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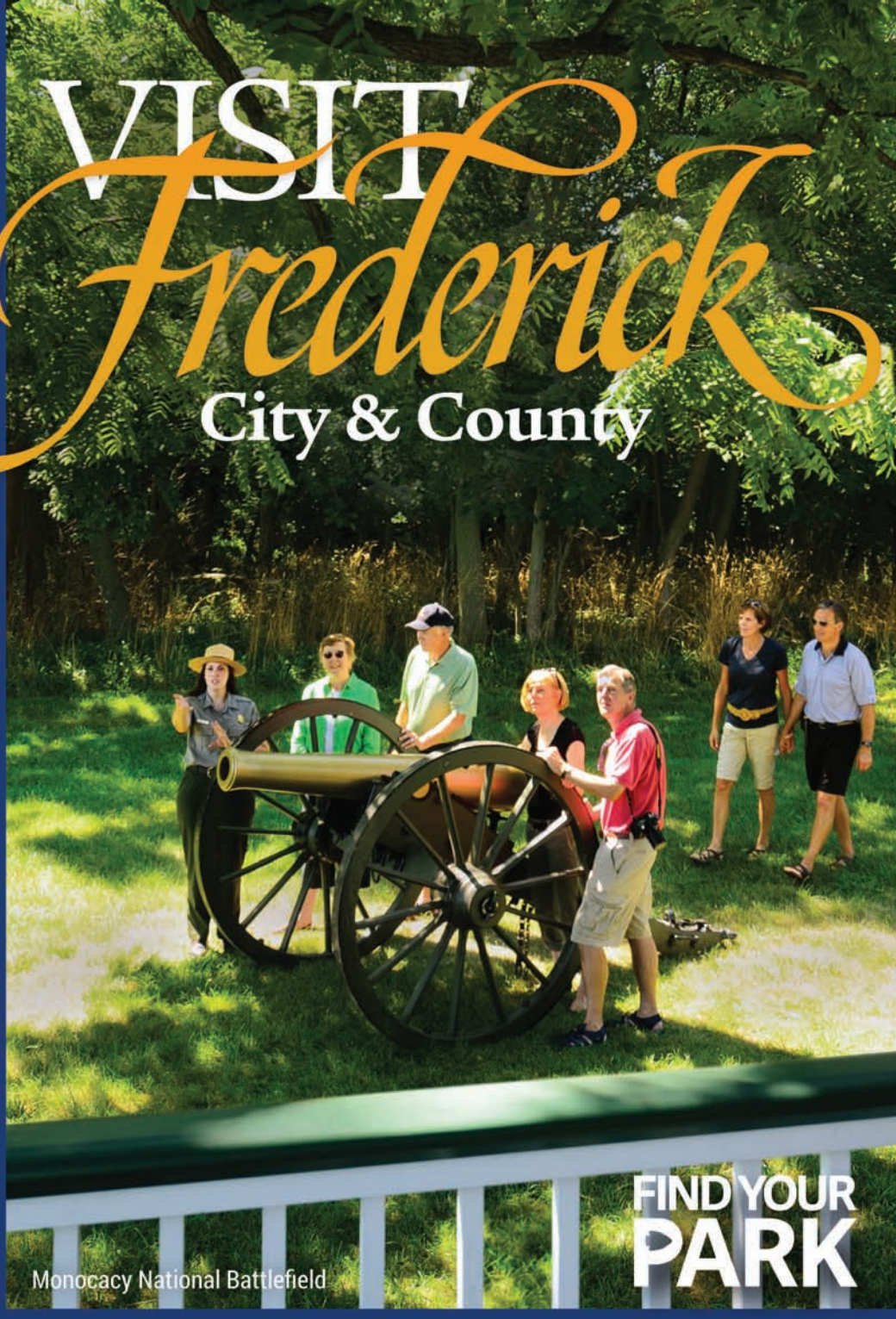

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Likable, inept Ambrose Burnside knew better than anyone that he was ill suited to command an entire army in combat.

Nothing in Ambrose Burnside's pre-Civil War career indicated that he would be anything but a successful and energetic general. A graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, Class of 1847, he had served in the Mexican War and on the southwestern frontier, being wounded during a skirmish with Apaches. He was well liked and well considered by his superiors.

The first hint of trouble came after Burnside resigned his commission in 1853 to open a munitions factory in his native state of Rhode Island. He intended to manufacture a new breech-loading carbine he had personally designed. The Burnside carbine was a short rifle with no fore stock that fired a .54-caliber metallic cartridge—the first American firearm to use such a round.

The success of Burnside's Bristol-based enterprise depended entirely on receiving a government contract. But despite producing and selling 200 of the weapons to the Army, he failed to secure the expected contract. As a consequence, he was forced into bankruptcy, with creditors assuming control of the carbine's patent. Eventually, some 55,000 Burnside carbines were sold to the government, along with millions of rounds of metallic ammunition. Burnside did not receive a penny of the profits.

When the Civil War began, Burnside, then a major general in the Rhode Island Militia, was named a colonel of the 1st Rhode Island Volunteers, a 90-day regiment he had helped organize. Rushing to the nation's capital, he fought competently at the First Battle of Bull Run and was promoted to brigadier general.

In the spring of 1862, Burnside led an expedition down the coast of North Carolina, capturing Roanoke Island, New Bern, Beaufort, and Fort Macon, despite being threatened with mutiny several times by the men in his combined Army-Navy invasion force and almost drowning off the coast of Cape Hatteras.

At the Battle of Antietam, Burnside needlessly delayed his arrival on the battlefield by fretting over the construction of a stone bridge across Antietam Creek. The picayune bridge-building prevented his friend McClellan from crushing Robert E. Lee's Confederates and perhaps winning the war outright. Adding insult to injury, the bridge proved entirely unnecessary—the water in the creek was only knee deep.

Twice Lincoln offered Burnside command of the Army of the Potomac, and twice Burnside turned him down. Lincoln's offers were both personal and political. He genuinely seemed to like Burnside, and he also wanted to soften the blow of removing the popular McClellan by replacing him with his best friend.

Finally, in November 1862, Burnside accepted the president's offer and began making plans to attack Lee at Fredericksburg, Virginia. His plan depended heavily on surprise, but Lee was waiting for Burnside with his full army on Marye's Heights when the Union attackers swarmed through the city on December 13. Wave after wave of Union attackers rushed the entrenched Confederate position, only to be decimated by massive rifle and artillery fire. Burnside muttered in anguish, "Oh, those men, those men." More than 12,000 casualties were inflicted by Lee's soldiers, at a cost of less than half that number.

Following an ill-fated flank march that became infamous as "Burnside's Mud March," Burnside was mercifully removed from command and transferred west to the Department of the Ohio. He returned in time to lead the IX Corps in the various battles of Ulysses S. Grant's Wilderness campaign before coming to grief in the rubble of the Crater.

Grant pronounced a harsh, if fair, judgment of Burnside's career: "An officer who was generally liked and respected, he was not fitted to command an army. No one knew that better than himself." Burnside had tried twice to tell Lincoln that very thing. It was too bad for everyone involved that the president had failed to believe him.

Roy Morris Jr.

CIVIL WAR Quarterly

Volume 3 ■ Number 1

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Southerner vs. Southerner

BY CAROLE E. SCOTT

A sizable minority of Southerners, particularly in border states such as Tennessee, Missouri, and Kentucky, did not support the Confederacy. Acts of civil disobedience and sabotage led to a severe crackdown on Southern Unionists.

THE Confederate States of America fought two wars, one against the armed forces of the United States and one against fellow Southerners who joined either the Union Army or pro-Union guerrilla groups. Although they came from all classes, most Southern Unionists differed socially, culturally, and economically from their region's dominant prewar, slave-owning planter class. As many as 100,000 men living in the 11 Confederate states eventually served in the Union Army. The majority of them were from Tennessee, North Carolina, and Virginia/West Virginia.

In 1860, most white residents of the slave states did not live in the so-called "plantation belt." Instead, they lived in areas substantially populated by small farmers and herdsmen who owned few if any slaves. Opposition to secession was greatest in slave states sharing a border with a free state. Border state slave owners may have feared that many of their slaves would successfully run away if their state left the Union because the Fugitive Slave Act, which required that runaways who reached free states be returned to their owners, might be repealed.

The 13 states the Confederate government claimed included Missouri and Kentucky, which did not formally secede from the Union. Maryland was not included. To keep Washington, D.C., from being surrounded by the Confederacy, the Federal government quickly imposed martial law in Maryland and garrisoned it with Union troops, thus effectively preventing the state from leaving the Union.

Most of the white Southerners who chose to join the Union Army lived in the Confederacy's border states and the Deep South's relatively poor "white counties," which were too infertile to support plantation agriculture. As a result, they had few if any black residents, either slaves or freedmen. White counties were concentrated in but not confined to the Appalachian Mountains—western Virginia, eastern Kentucky, western North Carolina, eastern Tennessee, northern Georgia, and northern Alabama. Many Southern Unionists in these states shared Northerners' hatred of the region's aristocratic, slave-owning oligarchy.

Widespread opposition to secession initially kept Virginia in the Union. Such opposition was strongest in western Virginia, where only one out of 100 voters owned slaves. Nonetheless, half of Virginia's northwestern counties (which in 1863 became the state of West Virginia) were in favor of Virginia seceding. As many as half of West Virginia's eligible men later fought for the Confederacy.

So strong was pro-Union sentiment in mountainous North Alabama and adjoining East Tennessee that it was proposed the two regions unite to form a new loyal state called Nickajack. Representatives from 26 counties in East Tennessee's mountainous, grain-growing and stock-raising region agreed to secede from Tennessee. Their petition to do so was rejected by the state legislature, and Confederate troops were sent to occupy East Tennessee to prevent its secession. In East Tennessee the vast majority of whites owned no slaves, and Union supporters outnumbered Confederate supporters. The majority of Confederate soldiers did not own slaves.

When the war began, Union leaders greatly overestimated how many Southern civilians were Unionists at heart and assumed that if they were treated well they would turn against the Confederacy. When that proved not to be the case, President Abraham Lincoln and his generals turned to a hard war policy that targeted anything

Union Captains William Cross and David Fry secretly lead a covey of Tennessee Unionists in swearing allegiance on an American flag. These pro-Northern Southerners would burn a number of bridges in East Tennessee in an attempt to sabotage Confederate war efforts.

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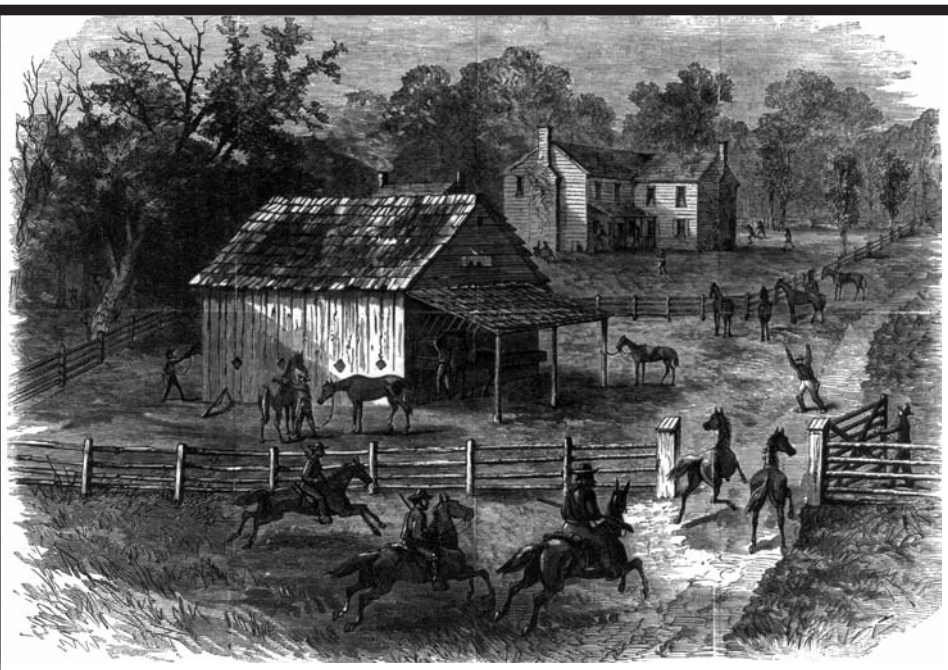

Pro-Union guerrillas steal horses from their fellow Southerners during a nighttime raid on a farm. Such raids were motivated, in part, by attacks by Confederate Army units or pro-slavery neighbors.

and everything that might help the Confederacy. To deal with Confederate guerrillas, executions and the destruction and confiscation of property were allowed. In Kentucky, Union Maj. Gen. Stephen G. Burbridge executed four Confederate prisoners for every Union soldier or citizen killed by bushwhackers—a name originally used only to describe Confederate guerrillas.

When Union Colonel William Weer of the Army of the Frontier was in Carrollton, Arkansas, he issued a draconian order on April 4, 1863: "It having come to the knowledge of the colonel commanding that the forage trains of this command are repeatedly fired into on Osage Fork of Kings River by lawless men, who secrete themselves in the bushes and are encouraged and entertained by the inhabitants in that vicinity, you are therefore instructed to proceed to said neighborhood with the wagons placed in your charge, destroy every house and farm etc. owned by secessionists, together with their property that cannot be made available to the army; kill every bushwhacker you find; bring away the women and children to this place, with provision enough to support them, and report to these headquarters upon your return."

Pro-Union Southerners who organized guerrilla bands had a variety of objectives. Among them were controlling their community politically and economically; harassing and defending themselves from representatives of the Confederacy; assisting the Union Army; and resisting attacks from neighbors who supported the Confederacy. Vicious, neighbor-against-neighbor guerrilla activity was worst in Arkansas, Kentucky, Missouri, Tennessee, and Virginia/West Virginia.

In Tennessee and the adjacent areas of Kentucky, the Cumberland Mountains provided ideal conditions for guerrilla warfare. The section's isolated territory, much of it rough and inaccessible, made it suitable terrain for irregular warfare. Moreover, residents there clung to traditions that encouraged the growth of guerrilla bands—retribution, family feuds, class conflicts, vigilantism, and backwoods opposition to authority. Some Unionist guerrilla bands were composed of draftees who had deserted from the Confederate Army, men trying to avoid being conscripted into the army, and genuine outlaws whose objective was simply to prey on others. Roaming bands took advantage of the war to steal and rob. Acts of murder, arson, torture, intimidation, robbery, and pillage were so prevalent in some places that those loyal to the Confederacy simply fled to more congenial surroundings.

Throughout the war, both the Union and Confederate armies were negatively affected by guerrilla groups. A full-scale guerrilla war that began before 1861 continued to fester in Missouri. West Virginia authorized guerrilla groups organized to fight Confederate guerrilla groups to operate as state troops. But regular Union troops and Unionist guerrillas were only able to prevent loyal West Virginians from having to flee their homes and guard against any major damage to the vital Baltimore & Ohio Railroad.

In August 1861, the Confederate Congress passed an Alien Enemies Act that gave people 40 days to swear allegiance to the Confederacy or else leave the South. Failure to do so subjected one to arrest and expulsion. A Sequestration Act called for the property of disloyal Southerners to be confiscated and sold at a public auction. Many East Tennesseans lost their homes and property as a result of the act, leading to the most serious and determined act of pro-Union sabotage of the war. It would become known as "the Night of the Burning Bridges."

Unionist East Tennessee was important to the Union war effort because the railroads that ran through it were linked to the rest of the Confederacy. In 1861, William Blount Carter, a Unionist Presbyterian minister in Tennessee whose brother was a Union general, proposed to Union Brig. Gen. George H. Thomas that Unionists burn down nine bridges in East Tennessee to destroy the rail and telegraph connections between Virginia and Georgia. The plan called for Unionists to set fire to the bridges on the night of November 8. The burning of the bridges would be followed by an uprising of armed Unionists against the Confederacy and Thomas's troops invading and liberating East Tennessee from their camps in Kentucky.

After meeting with Thomas, Carter traveled to Washington to outline his scheme for President Lincoln, Secretary of State William Henry Seward, and Maj. Gen. George McClellan, the army commander. Lincoln approved the venture, and Carter


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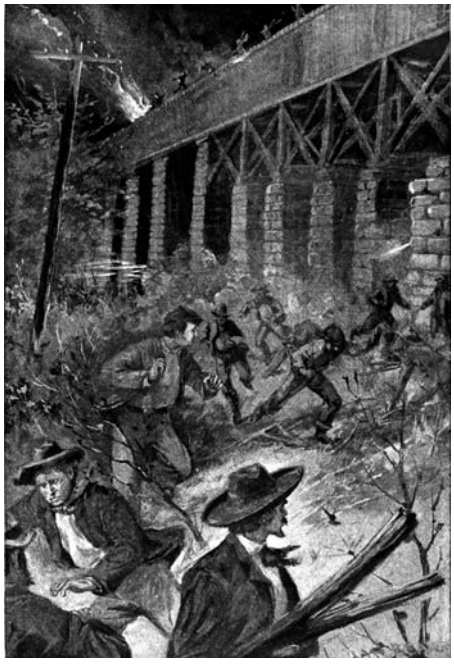
left the capital with $2,500 for expenses and a firm commitment from Lincoln for a Federal invasion of East Tennessee. Accompanied by Union Captains William Cross and David Fry, Carter quickly recruited 11 other cohorts for the raid. He selected local Unionist A.M. Cate to lead an attack on four bridges in southeast Tennessee and Robert W. Ragan and James D. Keener to strike the strategically vital bridge across the Tennessee River at Bridgeport, Alabama. Other groups would hit bridges between Chattanooga and Knoxville.

On the appointed night, the bridge burners set out. Ragan and Kenner were unable to burn the Bridgeport span, which was swarming with Confederate defenders, but Cate and his men managed to burn four bridges across the Hiwassee River around Charleston and Cleveland, Tennessee. In Marion County, 30 miles north of Bridgeport, Cate's brother, W.T. Cate, managed with his henchmen to set fire to bridges east of Chattanooga on the Western & Atlantic and East Tennessee & Georgia Railroads.

Fifteen miles northeast of Knoxville, another Unionist, William C. Pickens, led a group of a dozen sympathizers in an assault on an East Tennessee & Virginia Railroad bridge crossing the Holston River at Strawberry Plains. Carrying a lighted torch, Pickens crept along the riverbank. He was just about to fire the bridge when a bullet smashed into his thigh. James Keelan, the lone watchman, grabbed Pickens and held on for dear life while other Unionists stabbed wildly at the pair, accidentally wounding Pickens in the process. Keelan, wounded by gunfire, staggered off to summon help while the frustrated Pickens, who had dropped the group's only set of matches during the struggle, limped away under cover of darkness.

In upper East Tennessee, Captain David Fry and Daniel Stover (Senator Andrew Johnson's son-in-law) led separate assaults on bridges in Greene and Sullivan Counties. While the bridges burned, separate groups of Unionists skirmished with Confederate forces at Strawberry Plains, Union Depot, and Carter Depot. As late as two



East Tennessee Unionists set fire to a railroad trestle on "the Night of the Burning Bridges," November 8, 1861. Arsonists struck from Bridgeport, Alabama, to Strawberry Plains, Tennessee, causing a wave of panic to sweep across the South.

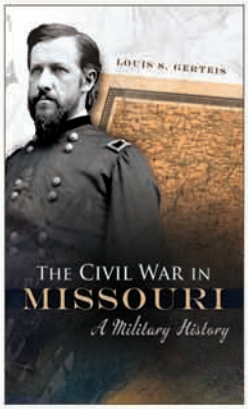
weeks later, Confederate regulars were flushing out loyalists in mountain coves along the Doe River.

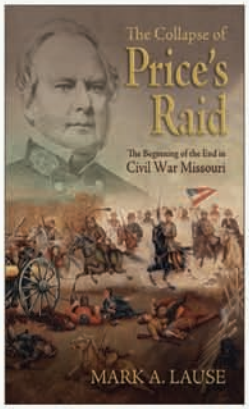
News of the night's destruction swept quickly across the South. Colonel W.B. Wood, the Confederate commander at Knoxville, informed General Samuel Cooper on November 11, "My fears expressed to you by letters and dispatches of 4th and 5th instant have been realized by the destruction of no less than five railroad bridges—two on the East Tennessee and Virginia road, one on the East Tennessee and Georgia road and two on the Western and Atlantic road. The indications were apparent to me but I was powerless to avert it. The whole country is now in a state of rebellion. A thousand men are within six miles of Strawberry Plains bridge and an attack is contemplated to-morrow. I have sent Col. Powel there with 200 infantry, one company cavalry and about 100 citizens armed with shotguns and country rifles. Five hundred Unionists left Hamilton County today we suppose to attack Loudon bridge. I have Major Campbell there with 200 infantry and one company cavalry. I have about the same force at this point and a cavalry company at Watauga bridge. The slow course of civil law in punishing such incendiaries it seems to me will not have the salutary effect which is desirable. I learn from two gentlemen just arrived that another camp is being formed about ten miles from here in Sevier County and already 300 are in camp. They are being reinforced from Blount, Roane, Johnson, Greene, Carter and other counties. I need not say that great alarm is felt by the few Southern men. They are finding places of safety for their families and would gladly enlist if we had arms to furnish them."

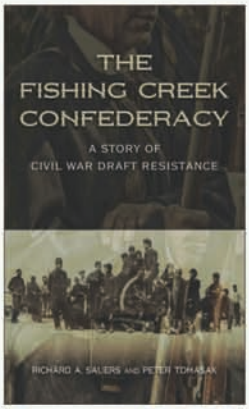
Panic swept across East Tennessee while Confederate officials rushed reinforcements into the area from Richmond, Memphis, and Mobile. The Confederate commander in the district, Brig. Gen. Felix Zollicoffer, who had worked hard to protect Unionists' personal and property rights, felt betrayed by the night's events. "The leniency shown them has been unavailing," he said. "They have acted with base duplicity and should no longer be trusted." He instructed Wood to disarm all suspected Union sympathizers and throw them in jail.

In a November 20 telegram, Wood assured Confederate Secretary of War Judah Benjamin, "The rebellion in East Tennessee has been put down in some of the counties, and will be effectually suppressed in less than two weeks in all the counties. We have now in custody some of their leaders, Judge Patterson, the son-in-law of Andrew Johnson, Col. Pickens, the senator from Sevier, and others of influence and some distinction in their counties. They really deserve the gallows, and, if consistent with the laws, ought speedily to receive their deserts."

Benjamin responded, "Your report of the 20th instant is received, and I now proceed to give you the desired instruction in relation to the prisoners of war taken by you among the traitors of East Tennessee. First. All such as can be identified in having been engaged in bridge-burning are to be tried summarily by drum-head court martial, and, if found guilty, executed on the spot by hanging in the vicinity of the burned







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bridges. Second. All such as have not been so engaged are to be treated as prisoners of war, and sent with an armed guard to Tuscaloosa, Alabama, there to be kept imprisoned at the depot selected by the Government for prisoners of war.... In no case is one of the men known to have been up in arms against the Government to be released on any pledge or oath of allegiance. The time for such measures is past. They are all to be held as prisoners of war and held in jail till the end of the war."

As many as 1,000 prominent and not so prominent East Tennesseans were arrested and taken to Knoxville. Five men were

hanged, and 400 were imprisoned in Alabama. The number of Confederate soldiers in Knoxville quadrupled, with roughly one soldier for every man, woman, and child in the city. Wood sent squads of men door to door to confiscate firearms from the entire civilian population.

Ultimately, East Tennessee Unionists were left holding the bag because Thomas, who had been on his way to support them, was recalled at the last moment by his superior, Brig. Gen. William T. Sherman, and ordered to hold Cumberland Gap against a suspected attack. Thomas protested, but it was too late to warn the bridge burners of the change of plans. In the end, the attack Sherman feared never came.

In explaining why people in East Tennessee remained loyal to the Union, Samuel W. Scott, a captain in the 13th Regiment

ABOVE: This bridge at Strawberry Plains was the northernmost target of pro-Union arsonists on "the Night of the Burning Bridges." It is shown in an 1864 photograph under Union guard. LEFT: Captain John Raines, left, served in the 2nd Tennessee Cavalry; his brother, Private Thomas Raines, right, served in the 5th Tennessee Infantry. Both were Union Army units.

Tennessee (Union) Volunteer Cavalry and Samuel P. Angel, the regiment's adjutant, later wrote, "One reason may be found in the fact that the soil and climate are not adapted to the growth of cotton, rice and tobacco, the great staples of the South, hence slave labor could not be employed to the same advantage as in the Cotton States. The people, or a large number of them, were comparatively poor and earned their living by daily labor. They were not slow to perceive that slave labor must enter into competition with them, lessen their wages and their chances of employment, and diminish their opportunity to better their condition either socially or financially. They could see that by fighting for slavery they were only fastening upon themselves the yoke of poverty, and the ban of social ostracism, hence slavery was not a question of paramount importance to them, unless it was its abolition."

James Gallant Spears, who fled from his native Tennessee to Kentucky, where he organized the 1st Tennessee (Union) Infantry, was one of the relatively few slave owners who sided with the Union and fought for it. Promoted to brigadier general in the Union Army, Spears served until February 6, 1864, when he was arrested because of his expression in violent language of his belief that the Emancipation Proclamation was illegal and unconstitutional. Refusing to resign, he was dismissed from the service the following August.

Spears did not realize when he decided to fight for the Union that its victory would cost him his slaves. That was not an unreasonable assumption. In his first inaugural address, Lincoln had pledged "that the maintenance inviolate of the rights of the States, and especially the right of each State to order and control its own domestic institutions according to its own judgment exclusively, is essential to that balance of power on which the perfection and endurance of our political fabric depend; and we denounce the lawless invasion by armed force of the soil of any State or Territory, no matter what pretext, as among the gravest of crimes."

Spears might also have been influenced by Congress's passage of the Corwin Amendment shortly before Lincoln's inauguration in 1861, which stated, "No amendment shall be made to the Constitution which will authorize or give to Congress the power to abolish or interfere, within any State, with the domestic institutions thereof, including that of persons held to labor or service by the laws of said State." Lincoln was willing to accept the amendment, but only two states ratified it before it became a dead letter.

To explain why Tennessee had seceded, the 13th Tennessee's Scott and Angel wrote, "The proclamation of Mr. Lincoln calling out troops and his well-known anti-slavery sentiments were used by the advocates of secession to alarm the slave-holders of the State, and many of those who were loyal to the Government were driven into secession by this false alarm. No sane man now believes that Mr. Lincoln would have freed the slaves had not the Southern people gone into rebellion. He did it, at last, with much hesitation, believing it the only means of preserving the Union."

East Tennessee's William G. "Parson" Bownlow, a fiery and controversial minister, opponent of secession, and editor of an influential Whig newspaper, said there were three essential traits of a true Unionist: an "uncompromising devotion" to the Union, an "unmitigated hostility" to the Confederacy, and a willingness to risk life and property "in defense of the Glorious Stars and Stripes." Brownlow, who called secessionists "imps from Hell," said that Unionists who had suffered at their hands were "justified in shooting them down on sight." Some followed his advice.

One of the more significant of Tennessee's Union Army units was the 1st Regiment of Tennessee Volunteer Cavalry. On its battle flag were emblazoned Chickamauga, Chattanooga, Knoxville, Atlanta, Nashville, and Franklin. Organized out of state, its first commander was a son of Lincoln's second vice president and the only senator from a Confederate state to remain in the Senate, Andrew Johnson. Later, Brownlow's son led the 1st Tennessee.

Armed bands roamed over the countryside, pilfering, robbing, and murdering peaceful citizens, and martial law was declared in East Tennessee. Provost marshals and enrolling offices were appointed in every town and county, and these were composed usually of the bitterest and most oppressive men in the Confederacy. Enlisting in the Union Army was difficult because the nearest Union camps were in Kentucky, and the routes to the Bluegrass State were well guarded. Capture meant sudden death or long confinement in some loathsome

prison. Most who made the trip successfully did so at night. During the war, Carter said, Colonel Brownlow and his regiment participated in more than 50 battles and skirmishes. Brownlow had four horses shot from under him and was severely wounded at the Battle of Franklin in November 1864.

Like Tennessee, pro-Union sentiment in North Carolina was concentrated in but not confined to the mountains on its western side. An estimated four to six percent of white males in North Carolina were Unionists, and 35 of its 90 counties experienced some kind of guerrilla activity. In coastal North Carolina, the 1st and 2nd North Carolina (Union) Volunteer Infantry were organized. In western North Carolina the 2nd and 3rd North Carolina (Union) Mounted Infantry were organized. A *New York Tribune* correspondent reported that the men in North Carolina's 1st and 2nd Union Regiments had "a bitter and malignant feeling toward their disloyal neighbors and hated slavery and slaveholders whom they believed responsible [for their impoverished] condition."

The eastern regiments were promised they would not have to leave North Carolina and that their families would be protected by troops from the North, which usually accompanied them on their operations. The 2nd North Carolina enlisted Confederate deserters and poor men attracted by a $300 bounty. The western regiments, which were told to take no prisoners and shoot guerrillas on sight, were much feared by Confederate civilians.

In central North Carolina there were long-established antislavery Quaker and Moravian communities. Anti-Confederate activities by members of these communities included helping escaped Union POWs and runaway slaves and convincing Confederate soldiers to desert. Deserters from the Confederate Army and men hiding out in Quaker Belt counties to avoid being conscripted responded to bullying and physical abuse by turning to guerrilla warfare. (Some Quakers and Moravians owned slaves and fought for the Confederacy.) In Virginia, Confederate General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson sent troops to round up Mennonites who refused to serve in the Confederate Army. Concerned that they might aim rifles badly, he assigned them to noncombat duties.

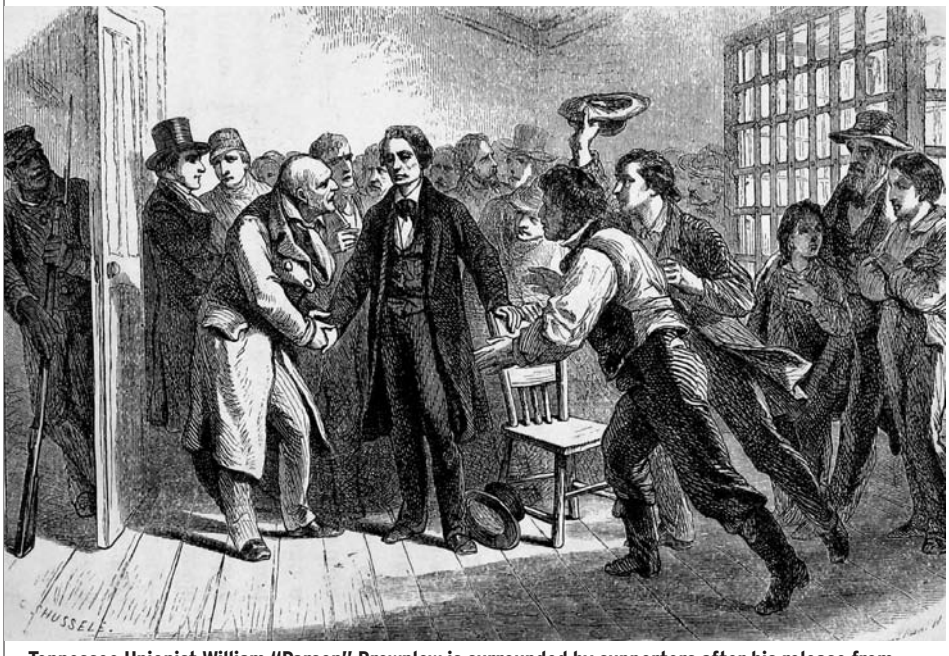
By war's end, an estimated 100,000 men had deserted from the Confederate Army. Desertion was most prevalent among poor men and those fighting near their homes. Mountainous North Georgia, which accounted for the majority of Georgia's Confederate deserters, provided only 14 percent of its Confederate units. More than 50 percent of Georgia's Confederate volunteer infantry companies hailed from its plantation belt counties. Their desertion rates were among the lowest in the state.

