 victory on the heights above Fredericksburg. Lee correctly determined his greatest peril was to the west with Hooker. The stage was set for Lee's

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ABOVE: An exultant Lee rides past his equally happy troops as they continue the rout of Union forces at Chancellorsville. It was Lee's high-water mark as a Civil War commander. OPPOSITE: Stonewall Jackson's audacious flank march from below Fredericksburg to Wilderness Tavern, where his II Corps surprised and routed Maj. Gen. Oliver O. Howard's XI Corps.

military masterpiece.

On May 1, the first day of the battle, Lee sent word to Confederate President Jefferson Davis: "Their intention is to turn our left, and probably our rear. Our condition favors their operations." Presciently, on April 29, in the first of his strategic troop partitions to confront Hooker's movements, Lee had ordered Maj. Gen. Richard H. Anderson to move west from north of Fredericksburg toward Chancellorsville. This was to block any Federal movement east toward Fredericksburg, which would threaten Lee's rear and perhaps create a path for Hooker to advance on Richmond. Anderson's troops arrived at dawn on April 30 and spent the rest of the day digging trenches and throwing up breastworks. Also on April 30, Lee ordered Maj. Gen. Lafayette McLaws down from Fredericksburg to support Anderson.

Lee's other adjustment was to get Maj. Gen. James Ewell Brown "Jeb" Stuart's two cavalry brigades to rejoin him with the main Confederate Army. Stuart had sent a message to Lee reporting that three Federal corps had crossed the Rapidan River and were heading southeast to get at Lee's rear. Stackpole characterized Lee at this moment: "No more time was to be lost. Lee's decision was to attack, and the orders to put his army into position were quickly made ready. Lee's decision was a courageous one, in the Lee tradition. Who but Robert E. Lee would have the strategic insight and moral courage to assume the heavy risk of further dividing his forces? On the other hand, who but he had such perfect confidence in his officers and men and such calm assurance that with God's blessing all would be well?"

At dawn on May 1, Lee and Lt. Gen. Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson surveyed the Federals across the river from Fredericksburg. Lee noted that the enemy was barely active and predicted to Jackson that the Union attack would come from Chancellorsville. Lee was a gambler, and he took a bold risk to attack in his numerically inferior state. He decided to leave behind a token force under Maj. Gen. Jubal A. Early to cover Sedgwick at Fredericksburg and ordered Jackson to take his remaining divisions to strike Hooker at Chancellorsville.

By 11 AM, Jackson was in motion, quick-marching his 31,000 troops westward to meet Hooker's more numerous divisions, which were moving from Chancellorsville toward Fredericksburg. Fighting soon commenced on the Orange Turnpike, eventually forcing Hooker's troops back toward Chancellorsville. This unexpected Confederate resistance badly unnerved the Union leader. Hooker's strategy called for a Confederate retreat—yet Lee was attacking. At that moment, Hooker lost the strategic initiative and ordered all units to withdraw from the

attack and resume their original positions. Thus, on the first day of the battle, Lee had already taken charge of the ebb and flow of the conflict. As Stackpole wrote bluntly, "Hooker lost his nerve!"

After the fighting of May 1 subsided, Jackson proposed a bold plan to Lee based on Stuart's reconnaissance. Essentially, the Union army's right flank was adjacent to heavy woods, with only a few pickets posted. Stackpole wrote: "Lee and Jackson exchanged glances. It was good news that Stuart brought, and the case for a flank maneuver became a determination in the minds of the two leaders." Jackson would take almost his entire II Corps (28,000 troops) before dawn the next day on a westerly march and then attack eastward against the unprotected Union right flank (Maj. Gen. Oliver O. Howard's XI Corps). This would constitute Lee's third partition of his army in the face of the enemy. Lee would be left with only Anderson's and McLaws's divisions facing the Union army and keeping it in check. With these remnant divisions, Lee would feign an attack, thereby enabling Jackson to steal a march on Hooker. At the same time, Lee admonished his divisional commanders to attack if a favorable opportunity presented itself. Even when Lee was conducting a holding action, his mind never wandered far from the offensive if he could inflict greater harm on the enemy.

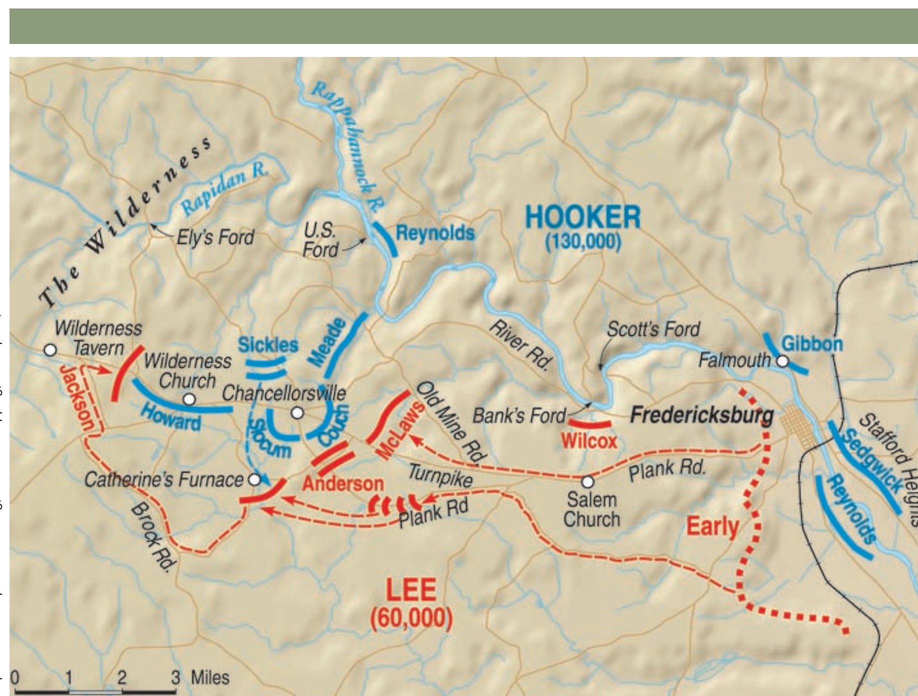
The thick woods in the Virginia Wilderness concealed many paths and rural roads known only to locals. The Brock Road met the Orange Turnpike just east of the Wilderness Tavern, a little more than a mile west of Howard's open right flank. The object of Jackson's march was to strike Hooker's rear. Lee envisioned that by the nightfall of May 2, his Army of Northern Virginia would either have broken the Union Army's right flank, or that he would be forced to withdraw toward the railroads to cover Richmond. At 4 AM on May 2, Jackson commenced what Stackpole referred to as "Jackson's Historic Flank March" around Hooker's army to strike the flank of Howard's XI Corps.

At 2:30 PM, the leading elements of Jackson's force, under Brig. Gen. Robert Rodes, formed up north of the Orange Turnpike just to the west of Howard's corps. Despite warnings from Hooker to strengthen his flank and reports from his pickets of suspicious Confederate activity, Howard did not create any meaningful defenses, trusting the dense woods to provide ample protection for his corps. With sunset at it back, Jackson's II Corps attacked at roughly 5 PM, turning the entire Federal flank. Elements of Howard's corps broke under the Confederate onslaught and began a headlong retreat. After the initial attack, the Confederates reformed to mount a night attack on Hooker's Federal line, which Jackson's assault had threatened to collapse. However, Hooker's easternmost units at Chancellor House formed a defensive line by 8 PM and checked any further extent of the Confederate high tide.

As darkness and fog cloaked the battlefield, Jackson and his staff were reconnoitering at 9:15. Confederate troops of a North Carolina regiment mistakenly identified Jackson's contingent as Union cavalry and fired on it, mortally wounding the great Stonewall. Lee's II Corps commander was struck in the left lower and upper arm as well as his right hand, and although his wounds were healing, he died from pneumonia a week later. A great turning movement against phenomenal odds was marred by the loss of Jackson. Lee turned over II Corps command to Maj. Gen. A.P. Hill, who likewise was wounded. Stuart temporarily took command of II Corps. Stackpole praised Lee's strategic vision and

"The sun of his destiny was at its zenith. All that he earned by a life of self-control, all that he had received in inheritance from pioneer forebears, all that he had merited by study, by diligence, and by daring, was crowned in that moment."

—Edward J. Stackpole



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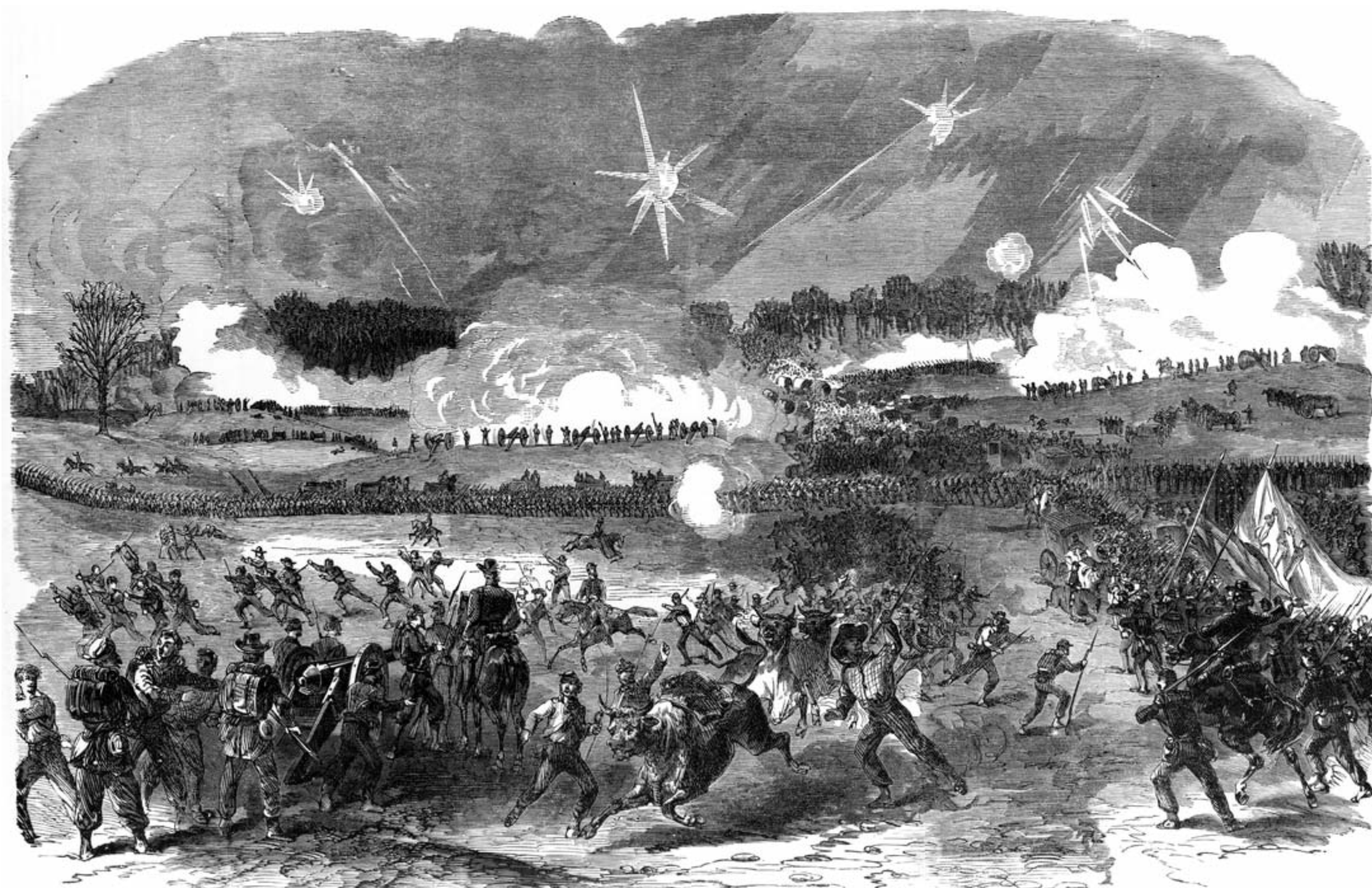
moral courage in planning "one of the great flank marches of military history. The specific blueprint and the execution were entrusted to Stonewall Jackson."

In the predawn hours of May 3, Lee ordered Stuart to push Hooker's line farther back and then unite to form a continuous front against the Army of the Potomac. The rationale for this was that during the night of May 2, Hooker's army had reformed and now separated Lee from Stuart with an imposing obstacle of manpower. At dawn, Stuart ordered some of his brigades forward in the direction of a "natural artillery park" called Hazel Grove. Contemporaneous with Stuart's move, Hooker visited Maj. Gen. Daniel Sickles, whose troops thrust out into a salient controlling Hazel Grove, and ordered him to abandon this site. As Sickles withdrew, Stuart's troops, under Brig. Gen. James J. Archer, advanced into Hazel Grove and took the position from Sickles's rear guard of Pennsylvania infantry.

This was a tactical breakthrough for Lee since his artillery commander, Colonel E. Porter Alexander, had decided earlier that Hazel Grove was the "ideal artillery park to slam round after round into Hooker's line" as well as against the Federal artillery park on Fairview Knoll. Alexander's possession of Hazel Grove enabled him to effect counter-battery fire against the Union guns on Fairview Knoll and, as the struggle progressed, force Hooker to abandon the Chancellorsville crossroads and ultimately Fairview Knoll. At 9:15 AM, as Hooker was leaning against a column of the Chancellor House, an artillery shell hit the house and so disoriented the Army of the Potomac's commander that he was unable, at a decisive point in the day's conflict, to function. The first thing Hooker did after regaining his lucidity was to ride off in search of a new headquarters.

It was now time for Lee's troops under Anderson and McLaws to enter the fray, pressing the Union line from the south and thereby forcing the Federals to bend back to back with other units. The only direction for the Union troops to withdraw was northerly, and it was becoming apparent that Hooker's initial position at Chancellorsville was becoming untenable. As Stackpole recounted: "By ten o'clock the field surrounding the Chancellor House had been vacated by the Federals, all of whom had retired in fairly good order to the north. Lee rode up to the ruined and still fiercely burning house. His weary, powder-blackened men suddenly awoke to a realization of the magnitude of their triumph and began to cheer for their commanding general." Stackpole added his own voice to those cheers: "The sun of his destiny was at its zenith. All that he earned by a life of self-control, all that he had received in inheritance from pioneer forebears, all that he had merited by study, by

BELOW: Even the pack animals bolt in fright after Jackson's corps slammed into the XI Corps' flank at Chancellorsville. Only the encroaching darkness slowed the Confederate advance. OPPOSITE: Confederate dead behind the famous stone wall at Marye's Heights above Fredericksburg, Va.



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diligence, and by daring, was crowned into that moment."

To the east, Sedgwick outnumbered Early's Confederates by a three to one margin. On May 2, Hooker exhorted Sedgwick to advance past Fredericksburg and attack Lee's rear. Finally, one day later, Sedgwick's forces began their attack against Brig. Gen. William Barksdale's brigade of Mississippians, an attack Stackpole termed the Second Battle of Fredericksburg. After two unsuccessful attempts to dislodge the Confederates, entrenched behind a stone wall, a third charge succeeded in opening the road to Chancellorsville and Lee's rear. Brig. Gen. Cadmus M. Wilcox's brigade of Anderson's division raced back east to assist Barksdale at Fredericksburg; however, it was too late.

National Archives

Knowing that reinforcements from Chancellorsville would reach him if he could delay the Union advance, Wilcox hastily erected field works at Salem Church. As Wilcox prepared to meet Sedgwick's attacking force, Confederate reinforcements from McLaws's and Anderson's divisions, under Lee's direct command, arrived, leaving Stuart back in command of a tiny force to contain Hooker. This constituted Lee's fourth strategic partition of the Army of Northern Virginia in the face of the numerically superior Army of the Potomac. The men of Anderson's and McLaws's divisions held against Sedgwick, enabling Lee to win the Battle of Salem Church. Lee now planned to attack Sedgwick, but McLaws and Early were unable to orchestrate a concentrated attack.

The next day, Early recaptured Marye's Heights above Fredericksburg to cut off Sedgwick's possible retreat to Fredericksburg. Lee ordered Early to strike Sedgwick's left and rear and attempt again to link up with McLaws. Lee arrived at noon with the remainder of Anderson's division, taking up positions between McLaws at Salem Church and Early back in Fredericksburg. Lee was eager to engage Sedgwick and deal his troops a mortal blow. As Stackpole stated, "Once more Hooker's plan had backfired; instead of pocketing Lee between wings of the Union army, Sedgwick now found himself in a comparable position, with Confederate troops on his front and rear."

Again the Confederate forces under Lee could not execute an effective attack. Sedgwick's VI Corps recrossed the Rappahannock River, this time to the west of Fredericksburg. Hooker convened a council of his subordinates, and although some still wanted to attack the Confederates, Hooker wanted to retreat using the protection of Washington as his pretext. On May 5 and 6, Hooker recrossed the U.S. Ford of the Rappahannock River, ending the Chancellorsville campaign.

Abraham Lincoln was overwrought with the news of yet another defeat. "What will the country say?" he fumed. "Think of it, 130,000 magnificent soldiers cut to pieces by 60,000 half-starved ragamuffins!" The end of the 1863 campaign in the Wilderness of Virginia was the start of the Gettysburg campaign. Lee would wait for Longstreet to arrive from Suffolk, but he knew that he would have to invade the North in the summer of 1863 to compel Lincoln to abandon the war or, alternatively, to garner European recognition of Confederate sovereignty. Lee was already planning to threaten the Federal capital, Baltimore, and Harrisburg.

Stackpole's analysis of Lee's per formance at Chancellorsville drew on his own experience as a 20th-century general.

Stackpole praised Lee's performance fulsomely: "Lee was so vastly superior to Hooker in every category that he could afford to violate fundamental military principles at frequent intervals during the campaign, and did so, each time with impunity because of the marked deficiency of his opponent. It is considered a cardinal strategic sin for a commander to divide his forces in the presence of the enemy and thus risk the danger of being defeated in detail. Lee did just that not once, but four distinct and separate times."

Following his book on Chancellorsville, Stackpole published two other Civil War studies: *From Cedar Mountain to Antietam* (1959) and *Sheridan in the Shenandoah* (1961). And though by then he was long since retired from military life, Stackpole was always referred to by his rank. As historian Robert H. Fowler noted in his prologue to the third edition of Stackpole's *They Met at Gettysburg*, "To everyone except for a few of his contemporaries, he was 'the General.' It was unthinkable to call him anything else. He was a natural leader of men."

