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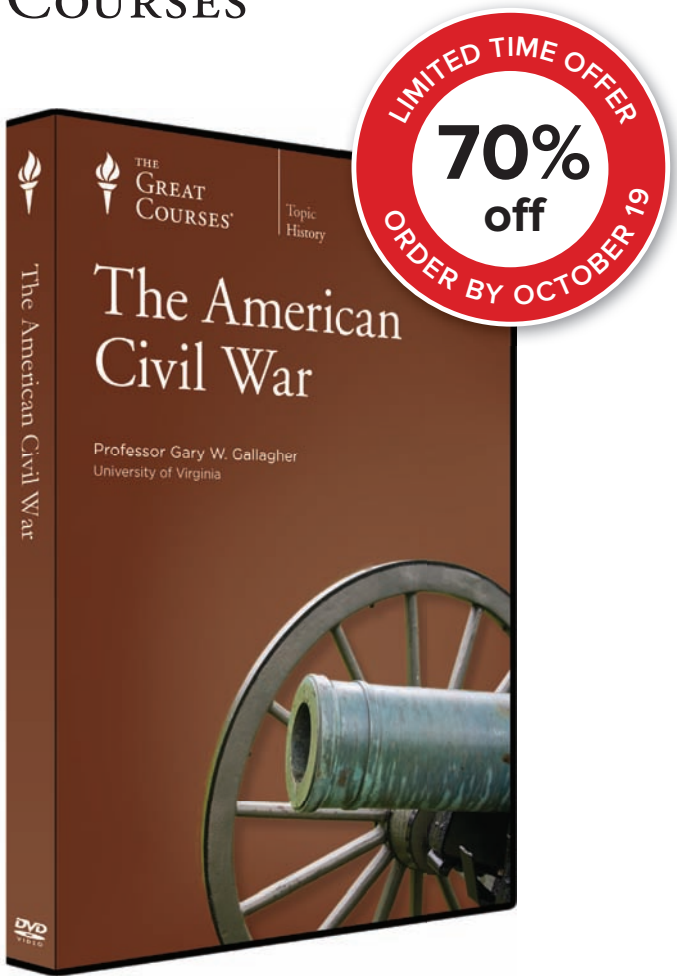


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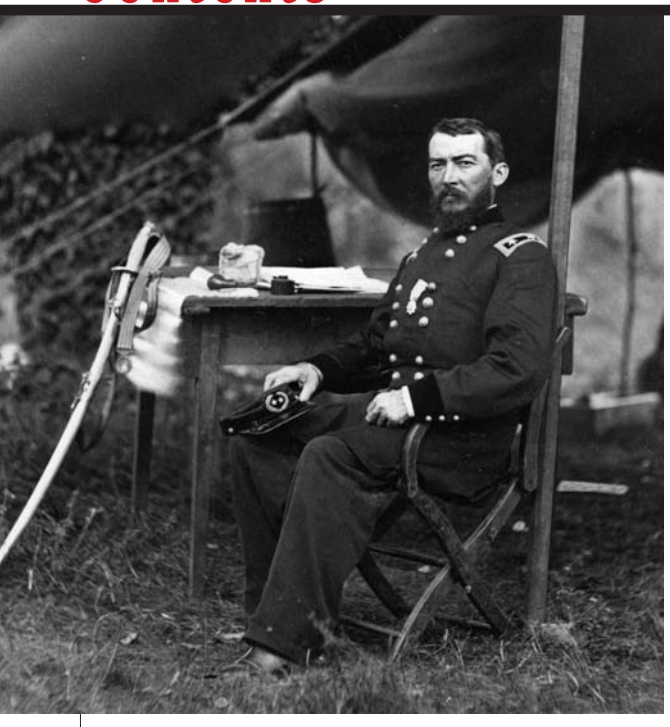

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COVER: Don Troiani's iconic portrait, "Confederate Officer with His Men." © 2015 Don Troiani, Military & Historical Image Bank www.historicalimagebank.com


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HISTORIC FARNSWORTH HOUSE INN -1810-

# Even the best spies sometimes get caught, as crack Union double agent Timothy Webster would learn the hard way in 1862.

Spying is a dangerous game. Even the best spies sometimes get caught, as Confederate raider John Yates Beall, "the Mosby of the Chesapeake," learned the hard way in 1865, and the consequences are never pretty to contemplate. For crack Union double agent Timothy Webster, not even the personal intercession of Abraham Lincoln could prevent those consequences from taking place.

Webster, a transplanted Englishman, had learned the tricks of his trade as a New York City policeman and railroad detective. He won the gratitude of Lincoln and the respect of Lincoln's spymaster, detective Allan Pinkerton, by infiltrating a group of Baltimore-based conspirators who were plotting to assassinate then president-elect Lincoln as he passed through the city en route to his inauguration. Duly warned by Webster, Pinkerton was able to safely spirit a disguised Lincoln into the capital ahead of his would-be assassins, thus averting a constitutional crisis at the very start of Lincoln's term.

In May 1861, Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan, who had known Pinkerton from his days as a railroad president before the war, asked the detective to provide "observations made within rebel lines." Pinkerton turned immediately to Webster, who traveled incognito to Memphis, where he made friend with Confederate officers and even received a guided tour of the city's defenses. "He partook of soldiers' fare in the rebel camp, shook hands warmly with raw recruits, joked and laughed with petty officers, became familiar with colonels and captains, and talked profoundly with brigadier generals," Pinkerton gushed. "Webster's talent in sustaining a role of this kind amounted to positive genius, and it was this that forced me to admire the man as sincerely as I prized his services."

Dodging authorities, Webster traveled by train through Mississippi and Tennessee, pumping fellow passengers for information, then crossed Kentucky to Cincinnati, where he reported his findings to Pinkerton. Returning to the scene of his first coup, Webster got himself initiated into the shadowy Knights of Liberty in Baltimore. The Knights were planning, they said, to lead an army of 10,000 pro-Confederate Marylanders in an attack on Washington. Once again Webster got word to Pinkerton, who arranged to have his operative arrested with other leading Knights to preserve his cover. The putative attack never came.

Moving south to Richmond, Webster turned his charms on Confederate Secretary of War Judah Benjamin, obtaining a secret commission to carry messages back and forth to Confederate agents in Washington. This led directly to the unmasking of a Rebel spy ring in the provost marshal's office in the Union capital—Webster's last counterespionage triumph.

Webster's luck ran out in January 1862. Stricken by a sudden attack of rheumatism, he fell out of sight for several weeks. Fearing the worst, Pinkerton ill-advisedly sent two of his other operatives, Price Lewis and John Scully, to Richmond to locate Webster. They found him bedridden in the Monumental Hotel. Suspicious Confederate agents began tailing to the two and eventually arrested them as Union spies. Sentenced to hang, they broke down and betrayed Webster.

Webster was still so ill when he was brought into the Richmond jail that a fellow prisoner exclaimed, "My God! They will send the dead here next." In a sense, they had. Webster was a major embarrassment to the Confederate government, Judah Benjamin in particular, and he was swiftly convicted and sentenced to death. A distraught Pinkerton implored Lincoln to intercede, and Lincoln warned Confederate leaders that he would start hanging Southern spies if Webster was killed.

It was to no avail. On April 29, 1862, the crippled Webster was taken to Camp Lee, on the site of the old Richmond fairgrounds, and placed on the scaffold. When the trapdoor was sprung, Webster fell to the ground stunned—the noose had slipped off—and murmured, "I suffer a double death." Soon he did, becoming the first American agent to be hanged as a spy since Nathan Hale in the Revolutionary War. Spying is a dangerous game.

*Roy Morris Jr.*

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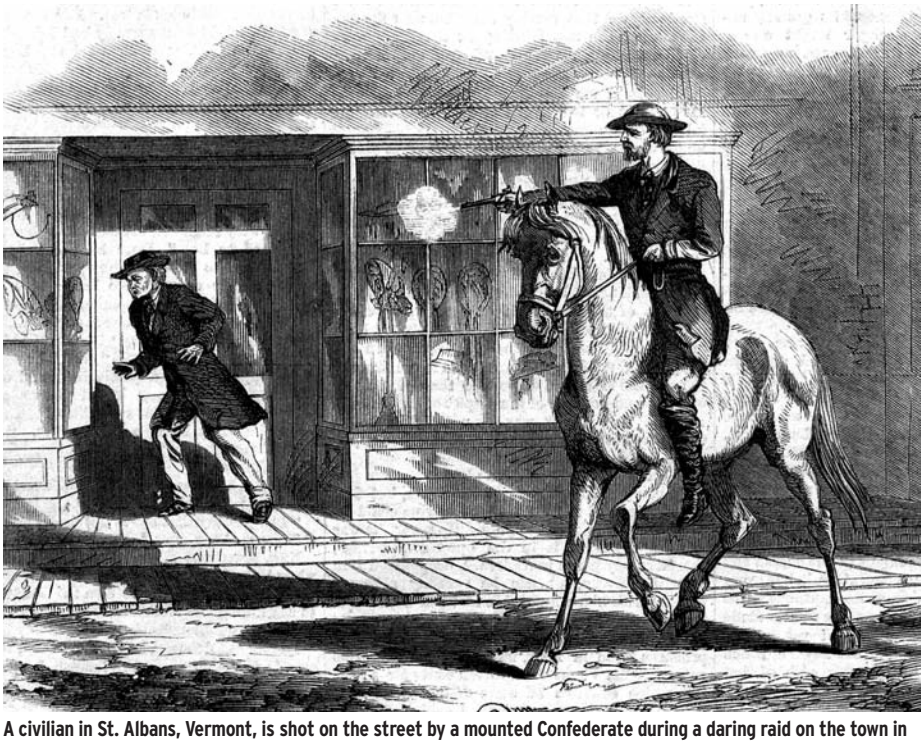
By Peter Kross

# In 1864, Confederate leaders gave the okay to set up a major spy ring in Canada. Agents immediately began plotting to spread terror in the Union.

THE Civil War was fought out in the open on battlefields across the United States. But beginning in early 1864, the highest levels of the Confederate government decided that another, more clandestine war would be fought behind the lines in the North. Plans were put into place to set up secret operations north of the border in Canada. There, a shadowy group of secret agents, adventurers, and other Confederate sympathizers began planning a series of attacks on forts, cities, and other strategic locations in the North to wreak havoc on the Union war effort. In time the secret Canadian operation would see the arrival of John Wilkes Booth, developing his plan to either kidnap or kill President Abraham Lincoln. Booth's accomplice John Surratt Jr., a Confederate courier, used Canada as a safe haven for his clandestine activities.



A civilian in St. Albans, Vermont, is shot on the street by a mounted Confederate during a daring raid on the town in October 1864. One resident was killed in the fighting, which netted the raiders $200,000 in Union greenbacks.

As part of the British Empire, Canada was home to a large number of Americans who had immigrated there in the years following the American Revolution. Canada was morally opposed to the idea of slavery but had many mercantile contacts with Southern planters whose cotton was imported north of the border. As the Civil War grew in intensity, members of the Canadian government took a neutral stance on the war, but a large portion of the population sympathized with the South. Canada served as the home to hundreds of Confederate prisoners of war who escaped capture. Canada also served as a secure communications link between England and the Confederacy.

In 1864, the Confederates began sending agents to Canada to set up what would later become a large-scale covert network. One of the principal figures who would help establish the system was Judah Benjamin, a former United States senator from Louisiana who had served successively as Confederate attorney general, secretary of war, and secretary of state. Benjamin was one of the most important Jewish leaders of the Confederacy and was well regarded by all who knew him. Throughout this period, Benjamin was taking orders regarding the establishment of a Confederate secret service bureau from President Jefferson Davis and other top-ranking officials, including Secretary of War James Seddon and Brig. Gen. John Henry Winder, the provost marshal in Richmond. In February 1864, the Confederate Congress passed a bill establishing a secret service fund of $5 million, of which $1 million was set aside for Canadian operations. These funds were under the direct control of Benjamin, who had complete discretion as to how the money was distributed.

Halifax, Nova Scotia, had a large number of former Confederate prisoners. Benjamin sent James Holcombe, a professor at the University of Virginia, to Halifax as a commissioner to represent the Confederate government. Holcombe took on the new assignment with relish. One of his primary tasks was to secure the release of the 400 Confederate soldiers who were then living in Canada. His official instructions regarding the men read in part, "You are requested to make in Canada and Nova Scotia the requisite arrangements for having passage furnished them via Halifax to Bermuda, where they will receive from Major Walker, the agent of the Department of War, the necessary aid to secure their passage home."

Before heading to Canada, Benjamin gave Holcombe $8,000, of which $5,000 would be used for expenses with $3,000 paying Holcombe's salary for six months. A letter of

# Brother vs. Brother

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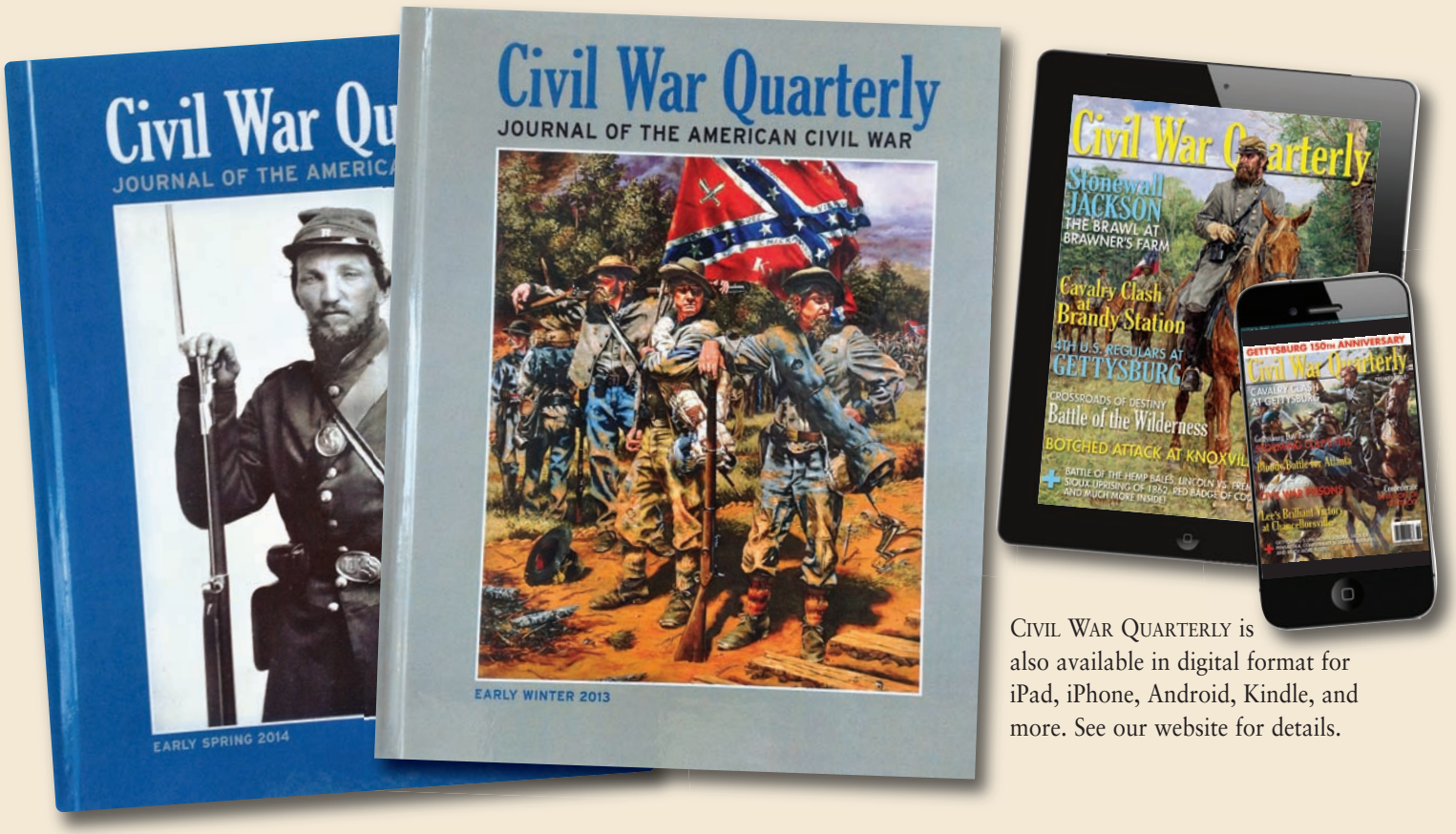


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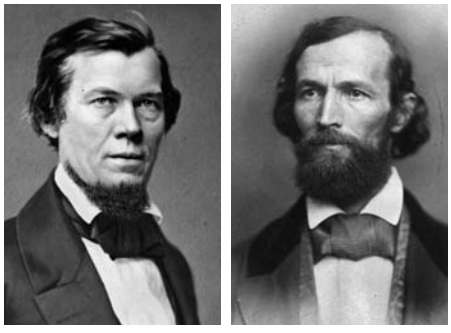
credit for an additional $25,000 was sent to Liverpool, England, to provide him with emergency funds. Like any good employee, Holcombe was told to keep his receipts and provide them to the government to be reimbursed (his traveling expenses were to come out of his own pocket). He was also instructed to tell the British authorities in Canada what he was doing. The Confederates wanted to keep the British apprised of what they were doing to prevent their agents from being deported. Holcombe arrived in Halifax in March and soon discovered that there were only 12 former Confederate prisoners still living there, of whom nine were to leave that very day. He later found that there were only 100 Confederates in the entire country waiting to get home.

The U.S. Consul's office in Halifax was monitoring all the comings and goings of suspected Confederate sympathizers, and in February 1864 Federal authorities noted the arrival in the city of Beverly Tucker, who formerly had served as the U.S. consul in Liverpool. While in Europe, Tucker had become an agent for the Confederacy. His job in Canada was to gather supplies for the Confederate Army. Tucker met with Holcombe and former Alabama Senator Clement Clay, who was one of the assistant Confederate commissioners sent to Canada. On March 23, President Davis authorized payment of $46,512 in secret service gold to a "Mr. Tucker." The Tucker mentioned in the note was probably Beverly Tucker, but it could have been a man named Joseph Tucker, who had proposed working for the Confederacy as a secret agent.

Tucker was acquainted with a Confederate courier named Robert Coxe. Coxe had arrived from England in August 1862 and moved to St. Catharines, Ontario, near the New York border. St. Catharines was near Niagara Falls and strategically located on the railroad line to Buffalo. A surprising number of Northerners in the region were allied with the Confederacy, and the railroad line connected them with each other. Coxe's job was to serve as a conduit to other Confederate agents making their way to Canada. John Wilkes Booth, the future assassin of Abraham Lincoln, had his own longstanding ties to the Confederate government. In October 1864, Coxe was in Poughkeepsie, New York, before leaving for Canada. At the same time that Coxe was in that city, Booth was supposed to have been in nearby Newburgh, 14 miles away. It is possible, given Booth's secret affiliations with the Confederates, that he and Coxe met to discuss business. One day later Booth went to Montreal, where he had meetings with various other Confederate agents.



**Jacob Thompson, center, and Clement Clay, right, ran Confederate covert operations in Canada. The two men did not like each other, to say the least.**

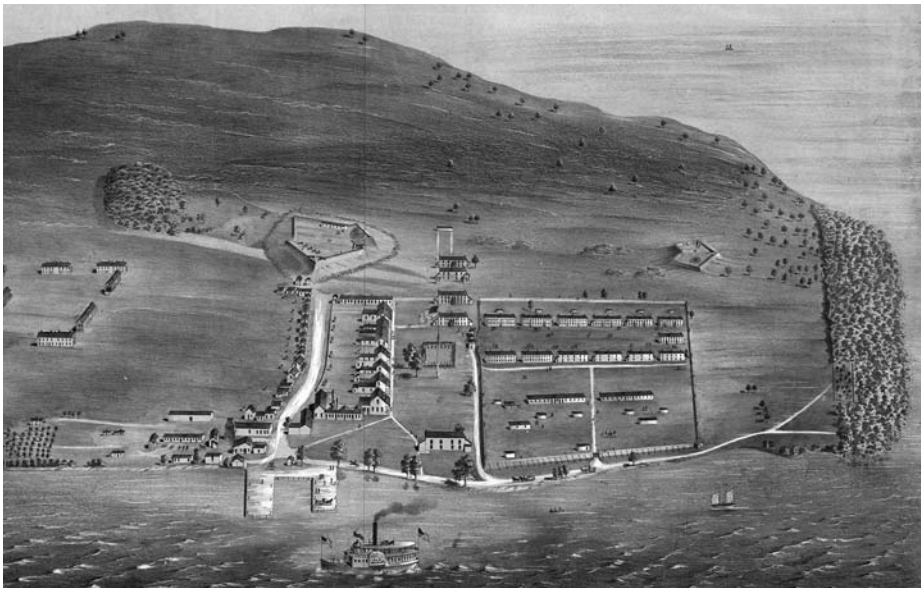
With more and more Confederate agents filtering into Canada, the leadership of the Confederate government decided that it was time to send an official delegation to Canada to set up a spy mission directed against the North. Alexander Stuart, a former member of Congress who had been U.S. secretary of the interior from 1850 to 1853, was asked to serve as their official commissioner. Stuart arrived in Richmond for talks with Jefferson Davis and Judah Benjamin, who told him that the Confederacy had decided to mount an official espionage effort in Canada and that he was just the man to lead the effort. They told Stuart the Confederate government had deposited a sum of three million pounds in a London bank to fund the effort. To their chagrin and surprise, Stuart turned them down. He would not betray the U.S. government.

Davis and Benjamin had better luck with their next candidate, Jacob Thompson. Like Stuart, Thompson had a fine pedigree in politics, having served as a congressman and secretary of the interior under President James Buchanan. Being from Mississippi, Thompson had no love for the Union and accepted the job at once. Thompson was to serve as the head of the Confederacy's underground movement in Canada and had the final say in what operations he wanted to conduct and the people he would hire. Using Canada as his base of operations, Thompson was directed to wreak havoc on Union targets and disrupt the Federal war effort. He was to use his assets to attack Union military facilities in the Northwestern states and foment rebellion. If these efforts were successful, said Davis, then Abraham Lincoln would have no choice but to sue for peace on Richmond's terms. Davis gave Thompson a draft for $l million in gold to finance the operation and told him to "carry out such instructions as you have received from me verbally."

Thompson was the senior official, and Clement Clay was his second in command. One of Clay's responsibilities was to work with the Copperhead movement in the North. The Copperheads were Northern Democrats who opposed Lincoln's administration and wanted to see a negotiated end to the war. The Copperhead movement included such fringe groups as the Kings of the Golden Circle and the Order of the American Knights, neither of which had much influence on the war effort. Even though Clay was a commissioner, he worked for the Confederate War Department and received all his funds from that office.

Thompson and Clay arrived in Halifax from Richmond on May 19. They soon left for Montreal, which they would make their home base. At that time, Montreal was known as the spy capital of the north, with secret agents from both sides taking up residence there. All sorts of shady character flocked to Montreal. Some of the Southern men were revolutionaries; some were simply out for adventure.

Unfortunately for the Confederates, Thompson and Clay soon developed a deep hatred for each other. Sickly and ill-tempered, Clay had little interest in playing second fiddle to Thompson. The two men separated soon after arriving in Canada. Thompson settled in Montreal, while Clay moved to St. Catharines. Their military adviser, Captain Thomas Henry Hines, later described the clash of personalities. "The



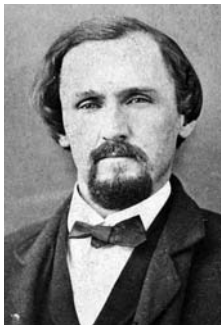
**The infamous Union prison camp on Johnson's Island, near Sandusky, Ohio, held as many as 2,700 Confederate prisoners of war. It was the target of an unsuccessful raid by Canada-based agents in September 1864.**

commissioners were not harmonious from the inception of their mission," Hines wrote in *Southern Bivouac* magazine in 1886. "This was a source of constant embarrassment and proved one of the most potent obstacles for success. They found it impossible to agree. Colonel Thompson was a man of sterling integrity, but he was inclined to believe too much that was told to him, to trust too many men, to doubt too little and suspect less. His subordinates were kept in continual apprehension, lest he compromise their efforts by indiscreet confidences." Hines' associate, Captain John Castleman, liked Thompson, but found Clay "not practical. He lacked judgment. He was peevish, irritable and suspicious. He distrusted Mr. Thompson and relied on those who were often untrustworthy."

Also arriving in Montreal was William Cleary, who served as Thompson's private secretary. When Cleary arrived in Canada he was wanted by Federal authorities for some unknown reason. As Thompson's private secretary, Cleary knew all about the clandestine goings-on in Canada, and he played an integral role in sabotage efforts against the Union. One involved a transplanted Kentucky physician named Luke Blackburn, who had gone to Canada at the behest of Mississippi Governor John J. Pettus to oversee relief supplies arriving aboard blockade runners from England. Blackburn, a relative of Kentucky Senator Henry Clay, had helped fight yellow fever outbreaks in

the South and, most recently, in Bermuda. According to testimony revealed in his subsequent trial, Blackburn put that experience to work in a less benign way, attempting to spread the dread disease among the military and civilian populations of the North. He supposedly sent clothing believed to be infected with yellow fever to Abraham Lincoln as a gift. He did not want to deliver the package himself and asked that a friend deliver it for him. At the last minute, the man refused to make the delivery. At the time it was believed that yellow fever was spread by human contact, although it is actually spread by mosquitoes.





**LEFT: Clement Vallandigham of Illinois, the most prominent Copperhead in the North, refused to help Confederate agents raid Chicago. CENTER: Confederate agent Beverly Tucker, former U.S. consul in Liverpool, raised supplies for the Confederate Army in Canada. He fled to Mexico after the war. RIGHT: Confederate naval raider John Yates Beall led the failed raid on Johnson's Island. He was later captured and executed by Union authorities in February 1865.**

The commissioners in Canada turned their attention to what would become known as the Northwest Conspiracy. Working with the Order of the American Knights, their plan was to take the war to the states on the Canadian-American border, particularly Ohio. The man the Confederates tasked with the job was Hines, who had served in the 9th Kentucky Cavalry Regiment under Brig. Gen. John Hunt Morgan. Both Morgan and Hines were captured in a cavalry raid into Ohio and were put in prison in the Ohio Penitentiary. They soon escaped, and Hines made his way to Canada after a trip to Richmond, where he got his instructions from the Confederate leaders. Once in Canada, Hines worked with the Knights to bring the war to the Northern states. Hines worked directly with the Confederate State Department, but he got his instructions in secret code from the Confederate Signal Corps. Hines was given $5,000 and a supply of cotton to sell to finance his operations. Hines and his men supplied the Knights with guns and ammunition, but a Federal agent inside their organization leaked the information, and the plot was uncovered.

In August 1864, the Confederates sent 62 men from Canada to Chicago with the purpose of freeing prisoners of war at Camp Douglas. Hines met with Clement Vallandigham, the North's most prominent Copperhead, to discuss details of the raid. Vallandigham promised to arm and send 100,000 men into the streets of Chicago to support the invasion. The revolt was timed to coincide with the Democratic National Convention, which was also taking place in the city. At the last minute, however, Vallandigham and the other Copperheads backed out, perhaps thinking the Democratic presidential nominee, General George B. McClellan, would defeat Lincoln anyway and bring a negotiated end to the war. A disgusted Hines later scoffed, "There was a reluctance on their part to sacrifice life to a cause."

Another operation carried out of Canada was undertaken with Thompson's cooperation. The plan called for the capture of the steamer USS *Michigan,* which was operating on Lake Erie, and use it to free the estimated 2,700 Confederate prisoners held in a Union prison camp at Johnson's Island in Sandusky, Ohio. The escaped prisoners would then band together as a foraging army and fight their way back across the state to Virginia, while the Rebel-controlled *Michigan* would move down the lake, bombarding Detroit, Cleveland, Buffalo, and Sandusky, Ohio. The man whom Thompson asked to head the operation was John Yates Beall, a well-known Confederate sailor who went by the nickname "Mosby of the Chesapeake," due to his successful exploits against Union shipping on that river. On September 19, Beall destroyed four Union schooners. Elaborate plans had been set up to carry out the raid. Beall and 20 men boarded the ship *Philo Parsons*, which ran on the Detroit-Sandusky route. Beall asked the skipper to make an unscheduled stop at Amherstburg on the Canadian side of the border, where he picked up more men.

As the ship got closer to Johnson's Island, Beall took over the vessel and hoisted the Confederate flag. He let the passengers out before heading for his destination. Captain Charles Cole of the Confederate Army was to signal from shore that it was all clear to attack the fort. However, Cole was arrested by Federal authorities. It was later speculated that Cole had been betrayed by a Confederate captive held aboard *Michigan*. With no signal at hand, Beall broke off the strike and returned to Canada. Cole was taken to Fort Lafayette in New York harbor, where he was tried and convicted of spying for the Confederacy. A full confession earned him amnesty, and Cole was released in the spring of 1865. He drifted to Mexico after his release and eventually went into the postwar railroad business in Texas.

Beall's next assignment was to intercept a train carrying seven Confederate general officers from Johnson's Island to Fort Lafayette. The raid was a failure, and Beall was captured. He was put on trial, found guilty, and was sentenced to hang. Beall, made of sterner stuff than Cole, refused to confess, and Federal authorities carried out his execution on February 24, 1865. There was a tenuous link between John Wilkes Booth and John Yates Beall. Both men had been present at the hanging of John Brown, the abolitionist hero, in 1859. Whether or not they met on that occasion is unknown.

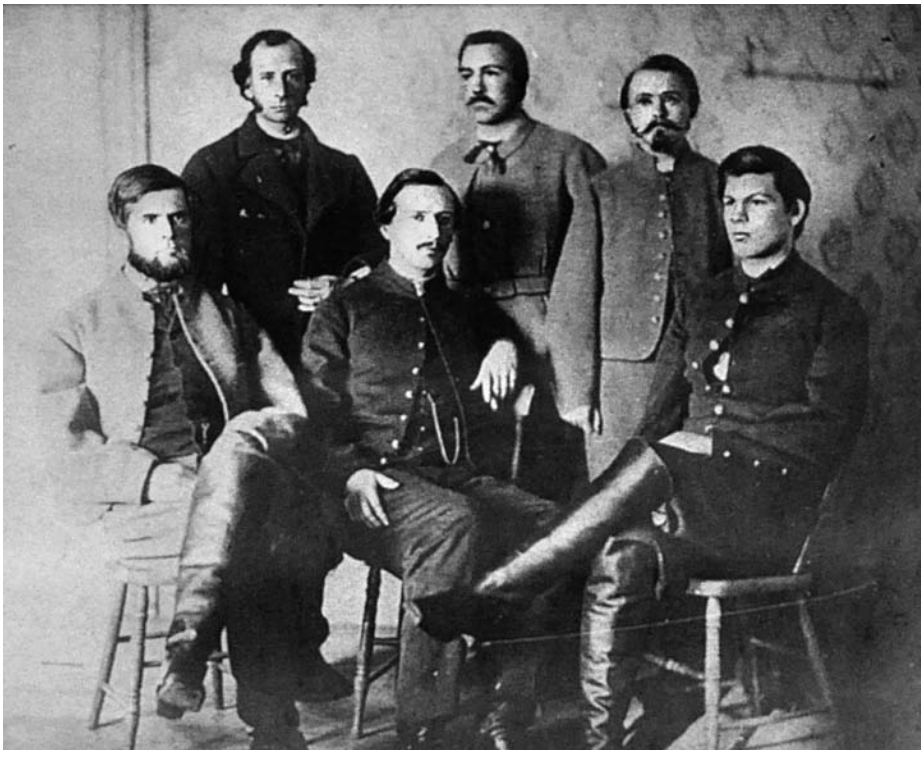
Another operation funded by the Canadian commissioners was a plot to set fires in certain hotels in New York City in 1864. The saboteurs were to use Greek fire, an incendiary substance made from an unstable mixture of pine resin, naphtha, quicklime, calcium phosphide, sulfur and niter, to attack hotels that were packed with guests. The agents managed in the end to

set fire to 19 hotels, a theater, and P.T. Barnum's American Museum, but the fires did not do as much damage as expected, and the panic they hoped to spread among the city's population did not materialize.

Despite the failure of the New York operation, the Confederates in Canada had more plans up their sleeves. The most successful operation called for robbing three banks and burning the town of St. Albans, Vermont, only 15 miles from the Canadian border. The plan, the brainchild of Confederate Secretary of War Seddon, was supervised by Lieutenant Bennett Young, who had served as an officer under the command of cavalry leader John Hunt Morgan. Young had been captured during a raid in Ohio in 1863 but escaped from Camp Douglas in Chicago and fled to Canada. He had good reason to seek revenge.

The purpose of the raid was to use the stolen money from the St. Albans banks to fund future Confederate operations and create panic in Northern states. Young and two of his men arrived in St. Albans on October 10, 1864, to learn the habits of the residents of the town and blend in as best they could. Over the next several days, 20 more of Young's men arrived. When asked by the locals why they were in town, they said that they were Canadian sportsmen on a hunting and fishing trip. The men carried Greek fire to burn down the town. On the morning of October 19, the raiders strode into the middle of St. Albans, gathered up the townsfolk, and put them in a safe place. Then they entered the Franklin County Bank and took what was described as "a considerable amount of cash" and locked up two cashiers in the vault. After that they raided the St. Albans Bank, where they took off with the silver but left the gold after the teller told them that there was no gold in the bank. The raid netted Young and his men a total of $200,000.

Before leaving town, the raiders unsuccessfully tried to burn down some municipal buildings. Townsfolk decided to fight back, and a shootout took place in which one resident was killed. Local residents managed to locate Young and took him into custody near the Canadian border. How-



**Some of the 23 Confederate raiders who attacked St. Albans were held temporarily by Canadian authorities. A Canadian judge ruled the raid a legitimate act of war, but forced the raiders to return $88,000 of the stolen money.**

ever, a British officer persuaded the citizens to release him into his custody. When the dust settled, 14 of Young's men were arrested in Canada and $90,000 was recovered. The raiders were sent to Montreal to face trial. An unapologetic Young wrote of the St. Albans raid: "I went to St. Albans for the purpose of burning the town and surrounding village as retaliation for recent outrages in the Shenandoah Valley and elsewhere in the Confederates States."

The Lincoln administration tried all sorts of diplomatic strategies to have the men sent back to the United States for trial but was unsuccessful. Young and his men were put on trial in Canada, where a judge ruled that their actions were legitimate acts of war and set them free. The Canadian government did, however, return $88,000 to the St. Albans banks that had been robbed. If nothing else, the raid at St. Albans brought the war to the very border of Canada, even though it did not alter the outcome.

By December 1864, it had become obvious to Confederate authorities that the Canadian spy ring led by Thompson and Clay had fallen into disarray. Thompson was simply too trusting to be an effective spymaster. Traitors and double agents were everywhere, and Federal detectives staked out the bar in his Toronto hotel and the railway station across the street, logging all suspicious comings and goings. "I had hoped to have accomplished more," Thompson wrote in a letter to Confederate leaders on December 3. "But the bane and curse of this country is the surveillance under which we act. Detectives, or those ready to give information, stand on every corner."

By far the most damaging double agent was Arkansas native Godfrey Joseph Hyams, who had relocated to Toronto with his wife in late 1863. Hyams was eking out a living repairing shoes when Thompson gave him $50 to help in a mission—mainly out of the goodness of his heart. Hyams repaid Thompson's kindness by going straight to Robert Harrison, Toronto's crown attorney, with damaging evidence on various Confederate plots, including a second attempt to free prisoners at Johnson's Island by capturing a second steamer, *Georgian,* and transporting the men to safety. Armed with Hyams' testimony, Canadian officials impounded the vessel at Collingwood on Lake Huron, ending the rescue effort.

Hyams' most damaging testimony concerned a secret arms factory that Thompson allegedly was operating in a Toronto house, making torpedoes, hand grenades, and Greek fire. As reported by U.S. Consul David Thurston, "The house Hyams described was empty, but his belief was that certain of these incendiaries were buried under the floor. Two policemen were detailed to examine the premises and in the extremity of the hall a portion of the floor was removed and under four inches of water and 18 inches of earth, several torpedoes were found buried. These torpedoes are covered with a mixture of broken coal and pitch and resemble pieces of bituminous coal. They are made of cast iron of irregular shape, hollow and are filled with power and covered. Hyams says they are to be thrown into coal bins in factories and steamboats, etc., where they will, without being noticed, be shoveled into the fire and effect the purpose for which they are designed."

Crown Attorney Harrison told Thurston that he hoped to arrest Thompson for conspiring to violate Canada's neutrality laws. Before that could happen, Confederate authorities pulled the plug on the entire operation. Clay had already returned to the South, and on December 30, Secretary of State Benjamin ordered Thompson home as well. "From reports which reach us from trustworthy sources," said Benjamin, "we are satisfied that so close an espionage is kept upon you that your services have been deprived of the value which is attached to your residence in Canada. The President thinks it is better that you return to the Confederacy." Thompson eventually sailed to England before he could be charged, living in exile for two years before returning to the United States and settling in Memphis. He was never prosecuted for his alleged spying activities.

The final piece of the puzzle of the Confederates' Canadian operation was the presence in Montreal of Lincoln assassin John Wilkes Booth in the months leading up to

the president's murder. Booth was an ardent Southern sympathizer but did not join the Confederate Army once the war started. Instead, he decided to use his fame as one of the nation's premier actors to further the Confederate cause in his own way. During the war Booth was a low-level courier for the Confederates and smuggled medicine to the South, doing a little spying along the way. Booth's sister, Asia Booth Clarke, in a tell-all book she titled the Unlocked Book, wrote, "I now knew that my hero was a spy, a blockade-runner, a rebel. I set these terrible words before my eyes and knew that each one meant death."

During the war, Booth traveled to such places as Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, and Montreal, meeting with Confederate agents. What is not in doubt is that Booth had meetings with certain members of the Confederate Secret Service in Montreal during the war. Booth met with Patrick Martin, who was part of Thompson's spy ring. Martin gave Booth letters of introduction to Dr. Samuel Mudd of Bryantown, Maryland, who later set Booth's broken leg at his home after the actor killed Lincoln.

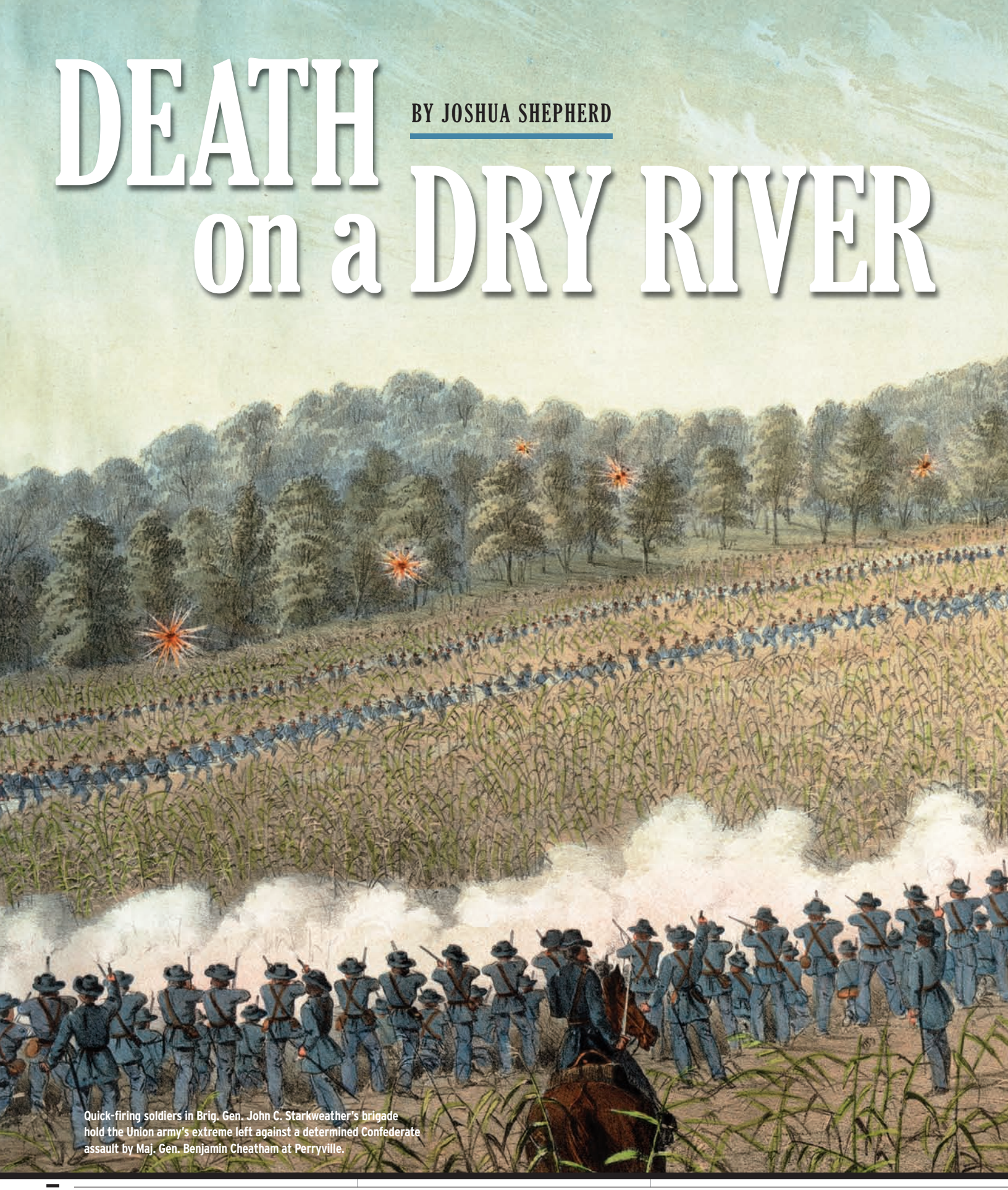
Booth arrived in Canada on October 18, 1864, and registered at the St. Lawrence Hall Hotel, a hotbed of Confederate Canadian operations. Booth had various meetings with Patrick Martin and George Sanders, who was a believer in political assassination. It is not out of the realm of possibility that Confederate plots to either capture or kill the president were discussed. While in Montreal, Booth was able to use money deposited for him in the Ontario Bank in the amount of Canadian $455. This money was most likely supplied to Booth by the Confederate commissioners living in the city. Immediately after leaving Canada, Booth came to Washington, where he took a room at the National Hotel and made deposits in a bank owned by Jay Cooke.

A check was written on November 16, 1864, on the account of Jay Cooke and Co., at a bank in Washington in the amount of $100. It was payable to a Matthew Canning, a longtime friend and theatrical agent of Booth's. A total of seven checks were

*Continued on page 98*

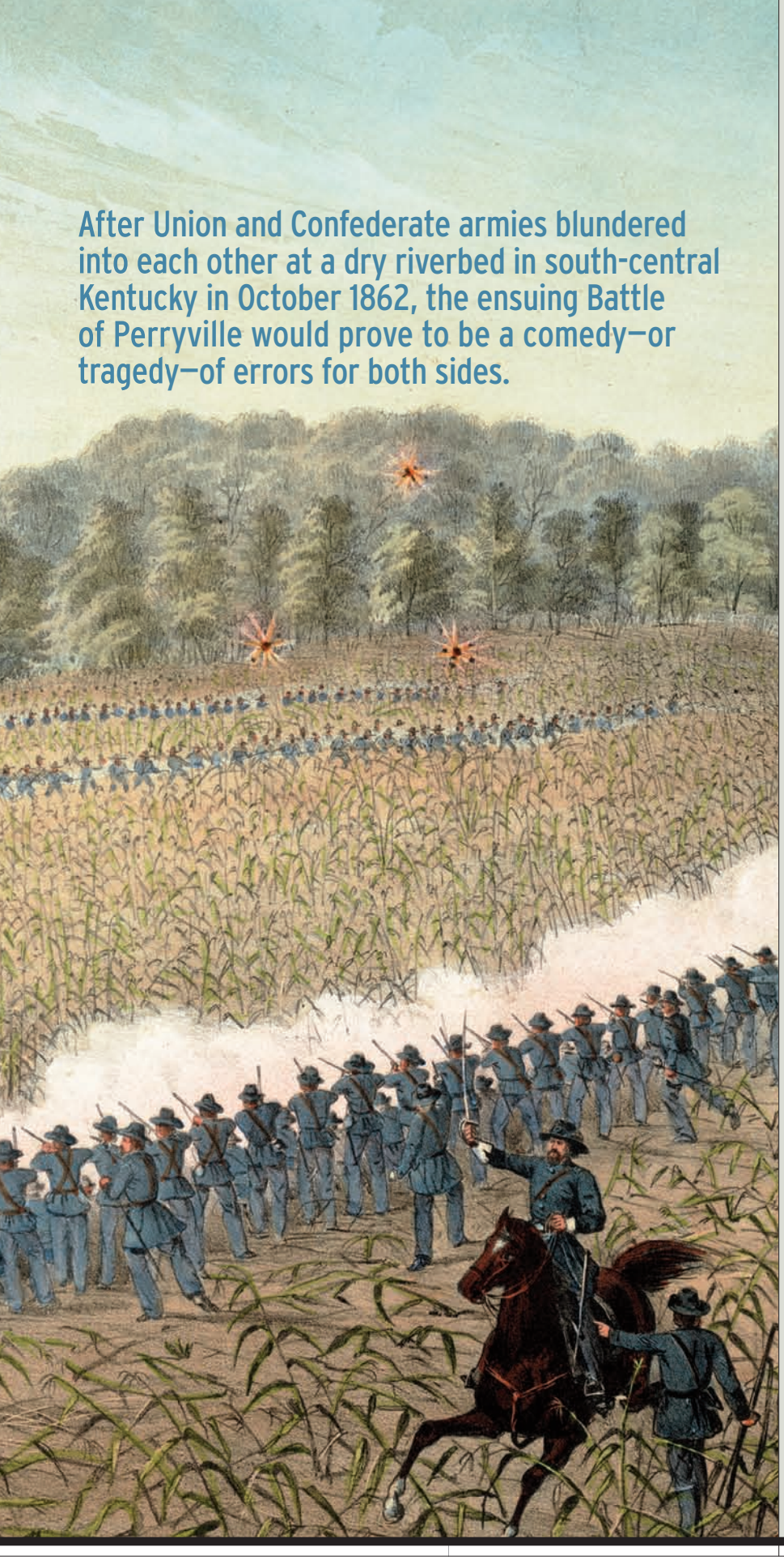
# DEATH on a DRY RIVER

BY JOSHUA SHEPHERD



Quick-firing soldiers in Brig. Gen. John C. Starkweather's brigade hold the Union army's extreme left against a determined Confederate assault by Maj. Gen. Benjamin Cheatham at Perryville.

**After Union and Confederate armies blundered into each other at a dry riverbed in south-central Kentucky in October 1862, the ensuing Battle of Perryville would prove to be a comedy—or tragedy—of errors for both sides.**



FOR Union Lieutenant Harrison Millard, it was an unsettling development. An aide on the staff of Brig. Gen. Lovell Rousseau, Millard had ridden out ahead of the lines on the morning of October 8, 1862. His division had formed up earlier that morning for an assault on Confederate troops in Perryville, Kentucky, but it looked now as if there would be no fight. Dust clouds in the distance, he thought, indicated that the Rebels were on the run.

Scouting a farmer's woodlot in the company of a newspaper correspondent, an incredulous Millard stumbled across a wounded but talkative Confederate. "I asked him what he was doing there," the lieutenant recalled, "and he replied that he was wounded, and had been left there by his regiment, which only a short time before had gone on." Millard dashed off to report his discovery to Rousseau but was surprised that his chief simply brushed him off. "Oh bosh," the general dismissively replied, "it is impossible. There is no one anywhere near here."

Such hubris had already enabled a major Confederate thrust into the heart of Kentucky. Reeling from the disappointing and bloody reverse at Shiloh during the first week of April, General P.G.T. Beauregard's Army of the Mississippi fled Tennessee, abandoned its base at Corinth, and retired to Tupelo to lick its wounds. Defeated, demoralized, and ill disciplined, the army was described as being "little more than a mob." Exasperated by what he considered Beauregard's timid strategic posturing, President Jefferson Davis opted to replace him with a personal favorite—General Braxton Bragg.

Despite a lack of experience at independent command, Bragg had much to commend him to such a weighty assignment. A stern West Pointer and Mexican War hero, Bragg projected competence. A skilled logistician and fussy organizer, he worked tirelessly to feed and resupply his haggard army, and his initial weeks in command at Tupelo seemed to justify Davis' decision. But as a leader of men, Bragg soon sowed seeds of ill will that would compromise his

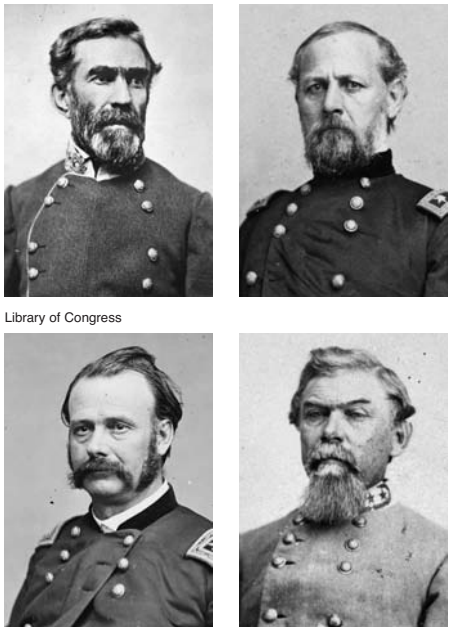
Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection

ability to command. Despite his organizational skills, Bragg was notoriously forbidding, contentious, and given to castigating his subordinates. His icy personality, paired with a vigorous restoration of discipline, quickly earned him the distrust of his own men.