Deserters in both the Union and Confederate armies might face firing squads. The Federal government encouraged men to desert from the Confederate Army by pardoning and restoring their citizenship rights and allowing them to go home if they took a loyalty oath to the Union. In August 1864, Union Lt. Gen. Ulysses Grant rewarded Confederate deserters with monetary incentives and transport home. By that time many Confederate soldiers were underfed, shoeless, lice infested, and clad in rags.

Bands of deserters hid out in the South Carolina hill country. A force of more than 500 deserters controlled an area at the border with North Carolina; their desertion rate was the highest in the Confederacy. These deserters fought with Confederate forces, stole supplies, robbed supporters of the Confederacy, and burned their property. No white Union Army units were organized in South Carolina.

In North Carolina in 1863, 13 Unionists were executed without trial in Madison County, a Unionist stronghold. Their execution was the result of armed Unionists stealing salt, a valuable commodity in the Confederacy, and looting the homes of secessionists, including that of a colonel in command of a Confederate army regiment. His wife and three small children, two of whom shortly afterward died of scarlet fever, were terrorized. Some of the Unionists were deserters from the colonel's own regiment.

The colonel and his regiment left Tennessee, where they were guarding another stockpile of salt, to deal with the Unionist band. Hoping this would force the Unionists' wives and mothers to reveal where they were, these women were brutally tortured. All the Unionists who were executed



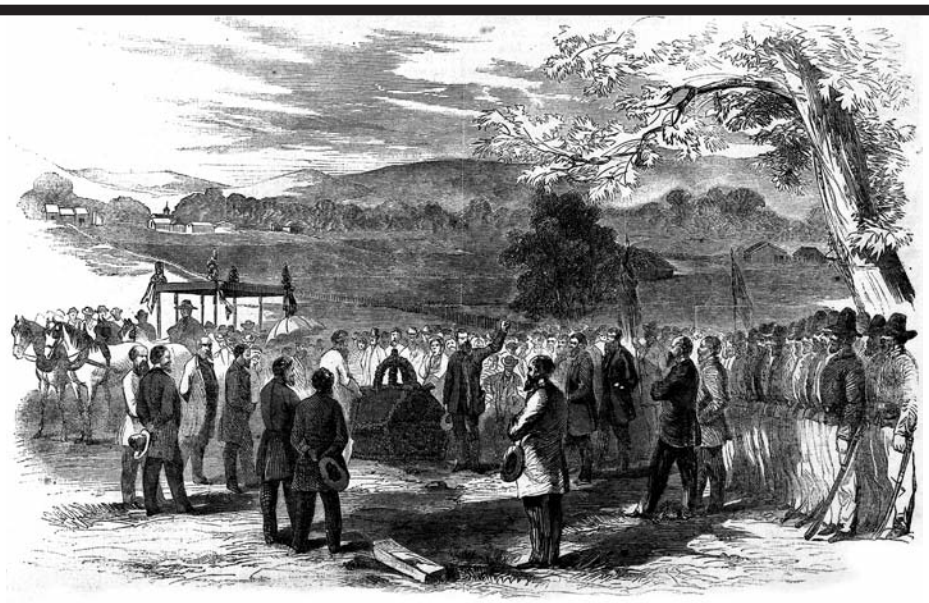
Tennessee Unionist William "Parson" Brownlow is surrounded by supporters after his release from prison on charges of treason against the Confederate government. An unapologetic Brownlow, later governor of Tennessee and a U.S. senator, called secessionists "imps from Hell."

belonged to the same poor family, the Sheltons. North Carolina's Confederate governor, Zebulon Vance, who tried to prevent any executions from taking place, labeled the affair "shocking and outrageous in the extreme." The colonel was suspended for six months, and his second in command was court-martialed and resigned. In a subsequent attempt to retake New Bern, North Carolina, Confederate forces captured 53 members of the 2nd North Carolina (Union) Volunteers, who were identified as deserters from the Confederate Army. Twenty-two of them subsequently were hanged.

A band of Confederate deserters from Jones and adjacent counties in southern Mississippi fought several skirmishes with Confederate forces and temporarily overthrew Jones's Confederate government. These men distributed to local residents corn collected by the Confederates as a tax-in-kind. Among the factors motivating the non-slave-owning farmers and herdsmen to desert was taxation and anger over the "Twenty Negro Law," which exempted owners of 20 or more slaves from service in the Confederate Army. Only 12 percent of Jones's population consisted of slaves.

Resistance to the slave-owning draft exemption was also widespread in Texas, particularly in those areas of north and central Texas with large German immigrant populations. Many Germans had immigrated to Texas in the 1850s, following the failed Revolution of 1848. These Germans had come to Texas to find personal and religious freedom, and they were adamantly opposed to slavery. After the Civil War started and it became apparent that the struggle would be a long one, many Germans protested against the Confederate government, particularly after the Conscription Act was passed in April 1862.

Confederate authorities responded forcefully, occupying the German town of Fredericksburg on the Pedernales River in Gillespie County. The local Confederate commander, Captain James Duff, threatened to "hang all I suspect of being anti-Confederate" and stepped up his persecution of Germans, whom he called "damn Dutchmen." Gillespie and several neighboring counties were put under martial law.



A mass funeral was held in Comfort, Texas, after the Civil War for 34 pro-Union German Texans killed in the Nueces Massacre of 1862. Nine were summarily hanged after they surrendered to Confederate authorities.

In the summer of 1862, German Unionists in Kerr County organized a militia company under Major Fritz Tegener and marched south, intending to avoid the draft by fleeing to Mexico. As soon as Duff learned about the movement, he sent a strong force under Lieutenant C.D. McRae to catch up with them. On August 9, as the refugees camped alongside the Nueces River, McRae's Confederates surrounded the camp and poured fire into the sleeping men. Nineteen Germans were killed by gunfire, and another six were trampled to death by McRae's cavalry. Another nine surrendered and were summarily hanged. McRae grimly reported to Duff, "We met determined resistance, hence I have no prisoners to report."

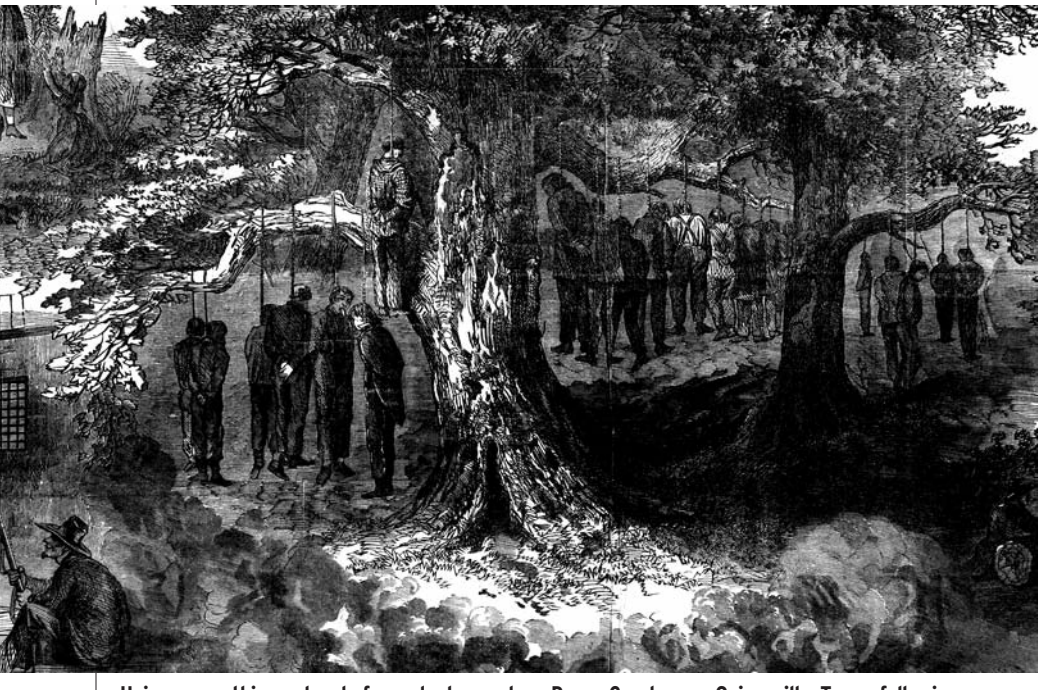
Shortly after the one-sided Battle of Nueces, what may have been the nation's greatest instance of vigilante violence took place in Gainesville, the county seat of Cooke County, Texas. Less than 10 percent of the county's heads of household owned slaves. Hostility between the county's earlier pro-slavery settlers and recent settlers from free states and from Germany predated the Civil War. Outraging slave owners were abolitionist Methodist preachers from Kansas, one of whom was lynched in another North Texas county before the war.

In October 1862, Colonel William C. Young, Cooke County's wealthiest slave owner, reported that he had received information that "a vile and secret organization" existed in the county to "overthrow the government both State and Confederate, the seizure and destruction of property, both public and private; the perfecting of an alliance with the invading armies, both civilized [Union army] and uncivilized [pro-Union Indians] now gathering upon our borders, and the indiscriminate slaughter of ourselves, our wives and children." He said a plan for self-defense was necessary.

Young, a veteran of the Mexican War and a former lawman, headed the 11th Texas Cavalry, a unit he had organized and in which his son also served. Of great concern to Young and others who shared his views was the fact that Cooke County residents had voted 221 to 137 against secession. The editor of the *Sherman Patriot,* a local Whig newspaper, recently had proposed that North Texas secede from Texas and become a new free state. Thirty county residents calling themselves the Peace Party signed a petition protesting the exemption from the draft of Cooke County's largest slave owners. A strong Union League presence developed in Cooke, Wise, Denton, Grayson, and Collin Counties. Members exchanged secret signs, handshakes, and

passwords at frequent meetings to discuss resistance to Confederate authorities.

One such meeting, at Rock Creek near Gainesville in early October 1862, led to an unimaginable tragedy. After the young son of a loyal Confederate told his father that Union Leaguers had threatened to kill him after he stumbled on their meeting, Texas state troops arrested 159 men suspected of being members of the group. The prisoners were brought into Gainesville, where a large, unruly mob thronged the streets. One witness recalled, "When I arrived near town, I saw crowds in every direction, armed and pressing forward prisoners under guard. The deepest and most intense excitement that I ever saw prevailed. There were three or four hundred men in sight. All reason had disappeared." Someone shouted, "Shoot all prisoners where they now stand!"



Union sympathizers dangle from elm trees along Pecan Creek, near Gainesville, Texas, following a mass lynching in October 1862. At least 41 suspected Unionists were killed during the "hanging days," although witnesses put the number of victims much higher.

To quiet the mob, local leaders immediately called a special town meeting. A 12-man, extralegal "citizens court" jury that included Young and six other slave owners tried the men for treason and insurrection. Based on a two-thirds majority vote, seven Unionists were convicted and hanged, including Henry Childs and his brother Ephraim. After the court adjourned for a week, an angry mob stormed the jail and demanded that 14 other Unionists be hanged as well. Panicked jailers complied, and the men were taken, three or four at a time, to an elm tree on the banks of Pecan Creek. Their bodies were then thrown into an unoccupied building along with those of two other luckless deserters who had also been hanged by the mob.

In all, at least 41 suspected Unionists were killed in Gainesville during the "hanging days" of October 1862. Other Unionists were hanged in the adjoining counties of Wise and Grayson. The Reverend Thomas Barrett, a Disciples of Christ minister who had served on the initial citizens' jury in a vain effort to spare the prisoners, said the number was too low. Barrett alleged that many other Unionists who had come into Gainesville to surrender had been hanged without any sort of trial whatsoever, "quick victims of lynch law." One of those hanged was the editor of the *Sherman Patriot,* who had ill-advisedly applauded the ambush slaying of Colonel William Young by Unionists near the Red River.

Texas contributed two regiments and two battalions of cavalry to the Union Army. The largest regiment, about 500 men, was organized in New Orleans in November 1862. (Texas's total free population in 1860 was 421,215.) Joining the Union Army late in the war became attractive to men with no great affinity for the Union because it had become pretty obvious by then that Texas Governor Sam Houston had been right when he said in 1860, "Let me tell you what is coming. After the sacrifice of countless millions of treasure and hundreds of thousands of lives, you may win [but] I doubt it. I tell you that, while I believe with you in the doctrine of states' rights, the North is determined to preserve this Union [and] when they begin to move in a given direction, they move with the steady momentum and perseverance of a mighty avalanche; and what I fear is, they will overwhelm the South." Because of his opposition to secession, Houston was removed from office. He turned down Lincoln's offer to lead Union troops to retake Texas.

Mississippi's only white Union unit was the 1st Mississippi Mounted Rifles. A newspaper ad placed by the recruiting station in Vicksburg told potential recruits of a $300 bounty and an abundant supply of good clothing and wholesome food. (Until June 1864 a Union private's pay was $13 a month.) More than 600 men enlisted in the 1st Mississippi. Some only stayed long enough to collect a bounty before deserting, some taking their horse and gun with them. By enlisting after deserting from another unit, some of them collected the bounty more than once. The great majority of the 1st Mississippi's officers were from the North. Some of its enlisted men had previously served in the Confederate Army. The role of the 1st Mississippi was to protect the Federal base at Memphis and conduct expeditions in Mississippi, Missouri, and Arkansas. It engaged a number of times in small-scale combat with Confederates.

Most of the whites in Arkansas who owned slaves owned only a few, and they lived in the southern and eastern lowlands.

Arkansas seceded because there was widespread opposition to forcing states that seceded to rejoin the Union. Despite its relatively small population, the only Confederate states to provide the Union with more soldiers than Arkansas were Tennessee and North Carolina. In mountainous north-central Arkansas, the war degenerated into a no-quarter-given conflict between bands of unorganized individuals.

Possibly as a result of hostility to the Federal government stemming from their forced removal west of the Mississippi, leaders of the Indian Territory's slave-owning Five Civilized Tribes signed treaties with the Confederacy. Indians opposed to the Confederacy who fled to Kansas joined a Union Home Guard, which fought mainly in the Indian Territory but also served in Arkansas, Kansas, and Missouri. The last Confederate general to surrender was a Cherokee, Stand Watie.

In late 1863, there was a failed attempt to create a Union army unit in mountainous North Georgia. This effort was renewed in 1864 with limited success despite the $300 bounty. Some of the men who were recruited formed Georgia's only white Union Army unit, the 1st Georgia State Troops Volunteers. This battalion of about 200 men was organized to guard the railroad from Chattanooga to Atlanta. It was deemed utterly useless and disbanded after some of its men fled rather than defend Dalton when Confederate troops sought to retake the city.

Some of the men who were recruited in North Georgia were enrolled in Union Army units in Tennessee. Nearly half the men in the 5th Tennessee Mounted (Union) Infantry were Georgians. Eight poor North Georgia farmers on their way to Cleveland, Tennessee, to join the 5th Tennessee were intercepted near the state line by Confederate guerillas and shot.

The men belonging to the Union's 1st Louisiana Battalion Cavalry Scouts were among the troops Union Maj. Gen. Nathaniel P. Banks commanded in the Union's failed Red River campaign. A New York soldier described the Loyalists who came in from the swamps and piney

This well-armed Hispanic American soldier was a member of one of four Union cavalry units raised in Texas during the Civil War. The largest such unit, about 500 men, mustered in at New Orleans in November 1862.

woods to take the oath of allegiance. They looked, he said, more like ragamuffins than men, clothed in every style of garment from the soiled coat of the gentleman to the hunting shirt of a backwoodsman or a full Confederate uniform. Reportedly, they "entered the residences of planters, carrying off whatever they needed or could appropriate, and in many instances offering violence and insults." After Banks withdrew from Alexandria, the personal property of many Unionists was destroyed and their homes burned. Some Unionists were also murdered.

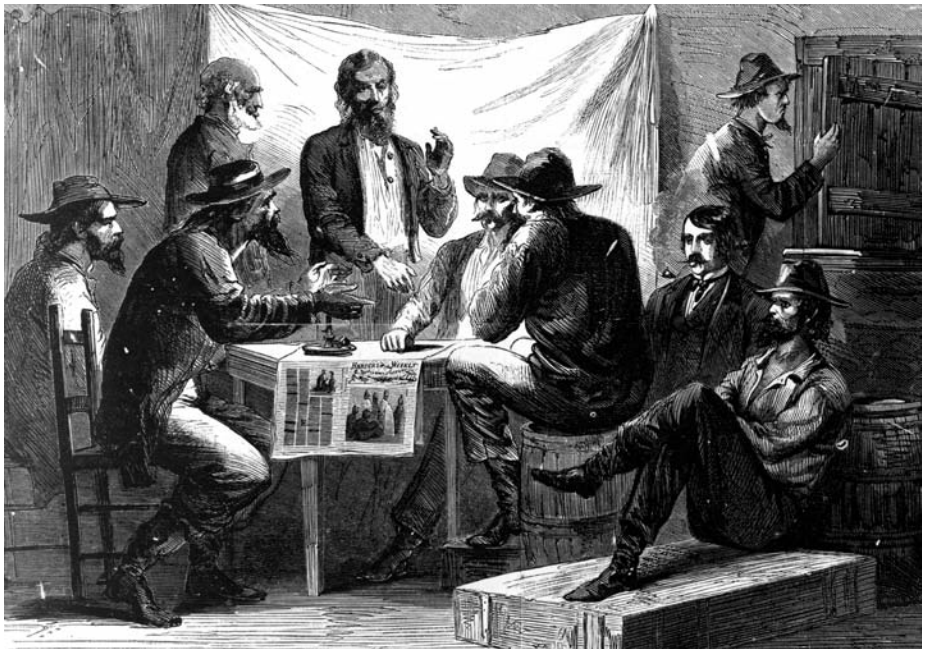
Pro-Union sentiment in Alabama was strongest in Winston County, a mountainous North Alabama county that in 1860 had 14 families who collectively owned 122 slaves and 637 families who owned none. A stronghold of Andrew Jackson Democrats, it began to call itself the "Free State of Winston" after the war began. Indicative of the strength of Unionists, who were often called Tories, is the fact that a pro-Union candidate in Winston won election to the secession convention by a vote of 515 to 128.

Most of the representatives to the secession convention from North Alabama voted against secession. Some refused to sign the ordinance of secession. During the war several prominent North Alabamians fled behind Union lines, which as early as 1862 extended into North Alabama. Others were prevented from going over to the enemy by being arrested for treason. Winston County's delegate to the state's secession convention was briefly jailed for treason because he was so outspoken in opposing secession.

When Union troops first appeared on the scene in 1862, North Alabama Unionists began recruiting troops for the Union from among the thousands of men hiding in the mountains of North Alabama either because they were deserters from the Confederate Army or to avoid being conscripted into it. A Peace Society organized behind Union lines helped elect a new governor of Alabama in 1863. By 1864, North Alabama Unionists were already discussing reconstruction

During the war, as many as 10,000 Confederate deserter and loyalist bands roamed and pillaged throughout North Alabama. Confederate deserters were also numerous in Unionist southeastern Alabama. Pillaging by loyalist and secessionist bands and Federal troops hurt the Confederacy by causing some North Alabama soldiers to desert the Confederate Army to go home to protect and support their families. William H. Smith, a future Reconstruction governor of Alabama, sought to escape conscription by serving in a civil office. After fleeing behind Union lines to escape arrest, he recruited Southerners for the Union.

The 1st Alabama Cavalry, Sherman's headquarters escort during his march through Georgia, was formed first in 1863. Companies of the 1st Tennessee and Alabama Independent Vidette Cavalry were organized in Alabama and Tennessee.



ABOVE: Union Colonel Abel Streight, left, led a contingent of mule-mounted Southern Unionists ingloriously captured by Nathan Bedford Forrest. Colonel George E. Spencer, right, led the notorious 1st Alabama Cavalry Regiment. RIGHT: Southern Unionists gather in a darkened room as one man keeps watch from a window for passing Confederates. Tennessee, North Carolina, and Virginia were home to the largest populations of pro-Union Southerners.

(There was also a Confederate 1st Alabama Cavalry.) The majority of the unit's men were Alabamians. The commander of the 1st Alabama, George E. Spencer, a New York-born lawyer, was serving as a captain on the staff of Union General Grenville M. Dodge when he requested a transfer to the 1st Alabama Cavalry Regiment. He was granted the transfer and promoted to colonel.

Various Union commanders, including Sherman, complimented the men of the 1st Alabama on their scouting ability. Their prowess as merchants of terror was recognized by both friend and foe. Union Colonel Oscar L. Jackson, commander the 63rd Ohio Regiment, said that the Alabamians "behave like robbers and marauders," and in his diary he recounted a dispute with a 1st Alabama cavalryman who had entered a house intending to pillage and rob it. According to Jackson, the man was throwing out the contents of a bureau while the home's women and children were frightened and crying. Jackson ordered him to stop. "This cavalryman," said Jackson, "answered me a little short when I spoke to him and as he passed me I helped him out the door with my boot."

The behavior of the 1st Alabama as it made its way to Milledgeville, Georgia, led Union Maj. Gen. Oliver O. Howard, who was apparently unaware that Sherman had ordered the 1st Alabama to burn the countryside, to write Spencer: "The major-general commanding directs me to say to you that the outrages committed by your command during the march are becoming so common, and are of such an aggravated nature, that they call for some severe and instant mode of correction. Unless the pillaging of houses and wanton destruction of property by your regiment ceases at once, he will place every officer in it under arrest, and recommend them to the department commander for dishonorable dismissal from the service."

Union Maj. Gen. Ormsby Mitchel likewise complained in a report to Washington that lawless vagabonds and brigands connected with his army were "committing the most terrible outrages—robberies, rapes, arson, and plundering." Mitchel said he was not responsible for these outrages because, since his line of posts extended more than 400 miles, he could not give personal attention to all his troops. Where he was, everything was in perfect order. Elsewhere, robberies, rapes, arson, and plundering took place. He asked for the authority to hang the perpetrators.

The risk to a Southerner who donned a Federal uniform of blue was illustrated by the capture of two companies of the 1st Middle Tennessee Cavalry, which was raised in North Alabama. Acting as guides, these companies and some of the 1st Alabama's men accompanied Colonel Abel Streight on one of the most inept raids of the Civil War. His men unwisely mounted on balky mules, Streight crossed North Alabama with Confederate general Nathan Bedford Forrest in hot pursuit. Forrest caught up with them near Rome, Georgia, and many of Streight's men could not be awakened to do battle with the Confederates. Then, hoodwinked by Forrest into believing he was outnumbered, Streight surrendered to a much smaller force.

Alabama Governor John G. Shorter demanded that the Alabamians captured by Forrest be turned over to his state to be tried for treason. They were, he complained, guilty not only of levying war against their state, but of instigating slaves to rebel and of committing rapes and destroying property. They could not claim, as could citizens of border states remaining in the Union, that they were subject to the conflicting claims of hostile governments. They had voluntarily and openly betrayed their state. Therefore, they were not entitled to the privileges of prisoners of war. Union Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton, who viewed Shorter's demand as

Continued on page 98

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IT was just after 3 AM on Saturday, July 30, 1864. A month of relative quiet along a two-mile stretch of Union and Confederate trench lines immediately east of Petersburg, Virginia, was about to come to an explosive end. In the aftermath of several earlier Federal attacks on the strategically vital city in mid-June, a portion of Maj. Gen. Ambrose Burnside's IX Corps picket line lay only 400 feet from Elliot's Salient, a highly fortified position on high ground that formed an angle protruding out from the main Confederate line, commanded by Maj. Gen. Bushrod Rust Johnson.

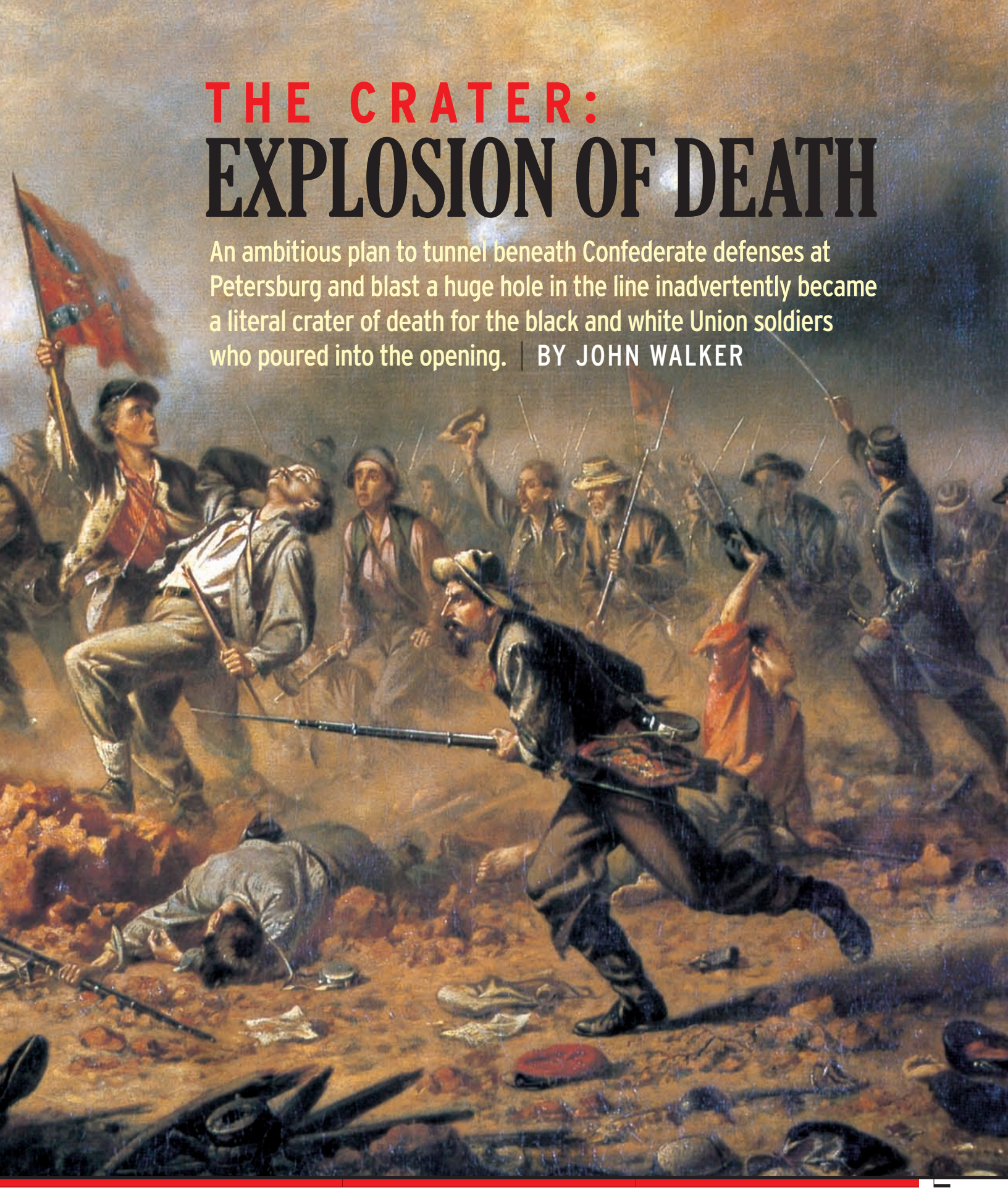
To support the defenders' artillery and mortars, a second line, or "cavalier trench," had been dug close behind the main redoubt. Elliot's Salient boasted four smoothbores of Lt. Col. William Pegram's battery and was backed by two regiments of veteran infantrymen of Brig. Gen. Stephen Elliot's South Carolina Brigade. Across a north-south ravine from Elliot's Salient were trenches occupied by the troops of Lt. Col. Henry Pleasants' 48th Pennsylvania Volunteer Regiment, many of them coal miners in civilian life.

In an unprecedented feat of excavation, and after coming up with the idea on their own, the men of Pleasants' regiment dug a 511-foot-long tunnel right up to the Rebel

Confederate defenders from the 12th Virginia Regiment rush to repel Union attackers after the massive predawn explosion at the Crater, outside Petersburg, Virginia, on July 30, 1864.

THE CRATER:
EXPLOSION OF DEATH

An ambitious plan to tunnel beneath Confederate defenses at Petersburg and blast a huge hole in the line inadvertently became a literal crater of death for the black and white Union soldiers who poured into the opening. | BY JOHN WALKER



Petersburg National Battlefield

works, 20 feet underground, and packed it with 8,000 pounds of highly explosive black gunpowder. After the mine was exploded at 3:30 AM and a concentrated Union artillery barrage hit the two-mile stretch of Rebel works, a massive assault by 14,000 Union troops was planned to exploit the expected breach blown in the enemy's line. If the Federals could swarm past the ruptured strongpoint and take the high ground 500 yards behind it, where Blandford Church's cemetery was located, the city of Petersburg, terminus of four railroads and Richmond's crucial lifeline to the Deep South, could be captured before the day was done. With Petersburg in Union hands, the Confederate capital of Richmond would surely soon fall as well. After a series of Union thrusts against Petersburg—flanking movements rather than costly frontal assaults—from June 9 to June 24 had failed and General Robert E. Lee had reinforced the Confederate defenders, a month-long lull fell over the trench lines. After the carnage at the Wilderness, Spotsylvania Courthouse, North Anna, and Cold Harbor, Union commander in chief Ulysses S. Grant had continued trying to maneuver Lee into position for an open-field battle to destroy the Army of Northern Virginia, but Lee responded by fighting behind an elaborate trench system, hoping to hold out long enough to discourage the Northern people into forcing their leaders to make peace with the South. Lee had remarked to Maj. Gen. Jubal Early, "We must destroy this army of Grant's before he gets to the James River. If he gets there, it will become a siege, and then it will be a mere question of time."