Stackpole died in 1967 and was buried in Harrisburg. The company that bears his name relocated in 1993 to Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, where it continues to publish a wide variety of works of military reference, the outdoors, general history, crafts, and regional travel. Chancellorsville, it could be said, was all those things. □

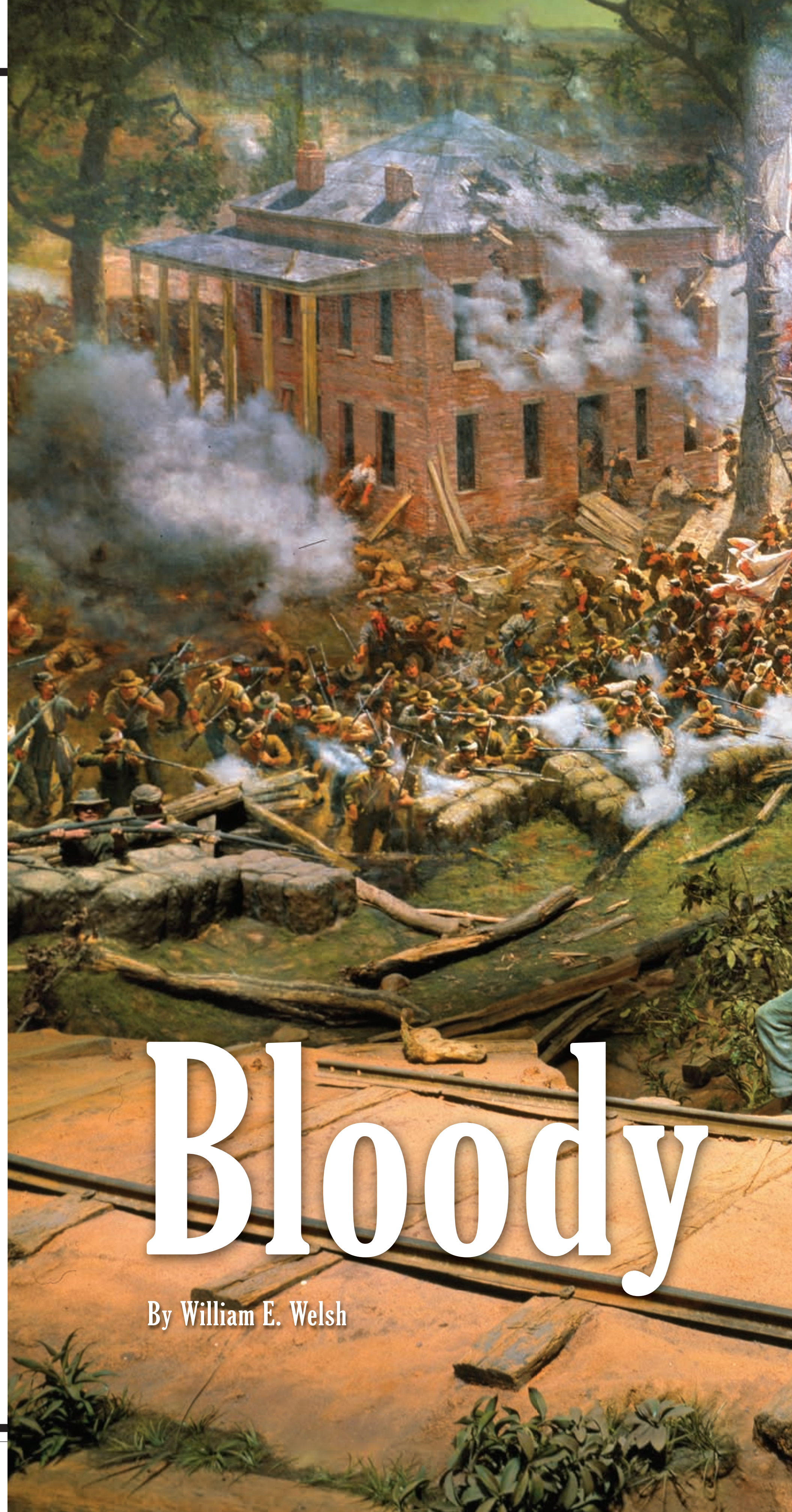
The author wishes to thank M. David Detweiler, grandson of General Stackpole and President/CEO of Stackpole, Inc. in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, for providing insight into his grandfather's military and literary careers.

When John Bell Hood took over command of the Confederate forces around Atlanta, it was only a matter of time before he attacked. That was just what William Tecumseh Sherman wanted him to do.

The guide shook uncontrollably when the gray-clad general pointed his pistol at him in the backwoods of central Georgia on the evening of July 21, 1864. Disgusted with mill worker Case Turner's various explanations and convinced that the guide was deliberately leading them astray, Maj. Gen. William H.T. Walker threatened to shoot him on the spot. A member of Walker's staff, Major Joseph Cumming, intervened on the guide's behalf, and Walker reluctantly lowered his pistol. The long, gray column that Turner was leading through the undergrowth on the fringe of Mrs. Terry's millpond three miles east of Atlanta once again lurched forward in search of the enemy, already in place less than a mile to the north.

Walker's division, in Lt. Gen. William "Old Reliable" Hardee's Confederate corps in the Army of Tennessee, had embarked on an exhausting, 12-mile flank march after receiving orders from General John Bell Hood, the new commander of the 60,000-man army. Instructed to launch a sledgehammer attack on the enemy at daybreak, Hardee had fallen nearly six hours behind schedule, at which point Walker pointed his gun at the guide's head.

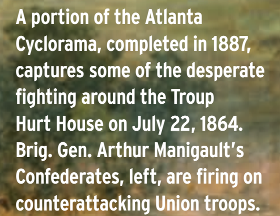
Walker's act reflected the combined sense of desperation and frustration



Bloody

By William E. Welsh

Library of Congress



A portion of the Atlanta Cyclorama, completed in 1887, captures some of the desperate fighting around the Troup Hurt House on July 22, 1864. Brig. Gen. Arthur Manigault's Confederates, left, are firing on counterattacking Union troops.

Repulse at BALD HILL

Library of Congress

facing the Confederate forces in the wake of the Union advance into northern Georgia that spring and summer. When the Federals moved into the Peach State, they were organized into three armies totaling 90,000 men under the command of Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman. His counterpart, General Joseph E. Johnston, had been assigned to lead the Army of Tennessee following the poor performance of General Braxton Bragg at Chattanooga in November 1863, when the Federals broke a two-month-long siege of the town and drove the Confederates across the Tennessee border into Georgia. Sherman was under orders from Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant, who had been elevated to general-in-chief of all Federal armies in March 1864, to smash Johnston's army and press into the enemy interior, wrecking anything—military or civilian—in his path.

By mid-May, Sherman had compelled Johnston to embark on a gradual retreat toward Atlanta. Johnston, a master of the prepared position, delayed Sherman as long as possible, but by the first week of July Sherman's troops were less than 10 miles from Atlanta. The only thing that stood between them and the key manufacturing center and rail hub was the Chattahoochee River. Confederate President Jefferson Davis implored Johnston to mount a counterattack, but Johnston failed to rise to the occasion. On July 9, he withdrew to the south bank of the Chattahoochee. A week later, Sherman had all his forces across the river. Johnston received a telegram on July 17 from Adjutant General Samuel Cooper informing him that he had been relieved of command and instructing him to turn over the army to Hood.

Upon hearing of Hood's appointment, Union Maj. Gens. James McPherson and John Schofield, who had graduated with Hood in the class of 1852 at West Point, warned Sherman that the new Confederate commander would strike them hard. "He'll hit you like hell, before you know it," Schofield told Sherman. That was precisely what Sherman wanted. He relished the idea of fighting the enemy on open ground rather than continuing to go up against prepared entrenchments.

The Confederate government wanted a fighter at the head of the Army of Tennessee, and that's exactly what it got. On July 20, Hood attacked Maj. Gen. George Thomas's Army of the Cumberland as it crossed Peachtree Creek. A three-hour delay in the attack gave Thomas just enough time to entrench and brace for the attack. Hood's first sortie against Sherman was easily repulsed by the battle-tested Federals.

Sherman shifted his focus to the opposite flank. Aware that the majority of Hood's troops were still in the vicinity of the creek, Sherman ordered McPherson to strike the Confederate right near the Georgia Railroad junction connecting Atlanta to Decatur. McPherson in turn sent Maj. Gen. Francis Blair's XVII Corps toward the city. Hood anticipated the move and shifted 2,000 cavalrymen under Maj. Gen. Joseph Wheeler to hold the low ridgeline east of the city until they could be relieved by infantry. The highest point in the ridgeline, at its southern end, was a barren knoll known as Bald Hill. Both sides spotted it and rushed toward it. Wheeler's troopers were the first to arrive, dismounting to fight on foot against Blair's troops.

At dusk on July 20, Hood ordered Hardee to send his reserve division, which was led by the hard-fighting, Irish-born Maj. Gen. Patrick Cleburne, to relieve Wheeler's troopers. Cleburne deployed his brigades in a line of battle stretching from the Georgia Railroad to Bald Hill. When Wheeler shifted his troops south the following morning, he noticed that Blair's left flank was in the air, and the cavalry commander sent word to Hood informing him that the Federal position opposite Bald Hill invited a flank attack.

The Federals struck first, attacking Bald Hill at mid-morning on July 21. The soldiers in Brig. Gen. James Smith's Texas brigade of Cleburne's division were in the process of entrenching on the knoll when they were overrun by Brig. Gen. Manning Force's brigade of Blair's XVII Corps. Smith's Texans hastily withdrew to a wooded tract west of Bald Hill. Hood drew up plans for Hardee's corps to make a long night march and come in behind McPherson's position the following morning. The 12-mile march called for Hardee's corps to march six miles south to Cobb's Mill, then turn north to march another six miles to the Widow Parker's house. From there, the corps was to fan out on an east-to-west axis and roll up Blair's corps. To fix McPherson's army in place and prevent him from reinforcing units on the southern part of the battlefield, Hood ordered Maj. Gen. Benjamin Cheatham's corps to attack east along the Georgia Railroad while the right wing of Hardee's corps attacked from the rear.

Hood's plan seemed reasonable enough, but he had overlooked the difficulty that Cleburne would face in withdrawing his men from their position. The fighting between Cleburne's division and Blair's men had continued after nightfall. Hardee ordered him to leave his skirmishers

behind to mask the withdrawal of the majority of his command.

Due to the delay in getting the men out of Atlanta, Hardee's march fell six hours behind schedule. By daybreak his lead column had only reached the halfway point, Cobb's Mill on the Fayetteville Road. Confederate officers persuaded the mill's owner and Turner, a mill worker, to help them find the most concealed and quickest route through the forest. After a brief rest, Hardee's corps continued north toward the Widow Parker's house. To give the four divisions more room to deploy, the corps split up at a fork in the road near the house. Cleburne turned left onto the Flat Shoals Road, while the divisions of Walker, Brig. Gen. George Maney, and Maj. Gen. William Bate continued to the Widow Parker's. It was after 11 AM before the three divisions finally reached the house. Without pausing to rest, the troops plunged into the woods toward the enemy position.

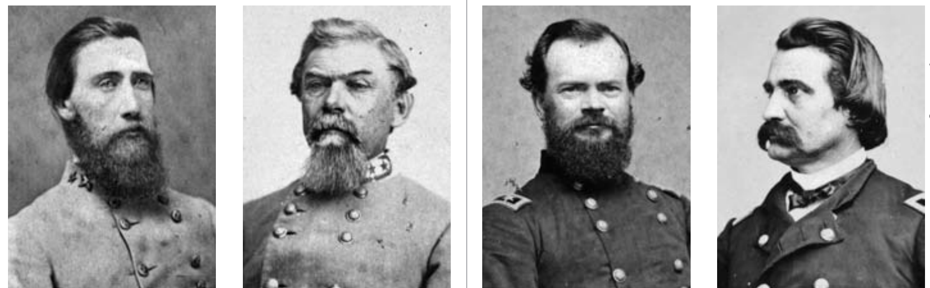
To reach their point of attack, Bate and Walker had to skirt Terry's millpond, which had been created by a dam across a portion of Sugar Creek. North of the millpond smaller streams fed into Sugar Creek. Without time to reconnoiter the enemy's position, Hardee didn't know exactly where the Federal units were located. As a result, he deployed his troops too soon. Many had to struggle for nearly a mile through the undergrowth to reach their jumping-off positions. "The whole country through which we passed was one vast densely-set thicket—a line of battle could not be seen 50 yards," wrote one Confederate officer.

The ordeal in the woods was difficult for all the Southern troops, but by noon, Hardee's four divisions had managed to array themselves to attack. Because of heavy straggling on the night march, only 9,000 of the 14,000 men in Hardee's corps were present. At noon, Maney's and Cleburne's troops emerged from the woods opposite XVII Corps' unanchored left flank at Bald Hill. However, Walker and Bate were surprised to find a Federal battle line confronting them; they had been led to expect no resistance. The Union troops belonged to Maj. Gen. Grenville Dodge's XVI Corps, which was en route across the rear of McPherson's army to a position on Blair's left flank. Federal scouts had warned Dodge that Confederates were advancing from the south, and he had deployed his men into line in anticipation of an attack. If Hardee had been able to launch his attack 30 minutes earlier, Bate and Walker would have been largely unopposed.

The four divisions of Hardee's corps were supposed to attack simultaneously, but the rough terrain disrupted that plan. Bate's division on Hardee's extreme right flank attacked first, striking Union Brig. Gen. Elliot Rice's brigade of Brig. Gen. Thomas Sweeny's division, which was supported by a battery of six 12-pounders from the 1st Missouri Light Artillery. Because of straggling, Bate had only about 1,200 muskets, one-third of his actual strength, available for the assault. The Union gunners poured a wall of lead into the enemy's well-dressed ranks. Only one regiment, the 5th Kentucky, managed to cross Sugar Creek and ascend the hill.

The 5th Kentucky squared off against the 2nd Iowa but was unable to push the Hawkeyes back. On the left, a Florida brigade had the unfortunate luck to run into a battery of the 14th Ohio Light Artillery. The battery of 3-inch ordnance guns was ably led by Lieutenant Seth Laird, who directed a steady fire at the Florida troops. Only a handful of Floridians were able to make it to within 50 yards of the battery before being forced back. After 30 minutes of fighting, the Confederates fell back to the protection of the woods.

The extensive forest on the southern end of the battlefield precluded Hardee from putting his own artillery into action. Most of the artillery was at the back of the column, and even when it was brought forward it proved impossible to get the limbered guns through the dense undergrowth.



All: Library of Congress

ABOVE, LEFT TO RIGHT: John Bell Hood, William Hardee, James McPherson, John Logan. BELOW: Federal pickets at Atlanta relax, perhaps too well, before the Confederate attack on July 22. OPPOSITE: Abandoned Confederate defensive works at Atlanta, photographed after their capture by Union forces.

Library of Congress

Sweeny's other brigade, led by Colonel August Mersy, deployed on the right of Rice's brigade. Next to it was Colonel John Morrill's brigade. Because of his position between the two Union brigades, Laird was able to turn his guns and shell Walker's division as well.

From a knoll a half-mile to the rear, McPherson watched the Confederates attack the brigades of Mersy and Morrill. One of Mersy's regiments, the 66th Illinois, recently had purchased 16-shot Henry repeating rifles, and their steady wall of fire, buttressed by Laird's canister and shell, drove the Georgians back to the safety of the woods. The feisty Georgians reemerged for a second attack, but again the charge was shattered by superior Union firepower.

Morrill's right flank was in the air and therefore ripe for attack. Unfortunately for the Confederates, the 64th Illinois on Morrill's right flank also was armed with Henry repeaters. Brig. Gen. States Rights Gist threw the full weight of his four regiments against two regiments, the 18th Missouri and 64th Illinois, on Morrill's right flank. The Missourians concealed themselves well behind a fence, and when Gist's troops came within range the Federals blasted them with three well-aimed volleys, sending them reeling back. Laird's guns then turned their attention to shelling Gist's troops. Gist, who was on horseback, miraculously managed to avoid the flying shell fragments, but he was wounded in the hand by a bullet and reluctantly turned over command to Colonel James McCullough of the 16th South Carolina.

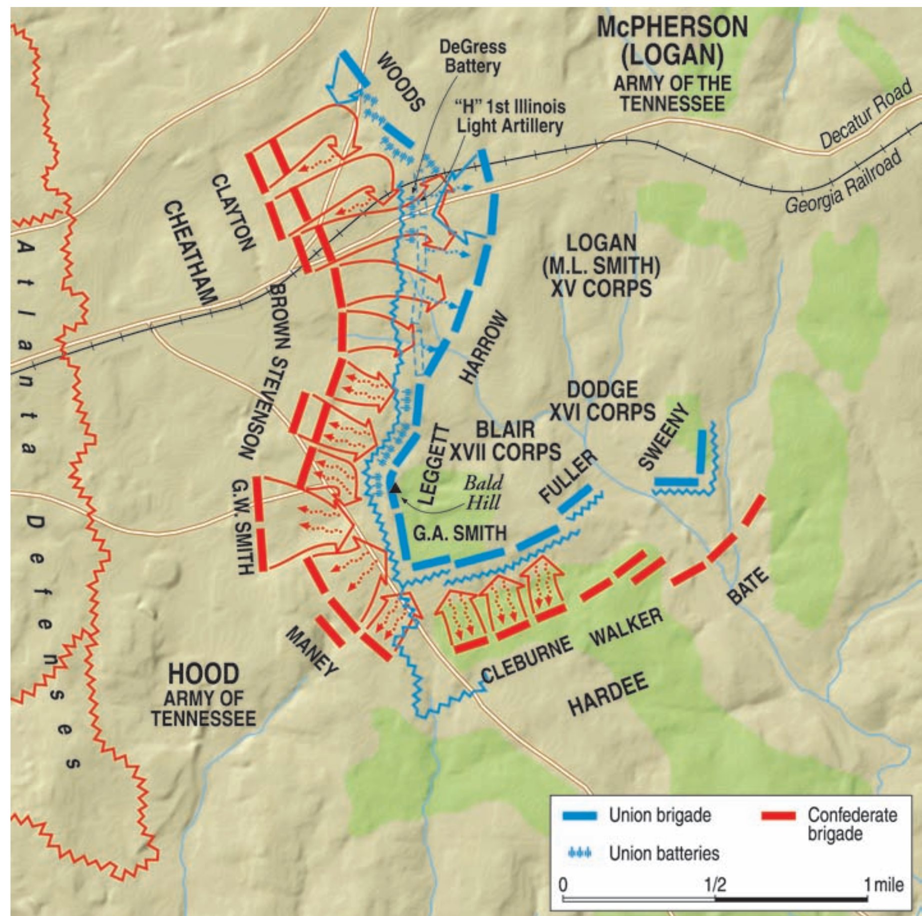
When Walker saw Gist retiring from the field, he kicked his gray charger and rode into the thick of the fighting to rally the brigade. "One more charge and the day is won!" he cried. "Follow me!" The Federals saw the Confederate general and began firing in his direction. Walker's horse was shot from under him. The wiry general stood up and was struck square in the chest by a bullet that pierced his lungs, killing him instantly. With both Gist and Walker out of the action, the attack came to an abrupt end.

At that point, McPherson and his staff were hastily trying to assemble troops to plug the gap between the two corps. Neither of the two corps already engaged with Hardee had troops to spare, so McPherson sent word to Maj. Gen. John Logan, commanding XV Corps, to send Colonel Hugo Wangelin's brigade, which was being held in reserve, south to plug the gap. Until the reserves arrived, Brig. Gen. Giles Smith's division of XVII Corps, deployed on the west side of the gap, dispatched as many troops as it could spare to prevent the enemy from exploiting the half-mile-wide gap.

Cleburne's hard-fighting division emerged from the woods at 1:15 PM. Cleburne's right flank was directly opposite the gap in the Federal line. On the left, Brig. Gen. David Govan's Arkansas brigade emerged to find it was facing a sturdy Federal line manned by the two brigades of Smith's division. However, the six regiments of James Smith's Texas brigade were able to crash through the gap in the Federal line and head straight for the rear of Blair's XVII Corps.

"The result of our fire was terrible," wrote one officer in the 16th Iowa Regiment. "The enemy's line seemed to crumble to earth, for even those not killed or wounded fell to the ground for protection."

Battles and Leaders of the Civil War



ABOVE: By 3 PM, Maj. Gen. Benjamin Franklin Cheatham's 14,000-man corps had finally gotten into action north of the Georgia Railroad on the Confederate left. Cheatham's costly breakthrough was not exploited. OPPOSITE: Maj. Gen. Grenville Dodge, pointing at center right, deploys Brig. Gen. Thomas Sweeny's division to defend the Union left flank at Bald Hill. After the war, Dodge became a wealthy railroad baron.

The two regiments on Govan's left charged the Federal line but encountered abatis that proved impassable. Backed by a section of guns belonging to the 2nd Illinois Light Artillery, Colonel William Hall's 3rd Brigade shattered the attack by those two unsupported regiments. "The result of our fire was terrible," wrote one officer in the 16th Iowa Regiment. "The enemy's line seemed to crumble to earth, for even those not killed or wounded fell to the ground for protection."

Govan's other three regiments were able to enter the gap in the Federal lines along with the Texans. This raised the number of regiments in the rear of Blair's XVII Corps to nine. Something had to be done. Brig. Gen. John Fuller observed the Texans advance unopposed through the gap in the Federal lines and ordered Laird to fire his 3-inch guns, which had a range of slightly over one mile, at the Texans. He also ordered the 64th Illinois to charge into the gap to slow the enemy advance. Only 90 of the 350 men from the 64th Illinois survived the counterattack.

About 2 PM, McPherson, his orderly, and Colonel Robert Scott, a brigade commander in Blair's corps who happened to be riding in the same direction as McPherson, were galloping west on a narrow path through the woods when a group of enemy soldiers suddenly blocked their path. A few of the Confederates shouted, "Halt!" McPherson had no intention of being taken prisoner. He gallantly tipped his hat at the enemy soldiers, bent low over his horse, and broke for the rear. A bullet struck him squarely in the back, nicking the strap holding his field binoculars, and traveled through his lungs. The 35-year-old general thudded to the ground with a mortal wound.