Bragg fretted about how best to employ his 32,000 men at Corinth against the Federals, who, with 110,000 troops, handily dwarfed the Confederate Army of the Mississippi. Fortunately for Bragg, his dilemma was partly solved due to the unorthodox decisions of his opposite number. Maj. Gen. Henry Halleck, who assumed direct command of Union forces in the theater following the bloodbath at Shiloh, inexplicably decided to split up his forces at Corinth, dispatching troops to relatively static posts throughout Arkansas and Tennessee. The only troops likely to see any serious action were those of Maj. Gen. Don Carlos Buell's Army of the Ohio. Buell was ordered to strike due east along the Memphis & Charleston Railroad on a roughly 230-mile campaign aimed at the vital junction of Chattanooga, Tennessee. Opposed to such a move from the outset, Buell soured further when his advance was stymied by elusive Confederate cavalry that wrecked roads, bridges, and rail lines in his front, flank, and rear.

The sudden dispersal of Union manpower removed the immediate threat of a major Federal thrust into Mississippi and afforded Bragg the unexpected opportunity to seize the initiative. Unfortunately for the Confederacy, Bragg remained puzzled by his options, and his subsequent actions took shape somewhat haphazardly. Rather than aggressively implement a coherent strategic vision, Bragg wielded the Army of the Mississippi in passive reaction to the decisions of the enemy, as well as the machinations of a particularly wily fellow officer.

Based near Chattanooga as the commander of the Department of East Tennessee, Maj. Gen. Edmund Kirby Smith had been contemplating a startlingly ambitious campaign of his own. Seemingly disenchanted with the job of occupying Unionist East Tennessee, Smith had formulated a grandiose plan to assume the offensive, reclaim Kentucky for the Confederacy, and achieve a measure of fame in the process. With Buell's army clearly aimed at Chattanooga, Smith issued desperate appeals for reinforcement. Bragg accommodated by dispatching a division under Maj. Gen. John McCown to Smith's aid. In spite of his hysterical appeals for support, Smith, who kept the lid on his Kentucky plans, tellingly posted a sizable body of men at Knoxville, roughly 120 miles northeast of Chattanooga.



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**Principal generals at Perryville included, clockwise from top left, Braxton Bragg, Don Carlos Buell, William J. Hardee, and Lovell Rousseau.**

In fact, Chattanooga was under no imminent threat. Buell's halfhearted advance bogged down near Decatur, Alabama, continually harassed by enemy cavalry raids. Chief among the culprits were Brig. Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest and Colonel John Hunt Morgan, two inveterate raiders who were making names for themselves by cutting Federal lines of communication in Tennessee and Kentucky. Worse yet, Buell discovered by the first of August that his path to Chattanooga was barred by a far more formidable force—Bragg's Army of the Mississippi.

Incessantly pestered by Kirby Smith's pleas for reinforcement, Bragg made the decision on July 21 to transfer his base of operations to Chattanooga. With the Memphis & Charleston Railroad held by Buell, Bragg plotted an elaborate alternate route through southern Alabama and Georgia before entering Chattanooga through the back door. On July 31, Bragg and Smith met to formulate a plan of action. The two men agreed on a concerted move: after Smith dislodged Federal troops then occupying Cumberland Gap, they would combine forces and strike Buell's rear in Middle Tennessee.

Bragg failed to take into consideration Kirby Smith's underhanded scheming. On August 9, Smith dropped something of a bombshell. Federal troops at the Cumberland Gap, he claimed, were far too well supplied to be attacked head on; he suggested a march of 130 miles in the other direction, toward Lexington. Bragg left the door open for such a move, demurring only that the idea might be "unadvisable." At that, Smith was off and running; by the middle of August he was headed pell-mell for Kentucky. On August 30, Smith scored a lopsided victory at Richmond, and on September 2 his forces occupied Lexington.

Pried away from his base in Mississippi and manipulated into assuming the defense of Chattanooga, Bragg now found himself maneuvered into a mad dash for Kentucky. What ensued was a whirlwind 300-mile race. Finally deciding to lunge into the Bluegrass, Bragg made for Glasgow, 95 miles northeast of Nashville and within easy striking distance of the Louisville & Nashville Railroad, as well as the Louisville Pike, Buell's primary artery of supply. Buell, on edge over the threat to his supply lines, set out from Nashville in a desperate attempt to secure the railroad. At breakneck pace, the two armies raced north on converging routes. For his part, Buell was mortified to implement such an embarrassing retrograde but was granted permission by Halleck, who icyily wired back: "March where you please, provided you will find the enemy and fight him."

The summer of 1862 had been one of the driest on record, and the drought caused wells, creeks, and even small rivers to dry up. Mile after mile during the relentless

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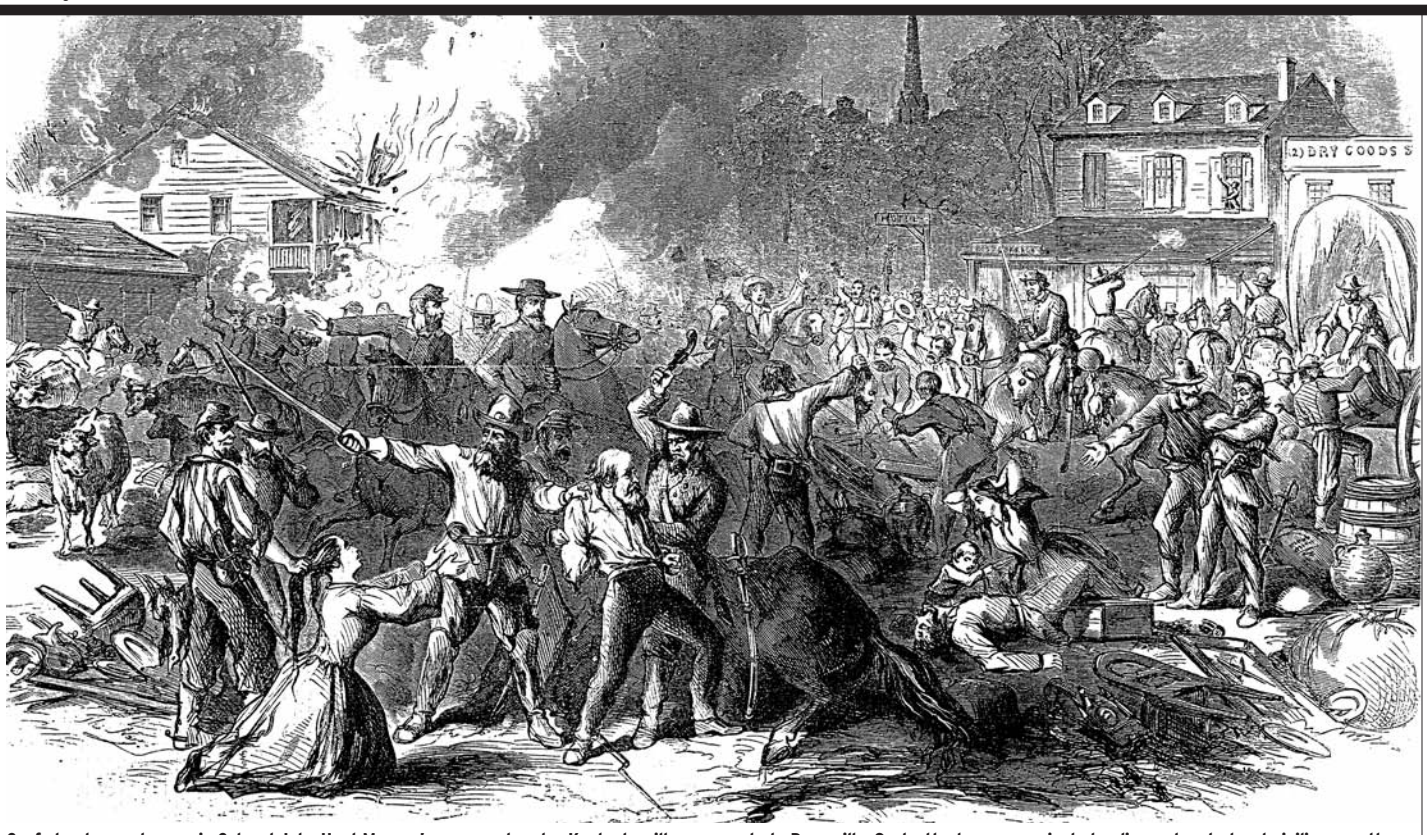



**Confederate cavalrymen in Colonel John Hunt Morgan's command sack a Kentucky village en route to Perryville. Such attacks were against standing orders to treat civilians gently.**

quest to get ahead of the enemy, the troops tasted little but choking dust clouds kicked up by the passing armies. Officers did what they could to alleviate the shortage, but much of the available water was barely fit for human consumption. "Nothing to drink but pond water," recalled John Duncan of the 3rd Ohio, "thickened with wiggletails, dead mules and horses."

Footsore Confederates won the punishing race, securing Glasgow on September 11. While Buell groped about for alternate routes, Bragg's luck began to run out. After one of his brigades was chewed up in an abortive assault on Federal works at Munfordville, Bragg chose to invest the town with his entire army. He easily bagged the Union garrison but wound up losing three days in the process. Bragg painfully vacillated over his options, at one point deciding to dig in and wait for Buell to attack him, then suggesting an immediate link up with Kirby Smith, and finally contemplating the seizure of Louisville.

By September 20, Bragg had decided on a concentration with Smith. As he moved northeast, Bragg abandoned the pike and railroad to the Army of the Ohio. Buell was only too happy to take the road, mercilessly pushing his men toward Louisville. On September 25, the Federals entered the city. Buell set to work immediately reorganizing his exhausted army. With his supply hub at Louisville secure, he began making plans to pursue Bragg and give battle. President Lincoln's patience, however, had run out. From Tupelo to Louisville, Buell had been outmaneuvered for hundreds of miles. In the process, he had failed to fight a single major action.

On September 29, Buell received stunning notification from Halleck that he had been relieved, to be replaced by his second-in-command, Maj. Gen. George H. Thomas. Not wanting to undermine Buell, Thomas demurred. In a telegram to Halleck, Thomas pointed out that plans were already underway to pursue the Rebels and he considered it injudicious to assume command in the midst of an active campaign. His position, Thomas argued, was "very embarrassing." The matter was dropped. Buell, belatedly realizing that his future military career hinged on the outcome of the current campaign, got the Army of the Ohio on the move.

While Buell feinted east toward Frankfort with one division, the bulk of the army angled southeast toward Bardstown. On the left was I Corps, under the command of Maj. Gen. Alexander McCook. A West Pointer and Indian fighter, the personable McCook was held in little esteem by Buell; a less charitable Federal officer called McCook a "chucklehead." In the center, Maj. Gen. Thomas Crittenden, a Kentuckian and Mexican War veteran, headed II Corps. He was accompanied by Thomas, who assumed de facto control of the corps. On the right was III Corps, under the command of Charles Champion Gilbert, whose actual rank was somewhat in question. A mere captain just weeks earlier, Gilbert had been advanced to "acting major general" through a bizarre turn of politically motivated events. With fresh stars on his shoulders and a banty rooster attitude about his new rank, Gilbert proved an instant success at rendering himself obnoxious to every man who served under him.

Bragg, who had his army dispersed

across Central Kentucky, struggled to discern Buell's intentions. Federal columns had fanned out from Louisville in all directions, and it was something of a mystery where Buell was leading the bulk of his army. Ultimately convinced that the Federals were targeting the state capital at Frankfort, Bragg settled on a concentration at Versailles, where he optimistically hoped to finally combine commands with Smith, who characteristically dragged his feet over such a move. As his army gave ground to the advancing Federals, Bragg headed for Frankfort to personally assist in arrangements for Kentucky's new Confederate government. He left direct command of the army to his senior wing commander, Maj. Gen. Leonidas Polk, an affable Episcopal bishop turned soldier whom Bragg personally detested.

By October 6, however, Bragg's other wing commander, Maj. Gen. William J. Hardee, was being pressured by pursuing Federals. Polk, eager to discern Buell's intentions, directed Hardee to halt, stand his ground, and "force the enemy to reveal his strength." Hardee reined in his men on imposing hills overlooking the sleepy crossroads hamlet of Perryville, then requested reinforcements to drive off the enemy to his front. Bragg remained convinced that Perryville was threatened by little more than a demonstration, and he ordered Polk to lead another division to Perryville, personally assume command, and whip the Federals who had been harassing Hardee. Once he had all his troops up, Polk would have just shy of 17,000 effectives.

Bragg's guess was entirely erroneous. Hardee was confronted not with a minor demonstration, but with the entire 55,000-strong Army of the Ohio. Buell, who ironically was convinced that he was up against Bragg's entire army, began consolidating his troops west of town. To the north, McCook's I Corps approached on the Mackville Road. In the center, Gilbert's III Corps was coming up the Springfield Pike. On the right, after a grueling march, Crittenden's II Corps was expected to move into position on the Lebanon Pike. Buell, who had been injured during a fall from his horse that afternoon, set up headquarters at the Dorsey House on the Springfield Pike and made plans to launch an attack the following morning, as soon as all three corps were in position.

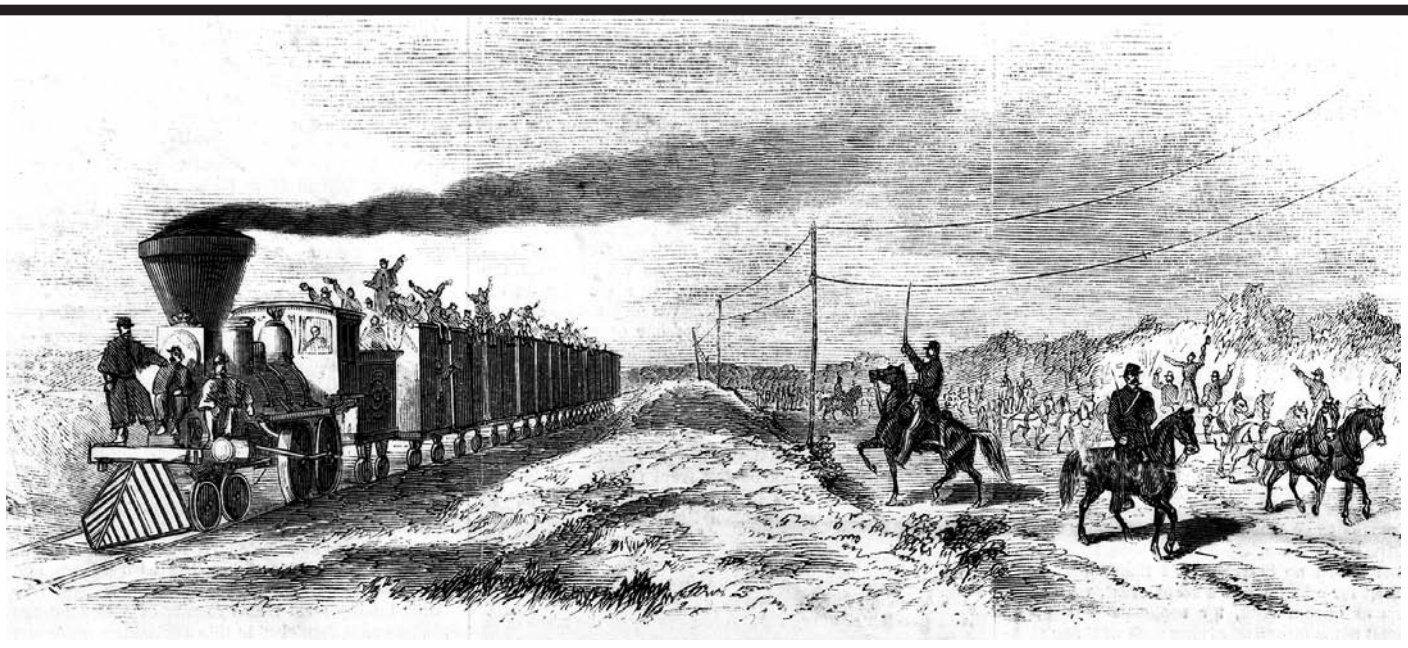
Both: Library of Congress

**Sheridan was eager to press the fight. "Tell Buell that they are fighting with a good deal of vim in my front," he shouted to a staff officer, "but if he will let me go, I can drive them to hell." Gilbert would have none of it.**

For much of October 7, Buell's vanguard clashed with Confederate horsemen under the command of Bragg's cavalry chief, Colonel Joseph Wheeler. Hardee grew increasingly alarmed that he was confronting a good portion of the Army of the Ohio. That afternoon he issued an earnest request to Bragg. "Tomorrow morning early we may expect a fight," wrote Hardee. "If the enemy does not attack us, you ought to unless pressed in another direction send forward all the reinforcements necessary, take command in person, and wipe him out." Bragg responded by hurrying Polk. "Give the enemy battle immediately; rout him, and then move to our support at Versailles," he directed. With a major battle taking shape, the Army of the Mississippi's commanding general was absent from the field. Buell, aching from his fall, was bedridden at his headquarters. Neither commander was in position to lead his men.

Inevitably, the two thirsty armies converging on Perryville would come to blows over water. When elements of Gilbert's corps discovered a few stagnant pools in Doctor's Creek to their front, Buell ordered Gilbert to seize the creek. In the predawn hours of October 8, Colonel Daniel McCook led his inexperienced brigade toward Peter's Hill, a conspicuous knob thought to be unoccupied that commanded the creek. As McCook's men mounted the slope, they were greeted by "a severe and galling fire" from the 7th Arkansas. McCook's outfit, bolstered by the 10th Indiana, easily drove off the lone Arkansas regiment, and the Federals, anchoring their newly won position with artillery, stayed put on Peter's Hill. McCook's position overlooked a narrow valley bisected by Bull Run Creek. Confederate troops, Arkansans under the command of Brig. Gen. St. John Liddell, formed up across the valley on Bottom Hill.

Fighting ramped up as both sides nervously felt out their opponents. Unaware that Peter's Hill was now held by a Federal brigade, Liddell ordered his 5th and 7th Arkansas to retake the position. Union artillery fire disrupted their advance, and the two regiments broke for the rear after McCook's men unleashed a devastating volley from a distance of 100 yards. The Confederates "wavered, broke and retreated to the woods," recalled one Federal gunner, "It was more than they could stand."



**ABOVE: A Union cavalryman raises his sword in salute to cheering comrades atop a troop train en route to Perryville on the Louisville and Nashville Railroad. The reinforcements and supplies were much needed at the time. OPPOSITE: Handsome Captain Ferdinand P. Boltz of Company F, 88th Indiana Regiment, later rose to the rank of colonel and acting adjutant of the regiment.**

Gilbert, who dashed off for direct instructions from Buell, clumsily followed up on the Confederate repulse, ordering Captain Ebenezer Gay's cavalry brigade, without infantry support, to seize the valley. A hesitant Gay led three regiments forward with predictable results. Advancing dismounted, Gay's troopers gave a good accounting of themselves but were worsted in a sharp fight with Liddell's men. Gay's outmatched horsemen, recalled McCook with dry detachment, "came back very rapidly."

Although the skittish Gilbert was apprehensive to bring on a general engagement, his lead divisional commander, Brig. Gen. Philip Sheridan, was not so disinclined. A scrappy little Irishman who possessed a giant sized appetite for battle, Sheridan was new to division command and itching for a fight. Acting without orders, he brought up another of his brigades and promptly ordered his men to clear the valley. With "iron nerve," thought one observer, Sheridan's men drove into the Confederates, who broke for the rear after a brief fight. The Federals kept up the pressure, charging up to the crest of Bottom Hill. Liddell's Arkansans, worn out after fighting all morning, pulled out.

Sheridan was eager to press the fight. "Tell Buell that they are fighting with a good deal of vim in my front," he shouted to a staff officer, "but if he will let me go, I can drive them to hell." Gilbert would have none of it. After consulting with Buell, the touchy corps chief pulled his troops back to Peter's Hill and ordered Sheridan to cool his heels; the army would advance, it had been decided, only after all three corps were in place.

Despite Buell's timetable, both Crittenden's and McCook's corps were tardy in arriving on the field. It was roughly 10 PM before the latter began forming his men on the Federal left, on the high ground above the Chaplin River. Still determined to hit the Confederates with nothing less than the full weight of his army, Buell decided to sit tight and launch his attack the following morning. It was a reasonable decision. Sheridan had roughly handled the opposition to his front, and McCook's senior officers were equally optimistic that the Rebels were retreating. While conferring with artillery Captain Cyrus Loomis, 3rd Division commander Brig. Gen. Lovell Rousseau remarked on dust clouds visible north of Perryville, likely an indication of Confederate troops on the move. "I guess," Loomis offhandedly quipped, "we have tread on the tail of Mr. Bragg's coat."

In fact, Bragg was busy reorganizing his lines for an all-out assault on Federal forces west of the Chaplin River. Alarmed that neither Polk nor Hardee seemed eager to give battle, Bragg had personally arrived in Perryville by midmorning and was not a little annoyed that Polk, in contravention of orders, had adopted a defensive posture. Still entertaining the notion that he faced only a portion of Buell's army, Bragg immediately ordered Polk to attack. While Hardee's left wing kept the Federals busy immediately west of Perryville, Polk would launch a staggering attack en echelon from the right. To add punch to the planned attack, Bragg ordered his left flank division, led by Maj. Gen. Benjamin Franklin Cheatham, to pull out of line, reform on the right flank, and open the assault.

Cheatham, a political general who lacked West Point training, was nonetheless a decent choice to spearhead the assault. A foul-mouthed, bullheaded brawler, his notorious fondness for the bottle was exceeded only by his love of fighting. In preparation for the attack, a Confederate cavalry probe determined that the Federal flank lay exposed to frontal assault at a vital road junction known as Dixville Crossroads. While McCook's Federals lounged on the Chaplin Hills and fanned out to find

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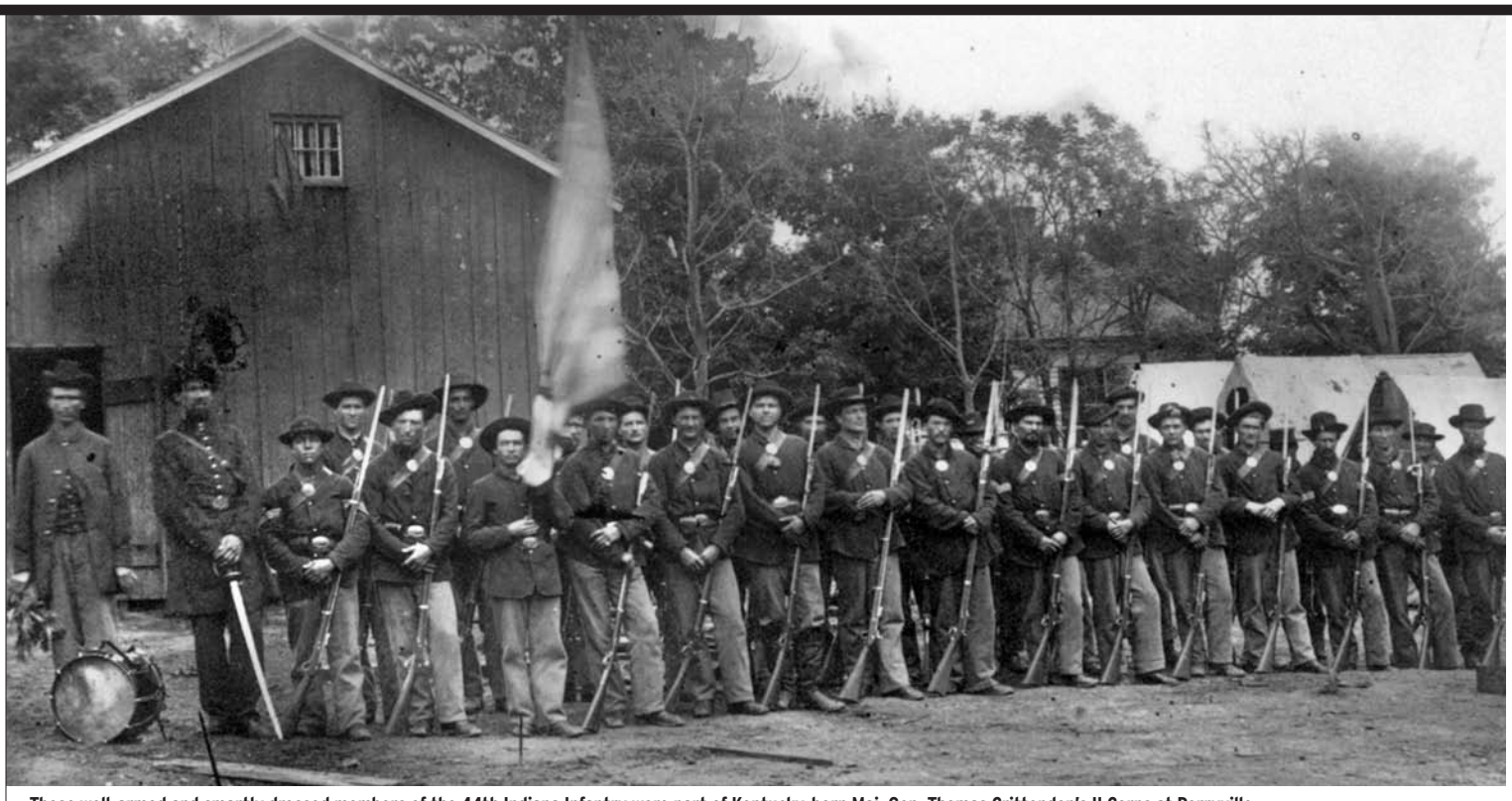


**These well-armed and smartly dressed members of the 44th Indiana Infantry were part of Kentucky-born Maj. Gen. Thomas Crittenden's II Corps at Perryville.**

water, Cheatham readied his men, some of the most experienced troops in the Army of the Mississippi, to assail Buell's left.

At half past noon, Confederate artillery opened a barrage intended to soften up the enemy position. George Landrum, who like Lieutenant Millard had unsuccessfully warned Rousseau of the proximity of Rebel troops, laughed out loud when the general and his staff scattered to escape the artillery fire. "Such a skedaddling to get out of range," he recalled, "I never saw before." Federal batteries responded in a thunderous duel that was heard nearly 10 miles away. As shells crashed through their ranks, McCook's troops grew jittery. Survivors described the barrage as sheer pandemonium, but after an hour of terror Confederate artillery fire abruptly ceased and an eerie silence descended over the hills. Some of the Federals grew hopeful that there would be no fight after all and surmised that the artillery fire had been little more than a noisy distraction intended to cover a Confederate withdrawal.

At about 2 PM, such assumptions proved sorely optimistic. Streaming out of the bed of the Chaplin River, Cheatham's division advanced across undulating terrain that served to mask its approach until the men neared the Federal line. The lead troops, a Tennessee brigade commanded by Brig. Gen. Daniel Donelson, headed straight for a Federal battery visible on the ridge line. Far too late, it became apparent that Donelson's brigade was acting on woefully inaccurate intelligence. Rather than striking an exposed Federal flank, the Tennesseans were headed nearly for the center of McCook's I Corps. Donelson blanched when he observed enemy artillery unlimbered far to his right on a bald hill known as Open Knob that commanded the field and anchored the Federal left. "The whole face of the earth," thought Carroll Clark of the 16th Tennessee, was "covered with Yankees."

Donelson's men entered a maelstrom. The I Corps gunners subjected the Tennesseans to a merciless crossfire that tore great gaps in their ranks. The men, reported Thomas Head of the 16th Tennessee, were "mowed down at a fearful rate." Pressing forward toward a gap in the Federal line, the Confederates desperately sought cover behind farm buildings. Cheatham scrambled to send support, while Federal regiments likewise rushed into the fight; Donelson's attack hopelessly stalled, then fell back.

With Union troops forming on Open Knob, Cheatham shifted one of his best brigades, that of Brig. Gen. George Maney, to more advantageous ground farther to the right. Maney was a solid field commander who led a brigade composed largely of tough Shiloh veterans. An attorney in civilian life, Maney was a Mexican War veteran. He had seen action in western Virginia as well as at Shiloh. Hastily deploying three of his regiments into a front line, Maney stepped off for Open Knob.

On the summit of the hill, Federal Brig. Gen. William Terrill had deployed a single regiment, the 123rd Illinois, as well as eight guns of Lieutenant Charles Parsons' battery. With such a skeleton force, Terrill was tasked with anchoring the left flank of the entire army. A West Point graduate and former battery commander, Terrill was far more comfortable manning big guns than maneuvering substantial bodies of infantry. Due to the rolling nature of the ground, Maney's lead regiments escaped notice

until they were a mere 200 yards from the Federal position. Frantically ordering up the rest of his brigade, Terrill directed the artillery to let loose on Maney's line.

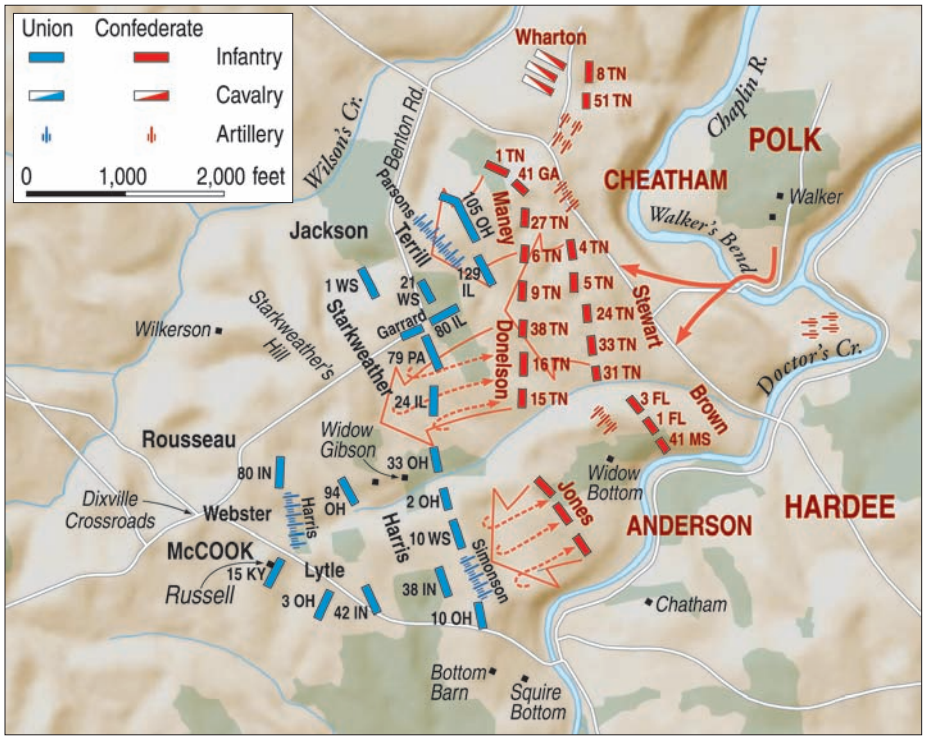
Firing a haphazard but deadly mix of canister, shell, and case, Parsons covered the eastern slope of the hill with a nearly impenetrable sheet of iron. Staggered, Maney's veterans went to ground behind a rail fence bordered by a belt of hardwood. It offered some cover, but men were still dropping fast. "The battery was playing upon us with terrible effect," remembered Lt. Col. William Frierson of the 27th Tennessee, "such a storm of shell, grape, canister, and Minie balls was turned loose upon us as no troops scarcely ever before encountered." As Parsons' guns splintered trees overhead, Maney's troops lost momentum and struggled to return fire.

At the top of the knob, the 105th Ohio arrived to reinforce the hill, but Terrill seemed disinterested in directing his brigade. All but paralyzed by a myopic fixation with the artillery, Terrill took over personal direction of the guns and abruptly ordered the 123rd Illinois, a green regiment, to charge the Rebels at the foot of the hill. The results of the misguided order were tragically predictable. The Illinois rookies advanced to within 100 yards of the enemy, where the Confederates greeted them with a volley that decimated their ranks. Broken and demoralized, the frightened Federals scattered back up the hill in considerable confusion; about a quarter of the regiment had fallen in minutes. An onlooker from the 105th Ohio was left dispirited by the fruitless charge. "Such an order," he later wrote, "was simple madness."

In the wake of the bloody repulse, Maney sensed an opportunity and ordered his men forward. Terrill grew frantic at the Confederate approach and again ordered a foolhardy counterattack, exclaiming excitedly, "Do not let them get the guns!" Elements of the 105th Ohio responded to the order, but the bulk of Terrill's men remained in place as the two opposing lines blazed away at near point-blank range. "The butchery," recalled Confederate Captain Thomas Malone, "was something awful."

Rushing uphill the last few yards, Maney's troops seized control of Open Knob amid the complete collapse of Terrill's brigade. Divisional commander Brig. Gen. James Jackson, who was desperately attempting to rally his men from horseback, was shot dead during the struggle. As Union troops fled the knob, Terrill succeeded in drawing off just one of his beloved guns; his brigade had been wrecked in the vicious fight for the hill. He withdrew his battered command behind another hill to the west, an imposing ridgeline occupied by the Federal brigade of Colonel John Starkweather.

Map © 2015 Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping, Minneapolis, MN




**Buell's Union forces, divided into three wings commanded by Maj. Gens. Alexander McCook, Thomas Crittenden, and Charles C. Gilbert, acted largely on the defensive at Perryville, permitting the Confederates of Maj. Gens. Leonidas Polk and William Hardee to take the initiative.**

Flushed with success after seizing Open Knob, Maney's blood was up, and he pressed his brigade forward for the next hill, optimistic that unrelenting pressure would effect a complete rout of the enemy. He would have help; on his left he linked up with elements of Brig. Gen. Alexander Stewart's brigade, which was likewise advancing as Bragg's planned echelon attack took shape. Hardee's left wing also joined in, although the inevitable fog of war ensured that the Confederate thrust would be a savage and disjointed affair.

Colonel Thomas Jones' Mississippi brigade, a painfully raw outfit, went forward prematurely. Isolated and without proper support, the Mississippians advanced gamely through a storm of Federal artillery fire, targeting a section of the enemy line occupied by the brigade of Colonel Leonard Harris. "We could see awful gaps in their ranks," recalled Frank Phelps of the 10th Wisconsin, but the Confederates simply closed ranks and pressed on. When the attackers "got within 30 rods of us," wrote Phelps, Colonel Alfred Chapin "called out for us to up & at them." The Mississippians were mangled by the ensuing volley. Breaking for the rear in disorder, Jones' shattered brigade left the hillside littered with men; nearly half the brigade was dead, wounded, or missing.

Brigadier General Bushrod Johnson's brigade advanced in even greater confusion. Johnson had received orders to oblique left to avoid Federal artillery, but

not all his regimental commanders were informed of the maneuver. While most of his brigade veered south, his 37th Tennessee continued straight ahead. Before Johnson's disjointed troops could even come to grips with the enemy, they were subjected to unexpected artillery fire that tore into their left flank. Overeager Confederate gunners, mistaking Johnson's men for fleeing Federals, had opened fire on their own men.

Regrouping as best he could, Johnson led his men straight for key ground on his sector of the field, the formerly obscure homestead of Henry Bottom defended by the Federal brigade of Colonel William Lytle, an idealistic warrior poet from Cincinnati who held his ground with grim determination. The horrific fighting that ensued transformed the Bottom farm into a veritable charnel house. Men fell by the score as the two lines savagely mauled each other. The Bottom barn, which was being used as a makeshift field hospital, burst into flames after it was hit by Confederate artillery. Federal wounded, unable to escape the structure, died in the inferno.

While McCook's I Corps desperately struggled to hold onto its position, Union headquarters remarkably had no idea that the army's left was on the verge of collapse. Due to the curious atmospheric phenomenon known as "acoustic shadow" that masked sound waves, much of the army had no idea that a major fight was even underway. Ensconced at the insulated bubble of the Dorsey House, Buell read, rested, dined rather well, and remained blissfully unaware that a third of his army was fighting for its life. At one point he had heard the faint boom of artillery and angrily snapped that such random cannonading was "a waste of powder."

It was not until 4 PM that Buell was informed of the Confederate assault. Even then, the incredulous general remained skeptical. Focused on executing his own attack the following morning, Buell failed to grasp that the grand Confederate assault had rendered null his own plans. Due to Buell's intransigent tunnel vision, McCook's beleaguered I Corps was left to shift for itself.

Despite their commander's stubborn disbelief, Federal troops arrayed on the Chaplin Hills were all too aware that they were in the midst of a serious fight. Itching to break the Federal left once and for all, Maney lashed his brigade against Starkweather's troops west of Open Knob. His attack was ably supported by the battery of Captain William Carnes, an enterprising young artillery officer who, largely on his own initiative, unlimbered his pieces on high ground above the Federal left from which he could readily pound Starkweather. His guns played havoc on the hill's defenders; among the casualties was General Terrill, mortally wounded by shellfire while, fittingly enough, personally manning his own cannon.

As the 1st Tennessee rushed forward, Federal gunners gave the regiment a brutal reception. "The iron passed through our ranks," remembered Private Sam Watkins, "mangling and tearing men to pieces." It was, he thought, "the very pit of hell." Perdition indeed waited at the top of the hill, where Maney's men engaged the Federals in a vicious hand-to-hand struggle. Clubbing and cursing with wild abandon, the two sides fought each other to a frazzle. The battered and exhausted Confederates drew off to regroup, while Starkweather executed a skillful retreat and regrouped. He chose his ground well, rallying his brigade on an imposingly steep ridge that would afford his troops a decided advantage. Hastily forming behind a stone fence, Starkweather's men poured a steady fire into the Confederates. Although supported by Stewart's brigade on the left, Maney's spent troops stalled and reluctantly fell back. They had beaten in I Corps' flank for nearly a mile but had reached the limit of their endurance. Thanks to Starkweather's stubborn stand, the Federal left had held.

Whether or not the rest of I Corps could hold fast was yet to be decided. Although Lytle's brigade had narrowly held its own against Bushrod Johnson's Confederates, it was soon assailed by overwhelming force. While the Rebels kept up pressure on both of Lytle's flanks, a fresh enemy

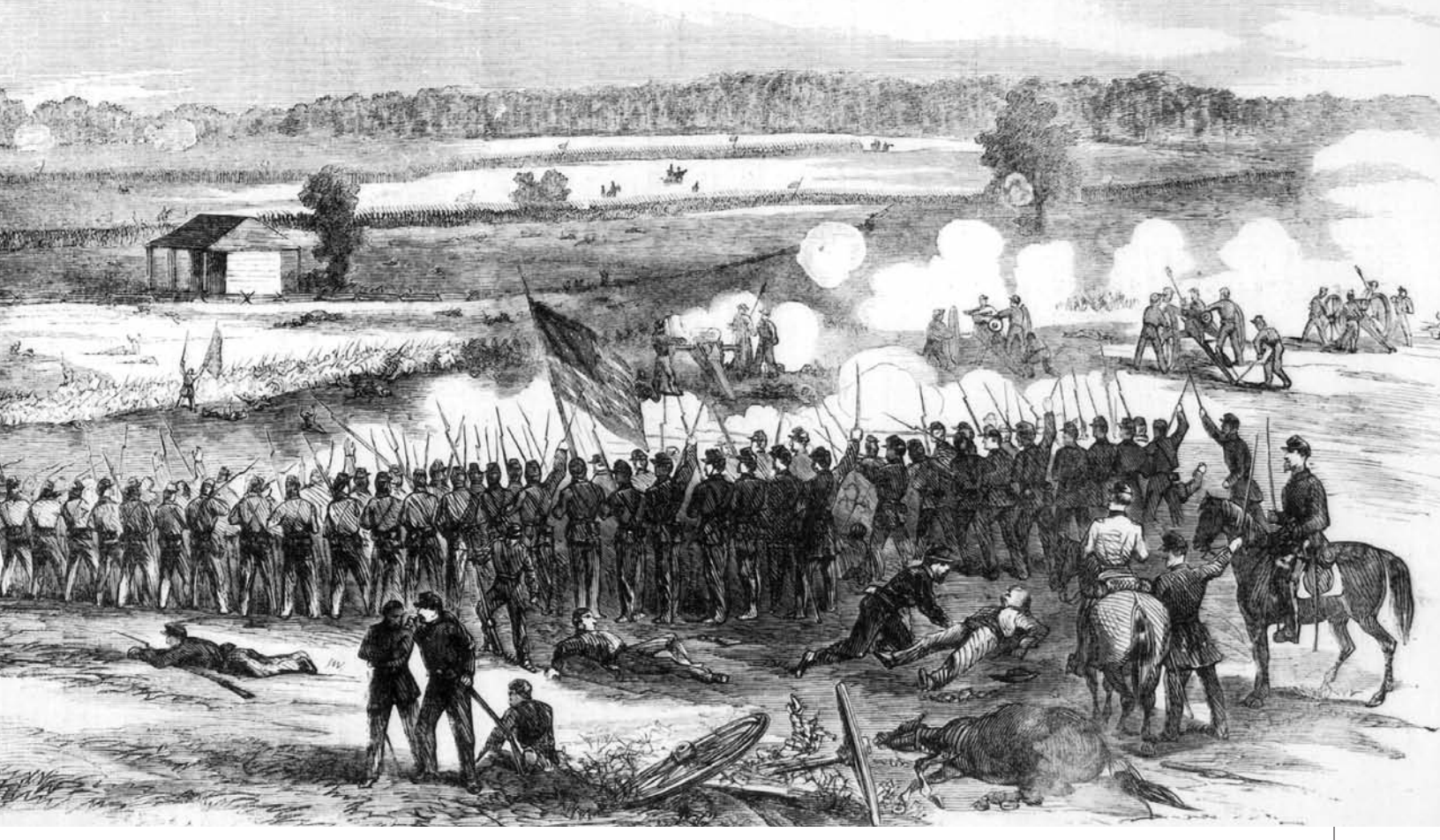
The Granger Collection, New York

**Infantrymen in the 80th Indiana exchange musket rounds with Cheatham's oncharging Confederates, while their comrades in the 19th Indiana Light Battery support them on the right.**

brigade appeared to his front. Composed of Tennessee and Arkansas veterans of the Shiloh campaign, the outfit was led by one of the most promising officers in the western theater, Irish-born Brig. Gen. Patrick R. Cleburne.

Moving forward at double time, Cleburne's men tore into the enemy at nearly the same time that Lytle's Federals, running low on ammunition, pulled back from the ground they had so tenaciously defended. One Louisianan paid grudging homage to the Federals' grim dedication. Corpses in blue appeared "in two straight lines as they had fallen. I could have walked on their bodies without touching the ground several hundred yards. Scarcely a man could be seen out of his place in the line." During the chaotic retreat, Lytle sustained what he initially feared was a mortal head wound and was captured by the onrushing Confederates.

Sweeping Lytle's brigade out of the way,



the Confederates made a determined drive for the Dixville Crossroads. Cleburne, advancing parallel to and north of the Mackville Road, linked up with Adams' brigade, which moved forward on his left. The Confederates crashed into a makeshift line composed of the 42nd and 88th Indiana, driving off the Hoosiers after a brief but bloody fight and pressing on toward their objective.

Despite such success, the Confederate juggernaut was losing momentum in the face of stubborn Federal resistance. As dusk approached, reinforcements arrived to relieve the battered I Corps. Gilbert released Colonel Michael Gooding's III Corps brigade just as Rousseau's thin and exhausted line was assailed by the Confederate brigade of Brig. Gen. Sam Wood. Directing the newcomers to the scene of the thickest fighting, McCook was clearly relieved. "I think this brigade," remarked the embattled corps commander, "will turn the scale."

Racing into action, Gooding's troops pitched into the Rebels and plugged the gap at Dixville Crossroads. The battle raged furiously, thought Gooding, as "one after one of my men were cut down." In something of an understatement, the colonel reported that his fresh brigade "severely pressed the enemy." In fact, his troops nearly folded up Wood's right, and Gooding's 22nd Indiana mounted an impetuous bayonet charge into the 32nd Mississippi. The action initiated a contagious rout of Wood's brigade, which hastily fled the field. The Hoosiers, in turn, were greeted by an unexpected volley that sent them reeling. Deployed directly in their front, and coming on for the crossroads, was Liddell's Confederate brigade.

Since opening the battle early that morning during the nasty tangle with Sheridan's men, Liddell's Arkansans had rested and regrouped before they were called on once more. General Hardee desperately sought fresh troops to throw a final punch at McCook's fragile line. Polk and Cheatham, on hand as Liddell's men went into action, were sure that the brigade could finally break through to the crossroads. Under simple orders to go where the fire was hottest, Liddell wryly remarked that on the blood-soaked fields of Perryville the hottest place "seemed to be everywhere." As darkness descended over the battlefield, Liddell groped his way toward the crossroads, unsure if there were friendly troops between him and the enemy. When his men opened fire on unidentified troops to their front, they were answered with a desperate call to cease firing. "You are firing upon friends," someone shouted, "for God's sake stop!"

Liddell was not the only disoriented soldier on the field that evening. The order to cease firing had come from an officer of the 22nd Indiana, who was convinced that his own regiment had bumped into another Federal unit in the darkness. Polk, riding to the front, was equally concerned lest Liddell precipitate a friendly fire incident. Determined to sort it out, Polk brazenly rode up the ridge to have a look for himself.

What followed was one of the more legendary cases of mistaken identity in the Civil War. Polk happened upon a somewhat befuddled officer and barked orders to cease firing. When the officer announced himself as the commander of the 22nd Indiana and then asked Polk's identity, the corps com-

Getty Images

**Another native of the Bluegrass State, Brig. Gen. Lovell Rousseau, personally rallies members of the 15th Kentucky. The painting was done later from a sketch by *Harper's Weekly* staff artist William DeLaney Travis, who personally witnessed the scene.**

mander blanched at the news but responded with stark bluster. "I'll soon show you who I am, sir," he shot back. "Cease firing, sir, at once." Coolly riding back to his own lines, Polk repeatedly snapped orders to cease firing. His bluff paid off; the confused Hoosiers let him pass. Reaching the safety of Liddell's line, Polk bellowed out his discovery. "Every mother's son of them," he exclaimed, "are Yankees!"

Liddell's brigade opened up on the unprepared Federals with a point-blank volley that put the shocked Hoosiers to flight; two-thirds of their number were left lying on the ridge. When Confederates began pouring through the gap thus created, the rest of Gooding's brigade retreated beyond the Benton Road. Sensing that victory was within reach, Liddell advanced his brigade to Dixville Crossroads, occupied the vital road junction, and readied for a final push against the demoralized remnants of I Corps.

He would never get the chance. Federal troops could be heard forming off to his left. It was a second and final brigade of reinforcements rushed to the scene by Gilbert, under the command of Brig. Gen. James Steedman. Liddell, convinced that he could break the Federals once and for all, was eager to press the fight. But Polk, rattled by his uncomfortable brush with the 22nd Indiana, would have none of it. He directed Liddell to sit tight. "I want no more night fighting," the bishop announced.

As it turned out, Bragg wanted no more fighting—either night or day. Contrary to Bragg's repeated assertions that Union forces in front of Perryville constituted no more than an isolated detachment of Buell's army, the day's fighting had obviously demonstrated that the Federals were present in strength. Operating southwest of town on the Lebanon Pike, Wheeler's cavalry had sparred with elements of Crittenden's II Corps, and elements of Gilbert's III Corps had made a late afternoon dash for Perryville itself, indicating that a sizable Federal force lay immediately west of the town. The day's fighting had been excruciatingly costly for Bragg's army. Nearly a third of his available force was dead, wounded, or missing. With no fresh troops at hand and no help expected from Kirby Smith, Bragg decided to abandon the ground for which his men had paid dearly in blood.

At the Dorsey House, Buell remained oblivious to the magnitude of the day's battle. The starchy general persisted in his belief that the fight had been a middling affair and failed to grasp that McCook's I Corps had been thoroughly mauled. Sheridan, who dined at headquarters that night, was startled by the army commander's stubborn refusal to acknowledge the obvious—that a major fight had taken place. Dinner conversation, thought Sheridan,

"indicated that what had occurred was not fully realized, and I returned to my troops impressed with the belief that general Buell and his staff-officers were unconscious of the magnitude of the battle that had just been fought."

Sheridan was not far off the mark. When II Corps entered Perryville at midmorning on October 9, they found the town deserted. Under cover of darkness, Bragg had pulled out. With the Rebels gone, the Federals were left in possession of a field littered with dead and wounded, and Buell was finally confronted with the staggering cost of I Corps' stubborn stand.

Both sides had suffered heavily in the fighting. Buell had lost at least 4,200 men: 845 killed, 2,851 wounded, and 515 missing. Proportionately, the Army of the Mississippi fared even worse: 510 killed, 2,635 wounded, and 251 missing. During a single afternoon of fierce fighting, Bragg had lost 20 percent of his available troops. Burial details labored for days at the unenviable task of interring the dead. John Sipe of the 38th Indiana, who had volunteered for the duty, hoped that he would "never witness the like again." Blue and Gray were scattered promiscuously, he wrote his wife, "with their limbs blown off or shattered to pieces. One Rebel with both his arms blown off told me if he were in his grave he would not suffer so."

It soon became apparent that such horrific losses had largely been in vain. As the Army of the Mississippi limped away from Perryville, Bragg quickly reached the conclusion that the campaign for Kentucky was over. Whatever chances he had once had for uniting with Kirby Smith and offering battle on his own terms had clearly evaporated. Considerably diminished by the battle at Perryville, the Confederates were in no shape to confront Buell again. By October 13, both Bragg and Smith, united at last in retreat, had their men on the move for Tennessee.

Slogging their way through the parched hills of eastern Kentucky, the demoralized Confederates made their way through Cumberland Gap to Knoxville. Defeatism infected the officer corps. In the wake of the Battle of Perryville, the army's senior officers sought to apportion blame for the embarrassing debacle. A host of generals, including Smith, Polk, Hardee, Buckner, Cleburne, and Liddell, angrily called for Bragg's ouster.

Unsettled by such insubordinate gossip, President Davis ordered Bragg to Richmond for a firsthand accounting of the disaster. Bragg put on a brave face, casting blame for Perryville in every direction but his own. Ultimately the president rallied to the defense of his old friend, retaining Bragg in command of the army. Despite the shakeup, the bitter controversy and mutual recriminations spawned by Perryville continued to fester, ensuring that the army's senior command would degenerate into a fractious gaggle of quarreling officers. The crippling distrust naturally filtered down to the men in the ranks, and Bragg labored under a black cloud that would dog him for the remainder of the war. "Not a single soldier in the whole army ever loved or respected him," recalled Sam Watkins, and the troops "had no faith in his ability as a general."