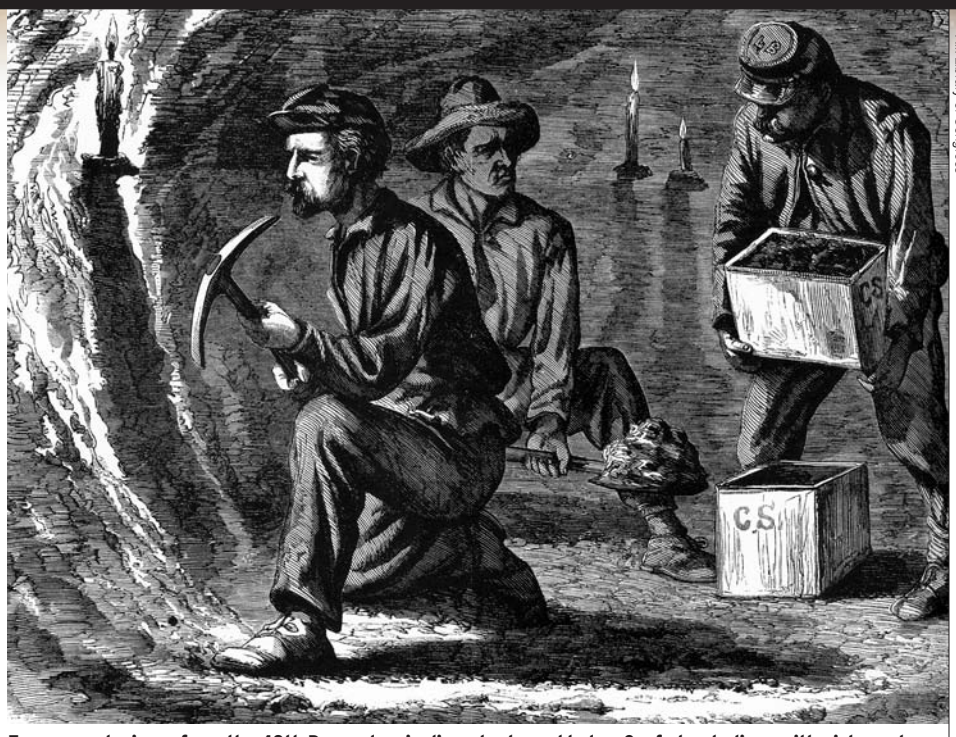
Neither Grant nor the commander of the Army of the Potomac, Maj. Gen. George Meade, was especially optimistic about the mine's potential usefulness—Meade termed it "clap-trap and nonsense"—but they allowed it to proceed as a way to keep the bored soldiers busy. In late July, after problems in the Shenandoah Valley and a Union setback at the First Battle of Deep Bottom put pressure on Grant to break the stalemate at Petersburg, the mine's potential took on a whole new significance to the Union high command. On July 26 Grant sent Maj. Gens. Winfield Hancock and Phil Sheridan on a diversionary attack against Richmond in an effort to get Lee to fatally strip his Petersburg defenses. Hancock's II Corps and Sheridan's two cavalry divisions failed to crack the Confederate fortifications, but they achieved their objective. After Lee ordered 20,000 men north of the James River, General P.G.T. Beauregard, commander of the Department of North Carolina and Southern Virginia, was left with just three divisions at Petersburg, some 18,000 effectives in all.

Meanwhile, Pleasants' men had come up with a viable alternative to costly frontal assaults and flanking maneuvers: they would go under the ground rather than over it. The 48th got almost no support from Meade or his chief engineer, Major James C. Duane, largely because the mine would have to be longer than 400 feet, a distance that would pose serious ventilation problems. Meade neglected to officially sanction the operation, allowing Duane to refuse the 48th the materials they needed to do the job: tools, timber, wheelbarrows, and sandbags. Left to their own devices, Pleasants' men went to work anyway using improvised equipment, putting

A lone observer from Lt. Col. Henry Pleasants' 38th Pennsylvania Volunteer Regiment peers carefully above the Union trench opposite Elliott's Salient at Petersburg.

shovel to dirt on June 25.

Pleasants and his 400 men completed the 511-foot shaft on July 17 in just three weeks—a mining miracle. Pleasants then devised an ingenious system to pump fresh air into the entire expanse when ventilation issues arose. Some 320 kegs of gunpowder—8,000 pounds—were placed in twin galleries below Elliot's Salient, while enemy countermining efforts, belated and uncoordinated, came to naught. Orders were circulated that the mine would be ignited at 3:30 AM on the 30th and that a massive infantry attack would commence immediately thereafter. During the night of the 29th, the Federals moved up 164 guns, including heavy mortars, siege guns, and Parrott guns. Also that night almost the entire IV Corps assembled behind the entrance of the mine, assuring the Federals overwhelming numerical superiority at the point of attack.



All: Library of Congress

Former coal miners from the 48th Pennsylvania dig out a tunnel below Confederate lines with picks and shovels, carrying out the dirt in hardtack crates. They completed the backbreaking work in three weeks.

Three of Burnside's four divisions, commanded by Brig. Gens. Orlando Willcox, Robert Potter, and James Ledlie, had been on line for 36 days, suffering at least 30 casualties a day from vicious sniping, and were exhausted from life in the trenches—drought, intense heat, bursting mortar shells, and sharpshooters' bullets. Burnside's fourth division consisted of two large brigades, nine regiments in all, of United States Colored Troops (USCT) under a white commander, Brig. Gen. Edward Ferrero. They had yet to see combat, but they constituted Burnside's freshest and largest division and had actually been drilled in preparation for the attack. Burnside had devised an exceptional plan: he would send the USCT division, 4,300 strong, through the gap created by the explosion in standard Civil War deployment—one brigade in front, the second in the rear in support. One regiment from each brigade would leave the attack column and extend the breach by rushing perpendicular to the crater, north and south, while the remaining regiments would advance through and push west toward the Jerusalem Plank Road and Cemetery Hill.

Burnside's three remaining divisions, their flanks protected, would follow and drive west almost unopposed to help take Cemetery Hill, from which they had a clear shot at Petersburg. A possible rapid end to the war could be envisioned. The attack would mark the first deployment of African American troops into major combat in the Eastern Theater. Beyond the tactical problems of leading so large an assault, though, black soldiers and their white officers had to prepare for combat in which they could expect no mercy if they were captured or left wounded on the field. Colonel John Bross, commander of the 29th USCT, told the press, "When I lead these men into battle, we shall expect no quarter, and shall not ask for quarter." Burnside was in high spirits; not only did he have units from two other corps standing by to help exploit the breakthrough if necessary—Maj. Gen. Gouverneur K. Warren's XVIII Corps and Maj. Gen. Edward Ord's X Corps—but he would have 144 field guns in support and all or part of another corps, Hancock's, which might return from north of the James River in time for the battle.

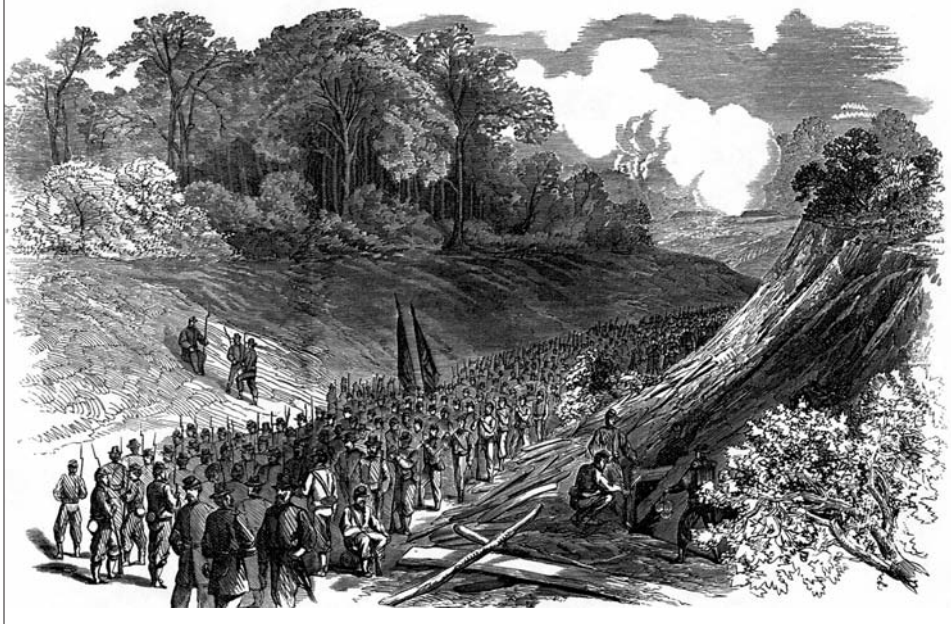
The day before the attack, Meade, after consulting with Grant, stunned Burnside by ordering him to spearhead the attack with a white, battle-tested division, a radical change that would have catastrophic repercussions. Grant and Meade feared political controversy if the black division was annihilated, with Grant fretting that they would be accused of "shoving these people ahead to get killed because we did not care anything about them." Rather than choosing the best of his three other divisions to lead the attack, Burnside went into a funk after he was unable to get the order rescinded. When none of his three remaining division commanders volunteered to lead the assault, Burnside had them draw straws. Ledlie, a political general with no military training, and an alcoholic and coward to boot, won the honors—such as they were. Burnside's willingness to allow possibly the worst general in the Union Army to spearhead the attack rather than one of his more experienced division commanders was a disastrous decision. With his ranks filled with inexperienced reinforcements and artillery units whose gunners were serving as infantrymen, Ledlie's two-brigade division was the weakest in Burnside's corps. Apparently, everyone in IX Corps knew of Ledlie's shortcomings except Burnside.

With less than 12 hours remaining before the attack, new plans had to be made. Rather than give Ledlie specific instructions, however, Burnside merely parroted Grant's order to press forward and take Cemetery Hill at any cost. He then ordered Potter and Willcox to follow Ledlie, one veering to the left and one to the right, to be followed by the black division. He left all other tactical decisions to his subordinates. Ultimately, Burnside and Pleasants would spend the day 400 yards behind the Crater, protected by a 14-gun battery. Meade too remained safely back, another half-mile behind Burnside and Pleasants.

Slowly the men of IX Corps moved up on the night of the 29th into their assigned positions. Ledlie's division was out front, just behind the ridge where Union pickets were dug in and just to the rear of the mine entrance. Potter's and Willcox's divisions were deployed along the slope of a railroad cut—the Norfolk & Petersburg Railroad bisected the Union line at that point—while Ferrero's men waited in the bottom of the cut, chagrined at being shunted to the rear. Elsewhere along the Union line, the other corps waited as well, including Hancock's, which now had returned, as hoped, from its movement beyond the James. A bad fuse delayed the detonation, but after it was relit the explosion came at 4:44 AM. In a sudden, fiery blast, Elliot's Salient ceased to exist. "Then came a monstrous tongue of flame shot fully two hundred feet into the air, followed by a vast column of white smoke," recalled an onlooker from the 20th Michigan. "A great spout or fountain of red earth rose to a great height, mingled with men and guns, timbers and planks, and every other kind of debris, ascending, spreading, whirling, scattering and falling with great concussion to the earth once more." Another Union onlooker, prefiguring a larger, more ominous blast 81 years later at Hiroshima, Japan, saw the smoke rising toward the sky "with a detonation of thunder spread out like an immense mushroom whose stem seemed to be of fire and its head of smoke."

The fresh Crater, which would soon become a horrendous death trap for thousands of Union soldiers, first entombed half of Pegram's guns and crews and entire companies of Elliot's command, as well as damaging part of the cavalier trench. A total of 278 Confederates were sent to their graves by the huge blast. Great clods of dirt, some as large as houses, littered the floor of the Crater along with the torn bodies of its erstwhile defenders. Some defenders were seen running from the trenches, but most of the South Carolinians remained at their posts in the smoky haze. It would take a full half-hour for the stunned defenders to reorganize and put up any type of effective defense. "The way was completely open to the summit of the hill," recalled a Union observer, "which was protected by no other line of works."

After recovering from the shock of the blast, North Carolina and Virginia regiments positioned on either side of Elliot's Salient shifted men to support the survivors of Elliot's five South Carolina regiments. "When we arrived at our position," a North Carolinian recalled, "we counted twelve United States flags in the works, and the whole field in front of the crater was filled with Yankees." Confederate defenders on both sides of the Crater began pouring a deadly fire from both



ABOVE: Union troops await the order to attack. The original plan, calling for African American troops to lead the attack, was countermanded by a politically motivated Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant. BELOW, Left to right: Generals William Mahone, James Ledlie, and Edward Ferrero.

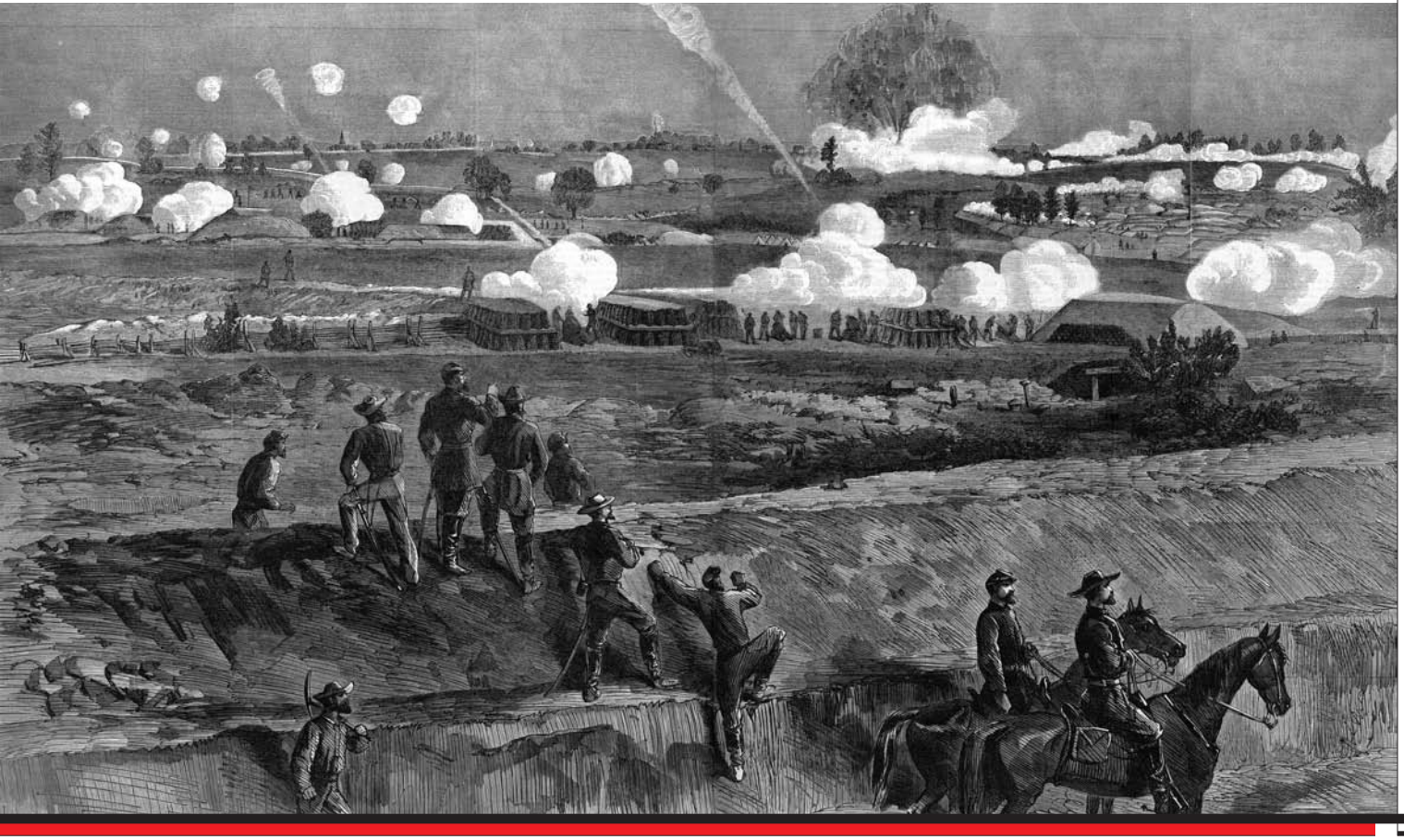
flanks into Ledlie's men while well-placed artillery raked the ground on all sides of the pit. An indecipherable labyrinth of trenches, bombproofs, and covered ways also helped freeze the first wave of Federals in place. Stunned by the explosion and the deafening roar that followed when all the Union batteries opened as one, the front line of bluecoats scrambled for the rear through a massive wave of detritus from the blast and an accompanying cloud of dust. Ledlie ordered his two brigade commanders, Brig. Gen. Frank Bartlett and Colonel Elisha Marshall, to open the attack, after which Ledlie himself retired to a nearby bombproof to sit out the battle, swigging rum from a bottle he had cadged from his staff physician.

The Federals were wasting precious time; it took 15 minutes for Marshall and Bartlett to coax their hesitant troops back to their original positions and send them over the top. Almost immediately the attack went awry. In dismay over the last-minute change in plans, the flustered Burnside had neglected to have the defensive obstacles cleared from in front of the Union trenches to allow easier passage for the attacking columns. Nor had anything been done to help the attackers scale their own six-foot-high trench walls—ladders that were to help Union soldiers traverse their trenches never appeared. Improvising quickly by jabbing their bayonets into the logs above them, Union attackers climbed their makeshift stepladders out of the trenches. Creeping forward in small groups rather than advancing on a broad front, Ledlie's men struggled to scale the trenches and lurched across the debris-strewn no-man's-land toward the Confederate works. Navigating their own trenches had literally destroyed the Federal dispositions. Three regiments of Ledlie's men, after being ushered through a hastily improvised 10-foot passageway, finally arrived at the explosion site.

There they were stunned to see the crown of the salient's ridge had been replaced by a high wall of fresh earth, beyond which yawned a fresh crater 170 feet long, 60 feet wide, and 30 feet deep. To many Union soldiers, inured to searching for protection when under fire, the Crater looked like the biggest and safest foxhole they had ever seen—except that it wasn't safe at all. Its steep 30-foot walls and slippery, sandy white clay made it nearly impossible to escape once the men had entered the pit. Instead of moving around the hole and heading for the high ground—Cemetery Hill lay just 500 yards away—Federal soldiers stumbled instead into the smoking abyss, using it as a vast rifle pit. A choking pall of dust and smoke blanketed the area.

Paralyzed by conflicting orders and lack of leadership, Ledlie's attackers failed to either widen the breach, as Ferrero's troops had been drilled to do, or push up the slope toward Cemetery Hill. "Our orders were to charge immediately after the explosion," recalled Union Major Charles F. Houghton

The gigantic explosion at the Crater (center right) as seen from the Union works. The explosion was followed by a largely ineffective artillery barrage. Many soldiers—attackers as well as defenders—were stunned and paralyzed after the initial blast.



of the 14th New York Heavy Artillery, "but the effect produced by the falling earth and the fragments sent heavenward that appeared to be coming right down upon us, caused the first line to waver and fall back."

At his headquarters north of the Appomattox River, General Lee was notified of the attempted breakthrough at 6:15 AM. He rushed orders for Brig. Gen. William Mahone, whose division was camped about three miles west of the Crater constituted Lee's closest reinforcements, to send two brigades to the scene of the crisis. Mahone, nicknamed "Little Billy" for his diminutive size and shrill, piping voice, chose a Georgia unit and his own Virginia Brigade, also known as the Old Dominion Brigade and including many men from Petersburg eager to defend their homes, to make the march. Using streambeds, back roads, and covered ways, Mahone and his men arrived a little after 8 AM. Lee rode to the front, arriving at Maj. Gen. Bushrod Johnson's command post not far from Cemetery Hill, from

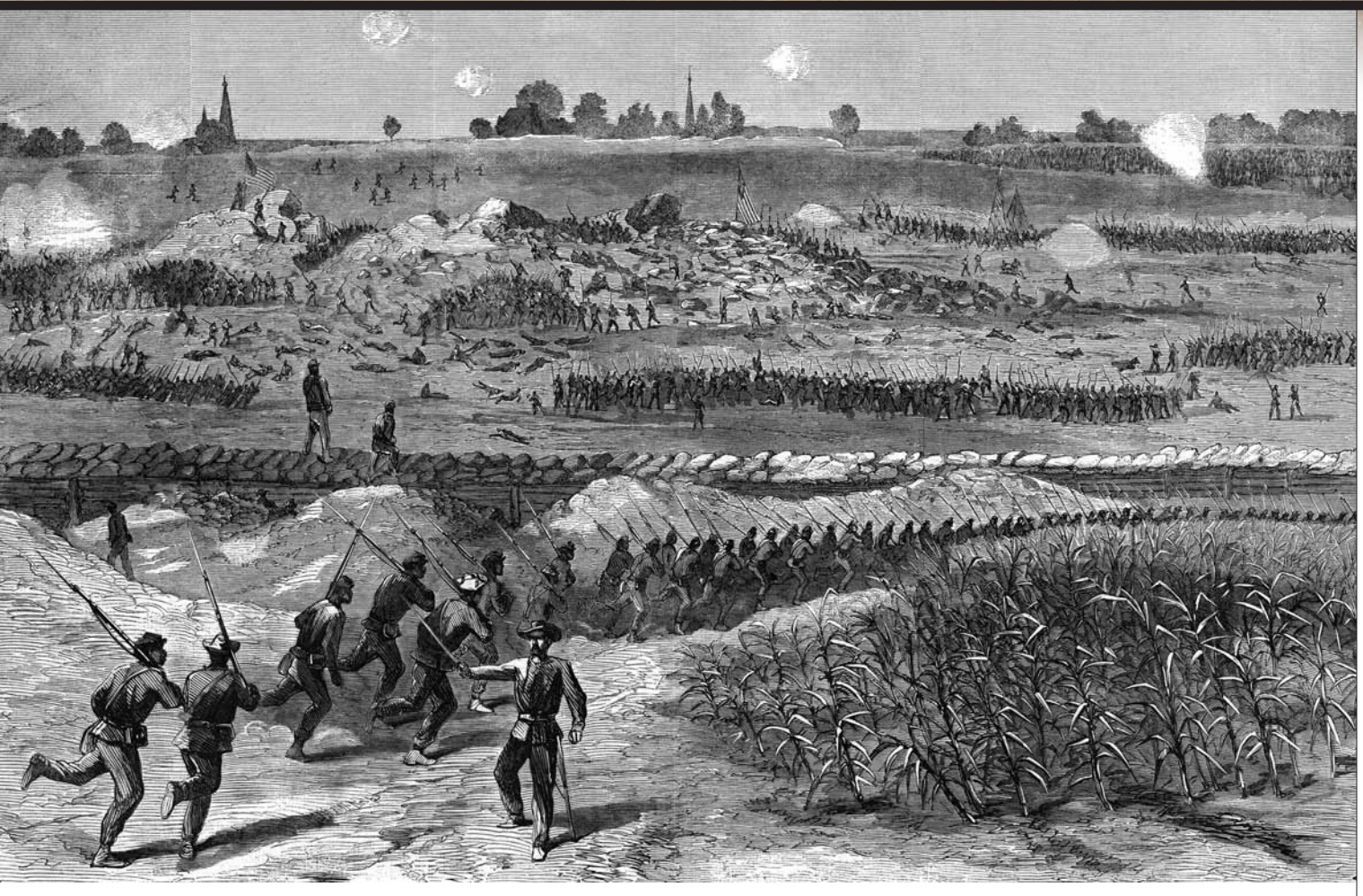
which vantage point Lee could clearly see the Crater and the Union units massed in and around it. He, Johnson and Beauregard rode to the Gee house at the juncture of the Baxter and Jerusalem Plank roads, 500 yards west of the Crater, where they climbed to the second floor to monitor the action.

As Confederate musket fire picked up, Bartlett pushed some of his troops into trenches south of the Crater while Marshall directed his soldiers to the north and west. Only a relative few men in the Union advance got as far as the maze of works beyond the Crater, where they began exchanging fire with a small group of Southern defenders. Unit leaders of the main body were ignored as they shouted and pointed their swords toward Cemetery Hill, and there wasn't anyone of superior authority to salvage the situation. Burnside, at least, should have been in close communication with the front. He was not.

Troops of one of the heavy artillery units fighting as infantry found a working gun and began utilizing it against the defenders to their west. Union reinforcements continued pouring into the breach as Burnside ordered his next two divisions forward, those of Potter and Willcox, but most of the attackers, rather than going forward toward Cemetery Hill, either joined their comrades in the Crater or branched out to the immediate right and left along the lines. As the Federals continued wasting precious time, 8- and 10-inch mortars in the Confederate rear, along with well-placed artillery batteries, began pouring a deadly storm of shell and canister into the crowded masses milling in and around the base of the Crater. Finally, fairly large groups of Union soldiers formed near the Crater's western edge and began filtering into the captured Rebel trench system.

Two light Confederate artillery batteries under Major John Haskell hurried up the Jerusalem Plank Road and unlimbered near Cemetery Hill. Exposed to Union sharpshooters and artillery fire, Haskell nonetheless opened fire on his own and began the most effective effort of the day by either side. Haskell entered the covered way, which led 500 yards from the Jerusalem Plank Road directly to the Confederate works north of the Crater, and asked Elliot for infantry to support his exposed guns. Responding to Haskell's request, Elliot was severely wounded when he tried, with a brave handful of fellow South Carolinians, to comply. Colonel Fitz McMaster assumed command and led 200 survivors of the 26th South Carolina into a creek depression west of the Crater, within the defensive works, where comrades from Elliot's other regiments rallied upon them. They were, for the moment, the only Confederate forces standing between the Crater and Cemetery Hill.

Several North Carolina brigades commanded by Brig. Gen. Robert Ransom moved south to link up with the left flank of the 26th South Carolina and Virginians from Brig. Gen. Henry Wise's brigade to repair the line and support McMaster. A number of disorganized Union thrusts were repulsed. By 8:30 AM, after Potter's and Willcox's divisions entered the fray, a large part of the Union IX Corps, about 10,000 men, had reached the destroyed enemy salient, most of them milling around the Crater. When Willcox led his division into action, he ordered a brigade commanded by Brig. Gen. John Hartranft to expand the breakthrough south of the Crater. Its lead regiments, however, were once again drawn inexorably toward the massive hole, where they became entangled with Ledlie's troops. Two other regiments simply halted on the rising slope. Stunned by this development, Willcox strongly cautioned Burnside against



ABOVE: Mounds of earth smolder in the middle distance as Union soldiers march into battle in this sketch made three hours after the explosion. On the left is Brig. Gen. Frank Bartlett's Massachusetts brigade; on the right are USCT troops. The inner line of Confederate works is visible on the high ground 500 yards in the distance. OPPOSITE: Union gunners aim a cannon at Confederate lines in support of the infantry attack at the Crater.

advancing any more troops.

Meade, exploding in anger when informed of the bottleneck at the Crater, summarily ordered Burnside to have all Union troops push forward to the crest of Cemetery Hill, regardless of their current dispositions. Willcox tried hard to comply, ordering the 27th Michigan straight into the teeth of Wise's Virginians, who halted the advance in minutes. Meanwhile, Willcox's second brigade, under Colonel William Humphrey, moved up, only to find its front partially blocked by Hartranft's stalled column. Under fire and eager to advance, Humphrey sent his entire command surging across the abatis-strewn field, where they crashed into the Confederate works, capturing prisoners and relieving, for a while, the pressure on the south flank of the Crater. Humphrey's success was fleeting, however; the Virginians rallied, and South Carolinians firing at the Crater turned their attention to the new threat. Humphrey's left flank quickly crumbled and three Michigan regiments found themselves isolated within the Confederate lines, taking fire from three directions.

Burnside's ambitious plan to seize Petersburg and bring a quick end to the war was disintegrating in a jumble of Union command failures and unexpectedly stiff Confederate resistance. Meade continued to insist that all Union units rise up en masse and take Cemetery Hill. Burnside opted to take the word of his commanders on the scene, who informed him that there was literally no more room for added units to deploy and that any reinforcements would be a waste of manpower. Nevertheless, sometime after 7 AM, Meade ordered Burnside to commit his fourth and last division, Ferrero's USCT troops. As his units advanced into the teeth of enemy fire, Ferrero clambered into Ledlie's bomb shelter, where he huddled, sharing a bottle of rum with Ledlie, for the remainder of the battle.

The USCT advance was blocked by a steady flow of returning wounded, panicked comrades, and Confederate prisoners coming from the front. After Lt. Col. Joshua Sigfried ordered his brigade forward, the black troops stolidly negotiated the obstacles leading to the front only to come under galling fire all along their column. Parts of the two leading regiments forced their way through the congested mass inside the Crater. while others skirted the abyss north of it, all disappearing into the honeycomb of enemy trenches and

bombproofs. In the turmoil, the 30th USCT fired on the 9th New Hampshire and rendered it hors de combat. Despite the blunder, the black troops moved into the Rebel entrenchments and confronted the 17th South Carolina, inflicting and suffering heavy casualties as they pressed ahead.

More of Sigfried's brigade followed and helped launch the fiercest Union attack of the day as the African American fighters captured the damaged cavalier trench held by Elliot's survivors, all the while screaming, "No quarter, remember Fort Pillow!" in reference to the recent notorious slaying of several dozen black troops during or after the battle for the West Tennessee fortification. They rounded up hundreds of prisoners, killing any who showed the slightest resistance, and after hours of stalemate it seemed that the breach might begin to expand.

Ferrero's second brigade commander, Colonel Henry Thomas, however, trying to follow up on the success of Sigfried's men, lost control of his regiments when they descended into the maze north of the Crater or moved into the pit itself. Thomas managed to get some of his men formed on Sigfried's left flank west of the cavalier trench, but a barrage of shells and bullets blasted them back into the trench. McMaster's Confederates, still sheltering inside the creek depression 200 yards to the west, massed their fire into the van of Sigfried's advance, wrecking it. Ferrero's depleted ranks fell back into the cavalier trench.