A Confederate officer, Captain Frank Beard of the 5th Texas, asked who the officer was. "Sir, it is General McPherson," Scott said. "You have killed the best man in our army." Thinking McPherson already dead, Beard took Scott and the orderly prisoner and led them off. McPherson was subsequently found, barely alive, by Private George Reynolds of the 15th Iowa, who was en route to a field hospital. Reynolds comforted McPherson as best he could, but the general died a short time later. Members of McPherson's staff could not find their commander, and they reported to Sherman that he was missing. Assuming the worst, Sherman sent a message to Logan informing him that he was now in command of the Army of the Tennessee. McPherson's body was recovered a short time later and taken by ambulance wagon to Sherman's headquarters at the Howard House. The hard-bitten Sherman, who could oversee the shelling of Southern civilians without blinking an eye, placed a small flag over McPherson's face and wept like a baby. "The whole of the Confederacy," Sherman said, "cannot atone for the sacrifice of one such life."

Maney's division, composed entirely of Tennessee troops, swept forward toward Giles Smith's division of the Federal XVII Corps. Brig. Gen. Otto Strahl's brigade, on the extreme left, advanced in three lines toward the entrenched position held by Smith's bluecoats. At that point, nearly two Confederate brigades were in the rear of Smith's division, which made it difficult for his men to defend their original battle line on the Flat Shoals Road. Colonel Benjamin Potts, commanding the 1st Brigade of Smith's division, ordered several of his regiments out of their entrenchments so that they were facing south. Strahl tried to outflank Potts's brigade, but the blistering fire forced the Southerners to retreat. When Strahl was wounded a short time later, his entire brigade broke off their attack.

The assault went better for Colonel Michael Magevney's brigade, which caught Hall's 13th Iowa unsupported in the fishhook where Blair's battle line bent

back toward the east. Magevney's men made the Iowans pay a steep price for not having withdrawn to a safer position. "We mowed them down with an awful havoc," wrote Captain Alfred Fielder of the 12th Tennessee. To their credit, the Iowans stood their ground despite suffering high casualties, and Magevney, who was unaware that Cleburne's troops were in the rear of Blair's XVII Corps, unwisely broke off his attack.

Once Maney's troops had retreated to the safety of the woods, the momentum shifted to the small number of Confederates who had actually managed to do what Hood originally envisioned in his tactical plan. Nearly two full brigades moved northwest through farm fields and copses toward Bald Hill, where they found their way blocked by Brig. Gen. William Harrow's 4th Division of Logan's XV Corps. The first Federals who went into action were those of Colonel Charles Walcutt's 2nd Brigade, which deployed in a cornfield. Major Thomas Maurice, chief of artillery for XV Corps, rushed three batteries into position to support Harrow's division. Harrow fed another brigade, commanded by Colonel John Oliver, into action. The well-led Federals charged the Confederates as they attempted to withdraw.

At 2 PM, Brig. Gen. Mark Lowrey's brigade of Cleburne's division, which had been at the back of Hardee's column, arrived on the field with six regiments of fresh troops. Cleburne put the remnants of two other nearby brigades under Lowrey's command and ordered the one-time Baptist minister to lead an attack against Brig. Gen. Mortimer Leggett's position on Bald Hill. Seeing the Rebels massing for an attack, Leggett ordered his men to jump over the parapets and seek cover on the far side of their fortifications. The defenders fired repeated volleys into the enemy, but to their consternation several lines of attackers crested the hill.

Leggett's troops resorted to an assortment of tactics to drive off the Confederates. On the north end of Bald Hill, Force's men lay prone, and when the Confederates were on top of them they stood up and fired at them at a distance of 10 yards. "We let them have it right in the breadbaskets," said a Wisconsin soldier. The Alabama and Mississippi soldiers in Lowrey's brigade took cover in the trenches, which enabled them to reload in a protected position and then fire over the wall at the bluecoats. This enraged the Federals, who resorted to hand-to-hand fighting with clubbed muskets and bayonets to dislodge the tenacious Confederates. By 3 PM, Lowrey's troops had withdrawn to lick their wounds. Without the support of the two batteries, Leggett's division would have been overrun.

Watching from the second floor of a home located—appropriately enough—beside a cemetery, Hood ordered Cheatham to launch a diversionary attack in the hope of preventing the Federals from reinforcing Bald Hill. Cheatham's corps was the largest in the Army of Tennessee, comprising three divisions totaling 14,000 men. Cheatham prepared to hurl his entire corps at the Federals and punch through their field works.

The Federal XV Corps opposite Cheatham was now led by Smith, who had taken command of the corps when Logan was promoted to army commander after McPherson's death. Smith's 2nd Division, in turn, was handed over to Brig. Gen. Joseph Lightburn. North of the railroad, Colonel Wells Jones led six regiments, and south of the railroad Lt. Col. S.R. Mott commanded three regiments. Deployed in support of these troops were Batteries A and H of the 1st Illinois Light Artillery.

Cheatham's attack got off to a bad start. Maj. Gen. Carter Stevenson ordered his division forward against the Federal lines a half mile south of the railroad in the vicinity of Bald Hill. Although the two federal divisions defending the sector were weary and had no reserves, Stevenson botched the attack by only committing his two front brigades, and his men gave up after a half-hearted effort. The defense of the area just north of Bald Hill was the responsibility of Colonel John Oliver, who had only three regiments available to fight off the assault. "The firing was very heavy along the entire line," wrote Major William Brown of the 70th Ohio.

The next division of Cheatham's corps to advance belonged to Brig. Gen. John Brown, who threw all four of his brigades into the fight against Lightburn's division. A major Federal strongpoint was the Troup Hurt House, one-eighth of a mile north of the railroad, where four 20-pounder Parrott guns were situated. Two other cannon had been placed between the house and the railroad. Beyond Jones's right flank was a large patch of marsh that formed a no-man's land and prevented Cheatham from flanking his opponent's position by sweeping around from the north.

Captain Francis DeGress ordered the crews of the four 20-pounders to begin firing on the Rebels once the Federal skirmishers had pulled back. The shell and canister from the powerful guns ripped great holes in the lines of Brig. Gen. Arthur Manigault's brigade as it steered toward Jones's ranks. The battery's fire so unnerved the Southerners that they broke ranks and fled for the rear. "Things looked ugly," Manigault wrote of the initial repulse. On Manigault's right, Colonel Samuel Benton's Mississippi brigade was stopped cold in its tracks 50 yards from the Federal works by the fire. Benton himself was struck fatally by shrapnel in the chest. Initially, at least, Lightburn's men had successfully parried the thrust of a corps-sized attack.

Hard on the heels of Manigault's brigade was Colonel Jacob Sharp's Mississippi brigade of Brown's division. "The men saw them, and gathered confidence," Manigault wrote of his command. Together the two brigades had enough weight to overwhelm the Federals north of the railroad despite their strong artillery support. The first Confederate regiment to fight its way through the Federal works, about 4 PM, was the 10th South Carolina, led by Colonel James Pressley. The South Carolinians streamed through a breach on the south side of the Troup Hurt House, captured a section of Battery H, then charged around to the other side to seize control of the rest of the guns that had

caused them so much misery. In a matter of minutes other Confederate regiments began wreaking havoc behind enemy lines north and south of the railroad.

Outnumbered five to one, there was no way Lightburn could rally his men at that location. Seeing Lightburn's division crumble to his north, Colonel John Coltart, commanding another brigade in Brown's division, ordered his men forward north of Bald Hill. To defend against Coltart, Colonel Reuben Williams had only 600 men in two regiments to hold off the determined Rebel attack. Twice the Union troops beat back Coltart's men with well-timed volleys, but several hundred more Confederates appeared on his right flank and delivered a blistering enfilade fire that ripped into the backs of his men. Williams had no other recourse than to order his men to fall back. By 4:15, Cheatham's corps had wrested control of nearly a mile of field works, an achievement that Hardee had not come close to matching.

Lightburn established a new line half a mile east in shallow trenches the Federals had occupied two days earlier. On his left flank, two brigades of Harrow's division did the same, while Walcutt's brigade remained in position to protect the right flank of the beleaguered Federals atop Bald Hill. Several thousand Confederates belonging to Brown's division were in possession of the Federal works and the ground immediately east, but they were milling around, rounding up prisoners, and had become hopelessly intermingled. If Cheatham was going to press his advantage, Brown's division would have to be reorganized. Several hours of daylight still remained, and the Confederates were on the verge of victory if they could just sustain their momentum.

Hood seemed to have no real sense of what Cheatham had achieved. If he had, he might have ordered newly minted Lt. Gen. Alexander Stewart's uncommitted corps to march to Cheatham's assistance. Stewart was an hour away to the northeast, and even the arrival of one of his divisions might have been enough to break the back of Logan's already exhausted army. The order was never given. "For reasons unknown to me, the battle did not become general," wrote Stewart.

Another short lull fell over the battlefield while Logan and his generals set about organizing a counterattack to regain the ground given up to Cheatham. Logan also ordered Dodge to send a brigade to assist the Federal right flank. For that task, Dodge selected Mersy's brigade. Altogether, the Federal right flank received 2,000 additional muskets. Logan also ordered Brig. Gen. Charles Woods, who was positioned on the extreme Federal right beyond the marsh north of the Troup Hurt House, to attack the Confederate left flank. The coup de grace was to be delivered by several batteries of Schofield's Army of the Ohio near Sherman's headquarters that began shelling the Confederate left.

Hand-to-hand fighting occurred in many places between the two lines of

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Union Maj. Gen. James B. McPherson was shot from horseback after ignoring Confederate demands to surrender. His death brought commanding General William Tecumseh Sherman to tears.

trenches. About 3,000 Rebels attempted to advance but made no progress. The Federal artillery not only broke up Brown's efforts to press his advantage against the Federal XV Corps, but also prevented enemy reinforcements in the woods to the west from joining the attack. "Their shells tore through our lines or exploded in the faces of the men with unerring regularity," wrote Manigault.

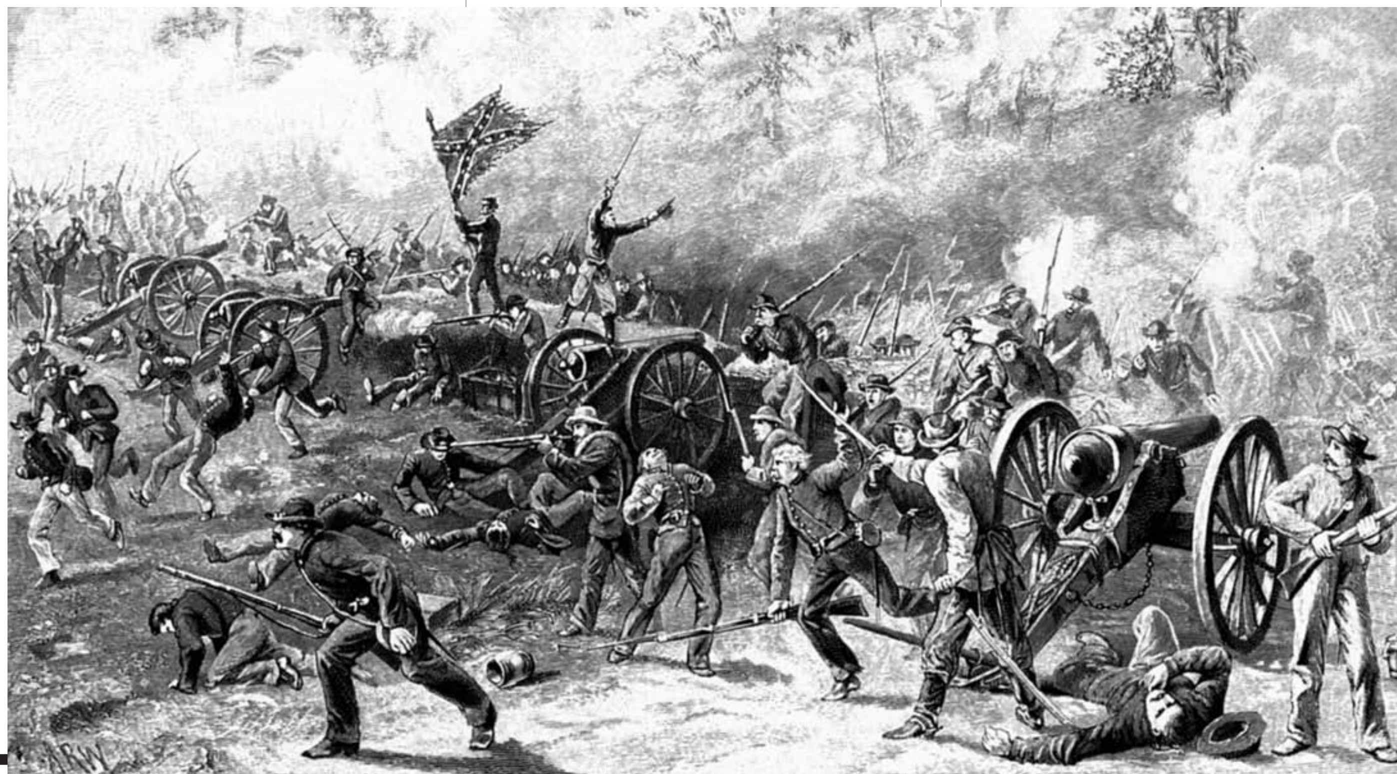
The soldiers of Manigault's brigade on the Confederate left were exhausted after protracted fighting, and they found themselves shortly after 4:30 PM under heavy artillery fire and assailed on both flank and front. Mersy's men charged along the axis of the Georgia Railroad, giving a bloodcurdling scream designed to rattle the enemy. About the same time, Harrow's division began its counterattack against Coltart's troops just north of Bald Hill. They easily drove the Alabamans back and recovered the field works they had abandoned earlier. The withdrawal of Manigault's and Coltart's brigades left Sharp's Mississippi brigade alone in the center, exposed to enfilading fire.

Brown, who was at the front witnessing the retreat, was furious. He ordered Sharp's brigade to counterattack Lightburn's brigade, which by then had joined the fighting. "We charged with an awful yell," said a lieutenant with the 41st Mississippi. The counterattack was enough to stall the Union forces momentarily, but the momentum was clearly with them. They drove Sharp's brigade back on Clayton's division, which was attempting to advance on the Decatur Road. Sensing that XV Corps might be able to recover all of the ground lost to the enemy, Logan spurred his horse and charged west along the Decatur Road behind his advancing troops, rallying them "with fire in his eyes," in the words of one Ohio private. Logan ordered his subordinates to press the attack at all costs.

Mersy's horse had been shot from under him during the advance, and he had been injured when the horse fell on him. As he was assisted to the rear, Mersy turned over command of his brigade to Colonel Robert Adams of the 81st Ohio. Adams's regiment recovered the captured guns, which the Confederates had neglected to haul away. Since he had only partially disabled the guns, DeGress was able to put them back into action immediately with the assistance of some nimble infantry who knew how to load and fire them.

After 30 minutes of hard fighting, the earthworks above and below the Georgia Railroad once again belonged to the Federal XV Corps. Cheatham gave a general order for his men to withdraw, and the officers of the units in the corps reluctantly carried out the order. Their feelings were summed up in the words of a member of the 10th South Carolina. "We [had] built these breastworks, given them up to the enemy, re-taken them at a very heavy sacrifice, and now we had to give them up again." By late afternoon, Blair had formed a new line a quarter of a mile behind his original line.

The defense of Bald Hill was in the hands of Colonel George Bryant, who had taken command of Force's 1st Brigade of Leggett's division when Force was wounded in the face in earlier fighting. Bryant's men had not been idle during Cheatham's diversionary attack. Anticipating yet another savage assault on their position before the end of the day, they had feverishly worked to strengthen the earthworks atop Bald Hill. By 5 PM, they had constructed a three-sided, makeshift fort



Manigault's Confederates overrun Battery H of Captain Francis DeGress's Union artillery near the Troup Hurt House. The resourceful DeGress later remanned the battery with handy infantrymen.

Library of Congress

with eight-foot walls. Supporting Bald Hill and the troops southeast of it were the Black Horse Battery and Battery D, 1st Illinois Light Artillery.

In light of the failure of Hardee's flank attack to achieve its ultimate objective, it was fortuitous that severe straggling occurred during the night march. By late afternoon, a large number of men who had not yet entered the battle had arrived in the woods south of the Federal lines. Cleburne, who never seemed to give up, rounded up as many fresh troops as he could from his division and sent members of his staff to ask for fresh troops from the other three divisions of Hardee's corps for a grand assault on Bald Hill.

Cleburne received permission from Maney to commit Colonel Francis Walker's Tennessee brigade, which until then had not participated in the action. By 6 PM, Cleburne had assembled 3,500 soldiers for the initial assault; another 2,000 were waiting in the woods behind them to lend support if necessary. The first troops to attack Bald Hill in the grand assault were 900 Arkansans from Govan's brigade, who charged across the open ground toward Hall's brigade. They managed to capture an outlying earthwork but did not have enough momentum to crack the main line of Federal trenches southeast of the hill.

Bryant's brigade atop Bald Hill had to hold the knoll against Confederate brigades attacking simultaneously from two directions. Cleburne had planned a classic double convergence to envelop and annihilate the Federal position. Walker's brigade advanced from the southwest toward the hill while Lt. Col. Morgan Rawls led Mercer's brigade in a charge from the southeast. Leggett had ordered Bryant to place three regiments on the southern slope of the hill outside the fort to prevent the enemy from sneaking up on it by taking advantage of its blind spots. Walker's Tennesseans were pummeled by the Black Horse Battery on Bryant's right flank, which fired double canister into their tightly packed ranks.

The Tennesseans turned to take cover in the woods, but Cleburne rallied the men and sent them back into the teeth of Federal fire from Bald Hill. The carnage was terrible, with canister fire opening huge gaps in the Southern ranks. "As I looked down the line, I could see men dropping by the scores," wrote a 9th Tennessee soldier. Meanwhile, Rawls's Georgians had captured an outlying earthwork on the southeast side of Bald Hill, but then Rawls seemed to lose his nerve. Rather than pressing his attack, he left his troops in an exposed position on open ground where they began dropping from repeated volleys of enemy rifle fire. Rawls himself was wounded and turned over command to a subordinate officer.

The Tennesseans turned to take cover in the woods, but Cleburne rallied the men and sent them back into the teeth of Federal fire from Bald Hill. The carnage was terrible, with cannister fire opening huge gaps in the Southern ranks. "As I looked down the line, I could see men dropping by the scores," wrote a 9th Tennessee soldier.

The second charge of Walker's men achieved better results. Once again they raced across the open fields with Walker on foot leading them. "They were dropping here and there," wrote an Ohioan who participated in the hill's defense. "But they came on like cattle facing a storm, and in a few minutes they were masters of the situation outside." Walker had placed his hat atop his sword so his men knew that he was among them, which unfortunately made him a rich target for enemy sharpshooters. He was struck in the upper body by a bullet and died on the blood-drenched slopes of Bald Hill.

Battle smoke clung to the hill, and desperate brawls broke out when the Tennesseans crashed into the defenders on the upper slopes. When the Confederates were within 20 feet of the fort, flag bearers jammed their standards into the ground as rally points from which the Tennesseans could assail the fort. On the south slope of the hill, the men of the 27th Tennessee, who hailed from the western portion of the state, captured the flag of the 30th Illinois of Bryant's brigade.

Soldiers from two brigades, the 11th Iowa and 20th Ohio, of Giles Smith's and Leggett's divisions, were packed tightly inside the fort. The best shots from each regiment used slits or cracks in the walls or stood atop the tall palisades and fired at Confederates brave enough to try to assault the fort. Those Southerners who tried to force their way inside the fort through one of its several entrances were shot in the face or stomach and fell back screaming and clutching their wounds.

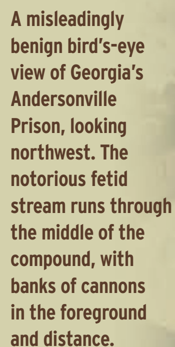
Shortly before 8 PM, the Confederates broke off the attack. Even though Cleburne had fed the available reinforcements into the battle by that time, they did little to improve the situation. Most of the Confederates who had fought so valiantly retreated to the woods, but a significant number chose to stay close to the fort. They found cover behind a three-foot embankment that stretched about 70 yards opposite the fort and maintained a steady fire against it throughout the night. Union sharpshooters and artillery blasted back at them.