Buell fared little better in the court of opinion. Already out of favor with the Lincoln administration in the weeks leading up the Kentucky campaign, Buell's fate was nearly a foregone conclusion after his nonperformance at Perryville. His actions subsequent to the battle didn't help matters. With Bragg's army in full retreat toward Cumberland Gap, Halleck unsuccessfully prodded Buell to mount a vigorous pursuit. He simply shrugged it off, opting to concentrate his forces at Nashville. "I deem it useless and inexpedient," he wired Halleck, "to continue the pursuit." For an exasperated Lincoln, such blatant disregard for orders was the last straw. At the end of October, Buell was relieved of command.

Ultimately, the bloody fight at Perryville came to be regarded as a senseless waste of brave men. Bragg had flushed Buell out of Tennessee and shifted the front, albeit temporarily, to the Ohio River, but the entire campaign had been a misbegotten affair from the outset. Without a rational end game, Bragg's headlong drive into the Bluegrass State had mystified both the Federals and his own men. The "whole tour through Tenn & Ky," wrote Edward Brown of the 45th Alabama, "is a foggy affair to me." Once battle was joined, neither Bragg nor Buell possessed a clear grasp of the situation. More damningly, both generals were disengaged from the fight, leaving more than 35,000 men to slug it out on their own. The indecisive results of the battle were a sobering testament to the bitter fruit of maladroit generalship.

For the common soldiers who had grappled there, Perryville remained a tragically senseless affair. Sam Watkins, whose 1st Tennessee had seen some of the worst fighting on the Federal left, was dispirited by the pointless and bloody stalemate. His own homespun assessment of the engagement was likely the most accurate. "I do not remember of a harder contest and more evenly fought battle than that of Perryville," he wrote. "If it had been two men wrestling, it would have been called a 'dog fall.' Both sides claim the victory—both whipped." □

# Forty-rod, Blue Ruin, AND OH BE JOYFUL

## ALCOHOL ABUSE IN THE CIVIL WAR

**With a plethora of colorful nicknames, alcohol was widely abused in both Union and Confederate armies during the Civil War by soldiers desperate to escape the terrors of battle and the boredom of camp.**

By David A. Norris

Union General Benjamin Butler was baffled. Every night a picket guard went to an outpost 1½ miles from Fort Monroe, Virginia. The soldiers departed for their shift perfectly sober, yet when they returned to the post the next morning they caused trouble "on account of being drunk." Investigations failed to reveal the source of their whiskey. Searches of canteens and gear turned up nothing suspicious. But there was one odd thing about the detachment: someone in Butler's command noticed that the men always held their muskets straight up in a peculiar manner. The mystery unraveled when their muskets were examined. "Every gun barrel," wrote Butler, "was found to be filled with whiskey."

Excessive drinking was a constant problem in both armies during the Civil War. "No one evil agent so much obstructs this army as the degrading vice of drunkenness," wrote Union Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan in February 1862. "It is the cause of by far the greatest part of the disorders which are examined by court-martial." The complete abolition of alcohol, he believed, "would be worth fifty thousand men to the armies of the United States." And across the Mason-Dixon Line, the *Norfolk Day-Book* complained that Confederate enlisted men and officers in the vicinity were drinking whiskey "in quantities which would astonish the nerves of a cast-iron lamp-post, and of a quality which would destroy the digestive organs of an ostrich."

**LEFT AND ABOVE: Two "health elixirs," Dr. J. Hostetter's Stomach Bitters, left, and Drakes Plantation Bitters, were mostly alcohol. OPPOSITE: Two Union cavalrymen a long way from home share a bottle of whiskey in this staged studio photograph. Not all such drinking was staged.**

Many if not most soldiers were already well acquainted with alcohol from the antebellum era. Whiskey was far and away the most popular drink in 1861. Often made from corn instead of grain, it was distilled at countless locations across the country. Popular nondistilled drinks included cider and beer. Cider, made from apples, was more common, but beer was quickly growing in favor, its rise fueled by the steady German immigration into Northern states.

Low-grade whiskey carried with it the threat of poisoning the drinker, so makers might start with clear alcohol, water it down, and then doctor the mixture to simulate the color and flavor of the real thing. Chewing tobacco, for example, helped approximate the amber tint of whiskey or brandy. Harsher ingredients added the bite that drinkers expected in their whiskey. An 1860 inspection of liquor samples in Cincinnati found whiskey containing sulfuric acid, red pepper, caustic, soda, potassium, and strychnine. It was no wonder that "rotgut" was the most prevalent nickname for cheap liquor during the era.

Countering the growth of alcohol consumption was the temperance movement,

All: Library of Congress

**ABOVE: While soldiers toast mordantly, "Here's health to the next one that dies," Death listens craftily outside their tent. BELOW: Texas Confederates share whiskey and other scarce provisions from a captured Union supply wagon.**

which sought to make all forms of alcoholic beverages illegal. Maine enacted a prohibition law in 1851. Several other states or territories passed dry laws in the following years. In most cases, these laws were repealed or overturned within a short time. Per capita consumption peaked in 1830 at an equivalent of 7.1 gallons of alcohol annually. A swift decline followed, with the annual per capita figure dropping to 2.53 gallons by 1860.

Alcohol still had an official presence in the U.S. Army in 1861. A daily spirit ration for American soldiers had been abolished in 1832, but officers were permitted to issue special servings of whiskey to relieve fatigue and exposure. Soldiers, naturally, had countless sneaky ways to obtain whiskey. While diligent officers could restrict the flow of whiskey into camp, soldiers could still drink when they received a pass to leave camp. In the Confederate Army, the phrase "running the blockade" meant slipping in and out of camp for illicit purposes, usually involving alcohol.

On February 27, 1862, the Confederate Congress passed a law allowing President Jefferson Davis to suspend habeas corpus and declare martial law in areas threatened by the enemy. Immediately, martial law was declared in Portsmouth and Norfolk, Virginia, followed by Richmond on March 1. Richmond came under control of the provost guards commanded by Brig. Gen. John H. Winder, who prohibited the manufacture of liquor and closed the city's saloons. By then liquor sales had caused so much trouble and crime among Confederate soldiers and civilian that many in Richmond welcomed martial law. Winder also barred rail shipments of whiskey into the Confederate capital. Apothecaries were allowed to dispense liquor only with a doctor's prescription.

Martial law did not stop the distribution of whiskey, but merely drove it underground. There were still countless cases of drunk and disorderly behavior, as well as arrests for illegal sales of alcohol. Corruption flourished among the provost guards, some of whom forged prescriptions for alcohol. After obtaining the liquor, they then arrested the apothecaries who had dispensed it, thus adding insult to injury.

A great deal of whiskey was sent to army camps on both sides by well-meaning relatives back home. It was a common practice, especially among the Union soldiers, for families to send their loved ones packages of fresh, canned, or smoked food and other small creature comforts. Commanding officers quickly realized that a great deal of whiskey was also being smuggled into camp inside these care packages. General Butler later testified before Congress that a search of an Adams Express Company depot yielded 150 different packages of liquor in crates and boxes on their way to his command.

Every parcel intended for a soldier had to be opened and inspected by officers of his regiment or brigade. Union Private John D. Billings, in his classic memoir *Hardtack and Coffee,* recalled, "There was many a growl uttered by men who lost their little pint or quart bottle of some choice stimulating beverage, which had been confiscated from a box as contraband of war." Billings noted some ingenious ways that innocent-looking gifts concealed whiskey. One favorite ruse was hiding a bottle of whiskey inside a well-roasted turkey.

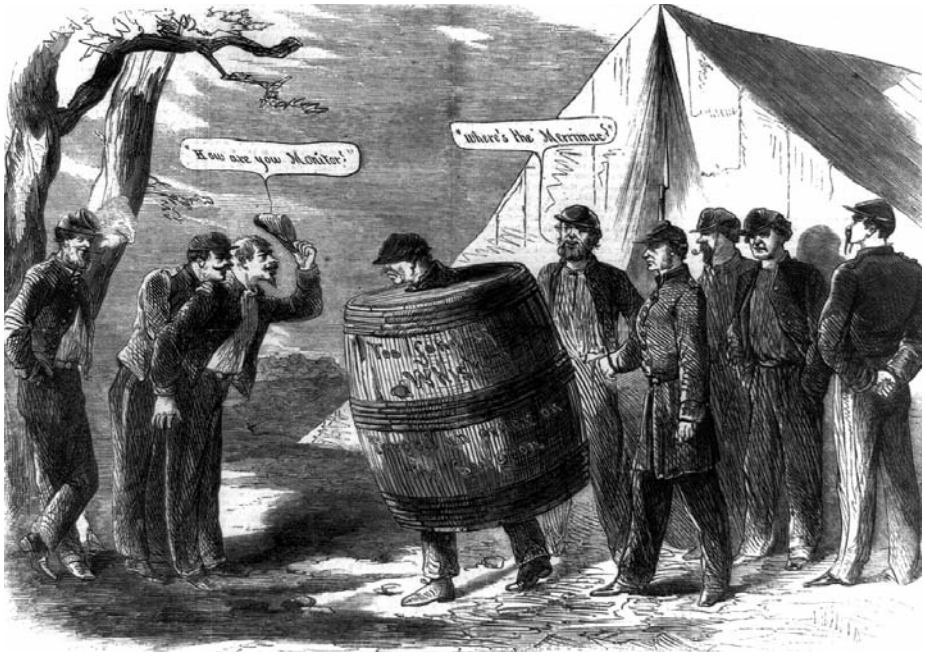
Whiskey bottles also came into Billings' camp in tin cans of small cakes or in loaves of bread with holes cut in the bottom.

Smuggling whiskey in legitimate-looking containers with false labels was a common practice. A helpful sutler showed Butler several little bottles that supposedly contained hair oil packaged by a New York City firm. Instead, each bottle contained half a pint of whiskey, with a little olive oil on top. The bottles were sold wholesale at eight cents each, but soldiers paid 25 cents for them in camp. The distributor claimed to have sold thousands of such bottles at Fort Monroe.

In February 1863, the Union guard boat *Jacob Bell* searched the supply schooner *Mail* at Alexandria, Virginia. Aboard the schooner were 428 dozen cans labeled "milk drink" packaged by Numsen, Carroll & Company, a Baltimore firm. Upon closer inspection, Lt. Cmdr. E.P. McCrea learned that the milk drink was actually "villainous eggnog." Commodore Andrew Harwood noted that the cans were not soldered in the usual way. The top and bottom had been heated with a resinous substance and the edges bent over so that the cover at either end could be removed to convert the can into a drinking cup. Harwood issued orders to the Potomac Flotilla to seize any vessel caught smuggling alcohol.

Sutlers were in a good position to profit from liquor sales. Regulations prohibited them from selling liquor to enlisted personnel, but many of the officially licensed merchants evaded the rules. Sutlers could openly stock whiskey because they were still allowed to sell it to officers. Brassy enlisted men frequently borrowed a pair of officers' shoulder straps and purchased whiskey in the shops. Others stole bottles from sutler huts, wagons, or tents.

Impersonating an officer was only one of the many ways that Union and Confederate soldiers managed to get around the rules restricting their drinking. Assignment to guard duty also provided opportunities for mischief. In eastern North Carolina in April 1862, several men in the 51st Pennsylvania were ordered to guard the commissary tent in which a newly arrived shipment of whiskey barrels was stored. One night the guards took the barrels off their muskets. After unscrewing the breech plugs, each soldier had a long iron straw, which he inserted into the bung-hole of a whiskey cask and sucked himself into intoxication.




**This *Harper's Weekly* cartoon shows a soldier wearing a barrel as punishment for forging a surgeon's signature to obtain whiskey. The inscription reads, "Too fond of whiskey." Such ruses were commonplace in camp.**

Among the busiest routes for smuggling alcohol to the Union Army was the Long Bridge, which crossed the Potomac River, linking Washington, D.C., to Virginia. On November 23, 1863, all contraband liquor seized on the bridge was turned over to the Army Medical Museum, located not far from the Washington end of the bridge. At the time, tissue specimens saved for the museum were wrapped in cloth and preserved in a keg of alcohol or whiskey. Each specimen was identified by a small wooden block, with a description written on it in pencil so that the alcohol would not dissolve the writing. Confiscated liquor was distilled again by the museum into uniform grade 70 percent alcohol, which was deemed perfect for preserving specimens.

Surgeon John H. Brinton recalled that ground around the museum was piled high with "kegs, bottles, demijohns, and cases, to say nothing of an infinite variety of tins, made so as to fit unperceived on the body, and thus permit the wearer to smuggle alcohol into camp." Another medical officer, Acting Assistant Surgeon Ralph S.L. Walsh, marveled at the ingenuity of liquor smugglers. Goods confiscated for the museum, ranging from blackberry wine to straight alcohol, were packed in many peculiar vessels. Frequently women were arrested with belts under their skirts to which were fastened tin cans holding between a quart and a gallon of whiskey. In a number of cases the women sported false breasts, each holding a quart or more of contraband liquor. Guards seized so much alcohol at Long Bridge during the war that the Army Medical Museum had enough alcohol for its specimens until 1876.

In many camps sutlers were allowed to sell patent medicines. Often these remedies were nothing more than liquor flavored and tinted with herbal concoctions. Countless posters and newspapers touted the healing power of bitters, liquor strongly flavored with herbs. Some medicinal bitters were served as drinks in saloons. The highly advertised Drake's Plantation Bitters, which blended herbs with St. Croix rum, was enormously popular at sutler tents.

Lieutenant Luther Tracy Townshend, the


**A Civil War-era envelope features a drawing of a patriotically garbed vivandiere pouring a drink for a wounded soldier. Vivandieres were women unofficially attached to regiments to help with camp duties and nursing.**

adjutant of the 16th Vermont, was also the president of the regimental temperance society. Once, in the absence of the regiment's sutler, it fell to Townshend to order a shipment of necessities and luxuries for the troops. Some of the men persuaded Townshend to order several cases of Hostetter's Bitters to help soldiers who were suffering from chills. The merchandise soon arrived in their camp in Louisiana. As Townshend reported, "Some of the men, who were more chilly than the others, took overdoses and in consequence became staggeringly drunk." Only then did the mortified adjutant learn that Hostetter's Bitters was almost pure whiskey.

An exception to the ban on sutler sales of alcohol to enlisted personnel existed in some German units of the Union Army. Brig. Gen. Louis Blenker, for one, ordered sutlers to sell beer to the soldiers of his brigade, who were predominantly German immigrants, to keep up their morale. His orders caused resentment among non-German units, although this was mollified by sutlers selling beer to soldiers outside the brigade.

Perhaps the most creative dodge was used by a soldier of the 11th Ohio, who killed a snake and, in the words of a marveling comrade, "carefully dissecting the varmint obtained a long, white cartilage, which he carefully cleaned and coiled up. Proceeding to the hospital, he politely requested a small quantity of spirits in which to preserve the curiosity (which he represented as a tape worm). The surgeon not only agreed, but complimented the man highly for the interest he manifested in natural science!"

Whiskey abuse was not confined to land-based armies. Both Union and Confederate navies faced abuses of their own. In the 18th century the British Royal Navy routinely issued a ration of spirits, usually rum, to enlisted personnel. Originally the ration was eight ounces of distilled spirits per day. Naval rum was diluted with water, resulting in the traditional drink called grog. The practice was associated with Admiral Edward Vernon, a famed officer of the mid-1700s whose service nickname was "Old Grog" because he wore a coat made of grogham cloth. (Laurence Washington, George Washington's older brother, served with Vernon. When Laurence died, George inherited his plantation Mount Vernon, which had been named for the admiral.)

The Continental Navy, as well as the early U.S. Navy, adopted the British ration of half a pint of grog per day. Before the War of 1812, imported rum from Britain's Caribbean colonies was dropped in favor of American-made whiskey. Despite the switch, sailors and the general public continued calling the naval ration grog. On land, lower class saloons were called grog-shops or groggeries. Aboard ship, the crew's barrels of whiskey and the officers' private stores of liquors and wines were kept locked up in the "spirit room." At the captain's discretion, extra rations of spirits were doled out before and after action, or even during a battle. During the long fight with CSS *Virginia,* the crew of USS *Monitor* was braced by a special issue of two ounces of whiskey per crewman.

Captains also issued extra liquor as a reward for hard work such as the tedious and backbreaking job of loading coal aboard steam warships. Confederate sailors outfitting *Sea King,* which was secretly being converted at sea into CSS *Shenandoah,* received a serving of grog every two hours. Mariners saw the spirit ration as well-deserved compensation for their long months of hard work and isolation at sea. With some reason, temperance advocates saw it instead as a severe problem and focused considerable effort on luring sailors away from the bottle. In 1832 reformers persuaded Congress to cut the naval ration to one gill, or four ounces, daily. Sailors under the age of 21 and anyone who chose not to draw a spirit ration received instead a small cash commutation, which had risen to five cents a day by 1861.

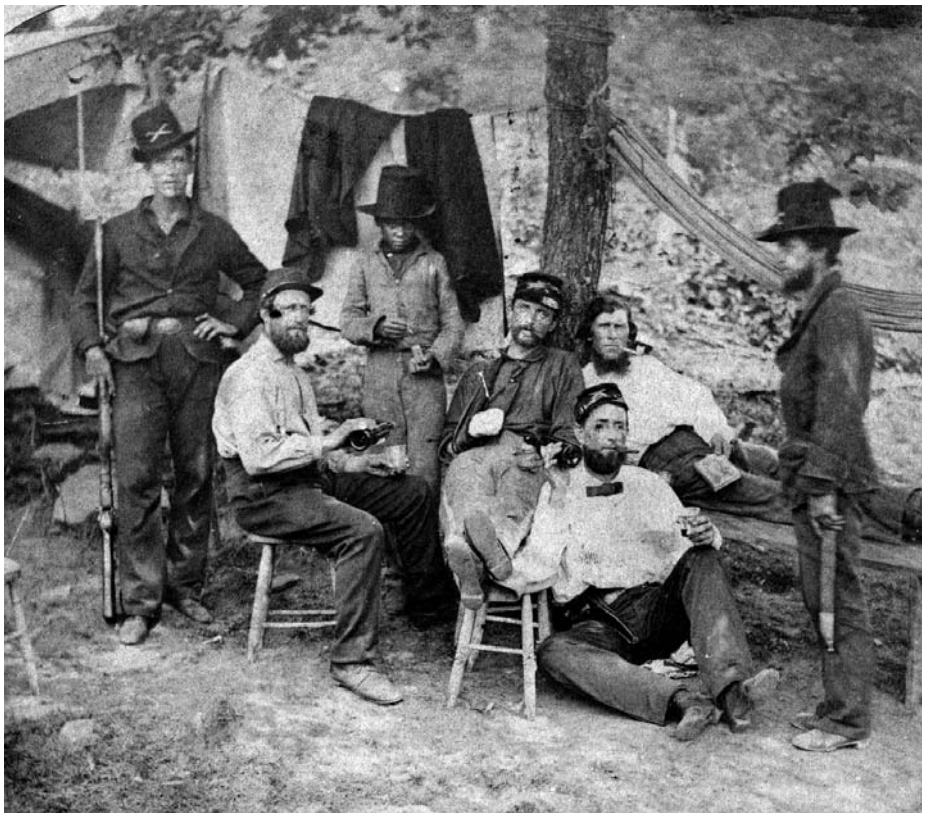
After reducing the naval grog ration, Congress debated but did not act further on the temperance movement's demands for tighter restrictions. A chance to end the grog ration arose again when Southern members of Congress left the nation's capital after the beginning of the war. Northern representatives and senators were more sympathetic to the temperance cause, and with Southern seats now vacant, there were enough Northern votes to abolish the naval spirit rations. A July 14, 1862, act of Congress set August 31 of that same year as the last day for the grog ration. A correspondent aboard an unnamed vessel wrote to the *Philadelphia Press* that Congress had made a great mistake. He warned that ending the spirit ration would drive all the old seamen out of the service. Aboard the receiving ship *North Carolina* in New York City harbor, the men met the restriction

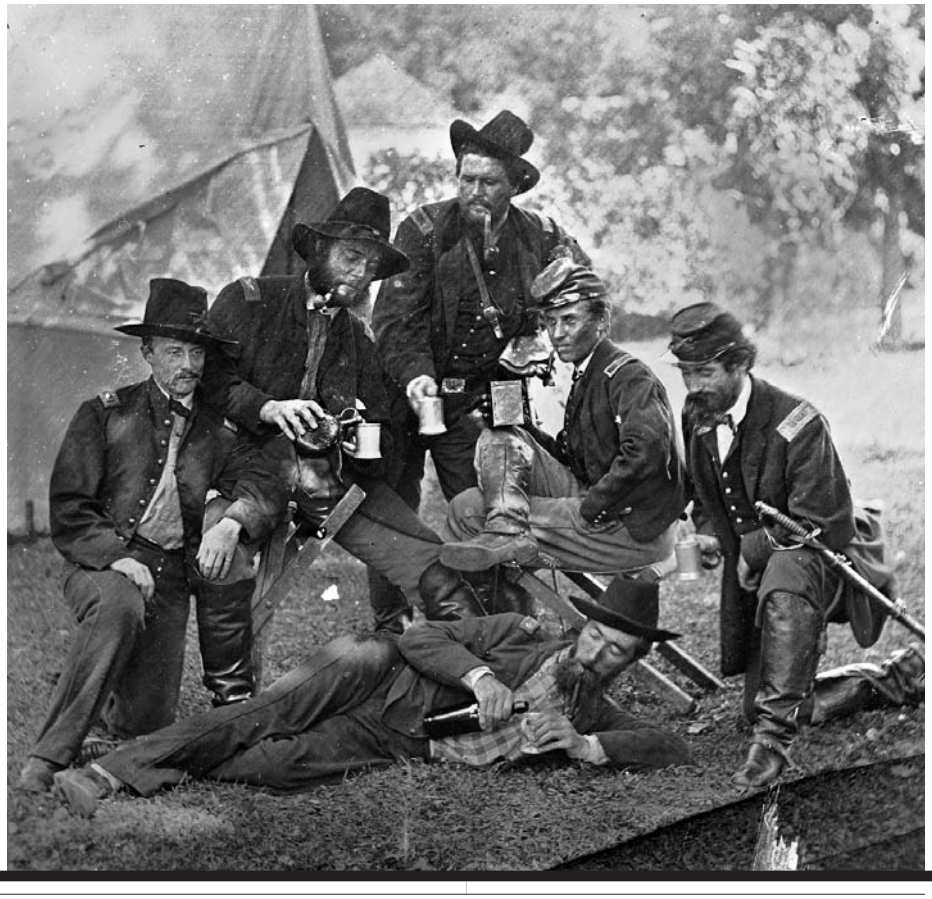
with muttered growls, but no signs of incipient mutiny were readily apparent.

Spirit kegs remained under lock and key until naval vessels returned to port. About 3,000 kegs were auctioned off and others were turned over to the naval medical service for hospital use. Excess whiskey in the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron was stored aboard the aptly named ship *Brandywine*. As compensation for the loss of the spirit ration, the Navy added five cents per day to sailors' pay, a raise of between 8 and 10 percent. Despite the banning of grog, there was still some alcohol aboard Union naval vessels. "Distilled spirituous liquors" were allowed on board ship as medical stores. And officers, trusted by Congress more than common sailors, were still allowed to have private stores of liquors and wines.

Grog was served in the Confederate Navy as well. Rebel tars were entitled to one gill of spirits or half a pint of wine per day. As in the Union Navy, a small cash commutation was paid to sailors not taking their spirit ration. Confederate Navy officials had considerable trouble obtaining enough spirituous liquor for rations and hospital use. Naval requirements clashed with state regulations that reserved corn and grain for food rather than distillation of spirits. Eventually a distillery was set up in Augusta, Georgia, to produce whiskey for naval use. Despite the trouble in obtaining liquor, the Confederate Navy never got around to banning its spirit ration, and it remained on the books until the war ended in 1865.

Illicit alcohol resulted in a number of embarrassing incidents at sea. Midshipman James Morris Morgan, in his memoir *Recollections of a Rebel Reefer,* wrote about an alcohol-fueled riot on the cruiser CSS *Georgia* in October 1863. Sailors slipped into a coal bunker and bored through a thin bulkhead separating the coal from the spirit room. Then they drilled a hole into the head of a barrel of liquor and inserted a lead pipe. The pilfered grog was distributed among the crew, said Morgan, "and soon there was a battle royal going on the berth deck which the master-at-arms was





**ABOVE: Union artillerists relax in camp with tobacco and drinks. Excessive drinking was a widespread problem in both armies. BELOW: Officers in the 3rd and 4th Pennsylvania Cavalry Regiments jokingly illustrate "the hardships of war" in camp near Westover, Virginia. Temperance movements sought ineffectually to limit drinking.**


**Sergeant C.W. Chapman of the 59th Virginia Regiment sketched this colorful print of his fellow Confederates drinking comfortably beneath a brush arbor. Such carefree moments were rare and therefore highly prized.**

unable to stop." *Georgia*'s first lieutenant went below and induced most of the men to give themselves up for punishment. One holdout defied the officers, but Morgan tackled him and the master-at-arms handcuffed him. Several crewmen were placed in irons and sentenced to a spell in the brig on bread and water.

The British blockade-running schooner *Sting Ray,* under the command of a Captain McCloskey, was captured in the Gulf of Mexico by USS *Kineo* on May 22, 1864. An acting ensign with a prize crew of seven men took charge of the vessel and followed in *Kineo*'s wake. McCloskey produced a stash of whiskey and offered it to the prize crew. By the time Acting Ensign Paul Borner realized what had happened his men were so drunk that they were unable to get back on deck without assistance.

Borner locked the hatch to keep the men from getting any more whiskey, but McCloskey and his crew jumped Borner, took his pistol, and reclaimed the ship. Union sailor William Morgan fell overboard, and McCloskey tossed a spar into the sea as an improvised life preserver. Another man jumped into a ship's boat, cut the painter, and escaped. The Confederates followed *Kineo* for a time before changing course and making a dash for shore. Seeing *Sting Ray* change course, Lt. Cmdr. John Watters of *Kineo* opened fire with a 20-pounder gun. McCloskey managed to beach the vessel after dodging several Union shells. Borner and five of his sailors were captured by the 13th Texas. Only two of Borner's crew avoided capture and were picked up later by *Kineo*. Morgan, according to Watters, was "in a beastly state of intoxication, crazy drunk and howling."

Doctors at the time incorrectly believed that alcohol was a stimulant, so they prescribed it to treat sick or wounded soldiers. Some drugs were soluble in alcohol, and patients received them in doses with whiskey or brandy. One treatment for diphtheria was a dose of brandy mixed with ammonia. Alcohol itself was seen as having curative powers for some illnesses. Laudanum, a mixture of alcohol and opium, was a widely prescribed painkiller. Ether was made by distilling alcohol and sulfuric acid, called "spirits of nitre." A purer form of alcohol called alcohol fortius was used to make ether and to dissolve various compounds.

Whiskey or brandy, either alone or mixed with other ingredients, were routinely used to treat patients suffering from wounds or illnesses. Usually whiskey was prescribed in frequent but small doses, perhaps one ounce or one tablespoon every few hours. Sometimes it was administered by itself, but it might also be mixed in eggnog or milk punch. One example concerned the case of Private Augustus C. Falls of the 1st New York Heavy Artillery. Falls was admitted to Douglas Hospital in Washington with diarrhea on August 5, 1864. A surgeon prescribed 1½ ounces of whiskey each day at dinner. Three days later the dosage was raised to two ounces of whiskey three times a day. On September 29, the dosage was again increased to three ounces of whiskey every four hours. Despite the special treatment, Falls died on October 5.

One of the few effective drugs of the era, quinine, could prevent malaria or ease

symptoms for patients who already had the disease. Soldiers often balked at taking their malaria medicine, though, because of its markedly bitter taste. To cajole soldiers into taking quinine, some surgeons mixed it with whiskey. This created the opposite problem; some soldiers enjoyed the quinine-whiskey dose so much that they sneaked through the line for a second prescription. While stationed at New Bern, North Carolina, the men of the 44th Massachusetts found that their medical officers took precautions to limit the soldiers to one dose each. Instead of serving quinine in whiskey, the drug came blended with medical alcohol, water, and cayenne pepper. "No soldier," wrote a veteran of the regiment, "is known to have acquired a dangerous hankering for the mixture."

Southern medical officers struggled to obtain sufficient quantities of medicinal alcohol. Surgeon General Samuel P. Moore established distilleries in Montgomery, Columbia, Salisbury, and Macon to produce medicinal alcohol. Volunteer committees gathered food, clothing, medicines, and creature comforts from civilians and shipped them to military hospitals. On November 22, 1861, the *Charleston Mercury* highlighted the first quarterly report of the city's Ladies' Christian Association. Among numerous shipments sent by the association to hospitals in Virginia were 34 boxes or crates of alcoholic beverages, including wine, brandy, blackberry brandy, claret, Madeira, port, whiskey, ale, bay rum, and additional alcohol in the form of medicines and bitters.

Drunkenness could be overlooked if it occurred when a soldier was off duty and did not compound his offense with other crimes. Court-martial of officers charged with drunkenness was handled differently from those of enlisted men. Officers found guilty could be cashiered with forfeiture of pay. In addition to dismissal, a Confederate law of 1862 allowed a public reprimand of officers convicted of drunkenness. An officer dismissed from the Confederate service could also be conscripted back into the ranks as an enlisted man. Enlisted personnel found guilty of drunkenness usually faced some form of confinement, corporal punishment, or public shaming. Penalties varied depending on the degree of the soldier's offense and the policies of his commanding officer. Common punishments for drunken enlisted men included confinement in a guard tent or guardhouse, wearing a barrel with a placard noting that the culprit was a drunk, extra duty, or a spell carrying a log or marching with a knapsack filled with rocks.

Generals were not immune from abusing alcohol. Indeed, their vast responsibilities encouraged such abuse. Most notoriously, rumors of alcoholism dogged Union General Ulysses S. Grant. After Grant's capture of Vicksburg, several gentlemen warned President Lincoln that Grant drank to excess. Lincoln was said to have asked what sort of whiskey Grant drank, because "if it makes him win victories like this Vicksburg, I will send a demijohn of the same kind to every general in the army."

A serious instance of generals drinking on duty contributed to the Union defeat at the Battle of the Crater on July 30, 1864. After successfully detonating a huge explosion in a tunnel dug under the Confederate lines outside Petersburg, Union forces moved in to exploit the break in the Rebel defenses. Brig. Gens. James H. Ledlie and Edward Ferrero remained behind the lines drinking liquor in a bombproof while their neglected divisions floundered without guidance from their commanders. The attack, which had the potential of taking Petersburg and shortening the war, bogged down, and the Union regiments were dev-

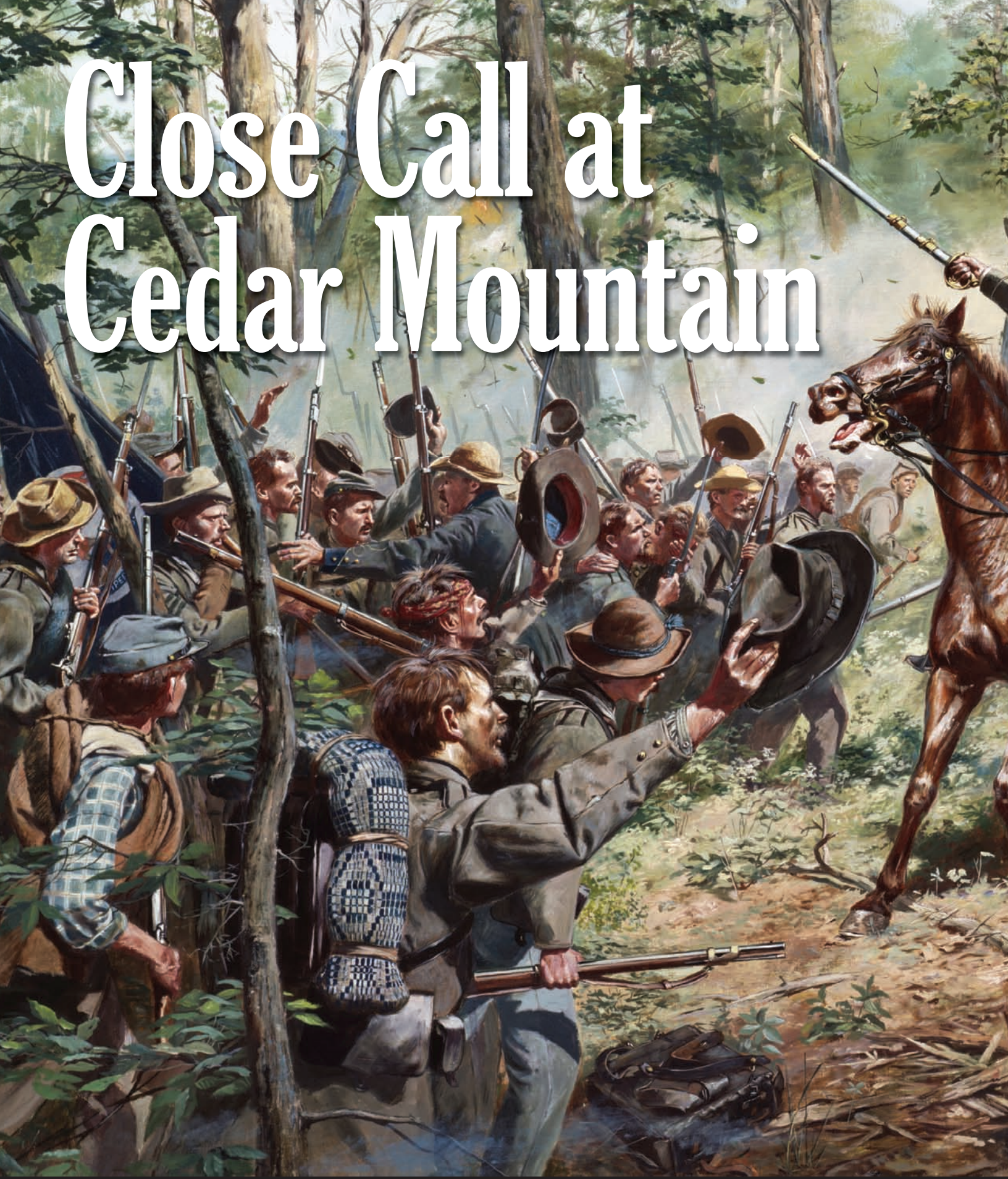
**Union officers enjoy a round of drinks at a portable bar inside a sutler's tent in this 1862 sketch by artist Arthur Lumley. Theoretically, the sutlers were off limits to enlisted men, but many snuck in anyway.**

astated by Confederate counterattacks. After investigations into their drinking and dereliction of duty, Ledlie was allowed to resign from the army, but Ferrero escaped serious penalty. He even managed to be brevetted to major general before the end of the war.

Offenses were not limited to line officers. Confederate hospital matron Phoebe Yates Pember wrote of one case in which a drunken surgeon treated a patient whose

*Continued on page 98*

# Close Call at Cedar Mountain



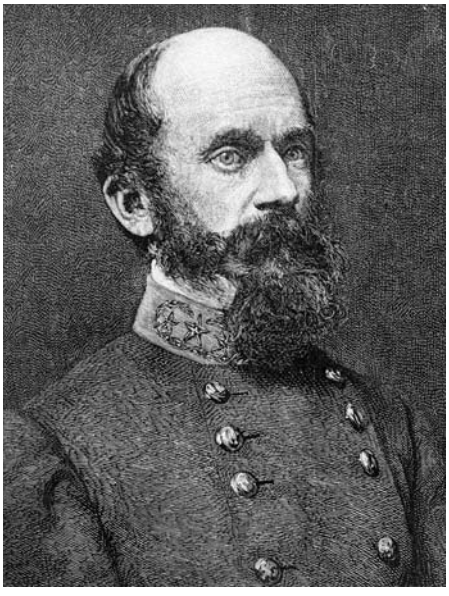
Waving the Confederate battle flag, Major General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson rallies his men at Cedar Mountain in Don Troiani's painting Jackson Is with You.

With Robert E. Lee counterattacking George B. McClellan outside Richmond in the summer of 1862, Union General Nathaniel Banks set out to distract Lee by capturing the key railroad junction at Gordonsville. As usual, Stonewall Jackson got there first.

BY WILLIAM E. WELSH

Painting by Don Troiani, www.historicalartprints.com

All photos: Library of Congress



**LEFT: Major General Richard S. Ewell. CENTER: Major General Nathaniel Banks. RIGHT: Brigadier General Samuel W. Crawford.**

Following the completion of Union Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan's unsuccessful Peninsula campaign earlier in the month, General Robert E. Lee sent Maj. Gen. Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson north from Richmond with two divisions on July 16, 1862. Jackson arrived in Gordonsville three days later. On July 29, his army was reinforced by Maj. Gen. A.P. Hill's "Light Division." The reinforcements doubled Jackson's command and gave him the strength necessary to overwhelm any one of the three Federal corps of the newly formed Army of Virginia under Maj. Gen. John Pope, which was spread along a wide arc from Fredricksburg to the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Pope, who had assumed command of the Army of Virginia on June 27, had been given the complex task of uniting three previously independent commands scattered widely over the northern half of the state into a single army. He ordered Maj. Gen. Franz Sigel's I Corps to Sperryville, Maj. Gen. Nathaniel Banks's II Corps to Little Washington, and one division of Maj. Gen. Irvin McDowell's III Corps to Waterloo Bridge, leaving his other division at Fredricksburg to guard the lower Rappahannock River. In preparation for a raid on the vital railroad hub of Gordonsville, where the Virginia Central Railroad connected the Confederate capital of Richmond to the Shenandoah Valley and to Tennessee, Pope ordered Brig. Gen. Samuel Crawford's brigade south to Culpeper to support Federal cavalry massing for the raid. But when the Federals learned that Jackson was advancing from Richmond with a force of unknown size, their mission changed abruptly from raiding to reconnaissance. Pope needed information quickly about the size of Jackson's force.

The addition of Hill's Light Division to his independent command gave Jackson the ability to overwhelm a portion of Pope's army, just as he had done to his foe in the Shenandoah Valley a couple of months earlier, if he could strike the enemy before support could arrive. To do this, Jackson hoped to reach Culpeper before the Federals could secure it in order to control its vital road network. His first target would be Banks, who Jackson learned from his scouts recently had been ordered to Culpeper by Pope.

On August 7, Jackson delivered orders of his own to his three divisions to march eight miles from Gordonsville to the vicinity of Orange Court House. From there, he hoped to reach Culpeper the following day. When Federal scouts reported the movement to Pope, the Union general ordered Sigel's corps and the rest of Banks's corps to converge on Culpeper. Banks arrived on August 8, but Sigel did not arrive until the following day.

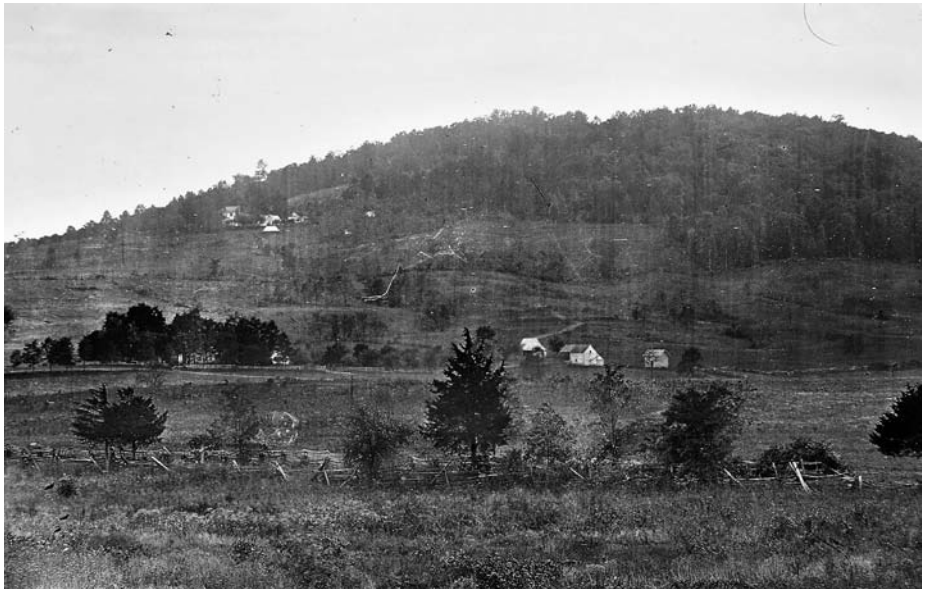
With the arrival of Hill's division, Jackson had under his command about 24,000 men in three divisions. Hill's 12,000-strong Light Division comprised six brigades, while Maj. Gen. Richard Ewell's division and Jackson's division, under Brig. Gen. Charles Winder, had 7,000 and 4,000 men, respectively. In addition, Jackson had Brig. Gen. Beverly Robertson's 1,000-strong cavalry brigade. The army was considerably larger than the one Jackson had commanded in the Shenandoah Valley earlier in the year. It would prove difficult for Jackson to manage, both on the march and on the field of battle. The campaign got off to a poor start when Jackson's famous "foot cavalry" managed to march only a half dozen miles on August 8—not the 20

miles a day for which it was noted. Winder, who had been sick with a fever and under orders to rest, received Jackson's permission to return to his command for the pending battle.

The August sun baked the Southerners as they marched north and showed no mercy to the troops, regardless of rank or branch of service. The narrow road was jammed with ammunition wagons, artillery, and ambulances. Thick clouds of dust filled the air, clogging men's throats and eyes. Jackson rode with his cap pulled down to keep the sun from his eyes. To those who rode past him, he seemed preoccupied, as well he might be. The night before, Union cavalry had raided his bivouac, setting off a firestorm of musket fire at 3 in the morning. Jackson fretted constantly about the 1,200 wagons the army had rumbling along in its train. When his personal surgeon, Hunter McGuire, asked Jackson if he expected a battle that day, Jackson flashed the hint of a smile. "Banks is on our front, and he is generally willing to fight," said Jackson, adding in an aside, "and he generally gets whipped." Then he fell silent again.

While the Confederate commander fretted, the enemy began to move. Samuel Crawford, a brigadier with a solid record that stretched back to the opening days of the war, left Culpeper at noon on August 8, taking with him two batteries to support the Federal cavalry operating south of the town. On August 9, the rest of Banks's corps, roughly 8,000 men, joined Crawford on the high ground between the two branches of Cedar Run. The five Federal brigades deployed in line of battle along a two-mile front to await the Confederate attack.

Banks, a former speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives and governor of Massachusetts, was considered by his contemporaries to be an aggressive general. He had been soundly whipped a few months before by Jackson in the northern Shenandoah Valley, and he was looking to even the score. Despite Pope's warning to wait for reinforcements, Banks had no intention of staying on the defensive if an opportunity should present itself to strike Jackson a hard blow. The fact that he had stationed his troops in line of battle astride the Culpeper Road was intended as a direct challenge to his foe. That was not at all what Pope had in mind, but Banks had a mind of his own.



**ABOVE: Cedar Mountain was also called Slaughter's Mountain in honor of Revolutionary War captain Phillip Slaughter. BELOW: Knapp's Pennsylvania battery blasts the Confederates at Cedar Mountain in this sketch made at the scene of battle.**

The Confederate vanguard, composed of the three brigades of Ewell's division, arrived at Cedar Mountain (also called Slaughter's Mountain, after Revolutionary War captain Phillip Slaughter) in the early afternoon, but it would be several hours before the Confederates were deployed in an effective line of battle. Brig. Gen. Jubal Early deployed his Confederate brigade in the fields of the Crittenden farm south of the Culpeper Road. Early pushed out a skirmish line, accompanied by a brace of 12-pounder cannons, and sent the Union pickets flying. He headed toward the intersection of Culpeper Road and Madison Court House Road, just west of the mountain.

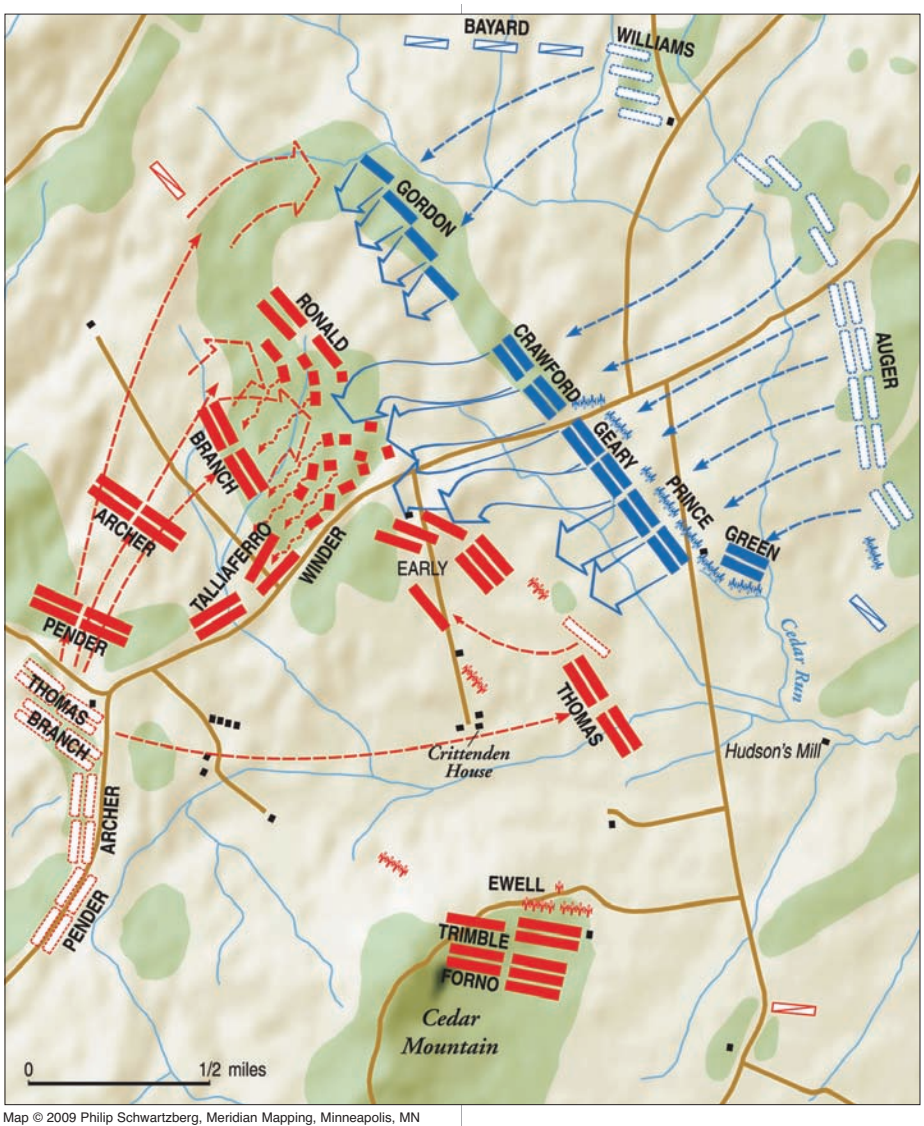
Federal artillery opened up on his troops from Mitchell's Station Road, which ran perpendicular to the Culpeper Road. The feisty Early, still aching from a shoulder wound he had suffered at Fort Magruder a few weeks earlier, would have to fight alone while Ewell took the other two brigades of his division along the base of Cedar Moun-

tain. The two brigades traveled undetected on a road through the woods. Their objective was to seize the high ground at the eastern end of the mountain. When Ewell reached the eastern edge of the mountain, he placed parts of two batteries on the commanding hill.

Because the units were nearly a mile apart, Early would have to rely on his own wits and the two other Confederate divisions for support. He personally led a reconnaissance party that located an old farm lane that diverged from the main road and spilled out into the woods directly onto the farmland where the Union cavalry was forming. As Early's men crept through the woods, Confederate artillery opened up on the unseen Federals who lay beyond the rolling farmland. The Federals responded with a splendid salvo of counterfire that showered the choleric Early with dust. By 3 PM, Early was in position and awaiting the deployment of Jackson's division, under Winder.