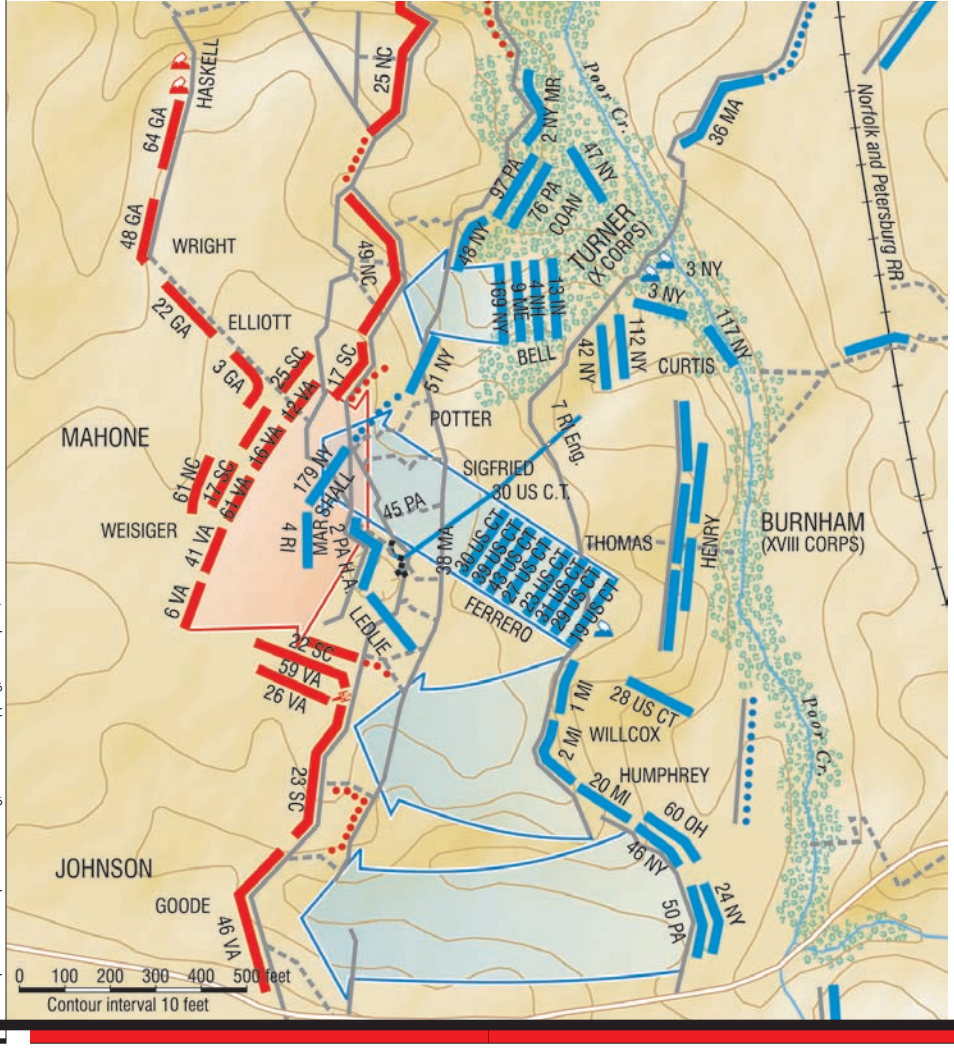
Burnside, who would be instructed by Meade to order a withdrawal in less than an hour, still believed his men had another charge in them. He ordered Sigfried and Thomas to again attack Cemetery Hill, reinforced by Marsh and Bartlett, Ledlie's two brigade commanders. Waving a regimental flag, Bross of the 29th USCT climbed out of the cavalier trench and exhorted his men to follow him. The courageous remnants of the division moved up and formed a ragged line on the colors. With Cemetery Hill 500 yards away in plain sight, the USCT troops once again moved forward into the fiery summer morning.

Shortly after arriving at the front, Mahone saw the confusion in the Federal ranks but, concerned about the enemy's numbers, he called for his third brigade—Willcox's Alabama troops under the command of Colonel John Sanders—to come up as well. Colonel David Weisiger's five Virginia regiments had led Mahone's initial march, moving through the covered way into the creek depression where McMasters' South Carolinians had made their heroic stand. Mahone sent the Georgians to support Weisiger's right flank, and as the Rebels moved into place, word spread that black units had taken part in the last attacks and that no quarter had been asked or given. By 9 AM Mahone's units were in place, locked and loaded, with bayonets fixed.

About 200 black troops had answered Bross's call and begun advancing west from the cavalier trench, their cheers catching the attention of Weisiger's men. In a line 200 yards wide and three lines deep, Weisiger's Virginians, backed by two North Carolina regiments, McMaster's survivors, and parts of two Georgia regiments, leaped out of the creek depression and charged the isolated and outnumbered USCT column, which floundered and fell back. Mahone's gray wave approached the cavalier trench, where it was met with a sweeping Union volley. The fire tore gaps in the Confederate line but couldn't slow it down, the attackers sweeping over the last few yards and crashing into the trench.

Fierce fighting exploded along the entire front, bayonets flashing and gun butts flail-

Following the explosion at the Crater, the main Union thrust in the center was blunted by a spirited counterattack organized by Brig. Gen. William Mahone. Confederate defenders tossed abandoned muskets like javelins into the Union ranks. By 1:30 the battle was over.

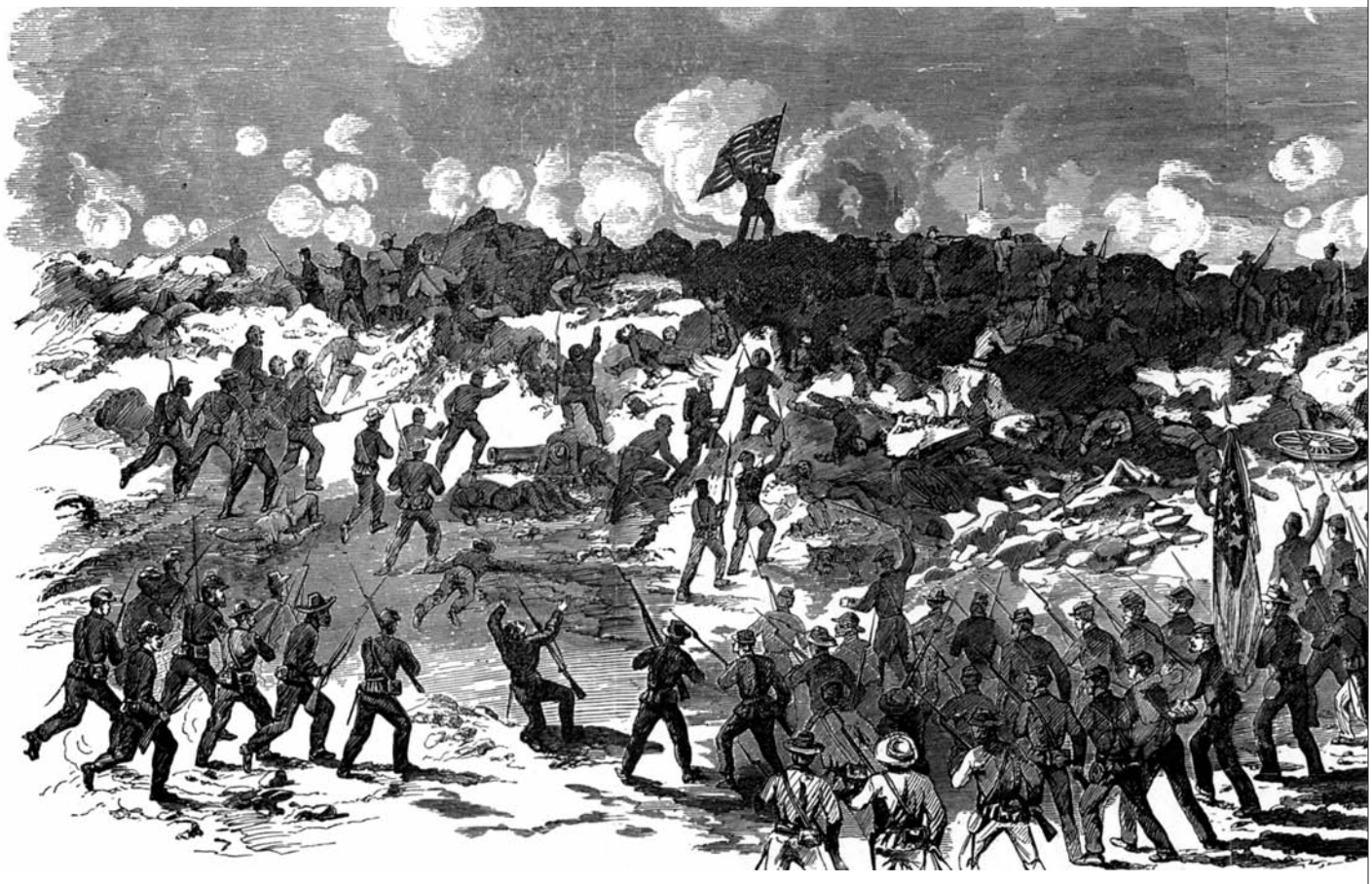


ing. With the cavalier trench cleared, the Confederate defenders worked their way toward the crowded blue maze north of the Crater, killing with abandon and taking few prisoners, white or black. Again panic struck the Union ranks, and mobs of men turned and headed back for the Crater only to find the intervening ground a cauldron of lethal crossfire. With Mahone's attackers in hot pursuit, most of the fleeing blue-coats tumbled into the perceived safety of the Crater. There, in a ghastly turn of events, some panicky Union troops bayoneted incoming black troops, fearing enemy reprisals if they were captured fighting alongside the black troops.

Approaching Confederates deployed movable Coehorn mortars 50 feet from the Crater and began sending a steady stream of shells into the churning morass. "We got closer and closer to the enemy," recalled a Confederate battery commander, "until we were throwing shells with such light charges of powder that they would rise so slowly as to look as if they could not get to the enemy, who were so close that we could hear them cry out when the shells would fall among them, and repeatedly they would dash out and beg to surrender." Mahone, whose Virginians by now had captured most of the line north of the Crater, ordered a line of sharpshooters to target the western edge of the Crater while sending the rest of his Georgia brigade against its southern flank. The Georgians made two bloody attacks and extended Weisiger's line to the south but failed to take the trenches south of the Crater. The Union mass in the smoldering rubble stubbornly held on, resisting all efforts to push them out of their man-made hole.

Mahone's attack had taken about an hour. Before it began, Burnside had begged Meade to allow fresh V Corps units to join the fray, but at 9:30 AM Meade sent orders instead for Burnside to begin conducting a withdrawal. The angry Burnside sought out Meade and in "language extremely insubordinate" demanded the operation continue with the aid of V Corps. After Grant arrived and backed Meade, a disconsolate Burnside returned to his headquarters and prepared to pull his commands back to safety. He would, however, be in no particular hurry to do so. Scores of additional Union troops would die because of his tardiness.

As the merciless summer sun baked the horrid pit, Union soldiers used the bloated bodies of dead comrades as makeshift parapets. Some Federals braved the hell of no-man's-land in a heroic effort to bring water and ammunition back to their comrades. Despite the dreadful conditions and abject confusion, the Federals continued somehow to keep the defenders at bay, throwing back a series of limited Confederate thrusts. More and more survivors crawled out of the Crater and headed back toward their



Men of the 2nd Division, IX Corps, rush into the maelstrom of the Crater. Furious Confederate defenders took few prisoners, seeing the mine explosion as a particularly underhanded tactic.

own lines, enduring a galling crossfire that killed and wounded hundreds more. In the pit's southern recesses, Chippewa Indian riflemen from the 1st Michigan Sharpshooters covered their heads and sang their death songs amid the deafening roar of battle. At 12:30 PM, word arrived that Burnside had given up and ordered a withdrawal; Union officers at the front were told to use their discretion as to the timing and method of withdrawal.

With the fighting now spread over a square mile centered on the Crater, the battle was about to turn in the defenders' favor for good. A few hundred yards to the west, Mahone prepared to apply the coup de grace. He sent Sanders' five Alabama regiments down the covered way into the creekside depression, telling Sanders to march his brigade around the friendly troops to his front (Wright's Georgians) and come in against the Crater from the southwest. Their orders were simple: clear the Yankees, black and white, from the line. The method was simple as well: one shot, then the bayonet. They would advance just before 1 PM under an artillery barrage while Lee and other commanders watched from the Gee House.

Supported by North and South Carolina units, the Alabama troops stepped off smartly. Once they passed the cavalier trench, however, they came under heavy fire from the Crater. The last few yards proved the toughest. On level ground, the Confederates were momentarily exposed to Union artillery that blew great gaps in the gray lines. The attackers doggedly closed ranks and came on, reaching the edge of the Crater before they had suffered more harm.

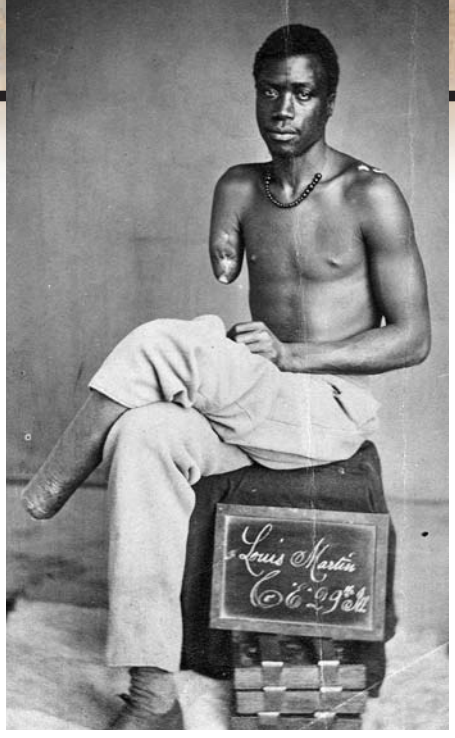
In these last minutes, Union resistance centered at the Crater's western edge crumbled in vicious fighting. Federal muskets with their bayonets still attached lay scattered about everywhere, and opportunistic Confederates picked them up and launched them like javelins into the teeming blue crowd. Confederate soldiers surged over the Crater's rim and into the pit, slashing their way forward. Bayonets, knives, and muskets used as clubs were the weapons of choice as the dense mass of humanity left little room for maneuver. The Rebels again refused to accept the surrender of black troops, dispatching them with brutality. Once more, fearing Rebel reprisals, many white Federals killed their black comrades in a craven attempt to ensure their own survival.

A sketch made immediately after the battle shows half-buried corpses, severed limbs, and scattered debris still smoking from the explosion, which could be heard several miles away.

With Confederates pouring over the top, Griffin and Hartranft yelled for any Northerners within range of their voices to retreat. The Union perimeter disappeared as a flood of survivors crawled out of the pit and headed back through no-man's-land. With Rebel mortars and artillery bracketing the area, more Federals were killed and wounded in the retreat than in Ledlie's morning attack. Those at the back of the pack turned and faced their pursuing tormenters, the fighting as savage as any witnessed in the entire war. "Our fellows seized the muskets abandoned by the retreating enemy," wrote one Confederate soldier, "and threw them like pitchforks into the huddled troops over the ramparts. Screams, groans and explosions throwing up human limbs made it a scene of awful carnage."

By 1:30 PM the battle was over with the exultant Confederates taking full possession of the Crater and the field works surrounding it. Pioneers and engineers worked all night to incorporate the Crater into the Confederate defenses. Meanwhile, within the Union lines, Burnside sat stunned as casualty figures came in. At 3 PM, Potter reported that his division was annihilated. Full regiments had been captured whole, and the majority of his field officers had been killed or wounded. Other division commanders reported similar heavy losses, and stories of the heartless treatment of USCT soldiers—by Rebels and Yankees alike—shocked Burnside, who struggled to make sense of the tragedy. He had committed 14,000 men from his corps and within six hours had lost nearly 35 percent of them. Despite numerous requests, Burnside waited until the next evening to report to Meade, finally admitting to a loss of almost 4,000 men, which he blamed on the lack of support from adjoining corps that were not committed.

The battle was over, but the repercussions were still to come. During a battle that reeked of command malfeasance on a scale that equaled that of Cold Harbor—two drunken Union division commanders sitting out the battle behind the lines—the Union Army suffered 3,798 casualties, including 504 killed and 1,881 wounded. Fully one third of the casualties were suf-



ABOVE: Private Louis Martin of Company E, 29th USCT, lost his right arm and left foot during the Battle of the Crater. BELOW: Newly rebuilt Confederate lines took advantage of the giant Crater, prefiguring the grueling trench warfare of World War I.

fered by black troops, including 219 killed in action and almost 1,000 wounded, the worst day for USCT troops in the entire war. A large number of Union casualties occurred after Meade and Grant had ordered a withdrawal, but both commanders were too far from the lines to realize Burnside had delayed sounding the recall. Meade had now suffered almost 6,000 casualties for the month with almost nothing to show for it (Lee could take a little comfort that Confederate casualties were less than half of Meade's). Most of the Confederate dead at the Crater were killed in the explosion that opened the battle; the defenders lost 361 men killed, 727 wounded, and 403 missing or captured for the day. The Confederate victory didn't change the strategic situation, which meant that the siege of Petersburg would drag on for another eight bloody months.

There was plenty of blame to go around on the Union side. Meade and his chief engineer had failed utterly to support Pleasants' mining efforts, and Meade and Grant had changed Burnside's attack plans at the last minute for political reasons. Burnside had failed to issue new and specific attack orders to Ledlie and delayed sending orders for his corps to retreat. Ledlie (but not Ferrero, who amazingly was overlooked in the aftermath) was soon sent packing, condemned by a court of inquiry along with Burnside, Willcox, and Colonel Zenas Bliss, for his part in the mismanagement of what Grant called "the saddest affair I have witnessed in this war." Burnside left on the heels of a violent argument with Meade, who wanted his corps commander court-martialed for incompetence. Grant, preferring a quieter procedure (and with the memory of his own misguided attack at Cold Harbor still fresh in his mind), sent Burnside home on leave, summing up the battle as "a stupendous failure, all due to inefficiency on the part of the corps commander and the incompetency of the division commander who was sent to lead the assault."

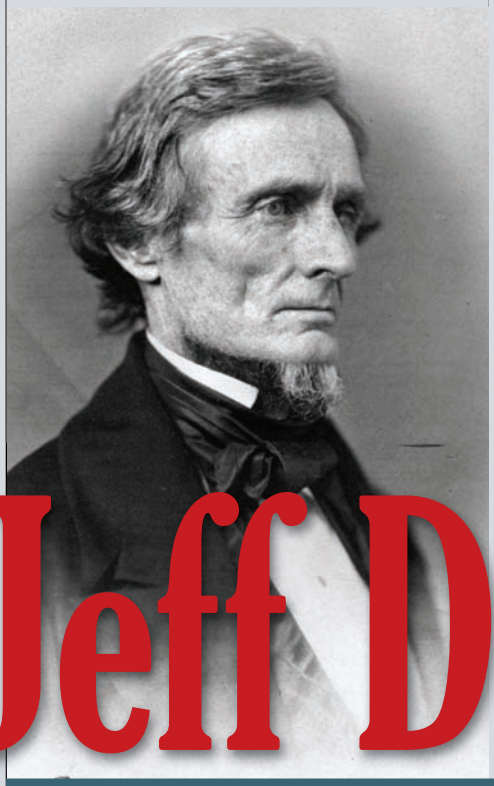
Resigning from the service, Burnside returned to Rhode Island, where he slowly recovered the geniality he had lost in the course of a calamitous Civil War career that had required him to occupy positions he himself had warned he was unqualified to fill. He found a large measure of solace in early 1865, when the Congressional Committee on the Conduct of the War exonerated him and condemned Meade for changing the plan of attack at the last minute.

The Petersburg campaign—it wasn't a siege in the true sense—encompassed 292 days of combat, maneuver, and trench warfare between June 15, 1864, and April 3, 1865. After the fiasco at the Crater, Grant spent the next eight months focusing on severing Petersburg's many road and rail connections to the south and west. He launched a total of nine offensives—the Battle of the Crater taking place during the third—in the campaign, striking both north and south of the James River. After six weeks of vicious fighting, the combat subsided into a prolonged stalemate in the trenches before Petersburg and Richmond that anticipated the gruesome conditions on the Western Front during World War I.

Pleasants had remained with Burnside on the parapet of a 14-gun Union battery during the battle and watched in horror as his men's incredible excavation effort—a legitimate mining marvel—went for naught. When things finally went horribly wrong, he angrily told Burnside that he had "nothing but a damned set of cowards in your brigade commanders." Many of Pleasants' surviving troops would have agreed with the colonel's assessment. For thousands of others, of course, it was then too late to say. □

Jeff Davis's Pets

Secretary of War Jefferson Davis lobbied long and hard for the creation of two new cavalry regiments. The handpicked 1st and 2nd Cavalry were a veritable Who's Who of future Civil War generals. BY COWAN BREW



Under a bright, high sun in a pale blue Midwestern sky, six companies of the United States Cavalry's 1st Regiment rode into a grassy valley bordering the south fork of the Solomon River in northwestern Kansas on the afternoon of July 29, 1857. Two miles away, unseen and unsensed, a party of 300 Cheyenne warriors waited silently on horseback amid a thin stand of cotton trees. They were planning to attack the unsuspecting Veho—white men—as soon as they got close enough to shoot. For the warlike Cheyenne, the hot summer day in the Moon-When-the-Buffalo-Are-Rutting was "a good day to die." Most days were for the fearless Cheyenne, who were born and bred for battle. Few warriors lived to ripe old age—or wanted to. Death in battle was their greatest glory.

The Cheyenne were even more emboldened that day by the powerful magic that their two young medicine men, Ice and Dark, had worked on them that morning. Their old-fashioned Allen revolvers had been loaded with magical gunpowder that would make it impossible for them to miss, and to further add to their medicine they had dipped their hands into a sacred lake whose waters would cause the white men's bullets to drop harmlessly at their feet. So confident were the Cheyenne of victory that they had even allowed a group of teenage boys to accompany them and witness the Vehos' defeat. One of the boys, an Oglala Sioux called Curley, would never forget what he saw that day. In a few years, under the warrior name Crazy Horse, he too would fight the white men. But today, as a guest, he politely stood aside, silent and watchful, as his Cheyenne friends prepared for battle.

Another young man destined for fame and bearing, like Curley, the boyish nickname "Beauty," galloped at the head of Company G, 1st U.S. Cavalry. His name was James Ewell Brown Stuart, a native-born Virginian and a graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point (Class of 1854). Stuart and his comrades had been tracking the Cheyenne for 2½ months across four states in broiling sun and pelting rain. Now they had caught up with them, although the troopers didn't pause to wonder why the normally elusive Indians had suddenly allowed themselves to be cornered. Instead, with the warriors shouting their war cries and the soldiers answering with a great shout of their own, the two sides drew ever closer. The booming voice of the regiment's commander, Colonel Edwin Vose Sumner, rose above the others. "Draw sabers!" he shouted. "Charge!"

As Stuart and the others lowered their blades to tierce point, preparing to charge, the Cheyenne beheld a glittering steel forest slanting directly toward them. The Cheyenne, like other Plains Indians, feared no man in battle, but their medicine hadn't prepared them to withstand the soldiers' long knives. Perhaps it was a sign from Maheo, the Sacred One, that they were not intended to fight that day. With the oncoming soldiers less than 100 yards away, the warriors broke ranks and scattered unapologetically into the hills. They would live to fight another day.

Stuart and his comrades followed in close pursuit, chasing the Indians like so many random dogies, or loose cattle, while the warriors made a life-or-death dash across the river. When Stuart's horse broke down, he hailed a private and commandeered his mount. Rank had its privileges. With a shout, Stuart raced after Captain James McIntosh and Lieutenants Lunsford Lomax, David Stanley, and James McIntyre, who had cornered a lone Cheyenne warrior armed with a decrepit Allen revolver. The warrior aimed his weapon at Lomax, and Stuart charged forward and shot the Indian in the thigh. The Cheyenne staggered from the blow.

Shouting, "Wait, I'll fetch him!" Stanley

Saber-wielding Civil War cavalrymen duel to the death over control of an American flag. A few years earlier such troopers were fighting together against Native Americans out west. LEFT: Secretary of War Jefferson Davis in the mid-1850s.

dismounted and raced toward the warrior. Stanley's pistol misfired, and the wounded Cheyenne limped toward him, clearly intending to go down fighting in a hand-to-hand struggle. Again Stuart charged, raising his saber and bringing it down on the warrior's head. At the same time, the dying Indian got off one last round from a foot away. The ball crashed into Stuart's chest; he reeled in the saddle while his comrades finished off their overmatched foe.

The other officers carefully laid Stuart on the ground and rigged up a cover of shade with their sabers and a horse blanket. They were sure he would die—no one could survive a pistol shot at such close range. But Stuart had more luck than the unfortunate Cheyenne that day. The pistol was old and ill kept, and the bullet had deflected off his breastbone and lodged painfully but not life threateningly behind Stuart's left nipple. Beauty, too, would live to fight another day.

American history might have been very different had the unknown Cheyenne warrior used a better pistol that day. In a few short years, under a different nickname, "Jeb," Stuart would become the Confederate Army's most famous cavalry commander, serving under General Robert E. Lee in the Eastern Theater of the Civil War. He would do well, save for one glaring lapse before the Battle of Gettysburg, when his absence on an ill-advised foraging raid would leave Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia without adequate cavalry cover as it prepared to fight the largest and most crucial battle of the war. In a sense, the Union victory at Gettysburg was set in motion by Stuart's unlikely survival on the banks of Solomon's Fork, Kansas, almost exactly six years earlier.

The brief and insignificant tussle at Solomon's Fork was just one in a series of Army-Indian clashes involving the 1st Cavalry and its brother regiment, the 2nd Cavalry, in the half dozen years preceding the Civil War. And Jeb Stuart was just one of a remarkable number of future Union and Confederate generals who fought Indians together on the western plains before fighting each other in battlefields back east a few years later. Included on the regimental rosters were such future luminaries as Lee, Stuart, Albert Sidney Johnston, Joseph Johnston, George Thomas, John Bell Hood, Edmund Kirby Smith, Earl Van Dorn, William Hardee, and John Sedgwick. A stray arrow here or there might well have changed the entire course of the Civil War.

The illustrious 1st and 2nd Cavalry Regiments were the particular brainchild of Secretary of War Jefferson Davis, who lobbied President Franklin Pierce long and hard for their creation. Davis and Pierce had served with many of the regiments' officers in the recent successful war with Mexico. But then-President James K. Polk, having won a singular victory in the Mexican War and increased the nation's size by more than one million square miles, reduced the volunteer-swollen army's temporary size to its congressionally mandated peacetime size of 13,821 men. In June 1853, five years after the Mexican War, the army had fewer than 7,000 men on active duty in the West—124 soldiers for each of the Army's 54 western outposts.

In his first annual report to Congress in 1854, Davis complained bitterly about the reduced numbers. "We have a sea-board and foreign frontier of more than 10,000 miles, an Indian frontier, and routes through Indian country, requiring constant protection of more than 8,000 miles," he noted, "and an Indian population of more than 400,000, of whom probably 40,000 warriors are inimical and only want the opportunity to become active enemies." Davis petitioned for more soldiers.

Opponents in Congress, led by Union-leaning Senators Sam Houston of Texas and Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri, fought an increase in the military for a number of reasons, not least of which was their fear that such an army would be Southern-dominated, at a time when the winds of secession were just beginning to blow malignly across the country. They did not trust Davis, a Mississippian, to maintain a proper regional mix of appointments. Pierce, too, although a native of

Future generals who served in western cavalry units before the war included, left to right, Edwin V. Sumner, Richard W. Johnson, David C. Twiggs, and George H. Thomas. Twiggs was the lone Confederate.

New Hampshire, was also suspected of pro-Southern views.

Opposition to Davis's request crumbled in the wake of the shocking August 1854 massacre by Sioux warriors of 2nd Lt. John L. Grattan and 29 men under his command at Fort Laramie, Wyoming. Grattan, a recent graduate of West Point, had impetuously led his men into a Sioux village to demand restitution for the tribe's alleged butchering of a straw milk cow. The Sioux chief, Conquering Bear, asked Grattan to give him time to make restitution, but the hotheaded young officer, convinced that he could defeat the Indians with a single howitzer and a handful of men, refused. In the ensuing attack the howitzer misfired, and Grattan and his men fled in panic. The enraged Sioux followed and chopped them down. Although Grattan had been the obvious instigator of the fight, Davis characterized the fray as "a deliberately forced plan" by the Indians to raid government stores. He renewed his demand for additional troops to police the frontier.

In the end, Davis got what he wanted. On March 3, 1855, Congress passed a bill mandating four new Army regiments, two infantry and two cavalry. Davis set to work immediately to fill the officer vacancies in the cavalry regiments, his particular pride and joy. Command of the 1st Cavalry went to Colonel Edwin Vose Sumner, better known to his men as "Old Bull of the Woods" for his thundering voice and hard head (an enemy bullet had literally bounced off his skull during the Mexican War, to no observable ill effect). Selected to lead the 2nd Cavalry was Colonel Albert Sidney Johnston, a longtime Davis friend and a veteran Indian fighter in Florida and Texas. Understudying them were Lt. Cols. Joseph E. Johnston (1st Cavalry) and Robert E. Lee (2nd Cavalry).

Lee, then serving as superintendent at West Point, his alma mater, was not particularly thrilled by the new assignment, which would mean a forced separation from his beloved family and friends. But if Lee was not overly excited by his new post, most of the others were. Appointments to the new regiments were widely sought after by ambitious young officers. Captain Edmund Kirby Smith, who got a 2nd Cavalry posting, exulted in a letter home that he would be serving in "the regiment of the Army." Stuart noted that "expectation is on tiptoe to see the correct list." He received a 1st Cavalry post and gleefully boasted, "No regiment was ever marshaled into the field with such brilliant luminaries at its head." He was more insightful than he knew.

Not everyone was thrilled. Critics in both Congress and the military took note of the apparently inordinate number of native Southerners appointed to the two crack regiments. Of the 25 officers chosen for the 2nd Cavalry, 17 of them were Southern born. After the Civil War, backward-looking critics would charge that Davis had deliberately stocked the regiments with fellow Southerners to give them valuable experience for the upcoming war. Future Union Brig. Gen. Richard W. Johnson, who also served in the 2nd Cavalry, disagreed, noting sensibly, "This was six years before the war, and a little too early for one to predict with any degree of certainty the supreme folly of a war between the sections." Such criticism also failed to note that the commanding officer of the 1st Regiment was a Northerner, as were two majors, several captains, and a number of lieutenants in the two units.

After the officers were chosen, regimental recruiters began to fill the company rolls, tacking up posters in cities and towns across the country announcing the search for "able-bodied unmarried men between the ages of 18 and 45 for active service against Indians on the frontier." Monthly pay was set at $22 for first sergeants, $17 for duty sergeants, $14 for corporals, and $12 for privates. Separate companies were recruited in Mobile, Baltimore, Memphis, St. Louis, Cincinnati, Evansville, Indiana, Logansport, Indiana, Rock Island, Illinois, and western Pennsylvania.

Recruits were not hard to come by, and eager applicants soon flocked to Jefferson Barracks outside St. Louis for training and

Left to right are Confederate Generals Albert Sidney Johnston, Robert E. Lee, Earl Van Dorn, and Edmund Kirby Smith. All served in the 1st or 2nd U.S. Cavalry before the war.

equipping. The men were issued colorful new uniforms: dark blue jackets, pale blue trousers, silk sashes, yellow-braided trim, and black, broad-brimmed hats pinned up on the right with ostrich plumes trailing behind them. The new hat, immediately dubbed the "Jeff Davis," replaced the leather-visored dragoon cap favored in the Mexican War. It proved less than popular with the men, who complained about its weight and fit. Groused one recruit, "If the whole earth had been ransacked, it is difficult to tell where a more ungainly piece of furniture could have been found."

It would take more than smart new uniforms to fight the Plains warriors. Good weapons were particularly needed to offset the superior mobility and individual fighting skills of the Indians whom the soldiers were about to face. Eight companies of the 1st Cavalry and two of the 2nd were issued Sharps carbines; the others were given U.S. Model 1854 carbines. All carried Colt cap-and-ball six-shooters. A few companies were issued experimental arms—muzzle-loading Springfield pistol-carbines, Merrill breechloaders, and Prussian-style sabers. The plains would be the Army's field laboratory for weapon testing.