Sherman wired Washington that the fighting had been severe and that McPherson had been killed while on reconnaissance. Likewise, Hood informed Richmond of the death of Walker and noted that his men had fought gallantly. He omitted from his report the fact that both Cheatham and Hardee had been repulsed. The combined casualties for the fighting on July 22 numbered some 10,000 men, making it the bloodiest single day of the Atlanta campaign. □

IN wretched CAPTIVITY: CIVIL WAR PRISONS

THE JUNE 19, 1861, editorial in the *Charleston Mercury* newspaper warned: "War is bloody reality, not butterfly sporting. The sooner men understand this the better." During the four-year course of the Civil War, the entire country—North and South—would come to the same grim realization. There were seemingly endless lists of thousands of soldiers killed or wounded in battle or dead of disease. Thousands more, both Union and Confederate, languished in prisoner of war camps, enduring hardships that previously it had been inconceivable for civilized people to inflict upon one another.

From 1861 to 1865, more than 150 prison camps were established by the Union and Confederate governments. Estimates of the total numbers of prisoners taken and deaths that occurred in captivity vary widely, and Confederate records are incomplete. However, the *Official Records* of the war cites a total of 347,000 men—220,000 Confederate and 127,000 Union—who endured the privations of being prisoners of war. These privations ranged from inadequate shelter and clothing, poor hygiene, and the monotonous passage of time to outright starvation, intentional cruelty, harsh summary justice, swarming vermin, and rampaging disease. More than 49,000 prisoners died in captivity, at least 26,440 Confederate and 22,580 Union, an overall mortality rate of 14 percent. Twelve percent of Confederate prisoners and 18 percent of Union captives never returned from incarceration.



A misleadingly benign bird's-eye view of Georgia's Andersonville Prison, looking northwest. The notorious fetid stream runs through the middle of the compound, with banks of cannons in the foreground and distance.

As in all wars, the victors tend to write the history, and Confederate prisons have become notorious for a litany of horrors. But the simple truth is that neither side could fully claim the moral high ground. Neither side was prepared to accommodate the large numbers of prisoners taken during the war, which many believed would be of short duration but which dragged on for four years of incredible misery.

From the outset, the South suffered shortages of basic commodities such as medicines, foodstuffs, and textiles due to the

All the horrors of prison life were experienced by hundreds of thousands of captives, Union and Confederate, during the Civil War. It was difficult to believe that Americans could do such things to one another. | BY **michael** E. HASKEW

All Images: Library of Congress

strangling Union blockade that stretched from the major ports of the mid-Atlantic to the Gulf coast of Texas. The war on land was fought largely in the South, soaking rich farmland with blood. Thousands of Southern farmers left home to serve in the Confederate Army, and few able-bodied men remained behind to tend whatever crops could be produced in straitened circumstances.

With threadbare Confederate soldiers serving in the field without shoes, subsisting on a handful of cornmeal or a few peanuts, the Southern government faced a virtually insurmountable task to provide adequately for thousands of Union prisoners. Nevertheless, early in the war the Confederate Congress resolved that the rations furnished prisoners of war "shall be the same in quantity and quality as those furnished to enlisted men in the army of the Confederacy." It sounded good on paper.

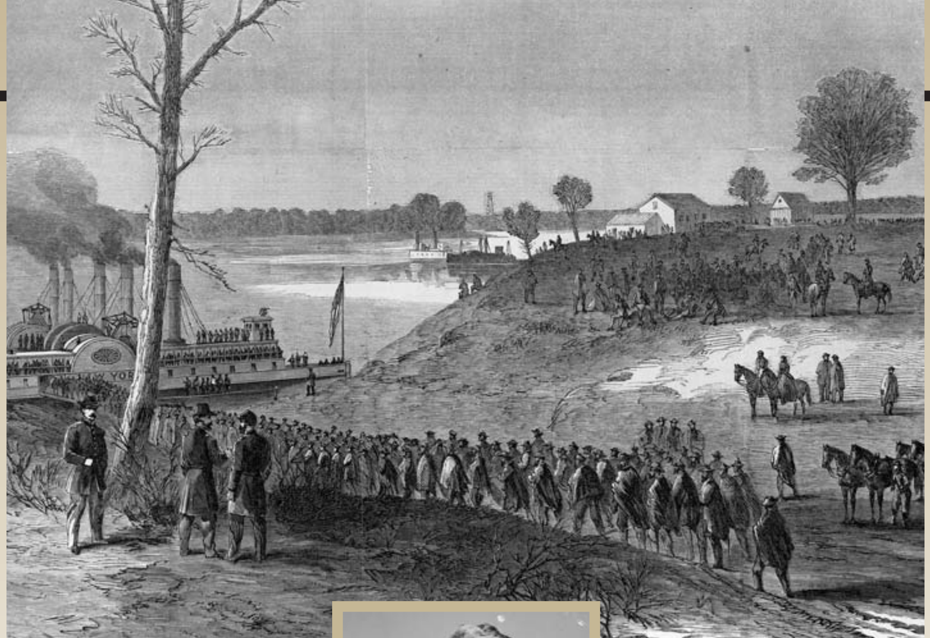
In the North, more plentiful food supplies, the availability of medical care, and the relative abundance of resources should have weighed positively on the treatment of prisoners. In too many instances, however, conditions were scarcely better than the worst of the prisons in the South. Administrative indifference, ineptitude, and corruption combined with a desire to mete out the same treatment to Confederate prisoners that was rumored to exist in Southern prisons. Camp Douglas in Chicago and Elmira in upstate New York—prosperous communities both—left horrible legacies of their own.

The burden of feeding and sheltering prisoners steadily increased as the war progressed. Early in the conflict, a system of parole and exchange was utilized extensively, and thousands of soldiers were returned to their units. Patterned after a similar system that had seen widespread use in Europe, officers of equal rank were exchanged one for another, while enlisted men were exchanged on a number-by-number basis. When an even exchange was not immediately possible, officers were exchanged for a certain number of enlisted men, such as one captain for six enlisted soldiers. Parole was sometimes extended to prisoners when a timely exchange was not expected. Parole often took place within 10 days of capture, and the system worked reasonably well for a while as prisoners were returned to their respective sides and rejoined the ranks when notified that a proper exchange had occurred. At times parolees went home to await the official exchange; however, these individuals were often reluctant to return to service. Therefore, paroled prisoners were frequently kept near their units until word of an exchange was received.

Over time, the system became increasingly untenable due to the sheer weight of numbers. With the surrender of Fort Donelson, Tennessee, in February 1862, nearly 12,400 Confederate prisoners were captured by Maj. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's Union forces. The Confederate commander at Fort Donelson, Maj. Gen. Simon Bolivar Buckner, a personal friend of Grant's, was imprisoned in Boston until he was exchanged. Another 7,000 captured soldiers were sent to the infamous Camp Douglas; the rest were scattered throughout other prisons in the North.

On July 22, 1862, the Confederate and Union governments agreed to a formalized program of exchange known as the Dix-Hill Cartel, named for its principal negotiators, Union Maj. Gen. John A. Dix and Confederate Maj. Gen. Daniel Harvey Hill. Prior attempts to formalize exchange protocol had been complicated by several factors. Since the North viewed the conflict as a civil insurrection rather than a war between two sovereign nations, Abraham Lincoln wanted to avoid any action that might legitimize the Confederate government. A formal agreement to exchange prisoners, in the eyes of many observers, particularly those in foreign governments, might do just that.

Fragile from the beginning, the Dix-Hill Cartel survived with limited interruption for only five months. On December 28, 1862, U.S. Secretary of War Edwin Stanton suspended the exchange of commissioned officers in response to a proclamation by Confederate President Jefferson Davis that labeled Union Maj. Gen. Benjamin Butler, commander of the forces occupying New Orleans, "a felon deserving of capital punishment." The Davis proclamation followed Butler's execution of William B. Mumford, a civilian resident of New Orleans who reportedly had pulled



ABOVE: Exchanged Union prisoners walk to the steamboat *New York* at Aiken's Landing, S.C., in February 1865. LEFT: Union General John A. Dix negotiated with Confederate General Daniel Harvey Hill to formalize prisoner exchanges. OPPOSITE: Confederate prisoners from Brig. Gen. Edward Johnson's division wait at Belle Plain Landing, Va., for transportation to a POW camp after their capture at the Battle of Spotsylvania in May 1864.

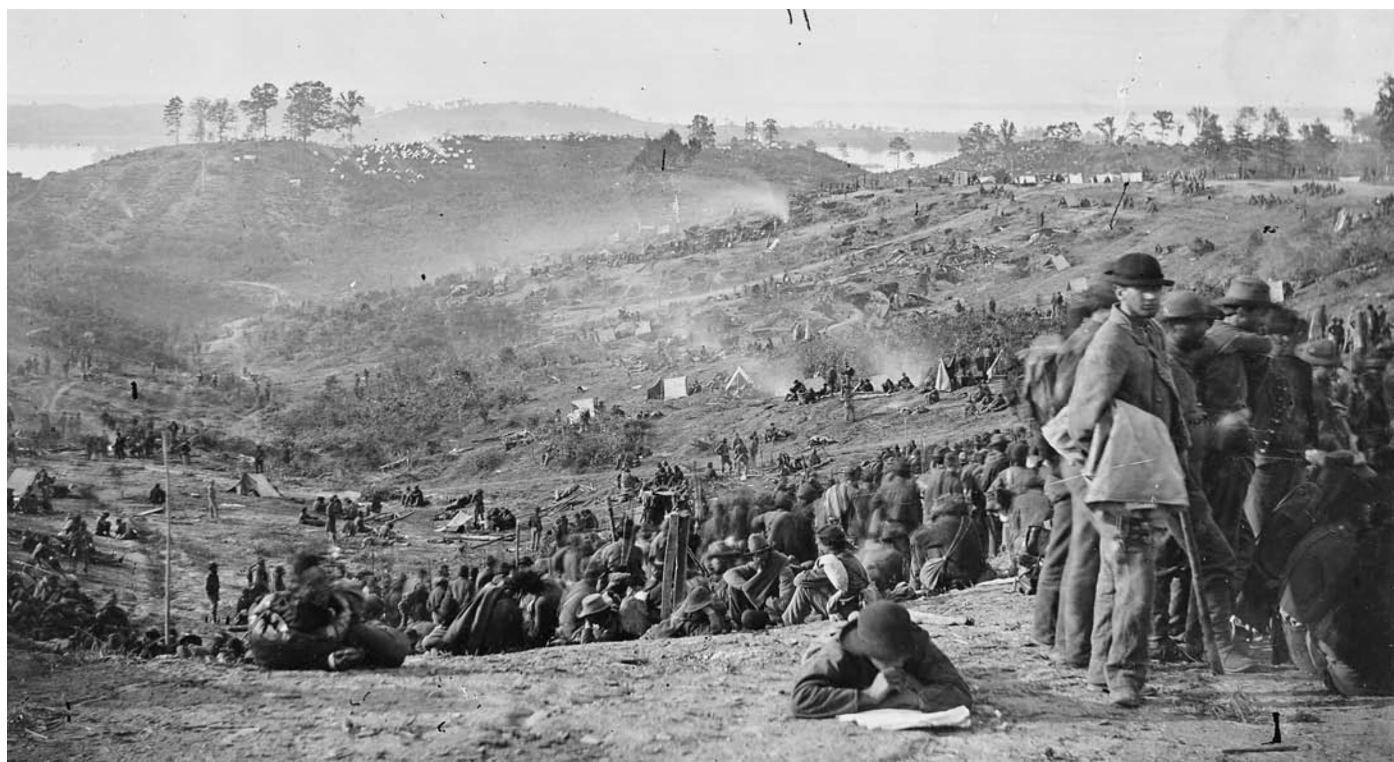
down the U.S. flag that had been raised above the city's former mint and torn the banner to shreds. A harmless act of vandalism was raised to a fatal act of treason.

By the spring of 1863, Maj. Gen. Henry Halleck, general-in-chief of the Union Armies, halted all major exchanges. This action was in response to Confederate assertions that Southern soldiers captured by Grant at Vicksburg and subsequently paroled would be considered unilaterally exchanged. A May 1, 1863, joint resolution of the Confederate Congress rendered the decision to continue the exchange program absurd. The resolution asserted that captured African American soldiers who had once been slaves would be treated as runaways rather than soldiers and would be returned to their former owners if possible. It further threatened that "every white person being a commissioned officer who shall command Negroes or mulattoes in arms against the Confederate States shall be deemed as inciting servile insurrection, and shall if captured be put to death or be otherwise punished at the discretion of the Court."

By then, the protracted war had significantly drained Southern manpower, and the exchange of prisoners was the primary method by which the Confederates replenished the depleted ranks of their field armies. An effort to revive a formal exchange system fell apart after representatives of the U.S. government refused to receive Confederate Vice President Alexander Stephens in Washington, D.C., under a flag of truce. Sporadic prisoner exchanges did continue as Butler negotiated with the Confederates under the watchful eye of Secretary Stanton. Butler and Confederate exchange agent Robert Ould arranged the transfer of large numbers of prisoners in the autumn of 1864, particularly those who had been held for the longest time or were in poor health and deemed unfit for further duty. Significant exchanges took place at Savannah and Charleston.

The relentless Grant recognized the fact that continued prisoner exchanges would actually prolong the war. Grant believed that the South could be subdued most efficiently through attrition, as evidenced by his continuation of the Army of the Potomac's offensive in Virginia in the spring of 1864 despite horrendous casualties. In April of that year, Grant halted exchanges on the basis of the Vicksburg disagreement and the proposed mistreatment of black prisoners by the Confederates. Grant stated his pragmatic perspective in an August 18, 1864, dispatch to Butler, noting: "It is hard on our men held in Southern prisons not to exchange them, but it is humanity to those left in the ranks to fight our battles. Every man released on parole or otherwise becomes an active soldier against us at once, either directly or indirectly. If we commence a system of

"IT IS HARD ON OUR MEN HELD IN SOUTHERN PRISONS NOT TO EXCHANGE THEM, BUT IT IS HUMANITY TO THOSE LEFT IN THE RANKS TO FIGHT OUR BATTLES.... IF WE COMMENCE A SYSTEM OF EXCHANGE WHICH LIBERATES ALL PRISONERS TAKEN, WE WILL HAVE TO FIGHT ON UNTIL THE WHOLE SOUTH IS EXTERMINATED." –ULYSSES S. GRANT



exchange which liberates all prisoners taken, we will have to fight on until the whole South is exterminated."

Although Lincoln had hesitated to authorize exchanges during the first year of the war, he had bowed to political pressure and to the rising concern of family members whose loved ones were held in Confederate prisons and allowed the Dix-Hill Cartel to become operative. Now he remained notably quiet on the topic, leaving it to Grant to publicly state that future prisoner exchanges would be suspended due to the exigencies of war.

While politicians and high-ranking military commanders debated, prisoners on both sides suffered. Escape attempts occurred with regularity and were infrequently successful. Confederate Brig. Gen. John Hunt Morgan and a few of his daredevil cavalrymen tunneled their way to freedom from the Ohio State Penitentiary. The largest escape of the war took place at Libby Prison in the Confederate capital of Richmond when more than 100 Union officers broke out on February 9, 1864, and 59 of them managed to elude recapture.

Within three months of Grant's suspension order in April 1864, the population of Andersonville prison had grown to more than 20,000, twice its original capacity. At its peak in August, the stockade housed over 33,000 Union soldiers in utter squalor. In July 1864, then-Captain Henry Wirz paroled several Andersonville prisoners, who carried a petition to Washington, D.C., begging for the reinstatement of large-scale prisoner exchanges. Lincoln declined to meet with them, and no action was taken on their plea.

By far the most infamous of Civil War prisons, Andersonville, officially known as Camp Sumter, did not exist until the winter of 1863-1864. With defeats at Chattanooga and Atlanta in the West and expanding Union offensive operations in the East, the war was going badly for the Confederates. Union forces were penetrating ever farther into the heart of the Confederacy. It became necessary to construct a prison deep in Georgia to house increasing numbers of Union prisoners. A location near the town of Andersonville in Sumter County, approximately 60 miles southwest of Macon, was chosen because of its proximity to a rail line, a source of water from Sweetwater Creek that ran through camp, an abundance of pine trees for the construction of a stockade, and the availability of slave labor.

Construction began in December 1863. The original stockade occupied 16½ acres, with a pair of large gates on its western face. A fenced perimeter was set between 19 and 25 feet inside the stockade walls. This was the notorious "Dead Line," and any prisoner crossing it would be shot immediately. On February 24, 1864, the first prisoners, 600 men transferred from Libby Prison, arrived at Andersonville. Wirz assumed command in April and was subordinate to Brig. Gen. John H. Winder, the newly appointed commissary general of Confederate prisons. The population of Andersonville swelled rapidly. In July, Wirz set the prisoners to work constructing a 10-acre expansion of the stockade. By August, starvation and disease were rampant, and the dead during that month alone totaled 2,994. The creek that ran through the compound became fetid, contributing to an epidemic-level rise in dysentery cases. Many prisoners lived in makeshift lean-to structures. Others had no shelter at all, clawing holes in the ground for whatever cover was possible. Prisoners stole from one another and fought over morsels of food. Organized gangs terrorized the camp.

Private Prescott Tracy of the 82nd New York Infantry Regiment was one of only a handful of Andersonville prisoners actually exchanged in 1864. His description of the horrors at Andersonville was later published in a propaganda pamphlet entitled *Narrative of the Privations and Sufferings of United States Officers and Privates While Prisoners of War in the Hands of Rebel Authorities* that circulated widely in the North. "The new-comers, on reaching this, would exclaim: 'Is this hell?' Yet they soon would become callous, and enter unmoved the horrible rottenness," recounted Tracy. "The rations consisted of eight ounces of corn bread (the cob being ground with the kernel), and generally sour, two ounces of condemned pork, offensive in appearance and smell. Occasionally, about twice a week, two tablespoons of rice, and in place of the pork the same amount (two tablespoonfuls) of molasses were given us about twice a month. The clothing of the men was miserable in the extreme. Very few had shoes of any kind, not two thousand had coats and pants, and those were late comers. More than one-half were indecently exposed, and many were naked."

From February 1864 through the end of the war, approximately 45,000 prisoners were held at Andersonville. A total of 12,913, roughly 28 percent, died and were

ABOVE: Starving Union prisoners wait at the main gate at Andersonville for their meager rations to be issued. RIGHT: A Union prisoner after his release from Andersonville. Photos such as these understandably outraged the Northern public. OPPOSITE: A closer view of the squalid conditions at Andersonville, August 1864. The notorious "dead line" can be seen at the right. Anyone crossing it was shot on sight.

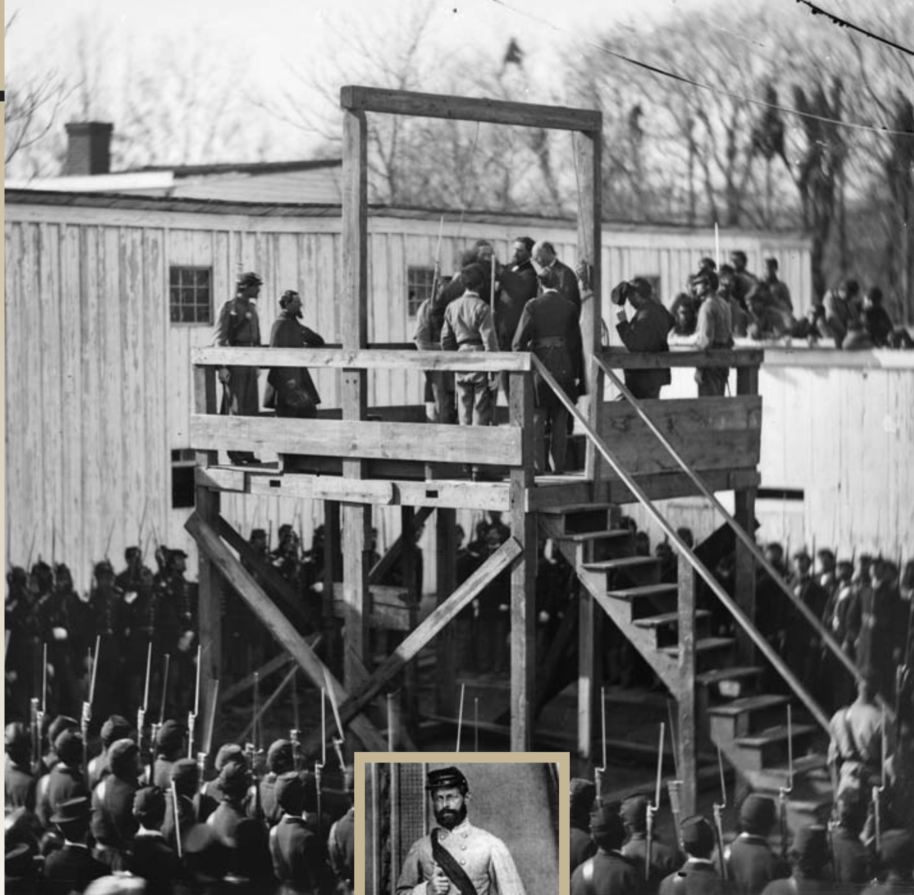
buried in mass graves. The toll at Andersonville represents 57 percent of all Union prisoner deaths during the war. When the war ended, the focus of retribution against the South for the atrocities perpetrated in Confederate prisons would fall on Wirz, who former prisoners remembered brandishing a revolver when greeting them on arrival at the prison, shouting threats, and often losing his temper. The Northern propaganda machine had also been in motion for some time, and photographs of emaciated men, no more than living skeletons, fueled the rage against those who had encouraged, facilitated, or allowed such inhumane treatment to occur.