Before deploying his infantry, Winder placed his batteries just south of the Culpeper Road, near the gate that marked the entrance to the Crittenden farm. As his brigades arrived on the battlefield, Winder sent them forward one at a time. First, he

**BELOW: While the Union center hammered the Confederates around Culpeper Road, Major General A.P. Hill's corps hit the Federal right a staggering blow. RIGHT: This Edwin Forbes sketch of the battlefield shows Cedar Mountain looming at the left, with Federal reserve troops forming across the foreground at bottom. Other Union forces are engaged in the middle ground against Confederates in the distance.**

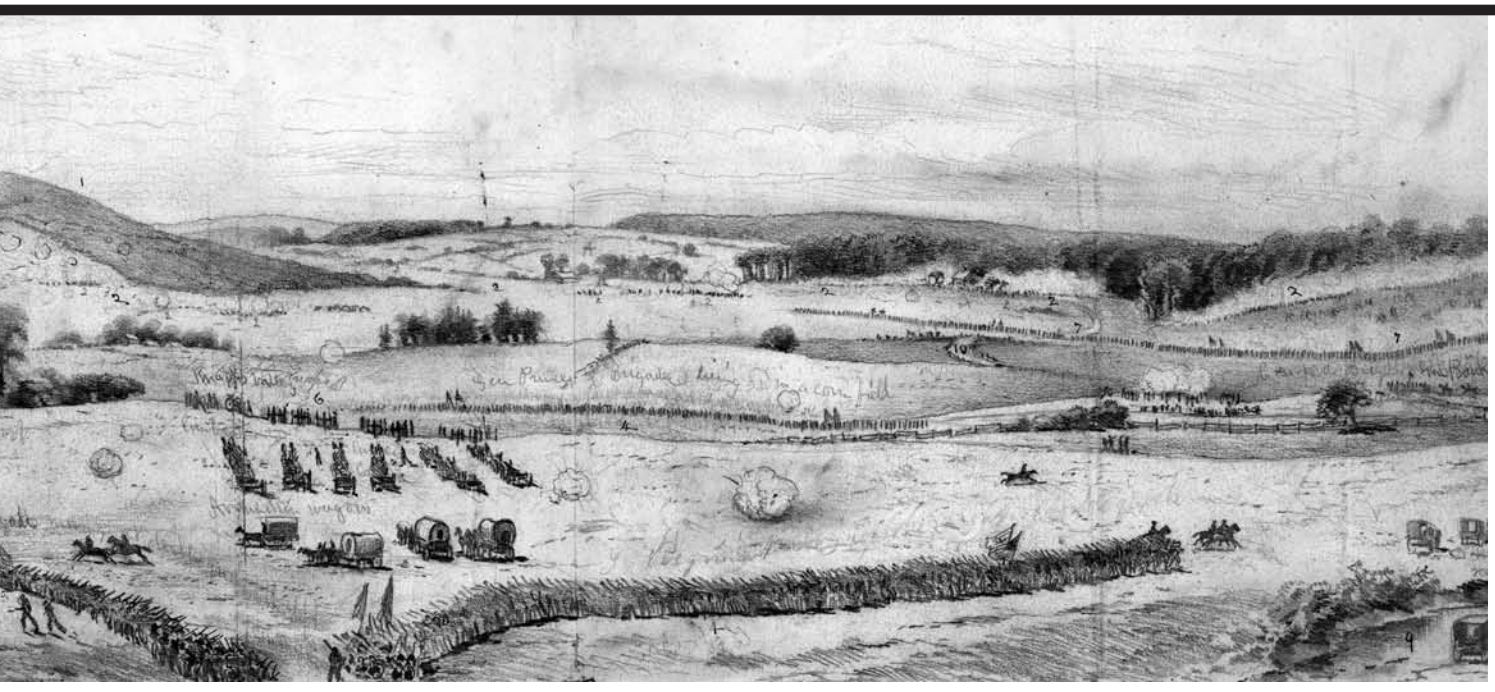



Map © 2009 Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping, Minneapolis, MN

sent Colonel Thomas Garnett's brigade into the woods bordering a large wheat field immediately north of the Culpeper Road. Next, Winder directed Brig. Gen. William Taliaferro's amalgamated Virginia and Alabama brigade south of the turnpike to support Early's left flank. Lastly, he ordered Colonel Charles Ronald's brigade, the Stonewall Brigade of First Manassas fame, through the woods north of the road to take up positions on Garnett's left flank.

While Garnett and Taliaferro executed their orders admirably, Ronald wound up far beyond and behind Garnett's left flank. The Stonewall Brigade came to a halt in a tree line on the western end of a smaller field north of the one upon which Garnett was positioned. The "brushy field," as it is referred to in contemporary accounts, was not where Winder had wanted the unit placed. Ronald's failure to effectively carry out Winder's orders nearly cost the Confederates the battle almost before it started.

Banks deployed Brig. Gen. Christopher Auger's division, comprising three brigades, south of the Culpeper Road, and Brig. Gen. Alpheus Williams's division, consisting of two brigades, north of the road. The Federal right flank overlapped the Confederate left flank by nearly 300 yards. Both Jackson and Winder were unaware that the wooded ground north of the Culpeper



Road presented a golden opportunity to the Federals to outflank the Confederates if they could attack before Jackson was able to extend his line.

As Jackson awaited the arrival of Hill's division before committing himself to battle, the two opposing sides engaged in a ferocious artillery duel. Beginning at about 4 PM, the Union and Confederate gunners dueled for nearly two hours across open ground from 900 yards apart. Unlike the Federal guns, which were concentrated near the intersection of the Culpeper Road and Mitchell's Station Road, the Confederates had deployed their guns in four separate positions between the Culpeper Road and Cedar Mountain. The placement of the Southern guns in clusters allowed them to bring a converging fire on the Federal batteries that was so effective the Northerners had to withdraw their guns more than once during the duel. Still, the Federal guns slowed the pace at which the Confederate infantry could deploy and substantially delayed Jackson's advance.

Once the artillery contest was in full swing, the ailing Winder became engrossed in the exchange to the detriment of his division. At one point, he ordered Garnett to prepare to charge across the open ground in front of Early to seize the Federal battery he believed was unprotected. To carry out these orders, Garnett was forced to face two of his regiments south along the Culpeper Road, rather than east toward the Federal infantry on the opposite side of the wheat field. This further weakened the Confederate left flank. Although he complied with the order, Garnett sent word back to Winder that the enemy guns could not be taken because they were supported by both infantry and cavalry. Instead of sorting out the problem, Winder ordered Garnett to keep the regiments aligned as instructed, and he turned his attention back to the artillery contest.

While Winder was directing the artillery fire near the Crittenden gate, a shell came whistling down from one of the Federal batteries and struck him on the left side, nearly tearing off his arm at the elbow. The general quivered and dropped to the ground with what was described as "a tremendous hole in his side." A surgeon examined his wounds and deemed them fatal. Winder was carried on a stretcher to the rear, where he died less than two hours later. Jackson, hearing of the incident, raised his arm and bowed his head for a moment of silent prayer.

The wounding of Winder at 4:45 PM meant that Taliaferro would now assume command of Winder's division. The task that Taliaferro inherited was a difficult one. Neither Winder nor Jackson had apprised him of their orders. What was more, Taliaferro began receiving reports that Federal troops were massing opposite the Confederate left flank. He personally inspected his left on horseback, but found no evidence of an impending attack. Jackson, who was devoting most of his time to the situation south of the Culpeper Road, also inspected the left flank. Before riding away, Jackson told Garnett to watch his left flank closely and, if necessary, request support from Taliaferro.

While the Confederates were busy correcting the kinks in their deployment, the Federals south of the Culpeper Road attacked. Leaving behind Green's understrength brigade, Auger sent Brig. Gen. John Geary's and Brig. Gen. Henry Prince's brigades forward at 5:45 PM against the Confederate right flank. Banks watched intently from just north of the Culpeper Road as his blue ranks were swallowed up by the mature corn growing on the Crittenden farm. Across the field, Jackson sat atop his horse next to Taliaferro's position. As the Federals approached, Jackson rose in his saddle and watched closely to see how his soldiers would meet the enemy attack.

The forces facing each other on the Crittenden farm were nearly equal. The Federals fielded 10 regiments and one battalion;

the Confederates matched the attackers with nine regiments and a battalion. Geary's brigade advanced on the right toward Taliaferro, while Prince's brigade advanced on the left toward Early. Auger was struck in the back by a bullet in the first few minutes of the attack and carried to the rear. Geary advanced first with two regiments forward and another two regiments in reserve. Prince's brigade attacked in the same style.

As the fighting grew in intensity, Early sent word to Jackson that he needed reinforcements quickly in order to hold back the Federals. In response to the Federal advance, Ewell's guns on Cedar Mountain switched their attention from the enemy artillery to the Federal infantry on the plain below. When Early's messenger arrived, Jackson sent a courier to Hill urging him to hurry forward with his troops. Help was not far away. Edward Thomas's brigade had been marching at the double quick for the last mile of their 10-mile march that day. When the Georgians came pounding up the Culpeper Road, Jackson rode to meet them, hailing them as they arrived by waving his cap above his head. The Georgians responded with a loud cheer before moving to Early's support.

Just when Jackson had stabilized his right, his left became unglued. From his position near Early's brigade, Jackson's attention was drawn to loud rolls of musketry to the north. He tried to see what was unfolding through his field glasses, but his line of sight was blocked by both the rolling terrain and thick woods. When a courier told him his left had been turned, Jackson spurred his horse and galloped back up the Confederate line. Fearing the worst, he began ordering to the rear the rifled artillery near the gate where the farm road exited the Culpeper Road.

Meanwhile, Crawford's Federal brigade lay concealed for most of the hot August afternoon in the woods along the banks of Cedar Run, where it could not be seen by the enemy units forming up on the Confederate left. Just before dusk, when the length of the men's shadows on the ground exceeded their height, some 1,500 Union troops emerged from the woods and prepared to advance across a stubbled wheat field to engage their foe. They dressed ranks, crossed a fence, and with a loud cheer rushed downhill toward the Confederate line. To the Virginians of Garnett's brigade, which occupied a nearly identical wood on the opposite side of the wheat field, the attacking blue line seemed to extend indefinitely in both directions.

**As Early's men crept through the woods, Confederate artillery opened up on the unseen Federals who lay beyond the rolling farmland. The Federals responded with a splendid salvo of counterfire that showered the choleric Early with dust.**

Before Crawford's brigade had advanced halfway toward its objective, the first of several volleys erupted from Garnett's Confederates. The musket fire soon became one continuous roar, like a never-ending peal of thunder. The Federals continued to advance despite the storm of lead, pausing briefly at the tree line before closing with their enemy. Soldiers swung their rifles like clubs and thrust at each other with bayonets. Although the Confederates occupied what appeared to be a strong position along a fence line, the Union soldiers prevailed.

Crawford's brigade had the good fortune of finding the Confederate left flank in the air. The Stonewall Brigade was farther to the left, but it had not yet advanced to the wheat field. Worse yet, two of Garnett's regiments were not even facing in the direction of the attack. The 1st Battalion of Garnett's brigade reacted to the Federal attack like a man bitten by a rattlesnake. Panic spread from one soldier to the next. Dozens fell alongside the fence in a matter of minutes. In no time, the Federals were over the fence and chasing their enemy through the woods. A number of the soldiers in the 1st Battalion simply dropped their rifles and fled without looking back. The Federals changed front to the east and rolled down the line in the direction of the 42nd and 48th Virginia Regiments. To stem the blue tide, these units would have to hold, and the Confederate command would have to rush reinforcements to the spot. Otherwise, the day would belong to the Federals.

By taking Garnett's brigade in the flank, Crawford was able to multiply the effect of his attack manyfold over a frontal attack. His objective had been the guns near the Crittenden gate that Jackson had so wisely sent to the rear. Even though the guns were

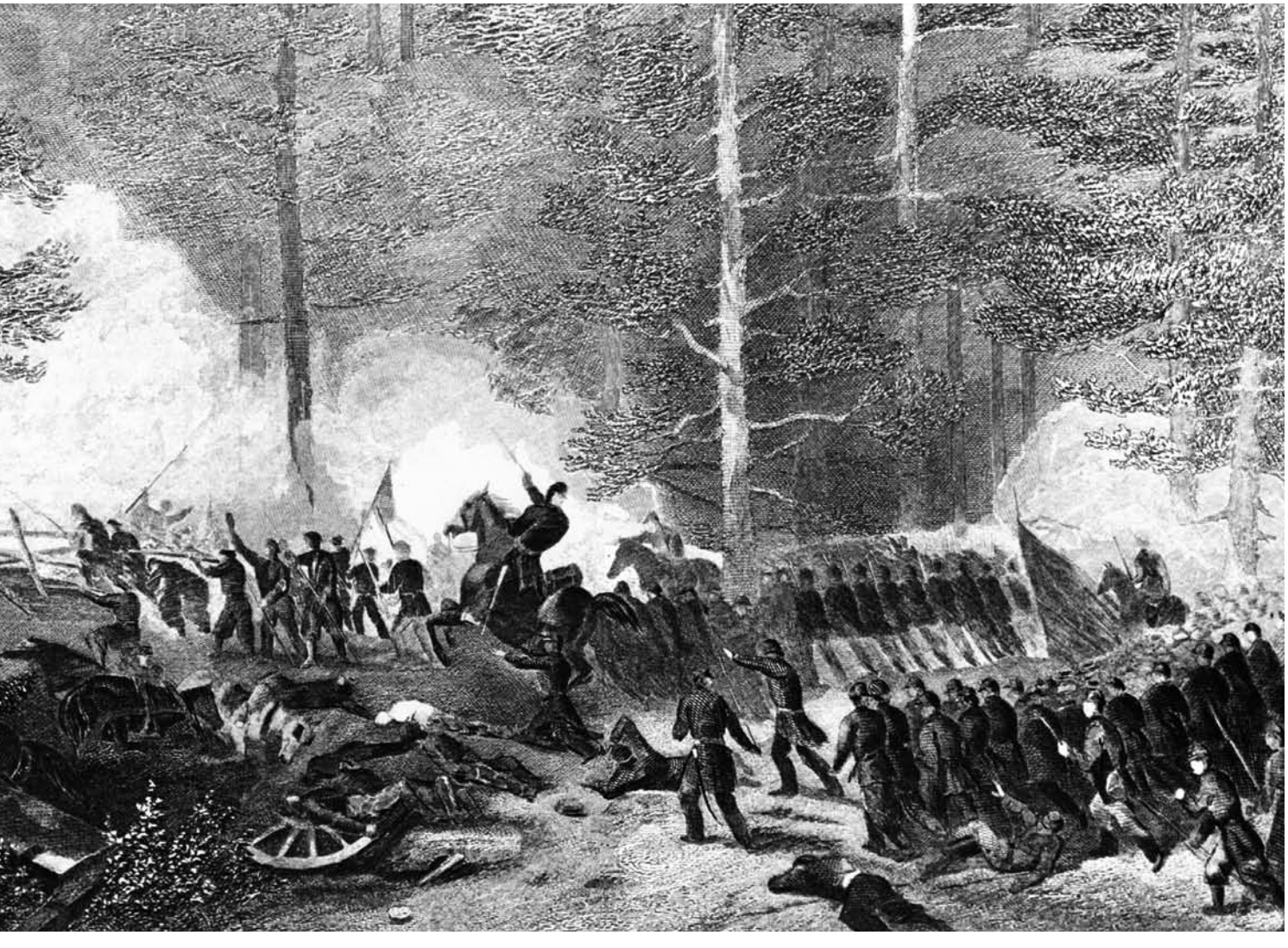
now safe, Jackson's entire line was slowly unraveling. Jackson wrote after the battle that the Federals "fell with great vigor" on his left flank. Unless he stabilized it, his army was on the verge of a major disaster.

The Federals steadily drove their enemy before them. The 28th New York advanced on the right, while the 5th Connecticut advanced on the left. Interspersed with these regiments were elements of the 46th Pennsylvania. While the Confederate 1st Battalion had fled without much of a fight, the 42nd Regiment stood its ground until fire from both the front and rear forced it to retreat as well. The 21st Virginia and 48th Virginia, which were facing south along the Culpeper Road, were the unluckiest of all. They did not discern what was happening until some of their numbers were shot in the back. Still, they tried valiantly to fend off the attack. The two sides fought hand to hand in the thick woods. Soon, Garnett's entire brigade was routed.

When the Stonewall Brigade finally advanced, it caught the rear elements of Crawford's attack in the flank. Two regiments of the Stonewall Brigade formed along the fence line bordering the wheat field across which Crawford attacked, while the remaining three regiments advanced through the brushy field next to it. These three regiments wheeled to change front before firing into the 3rd Wisconsin, which had been detached from Brig. Gen. George Gordon's brigade and assigned to Crawford.

Crawford's troops poured out of the woods, crossed the Culpeper Road, and charged Talaiferro's brigade. They quickly routed two green Alabama regiments on Taliaferro's left flank. The other regiments fell back but continued fighting. Early, who had just finished placing Thomas's Brigade on his far right flank, galloped over a ridge and found half his brigade gone. The Confederate line stabilized temporarily when four well-served guns of the Middlesex Artillery under the command of Captain Willie Pegram fired canister at point-blank range into the Yankee tide. Shortly afterward, Crawford's attack ran out of steam. Meanwhile, Jackson found Hill and ordered him to deploy the rest of

**Brigadier General Samuel Crawford leads his Federal troops into the Confederate left, routing two regiments from the vaunted Stonewall Brigade in the process.**



his division immediately. The troops of Brig. Gen. Lawrence Branch advanced first and were soon followed by those of Brig. Gen. James Archer.

Leaving Hill to do as he had been told, Jackson rode to the Crittenden gate, where he found large numbers of men from Winder's division seeking protection in the woods south of the Crittenden gate. Oblivious to personal danger, Jackson rode into the mass as bullets flew around him. In an effort to rally the men, Jackson tried to draw his sword, but found it rusted in its scabbard. He unhooked it from his belt and waved the scabbard in an effort to get his men to reform. Thinking that this was not enough, he snatched a Confederate battle flag and began beseeching the men to fight with his scabbard in one hand and a Confederate battle flag in the other. "Jackson is with you!" he cried. "Rally, brave men, and press forward! Your general will lead you! Jackson will lead you! Follow me!" When only a few dozen men stopped, he yelled: "Rally men! Remember Winder! Forward, men, forward!" Jackson was able to form parts of Garnett's and Taliaferro's brigades into a new line. At that point, Taliafferro rode over to Jackson and implored him to retire. "Good, good," Jackson said in his usual taciturn manner, before riding to the rear.

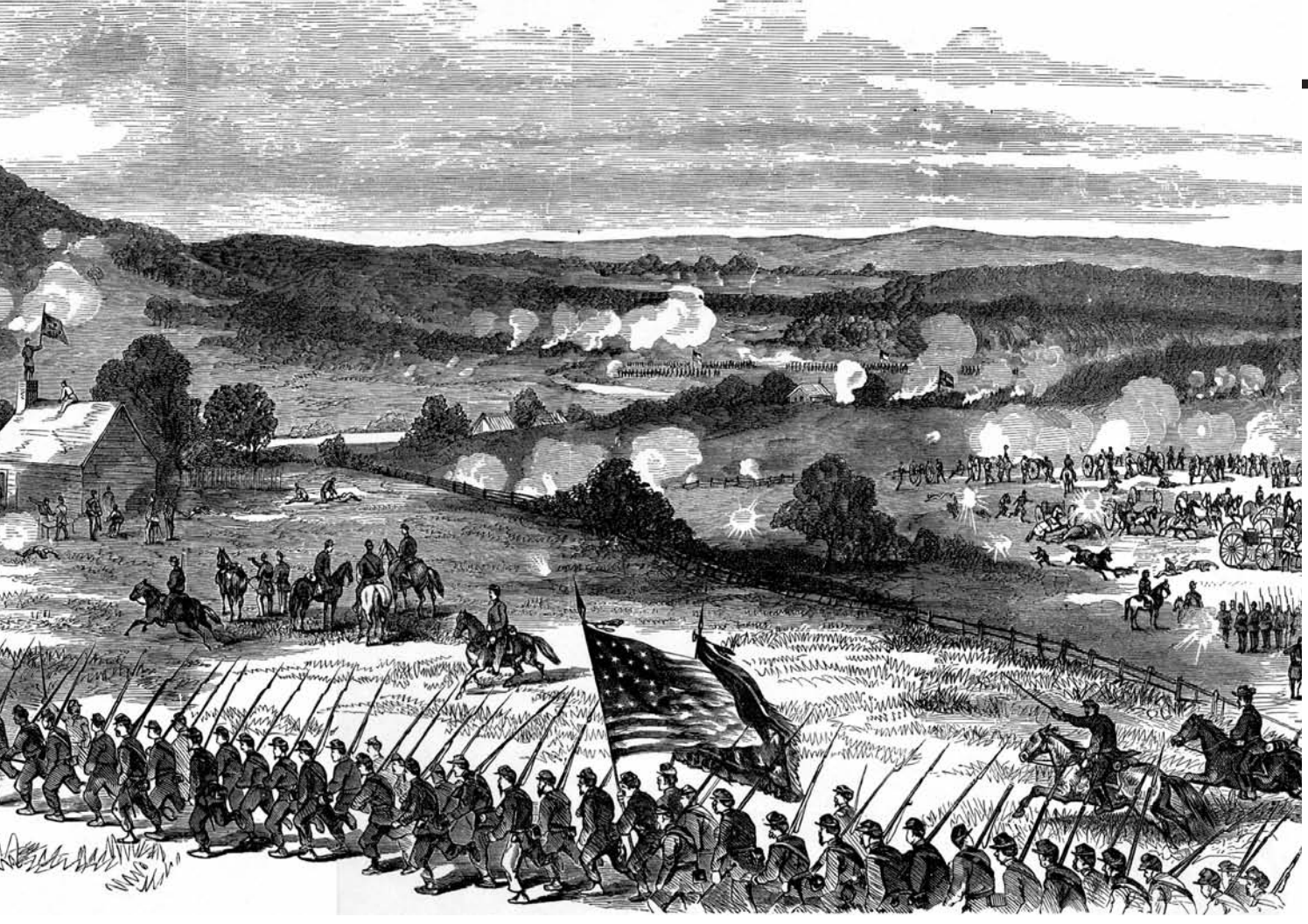
Banks failed to follow up Crawford's attack with reinforcements, even though Gordon's brigade, the other brigade in Williams's division, had not yet been committed to the battle. Without support, the survivors of Crawford's attack had no choice but to retreat along their line of attack. There followed a series of inept moves by Banks and his subordinates. The first was the advance of the 10th Maine. The regiment, which had been detached from Crawford's brigade to guard a Federal battery, was sent alone into the wheat field at about 6:30 PM, where it was sacrificed to no clear advantage. Next, Banks unnecessarily sacrificed the 1st Pennsylvania Cavalry to cover the withdrawal of his artillery, losing 93 horsemen in the futile charge.

At dusk, Gordon's brigade arrived opposite Archer, but it was too late to help Crawford. Gordon's men had marched nearly a mile to the battle at the double-quick. Their effectiveness was greatly reduced by the difficulty they had telling friend from foe in the wheat field in the gathering darkness. As Gordon's men were deploying, the men of the Stonewall Brigade descended on Crawford's brigade as it limped back across the wheat field.

The 5th Virginia charged across the open ground and plucked from the retreating troops the flags of the 5th Connecticut and 28th New York. When Brig. Gen. Dorsey Pender's brigade, another of Hill's fresh brigades, joined Branch and Archer on the Confederate left flank, Gordon's brigade found itself in great peril.

Jackson issued orders directly to both Pender and Branch. He sent Pender through the woods behind the Confederate left flank and then turned east toward the Federals. He ordered Branch to incline right across the Culpeper Road to strike the Federals south of the road. While Branch was crossing the lane, Archer launched a frontal assault on Gordon. Archer's men wavered midway to their objective. The brigadier general noted in his battle report that his command "was exposed to a heavy fire from the enemy, who, from their position in the woods, was comparatively safe." Nevertheless, he rallied his troops in the open field and ordered them a bayonet

**BELOW: This small cabin near the battlefield served as a Confederate field hospital during the fighting. Who knows what suffering took place inside? RIGHT: The final repulse of the Union troops at Cedar Mountain was not nearly as orderly as this wartime illustration suggests. There was a near stampede on the Union left.**



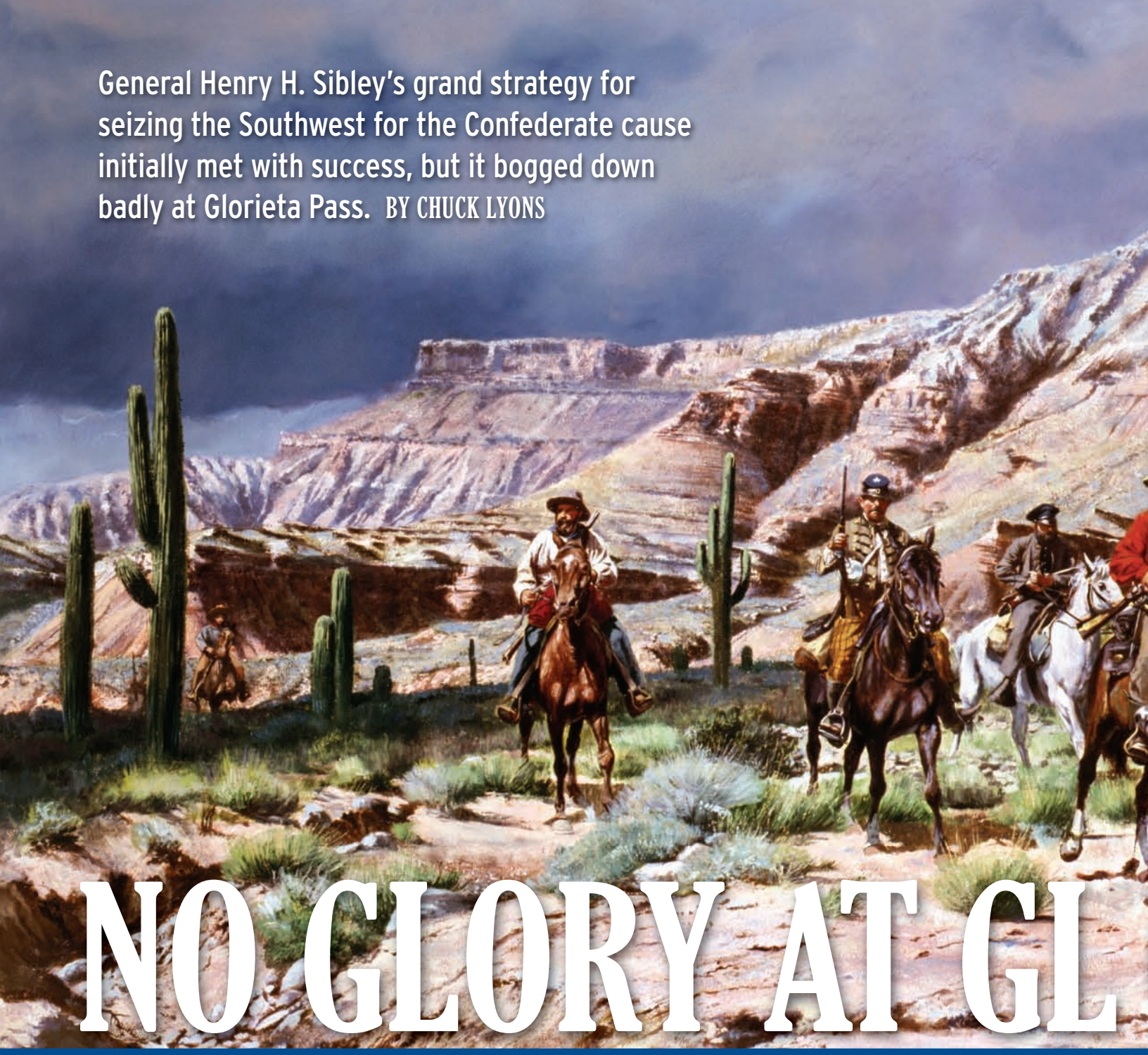
charge against the Union position.

The effect of Archer's attack was vividly described in Gordon's battle report: "Companies were without officers, officers and men were falling in every direction from the fire of an enemy which largely outnumbered my brigade." The brigade held its ground until Pender struck. Under cover of the woods, Pender was able to approach to within a few dozen yards of the enemy. "I met the enemy, repulsing him with heavy loss in almost the first round," Pender wrote. The combined force of Archer and Pender was more than Gordon's brigade could stand. With Pender in his flank and rear, Gordon ordered a general withdrawal. "The enemy poured a destructive fire in this new direction. It was too evident the spot that had witnessed the destruction of one brigade would soon in a few minutes be the grave of mine," Gordon wrote.

The Federals were not only being pressed hard on their right and center but also on their left by Ewell's descent from Cedar Mountain. The presence of the Confederates on the Federal left flank was enough to create a near stampede among the Union troops in that sector. Artillery crews hastily limbered up their guns and moved them north in the direction of Culpeper. They were followed by Brig. Gen. George Greene's brigade of Christopher C. Augur's division, which had been held in reserve throughout the battle. By sunset, eight Confederate brigades had entered the cornfield, leaving just Pender and Archer north of the Culpeper Road.

As the moon rose in the night sky, Jackson pushed two reserve brigades of Hill's Division and substantial artillery up the road toward Culpeper. But Pope had already arrived on the battlefield and constructed a strong new line with fresh troops from Maj. Gen. James Ricketts' division of McDowell's corps. After a "reconnaissance by artillery" proved that the Federals held the road in strength, Jackson broke off his advance near midnight. After drinking a glass of buttermilk to calm his stomach, Jackson stretched out on a cloak strewn across the ground and immediately fell asleep.

Jackson waited for two more days after the battle to see if Pope would attack him. When he did not, Jackson withdrew to Gordonsville. The Union lost about 2,400 men at Cedar Mountain, while the Confederates lost close to 1,400. Both Jackson and Banks were satisfied with the performance of their troops on the battlefield. Jackson had achieved a tactical victory by driving the Federals from the battlefield, but he had suffered a strategic defeat by failing to capture Culpeper and annihilate Banks when he had the chance. But even though Pope had won a strategic victory, Jackson had effectively snatched the initiative from him at Cedar Mountain, and Pope would not regain it again during the Second Manassas campaign that followed less than three weeks later. □



General Henry H. Sibley's grand strategy for seizing the Southwest for the Confederate cause initially met with success, but it bogged down badly at Glorieta Pass. BY CHUCK LYONS

# NO GLORY AT GL

IN JUNE 1861, two months after Confederate artillery fired on Fort Sumter to begin the Civil War, 44-year-old, Louisiana-born Henry H. Sibley arrived in Richmond, capital of the newly formed Confederate States of America. A career soldier, Sibley had come to offer his services—and a plan. An 1838 West Point graduate, Sibley had served in the Seminole War and had been stationed for many years in the West. He was with the 1st Dragoons in Taos, New Mexico, when the war broke out and quickly resigned his commission to join the southern cause.

The curly-haired Sibley was known in military circles as a competent soldier and a heavy drinker. In Richmond, he explained to Confederate President Jefferson Davis that he wanted to raise a force in Texas, start north from El Paso, and capture Union forts along the Rio Grande until he reached Santa Fe. His men could live off the land, Sibley said, and would be greeted as heroes wherever they went by secessionists in the territory. After taking Santa Fe and consolidating his forces, Sibley intended to march on Colorado and California.

Sibley's plan meshed well with ideas Davis himself had long espoused. The Confederate president believed strongly in west-

Mounted Confederates, more cowboys than soldiers, ride through the forbidding southwestern desert in early 1862 in this Don Troiani painting, *Sibley's Texans.*

# ORIETA

ern expansion, and he viewed the vast territory of New Mexico, which stretched from Texas to California, as particularly ripe for the expansion of slavery. As secretary of war under President Franklin Pierce, Davis had been instrumental in the 1853 Gadsden Purchase, which had brought the Southwest into the Union, and before leaving the War Department in 1857 to return to the Senate, Davis had gone so far as to import 74 camels from North Africa and the Middle East to test their usefulness in the newly acquired desert countryside. (The military considered the experiment successful, but the Civil War put an end to the exotic project.)

Sibley's plan, if successful, would give the Confederacy access to the fabulous gold and silver fields of California, Colorado, and Nevada as well as access to the Pacific Coast ports of California, which were not being blockaded by the Union Navy. Davis agreed that there were wide pro-Confederate feelings in most of the western territories. He gave Sibley a commission as a Confederate brigadier general, with command of the newly created Department of New Mexico. For the time being, that was all Davis could give him; the Confederacy had no supplies or equipment to spare. Sibley was on his own, armed only with vague orders to drive all Federal troops from his department.

Sibley's first problem was supply. Texas had seceded from the Union on February 1, 1861. At that time, the Federal arsenal in San Antonio and the whole Department of Texas was commanded by Brevet Maj. Gen. David E. Twiggs, 71, one of the four highest-ranking officers in the U. S. Army. When Texas seceded, Twiggs, a native Georgian with pro-slavery sympathies, began negotiations with the Texans over the arsenal and the matériel it contained. Twiggs repeatedly asked Washington for instructions and received ambiguous replies. He told fellow officers he would never fire on American citizens under any circumstances but that he would surrender the U.S. property in his department to the state of Texas "whenever it was demanded."

Finally, Twiggs wrote to Washington revealing his Confederate leanings and asking that he be relieved of command—he was the most senior officer in the Army to declare for the South. Orders were issued granting Twiggs's request and assigning his command to Colonel Carlos A. White of the 1st New York Infantry. Before these orders could be put into effect, however, a sizable force of Texans moved into San Antonio on February 16 and seized control of the arsenal and other Federal installations. Twiggs quickly surrendered his command and turned over all Federal property, supplies, and buildings—including 19 forts—to the State of Texas.

At about the same time, Confederate Lt. Col. John R. Baylor raised a 350-man regiment called the Texas Mounted Rifles, marched to El Paso, and accepted the surrender of the Union's Fort Bliss and the sup-

Painting by Don Troiani, www.historicalartprints.com

plies it contained. Baylor then moved north along the Rio Grande to the village of Mesilla. Dressed in a blue jacket, red sash, and a silver belt buckle embossed with the Lone Star of Texas, Baylor cut a distinctly piratical figure. He went on to capture Fort Fillmore, which had been abandoned after its supplies were burned. On August 1, Baylor formally declared the Confederate Territory of Arizona, installing himself as military governor and Mesilla as the capital. He then sent Granville H. Oury as Arizona's delegate to the Confederate Congress.

Sibley made his way to San Antonio, where he recruited another 800 men. By fall that number had grown to 1,100. Meanwhile, Baylor and his forces marched to El Paso, arriving in mid-December to find things already in motion for the Confederacy. Besides Baylor's gains, the Union garrison at Fort Thorn, 50 miles north of Fort Fillmore, had retreated to Fort Craig, and the garrison of Fort Stanton, east of the river, had fled to Albuquerque. Three days after New Year's Day, 1862, Sibley moved against Fort Craig, which was commanded by Colonel Edward R.S. Canby and defended by a force of 3,800 men, about one-third of whom were in the Regular Army. The remainder were militia and volunteers in various stages of training and discipline.

Canby, who had taken command of the Department of New Mexico when its former commander, Colonel William Loring, resigned his commission and switched to the Confederacy, was born in Kentucky and raised in Indiana. He had served in the Mexican War, during which he had twice been cited for gallantry, and in the Florida Indian wars. The two opposing commanders knew each other well. Canby had been at West Point with Sibley, had been best man at Sibley's wedding, and was married to a cousin of Sibley's wife. The two men had also campaigned together against the Navajo Indians in the northern part of the territory. A careful officer, Canby talked little but acted efficiently in the face of emergency.

In mid-February, Sibley's force, with the addition of Baylor's men, headed north in sleet and snow to the vicinity of Fort Craig. On hand were Sibley's three regiments, the 4th, 5th, and 7th Texas Mounted Volunteers under Colonels James Reily, Tom Green, and William Steele, respectively. The 4th and 5th were each supported by two batteries of four 12-pounder mountain howitzers seized earlier from the San Antonio arsenal. Two companies of Green's 5th Regiment had been converted into lancers whose nine-foot-long spears were topped with colorful streamers and foot-long razor-sharp steel blades.

In addition, there were six companies from Baylor's army led by Major Charles L. Pyron and a newly formed company of volunteers—mostly gamblers, gunmen, and other unsavory characters—who had been collected in and around Mesilla. In all, about 2,500 Confederate troops headed out, trailing 15 pieces of artillery, including a battery of 6-pounders inherited from Baylor, a supply train, and a herd of cattle. A number of sick and dying men were left behind, along with a detachment of 630 men under Steele, who was charged with protecting the Mesilla-El Paso region. It was a decidedly motley force, armed mainly with squirrel guns, double-barreled shotguns, and Bowie knives and dressed in civilian clothes, Confederate gray, and even Union blue seized at the time of Twiggs's surrender.

Fort Craig was manned by 3,810 Federal troops including elements of the 5th, 7th, and 10th United States Infantry and companies of the 1st and 3rd Cavalry. The rest of the men were local volunteers, including 10 companies of the 1st New Mexico Regiment commanded by legendary frontiersman Christopher "Kit" Carson. The defenders had a battery of two guns at their disposal.

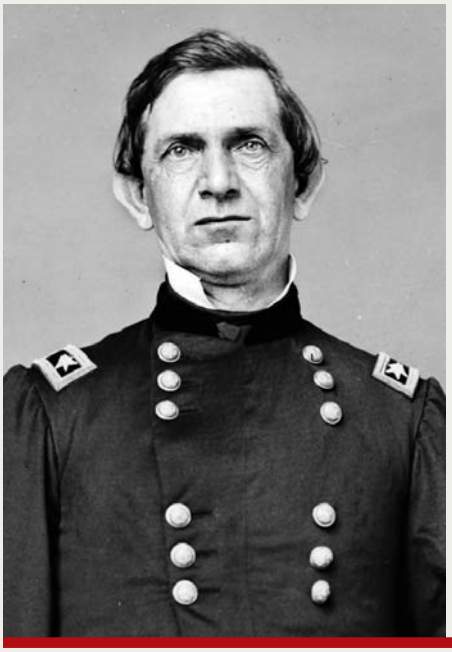
After a couple of days of maneuvering and slight skirmishes, Sibley crossed the river to the east side on February 19 and moved north in an attempt to circle the fort. Confederate reconnaissance had concluded that the fort could not be taken by direct assault without the support of heavy artillery. Sibley decided, at Green's suggestion, to initiate a circling maneuver to force Canby out of the fort and onto ground of Sibley's choosing.

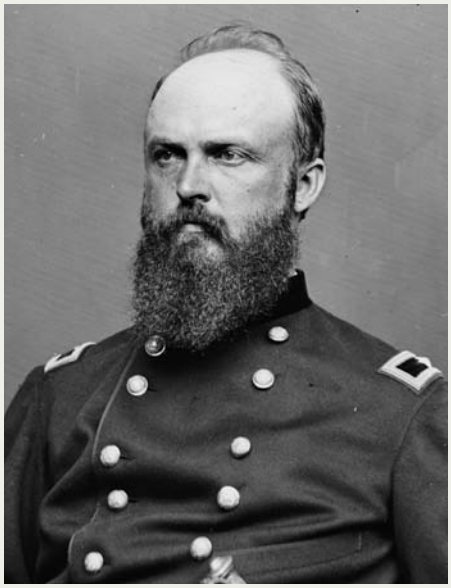
Canby could not let Sibley block the road north to Albuquerque, and he sent infantry, cavalry, and artillery across the river on the 20th to check the Confederate advance. They found Sibley waiting on a high mesa at Valverde, and his massed cannon and rifle fire quickly broke the Union attack. During the night, Union Captain James "Paddy" Graydon, who had served as enlisted man in the dragoons before becoming a hotelier and saloonkeeper and who now commanded an independent scouting company of New Mexicans, had what to him at the time seemed to be an inspiration. He loaded wooden boxes of 24-pound howitzer shells onto two mules and led a small force toward the Confederate camp. When they neared the enemy camp, the men lit the howitzer fuses, slapped the mules, and ran for cover—only to find that the mules had also turned and were loyally following them. The men again tried unsuccessfully to steer the mules into the Confederate camp, finally gave up, and ran for their lives. They were able to get just far enough away to escape injury when the shells—and the mules—exploded. No Confederates were killed in the highly irregular attack, but a number of their own mules stampeded into the darkness and were lost.

That morning, Sibley sent the 5th and 7th Regiments to make a feint toward the fort while the 4th and a battalion of Baylor's troops moved upriver to seize the ford at Valverde. Canby dispatched 220 regulars of the 1st and 3rd Cavalry and four companies of mounted volunteers to stop them. The Union men suffered scattered casualties crossing the river but were able to force Sibley back to the far side of the mesa. From there, Sibley's men tried mounted charges against Canby's flanks and dismounted charges against the center of his line, but all the attacks were repulsed. About 10 AM, Canby sent 720 regulars, a company of Colorado volunteers, and eight companies of Kit Carson's 1st New Mexico troops to join the fighting.

At noon the feint toward the fort was dis-

All: Library of Congress





**ABOVE (l to r): Colonel Edward R.S. Canby. Colonel John P. Slough of the 1st Colorado. Brigadier General Henry H. Sibley.**

continued, and Green with his 5th Regiment joined the fight at Valverde. Shortly after that, Sibley—feeling ill, possibly from too much whiskey—retired from the field, leaving Green in charge. Canby, freed from his duties defending Fort Craig, raced north to take command, bringing with him all his remaining troops except for a small detachment left behind to guard the fort.

About this same time, the Confederates launched a cavalry charge against the Union right that included 40 lancers from the 5th Texas, the only recorded instance of lancers being used in the Civil War. The lancers and cavalry encountered a devastating fire that finally broke the charge. In columns of four, banners fluttering and spears leveled, the lancers rode forth against the Coloradans. "Some of them came near enough," one of the Colorado volunteers wrote, "to be transfixed and lifted from their saddles by bayonets, but the greater part bit the dust before their lances could come in use." Union Captain Theodore H. Dodd shouted: "They are Texans, give them hell!" His men, who had no love for Texas residents, responded with withering fire. Only three of the 40 lancers got off the field unharmed.

In the afternoon, Green massed his cavalry with dismounted men behind and charged the Union batteries at both ends of Canby's line. The attack to Canby's right under Major Henry W. Raguet was easily repulsed, but on Canby's left the screaming Texans under Major Samuel A. Lockridge broke through the defensive line and seized several of the guns in Captain Alexander McRae's artillery battery. Hand-to-hand fighting ensued, during which Lockridge and McRae were shot dead, possibly by each other. Canby sent in two reserve companies and tried to recover the guns, but the reserves were beaten back. Green prepared a counterattack to sweep the badly shaken Union forces from the field, but Canby judiciously sent a flag of truce and requested an armistice to care for the wounded and bury the dead. Remarkably, Green granted the request. Meanwhile, against accepted protocol, Canby withdrew across the Rio Grande to Fort Craig.

Federal casualties at the Battle of Valverde were 68 men killed, 160 wounded, and 35 missing or taken prisoner. Five of the Union's eight field pieces were also captured. Confederate casualties were 36 dead, 150 wounded, and one missing. It was a clear-cut Confederate victory, but the Texans had also lost numerous wagons and precious supplies. Many of the cavalrymen in the 4th Regiment had to convert to the infantry for lack of fresh mounts.

The next morning, Sibley demanded the surrender of the fort, but was rebuffed by his old friend Canby. After giving his men a day's rest, Sibley headed north, intending to live off the land until he reached Albuquerque and seized the Federal supplies stockpiled there. When he approached Albuquerque, however, he found to his chagrin that the garrison had burned all the supplies in the city before falling back to Santa Fe. Sibley moved into the city unopposed, but some $6 million worth of matériel had literally gone up in smoke. Four days later, on March 5, a detachment of 600 Confederates moved with equal ease into Santa Fe, the territorial capital. Once again, Federal troops had burned any supplies they could not take with them, and the territorial government had relocated to Las Vegas, near Fort Union.

Sibley and his men soon felt the pinch of tight supplies and the indifference or outright hostility of New Mexico residents in the areas they had captured. Still, Fort Craig was an island of blue surrounded by southerners and cut off from any immediate aid. All that stood between Sibley and his triumphant march to California were the troops at Fort Union, 60 miles east of Santa Fe. Fort Union had become the gathering point for all the Union troops flushed out during Sibley's northern ride up the river, but Sibley, who had been stationed at

Painting by Wayne Justus, www.waynejustus.com

Fort Union before the war, felt that he knew the fort's weaknesses and would have an easy victory once he reached it.

Unknown to Sibley, Federal supporters had begun making moves to reinforce Fort Union. Colorado's acting governor, Lewis L. Weld, ordered seven companies of the Union's 1st Colorado Volunteer Infantry Regiment stationed at Denver and three companies from the Indian country southeast of the city to march through heavy snow and relieve the fort. Thrashing through waist-deep snowdrifts, the troops covered the last 92 miles in 36 hours, a grueling pace that caused many horses and mules to drop dead in harness. The reinforcements, led by Colonel John P. Slough, arrived at Fort Union on March 11. One of the Colorado companies was mounted; the remainder of the 950 men had walked over 400 miles in 13 days.

On March 22, Slough left the fort, heading west with 1,342 men and two four-gun batteries. They moved along the Old Santa Fe Trail, leaving only a small detachment behind at the fort. Canby, unaware of Slough's arrival, had ordered Colonel Gabriel R. Paul to hold the fort until Canby joined him and to not engage in any major battles. Slough either did not receive, or else ignored, the order. Meanwhile, a Confederate force comprised of six companies of Baylor's troops, four companies of the 5th Regiment, three locally recruited scout companies, and a battery of two 6-pounders headed east under the command of Major Charles L. Pyron.

Slough's force camped at the town of Loma. The next morning, Slough sent Major John M. Chivington ahead with 418 men to make a quick raid on Santa Fe. Chivington, a fire-and-brimstone Methodist preacher and a fearsome and experienced Indian fighter, originally had turned down a commission as a chaplain to take what he called a "fighting commission." Brash and irreverent, the six-foot-four, 260-pound Chivington had clashed repeatedly with Slough on the way from Colorado. In a letter to superiors, Slough wrote that half the regiment had "gone off to hell with a crazy preacher who thinks he is Napoleon Bonaparte."

Crazy or not, Chivington never made it to Santa Fe. On the morning of March 26, he and his men entered Glorieta Pass, a rocky defile through which the Old Santa

Lieutenant Colonel William R. Scurry, waving his hat, encourages Confederate forces to attack Union troops around Pigeon Ranch at Glorieta Pass. Painting by Wayne Justus.

Fe Trail twisted around the southern edge of the Sangre de Christo Mountains. By afternoon they were approaching the western end of the pass when they entered a narrow valley called Apache Canyon and ran headlong into the startled vanguard of Pyron's column.

The Union men took cover in pine trees on the left, where Chivington quickly regained control of his troops and sent them scurrying up the steep sides of the canyon. Their firing forced the Confederates to retreat into a deep, narrow gorge, where they destroyed a log bridge over a dry streambed and set up their artillery. Firing from whatever cover they could find, the Union troops gradually pushed the Confederates back. "We've got them corralled this time!" shouted one Colorado volunteer. "Hurrah for the Pikes Peakers!"

Chivington rode among the men "with a pistol in each hand and one or two under his arms ... a conspicuous mark for Texas sharpshooters," Private Ovando J. Hollister of the Colorado volunteers later wrote. Looking like "a mad bull" in the words of another onlooker, the preacher-turned-soldier ordered a mounted Colorado company to charge. With pistols firing and swords gleaming in the sun, Captain Samuel Cook and his men charged up the valley, leaped the streambed, and engaged the enemy in hand-to-hand combat. "On they came to what I supposed certain destruction, but nothing like lead or iron seemed to stop them," one Texan wrote.

The Confederates were able to save their artillery and continued to fight as they retreated down the valley. Finally, with darkness coming, Pyron abandoned the fight. Chivington paused to gather up his dead and wounded, and a truce was called to tend to casualties. Confederate losses from the engagement were four dead, 20 wounded, and 75 captured. Chivington reported five of his men killed, 14 wounded, and three missing.

Pyron desperately called for reinforcements, and the 4th Texas Regiment and a battalion of the 7th under Lt. Col. William R. Scurry rode through the night, reaching Pyron's camp at Johnson's Ranch about 3 AM. Scurry, as ranking officer, took over command of the entire force, which had now grown to about 1,000 men. When a Federal attack did not take place the following morning, Scurry waited another day and headed back into the canyon on the 28th, leaving his supply wagons back at Johnson's Ranch. Meanwhile, Chivington had fallen back to Apache Canyon and joined Slough's main column.

Alerted that the Confederates were moving against them, Slough divided his command into two parts, each smaller than Scurry's force. Leaving behind one force to guard his supplies, Slough began moving up the canyon with about 850 men. Chivington, meanwhile, guided by Lt. Col. Manuel Chaves and a group of New Mexico volunteers, took 490 Coloradans and began climbing the mountains in an attempt to get behind enemy lines.

About 11 AM, Slough's and Scurry's men met at Glorieta Pass, which one Union lieutenant described as "a terrible place for an engagement." The pass was a narrow gorge with steep walls on each side. There was no room for maneuver, and the men grabbed what sparse cover they could. Slough formed a battle line by placing two batteries of guns, each supported by a company of infantry, across the road and partly up the northern slope. Scurry also formed a line. Fighting became intense as the outnumbered Union troops tried to advance. Confederate pressure flanked the Union left, and Slough pulled back 800 yards to form a new line, while Union artillery was able to knock out two of Scurry's guns and Union rifle fire kept Confederates from manning the remaining gun. "The Texas battery soon slackened its fire until it almost ceased," Hollister wrote.

The Texans charged but were repulsed with more hand-to-hand fighting on the right and in the center. The charge on the left, however, was able to flank the Union line and force Slough to fall back to a new position east of Pigeon's Ranch, where Slough's troops had first sighted the Confederates that morning. In the bloody conflict, Raguet was mortally wounded and Pyron had a horse shot out from under him. After six hours of heavy fighting, with both armies on the edge of exhaustion, Scurry suggested a truce, which was called about 5 PM.

Meanwhile, Chivington and his men had crossed 16 miles of treed country to a 200-foot bluff overlooking Johnson's Ranch. They descended the bluff with ropes and leather straps, surprised the guards left behind with the supply train, and captured the wagons. Then they burned 85 wagons and provisions and bayoneted the 500 horses and mules that had pulled them.

With the catastrophic loss of his supplies, Scurry had no choice but to call off the engagement and try to get his men back to Santa Fe and Albuquerque. Under cover of the truce, the Confederate troops left their wounded at Pigeon Ranch and slipped

Painting by Don Troiani, www.historicalartprints.com

**Weary Confederates retreat after the Battle of Glorieta Pass in this painting by Don Troiani. Exhaustion and lack of provisions made them easy prey for trailing Apache Indians.**

away from the field. Rather than chase and possibly finish off the Confederates, Canby recalled his troops to Fort Union, fearing an immediate attack on that facility. Slough obeyed the order grudgingly, then resigned his commission in disgust. Scurry reported losses of 36 killed, 60 wounded, and 25 captured at the Battle of Glorieta Pass. Union losses totaled roughly the same although Slough insisted that the Rebels had lost at least 275 men.

Four days later, on April 1, Canby, who had just been promoted to brigadier general, headed out from Fort Union with 1,210 regulars and volunteers. The two armies exchanged artillery salvos outside Albuquerque to little effect, then settled down to await further developments. Sibley was basically without supplies and had little prospect of living off the land. He had learned the hard way that he could expect little help from the indifferent or hostile locals.