To ensure the cavalry had the best possible mounts, the Army paid top dollar for Kentucky-bred horses. At $150 per horse, the price was well above the going market rate, but the War Department spared no expense to get its troopers into the saddle. Horses were divided by type and color among the various companies—grays, roans, sorrels, bays, and browns. The division was designed to encourage company pride and also make the units easily recognizable in the field.

The 1st Regiment, headquartered at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, was the first to take the field, beginning frontier patrols in the late summer of 1855. With both Johnston and Lee called away to temporary court-martial duty, the 2nd Cavalry took longer to train. Major William Hardee, the author of a recent well-received book on infantry tactics, took over regimental drill instruction. A brief outbreak of cholera, coupled with blazingly hot weather and typical military slowness in getting supplies to the recruits, caused some of the more faint-hearted to desert. Most, however, stuck it out, and morale soared after the popular Johnston finally arrived in camp.

Of the two new regiments, the 2nd undoubtedly had the harder task ahead of it. While the 1st was assigned to the rolling grasslands of Kansas, Nebraska, and eastern Colorado—ancestral home to 4,000 generally peaceable Cheyenne—the 2nd had to cover the vastly more inhospitable region of Kansas, Oklahoma, and northern Texas, home to 15,000 implacable Comanche warriors and their families. Universally considered the best horsemen on the plains, the Comanche ranged far and wide, continuing a generations-long tradition of raids into Texas and as far south as Mexico. They viewed the Southwest as their own private hunting ground, and anyone unlucky enough to wander into their reach was fair game. Raiding was their life, and they were enormously skilled at living it.

On October 27, 1855, the 2nd Cavalry finally broke camp and headed for its assigned duty postings in Texas. The 710-man column rode diagonally across Missouri, through northwest Arkansas and the Indian Territory of Oklahoma, making a mere 10 to 20 miles a day. Wives, children, slaves, and servants accompanying the caravan slowed it down. Constant rain and a year-long infestation of grasshoppers that had stripped the prairie of vegetation made travel across the forbidding landscape even more difficult. The weather soon turned cold, and early blizzards and sub-zero temperatures struck the columns. On some days the weather was so bad that the regiment had to remain in camp. Lonely graves dotted the frozen plains. "In the whole course of my military experience," future Confederate general Kirby Smith would later write, "I have never seen men suffer more."

At last, on December 15, the regiment crossed into Texas and marched to Fort Belknap above the Brazos River. Once there, the column split into two wings. Hardee took four companies up the Clear Fork of the Brazos to build an advance camp and watch over the nearby Comanche reservation. The rest proceeded to Fort Mason on the Llanos River, 170 miles away, completing the 750-mile trek on January 14, 1856.

As soon as weather permitted, Johnston sent the entire regiment into the field to conduct daily scouting patrols of the area. Texans had long pleaded for help from the federal government against the ferocious depredations of the flint-hard and ever-aggressive Comanche. The new regiment was intended to answer those pleas. Veteran plainsmen, however, scoffed at the untried troopers' chances of controlling the Indians. "Keeping a bulldog to chase mosquitoes would be no greater nonsense than the stationing of six-pounders, bayonets, and dragoons for the pursuit of these red wolves," scoffed one old-timer. Wolves, as everyone knew, were elusive.

Despite the old-timers' doubts, Johnston's policy of "rigorous hostility" to all nonreservation Indians soon paid dividends. "The troops ought to act offensively, to carry the war to the homes of the enemy," he urged the War Department, noting that it was not enough to wait for the Comanche to strike and then try to run them down. Vigorous action, said Johnston, was needed to keep the Indians in check and on the defensive. He intended to do just that.

Meanwhile, Robert E. Lee, who had not made the march into Texas with the regiment, arrived a few weeks later and took command at Camp Cooper. He dutifully met with Chief Catumseh of the reservation Comanche but was less than impressed by the chief or his charges. "These people give a world of trouble to man and horse," said Lee, using his favorite—if mild—pejorative, "and, poor creatures, they are not worth it." Any attempts to humanize the Comanche, Lee warned, "will be uphill work, I fear. Force is the only corrective they understand."

Heeding his own advice, Lee took the field in the summer of 1856 with four companies of the 2nd Cavalry. Fellow Southerner Earl Van Dorn of Mississippi served as his second in command on the expedition, and the celebrated scout Jim Shaw and his Delaware Indians rode along with the column as guides. The force headed west from Fort Chadbourne, scanning the horizon for telltale smoke signals. The soldiers found several abandoned campsites, but no live Indians. At the headwaters of the Brazos and Colorado Rivers, Lee divided his command into three groups to cover a greater area.

Van Dorn's force, accompanied by Shaw, broke camp on June 29. That evening the soldiers finally spotted smoke signals. The next morning they swooped down on an unsuspecting Indian camp in a nearby ravine. Expecting to find large numbers of hostile Comanche sheltering there, they were quickly disappointed. Only three warriors and a woman were in camp, and one of the men quickly leaped onto his horse and escaped. The other two, gallantly defending the woman, were chopped down by the troopers' gunfire.

Despite the lack of major battles, however, the incessant cavalry patrols put the always wary Comanche on guard, so much so that by the autumn of 1856 veteran Indian agent Robert S. Neighbors could write approvingly, "Our frontier has, for the last three months enjoyed a quiet never heretofore known. This state of things is mainly attributable to the energetic actions of the 2nd Cavalry, under the command of Colonel A.S. Johnston."

Johnston's popular reign as head of the 2nd Cavalry came to an abrupt end in May 1857 when he was ordered by his superiors in Washington to lead a punitive expedition—this time against white men, Mormon extremists who were attempting to secede from the Union. His replacement,

ABOVE: The crumbling remains of Fort Belknap, Texas, were photographed in 1934. The fort, located on the Brazos River, served as the home base for the 2nd U.S. Cavalry Regiment, commanded by then Colonel Robert E. Lee. OPPOSITE: Cheyenne Indians attack outnumbered railroad workers on the western plains. Two new cavalry regiments were added in 1855 to combat the growing threat posed by 40,000 implacable warriors to white expansion.

The brief, one-sided skirmish at the ravine was the only action in Lee's entire 40-day, 1,600-mile expedition. The cavalry averaged sighting one Indian every 10 days—hardly a worthwhile return on the Army's investment of men, money, and time. Said a disgusted Kirby Smith, one of Lee's party on the raid, "We traveled through the country, broke down our men, killed our horses and returned as ignorant of the whereabouts of Mr. Sanico [a Comanche chief] as when we started."

Brig. Gen. David Emanuel Twiggs, continued Johnston's aggressive policies. "Old Davey, the Bengal Tiger" was 67 years old, but he was still as active and disputatious as he had been as a young captain in the Black Hawk War several decades earlier. A tall, beet-faced man with a towering temper and an eye for the ladies, the Georgia-born Twiggs recommended keeping the pressure on the Comanche. "For the last ten years we have been on the defensive," he wrote to his old Mexican War com-

mander, General of the Army Winfield Scott. "It is time to follow them up winter and summer, thus giving the Indians something to do at home in taking care of their families, and they might possibly let Texas alone." Scott gave him the go-ahead.

In July 1857, Lieutenant John Bell Hood rode out with 24 men from Fort Mason to scout the headwaters of the Concho River, a favorite Comanche haunt. Tracking the Indians for 12 days, he trailed them into the forbidding desert of the Staked Plains in the Texas Panhandle. After a 150-mile slog, the soldier came upon a fetid water hole on July 20, the only water they had seen in days. Fresh tracks alerted them to recent Comanche presence.

That afternoon Hood's party crested a ridge and saw someone waving a white flag on a parallel ridge two miles away. Standing orders were to attack all Indians on sight, but since Hood had also received word that friendly Indians were moving through the area at this time, he decided to get a closer look. When he and his troopers got within 30 paces of the Indians, the waiting Comanche threw down the white flag, set fire to a pile of leaves to spook the soldiers' horses, and began firing into their ranks while another 30 Indians swooped down on Hood's flank. Comanche women followed the warriors, reloading their rifles for them and urging them on in combat with shrill ululations.

Hood, blasting away with a double-barreled shotgun, led the troopers forward. Desperate hand-to-hand fighting ensued. The troopers swung their sabers at the Indians, who were attempting to bash in the heads of the soldiers' horses to unseat their riders. One arrow struck Hood in the left hand, pinning it to the saddle. He would always have terrible luck in combat, suffering a crippled arm at the Battle of Gettysburg and losing a leg two months later at the Battle of Chickamauga. Jerking his hand free, Hood broke off the arrow and continued firing his shotgun. The soldiers were down to 11 unharmed men when the Comanche, at the mournful urging of their women, suddenly called off the attack, gathered their dead and wounded, and rode away. Hood estimated that the Indians had lost nine killed and 12 wounded. The fight, although strategically meaningless, brought Hood praise from Twiggs and Scott, who called the brief engagement "most gallant" and said it reflected much credit on the soldiers. It was the first mention of Hood's later Civil War sobriquet, the Gallant Hood.

Following the death of his father-in-law in October 1857, Lee left the regiment for good. His successor, Major George H. Thomas, was a fellow Virginian who had been recommended for the post by his old Mexican War artillery commander, Braxton Bragg. Thomas, wrote Bragg, "is not brilliant, but he is a solid, sound man, an honest, high-toned gentleman, above all deception and guile. I know him to be an excellent and gallant soldier." Ironically, Thomas's famous stand at the Battle of Chickamauga six years later would deny Bragg the total victory that his luckless Army of Tennessee came within a hair's breadth of winning.

Unfortunately for Thomas, the 2nd Cavalry commander, David Twiggs, nursed a longstanding grudge against him dating back to the Mexican War, when Thomas had refused to let Twiggs have a brace of mules for his personal use. They clashed again at a court-martial of a young lieutenant accused of stealing a drunken civilian's purse. Thomas voted to absolve the officer of any wrongdoing, but Twiggs reversed the ruling. Thomas then went over his head to Secretary of War John B. Floyd, who upheld Thomas's judgment and warned Twiggs not to interfere. Twiggs did not forget the slight.

Bad blood between the two surfaced again in September 1858 when Twiggs was preparing to lead a major expedition against the Comanche. Thomas, as ranking field officer in the regiment, expected to lead the offensive, but Twiggs placed Earl Van Dorn in charge instead, leaving an enraged Thomas back at Fort Mason to command a skeleton guard of noncoms, band members, and convalescents. Thomas saw it as the slight it was.

The dashing Van Dorn, with a newly won reputation as the best Indian fighter in the West, marched out of Fort Belknap in mid-September at the head of 225 soldiers and 135 Indian auxiliaries. On September 15 the force arrived at Otter Creek in southern Oklahoma, where they quickly threw up a log stockade named Fort Radziminski in honor of a popular young Polish lieutenant in the regiment who had died of tuberculosis the year before. Scouts soon spotted a number of Comanche teepees near a Kiowa Indian camp at Wichita. The Comanche, led by Chief Buffalo Hump, had come to present some stolen ponies to their Kiowa allies.

Riding all day and night, Van Dorn and his troopers reached the village before daybreak on October 1. Van Dorn divided his forces, sending one column around to the left to capture the Indians' ponies while he personally led to the rest of the command forward after a shrill blast from the company bugler. The Comanche, literally caught napping, dashed from their teepees and ran for a ravine behind the village. In the predawn chaos, soldiers dashed through the camp, firing their carbines and swinging their sabers. One sergeant, John W. Spangler, personally claimed credit for killing six Comanche warriors singlehandedly.

The Indians fought a desperate rearguard action, seeking to cover their families' retreat. Van Dorn, an accomplished horseman, raced after them, overtaking two fleeing Comanche who were riding double. The captain shot their horse, sending the Indians tumbling to the ground unhurt. Rising quickly, they let fly with bows and arrows. Reacting instinctively, Van Dorn threw up his hands; one arrow slashed into his wrist, the other struck him in the side, passing through his stomach and nicking his lung before coming out the other side.

Soldiers raced to rescue their badly wounded commander as Indian resistance quickly crumbled. Inside the ravaged camp, 56 Comanche warriors and two women lay dead; another 25 were mortally wounded. The soldiers lost four killed, including Lieutenant Cornelius Van Camp. "It was a bad day for Vans," Van Dorn ruefully observed. A gratified Twiggs reported to Washington that Van Dorn's raid on the

Union and Confederate cavalry charge each other at the 1864 Battle of Westport, Missouri, in this 1921 painting by famed illustrator N.C. Wyeth. Opponents of "Jeff Davis's Pets" feared the creation of two new Southern-dominated regiments.

Comanche village represented "a victory more decisive and complete than any recorded in the history of our Indian warfare." It was a claim as grandiose as Twiggs' shelving of Thomas was petty.

Van Dorn recovered quickly from his wounds, but his famous victory was soon overshadowed by a report that the same Comanche he had attacked had recently engaged in a parley with an Indian Affairs representative and mistakenly believed that they had reached a peace agreement with the white men. "One of us has made a serious blunder," a chagrined Twiggs lamented, "he in making the treaty, or I in sending out a party after them." The second guessing did nothing to help the dead Comanche or their furious chief, Buffalo Hump, who told Indian agents with some justification that henceforth his "heart was black" toward all American soldiers.

After five weeks recuperating at his Mississippi home, Van Dorn returned to the 2nd Cavalry at Camp Radziminski. The next spring he again took the field in search of the star-crossed Buffalo Hump and his band. The soldiers tracked the Indians to a camp on the Cimarron River in northwestern Oklahoma. Dismounting to attack in a misty rain, the troopers swept the Comanche toward a deep, steep-sided ravine. Kirby Smith, his glasses fogged by the rain, walked right past a concealed Comanche, who then shot him in the thigh. Fitzhugh Lee, Robert E. Lee's nephew, was also wounded in the fighting, taking an arrow through the chest before shooting his assailant between the eyes. Not a single Indian escaped—49 were killed, five wounded, and 37 taken prisoner. "The Comanches," reported Van Dorn, "fought without giving or asking quarter until there was not one left to bend a bow."

Van Dorn's twin victories helped crush Comanche resistance in northern Texas, at least for a time. Meanwhile, the 1st Cavalry's contemporaneous victory at Solomon's Fork ended major Cheyenne hostilities in Kansas and Nebraska for several years. "Colonel Sumner has worked a wondrous change in their dispositions toward the whites," remarked one Indian agent. "They said they had learned a lesson in their fight with Colonel Sumner, that it was useless to contend against the white man." In the end, it was a lesson that would not last as intermittent hostilities between soldiers and Indians would continue for another two decades on the western plains, interrupted by much more urgent hostilities among the white men back east.

Two years after Van Dorn's victory on the banks of the Cimarron, the elite fighting force put together by Jefferson Davis would find itself breaking apart in the wake of mass resignations by Southern officers heading home to fight for the Confederacy under now-President Jefferson Davis and General Robert E. Lee. The new war would pit officers of the 1st and 2nd Cavalry against one another on fields of battle from Pennsylvania to Missouri, and the frustrating, frequently inconclusive warfare they had conducted against hostile Cheyenne and Comanche warriors would be forgotten in the much larger war they fought against each other.

In all, 29 officers from the 1st and 2nd Cavalry would become generals in the Civil War. Robert E. Lee, of course, was the most prominent, leading the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia into military immortality. His commanding colonel on the frontier, Albert Sidney Johnston, would also become a full general in the Confederacy before dying early in the war at the Battle of Shiloh, his great promise largely unfulfilled.

Three other members of the two cavalry regiments would achieve the rank of full general in the Confederacy: Joseph E. Johnston, John Bell Hood, and Edmund

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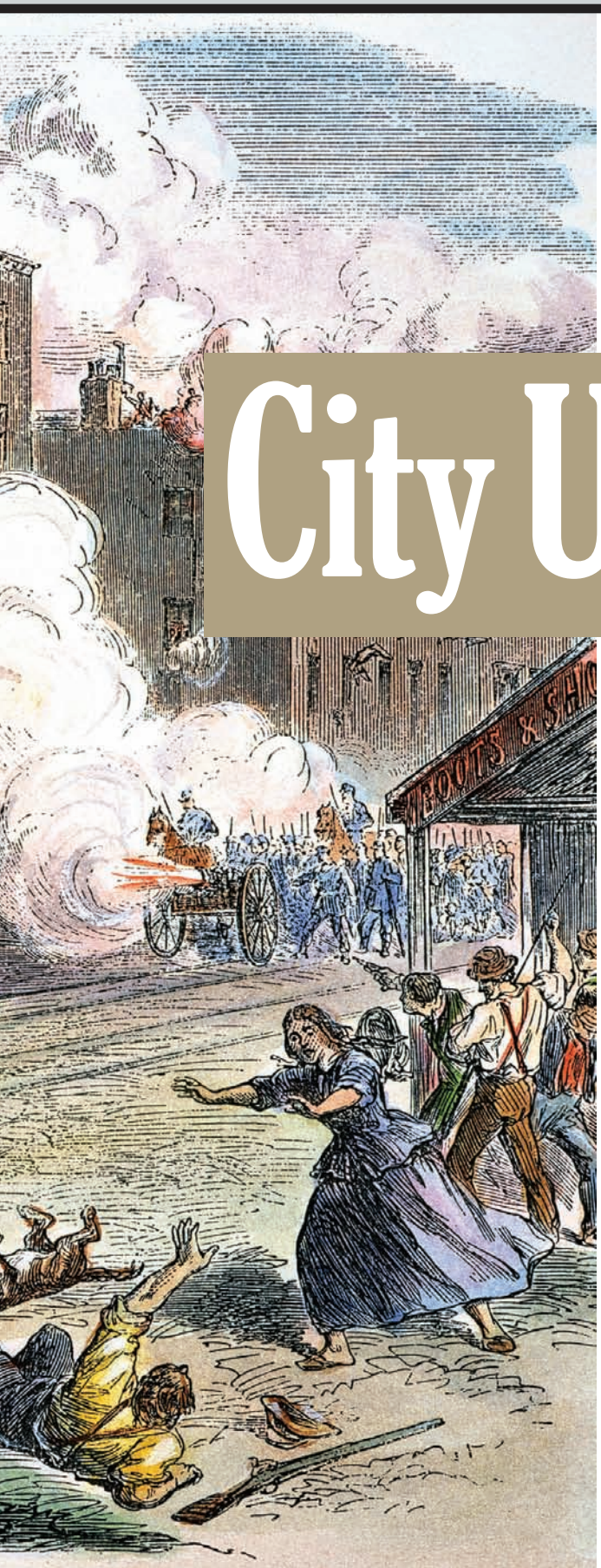
Armed rioters fire on police and army units in New York City at the height of the July 1863 draft riot. The riot was the worst civil insurrection in American history.



After the Lincoln administration began drafting Northerners for the war effort in July 1863, mobs of outraged New York citizens, most of them Irish immigrants, savagely attacked policemen, soldiers, and innocent African Americans whom they blamed for the draft. | BY RICK BEARD

City Under Siege

For four breathlessly hot days in mid-July 1863, New York City became the northernmost battleground of the Civil War. Mobs marauded through Manhattan, looting and burning homes and public buildings, fighting police and soldiers, and beating and sometimes killing those who resisted. African Americans were singled out as particular targets. Never before or since had the public order of a major American city been so imperiled. Democracy lay bleeding in the streets.

The spark that ignited the rioting was the 1863 Conscription Act, but a combustible mixture of long-festering issues—slavery, abolitionism, social class, politics, ethnicity, race, labor, and capital—fueled the fire that threatened to consume the Union's largest and most important city. In 1860, New York City was home to 805,658 souls, 53 percent of whom were native born. Of the nearly 400,000 people who had come from abroad, 53 percent were Irish. By the war's outbreak, some 86 percent of the city's laborers and 74 percent of its domestic servants hailed from Ireland. More than half the city's blacksmiths, weavers, masons, bricklayers, plasterers, stonecutters, and polishers were also Irish-born. By comparison, New York's free black community was miniscule. Numbering 12,000 men, women, and children, blacks represented less than two percent of the city's population.

In 1860, 58 percent of the population lived in 15 downtown wards that covered less than nine percent of Manhattan's area. The slums in the 6th, 11th, 13th, and 14th wards on the Lower East Side housed 147,264 residents. Irish, German, and Jewish immigrants lived cheek by jowl with free blacks. They labored at the same menial jobs, drank at the same taverns, and mingled in the same streets and dance halls. Living in such close quarters bred resentment and hostility that could easily erupt in violence. Between 1834 and 1863, there were at least a dozen major civil disturbances, several of which featured Irish New Yorkers as protagonists and African Americans as victims.

The Granger Collection / New York

The Conscription Act that would trigger the rioting in July 1863 was an act born of necessity. With 130 regiments scheduled to leave for home in May and June, the Union Army needed 300,000 new recruits, and leaders in Washington were worried that few of the initially optimistic volunteers would reenlist. The new bill called for all male citizens between the ages of 20 and 45 to be enrolled in two classes. The first included single men between the ages of 20 and 45 and married men between the ages of 20 and 35, while the second included married men between the ages of 35 and 45. The second class would only be called up after the first class had been exhausted.

The Provost Marshal's office, headquartered in Washington, was charged with administering the draft. Acting on orders from Provost Marshal General James Fry, a veteran of First Bull Run and Shiloh, conscription agents began going door to door in each congressional district during May and June 1863 to register all draft-eligible men. As federal agents, the provost marshals had broad powers to arrest and pursue draft evaders. Recent immigrants who had declared their intention to become citizens had 60 days to leave the country or become eligible to be drafted. African Americans, because they were not legally citizens, were not subject to conscription.

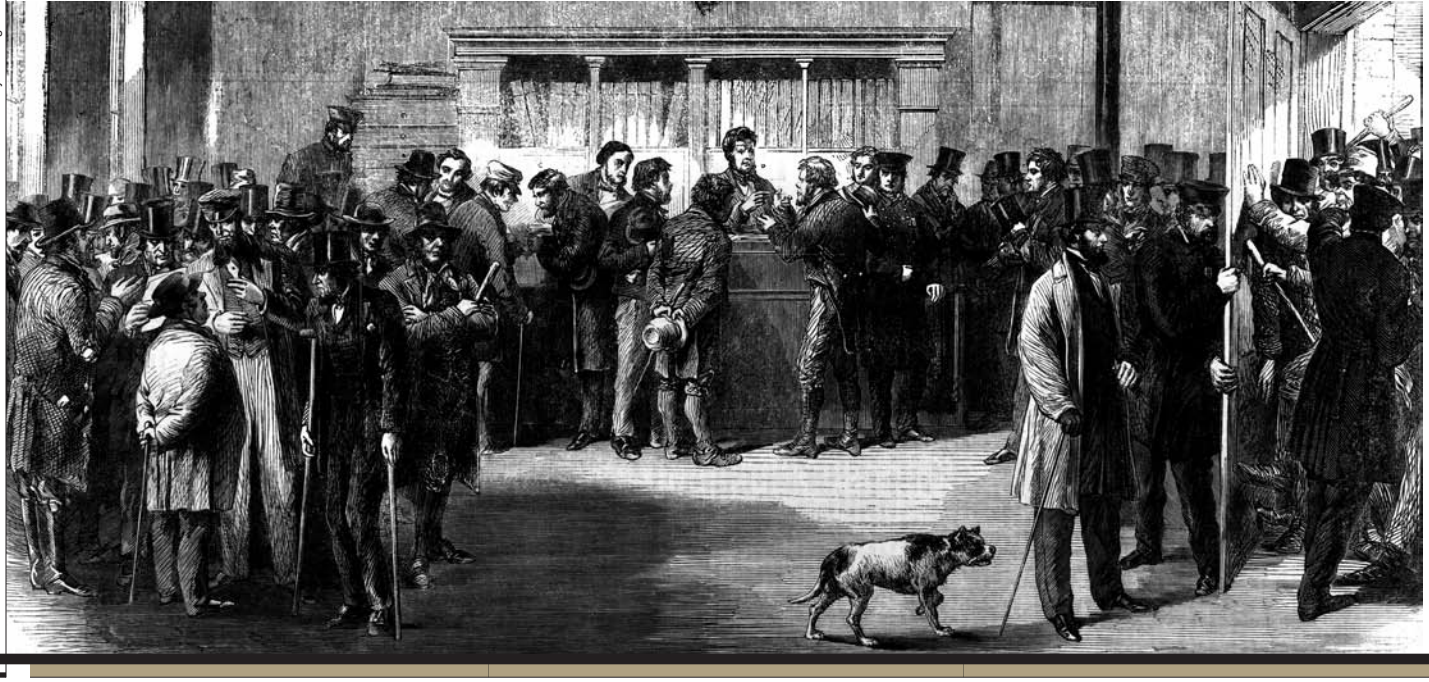
Those men who were mentally or physically disabled, or who were the sole support of aged or widowed parents or orphaned children, were exempt from service. The bill's most controversial provision allowed a draftee to escape service by providing a substitute or paying a $300 commutation fee. At a time when a New York laborer might make no more than $6 a week, paying a $300 commutation fee represented a financial impossibility. Attempts by some Republicans to justify the fee as a means of allowing businessmen to stay home and run production efforts vital to the Northern war effort rang hollow to most. The draft represented a dramatic departure from the American tradition of voluntary military service. "This law," editorialized *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper,* "converts the Republic into one grand military dictatorship."

ABOVE: A political cartoon shows a man dressing as a woman to avoid the draft. BELOW: Well-heeled New Yorkers mingle with working class individuals at a downtown recruitment center. The Conscription Act allowed draftees to pay substitutes $300 to serve in their place—well beyond the financial ability of most Americans.

Many Democratic leaders believed the draft was a Republican ploy designed to undermine local political power by setting draft quotas that were far too high. New York was to provide 26,000 men, a number Governor Horatio Seymour said failed to give the state sufficient credit for its volunteers. A Democrat who supported the Union but nonetheless was critical of administration policies, Seymour believed the draft was unconstitutional. Determined to meet manpower quotas with volunteers, he had no intention of enforcing the draft.

Seymour was one of the many Democrats who spoke at the mass State Convention for Peace and Reunion at Cooper Union on June 3. The 30,000 in attendance that day heard the governor warn against Republican assaults on civil liberties. Other speakers praised former Ohio Congressman Clement Vallandigham, a leading Copperhead (Peace Democrat) who had been arrested a month earlier for providing aid and encouragement to "those in

Both: Library of Congress



arms against the Government." Abraham Lincoln, raged one speaker, had committed "damnable crimes against the liberty of the citizen." Former New York City Mayor Fernando Wood, now a congressman, concluded the convention with a call for a cease-fire and negotiations for national reconciliation, a position quickly disavowed by the Democratic Party leadership.

Manton Marble, editor of the *New York World,* captured the mood of many New Yorkers. "Our people have become sick of useless butchery," he wrote, "and dread strengthening a government that is strong only with the weak and unarmed, and nerveless on the battlefield, where alone it shows its power." Enforcement of the draft, Marble warned, would be met with "manifestations of popular disaffection. It is impossible to tell what shape it will assume." On July 4, Seymour gave a speech in which he asked, "Is it not revolution which you are thus creating when you say that our persons may be rightfully seized, our property confiscated, our homes entered?" His closing words would prove eerily prophetic. "Remember this," he cautioned. "The bloody and treasonable and revolutionary doctrine of public necessity can be proclaimed by a mob as well as by a government."

New York was grievously ill prepared to respond to any large-scale civil disturbance. Twenty thousand state militiamen who might otherwise have been in the city were in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, where Union forces led by Maj. Gen. George G. Meade were repulsing Robert E. Lee's Confederate invasion. Maj. Gen. John Wool, a veteran of the War of 1812 and the Mexican War who now commanded the Department of the East, had a mere 550 men scattered in small garrisons at the city's harbor forts and the navy yard, plus the Invalid Corps and the Provost Marshals. There were almost no military vessels in the harbor.

This state of affairs left the Metropolitan Police as the primary deterrent to any civil unrest. In a political struggle that led to a riot six years earlier, the Republican Party in New York City had wrested control of the police force from the Democrats. The well-founded suspicion that the Metropolitans were little more than an arm of the Republican political apparatus would make the police force a flashpoint for rioters in the coming unrest.

The provost marshal responsible for conscription in Manhattan decided to begin the draft during the second week of July. Colonel Robert Nugent was an Irishman who was well aware of the ill feelings many of his countrymen harbored toward conscription. To avoid trouble, he decided to avoid the more densely settled areas on the Lower East Side and hold the initial drawings in the 9th District, which was located above 40th Street on the more sparsely settled Upper East Side. By 4 PM on Saturday, July 11, draft officials had drawn 1,200 names from a cylindrical drum sarcastically dubbed the "wheel of misfortune" by onlookers. No one had sought to disrupt the process. William Jones, who lived at the corner of 46th Street and Tenth Avenue, was the first name called.

Nugent's decision to begin the draft on a weekend proved to be a strategic blunder. On Sunday rumors spread that Copperheads were plotting to seize one of the city's armories. The rumors proved to be false, but giving residents an extra day to drink whiskey and review a list of 1,200 names largely comprised of laboring men and poor mechanics unable to hire a substitute was, in the words of one journalist, "like applying fire to gunpowder."

Around 4 AM on Monday, men began streaming up Eighth and Ninth Avenues toward the southeast corner of Central Park at 59th Street. Irish workmen—stone masons, cellar diggers, boilermakers, and many more—joined Germans and other workers intent on stopping the draft. After lingering for a few hours to hear speeches and talk among themselves, the crowd began moving down Fifth and Sixth Avenues before turning east on 47th Street toward Third Avenue. There they were joined by a huge crowd, including many women, that had moved up the east side of Manhattan, recruiting workers from the many factories along their route. As James Jackson, owner of an iron works on East 28th Street, later recalled, "The leaders said they wanted the shop to close but that I might go to work the next day." Their only aim, they told Jackson, "was to make a big show to resist the draft. They said they had no other motive than to have the men join them to put down the draft."

By 10 AM a crowd that a journalist at the scene estimated (surely inaccurately) to number 10,000 people had gathered in front of the 9th District provost marshal's office on 47th Street and Third Avenue. Furious that they no longer enjoyed the volunteer fireman's traditional exemption from militia service, Peter Masterson and his running mates from the Black Joke Engine Company Number 33 arrived on the scene and promptly began bombarding the office with rocks and paving stones. Amid cries of "Down with the rich men!" they succeeded in driving off draft officials,

All: Library of Congress

Left to right: New York Governor Horatio Seymour; Maj. Gen. John Wool; and Provost Marshal Colonel Robert Nugent.

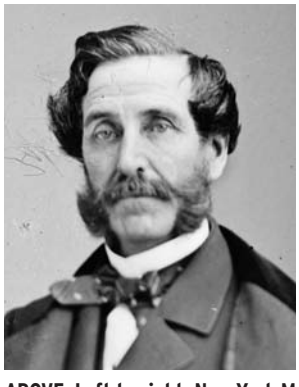
although not before a quick-thinking official was able to lock the draft records in a safe. The angry firemen then set the building ablaze, and before long the fire spread to adjacent houses. Appeals to put out the fires fell on deaf ears. Looting soon followed. The police and invalid soldiers commanded by Lieutenant Abel Reade were simply overwhelmed. When the soldiers got off one round that killed or wounded half a dozen rioters, the enraged mob clubbed two of the soldiers to death and threw a third off a ledge into the East River and dropped large boulders on him.