Born in 1823 in Zurich, Switzerland, Wirz immigrated to the United States in 1849 and opened a medical practice in Kentucky. He later moved to Louisiana with his wife and two stepdaughters. By the eve of the Civil War, his practice was prospering. With the outbreak of war, Wirz supposedly enlisted in Company A, 4th Battalion, Louisiana Volunteers, although there is little information to confirm this. He was further said to have held the rank of sergeant and fought in the Battle of Seven Pines, where he was wounded and lost much of the use of his right arm. Subsequently, he was promoted to the rank of captain for bravery on the field. Rendered unfit for further combat due to his debilitating wound, Wirz was assigned to Winder's staff in Richmond and later detailed by President Jefferson Davis to serve as a courier to Confederate diplomats in Europe. Upon his return, Wirz was detailed by Winder to serve at prisons in Richmond, Tuscaloosa, and finally Andersonville.

Within days of General Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appomattox on April 9, 1865, effectively ending the war, Wirz was arrested and taken to Macon for questioning. He was briefly released and went to a nearby railroad station to return to his family at Andersonville. While waiting for the train, he was arrested again. By May 10, he was in jail in the Old Capitol Prison in Washington to await trial. Maj. Gen. Lew Wallace, later the best-selling author of the Biblically inspired novel *Ben Hur,* presided over the 63-day military tribunal, which lasted from August 23 to October 18.

Thirteen separate charges were leveled against Wirz, alleging such acts as Specification No. 11: "July 1, 1864, Henry Wirz did incite, and urge ferocious bloodhounds to pursue, attack, wound, and tear in pieces soldiers belonging to the U.S. Army, and a prisoner (unknown name) was so mortally wounded that on the sixth day he died." Specification No. 4 noted: "On May 30th, Henry Wirz with a certain pistol did feloniously and with malice aforethought, inflict upon a soldier (unknown name) a mortal wound from which the soldier died."

The remainder of the charges were similar, alleging that Wirz personally abused and murdered prisoners and ordered Confederate soldiers to do so as well. Interest-



ABOVE: The hangman places a noose around the neck of Andersonville commandant Henry Wirz prior to his execution in Washington on Nov. 10, 1865. RIGHT: Wirz wearing his Confederate uniform in better times. OPPOSITE: Antiseptic view of the Confederate prison at Salisbury, N.C. The 33 percent death rate there rivaled or even eclipsed that of Andersonville.

ingly, several of the other specifications accuse Wirz of crimes committed either before his arrival at Andersonville or during the month of August 1864, while he was actually ill and recovering at his home five miles from the prison. These allegations may have been false, or they may have been dated incorrectly. There may have been many other incidents that were never specified.

Most of the evidence against Wirz was circumstantial, and as the trial progressed, the validity of the charges hinged on the testimony of a single eyewitness, a former prisoner named Felix de la Baume, who claimed to be from France and a grandnephew of the great Marquis de Lafayette. De la Baume provided the name of one of Wirz's victims and testified that he had personally witnessed the murders of two unnamed prisoners. De la Baume was praised for his "zealous testimony" at the trial. Before the proceedings were even completed, he was awarded a position in the U.S. Department of the Interior. However, soon after the trial, de la Baume's true identity was discovered. His real name was Felix Oeser, and he was originally from the German province of Saxony and a deserter from the 7th New York Volunteer Infantry. Oeser supposedly admitted that he had committed perjury, but then his trail went cold. He was allowed to simply melt away.

On the night before his execution, Wirz was visited by his attorney, Louis Schade, who repeated an earlier offer from a high-ranking government official. In exchange for implicating Jefferson Davis, Wirz would escape the gallows with a commuted sentence. Wirz responded: "Mr. Schade, you know that I have always told you that I do not know anything about Jefferson Davis. He had no connection with me as to what was done at Andersonville. If I knew anything about him, I would not become a traitor against him or anybody else even to save my life."

Prior to his execution, Wirz wrote two notable letters. One was to Schade, asking for help for his destitute family. The other was an appeal for clemency to President Andrew Johnson. "For six weary months I have been a prisoner; for six months my name has been in the mouth of every one; by thousands I am considered a monster of cruelty, a wretch that ought not to pollute the earth any longer," he wrote. The appeal went unanswered.

On November 10, 1865, guarded by four companies of soldiers, Wirz was led to the gallows in the yard of the Old Capitol Prison. After ascending the stairs to the platform, the condemned man commented that he was being hanged for merely following orders. With the dome of the Capitol in the background, the hangman's noose was placed around his neck, and the trap door was sprung at 10:32 AM. Wirz's neck did not snap with the initial drop, and he slowly strangled at the end of the rope. A crowd of about 250 spectators, each issued a ticket for admittance, watched the event with ghoulish pleasure, chanting over and over: "Wirz, remember Andersonville. Wirz, remember Andersonville."

The debate continues to the present day over whether Wirz was justly convicted or had actually done the best he could in difficult circumstances. Initially, he was only one of several individuals who ran the risk of being charged with heinous crimes against Federal prisoners, and he was certainly a lesser target than Jefferson Davis or Secretary of War James Seddon. However, establishing a direct link between the highest echelon of the Confederate government and the sanctioning of mistreatment of Union prisoners proved a difficult proposition for prosecutors. Furthermore, placing Davis on trial might well have complicated the process of assimilating the former Confederate states back into the Union. Like the much more culpable and dishonorable Japanese emperor Hirohito following World War II, Davis went unpunished for calculated political reasons.

A lesser known figure in the prison drama was General Winder, who conveniently died of a massive heart attack on February 7, 1865. Winder was reportedly heard to brag that more Union soldiers were dying at Andersonville than the Confederate armies were killing in battle. He was also said to have turned a deaf ear to pleas from Wirz for the relief of suffering prisoners. Earlier, Winder had been responsible for the prison facilities in the Richmond area, including Libby Prison, Castle Thunder, and Belle Isle, an island in the James River where Union enlisted men were held. Had he lived, it is likely that Winder would have joined Wirz on the gallows.

Among the other prisons located throughout the South, Libby was the most prominent. Consisting of three buildings, each four stories high, the warehouse complex was commandeered by Winder for use as a prison following the July 1861 Battle of Manassas. During the war, more than 50,000 men passed through Libby, and conditions became progressively more crowded, with no fewer than 1,200 Union officers held captive there at any given time. The windows were barred, and few of them had glass panes, exposing the prisoners to weather extremes ranging from boiling hot to freezing cold. Captives were not allowed to lie on their blankets during daylight hours and were banned from looking out the windows for fear that they might signal Union sympathizers outside

A story entitled "Horrors of Richmond Prisons" appeared in the November 28, 1863, edition of the *New York Times*. It noted that at Libby, "the prevailing diseases are diarrhea, dysentery and typhoid pneumonia. Of late the percentage of deaths has greatly increased, the result of causes that have been long at work—such as insufficient food, clothing and shelter, combined with that depression of spirits brought on so often by long confinement." Describing his early days of captivity at Libby, Lt. Col. F.F. Cavada wrote: "Nothing but bread has, as yet, been issued to us, half a loaf twice a day per man. This must be washed down with James River water, drawn from a hydrant over the wash-trough. There are some filthy blankets hanging about the room; they have been used time and again by the many who preceded us; they are soiled, worn, and filled with vermin but we are recommended to help ourselves in time; if we do so with reluctance and profound disgust it is because we are now more particular than we will be in time."

THAT THE NORTH, LARGELY UNTOUCHED BY THE WAR, WAS MUCH BETTER ABLE TO CARE HUMANELY FOR ITS PRISONERS THAN THE STARVING SOUTH, IS BEYOND DISPUTE. WHETHER IT CARED TO DO SO REMAINS AN OPEN QUESTION.

Bad as they were, Andersonville and Libby Prison were not alone in their records of deprivation. A camp at Salisbury, North Carolina, housed prisoners as early as 1861, after the Confederate government had paid $15,000 for a 16-acre tract there, including the three-story main building, six smaller brick buildings, and other structures that had once been used as a cotton mill. In the autumn of 1864, nearly 9,000 prisoners were held at Salisbury, considerably outnumbering the inhabitants of the nearby town. One prisoner referred to Salisbury as a "dark hole." Private Benjamin Booth of the 22nd Iowa Infantry kept a daily log of deaths in the camp, noting that 58 men died on December 1, 1864, alone, and another 40 on January 12, 1865. More than 15,000 Union captives were held at Salisbury during the war, and approximately 5,000 of them died, a mortality rate of 33 percent that may have actually eclipsed that of Andersonville.

Confederate captives fared little better in Union camps. Captain Francis Marion Headley of the Confederate 8th Kentucky Mounted Infantry was captured in 1862 at Champion Hill, Mississippi, exchanged, and then captured a second time while on recruiting duty in his home state. Headley was sent to the Federal prison at Johnson's Island, just off the coast of Lake Erie and about three miles from the city of Sandusky, Ohio. The prison opened in April 1862 and consisted of a 1.65-acre tract that included 12 two-story barracks and a hospital building enclosed by a wooden stockade with walls 15 feet high. Prisoners were allowed to receive mail and purchase food and other goods from a sutler. Some were given surplus Union uniforms to replace their worn-out clothing.

Although Johnson's Island was intended to house only 2,500 men, the prison was

regularly overcrowded and as many as 15,000 captives, most of them officers, passed through its gates during the war. The Ohio winters were harsh, and the men were subjected to sub-freezing temperatures and bitter winds that swept through their barracks off Lake Erie. Remarkably, only about 300 died. The difficult experience, however, remained with Headley for the rest of his life and contributed to his declining health.

Elsewhere in Ohio, the prisoners fared much worse. At Camp Chase, established on the outskirts of Columbus in May 1861 as a training facility for Union volunteers, 2,260 Confederate prisoners died. Three separate prisons inside the camp encompassed six acres and were intended to hold a total of 4,000 men. At its peak, the population of Camp Chase numbered from 7,000 to 10,000. Captain H.M. Lazelle, a Federal inspector who visited the camp in July 1862, noted that many of the barracks roofs leaked and that the buildings themselves were constructed so low that standing water soaked the floors for days following even moderate rain. Overcrowding, along with open latrines and cisterns, contributed to an outbreak of smallpox, and the quality of the food was so poor that the commissary officer was relieved of his post and summarily dismissed from the military.

Counting only the 2,260 noted burials and the estimated 25,000 Confederate prisoners who transited Camp Chase during its operation as a prison from the summer of 1861 through the end of the war, the mortality rate at the facility may be estimated at just under 10 percent. Camp Douglas, the most infamous of Northern prisons, opened in Chicago in 1861 as a training camp for volunteer infantry units and was permanently designated a prison camp in January 1863. At times, both Confederate prisoners and Union parolees were held there together.

During the war, more than 26,000 Confederates were imprisoned at Camp Douglas at various times, and the estimated number of deaths ranged from 4,500 to more than 6,000. Controversy surrounds the final mortality rate due to the allegation that a large number of prisoner deaths were never recorded, the bodies either buried in unmarked mass graves or simply considered unaccounted for. On the other hand, it was charged that an unscrupulous contractor simply buried a number of empty caskets to increase his payment from the U.S. government. Regardless, the generally accepted mortality rate at Camp Douglas is 17 to 23 percent.

Constructed on land previously owned by U.S. senator Stephen Douglas (hence the name), the camp was in a low-lying area where drainage was inadequate. Conditions deteriorated to such an extent that Henry W. Bellows of the U.S. Sanitary Commission wrote to Maj. Gen. William Hoffman, commissary general of prisons: "Sir, the amount of standing water, unpoliced grounds, of foul sinks, of unventilated and crowded barracks, of general disorder, of soil reeking miasmatic accretions, of rotten bones and emptying of camp kettles, is enough to drive a sanitarium to despair. I hope that no thought will be entertained of mending matters. The absolute abandonment of the spot seems to be the only judicious course. I do not believe that any amount of drainage would purge the soil loaded with accumulated filth or those barracks fetid with two stories of vermin and animal exhalations. Nothing but fire can cleanse them."

Depending on the sources consulted, the population of Camp Douglas peaked at anywhere from 9,000 to 12,000, fell sharply later in 1862 following an exchange under the Dix-Hill Cartel, and then rose significantly by mid-1863. During the winter of 1862-1863, more than 200 prisoners were crowded into barracks measuring no more than 20 by 70 feet. Prisoners were required to stand in ranks in ankle-deep snow and ice. Temperatures dipped below zero, and up to 1,700 died during that winter alone.

A number of Illinois Militia and U.S. Army officers were in command at Camp Douglas. One of the more memorable was Colonel Charles V. DeLand, previously the commander of the 1st Michigan Sharpshooters. DeLand took charge of the camp on August 18, 1863, and attempted to tighten discipline by putting the prisoners to work on an improved stockade. More than 70 escapes were attempted at Camp Douglas, and while DeLand was in command more than 150 prisoners, 26 in a single incident, broke out. DeLand was known for the severe punishment he dispensed, once having prisoners of the 8th Kentucky Cavalry remain standing at attention for a lengthy period after a tunnel was discovered under their barracks and ordering guards to shoot any of the prisoners who sat down. One was killed and two were wounded. On another occasion, three men were hung by their

ABOVE: Rows of tents within the stockade at Camp Rathbun in Elmira, N.Y. Prisoners called it "Hellmira." LEFT: Tightwad Union Commissary General William Hoffman, right, with his staff. OPPOSITE: Libby Prison in Richmond housed Union officers in a trio of former warehouses. Prisoners were not allowed to look out the windows for fear of signaling civilian sympathizers.

thumbs for an hour with their toes barely touching the ground because they allegedly threatened another prisoner who had been an informer.

As the war progressed, the Union armies took prisoners in ever-growing numbers. Of the 12,000 Confederates that inhabited the prison at Rock Island, Illinois, during the war, 2,000 died. At Point Lookout, Maryland, 50,000 prisoners passed through during the war and from 12,000 to 20,000 were housed there at any given time. Among these, an estimated 4,000 deaths occurred, for a rate of roughly eight percent. The famous Southern poet Sidney Lanier was a captive at Point Lookout and contracted tuberculosis there that dramatically shortened his life. He died at age 39.

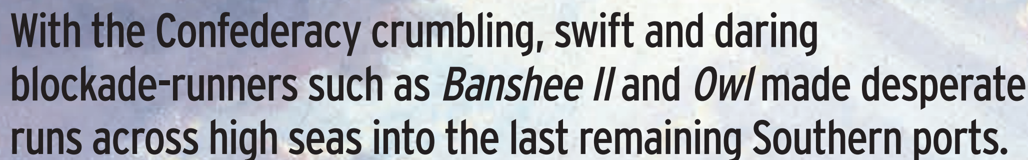
At Fort Delaware, on Pea Patch Island in New Castle County, Delaware, the population swelled to more than 13,000 prisoners following the Battle of Gettysburg in July 1863 and increased to more than 30,000 by the end of the war. The prisoners suffered about 2,500 deaths. One prisoner from Georgia was starved from a healthy weight of 140 pounds to 80, while another prisoner wrote graphically, "The bacon was rusty and slimy, the soup was slop filled with white worms a half-inch long."

In the spring of 1864, the problem of overcrowding had become so severe that a new prison was constructed on the site of a former mustering location for Union troops at Elmira, near the banks of the Chemoung River in upstate New York. Troops were detailed to convert the dilapidated camp into a prison and build a stockade. By July, 700 prisoners had been transferred from Point Lookout, and a month later the prison population swelled to more than 10,000 Confederate enlisted men. Conditions at Elmira were terrible from the beginning. The prison was below the level of the river, making drainage problematic. The barracks could hold only about half the prisoners; the rest were forced to live in tents. With the onset of winter, the men were exposed to extreme cold. Disease was widespread. By war's end, more than 12,000 prisoners had occupied Elmira, known to many of them as "Hellmira." Nearly 3,000 died, yielding a harvest of death approaching 25 percent and rivaling that of Andersonville.

On November 1, 1864, Dr. Eugene Sanger, the commander and camp surgeon at Elmira, wrote to U.S. Army Surgeon General Joseph Barnes: "Since August there have been 2,011 patients admitted to the hospital and 775 deaths. Have averaged daily 451 in hospital and 601 in quarters, an aggregate of 1,052 per day sick. At this rate the entire command will be admitted to hospital in less than a year and

Continued on page 98

With the Confederacy crumbling, swift and daring blockade-runners such as *Banshee II* and *Owl* made desperate runs across high seas into the last remaining Southern ports.



LAST OF THE grey phantoms

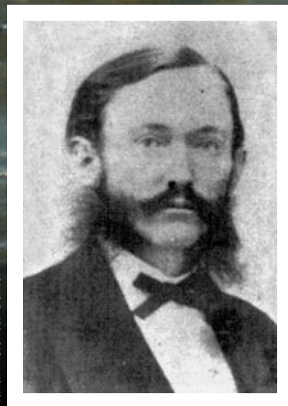
BY R. THOMAS CAMPBELL

Despite the increasing effectiveness of the Union naval blockade, more and more steamers plied the waters between the few remaining Confederate ports and Nassau, St. George, and Havana during the last two years of the Civil War, bringing supplies and munitions to the hard-pressed southern armies in the field. In 1863, a total of 199 blockade-runners made safe arrivals in Confederate ports. The next year that number increased to 244, with another 30 steaming into port in 1865. To achieve this daredevil record required a special design of steamer, one with high speed, large cargo capacity, and a low silhouette on the horizon. Add to those specifications a brave and imaginative commander, and success was usually, but not always, assured.

One such commander was English-born Tom Taylor, a supercargo for the Anglo-Confederate Trading Company of Liverpool, England. Taylor managed the loading and delivery of all payloads consigned to the Confederacy by his company. During the war, his steamers compiled an astounding record, successfully completing 49 runs out of 58 attempts. Supervising the operations of nine blockade-runners, Taylor personally made 28 trips to assure the safe delivery of his company's merchandise. Although sympathetic to the South's cause and her struggle for independence, Taylor put his vessel and his life in harm's way not for patriotism, but for the enormous profits that could be accrued by successfully running the Federal blockade. Little did he realize, however, that when the 252-foot *Banshee II* steamed majestically up the Cape Fear River at Wilmington, North Carolina, on the crisp fall morning of October 15, 1864, it would be the start of his last voyage of the war.

Banshee II represented the state of the art in shipbuilding when she was launched at the Aitken and Mansel facility at Glasgow, Scotland, in the summer of 1864. Advanced in concept, she constituted a class of vessel that would dominate the design of steam-driven merchant vessels well into the 20th century. Grossing 439 tons, *Banshee II* was 252 feet long with a beam of 31 feet. She drew only 11 feet of water when fully loaded, which permitted her to cross the bar easily at Wilmington. Her steel hull was a light gray, and

The Scottish-built, 252-foot-long blockade-runner *Banshee II* represented the state of the art in mid-19th-century shipbuilding. Giant sidewheels drove her through the water at nearly 16 knots. INSET, LEFT: Confederate Lieutenant John W. Dunnington. INSET, RIGHT: Commander John N. Maffitt, skipper of *Owl* on her various adventures.



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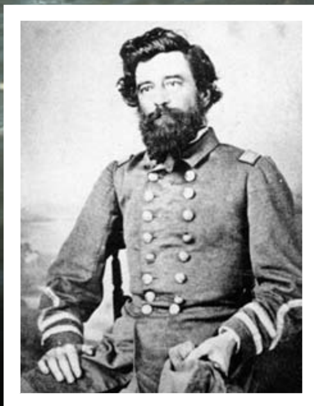

Author's Collection

her giant sidewheels could drive her through the water at over 15½ knots. Her 53-man crew, with their English officers and Southern pilots, made the speedy *Banshee II* almost impossible to catch. She was the pride of the Anglo-Confederate Trading Company, and Taylor was eager to put her through her paces.