He had no choice but to return to Texas. On April 12, Sibley began his retreat, burying eight brass howitzers near the Albuquerque town plaza and moving south along the Rio Grande. Canby pursued with reinforcements from Fort Union, and the two armies clashed briefly near the town of Peralta. When the engagement petered out, the Confederate forces continued to move south along the west side of the river, while Canby's forces shadowed them on the east bank. On the third morning, the Federal troops awoke to see the Confederate camp abandoned, its fires still burning. Sibley and his men had slipped away in the night, swinging west from the river around the base of the Sierra Magdalena Mountains on what would become a torturous 100-mile detour to avoid Fort Craig and whatever Union troops were stationed there.

Abandoning their remaining wagons and leaving their wounded to Canby's mercy, Sibley's men began the 10-day detour with less than a week's provisions strapped to the backs of their remaining mules. It was a trek they would remember all their lives. With little food or water, the men trudged across the barren desert, pulling their remaining artillery pieces by hand through dry gullies and over bare hills. Morale disintegrated, and what had begun as a military march quickly became an every-man-for-himself trek across the desert. Stragglers were easy prey for the merciless Dog Canyon Apaches who trailed their bloody footprints. After eight days, they completed their circle around Fort Craig and again reached the Rio Grande. A year later, Union scouts were still finding scattered pieces of bleached-out skeletons along the route.

What was left of the army returned to Fort Bliss in early May. Since the start of the expedition into New Mexico, the Confederates had suffered 1,700 casualties, many of them coming on the retreat around Fort Craig. In his report to Richmond, Sibley said bluntly: "Except for its political, geographical position, the Territory of New Mexico is not worth a quarter of the blood and treasure expended in its conquest." High-blown talk of the gold fields and of California ports was noticeably absent. On May 14, Sibley assembled the survivors of his expedition on the fort's parade ground, thanked them for their service, and continued his retreat to San Antonio, where the army disbanded.

Plagued by chronic illness and worsening alcoholism, Sibley went on to a number of small commands and no real achievements for the rest of the war. In 1869, he became a general of artillery for the khedive of Egypt, but later returned to the United States and died in poverty at Fredericksburg, Virginia, in 1886.

After his New Mexico service, Canby served two years as assistant adjutant general in Washington and commanded troops during the New York City draft riots in July 1863. A year later he was made a major general and given command of the Military Division of Western Mississippi. After the war, he commanded the Department of the Columbia on the Pacific Coast and was murdered by hostile Modoc Indians during a peace parlay in April 1873.

In the end, Sibley's ambitious plan had come to nothing. It had drawn some Union troops and some attention from the war in the East and had thrilled and excited people in the South, but in the end it had produced nothing concrete. The engagement at Glorieta Pass was so disastrous to Confederate hopes that some historians have labeled it the "Gettysburg of the West." In its way, it was at least as decisive in its far-reaching consequences. Jefferson Davis's long-standing dream of vast gold fields, expanded slave territory, and bustling California ports had been crushed in the rocky defile at Glorieta Pass, never to be renewed for the remainder of the war. □

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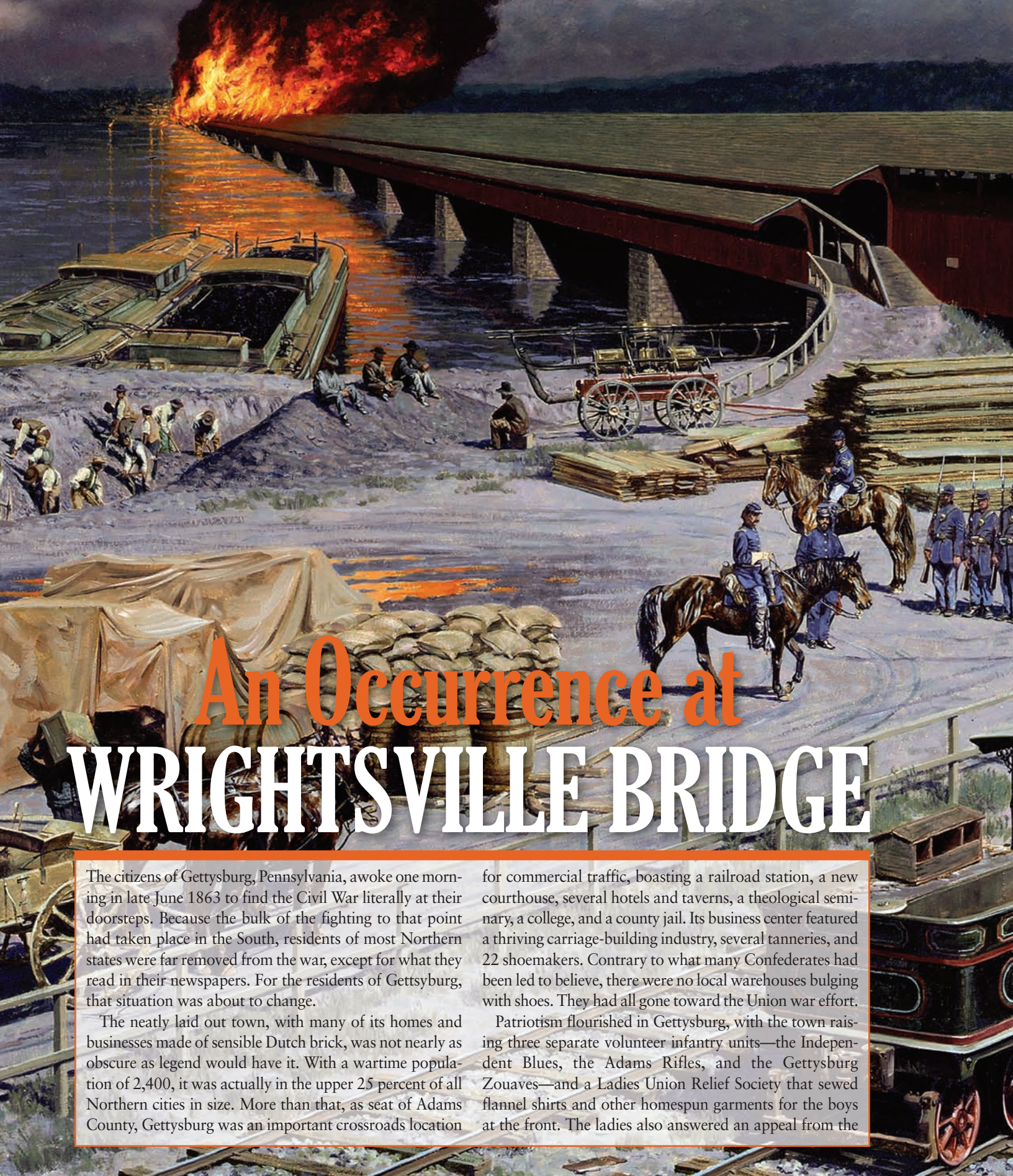


# An Occurrence at WRIGHTSVILLE BRIDGE

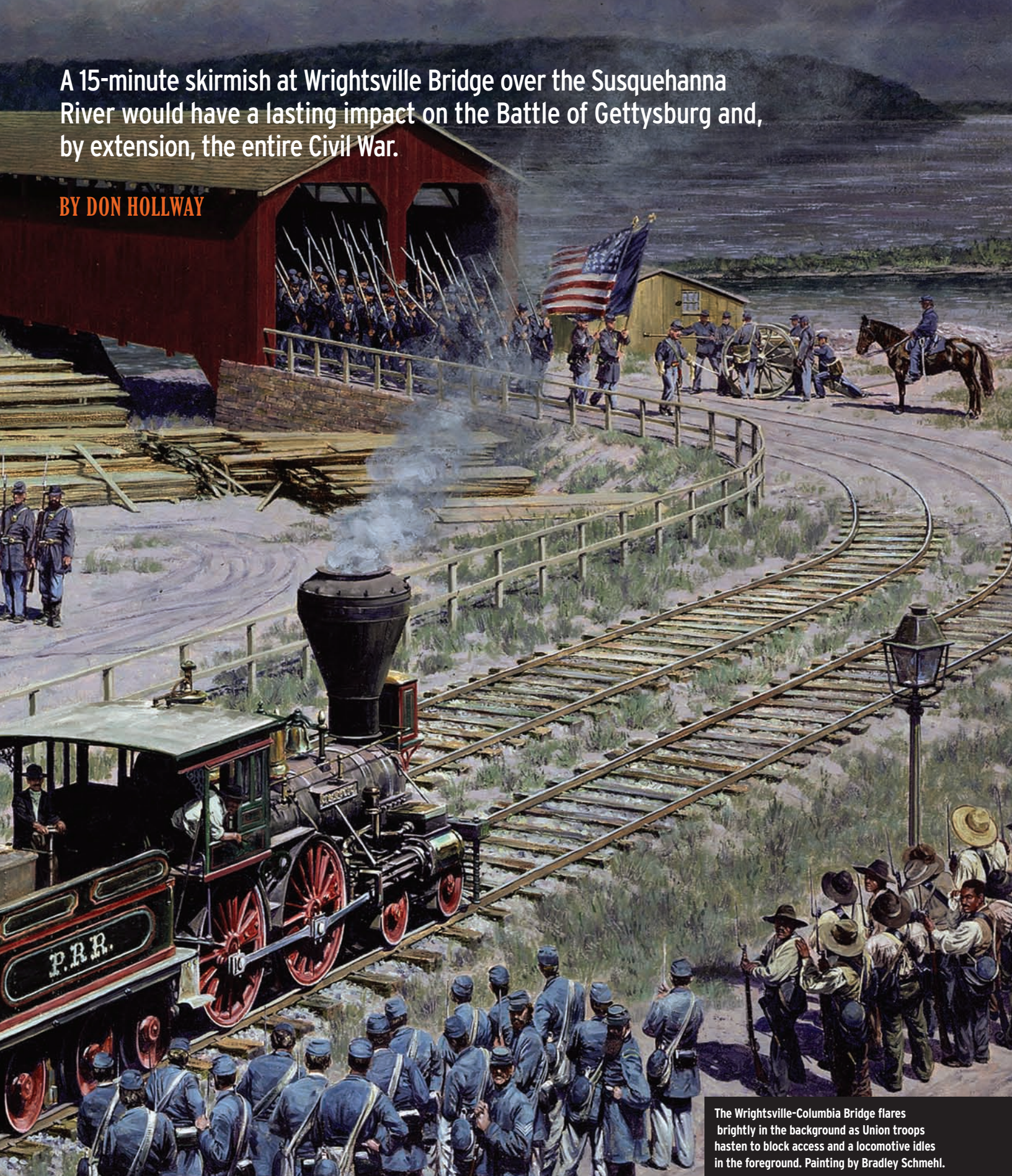
The citizens of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, awoke one morning in late June 1863 to find the Civil War literally at their doorsteps. Because the bulk of the fighting to that point had taken place in the South, residents of most Northern states were far removed from the war, except for what they read in their newspapers. For the residents of Gettsyburg, that situation was about to change.

The neatly laid out town, with many of its homes and businesses made of sensible Dutch brick, was not nearly as obscure as legend would have it. With a wartime population of 2,400, it was actually in the upper 25 percent of all Northern cities in size. More than that, as seat of Adams County, Gettysburg was an important crossroads location for commercial traffic, boasting a railroad station, a new courthouse, several hotels and taverns, a theological seminary, a college, and a county jail. Its business center featured a thriving carriage-building industry, several tanneries, and 22 shoemakers. Contrary to what many Confederates had been led to believe, there were no local warehouses bulging with shoes. They had all gone toward the Union war effort.

Patriotism flourished in Gettysburg, with the town raising three separate volunteer infantry units—the Independent Blues, the Adams Rifles, and the Gettysburg Zouaves—and a Ladies Union Relief Society that sewed flannel shirts and other homespun garments for the boys at the front. The ladies also answered an appeal from the

A 15-minute skirmish at Wrightsville Bridge over the Susquehanna River would have a lasting impact on the Battle of Gettysburg and, by extension, the entire Civil War.

BY DON HOLLWAY




The Wrightsville-Columbia Bridge flares brightly in the background as Union troops hasten to block access and a locomotive idles in the foreground. Painting by Bradley Schmehl.

Map © 2015 Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping, Minneapolis, MN


**ABOVE: The two-pronged Confederate invasion of Pennsylvania centered on Gettysburg after detours to Harrisburg and Wrightsville. RIGHT: Maj. Gen. Jubal Early, left, and Union Colonel Jacob Frick.**

United States Sanitary Commission to send boxes of blankets, food, and clothing to military hospitals in Baltimore.

Still, the war seemed comparatively far away until Gettysburg residents received their first warnings in late June 1863 of a new Confederate invasion threat, mounted nine months after a previous Rebel advance into Maryland. Men mustered into the hastily formed 26th Pennsylvania Emergency Volunteer Infantry and patrolled roadways west of town, felling large trees across the thoroughfares to impede approaching Confederates. Everyone was on edge.

At 8 AM on June 26, the first Confederates neared Gettysburg, the sharp spearpoint of Lt. Gen. Richard S. Ewell's II Corps of the Army of Northern Virginia. A week earlier Ewell had received orders from General Robert E. Lee to march his corps into Pennsylvania ahead of Lee and the rest of the army. Ewell, accordingly, had crossed into Pennsylvania. While he led two divisions toward the state capital at Harrisburg, Ewell ordered Maj. Gen. Jubal Early to take his 6,500-man division across South Mountain to Gettysburg and then proceed to York, cut the North Central Railroad, and destroy the bridge across the Susquehanna between Wrightsville and Columbia.

On the morning of the 26th a cold drizzle fell as Early's men marched toward Gettysburg, pausing along the way (in direct contravention of Lee's standing orders not to destroy private property) to burn the Caledonia Furnace Iron Works owned by Republican Congressman Thaddeus Stevens, one of the harshest Northern abolitionists. Receiving information that local militia had massed at Gettysburg, Early decided to approach the town from two different directions. He sent Maj. Gen. John B. Gordon's infantry division and Lt. Col. Elijah V. White's 35th Battalion, Virginia Cavalry, directly down the Cashtown Pike, while Early and the balance of the division approached Gettsyburg from the north on the Hilltown Road.

The green militiamen were no match for White's fire-tested Confederates, who easily brushed them aside, killing 20-year-old Private George Washington Sandhoe and charging into Gettysburg in a style befitting their unit nickname, the Comanches. "It seemed as if pandemonium had broken loose," recalled Gettysburg resident Lydia Catherine Zeigler. Professor Michael Jacobs of Pennsylvania College observed the cavalry's arrival with true professorial disdain: "The advance guard of the enemy, consisting of 180 to 300 cavalry, rode into Gettysburg at 3:15 PM, shouting and yelling like so many savages from the wilds of the Rocky Mountains, firing their pistols, not caring whether they killed or maimed man, woman or child." Disregarding the danger, 10-year-old Gates D. Fahnestock and his friends dashed to second-story windows to watch the proceedings "as they would a wild west show."

Things settled down once Gordon's infantry marched into town. "These Confederates were very firm and businesslike in their attitude toward the townspeople," reported Henry Jacobs. But fellow resident Fannie Buehler, whose postmaster husband was in hiding for fear he would taken prisoner by the Confederates, had a less admiring view of the invaders. "I never saw more

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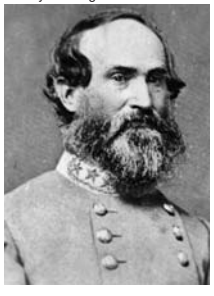

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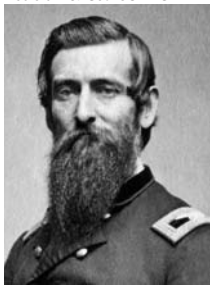


unsightly set of men," she noted, "dirty, hatless, shoeless, and footsore." A Southern flag went up in the town square, and regimental musicians annoyed citizens by playing "Dixie" and other patriotic Confederate airs long into the night. Years later, Gordon would look back on the opening salvo in the Battle of Gettysburg as a mere dustup: "I had met a small force of Union soldiers," he said, "and had there fought a diminutive battle when the armies of both [George G.] Meade and Lee were many miles away."

Early arrived in Gettysburg late that afternoon and went to the Adams County courthouse. There he reviewed the 175 bedraggled militiamen whom his troops had captured. "You boys ought to be home with your mothers and not out in the fields where it is dangerous and you might get hurt," the general tongue lashed them. He then presented a list of demands to city fathers. Early wanted 7,000 pounds of bacon, 1,200 pounds of sugar, 1,000 pounds of salt, 600 pounds of coffee, 60

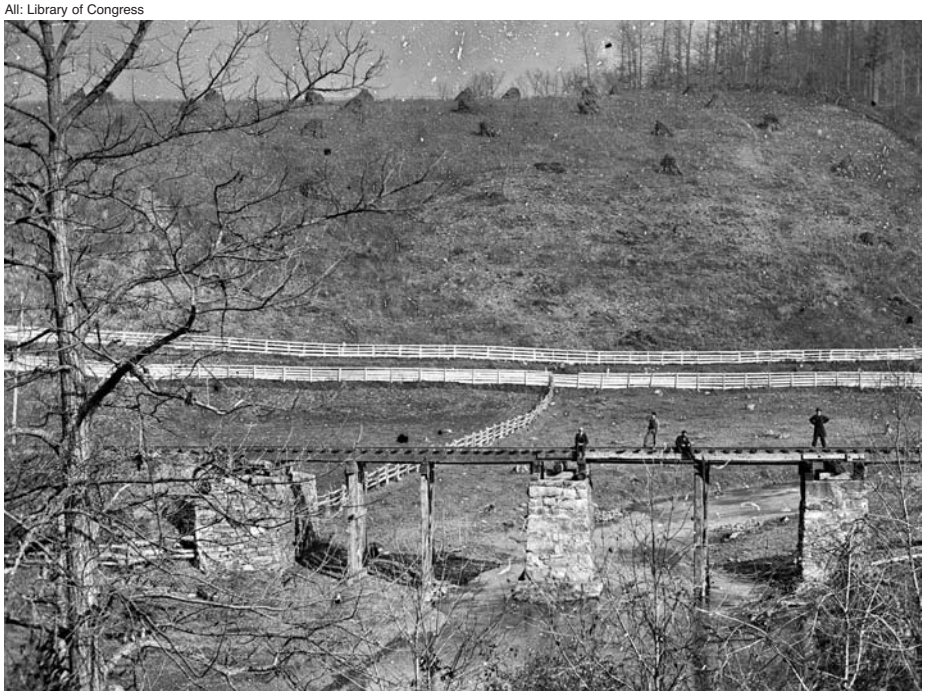
barrels of flour, 10 barrels of onions, 10 barrels of whiskey, 1,000 pairs of shoes, and 500 hats. Or, he said, he would accept $5,000 in cash. Borough President David Kendlehart rejected Early's demands as exorbitant but promised that town merchants would "furnish whatever they can of such provisions." In the end, Early had to settle for the 2,000 rations his men discovered at the train depot.

The next morning the Confederates rode out of Gettysburg, heading east toward York. At that point, Maj. Gen. Darius N. Couch had fewer than 250 men to defend the Union's newly created 34,000-square-mile Department of the Susquehanna. He called for volunteers, but his main ally was the Susquehanna River itself. He was determined that no Rebel unit should cross it. There were only a few points where such a crossing was even possible. Between Harrisburg and the neighboring state of Maryland there was only one, east of York, between the villages of Wrightsville and Columbia.

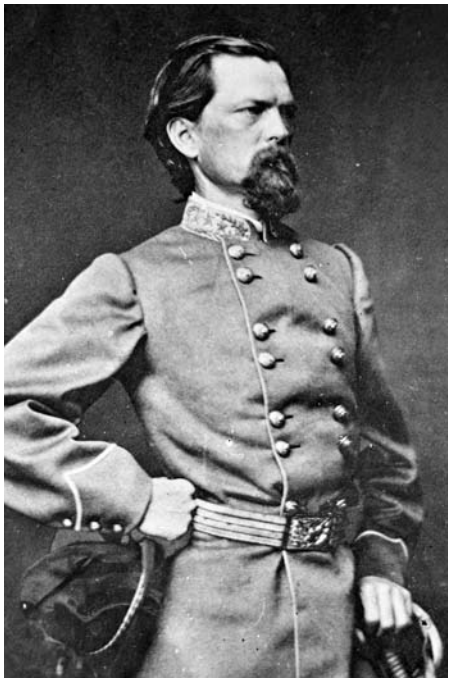
There the river, a mile wide, made a formidable military barrier. In 1777, when the British occupied Philadelphia, the Continental Congress had retreated west across it to the safety of York, where its members signed the Articles of Confederation. Since then, an impressive bridge had been built over the river. Completed in 1834, the 5,620-foot-long Wrightsville-Columbia Bridge was the world's longest covered bridge. It featured 27 wooden spans, each 200 feet long, 40 feet wide, and stout enough to bear loaded train cars. It rose on stone pylons 15 feet above the high water mark. As an intersection of road, rail, river, and canal traffic, Wrightsville was of much greater strategic import to the invading Confederates than Gettysburg.

Couch assigned its defense to Colonel Jacob Frick. With fewer than 1,000 men—most of them freshly recruited militia—Frick needed allies to stall the enemy advance until reinforcements arrived. Couch sent his aide-de-camp, Major Granville O. Haller. But the Confederates had easily scattered Haller's militia and irregulars at Gettysburg, and they had no reason to stop there. Early's orders to destroy the Wrightsville Bridge did not preclude capturing it first and linking up with Ewell from the far side of the Susquehanna. "I directed General Gordon, in the event of there being no force in York," Early reported, "to march through and proceed to Columbia Bridge, and secure it at both ends, if possible."

All: Library of Congress



**ABOVE: Colonel Elijah White's "Comanches" destroyed this bridge near Hanover Junction, southeast of Gettysburg. BELOW: Confederate Maj. Gen. John B. Gordon, left, and Private C. C. Wenner of Company A, 35th Virginia Cavalry.**

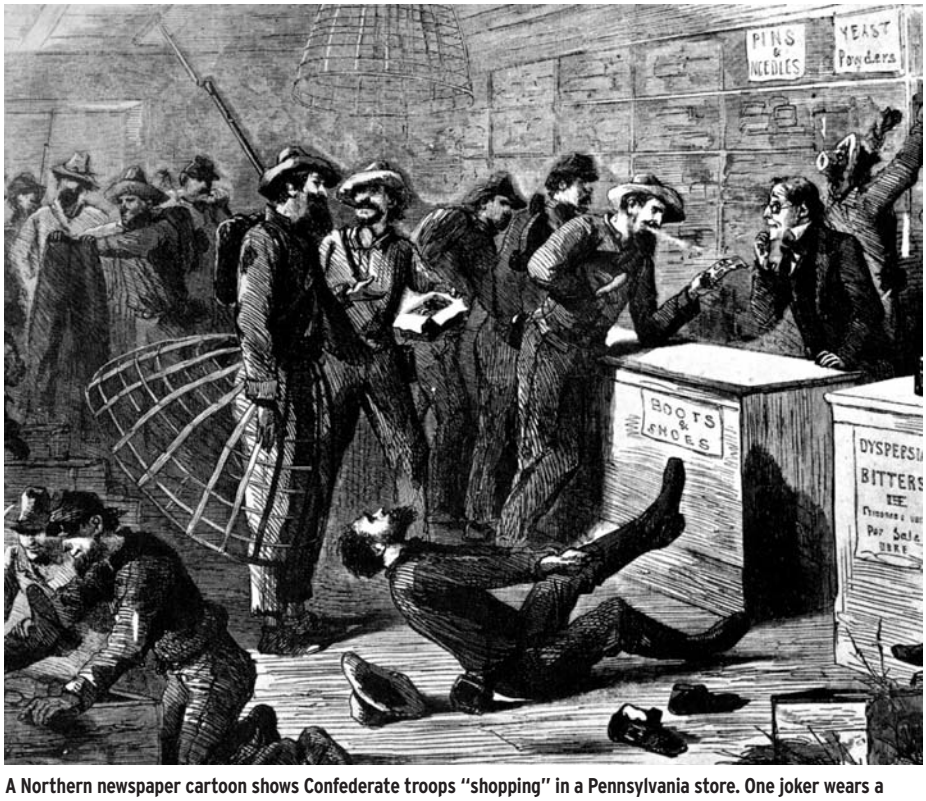


The rain cleared off Saturday morning. Gordon's Georgia brigade led the way toward York, 30 miles away. His cavalry fanned out on his flanks, burning rail bridges, cutting telegraph lines and, as one lieutenant put it, "gobbling up all the horses, wagons, cattle and sheep for miles on either side of the march." Fearing a sack, and despite Haller's pleas, York surren-

dered. Early caught up to Gordon that evening a dozen miles from town. The Georgian reported, "I have been visited by a delegation from York, and have agreed to take possession of the town without destroying property." Early replied, "I could not have given you better instructions."

York was the largest Northern city occupied by the Confederacy. As he had done at Gettysburg, Early moved quickly to extract all possible gain from the city. "I then made a requisition upon the authorities for 2,000 pairs of shoes, 1,000 hats, 1,000 pairs of socks, $100,000 in money and three days' rations of all kinds," he reported later. "Subsequently, between 1,200 and 1,500 pairs of shoes, the hats, socks, and rations, were furnished, but only $28,600 in money was furnished, which was paid to my quartermaster Major [C.E.] Snodgrass, the mayor and other authorities protesting their inability to get any more money, as it had all been run of previously, and I was satisfied they made an honest effort to raise the amount called for."

Meanwhile, Haller reported to Couch that he was abandoning the city. Couch telegraphed Frick at Wrightsville: "York has surrendered. Our troops will fall back from there to-night. Tell the people of Lancaster that the time has come for action." It was the Union's darkest moment. That same Saturday, Army of the Potomac commander Maj. Gen. Joseph Hooker tendered his resignation. Shortly past midnight, three brigades under Confederate Maj. Gen. J.E.B. Stuart crossed the Potomac, a mere few dozen miles from Washington. At about the same hour, Maj. Gen. George Meade, shaken from his bed, was handed Hooker's command. And rumor had it that, come daylight, some 35,000 Rebels would hit Wrightsville, take the bridge, and cross the Susquehanna into the heart of the Union.




**A Northern newspaper cartoon shows Confederate troops "shopping" in a Pennsylvania store. One joker wears a hoop skirt while another pulls on a new pair of boots.**

Church bells rang, but many services were cancelled as Gordon's brigade rode unopposed into York at about 10 AM. Reining up before frightened womenfolk in their Sunday best, Gordon "assured these ladies that the troops behind me, though ill-clad and travel-stained, were good men and brave; that beneath their rough exteriors were hearts as loyal to women as ever beat in the breasts of honorable men." Not all of York's citizens, however, feared rebel conquest. Soon after addressing the matrons, the general bent from the saddle to accept a bouquet of flowers from a girl "probably twelve years of age." As he rode on, he discovered that it hid a note, "in delicate handwriting, purporting to give the numbers and describe the position of the Union forces of Wrightsville. It bore no signature, and contained no assurance of sympathy for the Southern cause, but it was so terse and explicit in its terms as to compel my confidence."

While Early and Gordon were riding unhindered into York, a hard-pressed Frick was busy marshaling his threadbare forces at Wrightsville. A correspondent for the *Pottsville Miners Journal* reported the hasty defense efforts: "On Sunday we commenced digging rifle pits and had hardly completed them when our mounted scouts came in rapidly and reported to Colonel Frick that the rebels were approaching in force." Frick redoubled his efforts.

At the west end of the bridge, Wrightsville lay in a mile-wide, rolling valley between two parallel, roughly east-west ridges. Frick's entrenchments and rifle pits circled around the valley floor west of town. Together, he and Haller still had no more than 1,400 men total—by military tactics of the day enough to defend a 400-yard front. Their C-shaped perimeter was some eight times that far around. They had two bronze 12-pounder Napoleon cannons and a sharpshooting 3-inch Ordnance Rifle with a range of over a mile but arrayed them across the river to destroy the bridge if it was captured. They derailed hopper cars full of iron ore to block the entrance and barricaded Wrightsville's streets with logs and planks from riverside lumber yards. Union cavalry patrolled the roads toward York, alert for the first sign of the approaching enemy.

By 4:30 PM scouts reported no fewer than three brigades of infantry and a regiment of cavalry on the pike. The Pennsylvania militiamen, many of whom had never fired in

anger, put down their shovels and took up their guns. The *Miners Journal* correspondent observed, "The men were placed by companies in the pits, and about 5 o'clock the firing became brisk in the front. We could see from our position, the rebel cavalry who mounted and dismounted, were engaged in driving in our pickets. Between that hour and half past 6 o'clock the firing was quite sharp and the rebels evidently were trying to flank our little force, and cut off our retreat to the bridge, distant about a half mile."

Within the hour gray-clad troops were advancing through the fields of wheat and rye before the Union line. Gordon rode up the south ridge to look down upon the field of impending battle, comparing it to the note from his unknown accomplice in York. "There, in full view before us, was the town, just as described, a blue line of soldiers guarding the approach, drawn up, as indicated, along an intervening ridge and across the pike. Most important of all, there was a deep gorge or ravine running off to the right and extending around the left flank of the Federal line and to the river below the bridge."

Contrary to Union fears, Gordon had no more than 1,800 men (he estimated them at just 1,200), but he also had four cannons. He ordered one pair of guns deployed opposite the enemy center and the other on the heights to the north. While they held the Federals' attention he would launch his real assault elsewhere. "My immediate object was to move rapidly down that ravine to the river," said Gordon, "then along its right bank [relative] to the bridge, seize it, and cross to the Columbia side." Courtney's Virginia battery, led by Captain William Tanner, lobbed 40 rounds of shell onto the Union line while the cavalry was moving into position to assault the enemy flank.

Around 6 PM, 50 dismounted Confederate cavalrymen of the 31st Georgia, probing up from the bottom of the ravine, ran into a squad of Yankee skirmishers and nearly shot Union Major Charles McLean Knox, one of Couch's staff officers. He led a fighting withdrawal toward the Federal


**A crude drawing by eyewitness Louis Miller depicts Jubal Early's troops marching through York in suspiciously good order for the notoriously casual Confederates.**

entrenchments. The battle for the bridge was on. "We moved by the direct pike to Wrightsville, on the Susquehanna," Gordon reported. "At this point I found a body of Pennsylvania militia nearly equal in number to my brigade, reported by the commanding officer (whom we captured) at 1,200 men, strongly entrenched, but without artillery. A line of skirmishers was sent to make a demonstration in front of these works, while I moved to the right by a circuitous route with three regiments, on order to turn these works, and, if possible, gain the enemy's rear, cut off his retreat, and seize the bridge."

Confederates ducking through the high wheat in front of the Union center traded shots with militiamen popping up from their foxholes. Behind the Southern advance the first pair of cannons moved up, unopposed, to blast away from just 500 yards. The second pair, on the heights to the north, began hitting the Union line with oblique fire. With their heads down in their trenches, the Northerners took only one casualty—an unknown black volunteer fatally struck in the head by a shell fragment—but neither did they hold up the Confederate assault.

"It was difficult to do [the attackers] much harm or dislodge them," Frick recalled of watching from his command post north of the pike. "They depended exclusively on their artillery to drive us from our position here." The *Miners Journal* reporter observed Frick during the opening fight. "Colonel Frick passed quietly and exposed to the fire of the Confederate sharpshooters from the left to the right of our lines and whispered an order to the captains, an order to fall back to the bridge. This movement was affected in excellent order by the command, although exposed during the movement to a heavy fire of shell and to a galling one of sharpshooters. The shells exploded over us and in close proximity to our ranks and there were many narrow escapes. I am glad to say that the 27th Regiment had no men killed and but three or four slightly wounded. Had we moved from our pits five minutes later, my belief is that our retreat would have been cut off."

Meanwhile, Haller sent Robert Crane, superintendent of the Reading & Columbia Railroad, with a demolition crew of 19 carpenters onto the bridge. At the fourth span from the west bank—800 feet out on the water, far enough to prevent easy repairs—they sawed partway through the arches and key load-bearing spans. They filled boreholes with black powder, ripped up plank-

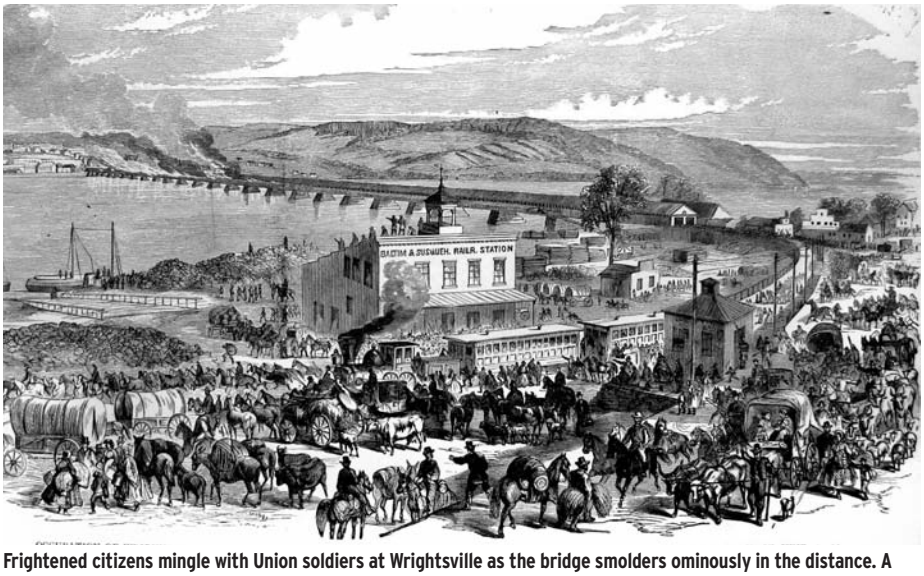
ing, and rolled barrels of kerosene and coal oil to the spot. Then they knocked holes into the roof and walls to let the fire breathe. Haller posted guards to ensure that if his troops panicked and rushed the bridge, no one would set off the charges prematurely.

Outside Wrightsville the fight neared the breaking point. "We pitched into them," wrote one Confederate lieutenant, "and after a brisk little battle of about a half-hour duration, routed them." Frick had gone around the line in full view, risking Confederate cannon fire and sharpshooters, giving the word to retreat. As one militiaman admitted, they all dropped everything and "fled in utter confusion from Wrightsville to the bridge." A Union defender agreed with that assessment. "In a moment all was confusion, and the retreat began in good earnest," he wrote of the flight into town. "The route all along that back street was covered with blankets, knapsacks, &c., dropped by the men."

"We drove them pell-mell through the streets of Wrightsville," declared a sergeant of the 38th Georgia. But after marching 20 miles and fighting a battle at the end of it, the Confederates were too played out to keep up the chase. "When a Yankee does run, he can outrun anybody, and there is no use in trying to catch him by a stern chase," decided one Georgian. "You either have to head him off or give it up as a hopeless case."

The Confederate cannoneers lifted their muzzles and began dropping shells into the town itself. Several militiamen were wounded by fragments; a Union captain was hit in the leg and, although hidden from capture and cared for in a local home, he later died. Rebels poured into town from the north, south, and west, sweeping up 20 Federals before they could reach the bridge. One Union lieutenant later wrote that if they had waited five more minutes to retreat, none would have made it.

Haller was way ahead of them. Confirming that Crane was ready to blow the bridge, he rode on across it and proceeded into Columbia to take charge of the Union artillery, completing the retreat he had conducted all the way from Gettysburg. Knox and Frick remained at the western entrance, shepherding the last of their men through the maze of overturned rail cars before following them inside. The Georgians paused a moment on the Wrightsville riverbank, forming for the final assault.




**Frightened citizens mingle with Union soldiers at Wrightsville as the bridge smolders ominously in the distance. A few more minutes and the Confederates would have crossed it safely.**

"Once across," Gordon wrote later, "I intended to mount my men, if practicable, so as to pass rapidly through Lancaster in the direction of Philadelphia, and thus compel General Meade to send a portion of his army to the defense of that city." A few Confederate cavalrymen led the way, clattering through the overturned rail cars and briefly onto the bridge, firing down the tunnel to test for a response and finding none. Company G of the 38th Georgia marched up and onto the bridge, heading straight for Philadelphia.

Eight hundred feet away, only Knox, Frick, Crane, and four demolition men remained to stop them. In a remarkable display of courage, coolness, and sheer military protocol, Frick ordered Knox to blow the bridge. Knox passed the word to Crane who in turn signaled his men to light their fuses. Then everyone ran for the east end, almost a full mile away. It was about 7:35 PM.

A *Harper's Weekly* reporter among the crowd watching from the east bank wrote, "Three reports were heard in quick succession, followed by a cloud of smoke." Confederates on the high ground behind Wrightsville saw the exploding timbers of the bridge rise high into the blue sky. "Every charge was perfect and effective," Crane declared. But the bridge's oaken beams were stronger than expected. When the powder smoke cleared, one observer said, it could be seen that the explosion had "simply splintered the arch. It scarcely shook the bridge."

The Wrightsville-Columbia Bridge was still standing.

As Crane later said, "The rebel cavalry and artillery approaching the bridge at the Wrightsville end, Colonel Frick, in order to more effectually destroy the connection (the bridge not falling), ordered it to be fired." The men stove in the barrels of kerosene and coal oil over the bridge floor and put it to the torch. Around 8 PM observers saw "a curl of smoke rising from the pier, and shortly after a column of flame mounted high in the sky."

The initial explosion had flushed the Georgians out of the bridge. Now they rushed back in. "With great energy," Gordon wrote, "My men labored to save the bridge. I called on the citizens of Wrightsville for buckets and pails, but none were to be found."

An evening squall, rather than dampening the flames with rain, fanned them

**A dramatic *Harper's Weekly* illustration of the covered bridge at Wrightsville after Union defenders had set it ablaze to prevent the Confederates from crossing the Susquehanna into the northern heartland.**

higher with wind. The bridge burned from the center toward both ends. Against the low-hanging clouds, the glow of a mile of blazing oak was visible in Hanover, 30 miles west, and Harrisburg, 30 miles north. "My people driven over Columbia Bridge," Couch telegraphed Meade. "It is burned. I hold the opposite side of the river in strength at present."

By firelight a Confederate detachment felt its way partly across a dam built a few hundred yards downstream, but previous days' rains had raised the river, and with Union guns trained on them they soon gave it up. Still, they earned the distinction of pressing farther east than any other Confederate troops during the Gettysburg campaign.

Gordon could only sit on his horse in the drizzle, watching the bridge and Southern plans go up in smoke. Early chose this moment to ride into Wrightsville, having seen "an immense smoke rising in the direction of the Susquehanna. I regretted very much the failure to secure this bridge," he would write, "as the river was otherwise impassable, being very wide and deep at this point. I therefore ordered General Gordon to move his command back to York next day, and returned to that place myself that night."

Meanwhile, embers from the inferno began falling in Wrightsville. The Confederates suddenly found themselves with a new battle to fight and new allies. "When the burning bridge fired the lumber-yards on the river's banks, and the burning lumber fired the town," Gordon recalled in grim humor, "buckets and tubs and pails innumerable came from their hiding-places, until it seemed that, had the whole of Lee's army been present, I could have armed them with these implements to fight the rapidly spreading flames."

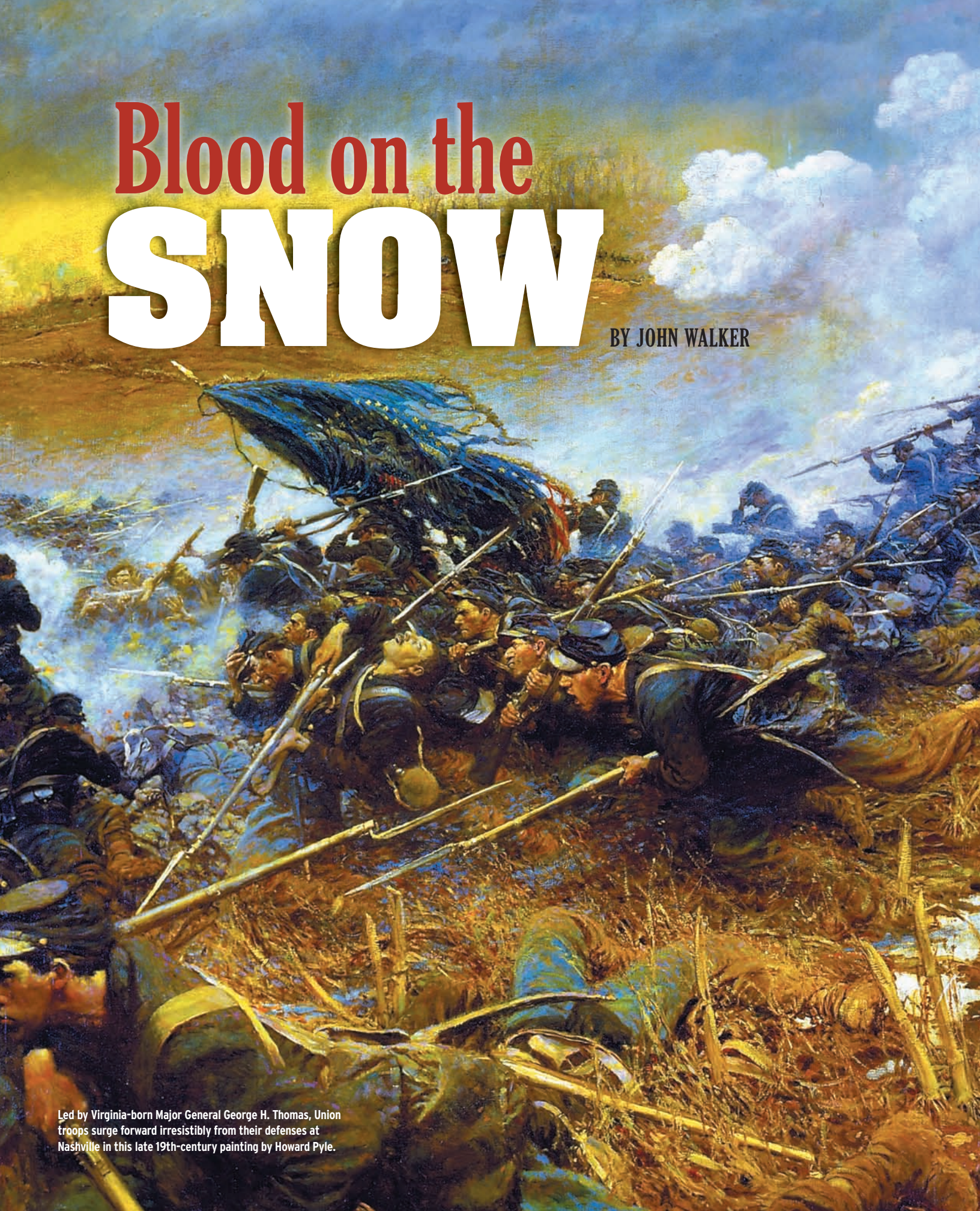
Together Northerners and Southerners formed a bucket brigade. The fire claimed three riverside houses, a foundry, mill, and lumber yard, but Wrightsville was saved. Nor, as far as the Confederates were concerned, was all lost. Ewell's other two divisions were now across the river from Harrisburg; Gordon and Early could march upriver to join the assault. It was not to be. At about that same hour, Robert E. Lee learned that the Army of the Potomac was pressing north. On Monday he issued new orders: "We will not move to Harrisburg as expected, but will go over to Gettysburg and see what General Meade is after."

On the scale of the Civil War, the battle for the Wrightsville-Columbia Bridge amounted to little more than a skirmish. Looking back 150 years later, however, those last days of June 1863 suggest an alternate timeline, one in which the Civil War turned out much differently. But for the 15-minute confrontation at the bridge, Gordon and Early might well have crossed the Susquehanna into the very heart of the North. Who knows what havoc might have ensued.

Instead, Union cavalry made a stand on the same high ground northwest of Gettysburg, near Oak Hill and Willoughby's Run, where Confederates had camped less than a week earlier. Other Federal troopers held up a Rebel advance down the same Chambersburg Pike that Gordon had ridden in his conquest of Gettysburg. By the next day, Meade and Hancock held the high ground on Cemetery Ridge, which Southern cavalry had already swept clear of Haller's militia. And on the afternoon of Friday, July 3, at the "High Water Mark of the Confederacy," the last of Maj. Gen. George Pickett's division fell back in defeat from the Bloody Angle, ground that the Confederates had already taken once, but now had lost forever—thanks in part, at least, to the brief but impactful occurrence at Wrightsville Bridge a week before. □

# Blood on the SNOW

BY JOHN WALKER



Led by Virginia-born Major General George H. Thomas, Union troops surge forward irresistibly from their defenses at Nashville in this late 19th-century painting by Howard Pyle.

**As the exhausted Confederate survivors of the Battle of Franklin shivered in their thinly held lines outside Nashville, Union General George H. Thomas prepared to launch a devastating, if much delayed, frontal assault.**

For the black-skinned, blue-clad soldiers deployed on the extreme left flank of the Union Army outside Nashville, Tennessee, the order to advance announced at dawn on December 15, 1864, was a long time coming. No unit of the United States Colored Troops (USCT), made up entirely of black enlisted men under the command of white officers, had been committed to major combat in the western theater since the bloody setback at Port Hudson, Louisiana, in May 1863. Now, almost 18 months later, two brigades of untested black troops were about to play a role in one of the most decisive battles of the Civil War.

Four miles south of the city, General John Bell Hood's ill-fed, ill-clothed, and ill-shod veterans of the Confederate Army of Tennessee waited grimly in their defensive works. This once-proud and formidable force had never been in such dreadful condition. Still reeling from the horrendous physical and psychological trauma it had suffered in the catastrophic defeat at Franklin, Tennessee, two weeks earlier, the army was so thinned, in fact, that it had only managed to extend a line of partially completed works four miles below the city, leaving sizable gaps between both flanks and the Cumberland River.

If the battle-hardened veterans under Hood could achieve victory—an increasingly remote possibility—their stalled

offensive into their namesake state could be resurrected. Accustomed to facing heavy odds, the renowned Confederate infantry, if victorious, could drive their defeated foes from Nashville, reclaim the capital city, and gain access to the vast Federal supplies there. With his troops rested and refitted, Hood could then push north, threatening Kentucky and Ohio, his army's ranks swelling with new recruits along the way. Union Maj. Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman might have to abandon his punishing march to the sea through Georgia and return to the defensive.

Threatened with removal from command of the Federal forces in Nashville for refusing to attack Hood immediately, Maj. Gen. George H. "Pap" Thomas nevertheless continued his meticulous preparations not only to defeat the Rebel host in his front but to utterly destroy it. Thomas needed time to organize and deploy his large and heterogeneous forces, find mounts for a third of his 12,000-man cavalry, and gather the necessary transports to conduct a vigorous pursuit of the enemy in the event they were driven back from the outskirts of the city.

It was now December 1. Maj. Gen. John M. Schofield, the victor of Franklin, was safely inside Nashville with his five divisions, 62 guns, and almost 800 wagons. Other units were arriving daily to fill out Thomas's army. Hood had few options; he feared wholesale desertion if he retreated to regroup. He could attack Murfreesboro, 30 miles southeast of Nashville, where 9,000 Union troops under Maj. Gen. Lovell Rousseau were posted in strong works, but Thomas could reinforce Rousseau with more troops than Hood had in his whole army. Attacking Nashville, one of the most heavily fortified cities on the American continent, was out of the question. If Hood managed to bypass Nashville and push north, he risked attack from flank and rear.

When Hood arrived in front of Nashville, he adopted a tactic that Napoleon Bonaparte, the father of modern warfare, once called a form of deferred suicide: the passive defensive. Hood put his men to work putting up breastworks and waited for Thomas to attack him, while he prayed for the arrival of reinforcements. He implored his superiors in Richmond to get General Edmund Kirby Smith to send troops from the Trans-Mississippi Department, but the chances of substantial reinforcements arriving in time to help Hood were remote at best.

As the exhausted Confederate soldiers set about digging trenches and throwing up breastworks south of the city, to one private "the lines looked more like the skirmish line of a regular army, than a regular army itself." Many of Hood's veterans had no overcoats or blankets, and their uniforms were in tatters. Those who had shoes—and as many as one in five did not—wrapped their worn boots in rags or gunny sacks. After a fierce storm hit Nashville on December 9, many soldiers began leaving bloody footprints in the snow.

On paper, Hood's army still looked formidable: three corps, nine divisions, 27 brigades. But after Franklin, the Confederate force in front of Nashville was down to about 23,000 infantry and 1,750 cavalry. Meanwhile, all the Federal units that would take part in the defense of Nashville had arrived safely. Three veteran divisions that made up Maj. Gen. A.J. Smith's XVI Corps were welcomed when they arrived on November 30 after an arduous trek across Kansas from St. Louis. The garrison and quartermaster troops had now been augmented by militia units, new levees, convalescents, detached units, three corps of infantry from three separate commands, and finally by a provisional detachment under Maj. Gen. James Steedman that included two brigades of U.S. Colored Troops. Upon arrival by rail from Chattanooga, the 1st and 2nd Colored Brigades were assigned positions on Thomas's extreme left flank along a front that stretched from Fort Negley east to the Lebanon Pike, close to the banks of the Cumberland River.