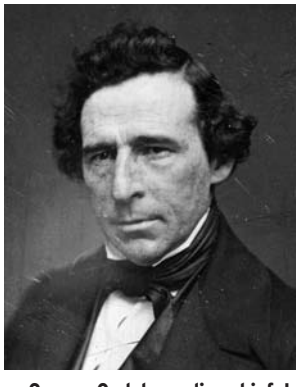
By 9 AM the city's police chief, 60-year-old John A. Kennedy, had ordered all police stations in Manhattan and Brooklyn to call in all their reserve officers. He then set off uptown to survey the situation for himself. Recognized by several of the rioters, Kennedy was savagely beaten and survived only because a friend was able to convince the mob that he was almost dead and then spirit him away in a wagon. James Crowley, superintendent of the police telegraph system, almost met a similar fate. When he was forced off a streetcar along Third Avenue, he began to gather up cut telegraph lines. Rioters were ready to attack him until he assured them that he was "only getting the wires out of your way, boys."

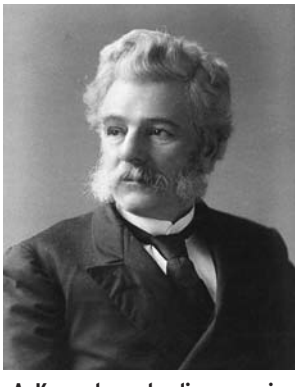
With Kennedy out of action, control over the police in Manhattan fell to Thomas Acton, president of the police commission that had originally appointed the chief. Acton quickly discovered that of the 1,600 officers on the force half were deployed to protect Westchester, Brooklyn, and Staten Island. He had no more than 800 men to push back against the rioters. Acton was a noted social and political activist and strong supporter of Abraham Lincoln. In the words of one contemporary, he was someone who "did not believe in speechmaking to [the mob]. His addresses were to be locust clubs and grapeshot."

Earlier that morning Kennedy had assigned 12 men to each of six conscription offices scheduled to conduct the draft that day. He and Mayor George Opdyke had adopted a preemptive strategy of dispatching small groups of police to uptown areas where working men and women were gathering. This did little but anger crowds already suspicious of the Metropolitans and in some instances led to more violence than might otherwise have occurred. Once he took charge, Acton immediately began ordering his officers back to the Mulberry Street headquarters so that he could dispatch them as needed to trouble spots. Communication was particularly challenging because the various police precincts could not communicate with one another by telegraph. Information had to flow first to headquarters before being shared.

At 11:30 AM, as Acton was taking charge, Provost Marshal Nugent ordered the six draft offices to close and transfer all their records to Governor's Island for safe keeping. At a meeting with Maj. Gen. Charles Sandford, commander of the state militia, Opdyke told him that a riot now existed and ordered him to call out the military to "suppress it without delay." This proved to be of little use. Confusion reigned among the various military officers charged with protecting the city. Sandford did little beyond guarding the armories, insisting that orders to do otherwise with the militia had to come from his commander, Governor Seymour. General Wool, who commanded the Federal troops, was 75 years old and infirm. As one officer observed, "General Wool seemed very much confused and worn out, and I should judge unable to perform any duty." A lieutenant who asked Wool's adjutant what was going on was told, "Good God, this is the one spot in New







ABOVE, Left to right: New York Mayor George Opdyke; police chief John A. Kennedy; and police commission president Thomas Acton. BELOW: Children living in New York's Colored Orphan Asylum pose before the riot. The facility housed more than 200 children at the time of the uprising.

All: Library of Congress

The most infamous incident during the first day of rioting was the burning of the Colored Orphan Asylum at 43rd Street and Fifth Avenue. Somehow, all 237 residents managed to escape unharmed.

York where the least is known of what is taking place."

The only federal officer at all eager to engage with the rioters was Brig. Gen. Harvey Brown, who was in charge of the harbor forts. When ordered to send 80 men to the city, Brown instead ordered all the troops in the harbor forts to stay put while he determined what was happening. At a stormy meeting with Mayor Opdycke at the mayor's temporary command center in the St. Nicholas Hotel at Broadway and Spring Street, Brown confronted Wool and demanded that he solicit additional troops from all military installations in the city. Although Wool disliked Brown, he put him in charge of all the federal troops in Manhattan and told him to report to Sandford. As soon as he realized that Sandford was not going to act, Brown established his headquarters at the Police Central Office and began cooperating with Acton.

Sandford's complaint that Brown was insubordinate led to an angry confrontation with Wool during which Brown demanded to be given independent command of all federal troops. Wool dismissed him on the spot, and only the intercession of Opdyke was able to restore the one senior officer willing to do anything. Thereafter Brown simply ignored Sandford, whom he termed "a damned militiaman," and acted unilaterally to meet the growing threat. Arguments over the command of federal troops on the first day were relatively meaningless because there were fewer than 500 troops available and Sandford insisted that most of them be deployed to protect the city's armories. Although Opdyke chose not to ask Secretary of War Edwin Stanton to dispatch federal troops to New York, he did contact leaders in New Jersey, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island to seek aid. Little help was forthcoming.

While waiting for assistance, Acton decided boldly to attack the rioters head-on. Inspector Daniel C. Carpenter, with a scraped-together company of 125 policemen, volunteered to lead the assault. "I'll go, and I'll win this fight, or Daniel Carpenter will never come back alive," he vowed. Acton advised him vaguely to "make no arrests." Carpenter's first order of business was to stop the mob from destroying Mayor Opdyke's home on Fifth Avenue. Rushing uptown in their paddy wagons, the policemen could hear the huge throng marching up Broadway, armed with clubs, pitchforks, iron bars, and pistols.

Carpenter sent two companies of officers up Fourth Street to storm the rioters from the rear. Then, aiming his locustwood club like a rifle, Carpenter ordered the rest of his men to attack. "Up, Guards! At them!" he cried. Racing forward, he confronted the apparent leader of the mob, a bearded man armed with a crowbar. The man swung his weapon at Carpenter but missed. The veteran policeman did not, bringing down his truncheon with full force on the rioter's skull and killing him instantly. Meanwhile, the other policemen fell on the crowd from front and rear, swinging blood-soaked clubs into the confused mass of men and women. Many fell bleeding to the cobblestone streets; the rest fled.

News of Carpenter's victory and the draft's temporary suspension led some of the original rioters to leave the streets and even, in some instances, to ally themselves with authorities to help quell the violence and protect property. Volunteer firemen were conspicuous examples of the sudden change of heart. A member of the Forrest Engine Company No. 3 argued that while the draft was "unnecessary and illegal, in the present exciting times we deem it our duty to protect the property of the citizens of the 11th Ward to the best of our abilities."

During the afternoon hours, other rioters continued to attack targets throughout lower Manhattan. A mob attacked and burned Allerton's Hotel at 43rd Street and Lexington Avenue, destroying the American Telegraph Company office in the

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"Our city ... is at the mercy of a mob which assembled this morning ... and are now spreading fire and outrage. Several buildings in different wards are in flames and the *Times* and *Tribune* offices are at the moment threatened."

process. In an attack on the armory at 21st Street and Second Avenue, rioters temporarily seized control of the building and began carrying off armaments. As police arrived to reclaim the building, the mob set it ablaze. Late in the afternoon, Acton and his police foiled an attack on their central headquarters.

On the city's West Side, rioters burned the 8th District provost marshal's office at West 29th Street and Broadway and began to target poor blacks. Around 4 PM the single most notorious event of the riots occurred when a mob attacked the Colored Orphan Asylum at 43rd Street and Fifth Avenue. The 237 young residents were able to escape, finding shelter in the 20th Precinct police station while the mob "clamored around the house like demons," looting, destroying the interior, and burning the building to the ground. One man in the crowd who had dared to call out, "If there is a man among you with a heart within him, come and help these poor children!" was beaten senseless and nearly dismembered.

After the burning of the Orphan Asylum, rioters attacked other reform organizations such as the Magdalene Asylum at 88th Street and Fifth Avenue and the Five Points Mission. On the Lower East Side, rioters ransacked homes for colored sailors operated by William Powell and Albro Lyons. Each building served multiple purposes as family homes, boarding houses for sailors, and centers for black activism. Powell provided space for a labor union for black seamen; Lyon ran a stop on the Underground Railroad. In both cases the rioters threw stones into the buildings, went through the houses looting and destroying the furnishings, and forced the families to flee.

Members of the black elite were also singled out for attack. Henry Highland Garnet, a noted abolitionist, minister, and educator, was lucky. His daughter foiled a planned attack on their home on 30th Street by quickly removing the doorplate identifying the house as Garnet's. James W.C. Pennington, also a leading abolitionist, was less fortunate. Returning from an out-of-town trip, he discovered rioters in his home and was barely able to escape capture. Other African Americans were even less fortunate. Around 6 PM on Monday evening, William Jones went out to buy a loaf of bread. Caught up in a mob's pursuit of another black man, Jones was seized and hanged, after which his dead body was burned near St. John's Church.

Assaults on African Americans as well as the hated Metropolitans and well-dressed men presumed to be Republicans continued throughout the afternoon and well into the evening. Shortly after dusk, Democratic and Republican civic leaders gathered at the St. Nicholas Hotel on Broadway to confer with Opdyke and Wool about what steps should be taken to stop the violence. Consensus proved impossible. Republicans, including several members of the Union League, demanded that the mayor immediately impose martial law and that Wool summon federal

troops to enforce it. Although a Republican, Opdyke sided with the Democrats in resisting such an extreme measure. He did promise that he would reserve the military option if conditions did not improve in the coming days. Martial law, he later explained, "would have exasperated the rioters, increased their numbers, and those in sympathy with them. The probable result would have been the sacking and burning of the city, and the massacre of many [more] of its inhabitants."

Displeased with the meeting's outcome, several members of the Union League appealed directly to President Lincoln. A telegram drafted by prominent citizens George Templeton Strong, John Jay, Professor Wolcott Gibbs, and James Wadsworth read: "Our city having given her militia at your call is at the mercy of a mob which assembled this morning to resist the draft and are now spreading fire and outrage—several buildings in different wards are in flames and the *Times* and *Tribune* offices are at the moment threatened. New York looks to you for instant help in troops and an officer to command them and declare martial law. Telegraph wires cut in all directions." Receiving no answer, they retired to a member's home on Gramercy Park to wait out what promised to be a sleepless night.

The four men's report of the threat to the *Times* and *Tribune* offices in Printer's Square east of City Hall was accurate. Throughout the afternoon and early evening, crowds had periodically gathered in front of the buildings to protest the newspapers' support of Lincoln administration policies. Horace Greeley, longtime editor of the *Tribune* and a supporter of conscription, was a particular object of the mob's scorn. Although Greeley insisted that the *Tribune* building not be fortified, his managing editor sent an associate to Governor's Island to bring back weapons to repel any attacks. In the meantime, Tribune staffers used bales of printing paper to blockade entryways and windows.

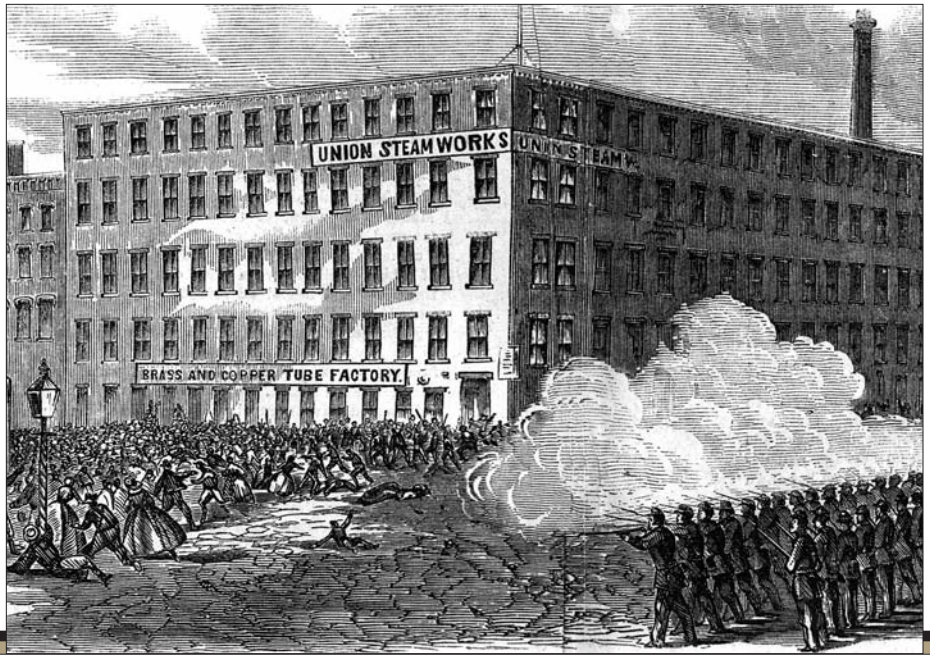
The leadership at the *New York Times* had none of Greeley's qualms about fortifying their building. Henry Raymond, one of the paper's co-founders, secured three Gatling guns from the army and set them up in windows. Not surprisingly, a mob led by a barber from the nearby Astor House Hotel, who had also been at the 9th District draft office that morning, elected to surround the less well-defended *Tribune* offices. In the words of one witness inside, the mob was "surging in black waves all around the building," creating a vision of "total depravity, shouting, and hooting, and yelling."

Alerted that an attack was planned for 11 PM, *Tribune* staff members began to unpack the crates brought from Governor's Island only to discover that the ammunition did not fit the rifles. As zero hour approached, "a gang of about three hundred ruffians, mostly in red shirts, shouting and yelling like fiends" streamed from Broadway through City Hall Park toward the newspaper building. "They were clearly the fiery nucleus of the entire riot," a witness recalled. The rioters made no secret of their chief target. "We'll hang old Greeley to a sour apple tree," they chanted. "We'll hang old Greeley to a sour apple tree, and send him straight to hell!" Sidney Gay, Greeley's managing editor, urged the elderly abolitionist to sneak out a back door. Refusing, the eccentric publisher marched out the front door of the newspaper and, unnoticed by rioters, walked calmly down the street to his favorite eating place.

In any event, the rioters never reached the *Tribune* building. As the mob exited City Hall Park, a squad of 110 policemen, led by the indefatigable Carpenter, set upon the rioters with clubs. So fierce was the assault that one *Tribune* editor later remembered hearing "the tap, tap of the police clubs on the heads of the fugitives." Within moments, "those of the three hundred who were not on the ground dead or helpless, were fleeing wildly in all directions." The police then set about successfully dispersing the crowds that surrounded the building. The attempted attack on the *Tribune* building ended the day's violence, and a heavy rainstorm that began shortly after 11 PM proved even more effective in driving the rioters from the streets. Throughout the rioting, the *Tribune* never missed an edition.

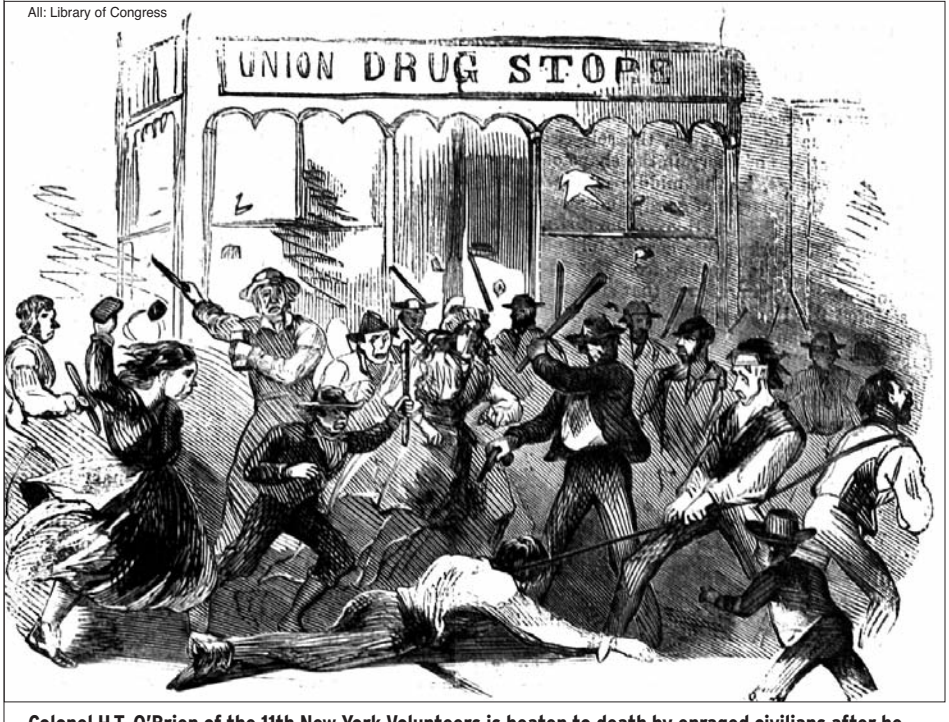
Tuesday, July 14, dawned as hot and humid as the day before. By day's end, the sheer scale of the violence—the loss of lives

BELOW: Some of the worst violence took place on the second day at the Union Steam Works at 22nd Street and Second Avenue. A mob, which included many brick-throwing women, unsuccessfully attempted to seize thousands of carbines stored in the building. OPPOSITE: When rioters attempted to attack the offices of the *New York Tribune,* Inspector Daniel C. Carpenter led a force of 110 club-wielding policemen to drive them off.



and property—dwarfed Monday's depredations. One of the fiercest battles of the entire week broke out when a mob, hoping to seize several thousand carbines, attacked the Union Steam Works at 22nd Street at Second Avenue. The battle ebbed and flowed as the rioters first seized and were then ejected from the building by 200 policemen led by Inspector George W. Dilks. Women were in the midst of the fighting, hurling bricks and stones at the police and fiercely swearing all the while. One reporter observed, "The women manifested more pluck and courage than the men, resolutely standing their ground when ordered to disperse by the officers."

All: Library of Congress



Colonel H.T. O'Brien of the 11th New York Volunteers is beaten to death by enraged civilians after he ordered his men to fire live rounds over the heads of the rioters. Several innocent onlookers were killed by the fire, including two children watching from upstairs windows.

The police were able to remove many of the weapons, but later in the day rioters returned and set the building on fire.

While one contingent of police was fighting at 22nd Street, another was sent to break up a mob burning buildings 12 blocks to the north. A troop of 150 soldiers and an artillery unit from the 11th New York Volunteers, sent to assist the police, successfully dispersed the crowd but further inflamed the rioters. Colonel H.T. O'Brien ordered the discharge of two cannons loaded with blanks and had his men fire live ammunition over the heads of the rioters. Bullets "whistled through the air in every direction, shattering shutters and doors," said one witness. They also killed seven people, none of them involved in the rioting and two of them children watching from upstairs windows.

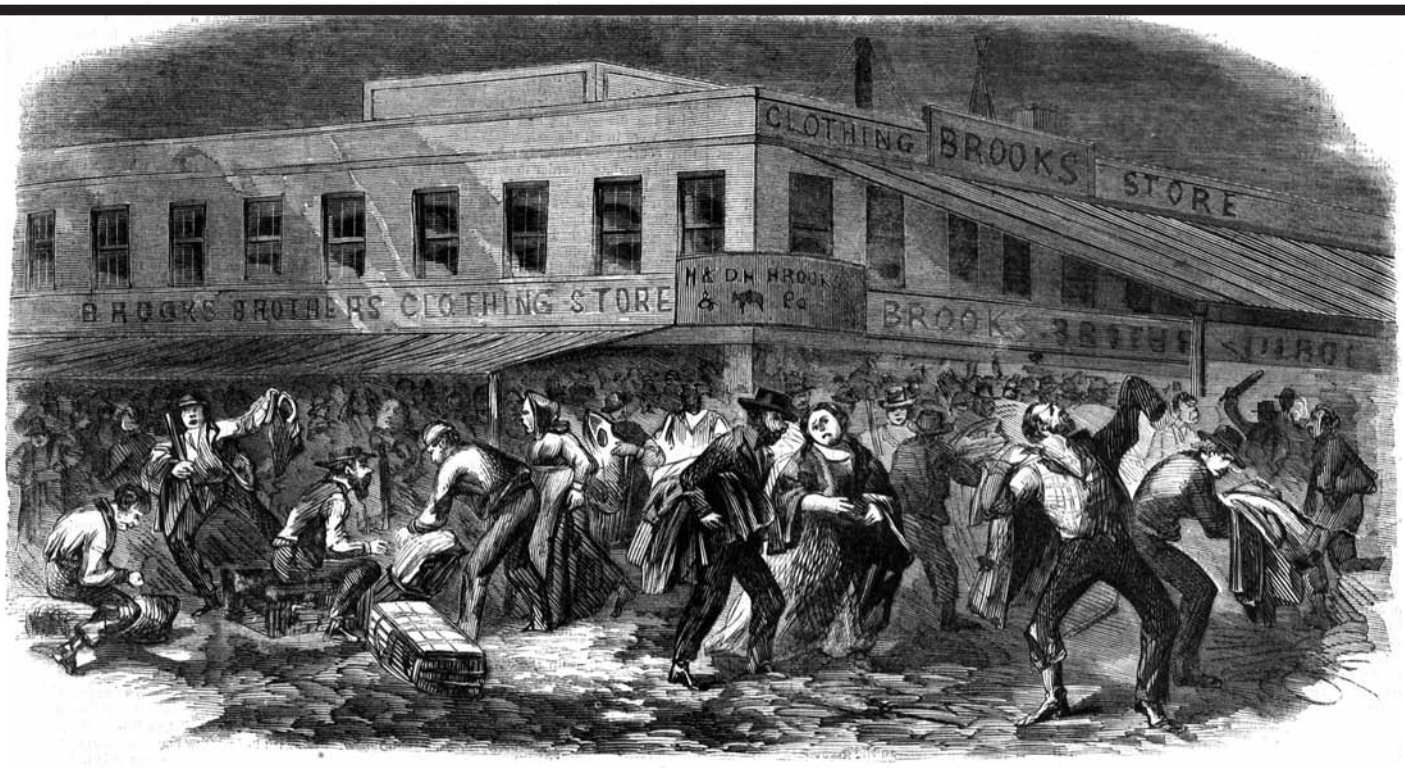
That afternoon O'Brien would pay a terrible price for his actions. He was recognized when he rather foolishly went to his neighborhood to see if his family was safe. When a woman threw a stone at him, he fired his pistol at her and wounded her in the knee. At that point a mob set upon him, beating him with bricks and clubs. For the next six hours rioters continued to assault him until he finally died "terribly mangled ... his body almost naked and covered with gore." During O'Brien's agonizing ordeal, a druggist who tried to give him water was beaten and his store ransacked. A young girl who protested the violence was also beaten and the house where she boarded destroyed. O'Brien's head was finally crushed with a paving stone.

Such ferocity characterized the rioters' attacks throughout the second day of violence. The assault on African Americans was ongoing. William Williams, a seaman from the naval transport *Belvidere,* was attacked and beaten when he asked for directions to a grocery store. An Irish laborer who lived nearby threw stones at Williams before dropping a heavy flagstone on his chest and jumping up and down on it. Police later took Williams to the hospital, where he soon died of his wounds. Others proved more fortunate, fleeing their homes while the mobs were busy ransacking them. Mrs. Hester Scott later recounted a dramatic escape from her four-story house: "We tied the sheets together, attached them to the roof, and we got down on the sheets," she noted. "One little girl, ten years of age, was let down; my husband lowered me and then my little girl; and then my husband came down."

Individuals and families were not the only targets of racially motivated attacks. After rioters attacked a vessel from Nassau that had tied up near Fulton Ferry, the British consul general in New York successfully appealed to Admiral Reymond of the French frigate *Guerriere* to take black sailors from British ships on board. The French vessel took 200 English seamen on board. An additional 100 blacks from the West Indies took shelter in the British consulate building.

Blacks were hardly the only targets of violence. The composition of the mobs themselves had changed, as many who had protested the first day began to work with the authorities to end the rioting. Those who remained in the streets were in most cases not the economically marginalized or the criminal poor. Instead, they were wage earners eager to assert their political importance who had begun to connect the draft to a host of other social issues, all of them seemingly the result of Republican misrule. In the words of one historian, the riots "had revealed a popular opposition to Republican rule broad enough to astonish even the most optimistic Copperhead."

This opposition found support from



Rioters ransack Brooks Brothers manufacturing, inflicting an estimated $50,000 in losses. The firm had recently quashed a tailors' strike and was guilty of supplying shoddily made uniforms to the Union Army.

some of the city's leading newspapers. On Tuesday morning, Manton Marble of *The World* warned that "any new attempt [to enforce the draft] will meet with still more serious opposition." And he posed the following questions to the Lincoln administration: "Will the insensate men in Washington now at length listen to our voice? Will they now give ear to our warnings and adjutations? Will they now believe that Defiance of the Law in rulers breeds Defiance of the Law in people? Does the doctrine proclaimed from the Capitol that in war laws are silent please them [when] put in practice in the streets of New York?"

Editorial voices such as Marble's helped fuel the rioters' hostility toward those whom they considered leaders of the new political and industrial order. Many manufacturers armed their workers to resist anticipated attacks by the mob. Businesses and government agencies in the Wall Street area assembled a volunteer force of 1,200 men to protect the neighborhood. Meanwhile, federal authorities removed the deposits in the Sub-Treasury and the money from the Clearing House to Governor's Island. Banks took similar precautions, shipping their bullion to the same destination. Workers at the Customs House fortified the building with bombs in the windows and sulfuric acid on the roof to be rained down on any rioters. The gunboat *Tulip* anchored off the Battery ready to engage any rioters.

Businesses failing to prepare for an assault might suffer the fate of Brooks Brothers, which was located a few blocks east of the *Tribune* building. Known as a hard employer, the firm had suffered through a tailors' strike the previous March and had also been discovered supplying shoddy uniforms to the Union army. Around 9:30 PM that Saturday, the first stones pelted the windows and men began breaking down doors. Rioters smashed cases and ransacked the store, carrying various items of clothing, hats, and bolts of fabric into the street. The arrival of 150 police officers eventually broke up the crowds, but not before the store had suffered damages totaling $50,000.

Several hours before the destruction of Brooks Brothers, Governor Seymour finally declared the city to be in a state of insurrection and invoked a state statute that made the restoration of order a state rather than a federal responsibility. Seymour had been out of New York until early Tuesday morning. Upon his arrival, he immediately thrust himself into the middle of the decision making and began working to help Democrats regain control of the city and conciliate the rioters.

Late in the morning the governor gave an impromptu speech at City Hall before a crowd that surely included a number of rioters. He began by addressing the crowd as "My Friends," a greeting for which he would be roundly castigated by Republicans. He reported that he had sent the state's adjutant general to Washington to try to have the draft suspended. He went on to promise, in the words of a reporter from *The World,* that if the conscription law was upheld, "then the State and City authorities will combine for the purpose of equalizing the tax and making it bear proportionately upon the rich and the poor." He closed with a plea for an end to the violence. "I wish you to take good care of all property and see that every person is safe," recalled a *Tribune* reporter. "It is your duty to maintain the good order of

All: Library of Congress

ABOVE: Several African Americans were lynched during the rioting; others were beaten to death by rioters. Police were ordered to escort black citizens to safety at their precincts. OPPOSITE: Angry rioters set fire to African American homes. One family was forced to escape their burning residence by climbing down from the fourth floor on a rope made of bed sheets.

the city, and I know you will do it."

After his speech at City Hall, Seymour wrote to Archbishop John Hughes, asking him to exert his "powerful influence to stop the disorder, while assuring the Catholic prelate that he did not "wish to ask anything inconsistent with your sacred duties" while aiding the civil authorities. Hughes, known to some as "Dagger John" because he drew a small cross that resembled a stiletto after his signature, had first arrived in New York in 1841. Although he had initially supported the Lincoln administration, Hughes had broken with the president over the Emancipation Proclamation.

A day later the archbishop replied to Seymour indirectly, writing a letter to the *New York Herald*. After taking a swipe at Horace Greeley for his well-known antipathy toward the Irish, Hughes appealed to "all persons who love God and revere the holy Catholic religion to disconnect themselves from the seemingly deliberate intention to disturb the peace and social rights of the citizens of New York and to dissolve their bad associations with the reckless men who have little regard either for Divine or human laws." It is unlikely that Hughes' call for an end to the rioting had much immediate impact, but throughout the four days Catholic priests frequently put themselves in harm's way, urging crowds to stop their rioting and spiriting victims of the mob's wrath to safety.

After his City Hall speech, Seymour spent the remainder of the day conferring with Democratic leaders like Maj. Gen. George McClellan, a New York resident since Lincoln had relieved him of command the previous November. The governor used "Little Mac" and other party leaders as emissaries, sending them into heavily Democratic neighborhoods to try to quell the riots. Seymour had little direct interaction with those city officials directing the activities of the police force. He and Acton had a long-simmering political feud and refused to speak to one another, and Opdyke, a Republican, was suspected of intending to wrestle political control of the city from the Democrats.

About noon on Tuesday, Opdyke formally appealed to Edwin Stanton to send federal troops. The secretary of war immediately dispatched five regiments to the city from Pennsylvania and Maryland. For Republicans, the soldiers could not arrive soon enough, and many still held out hope that Opdyke would declare martial law. To some, the current state of affairs demanded such a drastic step. One businessman described the current state of affairs as "the beginning of a new era of violence, resistance to law, contempt of the government, and disregard of all public and private good." Greeley's *Tribune* chimed in that the insurrection was "not simply a riot but the commencement of a revolution, organized by sympathizers in the North with the Southern Rebellion."

While the politicians argued, the rioters were using cut-down telegraph poles, carts, wagons, lumber, boxes, bricks, and rubbish to build barricades on both the east and west sides of Manhattan. The area between First Avenue and the river from 11th to 14th Street had long been a stronghold for the Irish Catholic working class, a zone free of a Republican presence. Those living in the neighborhood would remain the last holdouts against the restoration of public authority. On the island's west side, mobs barricaded the area from 36th to 42nd Streets along Ninth Avenue. This represented a far greater threat than the East Side barricade, for it would allow the rioters to dominate much of the upper West Side from behind its walls. At 6 PM the police, reinforced by a company of federal troops, assaulted the barricade. The soldiers advanced, firing volley after volley, and drove the rioters back while policemen dismantled the wall. The scene repeated itself four times before the barrier was completely destroyed. A final volley from the troops routed the last of the resistance. By nightfall the neighborhood was calm.

The success of the assault on the West Side barricade and other instances in which the police and the military coordinated their efforts demonstrated a basic truth. A disciplined offensive allowed a relatively small number of well-armed men,

moving together aggressively, to chase off a far larger mob. Although Tuesday had been a particularly bloody day, those in authority could take some comfort from the promised arrival of 4,000 federal troops the next day.