Banshee II made three round trips into Wilmington before Taylor had an opportunity to sail on her. Laden with a valuable cargo of cotton, she left Wilmington on December 28, just before the Union attack and eventual capture of Fort Fisher. Taylor's favorite captain, the competent Jonathon Steele, was at the helm. Accompanied by Frank Hurst, the agent for the Anglo-Confederate Trading Company at Nassau in the Bahamas, Taylor set sail for Havana before attempting a run across the Caribbean to Galveston, Texas.

"When all was ready we experienced the greatest difficulty in finding a Galveston pilot," Taylor recalled. "Owing to the high rate of pay, numbers of men were to be found ready to offer their services, [but] it was extremely hard to obtain competent men. After considerable delay we had to content ourselves at last with a man who said he knew all about the port, but who turned out to be absolutely worthless. We then made a start, and with the exception of meeting with the most violent thunderstorm, in which the lightning was something awful, nothing extraordinary occurred on our passage across the Gulf of Mexico, and we scarcely saw a sail."

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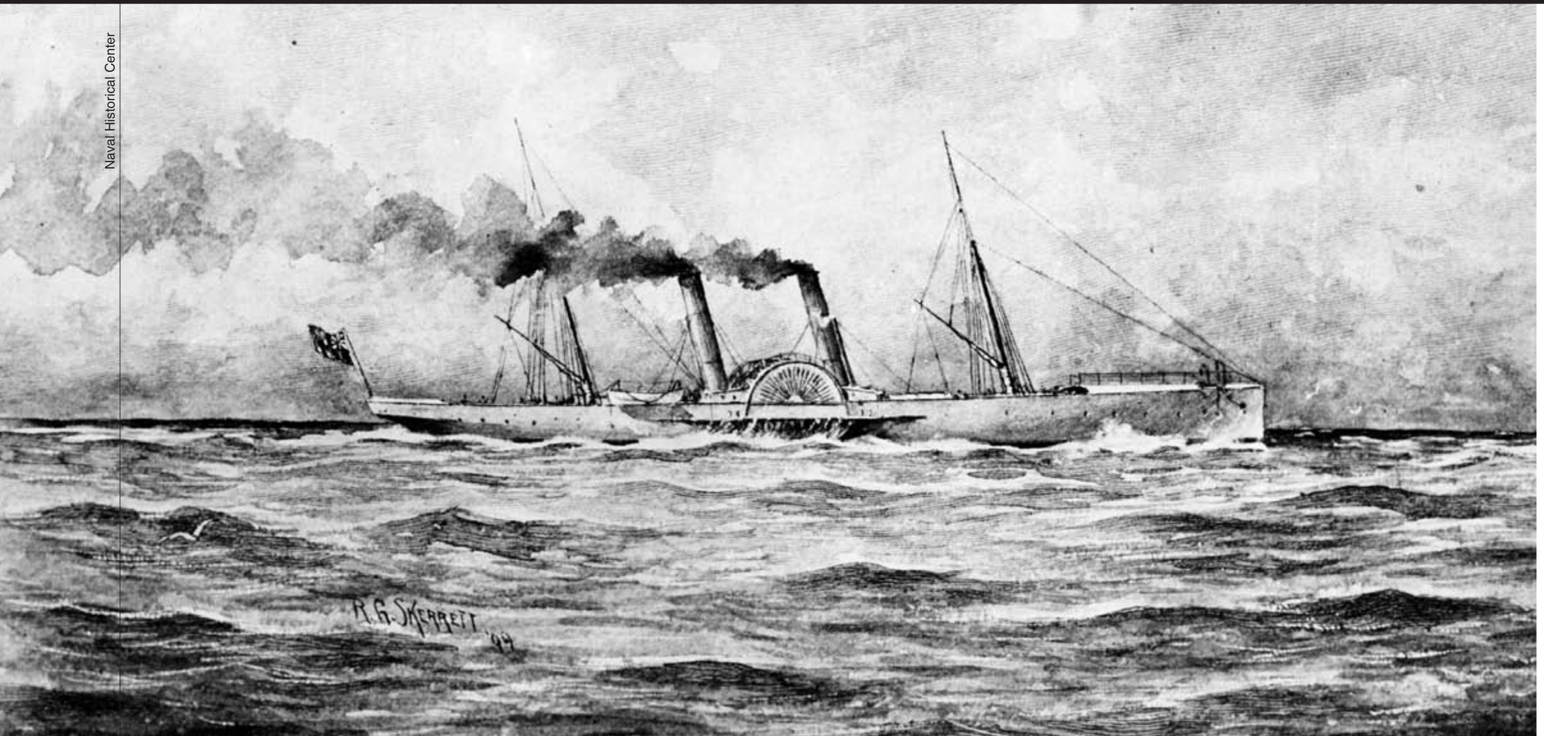

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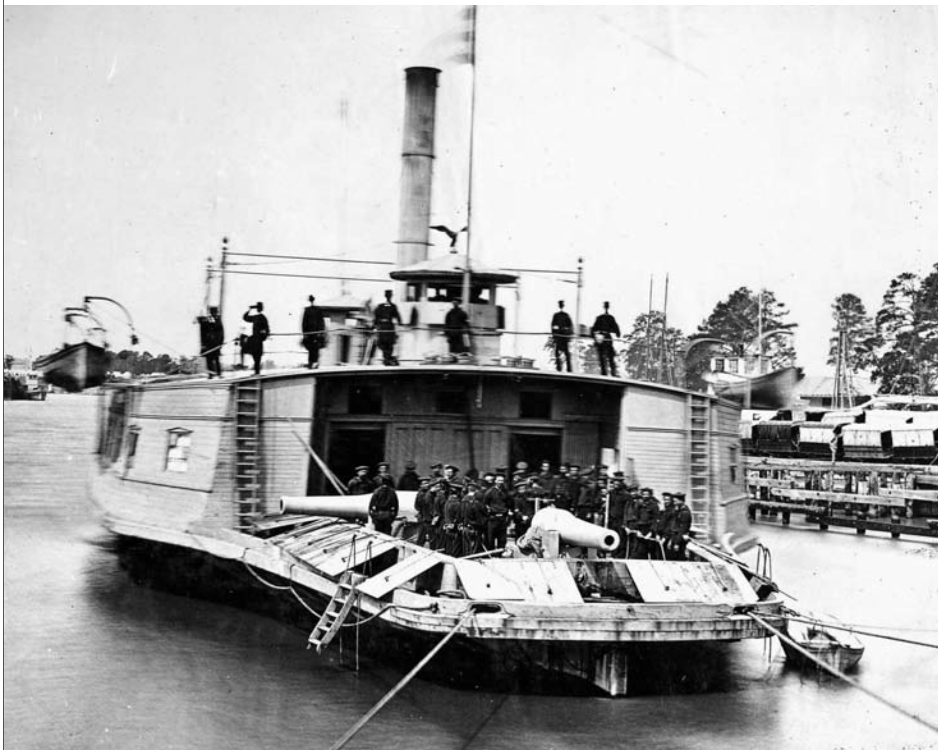


ABOVE: The original *Banshee*, built in 1862 in Liverpool, was captured in 1863 and sold to the U.S. Navy; she became part of the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron. LEFT: Mathew Brady took this photograph of a bristling Union gunboat on the Pamunkey River in Virginia.

It is 725 nautical miles from Havana to Galveston. The problem was not so much the distance between the two ports as the lack of transportation from Texas to the rest of the Confederacy. With the fall of Vicksburg and Port Hudson on the Mississippi River in 1863, very little in the way of supplies could reach the eastern half of the country. Most of the munitions, provisions, and consumer goods arriving at Galveston, therefore, were shipped by rail to Houston, where they were distributed throughout the Trans-Mississippi Department. In March 1865, *Banshee II* cautiously approached the Texas coast.

"It was a comparatively calm and very dark night," Taylor wrote, "just the one for the purpose, but within an hour all had changed and it commenced to blow a regular 'Norther.' Rain came down in torrents, then out of the inky blackness of clouds and rain came furious gusts, until a hurricane was blowing against which, notwithstanding that we were steaming at full speed, we made little or no way, and although the sea was smooth our decks were swept by white foam and spray. Suddenly we made out some dark objects all around us, and found ourselves drifting helplessly among the ships of the blockading squadron, which were steaming hard to their anchors, and at one moment we were almost jostling two of them. Whether they knew what we were, or mistook us for one of themselves matters not; they were too much occupied about their own safety to attempt to interfere."

Getting into Galveston that night was impossible, so Taylor let *Banshee II* drift free until she was clear of the enemy fleet. He

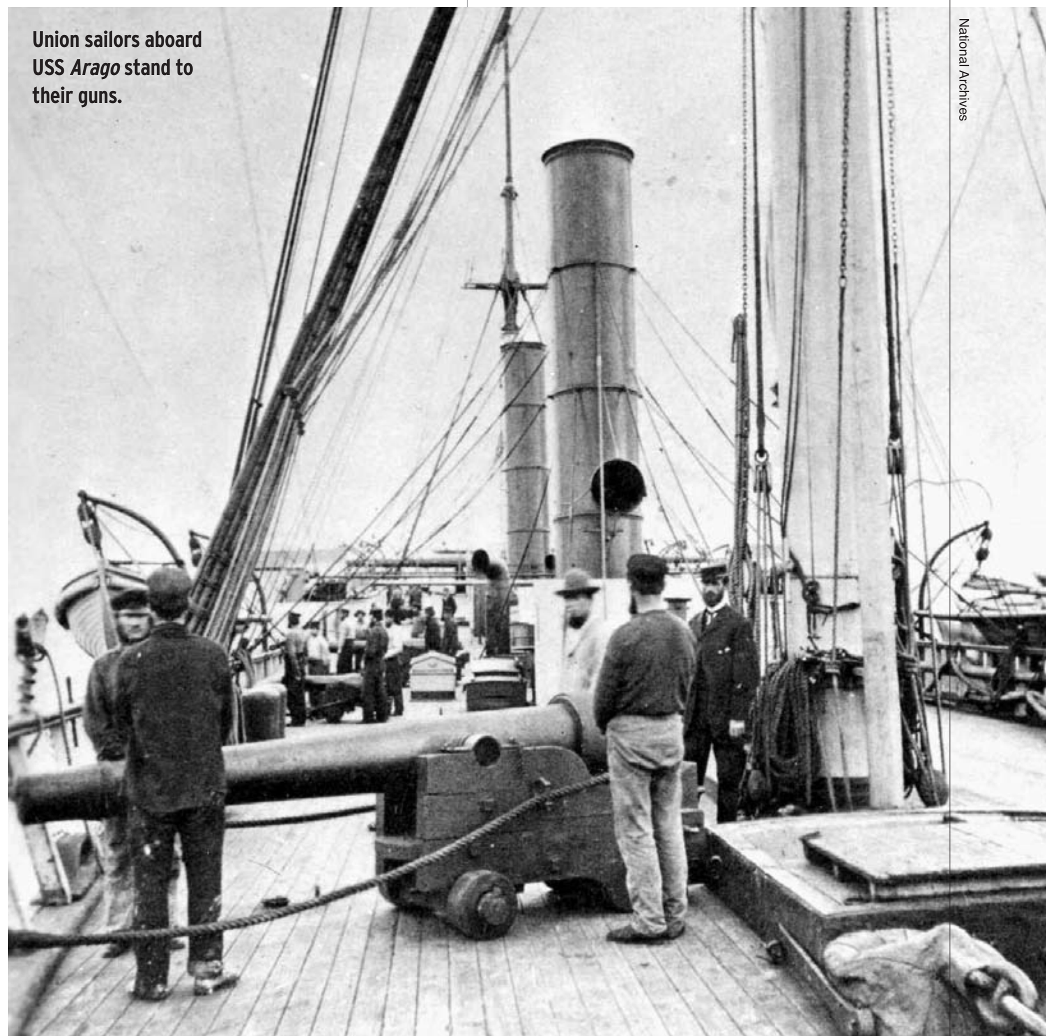
steamed slowly seaward, shaping a course to make land 30 miles to the southwest at daylight. He dropped anchor in perfectly calm water, the storm having subsided almost as quickly as it had risen. Having seen enough of his new pilot to realize that he was no good whatsoever, Taylor decided to lie off shore all day, keeping a sharp lookout, and that night creep slowly up the coast until he made out the Federal blockading fleet.

Anchoring again for the night, Taylor decided to make a bold dash for Galveston at daybreak. "All went well," he recalled. "We were unmolested during the day and we got under weigh towards evening, passing close to a wreck which we recognized as our old friend the *Will-o'-the-Wisp*, which had been driven ashore and lost on the very first trip she made after I had sold her. Immediately afterwards we very nearly lost our own ship too. Seeing a post of Confederate soldiers close by on the beach, we determined to steam close in and communicate with them in order to learn all about the tactics of the blockaders and our exact distance from Galveston. We backed her close in to the breakers in order to speak, but when the order was given to go ahead she declined to move, and the chief engineer reported that something had gone wrong with the cylinder valve, and that she must heave to for repairs."

It was an anxious moment. *Banshee II* had barely three fathoms beneath her, and her stern was almost buried in the white water. Taylor released the anchor, but in the heavy swell it failed to hold and the ship began to drift slowly but steadily toward shore. When at length the engineers managed to turn her head, Taylor and the others on the bridge were greatly relieved to see her point seaward and clear the breakers. "As soon as we reached deep water the damage was permanently repaired," he reported, "and we steamed cautiously up the coast, until about sundown we made out the topmasts of the blockading squadron right ahead. We promptly stopped, calculating that, as they were about ten to eleven miles from us, Galveston must lie a little further on our port bow. We let go our anchor and prepared for an anxious night; all hands were on deck and the cable was ready to be unshackled at a moment's notice, with steam as nearly ready as possible without blowing off, as at any moment a prowler from the squadron patrolling the coast might have made us out."

Banshee II had not been lying off for very long when the men on the starboard bow suddenly made out an enemy cruiser steaming toward them. It was a critical time; all hands dashed onto the deck and a man stood ready to knock the shackle out of the chain cable and release the anchor. Fortunately for the blockade-runners, the Union ship did not discover them, and soon disappeared over the horizon to the south.

Two hours before daylight, *Banshee II* quietly raised anchor and steamed on, feeling her way cautiously by the lead. When daylight broke, the men found themselves inside the Union fleet opposite Galveston and prepared to make a short dash for the bar. "We had been under weigh some time, when suddenly we discovered a launch close to us on the port bow filled with Northern blue-jackets and marines," Taylor said. "'Full speed ahead,' shouted Steele, and we were within an ace of running her down as we almost grazed her with our port paddle-wheel. Hurst and I looked straight down into the boat, waving them a parting salute. The crew seemed only too thankful at their narrow escape to open fire, but they soon regained their senses and threw up rocket after rocket in our wake as a warning to the blockading fleet to be on the alert."



Union sailors aboard USS *Arago* stand to their guns.

National Archives

To their dismay, the Confederates discovered that they had not taken sufficient account of the effects of the norther's effect on the current—instead of being opposite the town of Galveston, they found themselves three or four miles downstream. It was a

moment for immediate decision: the alternatives were to turn tail and race back to sea with the Federals' fastest cruisers in full pursuit, or else make a short but dangerous dash for Galveston under fire. Taylor decided to go for it, and orders to turn ahead full speed were given. To avoid the enemy fleet, *Banshee II* made a dash for the swash channel along the beach, only to discover that it was nothing more than a cul-de-sac. Shoal waters and heavy breakers still stood between the blockade-runner and Galveston.

By this time the Union fleet had opened fire, and shells were bursting all around the ship. Luckily for the Confederates, the enemy ships were in rough water on the windward side of the shoal and could not employ their guns with any precision. Although *Banshee II*'s funnels were riddled with shell splinters, she received no significant damage and had only one man wounded. But the worst was yet to come—white water lay dead ahead, and the ship's only chance was to bump through it. Everyone on board was well aware that if she became stuck fast they would lose both the ship and their lives, for no lifeboats could have been launched safely in such a surf.

"With two leadsmen in the chains we approached our fate, taking no notice of the bursting shells and round shot to which the blockaders treated us in their desperation."

"With two leadsmen in the chains we approached our fate," Taylor recalled, "taking no notice of the bursting shells and round shot to which the blockaders treated us in their desperation. It was not a question of the fathoms but of the feet we were drawing: twelve feet, ten, nine, and when we put her at it, as you do a horse at a jump, and as her nose was entering the white water, 'eight feet' was sung out. A moment afterwards we touched and hung; and I thought all was over, when a big wave came rolling along and lifted our stern and the ship bodily with a crack which could be heard a quarter of a mile off, and which we thought meant that her back was broken."

Banshee II went ahead. The worst was over, and, after two or three minor bumps, she emerged into the deep channel, helm hard a-starboard and heading straight for Galveston Bay, leaving the disappointed blockaders in her wake. It was a narrow escape, but *Banshee II* steamed gaily up to the town's wharves , which were crowded with townspeople who had watched the ship's exploits and cheered heartily for her success.

Taylor, to his disappointment, found Galveston a godforsaken place, its streets covered with sand, its wharves rotting, and its defenses in deplorable condition. The Federals, he believed, could have easily captured the city if they had taken the trouble to do so. But the crew's welcome was a warm one, and Maj. Gen. John Magruder, commanding the city, boarded the ship for a night of cheerful camaraderie. "We had a capital French cook," Taylor noted, "and as plenty of game, fish, and oysters were procurable, and our good liquor was plentiful, we had all the necessary ingredients for many most sociable evenings—this was the bright side of the picture."

The dark side of the picture was that Taylor had to travel all the way to Houston to secure an outbound cargo of cotton for his vessel. This he finally achieved, and after shipment over the worn-out rail line to Galveston, *Banshee II* cleared Galveston and returned to Havana without incident. By the time she reached the Cuban port, however, the war was over. Taylor sent the speedy runner home to England, where she was eventually sold for less than one-tenth of her original cost. The career of one of the Confederacy's last blockade-runners ended peacefully, if anticlimatically.

A sister ship, *Owl,* belonged to a new class of blockade-runners that appeared toward the close of the war. These vessels were constructed in Liverpool, England, under the watchful eye of Commander James D. Bulloch, the Confederate Navy's agent in Europe. Owned by the Southern government, they included the unimaginatively named menagerie *Bat, Stag,* and *Deer. Owl* was a 771-ton sidewheeler with a low, rakishly molded steel hull. She was 230 feet long, 26 feet abeam, and drew 10 1/2 feet of water. Her twin Watt engines could drive her at speeds up to 16 knots. She could carry 800 bales of cotton, and her oversized coal bunkers gave her an extra-long cruising range. Being careful to comply with English neutrality laws, *Owl* was placed under the command of British master Matthew J. Butcher and left Liverpool bound for Halifax, Nova Scotia, on July 29, 1864.

Beached remains of the British-built blockade-runner *Ruby*, which ran aground on June 11, 1863, at Folly Island, South Carolina.

Bulloch had personally selected *Owl*'s cargo. He elaborated on its contents in a letter to Confederate Secretary of the Navy Stephen R. Mallory, stating that the cargo

Library of Congress

contained goods for the Navy Department as well as the Ordnance Bureau. Bulloch also explained that he was sending a consignment of wire and a magnetic exploder with 100 fuses for electric torpedoes, the result of successful experiments carried out by Commander Matthew Fontaine Maury.

Arriving at Halifax, *Owl* attracted the attention of the U.S. Consul, who telegraphed on August 29 that the new blockade-runner was in port and was expected to leave shortly. Two days later, Consul M.M. Jackson rushed another telegram off to the Federal government. "British Blockade-running iron steamer Owl, 330 tons, has just cleared for Nassau with large valuable cargo, real destination, doubtless, Wilmington," he reported. "Steamer, schooner rigged; has two pipes, one abaft the other. Is long and low and painted light-red color. Takes nearly 100 seamen, probably to supply another vessel at Wilmington."