Hood's army had barely arrived when Thomas began receiving an almost daily barrage of telegrams from Maj. Gen. Henry Halleck in Washington and from

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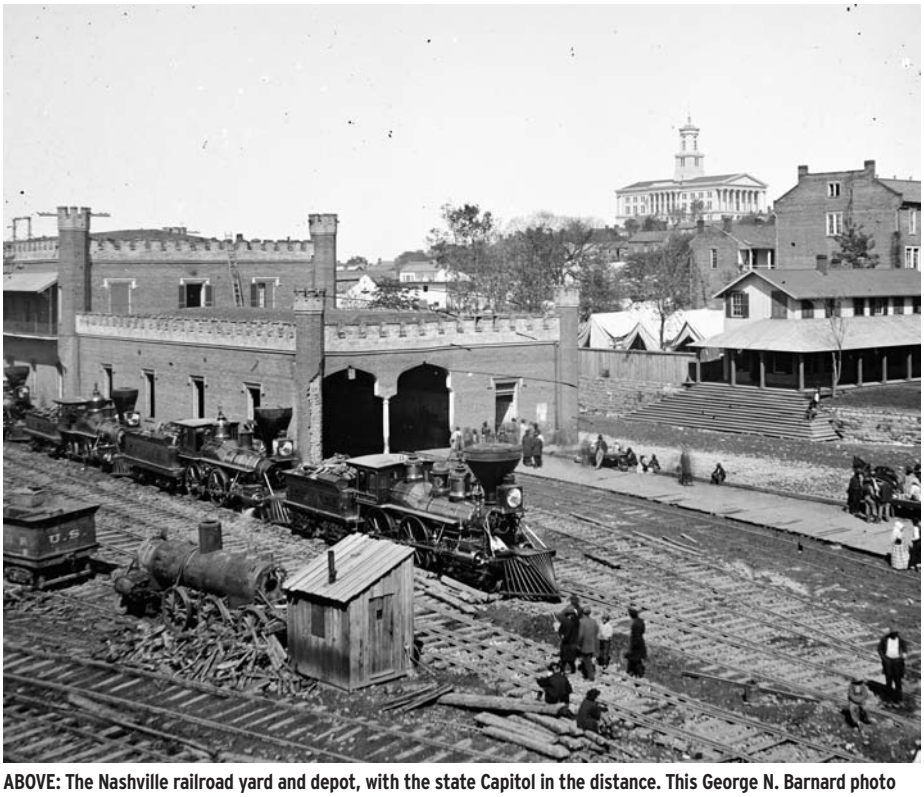


**ABOVE: The Nashville railroad yard and depot, with the state Capitol in the distance. This George N. Barnard photo may have been taken during the battle itself. OPPOSITE: Extensive Federal defenses, including trenches, earthworks, and abatis, made Nashville one of the most heavily fortified cities on the American continent in the fall of 1864.**

National Archives

Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant, 500 miles away in City Point, Virginia, urging him to attack and destroy Hood immediately. On December 6, obviously not cognizant of the weakened condition of Hood's army, Grant wired Thomas: "There is great danger in delay resulting in a campaign back to the Ohio." He ordered him to attack at once. Thomas agreed, but the difficulties he faced convinced him that his army wasn't adequately prepared, and he decided to delay until at least December 9 or 10.

Grant, worried that a Rebel thrust toward the Ohio River would embarrass him for allowing Sherman to march away from Hood's army, decided to relieve Thomas, but then changed his mind. By that time, both armies were literally frozen in place and unable to move, the result of a fierce storm that had covered the ground with a blanket of ice and snow. The storm halted construction of a line of wood-and-earthen forts, or redoubts, that Hood had ordered built along both sides of the Hillsboro Pike to shore up his weak left flank.

On December 9, Halleck wired Thomas that Grant had "experienced much dissatisfaction at your delay in attacking the enemy." In reply, Thomas told Halleck, "I feel conscious I have done everything in my power, and that the troops could not have been gotten ready before this. If Gen. Grant should order me to be replaced I will submit without a murmur." Two days later, as the freezing temperatures continued to keep armies immobilized, Grant wired Thomas that he was still worried about the threat of a Rebel army moving toward the Ohio River. At that moment, Hood's soldiers were shivering in their trenches and fortifications while bitterly cold winds howled around them and Union artillery shells rained down. The Confederates' own artillery was silent, conserving ammunition for the battle to come. All along the line, vicious skirmishing and sharpshooting were taking place day and night.

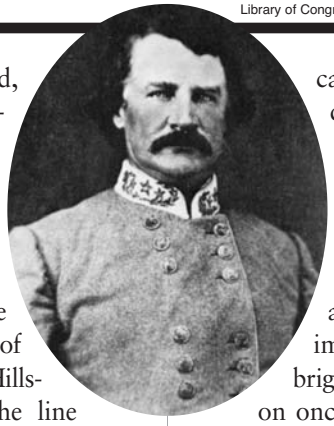
The weather finally took a turn for the better on December 13, and the morning of the 14th brought clear skies and a warm sun. The suffering of the Confederates in their trenches eased, but when the ice and snow began to melt, Hood's army found itself mired in a sea of mud. Thomas was ready to launch his attack. He called his commanders together, told them the attack would begin on the morning of December 15, and meticulously explained the role of each corps. He would sally forth with a combined infantry and cavalry force of 54,000 men while leaving 9,000 to man the city's defenses.

It would be none too soon. Grant was en route to Washington and planned to travel to Nashville by rail to personally assume command. Thomas chose a tactic favored by the other Union commanders. Steedman would move out at first light against the Rebel right and conduct a strong demonstration, tying down as many enemy units as possible in an attempt to mislead Hood about where the major attack would be made. On the far right, Brig. Gen. James Wilson's entire body of cavalry, together with Smith's infantry corps, would make a grand left wheel, assaulting and overlapping the enemy left. In the center, Brig. Gen. Thomas J. Wood's corps would serve as the pivot for the wheel and threaten the enemy salient on Montgomery Hill, a mere quarter mile south of Thomas's command post on Lawrence Hill. Schofield's corps would be held in reserve between Smith and Wood, to be used according to developments on the battlefield. Apprised of the war council at the last second, Grant muttered to his staff, "Well, I guess we won't go to Nashville," and settled in to await word

from the front.

The morning of December 15 broke warm and sunny, but a thick fog obscured the field until late morning. The fog and the uneven nature of the ground partially hid the first movements of Steedman's units when they sallied forth on the left, two hours late owing to the fog. The Union vanguard consisted of the 1st Colored Brigade under Colonel Thomas Morgan, the 2nd Colored Brigade led by Colonel Charles Thompson, and a motley brigade of white convalescents, conscripts, and bounty jumpers under the command of Colonel Charles Grosvenor.

Hood's right rested on a deep railroad cut between the Nolensville and Murfreesboro Turnpikes. Raines Hill, astride the former, was an imposing terrain feature held by veterans of Maj. Gen. Benjamin Cheatham's corps. A concealed lunette just to the east, across the tracks of the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad, was occupied by 500 survivors of the late Brig. Gen. Hiram Granbury's Texas Brigade. From Nolensville Pike, Hood's line ran west across Franklin Pike, past Granny White Pike, to where Redoubt 1, the true salient of Hood's left, lay just east of Hillsboro Pike. From there the line "refused" at a right angle to Redoubt 2, also on the east side of the pike. The Confederate line stretched diagonally across the pike to Redoubts 3, 4, and 5. A division of Lt. Gen. A.P. Stewart's corps was set behind a stone wall that ran parallel to Hillsboro Pike, constituting the extreme left flank of the Confederate works.



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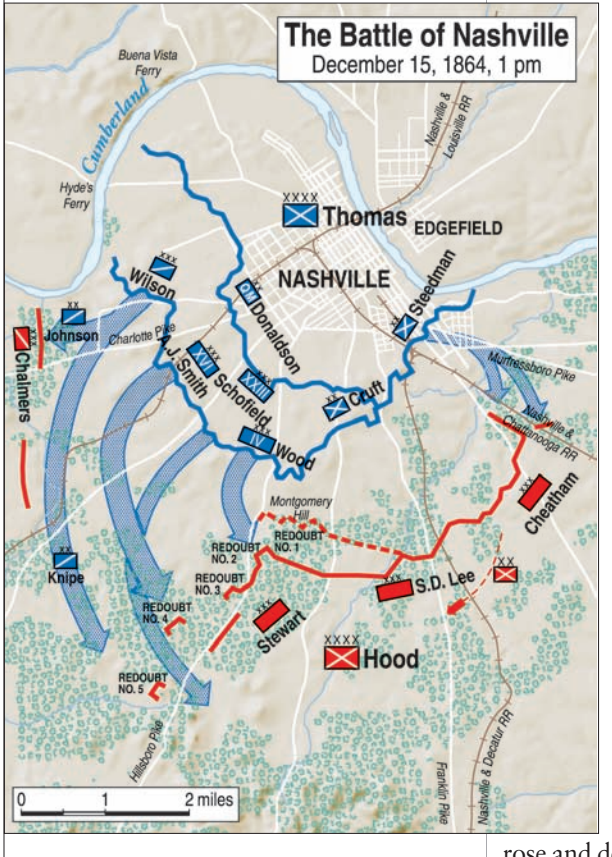
A little after 8 AM, Steedman's three brigades, 7,600 strong and augmented by two batteries of artillery, advanced toward Cheatham's works, driving back the Confederate skirmish line. The brigades of Grosvenor and Thompson advanced directly on the main works, while Morgan's three regiments of 3,200 black troops moved out to the left directly toward the hidden lunette. When Grosvenor's columns came within range, they were shredded by withering artillery and musket fire and fled in disarray out of range, where they were content to remain for the rest of the day.

Next came Thompson's brigade, which received the same harsh reception and also stalled. The Confederate veterans waiting inside the lunette held their fire while Morgan's troops continued forward. When the black troops moved onto the cut and within range, the Texans rose and delivered a terrible volley of musket fire into their ranks. Southern artillery then let loose a torrent of shells, and fire coming from the works west of the cut caught Morgan's men in a deadly crossfire.

Under such a pounding, Morgan's troops were forced to fall back. They quickly regrouped and reformed for another advance, as did the four regiments of Thompson's brigade. The black troops came on once more, only to be halted again. This went on for a good two hours. At 11 AM further advances were halted, but the attackers remained within musket range of the Confederate works and stayed in contact with Cheatham's right flank for the remainder of the day's fighting. The black units had done everything asked of them, suffering severe losses in the process.

On the Union right, the corps of Wilson and Smith were delayed for some time while several divisions of infantry were being aligned properly. At 10 AM the commanders began moving their two corps, seven full divisions in all, out of their works to initiate the grand movement of the day. Wilson's troopers, 9,000 mounted and 3,000 dismounted, moved out in a westerly direction, parallel to Charlotte Pike, then they wheeled to the left, crossed the pike, and moved southward toward Harding Pike. The first Rebel forces Wilson's men encountered were the skirmishers of the understrength, 700-man brigade of Brig. Gen. Matthew Ector (who was not present, having lost a leg at Atlanta). Hood had placed the brigade behind Richland Creek, between Charlotte and Harding Pikes, to provide some help to General James R. Chalmers's badly outnumbered cavalry brigades. Wilson's troopers advanced rapidly on Ector's small force, capturing a number of prisoners and wagons, but the bulk of the defenders fired off a couple of volleys and then headed back toward the main Confederate works on Hillsboro Pike as ordered. Chalmers's outnumbered force put up a spirited defense on Charlotte Pike, holding back an entire division of Wilson's troopers, but it was simply too small to be much of a factor in the rest of the day's fighting.






**ABOVE: Following the debacle at Franklin, Confederate General John Bell Hood attempted an incomplete encirclement of Nashville—only to be attacked himself. TOP: Major General Benjamin Franklin Cheatham.**

Smith's corps moved out simultaneously with Wilson's men. Bearing left, the corps moved across Harding Pike and advanced toward the Rebel works strung out along both sides of Hillsboro Pike. When reports began streaming in to Stewart about large movements on his left, he was well aware of what was happening—the enemy was trying to turn his flank. He immediately requested reinforcements. Hood ordered Maj. Gen. Stephen D. Lee, whose corps had scarcely been touched, to send one division to Stewart and ordered Cheatham to dispatch Maj. Gen. William Bate's division to the left as well.

As the two Union corps, more than 20,000 strong, moved forwardacross Harding Pike and approached the mile-long extension of the Confederate left along Hillsboro Pike, three of Hood's Redoubts—3,4, and 5—nestled along the west side of the pike, came into view shortly before noon. Each of the forts boasted a four-gun battery of 12-pounder smoothbore Napoleons, fairly accurate up to about half a mile. Inside the works, 50 cannoneers and 100 dug-in riflemen had been told to hold their positions at all hazards.

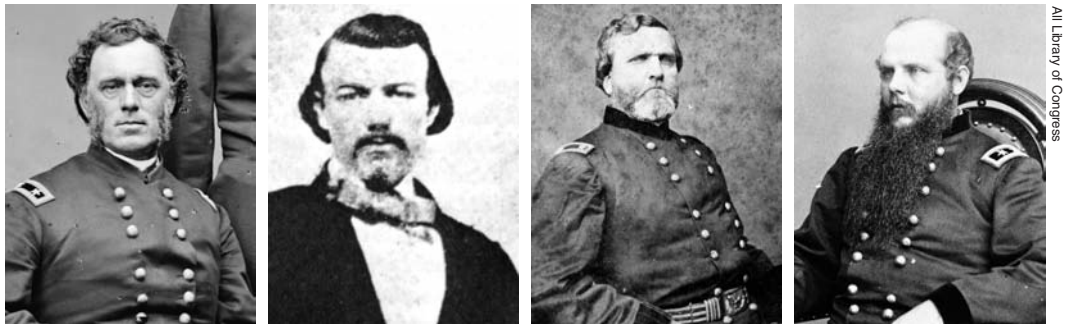
Between noon and 1 PM, while in the Union center Wood was about to get the order to attack Montgomery Hill with his corps, Wilson and Smith opened fire with their rifled pieces on Redoubts 3, 4, and 5; after a good hour's bombardment, the blue columns advanced again. The Confederates answered with volleys of double-shotted canister, halting the blue waves at least temporarily in front of Redoubts 3 and 4. Redoubt 5 was left exposed on Stewart's far left. Hit from front and flank, Redoubt 5 fell fairly rapidly, with the loss of its four guns, overwhelmed by a brigade of Wilson's dismounted troopers and a brigade of Smith's infantry.

The captured fort's guns were quickly turned on Redoubt 4, next in line, which was already being heavily shelled by the 16 guns placed in its front by Smith and Wilson. Inside Redoubt 4, Captain William Lumsden, a Virginia Military Institute graduate and former commandant of cadets at the University of Alabama, blazed away at the enemy with his gunners and 100 riflemen of the 29th Alabama. At 11 AM, Lumsden called to the officers and asked them to stay and help him hold the small fort. They replied, "It can't be done. There's a whole army to your front." It took almost three hours after the commencement of the initial artillery barrage before the attackers could finally overwhelm Lumsden and his garrison. When the end was near, Lumsden cried out, "Take care of yourselves, boys," and scrambled back with the survivors to the main Confederate works west of Hillsboro Pike. It was by now almost 3 PM; with the reduction of Redoubts 4 and 5 complete, the Union batteries displaced forward to focus their attention on the stone wall running along the eastern side of the pike.

Hoping that Wilson could extend his attack even further against Hood's flank and rear and possibly even gain a foothold on the vital Granny White Pike, Thomas ordered Schofield to move up with his two divisions, held in reserve near the Union salient on Lawrence Hill, into the pocket between Smith's corps and Wilson's cavalry. This movement went off without a hitch, and soon Schofield's corps of about 12,000 men was in position to join the general attack threatening to bury Hood's left along Hillsboro Pike.

By early afternoon it was almost time for Wood's anxious soldiers to play their part in the massive left wheel. All morning, the men of Wood's IV Corps, the largest in Thomas's force at 16,645 strong, had waited near Lawrence Hill while Steedman's corps moved out to their left and Smith and Wilson's on their right. Almost all the men were veterans of Franklin, where Wood had assumed command after Maj. Gen. David S. Stanley was wounded.

**"I BEHELD FOR THE FIRST AND ONLY TIME A CONFEDERATE ARMY ABANDON THE FIELD IN CONFUSION."**



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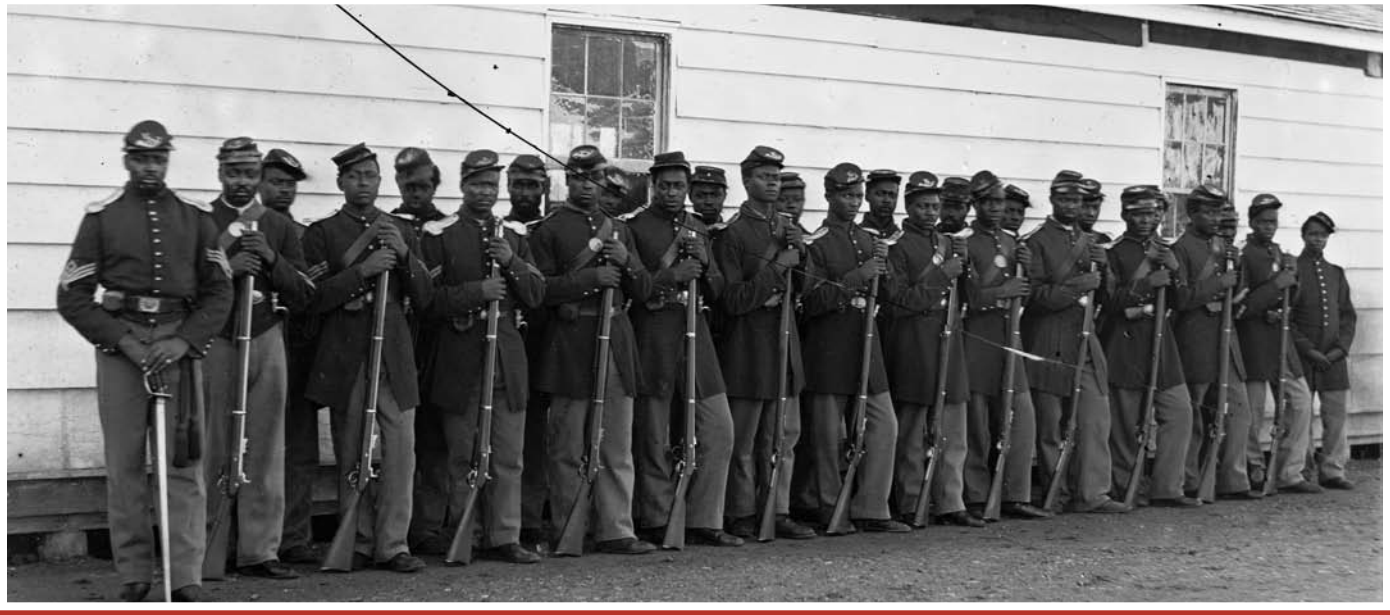
**LEFT TO RIGHT: Maj. Gen. James Steedman; Lt. Col. William Shy; Maj. Gen. George H. Thomas; Maj. Gen. John Schofield.**

Still a brigadier, Wood was trying to erase what he felt was an unfair stain on his record dating back to the Battle of Chickamauga, 15 months earlier, when he had obeyed a faulty order to pull his men out of line immediately before the massive Confederate breakthrough. Now Wood's corps advanced on the Rebel salient on Montgomery Hill, which was nothing more than a line of nearly empty works manned by a skeleton force of skirmishers.

From his post on the near side of the valley, Wood marveled at the imposing sight of his attackers. At about 1 PM, the pickets of Maj. Gen. William Loring's division looked out from their trenches along the crest of the hill and spotted Wood's blue lines coming up the slope toward them. The handful of butternut-clad infantrymen

# BLACK SOLDIERS, BLUE UNIFORMS



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**ABOVE: Company E, 4th U.S. Colored Infantry, at Fort Lincoln in Washington, D.C. BELOW: Black Union soldier proudly flourishing his pistol. OPPOSITE: Pickets of the 1st Louisiana Native Guard patrolling the New Orleans, Opelousas and Great Western Railroad.**

Although several overzealous Union Army field commanders organized African Americans into ad hoc militia units early in 1862 and several black regiments were mustered into service later that year, it wasn't until after President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation took effect on January 1, 1863, that the federal government began actively recruiting and enlisting black soldiers and sailors.

In late 1862, after battlefield reverses slowed white enlistments to a trickle, Lincoln was convinced that emancipation and enlistment of blacks were crucial to winning the war. He initiated one of his most controversial and revolutionary policy directives: slaves in areas still in rebellion would be liberated, free blacks in the North and occupied South would be enlisted, and, eventually, blacks in loyal slave-holding and border states would be enlisted as well. All would serve exclusively under white officers.

The president was treading on extremely sensitive ground—widespread racial discrimination was rampant in the North, and many senior Army officers and large numbers of their men strongly opposed the idea of blacks in uniform. Even after Lincoln made it clear that he expected his generals to comply with his new enlistment policies, Maj. Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman, overall commander in the vast western theater, blatantly hindered recruiting efforts there. Like many Union officers, Sherman was willing to utilize blacks in menial positions such as laborers, teamsters, railroad guards, and cooks, but he steadfastly refused to deploy black regiments alongside white units.

Free blacks in the North had thronged to enlistment offices after the war began but were turned away. Federal law made it illegal for them to serve in the army or in state militias. In May 1861, Maj. Gen. Benjamin Butler, commander at Fortress Monroe, Louisiana, declared escaped slaves "contraband of war" and refused to return them to their owners, instead putting them to work in support roles. Lincoln let Butler's policy stand. Three months later, Congress passed the First Confiscation Act, which was designed, in effect, to deprive the Confederacy of its huge black labor force.

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When Butler assumed command of Union forces in Louisiana, he faced an imminent attack and appealed to blacks to join his forces. The first units of Butler's "Corps d'Afrique" were two 500-man regiments—the 1st Louisiana Native Guards, free blacks with black officers and a white commander, and the 3rd Louisiana Native Guards, former slaves with an all-white officer corps. Butler's acceptance of the 1st Regiment with its black officers intact was unprecedented.

The men who joined the 1st Regiment were the elite of New Orleans black society: doctors, craftsmen, educators, and landowners, some of whom owned slaves themselves. Their ancestors had fought alongside Andrew Jackson against the British. Now, with their city occupied, and after first offering their services to the Confederacy, they joined Butler. On September 27, 1862, he mustered in the 1st Louisiana Native Guards, the first unit of black soldiers officially accepted into the U.S. Army. Butler would be replaced by Maj. Gen. Nathaniel Banks later that year; Banks strongly opposed the idea of black officers and relegated the Guards to garrison duty while he began purging the units of their black officers by any means he could devise.

In 1862, U.S. Senator Jim Lane resigned to accept a commission as a brigadier general and recruiter in his home state of

Kansas. Without waiting for authorization, he raised a regiment of blacks, cavalierly assuming that the War Department would approve. Ordered twice to abandon the project, he refused. In January 1863 Lane's stubbornness paid off when Federal authorities, who had by now passed the Second Confiscation Act and the Militia Act authorizing the president to employ blacks as he deemed necessary, accepted his units into service.

The performance of black soldiers in three battles over a two-month period in 1863 erased any lingering doubts as to their worthiness for combat roles and hastened a massive surge in recruitment and enlistment of African Americans. In late May, the 1st and 3rd Louisiana Native Guards advanced as part of Banks's XIX Corps on the Confederate bastion at Port Hudson, Louisiana. On May 27, they launched an ill-advised frontal assault against the fortified works. Against overwhelming odds, the two regiments mounted several heroic but futile attacks. Their ranks shredded by sustained artillery and musket fire, the black regiments withdrew after suffering horrendous casualties.

Two weeks later, three regiments of raw, virtually untrained blacks, most of whom were runaway slaves who had been laboring in the fields of Mississippi and Louisiana a few weeks earlier, distinguished themselves in the defense of Union positions at Milliken's Bend, Louisiana. Attacked by a numerically superior Confederate force, the blacks fought back ferociously; the battle escalated into a savage hand-to-hand melee that turned into one of the bloodiest small engagements of the war. The three regiments, one of which was issued outmoded muskets just the day before the attack, fought the Confederates but suffered appalling casualties.

On July 18, a state regiment of black volunteers, the 54th Massachusetts, led a Union assault on Battery Wagner in South Carolina, another heavily fortified Rebel outpost. Although the attack failed and the 54th suffered heavy losses, the unit's bravery in the face of terrible odds was unquestioned.

The conduct of the black soldiers on three separate battlefields did much to change racial stereotypes rampant in the North. People who had ridiculed the idea of putting blacks in uniform now endorsed it. Eight months after Fort Wagner, the 20th U.S. Colored Infantry, raised entirely within the state of New York, paraded through New York City and was cheered by whites and blacks alike. It had been only eight months since the infamous draft riots there.

By August 1863, 14 regiments of U.S. Colored Troops (USCT) were in the field. The surge in enlistments helped fill the ranks of depleted Union units. By the critical summer of 1864, more than 100,000 blacks were under arms. Unfortunately, the blacks who flocked to the uniform had to deal with limited opportunities for advancement to the officer corps, inadequate training, substandard equipment, lower pay, and inferior medical care. About one in five blacks died from disease, compared with one in 12 whites.

Almost 180,000 African Americans served in the Union Army by war's end, a little over half coming from the 11 seceded states; 7,122 whites served as officers in USCT units. Black units fought in 449 engagements. On December 15-16, 1864, two black brigades took part in the decisive battle of Nashville, which effectively ended the war in the western theater and was the only major Union victory in which colored units participated.

What had begun as a war to preserve the Union was transformed, in large part owing to military expediency, into a war for black liberation. African American men joined the Union ranks to escape slavery, destroy the Confederacy, prove their loyalty to the United States, and pursue their dreams of freedom and citizenship for themselves and future generations of black Americans.

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fired off a few volleys and then prudently headed for the rear. In a matter of minutes, Wood's legions came up and over the parapets and into the barren line of works, capturing a small number of prisoners. The assault, although successful, had only driven out the advanced forces of Stewart's corps; the main Rebel salient at Redoubt 1 was still intact.

While Wood was attacking, the fighting farther west continued unabated. Under an umbrella of artillery fire, Brig. Gen. John McArthur's division advanced on the stone wall along Hillsboro Pike, routing the defenders with surprising ease. The two brigades there were reinforcements whom Hood had withdrawn at about noon from his center, and when they arrived they had been placed on Maj. Gen. Edward Walthall's left opposite Redoubt 4. Walthall's three brigades had been taking a terrible pounding for several hours from the Union artillery and had been holding firm, but when the units on their left collapsed, they began to give ground as well. By now, Stewart could see disaster looming. Two more brigades from Lee had come up, but they were little help holding back the blue wave that had breached Hillsboro Pike. A brigade of McArthur's division advanced on Redoubt 3, and, although the defenders there greeted the attackers with a fierce blast of grapeshot and canister, the Federals pushed forward and carried the fort and its four guns. When they began taking fire from the defenders on Redoubt 2, McArthur's men stormed that fort and took it as well.

After the success of his initial attack upon Montgomery Hill, Wood realized that Redoubt 1, on a high hill to his front, was the crucial Rebel position, and he brought up two batteries of six guns each to deliver a converging fire on the salient. The vital angle in Stewart's line, with Walthall's division to its left and Loring's to its right, was being held by a brigade under the command of Brig. Gen. Claudius Sears. After a half hour of furious shelling, Wood ordered Brig. Gen. Washington Elliot to attack the salient. At 4:30 PM, angry because Elliot had delayed his

attack, Wood ordered Brig. Gen. Nathan Kimball to do the honors instead. With darkness approaching, Kimball promptly sent his division forward, and within minutes it breached the crest of the hill from the northeast. The men of Elliot's division were close behind, as well as a brigade of McArthur's coming in from the west. Four guns and a number of prisoners were taken.

Stewart, his left overlapped by Wilson and his line along Hillsboro Pike crumbling, saw the inevitable coming and ordered Walthall and Loring to fall back. He was establishing a new line near two hills that shielded Granny White Pike. While Stewart's corps was withdrawing in fairly good order, Colonel David Coleman's troops, cut off during the fighting along Hillsboro Pike, fell back to Shy's Hill, where they were met by Hood, who told them to hold at all costs. Bate's division, which had arrived after marching over from the right flank, was ordered into a defensive position on a hill north of Coleman's brigade. A division of Schofield's corps, hungry for action, came up and drove Bate's division off the hill, but when night fell the fighting ended and both armies bivouacked in place.

After Hood ordered Lee and Cheatham to withdraw their corps, Stewart pulled his various units together into a fairly solid line that connected at its northern end with Lee's unshaken left flank. Stewart's task was made easier by confusion in the Union lines caused by wild celebrations of victory. The intermingled units of Smith, Wood, Schofield, and Wilson, whose dismounted troopers had skirted Stewart's left and gained a foothold near Granny White Pike, halted for the night in the open fields.

Hood's left had taken a frightful pounding. Lost were 16 artillery pieces and some 2,200 soldiers, more than half of whom were captured when the Confederate left caved in. Thomas, believing that Hood might retreat, made plans for a pursuit, but several officers who knew Hood well, including Schofield, assured their commander that the battle was far from over. That night Hood established a new line of works along a span of hills two miles south of his original position. His men feverishly threw up breastworks along the front and heavily fortified two hills that would anchor the new line, Shy's Hill on the left and Overton Hill on the right.

Hood instructed Cheatham, whose corps moved from the right flank to the left, to have Bate's division join Coleman's depleted brigade on Shy's Hill. When the alignments were made, Hood had some 5,000 infantry on his left, 1,500 of them on Shy's Hill. Anticipating a repeat of the first day's tactics by Thomas, Hood told his chief engineer, Colonel S.W. Prestman, to select a line on which the reformed defenses could adequately protect the army's left flank. The line Prestman chose was not at the military crest of Shy's Hill, but farther down the reverse slope. If the Union attackers detected this flaw, they would be able to mass large numbers of troops in front of the hill, shielded from direct rifle fire, for a massive assault.

To complete his new line, Hood put Stewart's exhausted corps in the center and Lee's corps on the right. Two fresh divisions, those of Maj. Gens. Henry Clayton and Carter Stevenson, which had seen only light action on the previous day and hadn't been committed at Franklin, dug in astride the Franklin Pike and on the crest of Overton Hill. The line on Lee's right bent back sharply to the southeast of the pike. Thomas had decided to combine Wood's corps with Steedman's provisional division to batter Hood's right, in hopes of turning Hood's flank and gaining a foothold on the crucial Franklin Pike. The assault by Steedman's brigades would be an all-out attack, unlike the demonstrations of the first day.

At first light on the 16th, Wood advanced his corps toward Franklin Pike, pushing back the lines of Rebel skirmishers. Wood put one division on the pike and one on its left. With his third in reserve, he began moving south toward the new Rebel line. About a half mile from Lee's new works, Wood's corps encountered a heavy enemy skirmish line in front of Overton Hill. He brought his reserve division into line, and the entire IV Corps advanced, three divisions abreast, driving Lee's skirmishers back into their lines under heavy musket and artillery fire. Wood then halted

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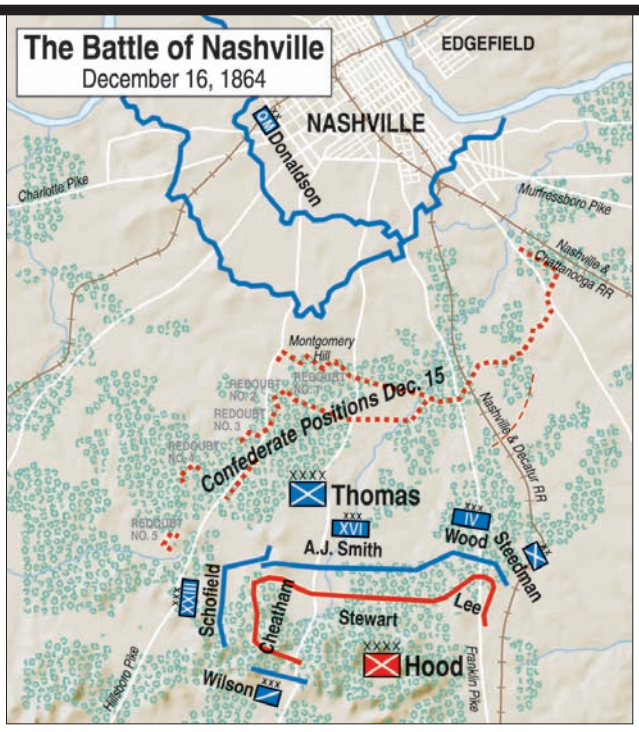
**Union troops crest a hillside outside Nashville as the Confederates start to pull back on the afternoon of December 15, 1864.**

the column to await the major assault set for later that afternoon.

At 6 AM, Steedman had moved forward to find the Rebel works to his front abandoned. He continued along Nolensville Pike, feeling for the new Confederate front, and took up position between Nolensville Pike and the left of Wood's corps. There he remained until early afternoon, when he was ordered by Thomas to connect with Wood's left and prepare for an assault. Meanwhile, on the Union right, Wilson went into action at 9:30 AM, intending to move his dismounted troopers forward, connect with Schofield's right flank, and hit the Rebels on the hills to his front. But the wet, muddy terrain and unexpectedly fierce resistance halted Wilson almost immediately, and when Thomas rode over to confer, Wilson suggested that his entire body of cavalry move over to Hood's right and have a go at it there. Thomas refused.

Other than the skirmishing on the Confederate right, no serious fighting took place until late in the afternoon. The morning hours were marked by an extremely accurate and continuous Union artillery barrage along the length of Hood's new line, with Shy Hill and Overton Hill taking especially heavy punishment. The Confederate smoothbores, fewer in number, were no match for the more than 100 Union rifled pieces that tore into the breastworks the gray-clad infantry had worked so hard to throw up the night before. Bate's division on Shy's Hill suffered under a particularly galling crossfire from three directions. A short distance to their front, one of Maj. Gen. Darius Couch's batteries was firing at them from almost point-blank range, and during the course of the day delivered a staggering 560 shells onto their works.

During the morning and early afternoon hours, the Union troops on Lee's front launched a number of probing attacks.




**Lt. Gen. A.P. Stewart's exhausted corps formed the center of the Confederate defensive line on the second day of the battle, with Maj. Gen. B.F. Cheatham on the left and Maj. Gen. S.D. Lee on the right.**

When it seemed that the fighting on his right might escalate, endangering his hold on Franklin Pike, Hood withdrew three brigades of Smith's division from their positions left of Shy's Hill and sent them to support Lee on the right. This decision would come back to haunt Hood—by the time these troops arrived, the attack on Overton Hill had been repulsed and there wasn't enough time for them to get back into position on Bate's left.

Lee's front had been taking heavy and accurate artillery fire, but the bulk of Hood's artillery at Lee's rear answered back furiously. At about 3 PM, with light rain falling, Wood felt that the time was right to overrun Overton Hill. He sent his columns forward. The brigade of Colonel Sidney Post took the lead, with that of Colonel Abel Streight in support. Steedman's two USCT brigades, seven regiments in all, moved up on Post's left as the assault began.

Wood's attackers reached the base of Overton Hill and moved steadily up the slope through a hail of Confederate musket, grapeshot, and canister fire. At the outer edge of the works, Post was wounded and Lee's infantrymen rose in their trenches and delivered a terrible volley of musket fire that brought the advance to a sudden halt. Wood recalled later, "After the repulse our soldiers, white and colored, lay indiscriminately near the enemy's works at the outer edge of the abatis." Steedman's 13th Regiment, made up primarily of contrabands, suffered heavy losses in its baptism of fire—55 killed and 165 wounded. Its loss of 40 percent of its strength constituted the greatest regimental loss of the two-day fight on either side.

Meanwhile, on the Union right, Wilson's gamble paid off. With two mounted and two dismounted divisions, he had finally forced Chalmers to give ground and had strengthened his foothold on Granny White Pike. Wilson's troopers captured a courier who was taking a message from Hood to Cheatham that read, "For God's sake, drive the Yankee cavalry from our left and rear or all is lost." Wilson now felt that victory was at hand. Once he had managed to gain Cheatham's rear, he would join Schofield in a general attack.

For two solid hours, Wilson sent couriers to Schofield, urging him to begin his attack, and finally Wilson proceeded to Schofield's headquarters in person. By this time, the attacks on Overton Hill were subsiding, and Thomas was en route to Schofield's headquarters as well. Schofield was being strangely hesitant. Having already received one full division of reinforcements, he was now requesting another before he would begin his attack, fearing heavy losses if he attacked Hood's breastworks. Thomas bluntly told him, "The battle must be fought, even if men *are* killed."

While Thomas was imploring Schofield to begin his advance, the group of officers suddenly witnessed a brigade of McArthur's division, under Colonel William McMillen, advancing toward Shy's Hill without waiting for permission. Thomas turned to Schofield and said, "General Smith is attacking without wait-

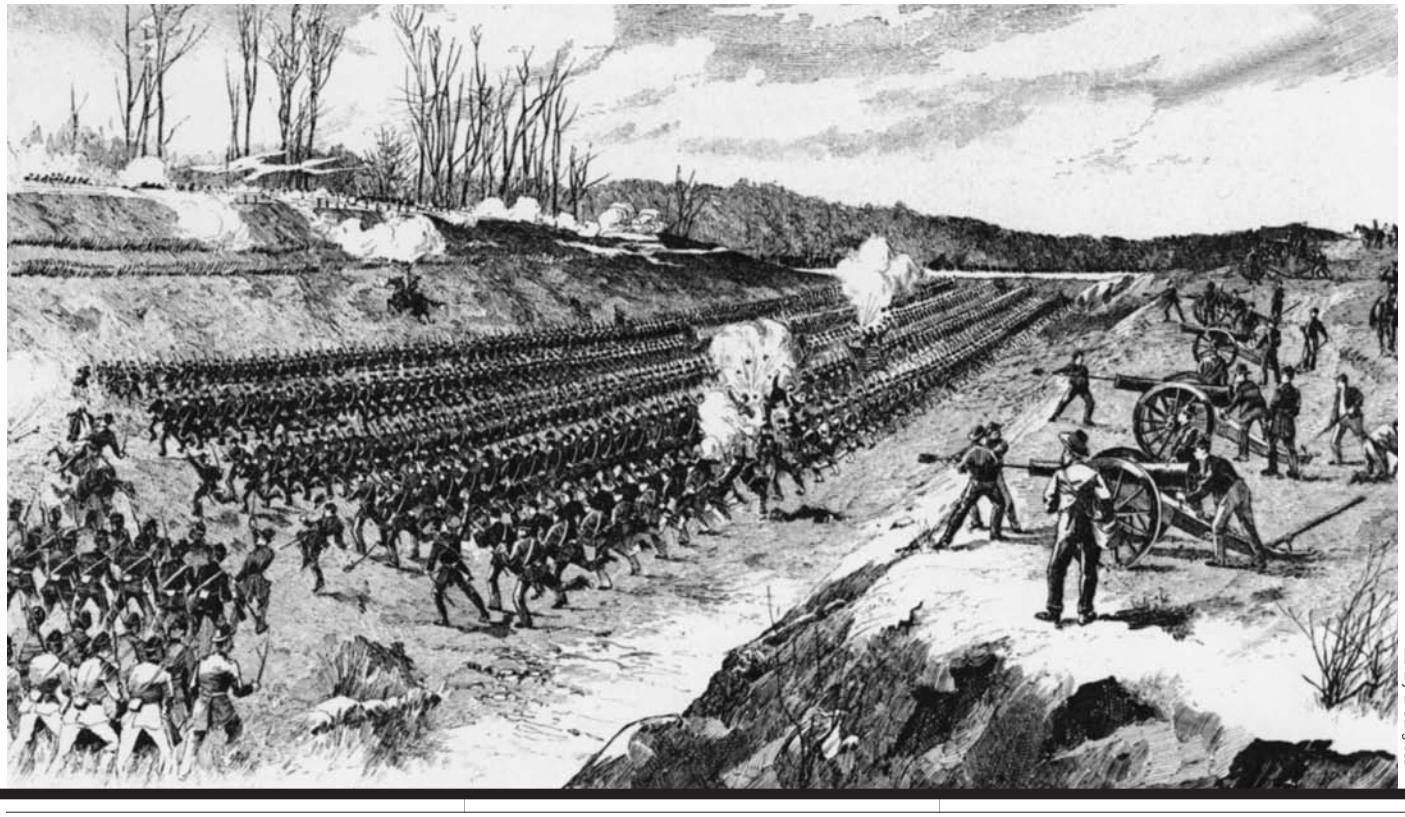
ing for you. Please advance your entire line." With this direct order, Schofield finally advanced.

Cheatham's soldiers, battered by Union artillery, now faced corps-sized attacks to their front and flank. They could also see Wilson's dismounted cavalrymen rushing over the hills to their rear. With his left under so much pressure, Cheatham brought up reinforcements and bent his far left flank into the shape of a fishhook, until he had one line of infantrymen firing to the south and another line firing to the north. Only 100 yards separated the two lines. Hood pulled Coleman's brigade off Shy's Hill to set up a front on the extreme left, on the east side of Granny White Pike, to hold off Wilson when he was reinforced by another brigade. Bate had to further thin his lines on the hill to cover the position vacated by Coleman's troops.

The brigade on Bate's extreme left, that of Brig. Gen. Daniel Govan, was driven back down the hill and into a field behind Bate's division. Govan's brigade was the only one left on Bate's flank, the other three brigades having been sent to support Lee, and had been tasked with covering a front originally assigned to an entire division. Minutes later a fatal breach occurred. Union infantry had massed in strength, almost undetected, on the steep slope to the front of Shy's Hill, and as they came up and over the hill they encountered the 20th Tennessee under Colonel William Shy. As other units began fading away, Shy and his men stood firm, and the fighting escalated into savage hand-to-hand combat. Shy's men continued firing until they ran out of ammunition and were surrounded. Shy was shot in the head and killed, and almost half his unit was killed or wounded. The 37th Georgia, on Bate's left, also fought savagely until it was overrun and virtually wiped out.

With Smith to their front, Schofield to their left, and Wilson coming up from the rear, Bate's men were buried under the weight of overwhelming numbers; all three brigade commanders were captured. "The breach once made," Bate recalled later, "the lines lifted from either side as far as I could see almost instantly and fled in confusion." Panic began to spread among Cheatham's units on the left and Stewart's in the center. Soon the bulk of Bate's three brigades turned and headed for the rear in full retreat. On the northeastern front, the men of Steedman's and Wood's corps, hearing the shouts of victory coming from the Union right, renewed their assaults without waiting for orders, capturing 14 guns and hundreds of prisoners.

The Confederate artillery commander, Maj. Gen. Edward Johnson, was captured along with almost all of his division and the remaining guns. The collapse came so quickly that the batteries' teams of horses couldn't be brought up quickly enough to draw away the guns. Watching from horseback, Hood was astonished. Only an hour earlier his lines had been holding, his men in the center and right waving their battle flags in defiance. He had even decided on a plan to achieve victory the next morning—he would withdraw his entire army during the night and attack the Union left at dawn. Now, with full darkness approaching, Cheatham and Stewart had caved in, their men fleeing en masse for Franklin Pike, the only remaining avenue of retreat. Hood, Cheatham, and other officers tried to rally the panic-stricken troops, but it was useless. Everywhere the woods were full of fleeing soldiers, many of whom dropped their weapons and packs to



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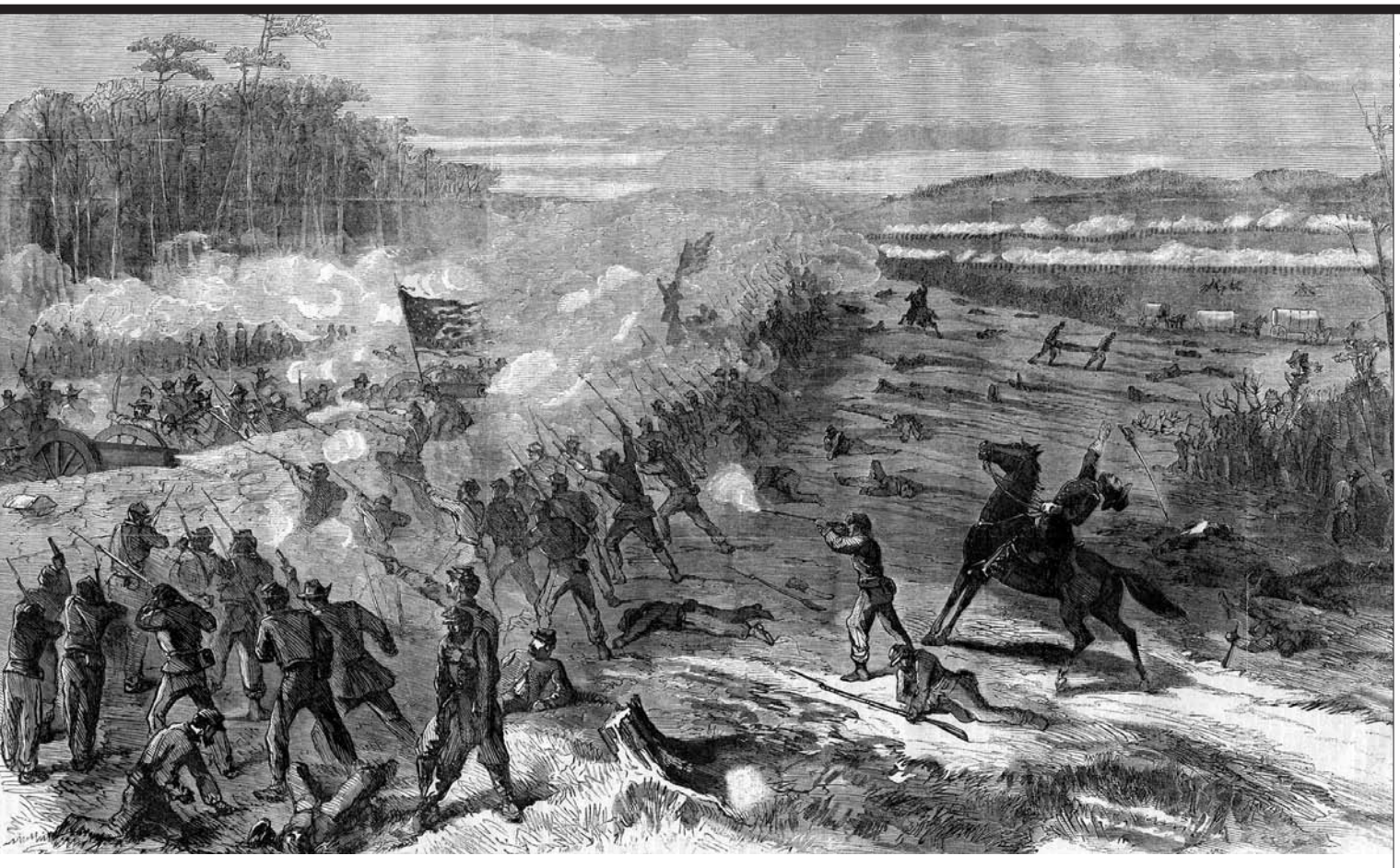




**ABOVE: Charge of the 3rd Brigade, 1st Division, XVI Corps at Nashville. The corps was commanded by Major General A.N. Smith. OPPOSITE: The five regiments of Colonel Philip Sidney Post's brigade follow their mounted commander up the slopes of Overton Hill into the face of Confederate artillery. Post won the Medal of Honor that day.**

lighten their loads as they ran.

When the blue legions approached Lee's corps along the pike and on Overton Hill, one division wavered and broke, and a second faltered. Lee heroically rallied a group of retreating soldiers for a stand behind the center of his line, and this small force checked the blue columns long enough to allow Clayton to withdraw his division and form it in the woods astride Franklin Pike, half a mile away. Both armies were now in motion, heading south. The drizzle turned into driving rain, mixing with the snow on the ground. Franklin Pike quickly became clogged with thousands of shaken soldiers, abandoned wagons, and riderless horses. Hood later wrote, "I beheld for the first and only time a Confederate army abandon the field in confusion."

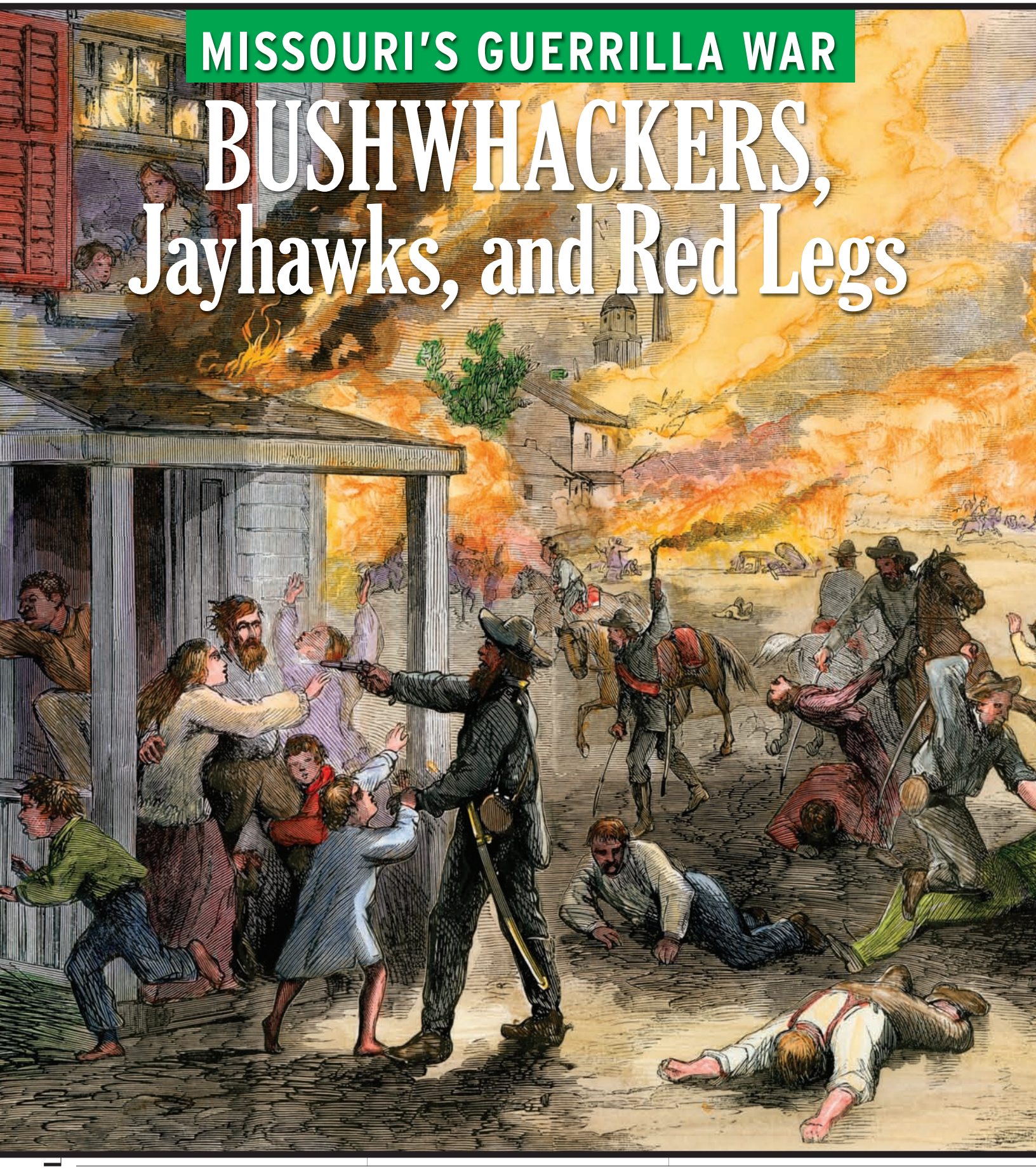
With the battle lost, Hood's task was to save as much of his army as he could. He sent Chalmers with his two depleted brigades to set up a barrier near Granny White Pike. Soon Wilson's four divisions arrived, and vicious, hand-to-hand fighting ensued in the rain and darkness, lasting long enough to enable Hood to get the bulk of his army safely onto Franklin Pike and headed south. Thomas arrived on the scene, miles in advance of the infantry. "Dang it to hell, Wilson!" cried the normally unflappable commander. "Didn't I tell you we could lick 'em? Didn't I tell you we could lick 'em if only they would let us alone?"