Heavy rains on Wednesday morning proved no deterrent to continued violence, and the day began as the previous one had—with the gruesome murder of a black man. Around 6 AM a volunteer fireman chased James Costello, a black shoemaker, down West 32nd Street. Costello defended himself, shooting his pursuer in the head, but was soon overwhelmed by a mob of 200 to 300. Pulled into the middle of the street, Costello was beaten to death with fists and stones and was then hanged from a nearby tree. The mob sliced off his fingers and toes as souvenirs. Next, the rioters burned down a nearby row of black homes. Troops dispatched to respond to the attacks managed to disperse the mob with several volleys, killing at least 23 people and causing the women and children to fill the air "with their cries and lamentations." Elsewhere, a mob dragged a black coachman named Abraham Franklin from his mother's parlor, beat him with clubs and fists, and hanged him from a lamppost. Soldiers drove off the crowd and cut down Franklin but then left him on the street. The mob came back, hanged him again, and mutilated his body.

While lynchings and looting were continuing, the city's Common Council met to consider a proposal to create a $2.5 million fund that would pay the $300 commutation fee for any New Yorker too poor to afford it. Viewed as a palliative for those opposing the draft, the fund was to be used only if the courts ruled the Conscription Act constitutional and would be funded by municipal bonds. "I was strongly urged by many leading citizens to give it my official sanction at once as a means of pacifying the rioters," Opdyke recalled, but he refused to "bow to the dictation of the mob, and in effect nullify the draft."

The uprising was entering a new phase, one in which smaller bands of rioters carried out sporadic surprise attacks at various points in the city. In response, Acton and Brown, who had been working closely together, divided the police force among four zones around the city: two on the Upper East Side, one around City Hall, and one on the northern tip of Manhattan. This allowed for more rapid responses to outbreaks of violence anywhere in the city. In the meantime, many wealthy New Yorkers fled with their belongings to Westchester or New Jersey.

Opdyke chose Wednesday afternoon to announce to the citizens of New York that "the riot which for two days has disgraced our City, has been in good measure subjected to the control of the public authorities. He went on to assure his constituents that "but for the temporary absence of all our organized local militia," their peace would never have been disturbed. Opdyke then invited citizens to form voluntary patrols of their various districts." He closed with the request that New Yorkers resume their accustomed daily routines.

Opdyke's reassurances were premature. Throughout the day rioters burned homes linked to Republicans up and down Sixth Avenue. Late in the afternoon Sandford, who had thus far restricted his troops to the protection of the armories, responded to reports that a threatening mob was gathering on First Avenue between 18th and 19th Streets. He dispatched 150 inexperienced volunteers, who soon found themselves trapped. Firing from rooftops and windows, rioters killed or wounded 10 soldiers. Brown was forced to send Regular Army troops and a howitzer to disperse the mob and rescue Sandford's volunteers.

Around 11 PM, more than 200 former grain shovelers attacked the Atlantic Dock

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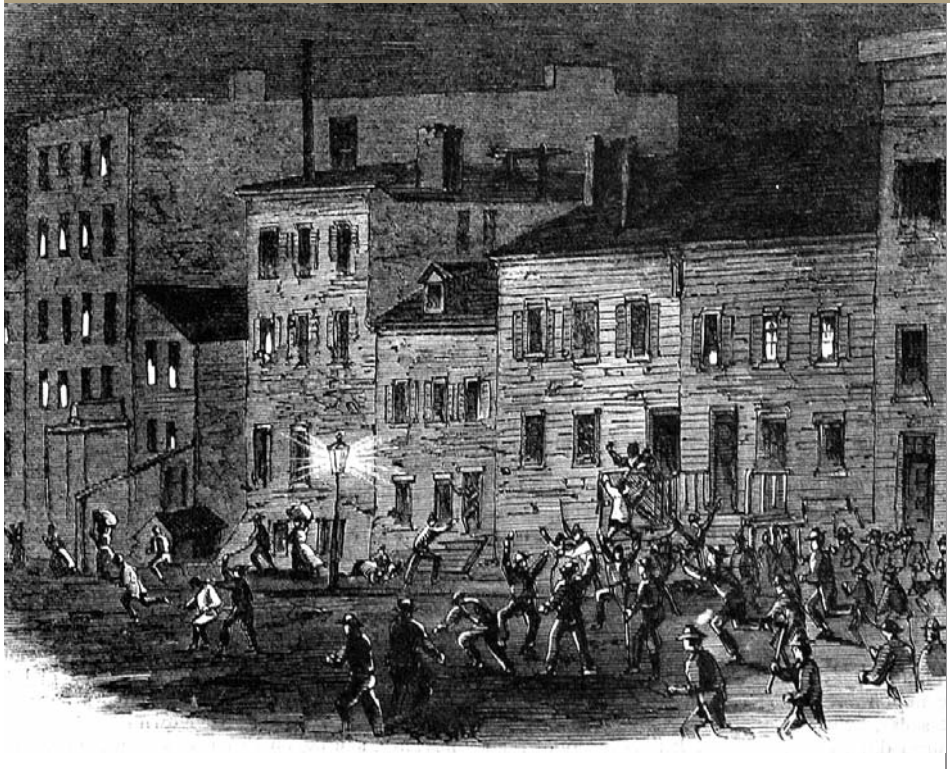
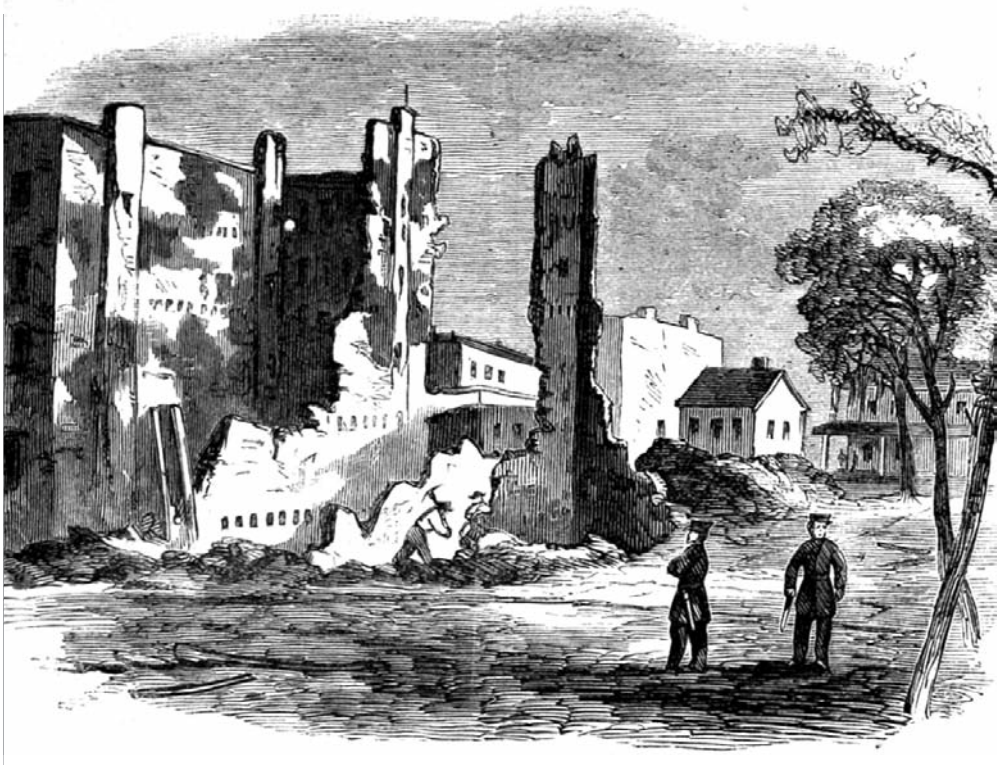


base in Brooklyn, where owners had hired strikebreakers the previous summer. There they set two grain elevators on fire, causing more than $100,000 in damage. This event, combined with the destruction earlier in the week of two street-sweeping machines owned by the city, were the week's most blatant examples of workers pushing back against labor-saving devices that were costing them jobs.

Throughout the evening the Union troops began arriving. The 74th Regiment of the New York State National Guard appeared at about 10 PM. Two hours later the 65th Regiment came on the scene, followed by the 152nd New York Volunteers and the 26th Michigan Volunteers. Around 4:30 AM the 600 soldiers of the 7th Regiment, who had served the city so well in the past, marched up Broadway to form ranks in front of the St. Nicholas Hotel. William Stoddard, one of Abraham Lincoln's secretaries who had been in New York throughout the week, wrote, "It was the beginning of the end, to the minds of many thousands who speedily heard of their arrival." By Thursday morning more than 4,000 battle-hardened troops were in New York.



ABOVE: Policemen inspect the ruins of the 9th District provost marshal's office, set on fire by firemen angry at no longer being exempted from the draft. LEFT: Members of the 7th Regiment, New York Militia, photographed in New York City at the time of the riot. OPPOSITE: The draft resumed peacefully on August 19,a month after Secretary of War Edwin Stanton sent 10,000 Union troops into the city to guard against further violence.

Despite the troops' presence, large parts of the city remained vulnerable to mob violence. Rioters continued to target blacks, and Acton sent out a general order to all police precincts to "receive colored people as long as you can. Refuse nobody." Militia troops engaged in a major battle for control of James Jackson's foundry on First Avenue at 28th Street, and troops were positioned to protect other businesses involved in war production.

The Upper East Side between Third Avenue and the river from 21st to 40th Streets remained the least tranquil part of the city. Throughout Wednesday night and all day Thursday, the newly arrived troops used howitzers to overwhelm the remaining rioters. By Thursday evening the fighting was over and the 6,000 Union troops were in firm control of the city. Opdyke believed the arrival of the regiments on Thursday "removed all doubt as to our ability to promptly quell the riots and restore the supremacy of law." Joseph Choate, at 31 already one of the city's most prominent attorneys, agreed: "Law and order appear to be getting the upper hand again." He went on to lament what was surely the riot's greatest shame: "The cruelty which has for these three days been perpetrated on the blacks is without a parallel in history."

On Friday, July 17, Opdyke issued a proclamation that reflected the state of affairs far more accurately than his statement two days earlier. "The riotous assemblages have been dispersed and the public authorities have the ability and the will to protect you," he assured New Yorkers. "Business is running in its usual channels and few symptoms of disorder remain. The Police are everywhere alert." While acknowledging that a small district in the eastern part of the city remained to be pacified, the mayor expressed confidence that he now had sufficient military to suppress any further rioting.

Opdyke's optimism was well founded. By Friday the rioting was over, and the search for motives had begun. James Brooks, a Peace Democrat congressman and newspaper editor, published an account he titled "The Riot—Its History." Sunday had been a day of leisure, he claimed, during which working men had pondered the draft. Monday saw the Conscription Riot, which included attacks upon the provost marshals

and their places. Tuesday saw the Riot of Thieves, not only by native New Yorkers but also troublemakers from Philadelphia, Boston, and other quarters. Wednesday was a day of fighting between the military and the mob.

Brooks caught the change in the mob's intent after the first day of rioting, but he was wrong about everything else. There is no evidence that "thieves" from other cities flocked to New York to take part in the rioting, and the military presence was not a decisive factor until Thursday. Unsurprisingly, Brooks also missed the one consistent element throughout the four days of violence—the brutal attacks on African Americans' homes and lives.

The draft, the spark that had ignited four days of violence, resumed in August under the watchful eyes of federal troops. Dix had hoped to carry out the draft under the aegis of the state, but Seymour refused the general's request for assistance. Instead, Stanton sent 10,000 infantry and three batteries of artillery from federal forces in Virginia. Few of the troops were of New York origin.

The first new names were drawn on August 19 in Greenwich Village, a Republican stronghold. Seymour and Samuel Tilden, a reform-minded Democrat and future presidential candidate, had convinced the administration to reduce New York's quota from 26,000 to 12,000 men. Tammany Hall support and the improved fortunes of the Union Army contributed to the successful completion of the draft within the city.

Opdyke's dogged refusal to use public funds to ease the sting of the draft on male New Yorkers did not prevent the city from having to assume costs stemming from the riots. Estimates ran as high as $5 million for property destroyed by the rampaging mobs. New York law made municipalities, not the state, responsible for property destroyed in a "popular commotion," and a committee of the New York County Board of Supervisors quickly set about reviewing claims for compensation. Eventually, the City Comptroller paid a total of $1,516,423.99 to claimants.

The human costs were harder to calculate. There was no conclusive agreement on the number of people who had lost their lives, with the count ranging from a low of slightly more than 100 to a high approaching 1,500. No more than 119 deaths can be definitively accounted for. The relative anonymity of the large crowds, as well as understandable reluctance on the part of surviving family members to report the death of a loved one for fear of official reprisals, make a persuasive case for a much higher death toll. The ferocity of the fighting, particularly on Tuesday and Wednesday, would certainly suggest that many more than 105 people died.

What can be known with certainty is the price paid by the African American community. For black New Yorkers, the riots shattered any sense of stability. One quarter of the free black population—3,000 people—were left without homes. Twenty percent of the community simply left: by 1865, New York's African American population had dropped from 12,414 in 1860 to 9,945. After the war, the organizers of the Colored Orphanage found themselves unwelcome when they attempted to rebuild in their old neighborhood, so they moved farther north to what would become Harlem.

Despite promises from Opdyke and Oakley Hall, the city's district attorney, that they would deal harshly with rioters, few were ever brought to justice. Of the 443 people arrested as suspected rioters, 221 were released, 10 were discharged by the judge due to insufficient evidence, 13 were allowed to enlist in the Union Army, two were deserters who were returned to the military, and one escaped. Of those remaining, the grand jury refused to indict 36 cases, and the 74 cases that were indicted were never brought to trial. Eighty-one rioters came to trial: 14 were acquitted and 67 were convicted. The court sentenced 25 of those convicted to six months or less.

The draft riots in New York City represented a serious, if brief, threat to the Union. Although events during these four July days played out on a local level, their implications were national. Failure to enforce conscription would have starved the Union Army of much-needed soldiers and blunted its momentum. The larger question was whether Lincoln's expanded administration could survive. The riot, one Union League member warned Edwin Stanton, was "the last great card of the rebellion." That it had been played not by Confederates but by immigrant laborers and their Democratic patrons was a reminder of just how fragile popular support remained for the Union war effort in teeming, combustible New York City. □

All: Library of Congress

Few Union men saw more of the war or its principal commanders than Medal of Honor awardee Horace Porter.

By Richard H. Owens, Ph.D.

In what is considered an accurate depiction by artist Tom Lovell of the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia at Appomattox, Virginia, Horace Porter stands immediately to General Grant's right.

An Astonishing Career

Horace Porter was born April 15, 1837 in Huntingdon, Pa. He traced his ancestry and family motto, "Vigilantia et virtute," to William De La Grange, who accompanied William the Conqueror to England in 1066. His grandfather, Andrew Porter, served as an artillery officer under George Washington. His father, David Rittenhouse Porter, studied law but turned to agriculture and industry, managing a farm and an ironworks. Active in Democratic politics, D.R. Porter served two terms as Pennsylvania's governor from 1839 to 1845. Like many Pennsylvania Democrats, he opposed slavery and was pro-Union.

Young Horace obtained appointment to West Point and entered in the summer of 1855 in one of only two classes in the academy's history with a five-year term. Eighty-one men entered with Porter. Forty-one graduated five years later on July 1, 1860. Porter graduated third in his class. He demonstrated discipline,

Tom Lovell/National Geographic Society

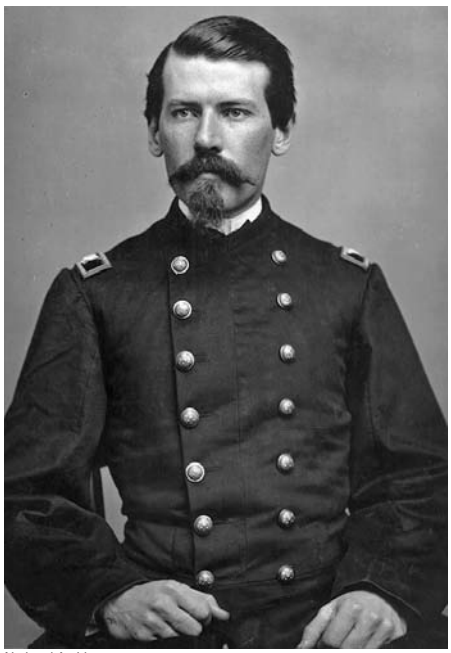
confidence, teamwork, and leadership, and earned regular citations for quality and good example. In his fifth year, he became adjutant of the corps of cadets, second only to cadet regimental commander.

In January 1860, Second Lieutenant Horace Porter was asked to remain at West Point after graduation to serve as an artillery instructor. The army recognized his qualities of leadership, communication, and administration in an era when most junior officers were assigned tasks escorting wagon trains and manning forts in the West. Porter welcomed the assignment and recognition of his abilities; he was enthusiastic about his prospects.

By March 1860, Porter and his classmates were, he wrote, "making necessary preparations for one of the greatest events in our lives," not knowing that in a year they would be at war. Of course, there had been signs at West Point of growing sectional division in America over slavery; the 1856 presidential campaign was especially bitter and caused divisions among cadets. Porter disapproved of slavery on grounds that it was inhumane, contrary to American traditions of liberty, and an irrational political and economic system.

After a semester of instructional duty at West Point, Porter was assigned in the winter of 1860-1861 to the army arsenal at Watervliet, NY, supervising production and shipment of munitions and guns. The assignment pleased Porter for its location near Albany, home of his fiancée, Sophie McHarg, whom he had met at West Point in 1859. At first, the challenges at Watervliet interested and occupied Porter. He wrote to his father that General Winfield Scott seemed determined to have sufficient troops and ammunition in Washington to quell possible trouble at Lincoln's inauguration. Porter noted that "tons of ammunition had been dispatched to the capital." More significantly, he hoped "these preparations may not be necessary and the states may yet come to some amicable settlement."

The principal issue for Porter was the Union. "The state of affairs is truly alarming," he wrote his father in what would become a stream of letters during his war years to him, his mother, and his fiancée, "and I fear we may soon see the worst. In my mind, nothing can justify the acts of states that in the most precipitate manner pass an act of secession, seize government property, and fire on government vessels, before the Republican administration ever went into power." Porter expressed some sympathy for classmates who left the army to fight for their states. But he added that there was a greater sense of loyalty to country than to states among the officers.


National Archives

In April 1861, Porter and his colleagues at Watervliet worked feverishly to meet demands for munitions. On April 11, Porter noted "enormous orders for supplies came from General Scott." In 36 hours, Porter and his men filled orders that normally took two weeks. Proud of his accomplishments at the arsenal, he appeared uncertain whether he would see action because "as long as there are so few of us here, I cannot get away from the Arsenal." Porter was released briefly from his duties that spring for a secret assignment carrying to Washington dispatches related to production, inventory, and transportation at the arsenal. He wore "citizen's clothes for disguise." The information was too important to be sent via telegraph or post. Porter's first experience as a courier excited him.

In recognition of his work at the arsenal, he was promoted to first lieutenant of ordnance on June 7, 1861. In September 1861, he was given active interim command of the arsenal while its commandant was on leave. But his anxiety over a field appointment grew, undoubtedly whetted by his clandestine mission to Washington. "I am moving heaven and earth to get with General McClellan before he starts south," he wrote. Porter was determined "not to stay here while the war continues." Nevertheless, he spent most of October 1861 waiting, as did McClellan's Army most of the time.

Finally, late in that month, Porter received orders. He saw his first action in November at Port Royal, SC, near Savannah, Ga. His initial battle observations were typically naive and optimistic. Describing the barrage against Confederate forts at Hilton Head, he wrote of "a beautiful sight as we watched it through our glasses." Later battles convinced him that war was hardly glorious. At Port Royal, he also discovered that maneuvering artillery in wet coastal areas produced much discomfort. "I had been working all night with my boots full of water and was pretty well worn out," he confided. Later, Porter "found an old candle, went up to an empty room, lay down on the floor in my wet clothes, and got a few hours sleep."

His superiors duly noted Porter's efforts. In December 1861, he was named chief of ordnance for the assault against Fort Pulaski. He discerned that Fort Pulaski, and eventually Savannah, could be taken through patience and intelligence, not bloody assault. "We can get to Savannah the back way and save lives and time; the Fort will then fall of itself. It has but two months' provisions," he wrote. But Porter was not making the decisions. His superiors decided to reduce Fort Pulaski, not attempt the end run that Porter advocated. They did follow his advice, however, on battery dispositions and other ordnance operations for which he had been trained and demonstrated considerable talent. He displayed ingenuity by persuading Connecticut volunteers to improvise whittled

wood fuse plugs for one battery. Other problems he faced were slaves who flocked to Union lines and the unpredictable quality and attitude of volunteer troops.

Porter's estimate of two months of supplies in Fort Pulaski belied Confederate ability to forage, improvise, and husband resources. By February 1862, the fort remained intact. Union morale was plagued by rumors that they might withdraw from Savannah after weeks of futile effort and little progress. Soon, however, firmer decisions and more strenuous efforts were made. In March 1862, serious siege preparations commenced. Porter was in the forefront of activity, giving advice, supervising gun placements and dispositions, selecting targets, and commanding 11 batteries totaling 36 guns.

On April 11, after an intense two-day bombardment, Porter reported that Fort Pulaski was in Union hands. Still naive but exuberant, he saw it as "Sumter revenged." He proudly noted that as commander of the artillery batteries, "I fired the first gun." Porter came under shelling during the battle and feared "several times I was a goner." Describing a captured Confederate officer named Freeman after the fort's surrender, Porter noted he "was a Union man and heartily wished the war was over, but that the blood of the South had been spilled and he would fight to the end." Porter closed optimistically that "the Fort is all knocked to pieces, our guns worked beautifully, and our firing was much better than the Rebels'."

Several things became clear to Porter during the Fort Pulaski campaign. The war could last a long time. The Confederates were formidable adversaries despite superior Federal firepower and ordnance. Senior Union officers, whether Regular Army or volunteers, often were politically motivated, misinformed, or simply inept. Porter recognized his own talents as a leader, soldier, and engineer. Finally, as the Confederate officer Freeman had convinced him, emotion and arguments for slavery, secession, and war were major factors for the South.

Despite increasing responsibilities and reputation, the Fort Pulaski victory was diminished for Porter by knowledge that "they're giving up on Savannah." To sweeten the disappointment, however, Porter received an engraved sword and was breveted captain "for gallant and meritorious services" on April 11, 1862, the date Fort Pulaski fell. He announced the promotion and described his role and responsibilities by noting: "I am sort of acting brigadier general." But the Union campaign in the Carolinas had stalled. Porter chaffed at slow progress in a secondary theater of operations. He worked to prepare heavy artillery for the James Island, SC, expedition, and on June 16, 1862, took part in the assault against Secessionville, SC, where he was wounded in the hand by a shell fragment.

Finally, in July 1862, Porter was named to General George McClellan's staff as chief of ordnance of the Armies of Virginia (as it was then called). The assignment reflected lack of battle experience among Union officers at that early stage of the war as well as the reputation Porter earned at Fort Pulaski. Porter was justifiably proud of his record and the assignment, although he exaggerated when he wrote: "You see this is the greatest position a young man has ever held in this country." Porter soon grew disappointed at the new assignment, however, and became increasingly critical of incompetence, political motives, and

Library of Congress

ABOVE: Porter's artillery skills made an impact at Fort Pulaski near Savannah. He was promoted but he came to feel that the war might very well be a long one owing to the stubborn resistance of the Southerners. OPPOSITE: Horace Porter.

RIGHT: At the Battle of Chickamauga in 1863, Porter rallied a few men to make a stand that led to his award of the Medal of Honor.
BELOW: General George Thomas, who rallied the Union forces at Chickamauga.

National Archives

U. S. Army

myopia among Regular Army officers in the field and War Department

Joining McClellan's staff after the Seven Days Battles of June 25-July 1, 1862, Porter spent August reorganizing the ordnance department which, like much of the battered army, was in disarray. Porter noted his growing frustration at the lack of action, movement, and anticipation of Confederate moves. "The oldest and generally most inefficient officers fall in at the top of the list and become chief," he complained while Robert E. Lee was advancing north to Antietam without resistance. Moreover, Porter learned to respect Lee and other Southern field commanders, a respect that grew with his later experience in the West and in Virginia.

Porter rendered fine service in organizing the artillery transfer from McClellan's base on the James River in Virginia to Antietam. But he was dejected both by being left behind at the time of the battle and the routine promotion of officers based on seniority rather than ability—another man was placed above him as chief of ordnance. "I am sending 440 wagons of ammunition to the Army at Frederick [Maryland], enough to last it all year if not wasted," he wrote at the time. "If he [Shunk, who superseded Porter] is up to his old Port Royal tricks, the Army will never get a round of it." Porter opined: "McClellan is so terribly afraid of hurting anyone's feelings that he lets affairs go on in this way for fear of offending some old fogy by promoting a younger man over him." Confusion was rampant and leadership weak, he declared. "At present, Marcy gives one order, McClellan another, Halleck another, and Stanton another. The feeling here is one of deep depression." Yet, Porter cautioned in this letter to his mother, "Do not mention this state of affairs. Let all people have perfect faith in the Army."

Porter realized early that McClellan was not the right man to lead the Union to victory. He was critical of McClellan well before negative comments about him became common. "It is a shameful thing," Porter wrote, "that we are exactly where we were a year ago and worse in some respects." Fortunately, General Ripley of McClellan's staff liked Porter and asked him to become chief of ordnance of the Army of the Ohio under Maj. Gen. Wright, with whom Porter had served in the Carolinas. Wright had established headquarters at Cincinnati, needed a good chief of ordnance, and asked for Porter, who was glad to accept.

In October 1862, Porter wrote to his mother that he thought the Union Army too amateurish and intent on "toy-soldiering." He was particularly upset by news that McClellan had decided against a fall campaign. At first, things moved slowly in the West, too. Then, in late January 1863, Porter was promoted to chief of ordnance

"Nothing could exceed the bravery of our troops. Their endurance and courage saved our army and Chattanooga."

of the Army of the Cumberland under General William S. Rosecrans.

Porter received permanent promotion to captain on March 3, 1863. By now, after three years in uniform and two years of war, he had become accustomed to army routine. He realized the war would go on for a long time and had become "a widespread and mammoth war of nations." As the Army of the Cumberland advanced south, the young man lamented the cost of war, separation from family, and soaring food prices. Around Murfreesboro in April 1863, amid a war of attrition, he reflected: "We have entered upon the second year of the war, and will have many a long campaign before it ends."

By the end of June 1863, the army had advanced on Tullahoma, Tenn., passed the Elk River on July 3, and crossed the Tennessee River on September 2. Porter understood Rosecrans' plan to outmaneuver and take Confederate General Braxton Bragg from the rear. But he realized that success in Tennessee would not end the war. By August 25, 1863 Porter believed Bragg was on the run, and he was buoyed by local demonstrations of Union support. But reality of a different sort soon slapped Porter and the whole Army of the Cumberland.

Rosecrans miscalculated. After pushing Bragg's Confederates into Georgia through the summer of 1863, he assumed Rebel forces were still on the run. Bragg, however, regrouped in September and turned to fight at Chickamauga, 12 miles south of the Union base at Chattanooga. In a letter following the battle, Porter noted its importance. The brevity of the letter betrayed his fatigue and the battle's physical and emotional impact on the Federals. "We have been fighting the great battle of Chickamauga, as it will probably be called, for the last two days. Yesterday [September 19], we repulsed the enemy at all points against fearful odds, but today [the 20th] have been driven back twelve miles [to Chattanooga]." Porter concluded: "This is the bloodiest battle of the war. We have lost probably 15,000 men."

A few days later he described the engage-

ment in detail, providing rare but important information on his role. For his actions at Chickamauga on September 20, 1863, confirmed by other witnesses, Porter received the Medal of Honor. As Porter told it, during the Union retreat on the afternoon of September 20, he and another officer, Captain J.P. Drouilliard, whom he had known at West Point, reached the crest of a hill. "I told him [Drouilliard] I was going no farther, as long as we could hold ten men together. He joined me, and by urging and threats we formed nearly a hundred men."

Stragglers and unattached officers were incorporated into the cohort that eventually weakened under artillery fire and several bayonet attacks. But they at least led the Confederates into believing a much larger unit held the hill. Porter delayed the Southern advance for about 20 minutes until artillery finally cleared the way. By the time Porter ordered the remaining soldiers on the hill to retire, most defenders had been killed or wounded under constant Rebel assault. Meanwhile, other Union troops escaped the Southern attack. Union forces under General George Thomas regrouped to prevent the retreat from becoming a rout. Porter wrote to reassure his sister on two accounts. "I was never in better health or spirits in my life. Do not believe any newspaper rumors about us [being beaten]. We are all right now."

Chickamauga was an important event for the North and for Porter. It marked the emergence of George Thomas and ended the uncertain and hesitant command of Rosecrans (who in later circumstances did well). Porter and most Union troops survived. They could afford manpower losses; the South could not. Furthermore, Union troops were tempered, and reversal at Chickamauga in Porter's estimation was "not serious. Nothing could exceed the bravery of our troops. Their endurance and courage saved our army and Chattanooga." He added that more vigorous and able leadership was needed. He wrote, "There must be some great changes among our general officers before another battle."

There were. Chickamauga brought full command in the West to Ulysses S. Grant. It also gave Porter further opportunity to demonstrate valor and leadership under fire and to meet Grant, who became Porter's most significant role model.

On October 23, 1863 in Chattanooga, Porter met Grant for the first time. The Union general had a major impact and influence on the younger man, who never lost admiration or respect for the plain-spoken soldier who became his commanding officer, mentor, president, and friend. Porter saw in Grant the character and attributes of a man far more complex than the tough public exterior. To Porter, Grant possessed many traits that also endeared Abraham Lincoln to both Porter and America: humanity, patience, determination, humility, simplicity, strength under pressure, and sensitivity. Although he had the opportunity to meet Lincoln more than once, Lincoln was a more distant hero. Porter was with Grant every day for over a year of bitter fighting in Virginia, through several years in politics, and later through Grant's period of disgrace and illness.

Their first meeting was hardly auspicious. Porter met Grant in a dark room crowded with other officers. General Thomas, then commanding the Army of the Cumberland, introduced Porter to Grant, who had been assigned command of all Union armies in the West. From then on, particularly after he was assigned to Grant's staff in Virginia, Porter believed that despite humility, informality, small stature, and minimal pomp and staff surrounding him, Grant was the man who would bring Union victory.

Although the Army of the Cumberland survived Chickamauga, Porter realized some problems went beyond the need for more vigorous leadership. "Most of the men were without overcoats, and some without shoes; ten thousand animals had died of starvation, and the gloom and despondency had been increased by the approach of cold weather and the appearance of autumn storms."

Porter understood logistics. At their meeting on October 23, Grant asked him how much ammunition was on hand following Chickamauga. Porter replied there was only enough for one day of intense battle. The next day, Thomas assigned Porter to accompany Grant's reconnaissance of their positions around Chattanooga. Grant again asked Porter to review the ordnance situation and shared with Porter some directives he was preparing for William Tecumseh Sherman. Grant quickly became aware of Porter's experience, knowledge, and abilities with siege warfare and artillery. The young officer impressed Grant, who liked his frank and honest assessments. Porter liked what he saw in Grant, too. He wrote that Grant was direct, open, intelligent, offensive-minded, dedicated, and had "singular mental powers and rare military qualities."