Owl did indeed head for Wilmington, but stopped first at Bermuda to pick up a pilot, arriving in the North Carolina port on September 19, 1864. Ten days prior to *Owl*'s arrival, Commander John Newland Maffitt received a telegram from Mallory. In it the naval secretary instructed Maffitt to relinquish his command of the ironclad CSS *Albemarle* in eastern North Carolina and proceed immediately to Wilmington, where he was to report to Flag Officer William F. Lynch. There, Mallory ordered, Maffitt was to take command of *Owl*. It would be Maffitt's final command of the war, but it would be several exasperating months before he was able to take her to sea.

While docked at Wilmington, Confederate naval officers attempted to transfer the *Owl* to government registry, but for some reason Butcher did not consider the process properly executed, and he refused to relinquish command. On the night of October 3, he crossed the bar at the mouth of the Cape Fear and headed for Bermuda with a full load of Confederate cotton. In spite of the moonless night, Federal blockaders quickly spotted the ship and proceeded to send nine shots screaming over and around the speeding Confederate vessel. Several shells exploded in close proximity, slightly wounding Butcher and several crewmen, but *Owl* reached St. George safely a few days later. Butcher, informed that a Confederate naval officer would soon take his place for the return trip to Wilmington, sailed for Liverpool. First Lt. John W. Dunnington took command of *Owl* and, guided by the experienced pilot Tom Burroughs, arrived uneventfully back at Wilmington on December 2.

While Maffitt waited impatiently in Wilmington for the transfer of *Owl* to naval registry, he received a series of instructions from Mallory. The naval secretary was convinced that the most efficient use of the fast steamers now entering the service was to operate them strictly as Confederate Navy vessels, officered and crewed by regular naval personnel. Mallory emphasized that "the *Owl* is the first of several steamers built for and on account of the Confederate Government, and which are to be run under the direction of the Secretary of the Navy. Naval officers are to be placed in command, and you are selected to take charge of the *Owl.* As the *Owl* will soon be followed by several other vessels under this Department, it is important that uniformity, as far as practicable, be observed in their management."

Five days later, Mallory sent an urgent telegram to Maffitt at Wilmington: "It is of the first importance that our steamers should not fall into the enemy's hands. Apart from the specific loss sustained by the country in the capture of blockaded runners, these vessels, lightly armed, now constitute the fleetest and most efficient part of his blockading force off Wilmington. As commanding officer of the *Owl* you will please devise and adopt thorough and efficient means for saving all hands and destroying the vessel and cargo whenever these measures may become necessary to prevent capture. Upon your firmness and ability the Department relies for the execution of this important trust."

"Union fire became more accurate, and it looked as if all was lost, when someone pointed to a steamer coming out of Galveston Bay. It was the little CSS *Diana*...."

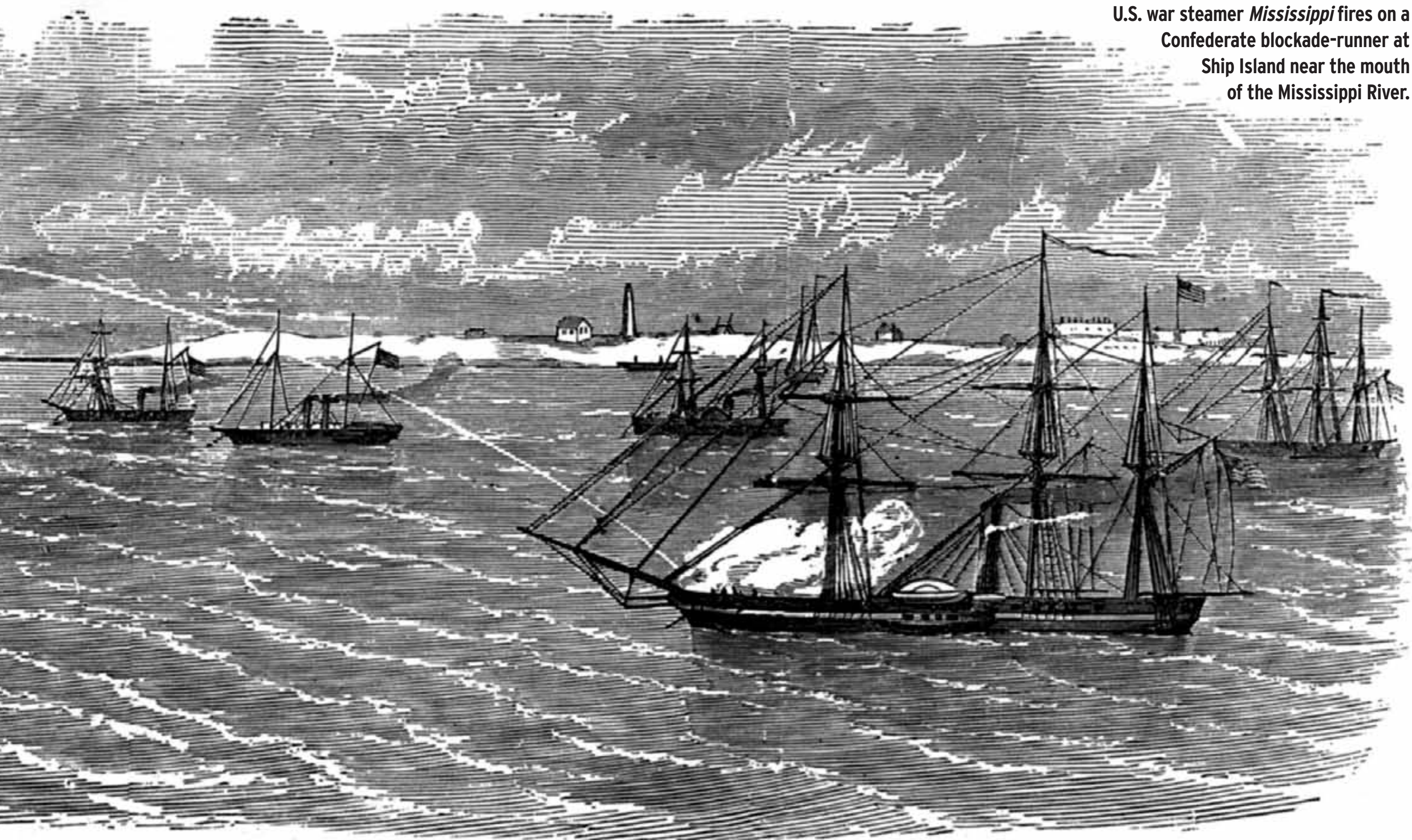
On November 25, Mallory wrote again: "Before leaving port you will station your crew for the different boats of the steamer, having placed in them water and provisions, and also nautical instruments. When capture, in your judgment, becomes inevitable, fire the vessel in several places and embark in the boats, making for the nearest land. The Department leaves to your discretion the time when and the circumstances that must govern you in the destruction of the *Owl* in order to prevent her falling into the hands of the enemy."

Although Mallory's obsession with the possible capture of *Owl* indicated the desperate straits in which the Confederacy now found itself, the urgent recommendations to a bold and imaginative commander such as Maffitt were unnecessary. Upon the arrival of his new command, Maffitt immediately set out to sea aboard the speedy runner. On the dark night of December 21, he drove *Owl* across the bar at the mouth of the Cape Fear River and set a course for Bermuda. Stacked in the hold and on deck were 780 bales of valuable southern cotton. *Owl,* as Maffitt later wrote, "ran clear of the Federal sentinels without the loss of a rope yarn." Arriving at St. George, Maffitt found several blockade-runners sheltering there, awaiting the results of the expected Union assault against Fort Fisher. By the first part of January, word reached the island that Union Maj. Gen. Benjamin Butler's assault against the Confederate bastion had failed, and Maffitt prepared to return to Wilmington.

On January 12, 1865, with her cargo hold stuffed with assorted hardware for the Army of Northern Virginia, *Owl* stole out of St. George and sped toward the North Carolina coast. On the dark night of the 15th, Maffitt approached Old Inlet at the mouth of the Cape Fear River. Luck was with him. Lookouts spotted only one blockader, and he easily avoided it. Crossing the bar on a high tide at 8 pm, Maffitt eased the big steamer up to the wharf at Fort Caswell. Wisps of smoke spiraled from her twin stacks as crewmen, elated over their easy and successful run through the blockade, rapidly drew the mooring lines taut. Presently, a small boat pulled alongside. The occupants, Confederate soldiers from the fort, had some disturbing news. Fort Fisher had fallen earlier that

same day to a combined Federal land and navy force. At that very moment, Southern forces were evacuating Fort Caswell and preparing to retreat to Wilmington. Several Union warships had already crossed the bar at New Inlet and were prowling the river. *Owl* must leave immediately.

Knowing that he had only minutes to make his escape, Maffitt acted with cool dispatch. As he was about to give the order to slip the chain, his pilot begged for a short delay. He pleaded for Maffitt to wait for 10 minutes while he slipped ashore to check on his ailing wife. Maffitt granted his request, on the strict condition that he return quickly. Giving his word, the pilot bounded onto the wharf and disappeared into the darkness. Maffitt nervously paced the steamer's deck. Calling the engine room, he ordered the engineer to maintain the highest possible steam pressure and to be ready to start the engines at a moment's notice. In addition, he ordered the lines cast off and the chain unshackled. Upriver, Maffitt could already see the shad-



U.S. war steamer *Mississippi* fires on a Confederate blockade-runner at Ship Island near the mouth of the Mississippi River.

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owy forms of several blockaders, and they appeared to be moving in *Owl*'s direction. The minutes seemed like hours. As steam hissed softly from the engine room, Maffitt once more checked his watch—10 minutes, 15 minutes, they must leave now! Suddenly, the pilot came bounding out of the night. The moment his feet hit the deck, *Owl*'s big paddle wheels began to turn. The mooring chain let go, her head turned southeastward, and the powerful steamer ran for the open sea. The nearest Federal ship immediately opened fire, her shells exploding around the fleeing blockade-runner, showering her with shrapnel but doing no damage. Soon the speeding *Owl* was lost in the darkness.

Maffitt had mixed feelings as the throbbing engines drove *Owl* on into the night. He and his vessel had escaped capture, but with Wilmington gone, he was now completely isolated from his family and his homeland. As *Owl* steamed seaward, the muffled explosions caused by the destruction of Fort Caswell were clearly audible. Maffitt wrote that they "rumbled portentously from wave to wave in melancholy echoes." Watching the distant flashes of light, the Confederate commander "in poignant distress turned from the heartrending scene." It was more than he could bear.

With his coal supply dangerously low, Maffitt returned to Bermuda under easy steam, entering St. George's harbor on January 21. He arrived just in time to stop five sister blockade-runners that were preparing to depart for Wilmington. Being the ranking Confederate officer in the islands, Maffitt called 1st Lts. John Wilkinson and John Low to the home of the Confederate quartermaster, Major Norman S. Walker. There, amid the gloom of the most recent news, the three officers discussed possible strategies for reaching the struggling armies with their supplies. Charleston had not yet fallen, and Maffitt and the others determined to sail for that port. "My cargo being important, and the capture of Fort Fisher and the Cape Fear cutting me off from Wilmington," Maffitt wrote, "I deemed it my duty to make an effort to enter the harbor of Charleston in order to deliver the much needed supplies."

Accordingly, on January 26, 1865, *Owl* cleared St. George bound for Charleston. Although several Federal warships were sighted on the departure from Bermuda, the speedy vessel soon left them far behind. Arriving off Charleston in the dead of night, Maffitt placed the government mail and his journal, including his log of his famous cruise aboard CSS *Florida,* in two weighted bags and slung them over the side on a heavy line. He ordered a trusted sailor to stand by the line with a hatchet—if capture appeared imminent, he was to send the pouches to the bottom of the sea. Several Federal blockaders, freed from their service at Wilmington, now crowded the entrances to the channels leading into Charleston, and Maffitt steamed *Owl* slowly back and forth trying to locate an opening.

Writing later, he described the nerve-racking effort. "On the western tail-end of Rat-

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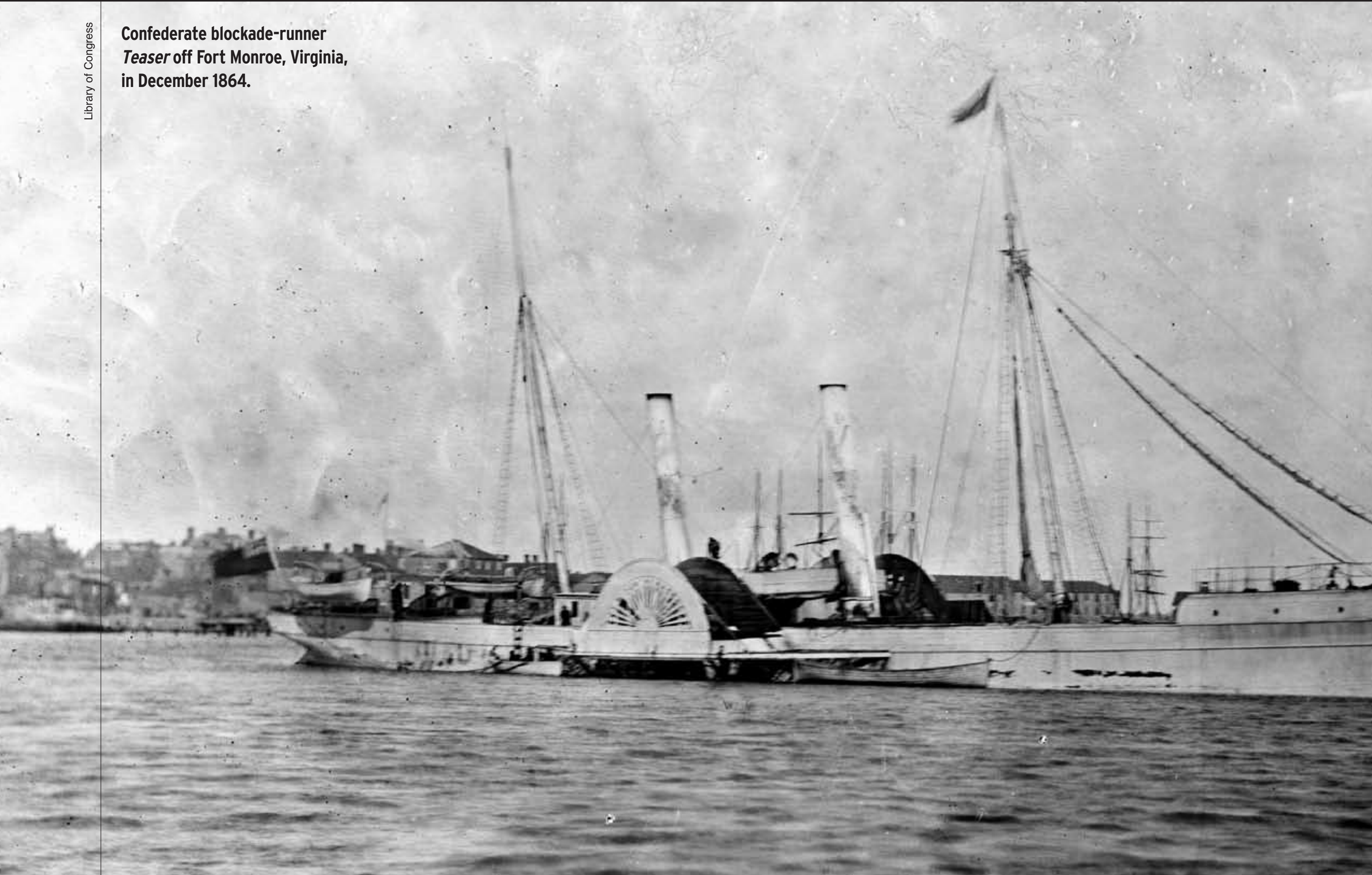

Confederate blockade-runner *Teaser* off Fort Monroe, Virginia, in December 1864.

tlesnake Shoal," he reported, "we encountered streaks of mist and fog that enveloped stars and everything for a few moments, when it would become quite clear again. Running cautiously in one of these obscurations, a sudden lift in the haze disclosed that we were about to run into an anchored blockader. We had bare room with a hard-a-port helm to avoid him some fifteen or twenty feet, when their officer on deck called out, 'Heave to, or I'll sink you!' The order was unnoticed, and we received his entire broadside, that cut away our turtle-back, perforated the forecastle, and tore up the bulwarks in front of our engine room, wounding twelve men, some severely, some slightly. The quartermaster stationed by the mail-bags was so convinced that we were captured that he instantly used his hatchet, and sent them, well moored, to the bottom; hence my meager account of the cruise of the *Florida*."

Instantly, the area was illuminated by burning lights and numerous rockets that sputtered into the blackened sky. *Owl* was silhouetted in the flickering light as her paddle wheels drove her forward at full throttle. The guns of the blockaders roared, sending shells screaming indiscriminately in all directions. Enemy vessels swarmed everywhere, but owing to the confusion, Maffitt was able to thread his way through the melee. *Owl,* although badly damaged, finally reached the perimeter of the surrounding blockaders, and with engines still at full power, drove steadily onward into the darkened Atlantic. With no way into Charleston, a disheartened Maffitt reluctantly set course for Nassau.

Owl limped into the Bahamian port, Maffitt recorded, "with a shot through her funnel, several more through her hull, her standing rigging in rags and other indications of a hot time." The Confederate commander wanted to try running into Charleston again, but while *Owl* was undergoing repairs, word reached Nassau that the Confederates had evacuated the South Carolina city. Only one southern port remained accessible now—the distant town of Galveston. With a full cargo of essential supplies still on board *Owl,* Maffit was determined to land it somewhere in the Confederacy. He decided to sail to Havana and, from there, try to reach Galveston. On the way, however, Maffitt agreed to drop off three passengers on the North Carolina coast. Thomas Conolly, a wealthy member of British Parliament, had approached him in Nassau, asking for his assistance in reaching the Confederacy. He was the bearer, Conolly explained, of important dispatches from Confederate diplomat James Mason to the government officials in Richmond. Maffitt, eager to be on his way, agreed, and although the repairs to *Owl* were

incomplete, he steamed out of Nassau on February 23, bound once more for the Carolina coast.

Just before dawn on the morning of February 26, *Owl* approached Shallotte Inlet. With much difficulty, in a cold driving rain, crewmen lowered a small boat, and Conolly and two others set out for the sandy shore that was barely visible in the fog and spray. The heavy surf swamped the boat, but the three men, cold, wet, and miserable, made it safely onto the beach. Eventually, Conolly made his way to Fayetteville, where he visited Maffitt's family before journeying on to Richmond. There he met President Jefferson Davis, dined with General Robert E. Lee, and witnessed the sad evacuation of the Confederate capital.

After dropping off Conolly and the two other passengers, Maffitt steamed for Havana, where he arrived around the first of March. There he found other blockade-runners, including Tom Taylor's *Banshee II,* preparing for the long run to Galveston. It took four to five days to steam the 725 miles from Havana to Galveston, and with the prospect of finding no coal at the Texas port, the steamers had to carry enough fuel for the round trip. Only the largest steamers had the bunker capacity to carry that much fuel. Even then, their draft might be too great to allow passage over the bar at Galveston. *Owl* still had her full load of supplies, and while her fuel supply might be marginal, Maffitt resolved nevertheless to make the attempt.

Before he could start for Galveston, however, Maffitt received orders from the Navy Department to execute one more courier mission. On March 24, he landed Assistant Surgeon D.S. Watson and First Assistant Engineer E.R. Archer on the Florida coast, nine miles from St. Marks. Maffitt left Havana for good in the middle of March. Hot on his heels, USS *Cherokee* steamed out of the harbor as well. Passing Morro Castle, *Owl* hugged the western coast, followed by *Cherokee*. The chase continued for more than an hour. *Owl* had the advantage of speed and Maffitt's superior seamanship. Throwing "dust into the eyes" of his pursuer by changing from hard to soft coal and clouding the air with dense, black smoke, *Owl* steamed past the Federal cruiser and disappeared into the darkness.

Arriving off the Texas port, Maffitt found 16 Federal blockaders guarding the entrance to Galveston Bay. Pressing on in the face of heavy fire, *Owl* managed to cross the bar, but ran aground on Bird Island Shoals. The enemy commanders were determined to destroy the helpless steamer, and they increased their fire, their shells dropping all around. Maffitt stood on the bridge as exploding shrapnel whizzed about him and coolly directed efforts to free the runner. Her powerful paddle wheels labored in reverse, but *Owl* would not budge. Union fire became more accurate, and it looked as if all was lost, when someone pointed to a steamer coming out of Galveston Bay. It was the little CSS *Diana,* captained by James H. McGarvey. Seeing *Owl*'s plight, McGarvey steamed into the storm of shot and shell and threw her a towline. With *Diana*'s help, *Owl* slid off the sandbar and steamed safely into the bay. It was a narrow escape.