After two days of heavy fighting, both armies faced further hardships. In the coldest winter in Tennessee in decades, Hood's ragged army slogged through the rain, sleet, and snow, followed closely by Wood's infantry and Wilson's cavalry in a race for the Tennessee River. In his retreat Hood was aided by three factors: inclement weather that turned the roads to mud; lack of forage for the Union pursuers; and the excellent rearguard actions of Lee, Chalmers, and the redoubtable Forrest, who rejoined the army at Columbia. Just as Thomas had been badgered to attack Hood without delay in the first days of December, now he was urged by his superiors hundreds of miles away to mount a vigorous pursuit to complete the destruction of the fleeing enemy. Grant, as usual, had nothing good to say—it wasn't long before he was telling his subordinates that Thomas was "too slow to attack, not vigorous enough in pursuit."

When Hood's dispirited army finally crossed the Tennessee River into Alabama on the night of December 25-26, Thomas called a halt to his pursuit. The Confederate invasion of Tennessee was over, and the gallant Army of Tennessee would never again take the field as an effective fighting force. Despite what Grant and Halleck said—and would continue to say—about his alleged "case of the slows," Thomas had won one of the most decisive victories of the entire war. □

MISSOURI'S GUERRILLA WAR

# BUSHWHACKERS, Jayhawks, and Red Legs



Panicked civilians run for their lives—some not quickly enough—as Quantrill's raiders ransack Lawrence, Kansas, on August 21, 1863.

For the citizens of western Missouri, the Civil War effectively began with the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854. By revoking the Missouri Compromise, the act permitted settlers to decide whether Kansas would enter the Union as a free or slave state. Abolitionists formed such organizations as the New England Emigrant Aid Company to populate the territory and tip the balance against slavery. Meanwhile, some Missourians crossed the state border to become Kansas residents or to vote illegally in elections and return home. In short order armed conflict erupted in the disputed area between increasingly large and organized paramilitary units. Violence steadily escalated.

On May 21, 1856, about 800 "border ruffians," as pro-slavery forces were often

**By the time the Civil War began, pro- and antislavery forces in Bleeding Kansas and Missouri had already been killing each other for five years. They had gotten quite good at it.**

**By Steve Lilley**

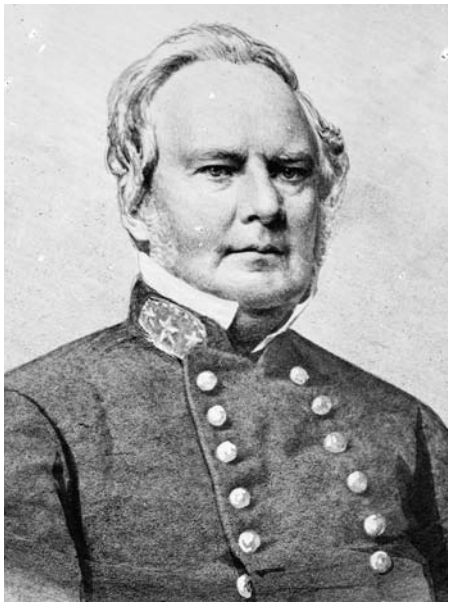
called, struck the abolitionist town of Lawrence, Kansas. The raiders, including a contingent led by former Missouri Senator David Rice Atchison, contented themselves with looting and property damage. Three days later, abolitionist John Brown and his sons avenged the raid by murdering and mutilating five pro-slavery men at Potawatomie, Kansas. "Bleeding Kansas," as it quickly became known, made the western Missouri border a war zone where tough young men, armed to the teeth, indulged in raids for both principle and profit.

The onset of the Civil War in 1861 only intensified the conflict. Anti-slavery Jayhawkers and Red Legs, so called because

of the red leggings they often wore, led by James Montgomery, Charles R. "Doc" Jennison, and Senator James Lane, exploited the war as a pretext for plundering and murdering their way across Missouri. Confederate General Sterling Price's September 1861 victory at Lexington, Missouri, provided a perfect opportunity for them. Still smarting from being brushed aside by Price at the Battle of Dry Wood Creek, Lane and Montgomery sought revenge against any Missourians who might have aided the Rebels. On September 22, Lane and Montgomery sacked Osceola, Missouri. After looting the town, the Jayhawkers shot five men down in the streets, burned all but three houses, and torched the St. Clair County courthouse along with many of its records. After nailing a U.S. flag to a tree to remind the residents where their sympathies should lie, Lane loaded 300 of his drunken men into wagons and departed. As the horizon swallowed up the Jayhawkers, unrepentant Missourians tore down the Stars and Stripes and trampled the flag in the dirt.

If anything, Jennison's Jayhawkers behaved worse than those in Lane's command. Jennison's 7th Kansas Cavalry attacked pro-Union Independence, Missouri, in November 1861 after pillaging and burning all along the way to their target. Once in town they stole anything of value, including quilts and blankets off the residents' beds. The fact that Jennison's regiment included a black company officered by a liberated slave further angered the Missourians. Always fearful that another Nat Turner might lead a bloody slave insurrection in their state, the sight of armed runaway slaves looting Missouri towns confirmed many Missourians' worst fears.

Although organized and equipped as U.S. military units, the Jayhawkers in practice recognized no higher authority. Not only did they often prove militarily useless to the Union cause, their murderous and thieving ways increased sympathy for the Confederacy among Missourians. Jennison's and Lane's commands spent the fall months in Missouri's Jackson, Lafayette,



**Confederate General Sterling Price, above, and Union Brig. Gen. Thomas Ewing.**

and Pettis Counties, looting and killing indiscriminately. In short order, the new commander of the Department of Missouri, Maj. Gen. Henry Halleck, had had enough. "These men do not belong to this department, and have no business to come within this State," he wrote Washington in January 1862. "I have directed General Pope to drive them out, or, if they resist to disarm them and hold them prisoners. They are no better than a band of robbers. They are driving good Union men into the ranks of the secession army." Summing up the damage the Jayhawkers were doing, Halleck warned that if the Federal government allowed men such as Lane and Jennison to operate with its approval, "it may resign all hopes of a pacification of Missouri."

Halleck underscored his point by including a letter from Colonel Frederick Steele in command of Federal forces at Sedalia, which condemned the Jayhawkers' random attacks on Missourians. The people of the state, he said, "except for the strongest Union men, are going to Price's army for protection." Price had indeed promised to protect his fellow Missourians from the Federal invaders but soon found it impossible to do so. After Price's victory at Lexington, Union Maj. Gen. John C. Fremont cautiously nudged the Rebels out of Missouri with an army of 38,000 men.

The troops Price led to victory at Lexington were Missouri State Guardsmen, not Confederate soldiers, and their enlistments steadily expired. In November 1861, Price issued an impassioned plea calling for 50,000 Missouri men to take up arms and drive the Federal invaders from the state. Few responded. Price complained that the Union military's occupation of most of the state effectively kept recruits from reaching him. In December, he appealed to Brig. Gen. Ben McCulloch, his co-victor at the Battle of Wilson's Creek, to join him in an expedition to the Missouri River. There, said Price, "Predatory bands of the enemy, under such men as Lane, Montgomery, and Jennison, supported by the United States forces, are not only desolating the country but are committing the most barbarous outrages." If only their combined forces could reach the Missouri, he argued, thousands would flock to the Confederate standard, but McCulloch, who harbored a low opinion of "Old Pap's" military skills, declined to join him.

Without active support from the Confederate government and with his Missouri guardsmen returning to their homes to prepare for the coming winter, Price's command dwindled to about 7,000 men.

These he led into Arkansas, where he shared Maj. Gen. Earl van Dorn's defeat at the Battle of Pea Ridge in March 1862. For all practical purposes, Pea Ridge ensured Federal control of Missouri. Never again would a major Confederate army realistically threaten to retrieve Missouri for the South. Despite the victory, Union commanders faced military threats far more troublesome than invasions by large-scale, conventional enemy armies. None would prove more troublesome or persistent than William Clarke Quantrill.

Myth and bias cloud most accounts of Quantrill's life. Some claim he exhibited sadistic tendencies early in life, but little evidence exists to substantiate the claim. Born in Ohio, Quantrill probably received a better than average education, becoming a school teacher at age 16 and following this profession for two years. In 1857, he traveled west to Kansas seeking his fortune, briefly trying his hand at frontier farming. Not only did he fail as a farmer, but his partners in the enterprise accused Quantrill of stealing from them. This unprofitable experience may have led him to join Colonel Albert Sidney Johnston's expedition against the Mormons in Utah in late 1857. Afterward Quantrill tried his hand at gold prospecting in Colorado. Over half of his party died on the trip to the gold fields, and Quantrill himself narrowly escaped the same fate. After all the danger and sacrifice, the young adventurer watched others strike it rich while he barely found enough of the precious metal to meet his expenses.

Broke and frustrated, Quantrill returned to Kansas and took up the only profession that had ever provided him a living—teaching. During his frontier days, Quantrill became adept with both revolver and rifle and associated with abolitionists. He also developed a reputation as a thief, arsonist, and liar who used the alias Charley Hart. As Charley Hart, Quantrill lived for a time among the Delaware Indians near Lawrence, Kansas. There he consorted with notorious border ruffians, engaged in petty crimes, and stole horses, sometimes betraying and defrauding his own partners. Occasionally, he sold escaped slaves and free blacks back into slavery. By 1860, his criminal activities forced him to flee Douglas County, Kansas. Despite his failures, Quantrill saw himself as a superior being whose abilities went unrecognized by those less gifted. In November 1860, the door to Quantrill's future cracked open.

**U.S. Senator James Lane, armed to the teeth, led pro-Union Jayhawkers in Kansas.**

A group of Quaker Jayhawkers, deceived by Quantrill's abolitionist pretensions, conspired with the man they knew as Charley Hart to raid Morgan Walker's Jackson County plantation and carry Walker's slaves to freedom. Once near the Walker place, Quantrill left his companions on the pretext of scouting the plantation. Instead, he alerted the Walkers to the plot and arranged an ambush during which the Walkers and Quantrill gunned down three of the raiders. News of the incident enflamed fears and provoked outrage throughout Jackson County. It also made Quantrill something of a local hero.

Quantrill gladly regaled the Missourians with details of his heroics. To justify the betrayal of his fellow raiders, he concocted a story, loosely based on fact, that he had been born in Maryland and had traveled west with his brother (a brother who did not actually exist). While in Kansas, said Quantrill, Jayhawkers had murdered the fictitious brother, wounded Quantrill, and left him for dead. Recovering from his injuries with the aid of a friendly Indian, he had dedicated himself to avenging his brother's death. The three men killed in the Walker raid were, he said, the last of the villains. However fanciful the tale, the story revealed the way Quantrill chose to see himself. The fable amplified his heroic persona and enabled him to enjoy the hospitality of the Walkers and the neighbors.

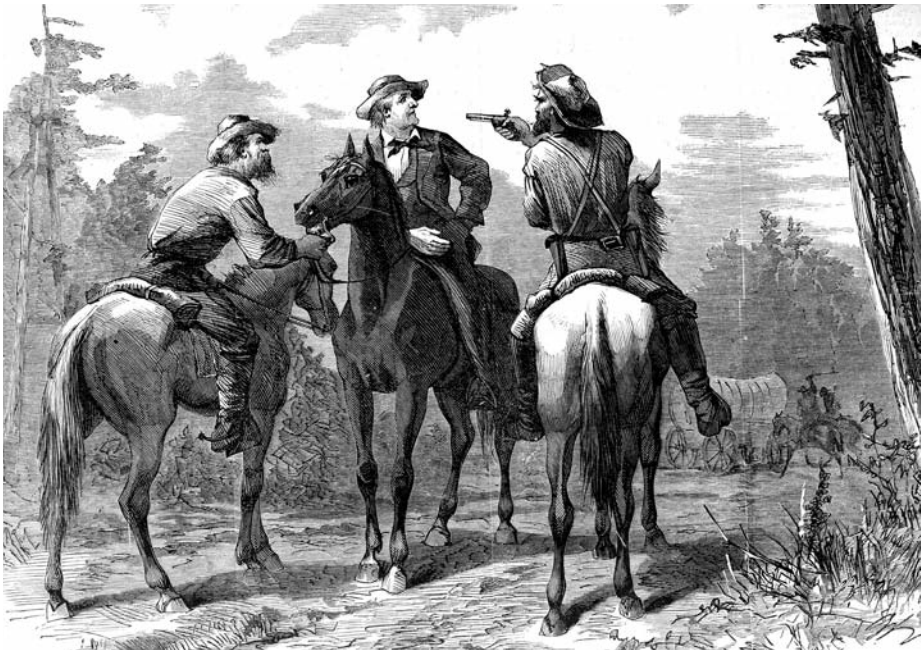
Like so many young men in western Missouri, Quantrill was swept up in the battles that raged across the state in the summer of 1861. He fought at Wilson's Creek as a member of Cherokee chieftain Joel Mayes' cavalry and later enrolled in Price's army as private. In October 1861, after Price's victorious Lexington campaign, Quantrill left the army and returned to the Blue Springs neighborhood, where the Walkers lived.

Quantrill's sabbatical from the war proved brief. The Blue Springs area had enjoyed relative calm during the first months of the war, but a Jayhawking raid changed all that. Quantrill alerted Andrew Walker to the incursion and joined a group of 11 men under Walker's leadership to punish the raiders. As Walker's little posse closed on the Jayhawkers, they found the raiders had torched the farmhouse of a local man named Strawder Stone and struck Stone's wife in the face with a

revolver when she protested the arson. Burning farmhouses was one thing, but even the most hardened frontiersman adhered to a code of chivalry that forbade abusing women. Walker's men rode down the raiders and shot Mrs. Stone's attacker, killing him before the rest escaped.

The following day, Quantrill learned that the marshal from Independence, Missouri, had arrested Stone and a neighbor for killing the Jayhawker. He calmly rode into Independence, claimed responsibility for the raider's death, secured the accused men's release, and offered himself in their place. After hearing Quantrill's version of the incident, the marshal sent him on his way and let the matter drop. Quantrill's willingness to sacrifice himself for the sake of his comrades further burnished his reputation. Two weeks later when Walker returned to farming and relinquished his command, the choice of his successor was obvious. Quantrill had acquired the respect and authority he long had craved. Quantrill's raiders were born.

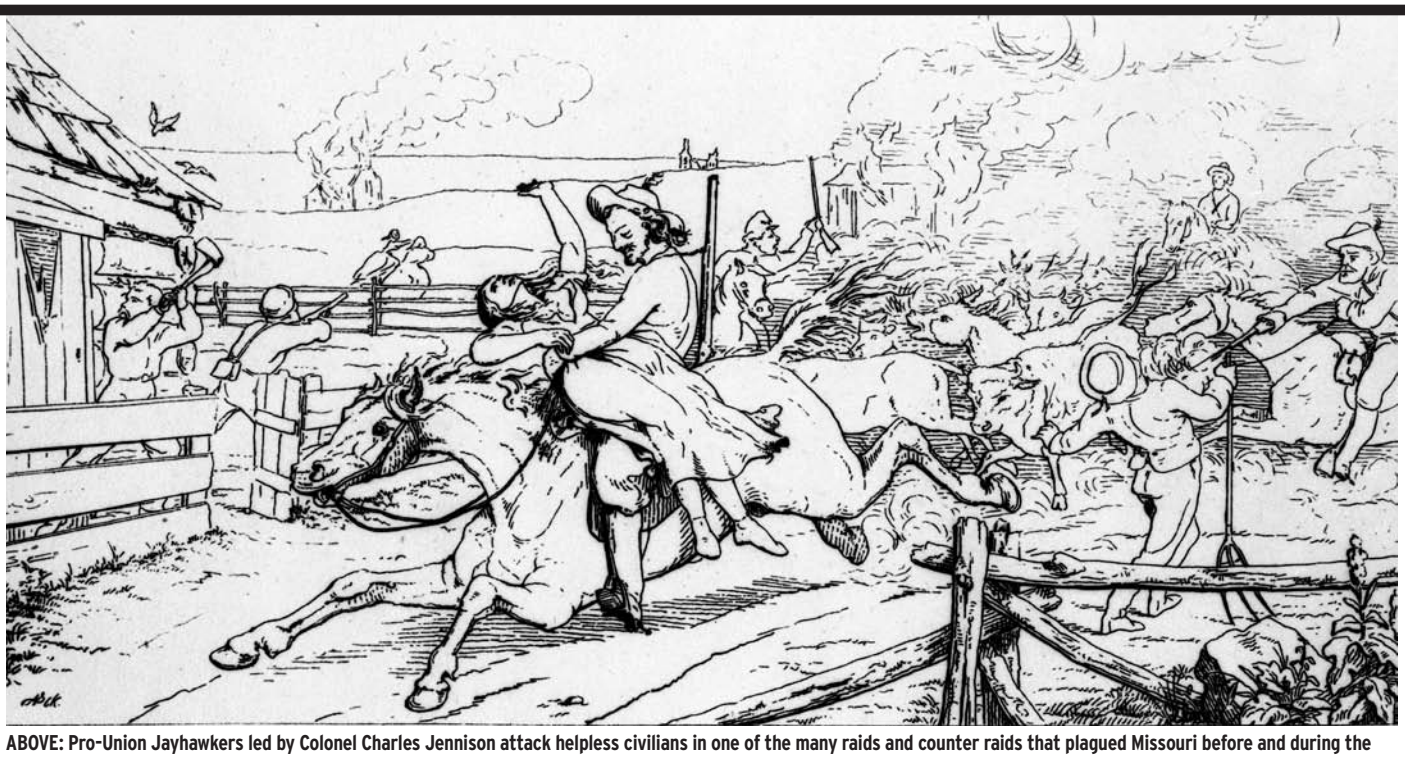
Quantrill had no problem finding recruits—they found him. Jayhawker crimes in western Missouri had driven many volunteers into Price's Missouri State Guard, which later became a Confederate army, not just a Missouri unit. Others joined the Bushwhackers to resist the Federals who burned their homes, stole their livestock, and murdered their friends, neighbors and family. When Price withdrew his army into Arkansas, many of his troops were unwilling to fight for the cause outside Missouri. Bushwhacking offered them ample opportunities to retaliate against Federal occupiers, and they easily found partisan bands that were only too happy to add them to their ranks.



**Never engage a superior force. Never enter combat without an overwhelming advantage. Avoid prolonged battles. Do not attack fortified positions. Move quickly. Always remain on the offensive and keep the initiative. Post pickets and scouts to avoid surprise attacks.**

Initially, Quantrill's raiders consisted mainly of Jackson Country farm boys, all in their teens and twenties, including Ed and John Koger and Bill Greg. A Canadian stone mason named George Todd rode with the outfit and became one of their leaders and most lethal riders. Later, a tall 18-year-old named Cole Younger joined the group. Jayhawkers had looted the Youngers' farm, and a Federal officer had robbed and murdered Cole's father. Younger had some scores to settle. John McCorkle, a veteran of Price's army, gave up fighting late in 1861, returned to his home in Jackson County, took an oath of allegiance to the Union, and tried to live peaceably. After constant harassment by Unionists and being robbed by Union soldiers, McCorkle had had enough. In the summer of 1862, he and his brother, Jabez, gave up neutrality and joined Quantrill. Many more angry young Missourians had similar stories to tell, and they did not forget insults or crimes against their families. Harboring grudges and seeking vengeance served as badges of manhood on the frontier, and these boys were good at both.

Sterling Price and the Confederate government offered the guerrillas encouragement—as if they needed any. Unable to mount a conventional military campaign to drive Federal troops from Missouri, Price organized small groups of partisans to destroy railroads, attack postal carriers and disrupt steamboat traffic. Such asymmetrical warfare partially neutralized the Union advantages in numbers and equipment. Federal troops found it impossible to protect every target from partisan depredations. Convinced that Missourians were by nature disloyal to the Union, Federal authorities issued a string of desperate and draconian decrees to suppress irregular warfare. In March 1862, Halleck issued Special Order Number Two, calling for all guerrillas to be hanged as robbers and murderers. Trapped between the blue-coated Jayhawkers who pillaged Missouri while flying the Stars and Stripes and the guerrilla bands that proliferated in



**ABOVE: Pro-Union Jayhawkers led by Colonel Charles Jennison attack helpless civilians in one of the many raids and counter raids that plagued Missouri before and during the Civil War. OPPOSITE: A pair of Confederate Bushwhackers rob a well-dressed victim while other raiders descend on a wagon train in the background.**

response, Halleck had ill advisedly issued an order that would do more harm than good to the Union cause.

By the time word of Halleck's order reached Quantrill in mid-March, he had been raiding Federal targets for months and commanded roughly 100 guerrillas. He promptly assembled his men, read the order to them, and drew a line in the dirt. Addressing his mounted men, he said, "Now, boys, I accept the challenge. All of you who wish to remain and fight with me ride over on this side of the line. All of you who wish to leave the outfit go ahead and nothing will be held against you." Most crossed to his side. A handful left, only to learn that the Federals would not leave them or their families in peace even after they abandoned bushwhacking. The Yankees had handed the Bushwhackers yet another recruitment tool.

Although Halleck's order branded irregulars as criminals, Quantrill and his men saw themselves as warriors striking back at the Federal oppressors. The guerrilla leader led his men on a hunt for Yankees. At last he found a suitable target, a German-born Federal sergeant at a bridge over the Big Blue River. The raiders disarmed the soldier, and Quantrill, anxious to show Halleck what he thought of Order Number Two, pulled his big Dragoon revolver and gunned down the unarmed man. Silence followed the gunshot. Quantrill holstered his Dragoon, smiled at his men, and shouted, "Halleck issued the order, but we draw the first blood!" The raiders were fighting under the black flag, and angry young men would flock to the banner.

Quantrill put his growing command to good use. While Federal commanders considered Bushwhackers mere murderers and brigands, the irregulars actually developed into hard-hitting light cavalry. The partisans armed themselves with the finest cavalry weapon of the Civil War—the Colt percussion revolver, usually a .44-caliber Army Model or a .36-caliber Navy Model. Quantrill sometimes wielded the heavier Colt Dragoon. Each revolver carried six rounds in its cylinder, and each rider carried from four to six revolvers stuffed into holsters, belts or slung across saddle horns. The Federal cavalrymen they faced typically carried single-shot pistols, sabers, or in some cases single-shot infantry muskets. Union cavalry units often broke when exposed to fusillades of remarkably accurate Bushwhacker handgun fire. Even infantry units dropped their rifles and ran when charged by Bushwhackers, only to be ridden down and slaughtered. The irregulars also rode the finest horses available. Federal cavalry stationed in Missouri often rode inferior mounts—Army plugs. If Bushwhackers chose to evade rather than engage a superior Federal force, they simply outran them and lived to fight another day.

For all his moral failings, Quantrill proved an inspiring leader and gifted tactician. Whenever possible he avoided exposing his men to unnecessary risks. A number of close scrapes with Union troops taught him important lessons about guerrilla warfare: Never engage a superior force. Never enter combat without an overwhelming advantage. Avoid prolonged battles. Do not attack fortified positions. Move quickly. Always remain on the offensive and keep the initiative. Post pickets and scouts to avoid surprise attacks.

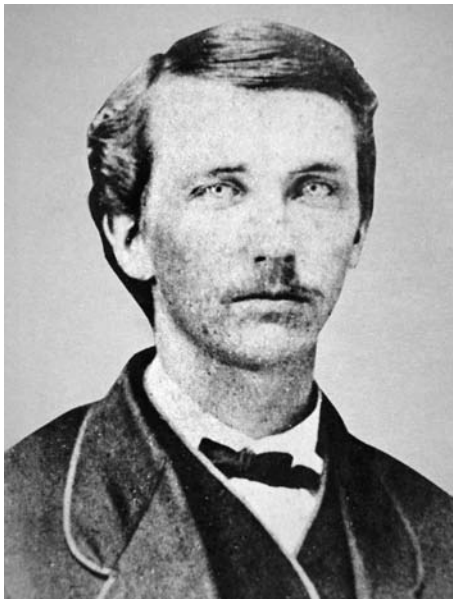
Quantrill's men developed a pattern of campaigning. Irregulars rendezvoused for an operation and afterward dispersed into

the countryside. Each winter they returned to their homes or hid in shelters in Missouri's forests. Some annually migrated to Confederate-held Texas for the winter and returned to Missouri each spring to resume campaigning.

These tactics gave the Confederacy a string of morale-boosting victories in Missouri, if only on a small scale. Guerrillas picked off small, isolated Union garrisons and spread consternation throughout the state. Maj. Gen. John Schofield, who replaced Halleck in Missouri, wrote in August 1862, "The rebels are rising all over Missouri and giving me quite as much as I can attend to." The same Bushwhacker operations that dismayed Schofield gave hope to Confederate Maj. Gen. Thomas Hindman, who saw in guerrilla warfare a means of tying down large numbers of Federal troops while he built an army to reconquer Missouri for the Confederacy. The Confederate Congress passed the Partisan Ranger Act in April 1862, empowering Confederate commanders to issue commissions to guerrilla officers and to enroll their men in the regular army. Among those commissioned was William Clarke Quantrill.

In a small battle at Lone Jack, Missouri, on August 15, 1862, a Confederate force including irregulars defeated, captured, and paroled a Union force commanded by Major Emory Foster. Exulting at the news, Hindman reported that Confederate forces commanded by Colonels Vard Cockrell and Sidney Jackman, ably assisted by Quantrill, had routed a superior force and won a brilliant victory. In fact, Emory's command was not routed, was heavily outnumbered by the Rebels, gave a good account of itself, and Quantrill took no part in the action. Nevertheless, Quantrill was near the battlefield at the time and received a field commission as a captain in the Confederate Army from officers who took part in the Lone Jack action.

Three weeks later, the freshly minted Confederate captain raided Olathe, Kansas, captured the 125-man garrison and, despite the Federal no quarter policy, paroled them. Still seeking recognition for his achievements, Quantrill traveled to Richmond, Virginia, in December during the winter lapse in fighting. Expecting a hero's welcome, he petitioned Confederate Secretary of War James Seddon for a colonelcy in the regular army. Seddon shared President Jefferson Davis' disdain for irregular troops and, much to Quantrill's surprise, refused to grant the commission. Unfazed by the rebuff, Quantrill returned to Missouri and simply represented himself as a Confederate Army colonel.



**Colorful but deadly Confederate Bushwhackers, clockwise from top left: William C. Quantrill, Bloody Bill Anderson, Jesse James, and George Maddox.**

Quantrill clearly cherished his commission as a Confederate officer. At last he had become an acknowledged leader of men and a heroic figure to those oppressed by Yankee invaders. At last he had achieved the respect and recognition he craved during his western wanderings. His little com-

mand and other irregular bands provided the Confederacy its only military successes in Missouri. Quantrill and his guerrillas attacked Federals so often that his name became synonymous with partisan warfare. In many cases, both sides credited him with raids in which he was not involved. He seemed to be everywhere.

Understandably, Federal authorities saw nothing heroic or honorable about Quantrill or other self-styled southern cavaliers. Despite the Federals' best efforts, Missouri remained unsubdued, and partisan warfare raged throughout the state. Rebel guerrillas attacked Union garrisons, burned railroad bridges, destroyed telegraph lines, fired on steamboats, terrorized the loyal population, and melted away when their less agile and adaptable pursuers arrived in force. As few as 4,000 to 5,000 partisans tied down as many as 60,000 Federal troops.

Frustrated in their attempts to pacify the state and convinced that most Missourians actively abetted the irregulars, Schofield took drastic action. He designated the areas where the guerrillas operated most freely, the Missouri and Kansas counties north of the 38th parallel and south of the Missouri River, as the District of the Border. In June 1863, Schofield named Brig. Gen. Thomas Ewing, a politically ambitious lawyer and brother-in-law of William Tecumseh Sherman, to command the new district. Intelligent and energetic, Ewing had his sights set on one of Kansas' Senate seats. Pacifying western Missouri and the Kansas border would surely advance his political career. Pacification meant reining in the Red Legs and subduing the Bushwhackers, a difficult task for a command numbering only 2,500 troops and encompassing thousands of square miles.

Undaunted by the size of the task and his meager resources, Ewing took bold action. First, he issued orders to arrest the Red Legs. Then, to deter Bushwhacker raids into Kansas, he established a cordon of permanent garrisons near the Missouri border. Each garrison would mount patrols and sweep the areas between outposts, constantly probing for guerrilla incursions. In the meantime, Ewing's troops beat the bush for irregulars.

Despite Ewing's efforts, Bushwhacker raids raged unchecked in western Missouri throughout the summer of 1863. Realizing that the guerrillas could never be suppressed by conventional military measures, Ewing moved against their support system. He knew the partisans' friends and relatives provided supplies and sanctuary to the raiders. The policy of requiring Missourians to take oaths of loyalty to the Union had proven fruitless. With Schofield's approval, Ewing escalated the pressure on suspected guerrilla sympathizers. In August, he issued General Order Number 10, requiring all able-bodied men to report for duty pursuing Bushwhackers. Doing so would augment his forces and might compel the Bushwhackers' collaborators to reveal themselves. The order also empowered Union authorities to send Missourians suspected of disloyalty or actively supporting partisans into exile. Federal troops began scooping up the Bushwhackers' female relatives. A hastily improvised prison on Grand Avenue in Kansas City housed female relatives of several notorious guerrillas, including Cole Younger's cousins and Bill Anderson's three sisters. Ewing's aggressive policies set the stage for a disaster.

On the afternoon of August 13, the Grand Avenue prison crashed to the ground, killing five women and severely injuring many others. Bill Anderson's sister Josephine was numbered among the dead, and his sister, Mary, remained crippled for life. News of the disaster spread rapidly along with the rumor that the Federals had intentionally undermined the building to murder the guerrillas' loved ones. John McCorkle's sister, Christie McCorkle Kerr, was one of those killed, and his brother's widow among the injured. McCorkle fully believed the Federals had conspired to kill the guerrillas' kinswomen. "Imagine, if you can, my feelings," he later wrote. "A loved sister foully murdered and the widow of a dead brother seriously hurt by a set of men to whom the name assassins, murderers and cutthroats would be a compliment. This foul murder was the direct cause of the famous raid on Lawrence, Kansas. We could stand no more."

Although McCorkle's memory usually served him well, Quantrill did not conceive the Lawrence raid to avenge their dead womenfolk. Quantrill had long desired to strike at Lawrence, the heart of the state's abolitionist movement and home of Jayhawker leader James Lane, and he had already roughed out a strategy for the raid well before the prison incident. An attack on Lawrence offered him an opportunity to take vengeance against a town that had neither shown the man they knew as Charley Hart sufficient respect or valued his peculiar talents.

A real obstacle the guerrilla chieftain faced was his own lieutenants' reluctance to tackle so risky a venture. Three days before the Grand Avenue prison disaster, Quantrill called a conference of his subordinates near Blue Springs to outline his plan. As bold and bellicose as his riders were, many remained skeptical of the venture. Hard-learned lessons had taught the Bushwhackers the insanity of attacking large settlements with garrisons and armed citizens returning fire from brick buildings. Worse yet, Lawrence lay 40 miles inside the Kansas border. Even if the guerrillas could slip past the Federal outposts undetected and burn the town, Federal troops would probably intercept and overwhelm them on the return trip. It seemed a fool's errand.

Although Quantrill commanded his band of Bushwhackers, his leadership relied on charisma, competence, and persuasion. He realized that he could order his men to follow him into Kansas, but most would simply drift away and await more attractive opportunities. Quantrill countered their objections in detail. His scouts had already reconnoitered the route and found the Federal outposts undermanned and their patrols easily evaded. Undoubtedly, Quantrill's men knew that in May guerrilla leader Dick Yeager had led a small band beyond Council Grove,

Kansas, 100 miles farther into the state, and lived to tell the tale. Additionally, Lawrence's large population of nearly 3,000 people and its remoteness from guerrilla strongholds made an attack seem unthinkable to its defenders. Partisan scouts reported that most Federal troops had been withdrawn from the town. The Kansans' complacency would prove their undoing. Few targets, Quantrill argued, offered a better opportunity for both revenge and plunder. "If you never risk, you never gain," he urged. The guerrillas debated the issue for 24 hours. In the end, all agreed to the plan.

Quantrill's lieutenants prepared their men for the expedition without revealing their destination. Realizing something big was afoot, Bushwhackers gathered rations and put their gear in order. On the morning of August 18, Quantrill's command moved out. As news of the raid and the Grand Street prison disaster spread, more riders joined the ranks. At the end of the first day's march, Bill Anderson, his brother Jim, and a lanky Missourian named Frank James arrived with more than 30 men behind them. Already gaining notoriety for his violent ways, news of the prison collapse and his sisters' fate had goaded Bill Anderson into maniacal rage. He dedicated the rest of his short life to killing Yankees, and Lawrence had plenty of them.

Rather than plot a direct course to his destination, Quantrill led his men eastward on August 19, carefully screening his movements with outriders. That night the Bushwhackers camped near Lone Jack.

Missouri artist George Caleb Bingham's well-known oil painting of suspected Confederate sympathizers being forced from their homes by General Ewing's notorious Order No. 10.

There Quantrill assembled his command, revealed their mission, and reminded them of the risks. "There will be troops behind us and troops in front of us," he warned. "There may be very few of us that get back alive." He offered his men one last chance to leave if they harbored any doubts about the raid—no questions asked, no hard feelings. After that, no one would be allowed to turn back. A dozen men swung into their saddles and rode away. That night, under the cover of darkness, the rest rode toward Kansas.

Before morning, Confederate Colonel John Holt, returning from a recruiting mission in Missouri, unintentionally rode across the Bushwhackers' line of march, bringing more than 100 untested soldiers with him. Quantrill outlined his intentions and suggested the Lawrence raid might provide a fine opportunity to give the new men some battle experience. Holt enthusiastically agreed and added his command to the column. By midday, 50 more Missouri guerrillas from Bates and Cass Counties, anxious for plunder and revenge, joined the band. Now Quantrill commanded 450 men, probably the largest force of irregulars assembled during the Civil War.

By evening they crossed the border into Kansas near Little Santa Fe and passed south of Aubry, the target of Quantrill's first Kansas raid. Federal Captain J.A. Pike commanded a garrison of 100 soldiers at Aubry. When a farmer reported an estimated 800 irregulars moving westward, Pike, thinking his command heavily outnumbered, warned other outposts of the incursion but neither pursued nor engaged Quantrill's men. The best opportunity to save the people of Lawrence had passed.

Quantrill continued his indirect course toward Lawrence, turning south and then northwest again toward Gardner. There the column encountered Federal soldiers who asked the raiders their identity and destination. Since many wore captured blue Federal uniforms, they easily convinced the questioners they were a Union cavalry command headed for Lawrence to have their horses shod. Ewing's defensive cordon proved not only porous but pointless.

For a time, the raiders followed the Santa Fe Trail, then headed northward across the prairie. Although they knew the area reasonably well, Quantrill was determined to arrive at Lawrence by dawn. Since straying from the poorly marked trails during the moonless night might cause a fatal delay, the Bushwhackers began impressing guides from farmhouses along their route. Once a guide passed beyond the area he knew, the guerrillas shot him and picked up another. Ten died after guiding Quantrill that night. The last ended his service so near Lawrence that Quantrill wanted him killed quietly to avoid alerting the town. One method of murder was as good as another to George Todd, who ordered the man bludgeoned to death with the butt of a Sharps carbine.

At dawn on Friday, August 21, the raiders stood on high ground overlooking Lawrence. Quantrill sent Bill Gregg with a party of five men to reconnoiter the sleeping town. As they waited for the scouts to return, some of the Bushwhackers, unnerved by Lawrence's size, counseled a hasty retreat. Before fear could infect the ranks, Quantrill calmly rode along the line and proclaimed: "You can do as you please. I'm going to Lawrence." Without waiting for Gregg's report, he galloped toward the town. Frightened or not, the others followed. After assigning his men their tasks, Quantrill issued one simple order: "Kill every man big enough to carry a gun."

Out for an early morning ride, Sarah Young and John Donnelly spotted the column approaching. Despite the abundance of blue coats among the approaching riders, they quickly recognized them as Bushwhackers. Without hesitation, Young ordered Donnelly to flee for his life while she rode to warn the town. Donnelly spurred his mount, outdistanced a detachment of pursuing Bushwhackers, and lived to tell the tale, but the guerrillas intercepted Young. Quantrill had compiled a death list of Jayhawkers and Union men he intended to kill and forced Young to accompany the raiders house to house to identify victims. More than once during the following hours, the courageous young woman successfully begged or demanded that the Bushwhackers spare men marked for death. Before the morning ended, many other Lawrence men would owe their lives to intrepid and quick-thinking women.

The raiders thundered into the town's

center, where the column divided. Holt's recruits attacked the east side, Andy Blunt's contingent attacked the west, and Quantrill led the remainder through the middle of town. Quantrill's column quickly overran the encampment of the 14th Kansas, with the Bushwhackers mowing down 17 of the 22 raw recruits as they stumbled half dressed from their collapsed tents. Alarmed by the gunfire, black recruits of the 2nd Colored Regiment abandoned their camp and ran for the Kansas River. Some escaped, but the Bushwhackers shot many more as they swam for safety.

Quantrill wheeled his men down Massachusetts Street, where they quickly surrounded the Eldridge House. Burned during the 1856 raid on Lawrence, the new Eldridge House appeared a formidable four-story brick structure that would serve well as a fortress. The guerrillas fully expected rifle fire from every window and approached warily. Much to their relief, they found a white surrender flag run out of a window by Captain A.R. Banks, provost marshal of Kansas and an Eldridge House resident. Realizing that the unarmed guests could not effectively resist, Banks offered to surrender the hotel on the condition that Quantrill guarantee the residents' safety. He accepted Banks' terms and set up his headquarters in the hotel. As the guests filed into the lobby to be robbed, most of Quantrill's contingent dispersed throughout the town to murder and plunder. As they rode away, Quantrill shouted: "Kill! Kill and you will make no mistake!" The command was unnecessary.

Bushwhackers began the grim work of disposing of the men on the death list. Reverend Hugh Fisher, recently chaplain to Jim Lane's Kansas brigade, ranked high on the list. In bed recovering from illness, Fisher was alerted by his wife, who rightly identified the raiders as Quantrill's men and implored him to flee to Mount Oread with their two older sons. She remained behind with their baby and seven-year old son to face the Bushwhackers. The dash to the town's outskirts quickly exhausted Fisher. Realizing that he lacked the stamina to evade the guerrillas' pickets, he urged his sons to ride on without him and returned to his house, where he hid in the cellar.

Quantrill's men searched the house for the reverend while Mrs. Fisher denied her husband was there and coolly diverted the Bushwhackers from his hiding place. At one point she thrust her infant son into a dumbfounded raider's arms while she assisted in the search. Failing to locate their quarry, Quantrill's men torched the house, posted a babysitter to see to it that it burned, and left the flames to do their work. As the fire burned closer to the hidden Fisher, the remaining guerrilla offered to help Mrs. Fisher rescue valuables from the house. She declined his offer and told him to leave the burning building and its contents to her.

**No longer amused by ordinary killing, Bushwhackers tied the wounded men's wrists together and forced them into the fire.**

The guard's departure left Mrs. Fisher free to rescue her husband by concealing him under a carpet and, with the help of a neighbor, slipping him into the backyard. Four raiders stood watching nearby, but thanks to his wife's quick thinking, Reverend Fisher remained unnoticed. Years later, when telling of his miraculous escape, Fisher wrote, "Blessed be the name of the Lord, he saved me when salvation seemed impossible." That afternoon their two older sons returned unscathed.

Another young woman bought time for the men of Lawrence by tending bar for the raiders. She flirted and beguiled the men who held the town by its throat. In the meantime, she secreted the contents of the saloon's cash drawer in her apron pockets and successfully persuaded the guerrillas to spare a young man's life, insisting that he was her only brother. In fact, she had never seen him before. Her intervention that day led to a long-term relationship, and the couple later married. Another woman hid fleeing men in her cellar. When a Bushwhacker confronted her about what she might have hidden there, she looked him in the eye and insisted they would find no one hiding in her home. He left her in peace.

One wounded man had the presence of mind to lie in the street and play dead. Amid the gunfire his wife scoured the town, looking for his body. When she found his still-breathing body, she loaded his limp form in a cart and wheeled it away under the noses of the raiders. When the remorseless killer Larkin Skaggs tried to shoot Judge Samuel Riggs as he ran for his life, Riggs' wife grabbed Skaggs' reins to keep him from pursuing her husband. Despite Skaggs' attempts to beat her free, she clung to his horse long enough to allow the judge to escape. One resourceful woman simply took a brush and painted "Southern" above her door; she and her household passed the morning unmolested.

Few Lawrence men that bloody morning enjoyed the protection of such guardian angels. What many Bushwhackers later recalled as a dashing military victory quickly degenerated into simple massacre and looting, seasoned with outright sadism. Judge Louis Carpenter suffered multiple gunshot wounds while fleeing. As his attackers closed in to finish the job, Carpenter's wife enfolded him in her arms and acted as a human shield. Unable to pry her loose, a guerrilla wrenched her arm upward and fired a killing shot into Carpenter's head.

D.W. Palmer and his assistant fell to gunfire in front of Palmer's gun shop. No

longer amused by ordinary killing, Bushwhackers tied the wounded men's wrists together and forced them into the fire. Shrieking in agony, the two men tried to run out of the burning building, only to have their tormentors repeatedly force them back into the flames. The raiders stood guard over the building, laughing at their victims' cries for mercy until they fell silent.

Guerrillas broke into Edward Fitch's home and set it ablaze. One of the raiders emptied his revolver into Fitch, a schoolteacher and member of Lawrence's home guard. As his wife and children watched helplessly, the Bushwhacker grabbed a second revolver and fired six more shots into Fitch's prostrate body. When Mrs. Fitch attempted to drag her husband's lifeless form from the burning building, the raiders forced her at gunpoint to leave it to the flames. One then returned to the house, pulled off the dead man's boots, and slipped them on, commenting on how well they fit him. More than once during the day, guerrillas proudly reminded the people of Lawrence that, unlike the Jayhawkers and Red Legs, they never made war on women and children—this as they burned their homes, killed their husbands, sons, fathers, and brothers, and spared only the widows and orphans they had created.

Atrocity piled on atrocity. The mindless arson and butchery even appalled some of the Bushwhackers. Many of Colonel Holt's troopers refused to participate in the carnage. This was not what they expected from their first taste of war. Some rode past the citizens of Lawrence displaying their unfired revolvers as proof that they were not murderers. Holt paused at the home of Henry S. Clarke, who stood in his front yard watching Lawrence burn. The Confederate colonel bore every appearance of an officer and a gentleman, and Clarke greeted him civilly. Holt offered Clarke a cigar, which he accepted. Hoping to enlist an ally in the maelstrom, Clarke brought breakfast to Holt, who ate it gratefully while remaining on horseback. For a time, Holt protected Clarke and his home against marauders. The other attackers rarely showed the people of Lawrence such consideration. Many openly competed with each other for the biggest bag of Kansans, reveling in the slaughter and shouting their total kills to each other. Bloody Bill Anderson claimed 15, perhaps 10 percent of the total slain in Lawrence, but at least three of Quantrill's men claimed even more.

**A Bushwhacker fatally shoots Judge Louis Carpenter in the head as his horrified wife attempts to shield him in her arms.**

Although they did not realize it, the raiders owed Boston-born Mayor George Washington Collamore a debt of gratitude. In the interest of public safety, Collamore required all home guard weapons to be stored in a locked armory away from potential mischief and misuse. His mandate eliminated the possibility of effective armed citizen resistance. A few townspeople did have firearms and mounted a feeble resistance. A small contingent of troops fired across the Kansas River near the ferry, wounding a few men. The guerrillas learned to avoid the areas where they faced gunfire. Like most of Lawrence's unarmed citizens, Collamore's only option was flight. The mayor and his hired hand slid down a rope into a cistern next to his residence. When the Bushwhackers arrived and demanded to know the mayor's whereabouts, Mrs. Collamore assured them he had fled the premises. The guerrillas contented themselves with burning the buildings and riding away. Collamore and his friend died of suffocation in the well—one more prominent Unionist scratched off Quantrill's list.

Jim Lane, the "Grim Chieftain" who had burned and looted his way across western Missouri, headed Quantrill's death list. Quantrill planned to capture Lane, return him to Missouri, and hang him there, but delayed his search for the old Jayhawker since John Noland, a black man who rode with the Bushwhackers and acted as their spy, had entered Lawrence before the raid and found that Lane had left town. Unknown to Quantrill, Lane had returned home shortly before the raid.

After burning the Eldridge House, Quantrill commandeered a buggy and team and toured Lawrence surveying his handiwork. His route took him down streets bordered by blazing buildings, littered with dead and dying men, thick with grief-stricken widows. Satisfied with the results, he went to Lane's home to exact more revenge.

The delay robbed Quantrill of his greatest prize. Lane heard the noise and bolted from his house in his nightshirt, fleeing through the cornfields. He spent the day cowering and searching for decent clothes. When Quantrill and his men arrived at Lane's home, they treated Mrs. Lane with the utmost courtesy. Declaring their intention to burn Lane's mansion, the raiders helped the senator's wife remove much of the contents before setting fire to it. As flames engulfed the house, Quantrill, playing the Southern gentleman, turned to Mrs. Lane and said, "Give Mr. Lane my compliments. Please say I would be glad to meet him." Unfazed, she responded that she was certain her husband would be glad to meet him under "more favorable circumstances."

Around 9 AM, Quantrill's observation post on Mount Oread reported the dust of many riders approaching. The guerrilla lieutenants hastily assembled their men for the retreat to Missouri. Some were too drunk to stay upright in their saddles and had to be loaded into wagons. Many decked out their horses in ribbons and bits of women's clothing, while others tied as much loot as they could carry to their mounts. The column formed on the south side of Lawrence and left its blazing ruins behind. One raider, Larkin Skaggs, remained in the town, unaware the raiders had withdrawn. Lawrence's angry survivors killed Skaggs and dragged his naked body behind a horse. Skaggs was the only Bushwhacker to die in Lawrence. His corpse lay all winter unburied in a ravine where weather and scavengers had their way with it.

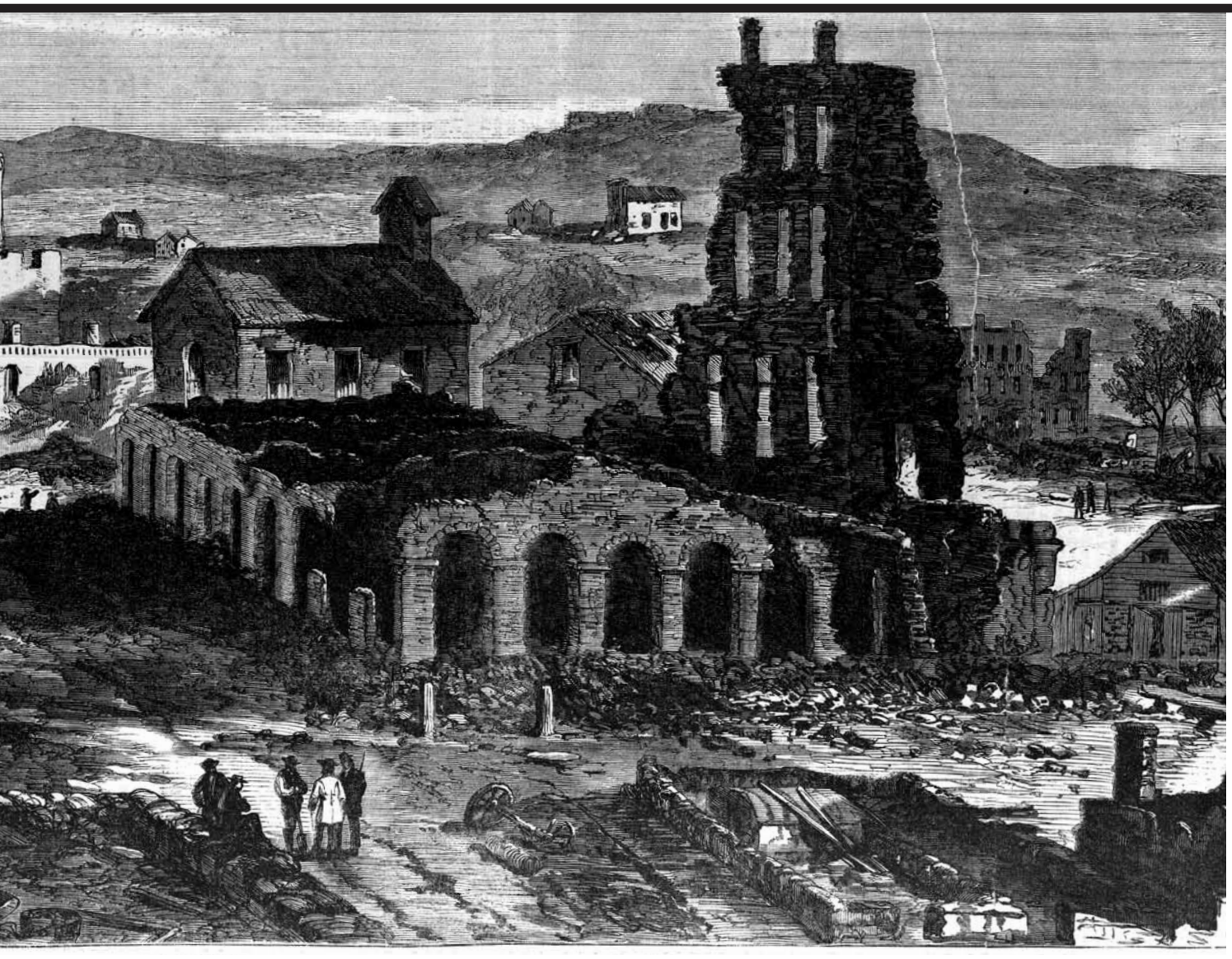
Ewing's chief of staff, Major Preston Plumb, intended to pile up more Bushwhacker corpses. When word of the raid reached him on the night of the 20th, Plumb scraped together a force of 50 men and rode out of Kansas City headed for Olathe, Kansas, a likely Bushwhacker target. As Quantrill's intentions became clearer to Plumb, he changed course for Lawrence. Along the way he added more troopers to his command until he rode at the head of more than 200 men, including a small group under Jim Lane. Still dressed in his nightshirt, astride an unsaddled plow horse, armed only with a pistol, and howling for vengeance, Lane led a poorly mounted contingent of Lawrence survivors. Quantrill's men had made off with the best horses during the raid.