On May 9, long after the hardened veterans of Robert E. Lee and Joseph Johnston had stacked their arms for the last time, Maffitt ran the blockade out of Galveston and arrived back in Havana. There he received word that all Confederate forces west of the Mississippi had surrendered. Maffitt and his fellow officers had to face the reality that their cause was lost. Deciding that the best course of action was to return to Liverpool and deliver *Owl* to Fraser, Trenholm and Company, Maffitt left Havana for the long ocean crossing. During the voyage, he maintained a wary eye for Federal cruisers, which were under urgent orders to apprehend him. Stopping at Nassau for coal, *Owl* reached Liverpool without incident and steamed up the Mersey River on July 14.

The following day, Maffitt gathered the entire crew on the quarter deck and addressed them for the final time as their commander. "This is the last time we meet as sailors of the Confederate States Navy," he told them. "The Confederacy is dead. Our country is in the hands of the enemy, and we must accept the verdict. I am grateful to you for your loyalty to me, and to the South." Maffitt then paid off the men, spliced the mainbrace one last time, and to the accompaniment of three resounding cheers from the crew, slowly lowered the Confederate flag. *Owl*'s gallant little war was over. □

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HARD LESSON

Continued from page 17

crossed the Tallahatchie River at New Albany after traveling slowly through the heavily timbered and swampy lowlands of northern Mississippi. The first contact with the enemy occurred that day when Smith's troopers met and dispersed a force of 600 state militia near Pontotoc. The snail's pace of the Union force continued as it crossed numerous swamps and creeks overflowing with winter rains. More threatening, the Federal flanks and rear came under repeated attacks from small bands of Forrest's men attempting to delay their advance. While the bluecoats struggled on, Forest concentrated his troopers at West Point, just south of the enemy.

The Federals reached Okolona on the 18th and commenced razing the land and tearing up track from the Mobile & Ohio at a leisurely pace. Smith's tardiness may have stemmed from a desire to abort the mission altogether because of the presence of Forrest. (The day before, he had broached this idea to his officers, citing the gathering of enemy forces at West Point and the fact that they were already eight days late in joining Sherman at Meridian.) A skirmish on the 19th left Forrest determined to try to channel the enemy between the swollen Tombigbee River on the right and the overflowing Sakatonchee River 12 miles to the west. Meanwhile, after reaching West Point on the 20th, Smith said he was too ill to continue and turned over command to Brig. Gen. Benjamin Grierson, but not before he ordered Grierson to abandon all plans to meet Sherman at Meridian. When Grierson insisted that he would press on to Meridian, Smith reassumed command and immediately ordered a countermarch to Memphis. According to an officer in the 4th U.S. Regular Cavalry Regiment, "Our General Smith was a beaten man well before Forrest ever delivered a blow against him."

As the Federals headed north on the 20th, a spirited clash occurred between their rear guard and Forrest's main body. After a two-hour contest, the Federals failed to dislodge the Confederates, who were firing from behind a log and rail fence, and drew off to the north. For the rest of the day, the Rebs pushed after the enemy, not stopping until they reached the outskirts of Okolona. At Egypt Station on the 21st, a Confederate assault led by Forrest himself forced the Federals through Okolona to a small rise west of town. Forrest ordered a saber charge by Colonel Tyree Bell's brigade that shattered the 7th Indiana Cavalry Regiment and routed the remainder of its parent 3rd Cavalry Brigade on the road to Pontotoc. Forrest led the chase after the defeated enemy, but halted after five miles to give his disordered command time to regroup.

As the enemy pursuit slackened, Smith established a defensive line on a ridge atop Ivey Farms. Protected on both flanks by steep ridges and in front by thick underbrush and patches of oak trees, Smith's position was the best defensive terrain he had occupied since leaving West Point. Most of the men were dismounted, and a battery of four cannon supported them. An attack on foot by the Confederates was repulsed, and Colonel Jeffrey Forrest, younger brother of General Forrest, was killed. With a mixture of rage and despair over his sibling's death, Forrest led a second assault on the enemy lines. The blow was delivered just as the Union cavalry was mounting up to continue its retreat. The fight moved on for two miles to another improvised Union position, from which they were pried out of by the following graycoats. During the fighting Forrest had two horses shot from under him.

A mile up the road, the Federals made a last stand. Over 2,000 blue cavalrymen faced off against Forrest's 300-man vanguard, the only Confederates who were able to keep up with the rapid Union retreat. Seeing the miniscule Rebel force facing them, the Northern troopers attacked. The Confederates counterattacked, and a wild melee ensued. With the odds heavily against him, Forrest was on the verge of being overwhelmed when the brigades of Bell and Colonel Robert "Black Bob" McCulloch arrived in time to strike the enemy flanks and send them reeling toward the rear. Almost out of ammunition and exhausted after two days of combat, Forrest called off any further pursuit.

For all intents and purposes, the Union cavalry was a beaten force. Reaching Pontotoc on the night of the 21st, the command was thankful "that Devil Forrest" was no longer barking at their heels. According to Colonel George E. Waring of Smith's command, "The retreat to Memphis was a weary, disheartening and almost panic-stricken flight, in the greatest disorder and confusion." For the next week, elements of Smith's riders straggled back into Memphis, completely spent. In the running fight from West Point to Okolona, Smith had lost 47 killed, 152 wounded, and 120 missing. Forrest's losses amounted to 27 killed, 97 wounded, and 20 missing in action.

While Smith's cavalrymen were being driven back to Memphis, Sherman's infantry columns steadily marched for Vicksburg. In parallel lines, Hurlbut's and McPherson's men passed Decatur, then Union, while Winslow's horse brigade headed for Canton, 25 miles north of Jackson. On the 26th, the Union infantry corps passed over the Pearl River and entered Canton, destroying the town of 2,500 citizens and the rail lines surrounding it. On February 27, Sherman left his army and went to Vicksburg to discuss a planned joint operation on the Red River with Maj. Gen. Nathaniel Banks.

On March 1, in wet, freezing weather, Hurlbut's and McPherson's weary foot soldiers left Canton for Vicksburg, reaching their old camp grounds on the Black River east of the city on the 3rd. The entire march from Canton to the Big Black had been monitored by Lee's cavalry, which had set numerous ambushes for the infantry and the army's supply trains. Despite their best efforts, the Southern horsemen could make no headway against the massed, compact enemy formations. Meanwhile, Polk had received some much-needed reinforcements in the form of Lt. Gen. William Hardee's 10,000-man

infantry corps, and was eager to throw them at the retreating enemy. However, the reinforcements had arrived at Demopolis on February 27, long after Sherman's army was out of harm's way.

In the end, Sherman's Meridian expedition was at most a limited and fleeting success. Considering the numbers of troops involved, there was no large-scale infantry combat. In fact, most of the fighting was done by mounted forces. Losses were small considering the number of troops involved. Hurlbut and McPherson lost 126 men, while Winslow sustained 70 casualties. The Confederates lost 359 men, including those from Forrest's command. Sherman had wanted to cripple the Rebel forces in Mississippi, thus removing any threat to Vicksburg or of reinforcements being used in other theaters of the war. On both counts he failed. For the remainder of the conflict, Confederate bands would harass Federal lines of communication and tie down large numbers of Union troops in Mississippi, Georgia, and Tennessee, while the transit of Southern forces to Georgia from the Magnolia State was never seriously interrupted.

Sherman's second aim, the destruction of the natural resources and infrastructure of Mississippi, was also minimally successful. Despite the elimination of 59 miles of rail track and the destruction of 21 locomotives, 45 railroad cars, and miles of telegraph wire, the Confederates were able to replace most of these losses in a matter of weeks. The devastation of the land and its farm produce created hardships for the local population but never seriously impeded the operations of the South's western armies in the last year of the war.

But whatever level of success could be attributed to Sherman's Meridian enterprise, one thing was certain: it heralded the start of a new Federal policy of "hard war" designed to beat down the Confederacy by not only eradicating its armed forces but also degrading Southern morale and undermining its economy. In that sense, Meridian was a dress rehearsal for the merciless struggle Sherman would later perfect in Georgia and the Carolinas. □

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By David Alan Johnson

Without the shadowy help of Rose O'Neal Greenhow, the Confederacy would have been hard-pressed to win the First Battle of Bull Run.

"But for you, there would have been no Battle of Bull Run." When Confederate President Jefferson Davis made that blanket statement in the summer of 1862, he was not addressing Pierre G.T. Beauregard, Joseph E. Johnston, or any of his other generals who had taken part in the war's first major battle in July 1861. Instead, he was talking to a slightly built widow in her mid-40s who had never seen the Virginia battlefield.

Rose O'Neal was born in 1817 into a wealthy family in Montgomery County, Md. With her husband, Dr. Robert Greenhow, and their growing family, she travelled throughout the United States until 1854, when Dr. Greenhow died in California. Instead of staying in the West, Greenhow decided to move back to the Washington, D.C., area with her four daughters.

With her money and background, she quickly became a leading member of Washington society. She and her daughters took up residence in a fashionable quarter of the city, on the corner of Thirteenth and I streets, not far from the White House. In fact, she frequently visited the White House as the guest of President James Buchanan and, afterward, of President Abraham Lincoln.

Despite her continued visits to the White House, Greenhow was anything but a supporter of Lincoln and his new Republican government. Her parents had been slave owners, and her father had been murdered by one of his slaves. Like the rest of her family, she was avidly proslavery and anti-abolitionist. When the southern states began seceding from the Union, Greenhow became an open supporter of the new Confederacy.

The assistant quartermaster for the United States government, Captain Thomas Jordan, was also the main recruiting officer for Confederate spies in Washington. Because Greenhow's prosouthern leanings were so well-known, Jordan approached her to work for the Confederate cause. Greenhow not only agreed to spy for the South, she also offered to organize her own spy network.

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Rose O'Neal Greenhow and her daughter in a photo taken while she was confined by the Union in 1862.

It did not take long for Greenhow to put together an espionage ring that would prove to be highly efficient and productive. By the time Fort Sumter was attacked in April 1861, Greenhow's network consisted of at least 16 contacts. Among them was a Secret Service agent assigned to Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan's staff; clerks in the Navy Department, the Adjutant General's office, and various other government departments; at least one Union soldier; employees on the staff of several senior Army officers; a banker; a dentist; and a number of other well-connected people in and around Washington.

The organization looked fine on paper, and Greenhow's operatives soon began passing information between Washington and Confederate intelligence personnel in Virginia. But the first real opportunity for her spy network to prove itself came in July 1861. After the Confederacy had decided to transfer its Congress from Montgomery, Ala., to Richmond, Va., Abraham Lincoln called a cabinet meeting attended by several generals, including 75-year-old General Winfield Scott, the commanding general of the United States Army. The purpose of the meeting was to determine what should be done about a Confederate force that had assembled in the vicinity of Manassas Junction, about 25 miles west of Washington. Scott suggested that the Confederates, under the command of General Pierre G.T. Beauregard, should be attacked and dispersed, and that the attack should be led by Brig. Gen. Irvin McDowell, with a force of just over 30,000 men.

Beauregard's force had taken up a position near a small stream called Bull Run. It was estimated that there were about 25,000 Rebels, and their position was not considered formidable. The main worry was that a second Confederate army, under General Joseph E. Johnston, might reinforce the Rebels at Manassas. Johnston's force of about 10,000 was then situated in the Shenandoah Valley. If Johnston could get to Beauregard, either before or during the attack, McDowell

and his men would be in serious trouble.

Greenhow's operatives soon got word of the Union intentions, and they were able to gather all the information that Beauregard needed to know about the enemy. Thanks to Greenhow and her spies, Beauregard even had a copy of the orders that McDowell had issued to his troops.

Johnston was informed of the impending battle and ordered to go to Beauregard's immediate assistance. Because of Greenhow's warning, Johnston was able to start for Manassas before Union troops could do anything about it.

McDowell attacked Beauregard's position on Sunday, July 21, and began to push the Confederates into retreat. But the Union push was blunted by troops under Brig. Gen. Thomas J. Jackson, who would become known as "Stonewall" Jackson for his stubborn holding action at Bull Run. This allowed Johnston's 10,000 men enough time to arrive on the field and turn the tide of battle. The combined forces of Beauregard and Johnston subsequently routed McDowell's men, who broke and ran from the field.

Immediately after the battle Greenhow received another note, this one from the Confederate government at Richmond: "Our President and our General direct me to thank you. The Confederacy owes you a debt." It did indeed. Without her intelligence, Johnston's men would never have reached Manassas on time, and the battle—and possibly the war—would have had a far different outcome.

After the rout at Bull Run, Winfield Scott was replaced as overall commander by Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan. McClellan brought his own personal spy with him, a Scottish immigrant named Allan Pinkerton. Pinkerton had become the first professional detective in Chicago in 1850, and had made a reputation for himself as one of the top detectives in the country. At the end of July 1861, he was given the assignment of keeping Greenhow under surveillance.

Along with two assistants, Pinkerton took up position outside Greenhow's house. He had been watching for only a few minutes—although in heavy rain it seemed a lot longer—when a visitor entered the house. Pinkerton recognized the visitor as an infantry captain he had met for the first time that same day. He identified the officer as "Captain Ellison," although that was not the man's real name.

A few minutes later, Greenhow and Ellison entered the room that Pinkerton was watching. Although Pinkerton could not hear the conversation as clearly as he would have liked because of the ongoing storm, he heard enough to know "that this trusted officer was then and there engaged in betraying his country, and furnishing to his treasonably-inclined companion such information regarding the disposition of our troops as he possessed."

At about 12:30 in the morning, Ellison finally left Greenhow's house and returned to his post. The captain's real identity was John Elwood of the 5th U.S. Infantry. Pinkerton related his information to Assistant Secretary of War Thomas A. Scott, who questioned the captain and had him placed under arrest. Following this, Pinkerton returned to Greenhow's residence to resume his surveillance.

Although Greenhow knew by then that Ellison/Elwood had been apprehended, she carried on with her activities as though nothing had happened, while the evidence against her increased.

On August 23, 1861, she was placed under house arrest, and later held in the Old Capitol Prison. Even in captivity Greenhow was able to continue spying for the South due to the inattention of her guards, sending coded messages to Confederate agents. In June 1862 she was exchanged for several Union prisoners of war. When she and her daughter arrived in Richmond they were welcomed personally by President Jefferson Davis. □

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PRISONS

Continued from page 83

thirty-six percent die." Elmira operated for 15 months, and on July 1, 1865, nearly three months after Lee's surrender, 218 Confederates remained in the facility's hospital. The last prisoner departed Elmira on September 27.

Union Commissary General Hoffman has been both praised and vilified for his administration of the Union prisons during the Civil War. A career officer, he had been a classmate of Lee's at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. He was a veteran of the Indian wars and the Mexican War. Captured in Texas at the beginning of the Civil War, he was exchanged on August 27, 1862. As commissary general, he was subordinate to Quartermaster General Montgomery Meigs, who instructed him that the barracks at the Rock Island prison should be "put up in the roughest and cheapest manner, mere shanties, with no fine work about them." Meigs, who had lost a son in the war, had no sympathy to spare on Confederate prisoners.

While adequate supplies of food and clothing were available most of the time, some civilian contractors took government funds and either failed to deliver goods or dealt in such shoddy products that clothing and blankets were of such inferior quality as to be of little use. Likewise, contracted meat was delivered to prisoners already spoiled and unfit to eat. At Point Lookout, Major Allen G. Brady, the prison provost, was widely believed to have taken provisions meant for prisoners and kept them for himself.

Hoffman's frugality became legendary. Although Congress had appropriated adequate funds for the purpose of caring for prisoners, he was reluctant to make such purchases and actually returned $2 million to the Treasury at war's end. He once ordered a prison commander, "As long as a prisoner has clothing upon him, however much torn, you must issue nothing to him." When a Confederate officer questioned Hoffman about his ill treatment at Camp Chase, the commissary general bluntly stated that it was "retaliation for innumerable outrages which have been committed on our people." After the war, Hoffman was officially commended for his "faithful, meritorious, and distinguished services as Commissary-General during the Rebellion." He retired from the army in 1870 with his permanent rank of colonel and died at the age of 77 in 1884.

An 1864 report by the U.S. Sanitary Commission accused the Confederates of a predetermined plan to mistreat Union prisoners. No doubt this charge, unproven then or now, influenced the desire for retribution against Rebel authorities who supposedly had perpetrated such an outrage. The debate continues to rage among historians to this day. At the very least, it appears that the Federal government endorsed a policy of retaliation for the poor treatment of Union prisoners in Confederate hands. Secretary of War Stanton went on record, writing to Hoffman: "The Secretary of War is not disposed, in view of the treatment our prisoners are receiving, to erect fine establishments for their prisoners." That the North, largely untouched by the war, was much better able to care humanely for its prisoners than the starving South, is beyond dispute. Whether it cared to do so remains an open question—at least in the minds of pro-Union historians.

In the end, Henry Wirz, the only individual on either side to be punished for inhumane treatment of prisoners, remains the most controversial figure of the Civil War's tragic prison legacy. One historical footnote remains. The defense that he had only followed orders failed to absolve Wirz of guilt in the mind of the court and established a precedent for the trials, 80 years later, of Nazi war criminals who made the same claim at Nuremberg following World War II. Simply acting on orders, it was judged, does not relieve an individual of his larger responsibility to humanity. It is a distinction that remains, in the wake of the 9/11 attacks and the government's concomitant response to terrorism, very much in question today. □

PENSACOLA

Continued from page 25

splitting, terrifying hours. Fort McRee fared the worst with half its guns dismounted and its outer walls pockmarked by shell hits. One section of wall collapsed. In view of its battered condition, Villepique asked Anderson for permission to abandon the fort. Anderson refused, chiefly because he feared the effect such an action would have on Confederate morale.

The Union bombardment resumed at 10 the next morning. Brown ordered the gun chiefs of his 10-inch columbiads and 42-pounders to maintain a steady rate of fire—one shell every 15 minutes. By contrast, the mortars were fired about once every half hour. Eventually, nearly all Confederate guns were knocked out of commission. The naval yard sustained some damage, and the nearby villages of Warrington and Woolsey were soon ablaze from hot shot and shell. Union cannon ceased fire at nightfall, but mortars continued a barrage until 2 AM. In all, the Federals expended some 5,000 rounds of ammunition in the artillery duel, while the Confederates expended some 1,000 rounds.

In May 1862, the Confederates abandoned Pensacola. New Orleans had fallen to Federal forces, and the troops tied up at Pensacola were needed elsewhere. The city's acting mayor, John Brosnaham, formally surrendered to Union Lieutenant Richard Jackson on May 10. Pensacola and its facilities became an important base for the Union's Western Gulf Squadron and its blockade of the Confederate coast. Fort Barrancas served as an important staging area for Federal raids into Alabama and western Florida.

Thanks to Slemmer and his handful of artillerymen, Fort Pickens was the only Federal post in the South never seized by the Confederates. Had the two sides not patched together a temporary truce, Fort Pickens, not Fort Sumter, might well have been the flashpoint of the Civil War. Instead, it became merely a dusty footnote in the annals of the greater war. □

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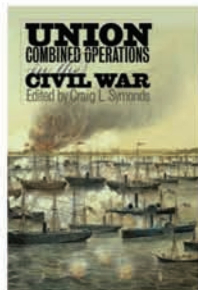

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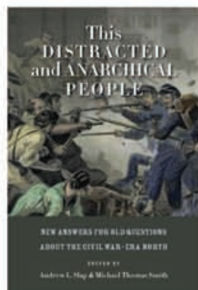

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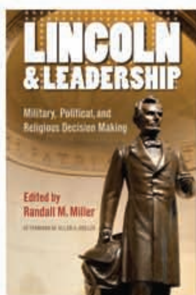

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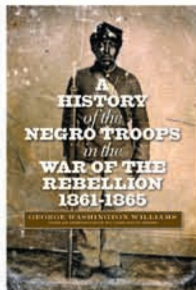

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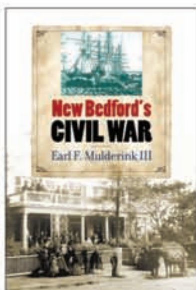

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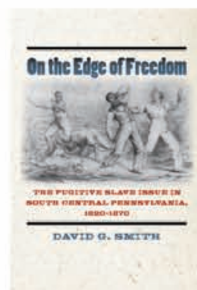

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