The guerrilla chieftain and his men put them to good use. While Plumb's troopers had worn out their horses during the night march, many of Quantrill's men switched to fresh mounts during the pursuit and killed their own jaded animals. Plumb pressed them relentlessly, finally pulling up close enough to the fleeing raiders to fire a few pistol shots into their ranks. Hung over and exhausted, some panicked guerrillas fled the column. At this moment, George Todd proved he was more than a murderous cutthroat. Rallying 20 men, he countercharged Plumb's vanguard, fired a volley that emptied some Yankee saddles, and spread confusion among the rest. Todd's action probably saved Quantrill's men from annihilation.

The pattern repeated itself several times. As the drunken fog lifted from their brains, the raiders' combat discipline sharpened. Riders lightened their loads, dumping worthless knick knacks stolen during the morning's revelry, and tightened the column. Todd and Bill Gregg fought a series of rearguard actions that kept the Federal pursuers at bay. After bypassing a Federal militia force at Paola, Kansas, the raiders crossed the Missouri border around midnight. The plucky Plumb, his men weakened by hunger and thirst, their horses collapsing and dying under them, detached a smaller, fresher force to continue the pursuit while he rested his command at Paola. By dawn of the 22nd, Quantrill's men had divided their loot and dispersed into the bush. Only a handful of stragglers and wounded had fallen into the pursuers' hands. The great Lawrence raid was over.


**This *Harper's Weekly* print shows the still-smoldering ruins of Lawrence one month after Quantrill's men had sacked the town. There was little left to photograph.**

Lawrence lay a smoldering, stinking wreck. For days after the raid the smell of cooking flesh rose from the smoking ruins. Reverend Fisher crawled from his hiding place and tallied the damage: "One hundred fifty-four of the best business houses and dwellings of Lawrence were burned to the ground. Two-thirds of the people were homeless. That night nearly an hundred widows and two hundred fatherless children sat wailing in the streets. One hundred and eighty-five men had been killed. Desolation like a pall hung over every home.



There was nought doing but burial."

For weeks afterward, Federal soldiers hanged or gunned down dozens of Missouri men suspected of participating in the Lawrence raid. Federal troops, Union militia, and Red Legs adopted a shoot on sight policy and assumed that any Missourian carrying a weapon was probably a Bushwhacker. Proof of involvement in the Lawrence raid mattered little to them. The Federals had long believed that anyone living in western Missouri either rode with the irregulars or gave them aid and comfort. Kansas Governor Thomas Carney agreed. In a report written three days after the raid, he assured General Schofield: "I must hold Missouri responsible for this fearful, fiendish raid. No body of men as large as that commanded by Quantrill could have been gathered together without the people residing in western Missouri knowing everything about it. While they conceal the movements of desperadoes like Quantrill and his followers, they are, in the worst sense of the word, their aiders and abettors, and should be held equally guilty." Ewing had already written that assumption into official policy.

Ewing did not receive word of the Lawrence raid until Quantrill had already begun his retreat. His inability to assemble a force in time to intercept the raiders made his failure in the matter complete. Meeting with a wild-eyed Jim Lane after Quantrill's men had disappeared into Missouri, Ewing endured the Grim Chieftain's scathing recriminations. Lane blamed Ewing's halfhearted policies for Lawrence's destruction and made it clear that the general's political ambitions were very much in jeopardy. Stung by his failure and certain that Lane could make or break his political career in Kansas, Ewing issued his immediately infamous General Order Number 11 on August 25. In effect, the order required the deportation, with few exceptions, of all the residents of Jackson, Bates, and Cass Counties in Missouri within 15 days. By the second week of September, Federals and Red Legs burned and murdered their way with impunity across a section of Missouri that would come to be called the Burnt District. The pitiless cycle of retribution continued. □

Hungry, wet and cold, Confederate pickets huddle around a pitifully small fire during the harsh Virginia winter of 1864-65. The soldiers' faces reflect their mood. Painting by Keith Rocco.

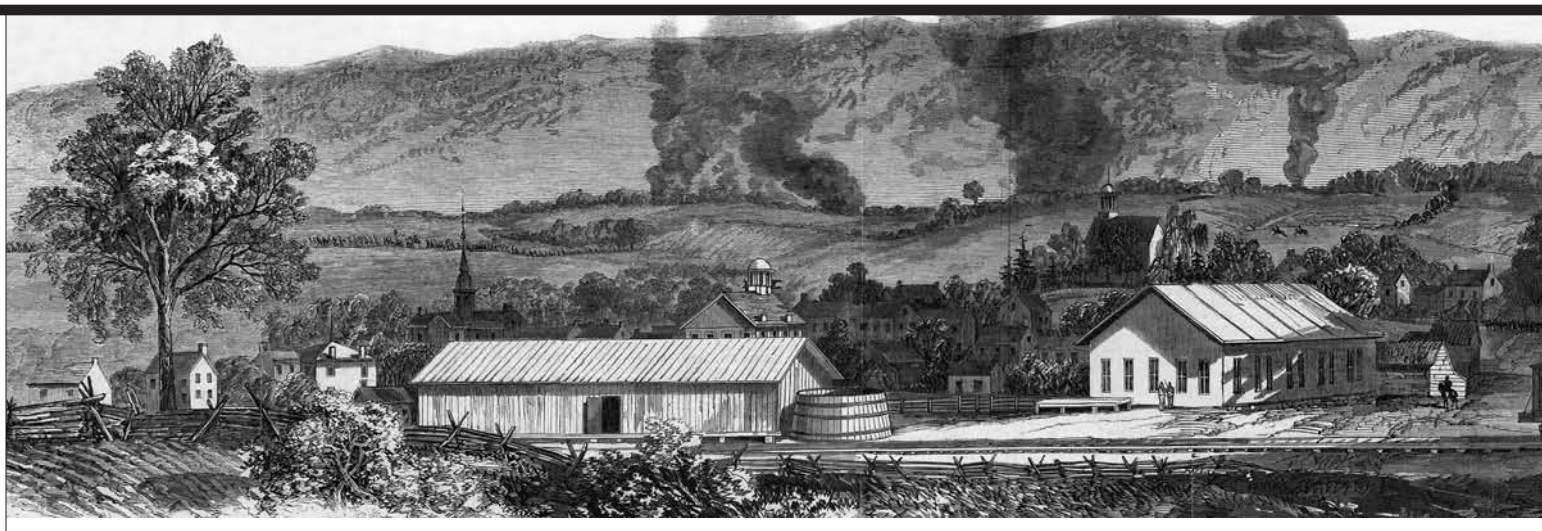
With his once formidable army reduced to a mere shadow of its former self, Confederate General Jubal Early waited uneasily at Waynesboro, Virginia, to do battle one last time with his chief tormenter, Phil Sheridan.

# OLD JUBE'S LAST STAND

THE UNRELENTINGLY HARSH WINTER of 1864-1865 gave no respite to Virginia's war-torn Shenandoah Valley. Heavy snows and frigid temperatures made travel difficult, and the two opposing armies found themselves literally frozen into place, 90 miles apart and in no particular hurry to get at each other again before the weather broke. At the northern end of the valley, in Winchester, Maj. Gen. Philip Sheridan's Union Army of the Shenandoah waited in comparative comfort, warm, dry, and well supplied by the increasingly efficient Quartermaster Corps. But their Confederate counterparts at Staunton were not so fortunate. There, Lt. Gen. Jubal "Old Jube" Early's Army of the Valley huddled together miserably, wet, hungry, and shivering in rundown huts and ragged tents. The men's morale was as low as the temperature outside. "Men's spirits dull, gloomy, and all are evidently hopeless," wrote one private, "waiting for we know not what end."

The two armies' contrasting moods reflected their recent history with each other. Three times in the past six months—at Winchester, Fisher's Hill, and Cedar Creek—Sheridan's Union forces had decisively beaten Early's men. The third loss, at Cedar Creek, had been the most demoralizing for the Confederates, who for much of the day on October 19 had believed, with good reason, that they had finally bested their hated foes. That morning, before dawn, while the diminutive Union commander was still asleep in Winchester after a whirlwind visit to Washington, Early's

BY COWAN BREW



men had waded across icy, chest-deep water in the Shenandoah River and fallen on Sheridan's unsuspecting camp at Cedar Creek. The surprise attack, spearheaded by three divisions under Maj. Gen. John B. Gordon of Georgia, had come within an inch of destroying Sheridan's entire army, which fell back in disarray to a new position eight miles north at Belle Grove.

Gordon, an experienced commander, had wanted to press forward immediately, but a prematurely jubilant Early shrugged off Gordon's suggestions. "This is glory enough for one day," Early said with airy satisfaction. But while Early celebrated and his hungry men happily looted the abandoned tents of their Union counterparts, Sheridan hurried back to his army, alerted by reports of heavy artillery firing in the vicinity of Cedar Creek. Accompanied by 20 troopers and a handful of staff officers, Sheridan completed a stirring 10-mile gallop to the battlefield, a dash that immediately became famous as "Sheridan's Ride." Once on the field, the Union commander rearranged his lines and inspired his troops with some Gaelic-inflected profanity: "Give 'em hell, God damn em! Face the other way! We'll lick those fellows out of their boots!" A spirited infantry counterattack ably supported by cavalry completely reversed the Confederates' gains and, as Gordon had feared, turned the apparent victory into another demoralizing defeat. Union Maj. Gen. William Emory, watching the wild celebration with his aides, predicted of Sheridan, "This young man, only about thirty years old, has made a great name for himself today."

So he had. Sheridan's improbable victory at Cedar Creek, quickly immortalized in poet Thomas Buchanan Read's 63-line ballad, "Sheridan's Ride," took the North by storm and made good on Emory's prediction. Coupled with Maj. Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman's capture of Atlanta earlier that fall, the Union victory at Cedar Creek went a long way toward enabling President Abraham Lincoln to win reelection over Democratic nominee (and former Union commander) George B. McClellan. Lincoln's victory at the ballot box would ensure that the North would continue pressing its "hard war" against the South. Nowhere was that concept to be more harshly carried out than in the Shenandoah Valley.

**ABOVE: The Shenandoah Valley town of Woodstock, Va., sits momentarily tranquil as smoke from the Union Army's notorious "Burning Raid" rises ominously in the background. BELOW: George Armstrong Custer and his beautiful wife Libbie sit for yet another photograph.**

While the two armies waited out the winter weather, the Union Army's commanding general, Ulysses S. Grant, urged Sheridan—who needed little convincing—to devastate the Shenandoah Valley. Under orders from Sheridan to "consume and destroy all forage and subsistence, burn all barns and mills and drive off all stock in the region," Union troopers commenced what became known as "the Burning Raid," inflicting more than a million dollars' worth of damage on hard-pressed Southern farmers in a mere four days. Barns, stables, corncribs, and smokehouses were set ablaze; cattle, sheep, hogs and horses were carried off or consumed. "Should complaints come in from the citizens of Loudoun County," Sheridan advised Brig. Gen. John D. Stevenson, "tell them that they have furnished too many meals to guerrillas to expect much sympathy." Sheridan, as usual, had little sympathy to spare.

Not all his men were so unsympathetic. Private Charles Humphreys of the reserve brigade observed the destruction at close hand. "In one day," he noted, "two regiments of our brigade burned more than 150 barns, 100 stacks of hay and 6 flour

mills, besides having driven off 50 horses and 300 head of cattle. This was the most unpleasant task we were ever compelled to undertake. It was heart piercing to hear the shrieks of women and children, and to see even men crying and beating their breasts, supplicating for mercy on bended knees, begging that at least one cow—an only support—might be left. But no mercy was allowed. Orders must be obeyed."

Most of Sheridan's subordinates were less moved by civilian suffering. One in particular, brevet Maj. Gen. George Armstrong Custer, was only too happy to accommodate Sheridan's wishes. Repeatedly that fall Custer's 3rd Cavalry Division had crossed swords with Lt. Col. John Singleton Mosby's redoubtable 43rd Virginia Cavalry Battalion. Although Mosby's men were legally sworn Confederate soldiers, their irregular raiding habits had caused Custer and his troopers to treat them as guerrillas. In early October, near Dayton, Custer had summarily executed a Southern bushwhacker, and a few days later one of Mosby's troopers was hanged from a tree alongside the road, wearing a placard that read, "In retaliation." And after a favorite trooper in the 6th Michigan was killed by a sniper shot from one of two adjacent houses, Custer's men dragged the owners of both houses outside and shot them, without bothering to determine which—if either—was the guilty party.

As the easily recognizable Union general in the valley, the flamboyant Custer was blamed for killings he did not commit. After Brig. Gen. Wesley Merritt executed six of Mosby's Rangers at Front Royal on September 23, four by shooting and two by hanging, residents of the town erroneously identified Custer as the perpetrator. Custer had been present at the scene behind the local Methodist Church, although not in command, but that was enough for Mosby to begin stockpiling for retribution any Custer troopers he managed to capture. On November 6, at Rectorsville, he made 27 Union prisoners draw numbered slips of paper to determine which seven would be executed in reprisal for the executions at Front Royal and elsewhere. The unlucky seven were led away to be hanged—two managed somehow to escape—and a note was left dangling from one of the bodies: "These men have been hung in retaliation for an Equal number of Colonel Mosby's men hung by order of General Custer, at Front Royal. Measure for measure."

Mosby's reprisals put an end to the blatant violations of the military code by both sides, but they left Custer and his men understandably bitter. That bitterness was compounded in mid-December when Brig. Gen. Thomas Rosser's Confederate cavalry raided Custer's camp at Lacey Springs, nine miles north of Harrisonburg. Little damage was done to the camp, but an embarrassed Custer was forced to explain to Sheridan how he had managed to get himself attacked while supposedly on a raid himself. Adding to Custer's embarrassment was the fact that Rosser had been his best friend at the United States Military Academy at West Point.

Fortunately for Custer, Sheridan chose to overlook the minor incident and instead selected his protégé to lead an honor guard to Washington to present captured Confederate battle flags to Secretary of War Edwin Stanton. The hard-to-please Stanton was charmed by Custer and his beautiful young wife, Libbie, praising Custer as "a gallant officer." The Custers spent the rest of the winter living with a family of Quakers named Glass four miles outside Winchester.

In January 1865, the Custers took a 20-day furlough to their hometown of Monroe, Michigan. A fellow traveler on the train to Michigan jotted down a hasty, rather hero-worshipping account of the general in his dairy. "Genl Custar [sic] reminded me of Tennyson's description of King Arthur," wrote Lewis T. Ives. "He is tall straight with light complexion, clear blue eyes, golden hair which hangs in curls on his shoulders [and] has a fine nose." Custer couldn't have said it better himself. He even found time to make his peace with God, experiencing a religious conversion at a Sunday evening service at the Monroe Presbyterian Church, an experience that left him feeling, said Custer, "somewhat like the pilot of a vessel who has been steering his ship upon familiar and safe waters but has been called upon to make a voyage fraught with danger. Having in safety and with success completed one voyage, he is imbued with confidence and renewed courage, and the second voyage is robbed of half its terror. So it is with me."

**Confederate raider John Singleton Mosby, center left, poses with members of his 43rd Virginia Cavalry Battalion.**

In mid-February, back in Virginia, Custer found out what his next voyage would be,

## "WE HAD WITHIN OUR GRASP A GLORIOUS VICTORY, AND LOST IT BY THE UNCONTROLLABLE PROPENSITY OF OUR MEN FOR PLUNDER."

**Maj. Gen. Phil Sheridan, bottom left, tips his cap to cheering soldiers as he leads his army down the Valley Pike en route to their last engagement with Maj. Gen. Jubal Early's oft-beaten Confederates.**

when he received a new assignment from Sheridan. For the past four months Grant had been urging Sheridan to cut the Virginia Central Railroad at Charlottesville and move eastward toward Richmond to threaten the rear of Robert E. Lee's lines at Petersburg. Citing bad weather, Mosby's guerrillas, and the (unlikely) threat of Confederate reinforcements in the valley, Sheridan delayed. Grant, who was even more stubborn than Sheridan, persisted, sending his subordinate a new set of orders. Sheridan was to destroy the railroad and the James River canal, capture Lynchburg, and then either return to Winchester or link up with Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman's army in North Carolina. Sheridan would obey—but only up to a point.

At dawn on February 17, 1865, Sheridan broke camp at Winchester and headed south with two full cavalry divisions, a section of artillery, and a long train of supply wagons, pontoons, ambulances, and medical wagons. Each trooper was issued five days' rations for himself, 30 pounds of forage for his horses, and 75 rounds of ammunition. Winchester resident Emma Reily watched the invaders leave. "I witnessed one of the grandest spectacles that can ever be imagined as they were leaving," she wrote. "10,000 cavalry passing our house four abreast thoroughly equipped in every detail. The horses, having been in winter quarters so long, had been fed high and curried and rubbed until their coats shone like satin. Each man had a new saddle, bridle and red blanket, and all their accouterments such as swords, belts, etc., shone like gold. It was a grand sight, requiring hours in passing."

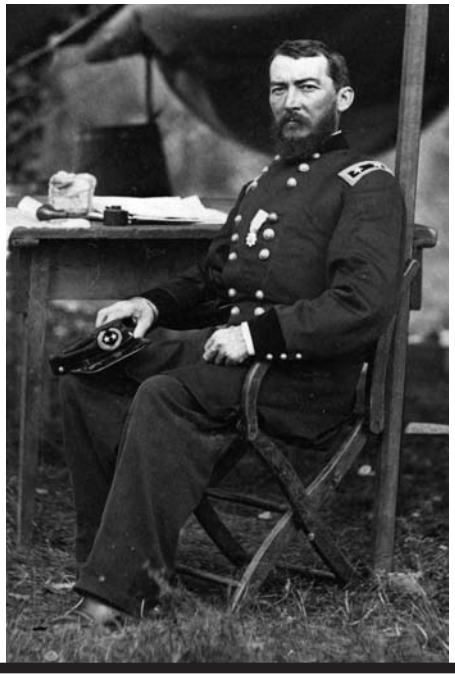
Back at Staunton, Jubal Early was not so thrilled by the Federals' departure. Knowing Sheridan only too well by this time, the Confederate commander assumed rightly that the enemy movement presaged new fighting. Spies in Winchester and soldiers manning observation posts on nearby Massanutten Mountain had already detected signs of the impending Union advance. Confederate Private Henry Berkeley summed up his commanding general's fears in his diary. "We hear that the Yanks are collecting a very large cavalry force at Winchester and are expected to move up the Valley as soon as the weather permits," Berkeley wrote. "I don't see how it is possible for our little force to make any headway against them. We are only 1,500; they are reported to be 15,000. They will run over us [by] sheer weight of numbers. Who will be left to tell the tale?"

Cold rain falls relentlessly as Sheridan's cavalry crosses an icy stream in northern Virginia on February 27, 1865.

As it was, Berkeley overestimated the Federals' strength by a third, but his fears were shared by Early. All winter the general had brooded over his three defeats, particularly the lost opportunity at Cedar Creek. Ungenerously, Early blamed his own failure on his men, complaining to Robert E. Lee, "We had within our grasp a glorious victory, and lost it by the uncontrollable propensity of our men for plunder." Ignoring his own delay, even after Gordon's urging, to follow up the initial attack, Early blamed his own subsequent retreat on "panic created by an insane dread of being flanked and a terror of the enemy's cavalry." That terror—or at least apprehension—was well earned. Twice before, the Confederates had been outflanked, at Winchester and Fisher's Hill, and their own cavalry had been sent reeling at Tom's Brook. The common Confederate foot soldier had good reason to fear the blue-coated Union horsemen, who had no similar fear of their Rebel counterparts.

Lee, who had slowly and steadily stripped Early of most of his command to reinforce his own works at Petersburg, somewhat unhelpfully advised Early "to produce the impression that the force was much larger than it really was." He should do the best he could. Early did, indeed, do his best, ordering Rosser to recall his horsemen, who had temporarily disbanded to spend the winter in their homes, and delay the Union advance at Mount Crawford, where a covered bridge crossed the North River. In the meantime, Early directed Maj. Gen. Lunsford Lomax at Millboro, 40 miles west of Staunton, to bring his understrength cavalry division east. He sent additional orders to Brig. Gen. John Echols to rush his infantry brigade by rail to Lynchburg, which Early assumed was Sheridan's ultimate target. Early had all military stores removed from the city to prevent them from falling into Union hands in the likely event of another Confederate defeat.

Phil Sheridan, wearing a major general's stars, sits uncharacteristically still. He was usually a raging dynamo of energy.



While Early was telegraphing a flurry of hasty orders, Sheridan's blue column proceeded in its usual swift but orderly fashion up the macadamized Valley Pike to Woodstock, where it camped for the night of February 27. The next morning the march resumed with Custer's 3rd Division on point. Despite a steady rain, Union spirits were high, and Sheridan bragged to Grant,"The cavalry officers say the cavalry was never in such good condition." The mood darkened noticeably when eight troopers drowned while attempting to swim their horses across the rain-swollen North Fork of the Shenandoah River. "Many others would have drowned had it not been for the superhuman efforts of a number of officers and men who rushed into the stream and at great personal risk brought them to shore," reported Colonel Alexander Pennington, commander of Custer's 1st Brigade. The rest of the army, having learned a hard lesson, waited for Union engineers to throw a preconstructed pontoon bridge across the river.

At officers' call the next morning, Sheridan informed his subordinates "that we were on a big march of not less than 350 or 400 miles." He left their ultimate destination undisclosed, if indeed he knew it himself, but he made it clear that he had no intention of returning to Winchester after the raid. Nor, for that matter, did he intend to reinforce Sherman in North Carolina, "wherever he may be found." Like many if not most of the soldiers in both armies, Sheridan sensed that the war was drawing to an end in Virginia, and he intended, as he put it, to be "in at the death." Custer's division again took the lead.

At Mount Crawford the Union column ran into Rosser, who had somehow managed to scrape together a couple hundred cavalrymen and was attempting to set fire to the covered bridge across the North River. Custer ordered newly arrived Colonel Henry Capehart to take Capehart's 3rd Brigade and secure the bridge at all costs. Capehart, who had just transferred into Custer's 3rd Division from the 2nd, immediately ordered two regiments to swim across the river above the bridge while he personally led to the rest of the brigade across the now burning timbers. The Confederates managed one last volley before melting back into the woods, although not before 37 of their men had been taken prisoner. The bridge was saved.

Sheridan's column bedded down for the night at Cline's Mill, seven miles north of Staunton. The general directed Colonel Peter Stagg to take his Michigan brigade around Staunton and burn the railroad bridge to the east at Christian Creek to prevent the Rebels from evacuating the town in the dark. Stagg's men piled fence rails on top of the span and burned it to the waterline, but they were too late to stop the enemy evacuation. Early and his staff had already ridden out of Staunton at 3:45 that afternoon to link up with Brig. Gen. Gabriel C. Wharton's ragtag infantry division at Waynesboro, a small village located midway between Staunton and Charlottesville on the banks of the South River near Rockfish Gap in the Blue Ridge Mountains. It was a narrow escape.

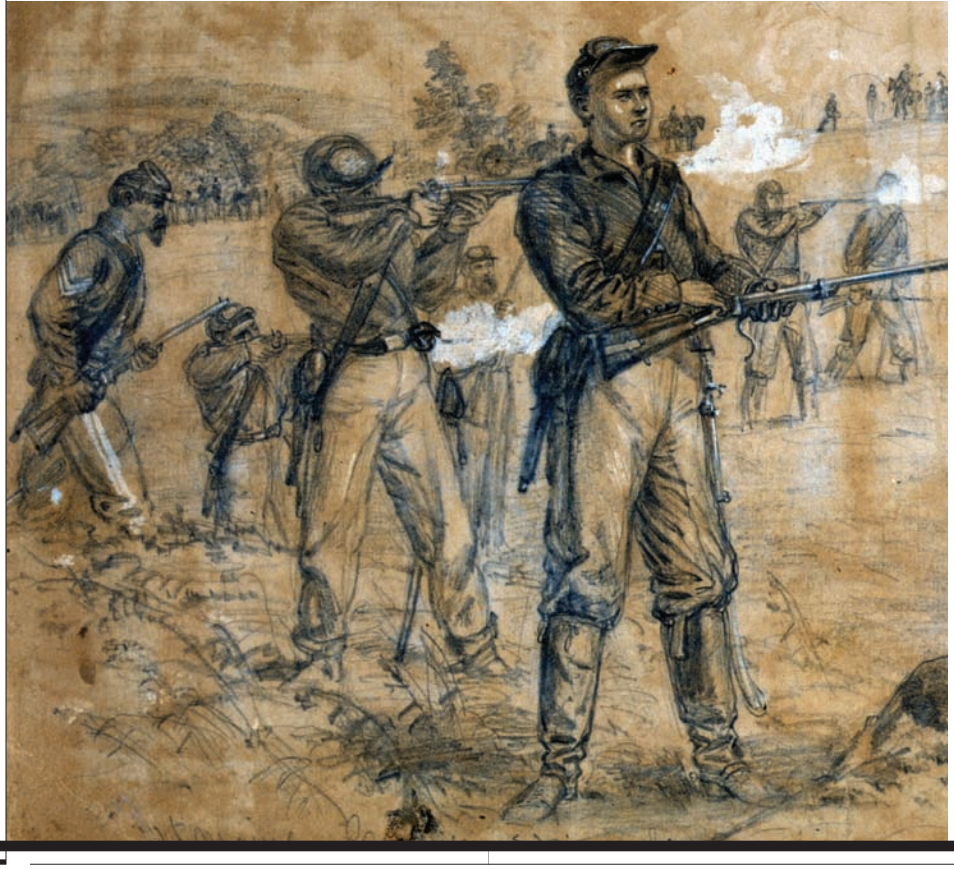
The next morning Sheridan entered Staunton like a conqueror. The streets were deserted and the warehouses empty, but somehow Early had left Sheridan a message to meet him in battle at Waynesboro—or so Sheridan claimed, anyway. It was unlikely that Early, outnumbered 8-to-1 and leaving town in a dust-swirling haste, would have had either the time or the temerity to challenge his pursuer to a duel to the death. More likely, Early expected Sheridan to continue south to Lynchburg, where Early had already stockpiled his largest remaining infantry force. Whatever the truth of the matter, Sheridan explained later that he was reluctant to leave Early's force—all 1,200 of them—operating openly in his rear, although it was anyone's guess what possible harm they could have done in their present state. Still, if Early wanted to fight at Waynesboro, Sheridan was more than happy to accommodate him. Each step Sheridan took to the east carried him that much closer to Grant and that much farther away from Sherman, which was his main purpose for continuing his pursuit of Early. All in all, it seemed a fair trade to Sheridan.

Sheridan directed Custer to "ascertain something definite in regard to the position, movements, and strength of the enemy, and, if possible, destroy the railroad bridge over the South River at that point." Since Sheridan already knew how many men Early had and where they had gone, the order did not make much military sense, but Custer as always obeyed with all due speed. He mounted up and headed east.

Early had uncharacteristically gotten the jump on Sheridan, having already reached Waynesboro and set about preparing a makeshift defensive line on a low ridge just west of town. Wharton, a blooded veteran of all Early's battles in the Shenandoah Valley, was given the unenviable task of holding on to a three-quarter-mile-long line of rifle pits with a skeleton force of 1,000 infantry, 100 cavalry, and six artillery pieces. The line was stretched thin, a mere 200 yards from the rain-swollen South River, and Wharton's sleet-soaked veterans were uncomfortably aware that they had a raging waterway in their rear. To make matters worse for the defenders, the line did not stretch far enough south to touch the westward bend of the river, leaving an eighth of a mile gap and exposing the Confederate flank.

Early's New York-born topographical engineer, Captain Jedediah Hotchkiss, charged later that the general had committed "an unpardonable error" by placing his men in such an exposed position. Early explained, somewhat weakly, that he had placed the men there "to secure the removal of five pieces of artillery for which there were no horses, and some stores still in Waynesboro, as well as to present a bold front to the enemy, and ascertain the object of his movement, which I could do very well if I took refuge at once in the mountain. I did not intend making my final stand on this ground, yet I was satisfied that if my men would fight, which I had no reason to doubt, I could hold the enemy in check until night, and then cross the river and take position in Rockfish Gap." Early was gambling on being able to outbluff the enemy, and the ever aggressive Custer, for one, was impossible to bluff. He simply charged ahead at all times, regardless of the odds. And this time, as everyone knew, the odds were in his favor.

**Custer had some of his cavalry dismount to fight the Confederates on foot at Waynesboro. By this point in the war, the Union cavalry was equally adept on horse or on foot.**



**Sabers flashing, Custer's horsemen charge the Confederates at Waynesboro. The overwhelmed Rebels broke and ran.**

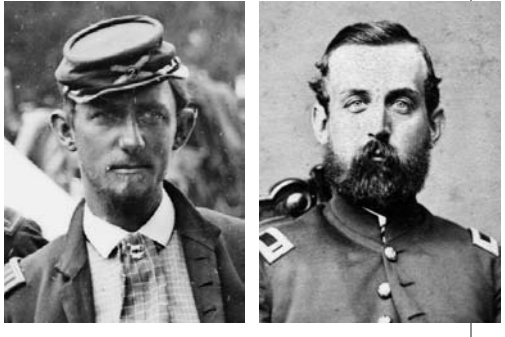
Arriving at Waynesboro at 2 PM on March 2, Custer immediately dispatched Colonel William Wells' 2nd Brigade to probe the Confederate line. A brisk rattle of fire erupted from the rifle pits, convincing Custer that a headlong frontal assault "would involve a large loss of life." Ordinarily this didn't unduly trouble Custer, but he looked around for another approach and soon discovered the dangerous gap between the enemy left and the river. While Wells kept the Confederates occupied on their front, Custer sent Lt. Col. Edward Whitaker, his chief of staff, to order Pennington to dismount three of his regiments and attack the enemy flank through a stand of woods that would obscure their approach.

Wells obeyed briskly and dismounted the 2nd Ohio, 2nd New Jersey, and 1st Connecticut Regiments, all of which were armed with seven-shot Spencer repeating rifles. The brigade's fourth regiment, the 2nd New York, was held in reserve. At a signal from aptly named bugler Joseph Fought, the Union force began the assault. It did not last long. While Lieutenant C.A. Woodruff's horse artillery blasted away at the Rebel breastworks, Pennington's men charged forward at the dead run, yelling like fiends. Meanwhile, Capehart's 3rd Brigade stormed into the works from the front. The overwhelmed defenders broke for the rear, in what a disgusted Jedediah Hotchkiss termed "one of the most terrible panics and stampedes I have ever seen. There was perfect rout along the road up the mountain."

Early, watching the enemy attack from a hill between the rifles pits and the river, saw at once that everything was lost. Cutting through a nearby stand of trees, he and his staff raced on horseback for the bridge leading to Rockfish Gap. Early and Wharton made it, but Dr. Hunter McGuire, the army's gifted medical director who had treated the mortally wounded Stonewall Jackson two years earlier, was not so lucky. Attempting to jump his horse over a fence rail, McGuire and his mount went sprawling face first into the mud. When he looked up, the first thing he saw was a Union cavalryman pointing a carbine at his head, his trigger finger twitching. Thinking quickly, McGuire made the arcane distress signal used by members of the Masonic Order. Fortunately for him, a Federal officer and fellow Mason rode up at that point and took charge of the shaken Confederate physician, telling the trooper, "This man is my prisoner. Let him alone."

McGuire was only one of more than 1,200 Confederates captured at Waynesboro, along with all 11 artillery pieces, 17 battle flags, and 150 wagons, including Early's own headquarters wagon. Union losses were a miniscule nine killed or wounded. After a brief unsuccessful pursuit of Rebel stragglers who made it safely through Rockfish Gap, Custer broke off the attack and rode up to report the victory to Sheridan, who had just arrived on the scene. As Sheridan staff member Captain George B. Sanford remembered, "Up came Custer himself with his following, and in the hands of his orderlies, one to each, were the seventeen battle flags streaming in the wind. It was great spectacle and the sort of thing which Custer thoroughly enjoyed."

So too did Sheridan, who praised Custer for making a "brilliant fight" and reported to Washington with pardonable pride that the battle at Waynesboro had closed hostilities in the Shenandoah Valley. It also closed Early's military career. Never again would Old Jube command troops in battle. While Sheridan went on to complete a brilliant Civil War career and personally attended Robert E. Lee's surrender to Ulysses S. Grant in Wilmer McLean's parlor at Appomattox, Early spent the last weeks of the war licking his wounds and preparing to retire to an embittered postwar career as one of the most unreconstructed of Southerners. He neither forgot nor forgave.



**Custer's brigade commanders, Cols. Alexander Pennington, left, and William Wells, right.**

As for Early's longtime opponent, the postwar years eventually brought Sheridan the command of the entire United States Army, one of whose members, golden-haired George Armstrong Custer, would meet his fate in typical Custer fashion on the banks of the Little Bighorn River in Montana 11 years later. There, unlike the Confederates at Waynesboro, the Sioux and Cheyenne warriors enjoyed a vast numerical advantage over Custer's 7th Cavalry. The tables had been turned, the odds reversed, and Custer lost his last desperate wager, almost without placing a bet. □

By Don Troiani

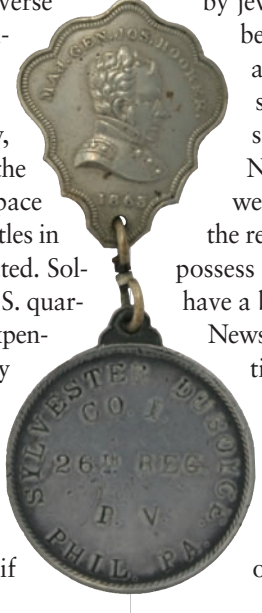
# Personal identification badges were worn by soldiers in the Civil War to avoid the dreaded "nameless grave."


**LEFT: Silver cavalry badge of Lieutenant C.M. Pease, 5th New York. CENTER: Badge for Drummer William R. Adams, 33rd New Jersey, made from a silver coin. RIGHT: Andrew N. Kennedy's Signal Corps badge. BELOW: Personal identification badge worn by Private Sylvester Duboyce, Co. I, 26th Pennsylvania Volunteers. Duboyce was wounded twice, at Gettysburg and Spotsylvania.**

THE American Civil War may well have been the first major conflict in which soldiers felt the need to wear some sort of a personal identification badge in the event that they were killed or wounded in battle. A great apprehension among soldiers was "the nameless grave," the fear that loved ones might not recover their remains or learn what had become of them. Although hand-written slips of paper with soldiers' names and information were often attached to their uniforms before they went into battle, a more reliable solution quickly took hold—the personal identification badge.

In the days when military secrets were not so secret, such badges openly proclaimed not only the soldier's rank, but also his regiment and often his corps and division. These badges fell into three categories: identification disks with die-stamped information, identification badges with engraved inscriptions, and corps badges that displayed the same information but within the shape of one of the various army corps symbols.

The first type was a coin-like disk, often stamped with the soldier's hometown and state, that would aid in identifying his body for burial or shipment home. Some consider this type of badge to be the forerunner of the World War II-era "dog tags." Fabricated of gilt brass or white metal, they were typically worn on the chest suspended from a patriotic clasp featuring an eagle or a favorite commander such as George B. McClellan or Philip Kearny. Generally, there was an eagle or hero on one side of the disk, often with the inscription "War of 1861," since no one knew how long the conflict would last. On the reverse side, the soldier's name, company, regiment, and hometown were stamped with individual letter punches. Occasionally, instead of a patriotic figure on the face of some disks, a blank space was provided for listing the battles in which the soldier had participated. Soldiers and jewelers often used U.S. quarter-dollar silver coins as an inexpensive substitute for commercially produced disks. One side of the coin was shaved smooth to accommodate the engraved information. A hinged T-bar pin was sweat-soldered to the reverse, leaving the coin motif fully visible, possibly as proof of the silver content.




Early in the war, Maj. Gen. Philip Kearny ordered his troops to wear a red cloth patch on their caps so that he might recognize the soldiers of his command. These were quickly accepted as a proud symbol by the men of his hard-fighting division. In March 1863, Maj. Gen. Joseph Hooker, the new commander of the Army of the Potomac, devised a similar system of cloth badges to be worn on the caps of the men in each army corps so that troops from different commands could be easily distinguished by their officers. The cut-out cloth emblems took various shapes: a circle for I Corps, a three-leaf clover for II, a diamond for the III, and a Maltese cross for V. Each badge's shape was also a different color to differentiate the three divisions composing each corps: red for the 1st Division, white for the 2nd, and blue for the 3rd. The concept was immensely popular with the soldiers, who quickly began to have their own customized badges fabricated and engraved by jewelers and pin makers. Not to be outdone, sailors in the Navy also adopted pin-on badges, some adorned with ship profiles such as ironclad monitors.

Northern jewelers nationwide were astonishingly quick to exploit the ready market of soldiers eager to possess such a badge and, indeed, to have a better one than their comrades. Newspaper ads for badges were plentiful, and soldiers were enlisted as "agents in the field" for various firms. Many badges were simple thin-sheet silver stampings or cut-outs, with an engraved inscription, or colored enamel-filled center, or


**ABOVE: Flip sides of Lieutenant Daniel P. Hardy's ID badge. The back lists his battles in the "War of 1861." RIGHT: Identification badge for Major E.R. Smith, 169th New York Volunteers.**

both. Some, however, were ornate gold and silver wonders of craftsmanship produced by the most prestigious American firms, such as the farewell badge that famed Brig. Gen. Joshua L. Chamberlain pinned to the chest of Brig. Gen. Charles Griffin in May 1865. Made by Tiffany & Company, which was a premier supplier of military goods of every type imaginable, from uniform buttons to weaponry, the badge was made of enameled gold displaying the Maltese cross of V Corps on a white ground. Edged with diamonds, the badge was crowned with a larger center diamond that was reputed to have cost $1,000—an astounding sum at the time. After the war, Chamberlain commissioned Tiffany to make a gold and enameled charm bracelet for his wife, Fanny, which incorporated military and rank symbols as the primary ornaments.

Confederate soldiers also used identification badges, but not nearly to the extent of their Yankee foes. Most were made of thin-sheet silver or brass and incorporated designs such as stars and crescents. Surviving examples of these badges are exceedingly rare, and fakes abound. It is wise to assume a guilty-until-proven-innocent approach with all Confederate badges—most are modern forgeries.

Quite a few Union identity disks have survived to the present, a large number having been found by relic hunters on Civil War battlefields and camps. Collectors value these badges primarily by two factors. If the regiment was a famous one, that is a big plus, and if the individual saw extensive service, it is even better. If he was killed or wounded at a famous battle, that is as good as it gets for collectors. Although certain styles of badges are rarer than others, the history is always the major factor in determining desirability. Disks can run from a few hundred dollars to a few thousand.

Identification and corps badges follow pretty much the same factors as the identity disks, with the latter being the most coveted by collectors because both the corps symbol and the soldier's identity are combined in a single item. Some army corps adopted emblems very late in the war, and consequently some (such as the triangle of IV Corps) are exceptionally scarce and are in high demand, even if the soldier himself had a lackluster service record.

As with all antiques of any value, fakery is an incessant problem in the pursuit of Civil War badges. The most flagrant offenders are badges made from coins. Original, well-worn period silver coins of the era are abundant and inexpensive, and they provide forgers with an authentic starting point for their fraud. One side is shaved down and appropriately engraved with a soldier's name and unit. The deceivers have become quite clever and often select less well-known regiments to allay suspicions aroused by too-good-to-be-true famous regiments. Frequently, real soldier's names are selected from period rosters so that a search will reveal that he was an actual soldier. Although fake engravings are generally not 19th-century quality, some very accomplished counterfeits have shown up. One should also be wary of silver badges that are cast or on the thick side. Most authentic badges were thin-sheet silver and cut or stamped out.

Most badges attached with a hinged pin-type back. A safety pin type fastener is cause for alarm as a rule because most collectors consider this a postwar feature. A missing pin on the back can reduce value by as much as 20 percent. Additional badges were made for veterans after the war and well into the early 1900s to wear at reunions and to commemorate their proud service. The later versions can often be difficult to distinguish from pre-1865 specimens, but most are made of German silver and are easy to spot. While still of interest to collectors, they rarely come close to the value of actual wartime specimens.

Many museums do possess some badges, but few have more than two or three on display at any given time. You can see many more at a good Civil War collector show in the dealers' cases or when a collector decides to mount a display of badges. Three of the nation's best specialty Civil War collectors shows are the Gettysburg Civil War Collectors Show, Eisenhower Inn, Gettysburg, PA, usually held on the last weekend in June; the American Civil War Show, Dulles Expo Center, Chantilly, VA, in April; and the Civil War Collectible Show, Tennessee State Fairgrounds, Nashville, in early December.

Authentic badges periodically turn up on eBay, so if you feel confident enough to wade through the minefield of stinkers, a nice item can be bought, often at a reasonable price. Many times dealers in antique jewelry and silver come across the badges mixed in with other trinkets when they buy estate collections, and it is always wise to sift through their lesser offerings at shows.

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## ESPIONAGE

*Continued from page 15*

drawn on the account—$100 to Canning, a $150 check cashed by Booth on January 7, 1865, and another one for $25 that was also cashed by Booth on March 16. What makes these transactions interesting is that Booth had made deposits in Cooke's bank just after he made his covert trip to Montreal. When Booth was killed at Garrett's farm, soldiers found a Canadian bill of exchange on his body. This paper trail has been cited by researchers attempting to tie Booth to the covert activities of the Confederate Secret Service and its relationship to the assassination of the president. When Federal detectives searched the room of George Atzerodt, one of Booth's accomplices in the plot to kill the president, they found Booth's bank book with the $455 amount duly recorded.

Another accomplice of John Wilkes Booth in the Canadian operation was John Surratt Jr., whose mother, Mary, owned the boarding house in Washington where Booth and his accomplices met to plan the president's capture/murder. Surratt was a Confederate courier and a friend of Booth's. After the president's assassination, Surratt fled to Canada, where he was given sanctuary by Catholic priests before making his way to England, Italy, and Egypt, where he was captured and sent back to the United States to stand trial in the president's murder. Young Surratt faced the same charges as that of his doomed mother, Mary, but the jury failed to reach a verdict and he was set free.

No positive link to the Lincoln assassination and the Confederate spymasters in Canada has ever been made. Like so much else surrounding the controversial mission, the facts remain in the shadows. The Confederate operations in Montreal and other Canadian cities were merely a sideshow to the savage land battles being fought in the United States. But the operations had the blessing and authorship of the highest levels of the Confederate government in Richmond. Perhaps they gave their blessing to Booth as well. If so, the evidence remains to be seen. □

## ALCOHOL ABUSE

*Continued from page 35*

ankle had been crushed by a train. After the injuries were set and bandaged, the soldier remained in excruciating pain and his condition worsened. Checking the patient, Pember found that the bandaged leg was perfectly healthy, while the other leg was "swollen, inflamed, and purple." The attending surgeon had been so drunk that he set the wrong leg. Fever set in and the patient died at the hospital.

Plagued with food shortages, inflation, and transportation problems, Southern soldiers and civilians dealt with severe shortages of alcohol caused by state legislatures restricting the use of grain, corn and foodstuffs for distilled liquor. Private distilling took a blow after the Federal capture of Chattanooga in September 1863 and advancing Union forces captured copper mines desperately needed by the South. Not only did their loss crimp production of brass artillery pieces, it also threatened the manufacture of percussion caps and artillery friction primers. The Confederate Ordnance Bureau confiscated scores of copper whiskey stills in western North Carolina. Metal from the stills went into many of the South's percussion caps made during the remainder of the war.

Southern blockade runners brought wine, whiskey, brandy and other potables from Europe. Less popular than wine and brandy, but still showing up in blockade runner holds, were rum, gin, Scotch whisky, champagne, ale, porter, and schnapps. Occasionally one might even find imported cut glass decanters to serve the imported liquors. Pure alcohol, intended as medical supplies, also passed through the blockade. Blockade-run liquor was beyond the financial means of most Confederates, forcing many people to turn to home-made substitutes. Despite wartime laws, some corn and grain found their way into whiskey. When these standard ingredients were not available, distillers turned to sweet potatoes, rice, sorghum seeds, and persimmons.

On October 21, 1863, the *Charleston Courier* published a recipe for persimmon brandy. Mashed by a pestle or simply with one's hands, persimmons were mixed with warm water and left to ferment for five or six days. Then the mash was ready for distillation. In thrifty fashion, the writer suggested saving the persimmon seeds. They could be used for buttons, or parched and mixed with dried sweet potatoes to make a coffee substitute. Beer and wine were simpler to make at home than whiskey, as they needed no distilling apparatus. Newspapers published numerous recipes for persimmon beer. Wine and brandy were made from any kind of available fruit, including peaches, pears, cherries, blackberries, plums, and even watermelons.

F.P. Porcher's 1863 work *Resources of Southern Fields and Forests* listed uses for hundreds of plants that grew in the Confederacy. He gave recipes for making beer from corn, persimmons, and boiled sassafras shoots. Blackberries could also be used to make wine, and with the addition of spices and whiskey, a healthy cordial could be concocted. Porcher also mentioned dozens of medicines that could be prepared from native herbs added to whiskey, wine, or brandy. Another way of coping with the lack of alcohol was to make a joke of it. By early 1864, "starvation parties" were becoming a fad in Richmond. Attendees wore the best finery they could manage. Unlike antebellum parties, there were no imported wines or liquors. The fine punchbowls and glassware remaining from the days before the war held only water from the James River.

Robert E. Lee once remarked that it was not possible to have an army without music. He might just as well have said that it was not possible to have an army without whiskey. Whether serving as an innocent aid to relaxation, medication to treat wounds or disease, or a lure to the evils of vice and desertion, whiskey and other types of alcoholic beverages were firmly rooted in the armies of the 1860s. The many creative ways alcohol found its way to soldiers and sailors, and the methods used to control its influence, are intertwined with the story of battles, generals, regiments, and ships of war. □

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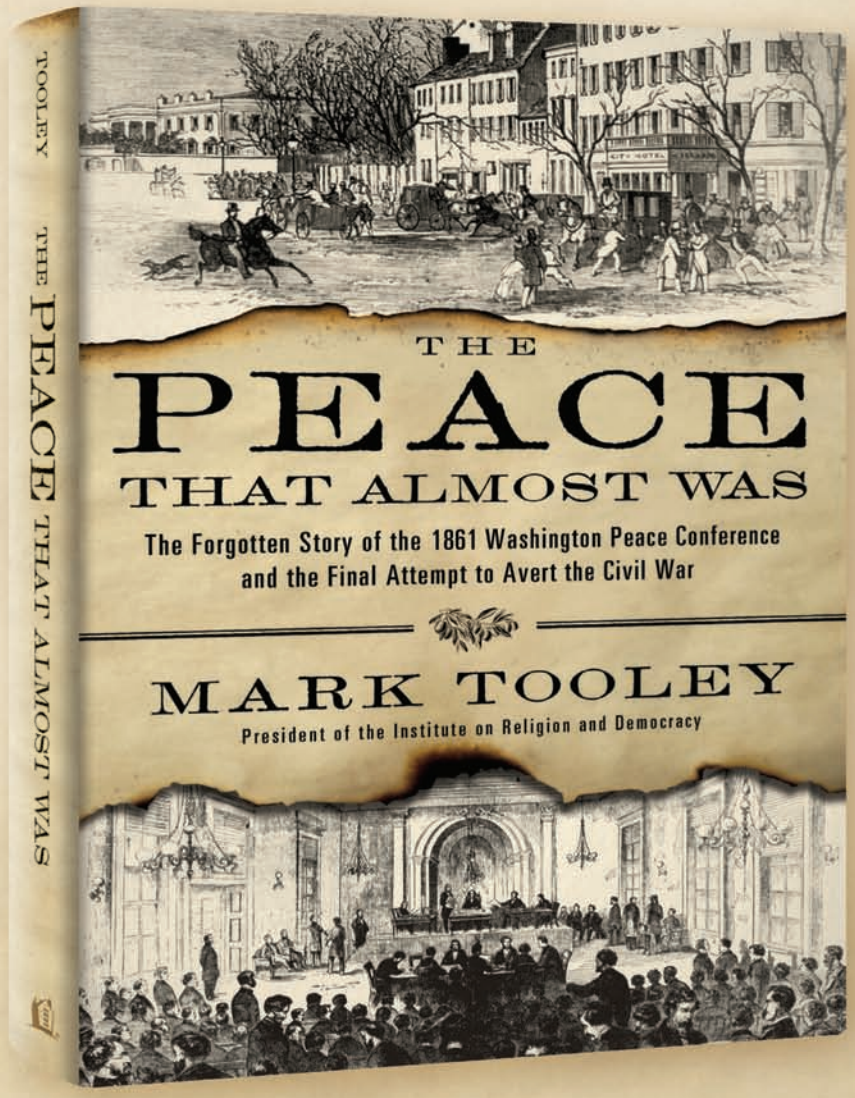


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