Porter's opportunity to serve directly under Grant was, however, still a half a year away. In his immediate future was a possible transfer to the ordnance office in the War Department. The news again provoked Porter's criticism of "armchair generals with seniority, contacts, rank, and no experience or zeal for the front." Thomas, with Porter's approval, wrote to Grant, asking the Western Commander to intercede so that Porter could remain with Thomas. Grant admitted he had little chance at that time of reversing an order from General Henry Halleck. But he gave Porter a letter for Halleck requesting that Porter be reassigned as soon as possible for duty with Grant himself. Grant also requested that Porter be promoted to brigadier general when assigned to his staff. Based on evaluations of Thomas and others, Grant's letter characterized Porter as "one of the most meritorious and valuable young officers in the service."

On November 6, 1863 Porter left for the War Department. On December 23, 1863 Horace and Sophie were married in Albany. By January, they were settled in the nation's capital. But Porter had no desire to remain behind a desk.

In spring 1864 Grant was called east to command all Union armies. On April 4 Porter was assigned as Grant's aide-de-camp as a lieutenant colonel. As his responsibilities grew, so did Porter's perspective

Library of Congress

Porter was present at newly captured Fort Harrison in the fall of 1864 when shell bursts startled everyone except Grant, who calmly continued to write a dispatch. Fort Harrison had bolstered the Confederate line between Richmond and Petersburg.

on the war. He noted that under Lincoln and Grant politicization of the army was at last being subordinated to the war effort. He also gained insight into the political character of the war and its prosecution, observing that finances, morale, elections, and political consensus were important elements in achieving victory. The young officer was proud to be part of Grant's staff and a force "unequaled in history."

Although Porter referred to the Confederates as the enemy, there is no evidence in his correspondence or records that he held Confederates in contempt. By 1864 his early critical comments about secessionists and slaveholders had been tempered by feelings of common humanity, suffering, and wartime experiences shared by both armies. A key meeting on May 3, 1864 to coordinate Union strategy reflected the attitude he learned from and shared with Grant. Porter knew what was needed to win the war. He was pleased to be at the center of decision making. Grant's military analysis included advantages of interior lines, terrain, and supplies. Porter appreciated Grant's plan at that May 3 meeting "to launch all his armies against the Confederacy at the same time, to give the enemy no rest."

Porter liked the democratic, informal style of Grant's headquarters. Grant preferred staff members to dine with him rather than in small messes according to rank. After the politics and formality of McClellan's staff and the War Department, Porter enjoyed the chance to speak his mind, learn the strategic picture, and participate in decisions. Grant was criticized in military circles outside the Army of the Potomac and by politicians. Porter disapproved the negativism, particularly regarding Grant's alleged slowness in moving against Lee in the spring of 1864. Porter speculated that Grant's critics were not aware of his responsibility to direct all Union armies, not just the Army of the Potomac.

Porter saw action throughout the campaign toward Richmond that spring. On May 6, 1864 he was breveted major for "faithful, gallant and meritorious service at the Battle of the Wilderness." Grant anticipated the terrible human cost of victory, and Porter appreciated his concern for needless death from hasty or incorrect decisions. Both abhorred what the war had become. Porter described the tragedy of the Wilderness campaign "as though Christian men had turned to fiends, and hell itself had usurped the place of earth."

By late June, Union forces had been on the move and under fire almost constantly for six weeks. Following Cold Harbor in early June, and frustrated, they probed for another opening around Lee. In a letter to Sophie from Cold Harbor, Porter wrote

that despite severe losses and several weeks of constant fighting, the men liked and trusted Grant in a way they had not McClellan. Also according to Porter, Grant was still working to rid the army of political generals, although it became a job even he and Lincoln together could not complete.

By mid-June, Grant was maneuvering between Petersburg and Richmond. Union confidence and ability to fight grew, as did casualty lists. The situation was precarious for both Grant and the Union. A major Federal reverse would jeopardize Lincoln's chances for reelection as well as the momentum gained since early May. Porter sympathized with what Grant had to do militarily as well as politically. Still, he rejoiced at the progress.

Porter recognized that Grant and Lincoln were willing to make sacrifices necessary to ensure victory, although they disdained the suffering they ordered. About Grant, Porter wrote: "No warrior was ever more anxious for peace, and all of the general's references to the pending strife evinced his constant longing for the termination of the struggle upon terms which would secure forever the integrity of the Union."

Porter was present during Lincoln's visit to Grant's headquarters in June 1864. On that occasion, he learned Lincoln's view of emancipation and its effect on American foreign relations. He also learned more about Lincoln's simple and honest nature when Lincoln asked to visit a typical officer's field quarters, which turned out to be Porter's. Seeing various ordnance objects in Porter's tent, Lincoln asked about the powder used in certain artillery shells. Porter explained. He was impressed with the president's knowledge and interest in learning about something as mundane as powder grains from a young lieutenant colonel.

As a member of Grant's military family and staff, Porter continued to observe and practice his mentor's style of management. Grant let Porter and his staff undertake extensive duties and entrusted significant responsibility to them. The Virginia campaign also gave Porter many opportunities to see Grant in action and test his own courage in battle. Grant did not pamper his staff. He did not hesitate to ride along the front of battle with his aides or dispatch them on hazardous missions in the thick of the fighting as Grant kept probing around Lee's left flank.

Ultimately lodged around Petersburg, south of Richmond, Union forces planted a huge mine beneath Confederate earthworks. On July 27, 1864 Porter was dispatched to Maj. Gen. Winfield Hancock, who commanded that point in the line, to personally deliver orders for the attack set for July 30. The explosion was timed for just before dawn to create a gaping hole in the Confederate lines in hopes of spreading Southern fear of more detonations and thus a general retreat. The explosives did not detonate on time, however. Union engineers bravely reentered the tunnel and reset the fuse, but the delay enabled the Confederates to erect a second line of defense. Finally, the mine exploded, blasting a huge

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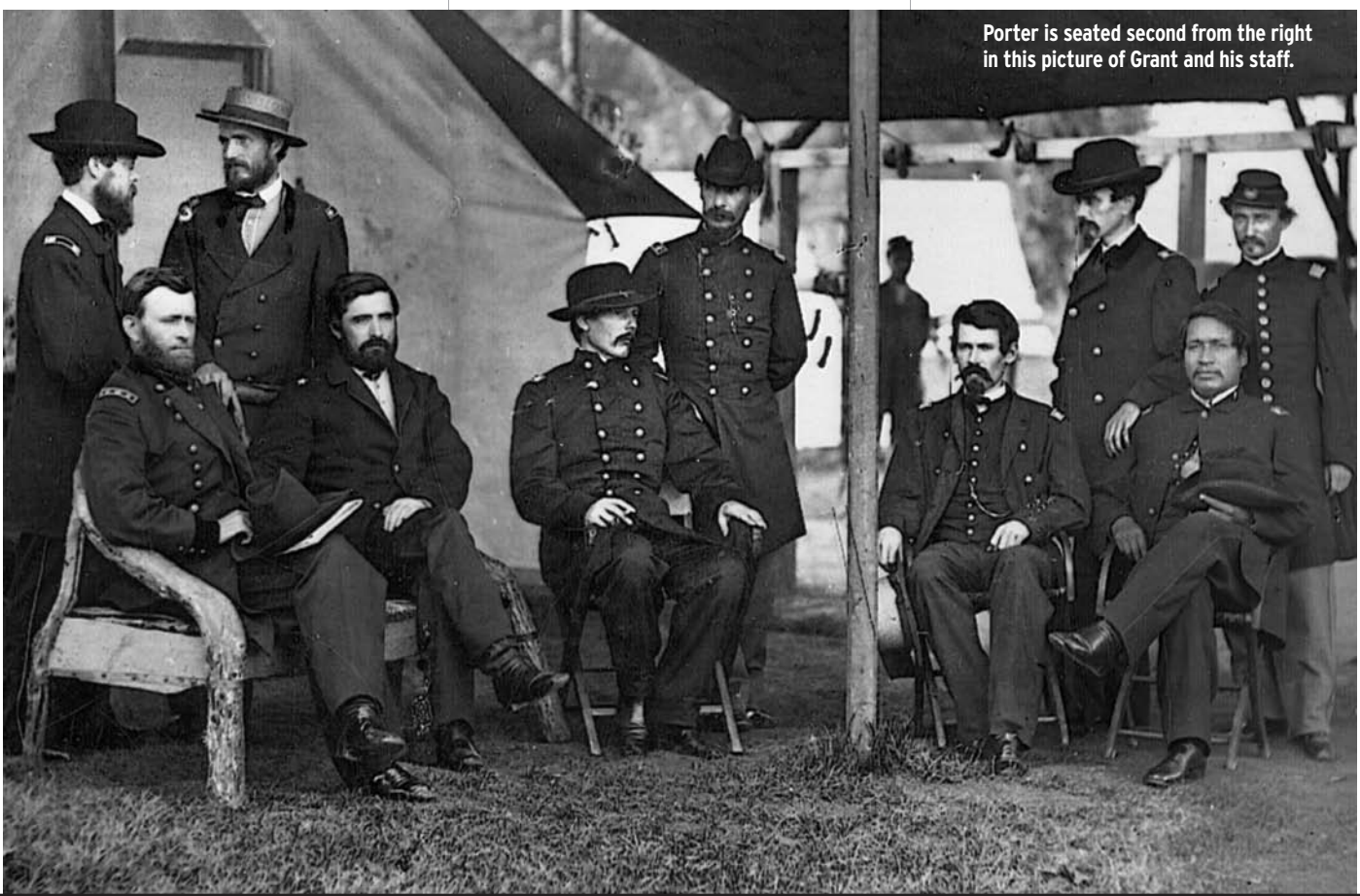

Porter is seated second from the right in this picture of Grant and his staff.

When Porter reflected on the years of battle, he recognized "the terrible realism of relentless war."

crater in the Confederate works. But Union misfortune continued. Union troops were slow to hit the breach. When they arrived, the crater walls were too steep to allow rapid advance or retreat. Senior Union officers remained in the rear (one drunk) instead of leading their troops. The result was chaos, and some of the costliest and bloodiest combat of the war.

When the attack became a disaster, Grant decided to view the situation personally. He chose only an orderly and one officer, Porter, to accompany him on reconnaissance. Under direct and heavy fire, they entered the crater so Grant could communicate directly with officers there. Grant did nothing to countermand the orders of those brave junior officers; the real problems were in the rear with the senior officers. Confederate counterattacks forced Grant to withdraw. On Porter's suggestion, they dismounted and returned to the Union lines. Having seen firsthand the situation in the crater, Grant stopped the attack. He saw no point in further futile loss of life by following a failed plan.

In the later summer and fall, Porter was an active participant in battles for Petersburg, Five Forks, and White Oak. His valor and actions were recognized on several occasions. On August 16, 1864 he was promoted to brevet lieutenant colonel "for gallant and meritorious services in action" at the Battle of Newmarket Heights. Porter's abilities and reputation continued to grow, and Grant entrusted him with increasingly sensitive missions. In September 1864 Grant sent him to Atlanta to confer with Sherman and communicate Grant's intentions. Porter also provided news to Sherman of Union actions designed to coordinate efforts against the shrinking Confederacy. While Grant put key points and the overall plan in a letter to Sherman, he informed the general that "Colonel Porter will explain to you the exact condition of affairs here better than I can do in the limits of a letter."

At their first meeting, Sherman impressed Porter. They discussed the war in Virginia and elsewhere. Sherman asked Porter to communicate to Grant his intention "to strike out for the sea." While both agreed Sherman could operate effectively by living off the land and cutting himself off from his base, neither worried that Grant would be unaware of the location and progress of Sherman's force. Porter recorded that owing to the regular exchange of Union and Confederate newspapers across the lines in Virginia, "there will be no difficulty in hearing of your movements almost daily." As a result of his understanding of Sherman's plans and intentions obtained at their meetings that September, Porter frequently became the spokesman for Sherman when the latter's activities were discussed by Grant's staff.

Another example of Grant's faith in Porter's judgment arose when Grant was selecting a man to lead the assault on Fort Fisher. Porter recommended General Alfred Terry, whom he had known at Hilton Head and Fort Pulaski. On January 2, 1865 Grant sent for Terry and gave him the command. Terry subsequently captured the fort. Soon, Grant sent Porter to Fort Fisher to see what Terry had accomplished. Porter reported that the fort indeed had been a formidable place, and that Terry had done well. Grant's trust in Porter's judgment was well rewarded.

Porter was breveted colonel and then brigadier general of volunteers in February 1865. In March, he received two Regular Army brevet promotions, one to colonel, U.S.A., and the second to brevet brigadier general, U.S.A. Both Regular Army brevet promotions cited Porter for "gallant and meritorious services in the field."

Also in March 1865, Porter had another opportunity to observe President Lincoln and learn more about prosecution of the war, national politics, and world affairs. Typical of both Grant and Lincoln, staff members again were allowed to participate in the meeting. With the end of the war in sight, they focused on planning for the future.

Following one series of discussions, Lincoln entered a tent in which Porter and some other officers were relaxing and settled in with them. He petted a stray kitten while chatting amiably. To Porter, such actions by the president surprised, pleased, and impressed him. His esteem for the man grew.

Ultimately, the siege at Petersburg came to a head. Lee attacked. Grant counterattacked. At the height of the fighting at Five Forks on the western end of the line, Grant needed frequent and precise appraisals of the situation from the front. He ordered Porter to spend the day with General Philip Sheridan and the Union cavalry. Porter dispatched orderlies to Grant each half-hour throughout the whole day's fighting on April 1. Significantly, as the battle progressed and Sherman maneuvered his cavalry seeking an opportunity to move around or through an opening in Lee's defenses, Porter was empowered to suggest tactics to Sherman. "You know my views," Grant had told Porter, "and I want you to give them to Sherman fully." Grant knew and trusted Sherman. But he also recognized that Porter knew and understood his plans and intentions. When the fighting ended on April 2, with Union victory assured, Porter rode to Grant's headquarters with the news.

Porter called the U.S. Civil War "a great war tragedy." After four years, it ended at Appomattox Court House, Virginia, on April 9, 1865. Porter was present at the surrender. He was fortunate to be one of few people inside the McLean House to witness the event. He took careful and

copious notes (many verbatim) of conversations between Lee and Grant.

The proceedings were brief and businesslike, but cordial. No word of bitterness passed between the two commanders. Porter handed Grant a manifold book from which he read the articles of surrender. After discussing some of the language, Lee, who was attended by only one other officer, reached for a pen or pencil. Seeing that neither Lee nor his aide had one, Porter offered his own lead pencil to the Confederate general. Lee accepted the instrument and used it for the rest of the proceedings. At the conclusion of the meeting, he returned it to Porter.

Following the surrender, the mood was quietly excited. With the surrender of the South's principal army, there was indeed reason to celebrate. But the human cost of the war had been so great and the end so sudden that both sides reacted almost numbly to the cataclysm at Appomattox. Even Grant was addled. After presiding at the surrender, he neglected to communicate the news to Washington. Riding back to camp, Porter realized the oversight and reminded Grant to report the surrender and its terms to the capital. Exclaiming that he simply had forgotten to do so, Grant immediately drafted and dispatched a telegram to the capital.

Grant asked Porter to accompany him to Washington on April 13, 1865, and from there to Philadelphia. Lincoln invited Grant to remain in Washington on the evening of April 14 to attend Ford's Theatre. Mrs. Grant, however, was anxious to catch the 4 o'clock train, so Grant declined the invitation. Porter later wrote that when Grant returned to his hotel after meeting Lincoln, Mrs. Grant told him that during lunch "a man with a wild look" followed her into the dining room and stared at her. Grant was accustomed to people staring at him, so he gave the incident little weight until the Grants were riding along Pennsylvania Avenue to Union Station.

A man on horseback riding in the same direction peered into their carriage. Mrs. Grant claimed it was the same man who had watched her at lunch. Before they reached the station, the man reversed

Porter stuck with Grant throughout this critical campaign that began Battle of the Wilderness in May, 1864, and worked its way south of Richmond to Petersburg. He not only was in the action, but also had the opportunity to observe Grant closely. Porter was promoted for his meritorious service at the Battle of the Wilderness.

direction, passing them a second time. Before their train reached Baltimore, someone tried to enter the car in which Porter and the Grants were traveling. He was deterred because the conductor had locked the door to the car to ensure the Grants' privacy. The Grant party reached Philadelphia that night. At a late supper around midnight, a telegram informed Grant that the president had been shot earlier that evening at Ford's Theatre.

Porter believed Grant's life was in danger on April 14. Porter and the Grants thought photos of John Wilkes Booth published after the assassination strongly resembled the man who spied on the Grants on their way to the station. In November 1868, Grant received an anonymous letter, ostensibly from the man who tried to enter the railway car Grant had taken to Philadelphia. The writer claimed to have been an accomplice of Booth assigned to kill Grant. The writer noted that the door to Grant's railway car had been locked, a fact known to few people.

A final aspect of Porter's involvement with Lincoln's assassination was his appointment to the court assigned to try the conspirators. The defense, however, claimed Porter would be biased because he was on the staff of an intended victim. Porter was excused from the jury.

The Civil War was for Porter and his generation the most formative experience of their lives. When Porter reflected on the years of battle, he recognized "the terrible realism of relentless war." From 1887 to 1897, Porter collected documents, analyzed published materials, and wrote many letters inquiring into recollections of Civil War events. He also studied his own "elaborate" notes from 1863 to 1865, with a goal to publish a thorough and exact account of the Virginia campaign with Grant. Portions of *Campaigning With Grant* appeared as articles in *Century Magazine* in the late 1880s and mid-1890s before Porter finally collected them into one volume. He finished *Campaigning With Grant* just before he departed for Europe in spring 1897 as U.S. Ambassador to France. He dedicated it "To my comrades of the Union Armies whose valor saved the Republic."

From 1866 to 1868, Porter served under Grant in Washington helping with the dissolution of Union armies and inspecting military posts around the country. For a time he was assistant secretary of war to Grant. In the winter of 1868-1869, he was dispatched south to quell Ku Klux Klan wars in Arkansas and Louisiana. Porter struck a raw nerve with the Klan, precipitating a letter to him signed "Beware—KKK." It warned: "Your time is short. Thus far you have been spared, but neither the army, the navy nor Congress can protect you longer, nor for one hour defer the just retribution in store for you when the time to strike arrives."

From 1869 to 1872, Porter served as executive secretary to Grant, who had been elected president. But Porter was unused to Washington politics. By 1872, his experiences disillusioned him and he decided to leave the administration after Grant's reelection, although he reluctantly took leave of Grant himself. In 1872, he became vice president of the Pullman Palace Car Company. In that and other railway and business ventures, Porter became a millionaire. He also was active in civic affairs and politics, particularly in New York, raising large sums to finance William McKinley's 1896 election.

From 1897 to 1905, Porter served as U.S. Ambassador to France. During those years, he was involved with Spanish-American War diplomacy and the complex international events of that era when the United States emerged as a world power. In 1907, he was U.S. delegate to the Second Hague Peace Conference. An advocate of naval preparedness before WWI, he served as president of the Navy League of the United States from 1909 to 1915.

But all his life, Porter retained memories of the hardship, suffering, destruction, and death that he witnessed, lived, and survived from 1861 to 1865. The Civil War influenced him through the remainder of his life and career in business and diplomacy. His two great heroes were two men he knew, one exceptionally well: Lincoln and Grant. Horace Porter died in 1921.

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THE Fort

When Confederate Maj. Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest and his 3,000 battle-hardened troopers rode back into their homeland of West Tennessee in late March 1864, they were not in the best of moods. A horse-gathering raid into Kentucky had netted a haul of 400 horses and mules for a new division of Bluegrass cavalry, but it had also seen the death of Colonel A.P. Thompson during an unsuccessful—and unordered—attack on Union-held Fort Anderson on the Ohio River near Paducah.

Forrest had already withdrawn from the smallpox-ravaged town before the attack, but that did not prevent pro-Northern newspapers from crowing about the comparatively minor skirmish at Forrest's expense. The *Louisville Journal,* labeling the Paducah raid an abject failure, charged that Forrest's men had been "gloriously drunk, and but little better than a mob." The paper accused the raiders of "commencing an indiscriminate pillage of the houses" before making "several desperate charges" upon the fort. "The Federals met them with a withering fire, and in each onset the rebel columns were broken and driven back in confusion."

That was bad enough, but the staunchly abolitionist *Chicago Tribune* leveled the explosive accusation that Forrest's men had "skedaddled, after killing as many Negroes as they could, which seems to have been their primary object in coming to Paducah." Even worse in Southern eyes was the newspaper's provocative claim that Forrest and his men had been "ignominiously beaten back by Negro soldiers with clubbed muskets." Further rubbing salt into the wound were false reports that Colonel Thompson, a well-liked young officer, had been killed by a musket ball to the forehead fired by "an ardent young African." (Actually, Thompson was killed by a shell from a Union gunboat.)

To a man, Forrest's soldiers seethed at the bogus reporting, which neglected to mention the surrender of a Federal detachment at Union City, a crossroads

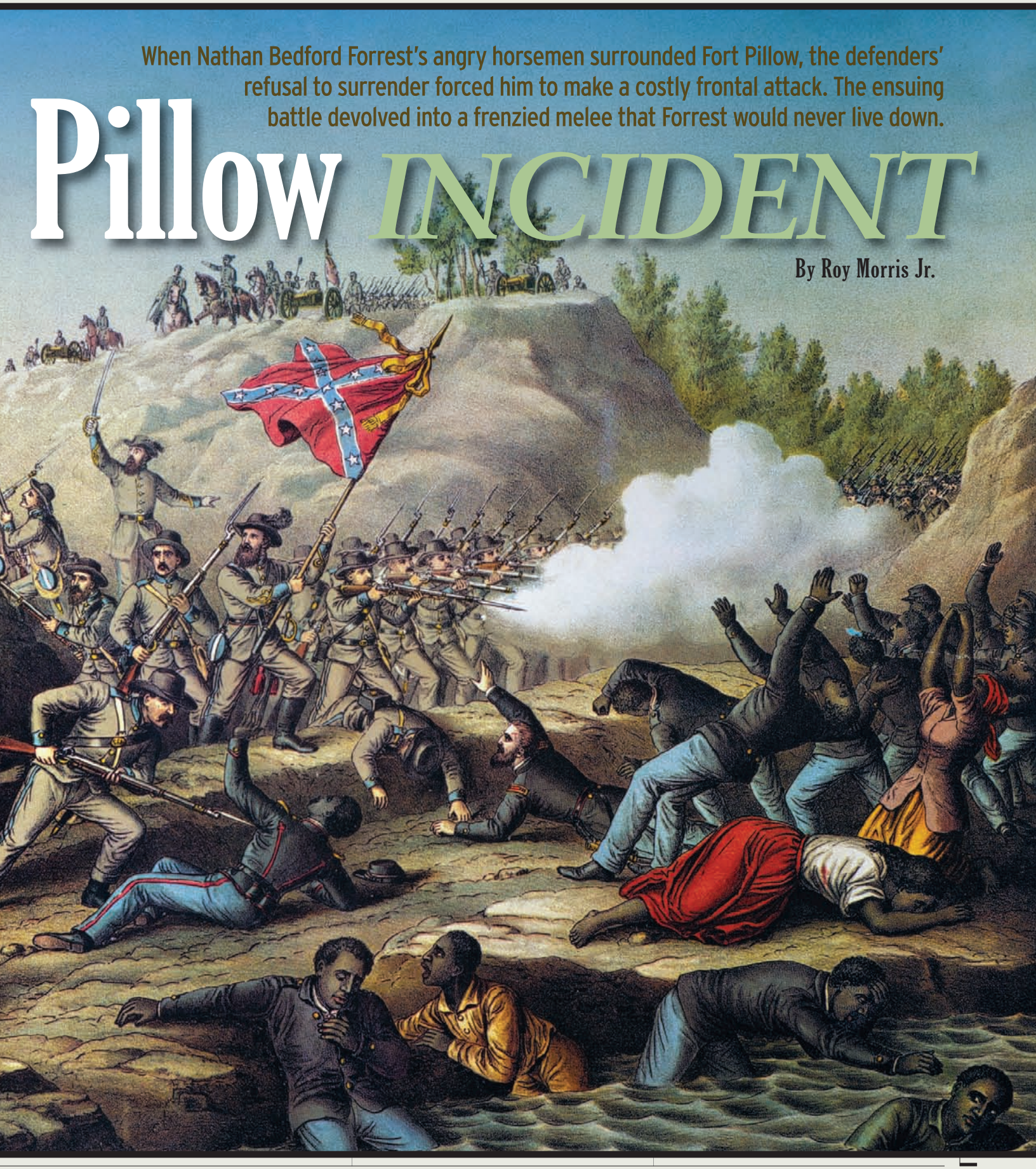
Furious Confederates ignore a white flag (far left) as they shoot and stab defenseless women, children, and unarmed soldiers in this lurid and inaccurate 1892 Kurz & Allison illustration of the Fort Pillow incident. No women or children were injured in the attack.

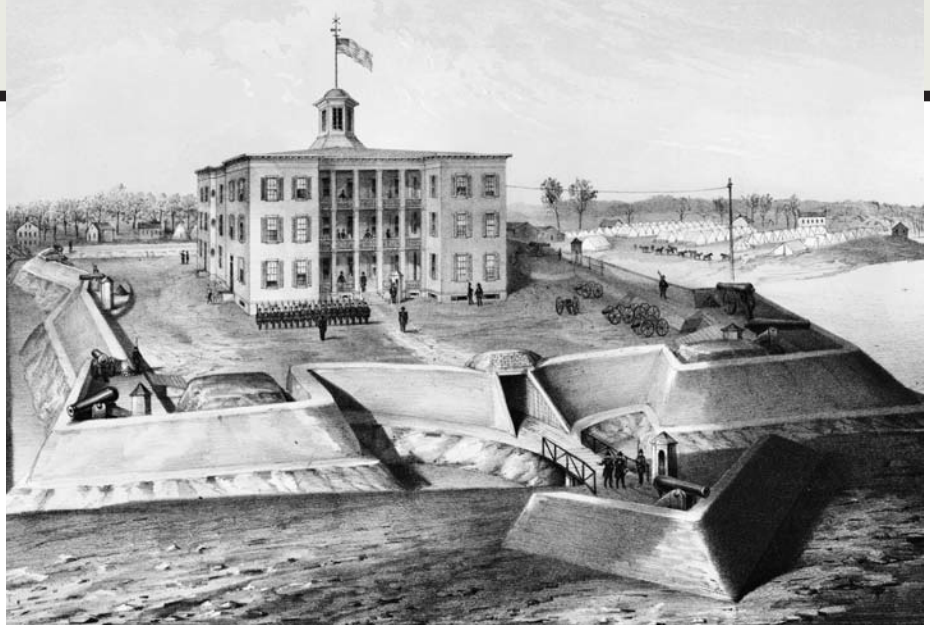
All images: Library of Congress

When Nathan Bedford Forrest's angry horsemen surrounded Fort Pillow, the defenders' refusal to surrender forced him to make a costly frontal attack. The ensuing battle devolved into a frenzied melee that Forrest would never live down.

Pillow INCIDENT

By Roy Morris Jr.

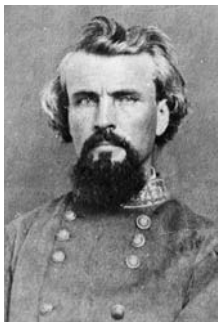




ABOVE: Union-held Fort Anderson, near Paducah, Kentucky, withstood an earlier attack by Nathan Bedford Forrest's cavalry. BELOW: James Chalmers, left; Forrest, right.

village in northwestern Tennessee, earlier in the raid. There, Colonel William L. Duckworth, posing as Forrest, had bluffed garrison commander Colonel Isaac Hawkins into capitulating without a fight. Hawkins, despite holding a strong opposition, had handed over himself and 500 other Union soldiers along with 300 horses and $60,000 in greenbacks that the garrison had recently received in pay. The Confederates joked afterward that they would be happy to parole Hawkins in order to obtain more horses and equipment the next time they needed them.

Riding back into their home state—Forrest and most of his men were native West Tennesseans—the returning horsemen were besieged by their hard-pressed friends and neighbors to do something about ongoing Federal abuses in the area. Two years of Union occupation interspersed with Confederate raids and counterraids had spawned a poisonous atmosphere of revenge and reprisal that hung over the entire region like an evil cloud. "The whole of West Tennessee," Forrest reported angrily, "is overrun by bands and squads of robbers, horse thieves and deserters, whose depredations and unlawful appropriations of private property are rapidly and effectually depleting the country." The land itself, usually green and fertile in the spring, was picked over and brown, dotted with burned farmhouses and ruined barns.



Making camp at Jackson, Forrest received a delegation of local residents who brought word of an ongoing campaign of plunder, blackmail, and destruction by a regiment of "renegade Tennesseans" led by Colonel Fielding Hurst of the 6th Tennessee (U.S.) Cavalry. According to the townsfolk, Hurst had demanded and gotten a sum of $5,139.25 from Jackson residents in return for a promise not to burn the town to the ground. The sum was precisely, to the penny, the amount Hurst had been fined by authorities in Memphis for destroying a local woman's property during a previous raid.

Even worse than Hurst's extortion demands, Forrest learned, was the colonel's brutal treatment of several Forrest subordinates who had returned to their hometowns to recruit new soldiers for the Confederate cause. Hurst had murdered seven of the recruiters in the past two months, including a well-liked young lieutenant named Willis Dodds, who had been killed less than two weeks earlier at his father's home in Henderson County. According to reports, Dodds had been tortured to death and "most horribly mutilated, the face having been skinned, the nose cut off, the under jaw disjoined, the privates cut off, and the body otherwise barbarously lacerated and most wantonly injured."

A furious Forrest issued a proclamation formally labeling Hurst and his troopers as outlaws and declaring that they were "not entitled to be treated as prisoners of war falling into the hands of the forces of the Confederate states." Instead, he said, Hurst's men would be shot down summarily whenever and wherever they were captured. Union authorities in Memphis warned Hurst "against allowing your men to straggle or pillage, as a deviation from this rule may prove fatal to yourself and your command."

The Jackson delegation also told Forrest about another "nest of outlaws" currently holed up in an abandoned Confederate fortification, Fort Pillow, overlooking the Mississippi River 40 miles due north of Memphis. These Unionists, members of the 13th Tennessee Cavalry, were under the command of Major William F. Bradford, another West Tennessee Unionist from Forrest's namesake home county of Bedford. The unit contained many "homemade Yankees," former Confederates who had joined forces with the occupying Federals. The turncoat cavalrymen were roundly detested by Forrest's men, many of whose families reportedly had been victimized by Bradford's men through threats, abuses, and outright thievery. "Under the pretense of scouring the country for arms and rebel soldiers," Forrest reported, Bradford had "traversed the surrounding country with detachments, robbing the people of their horses, mules, beef cattle, beds, plates, wearing apparel, money, and every possible movable article of value, besides venting upon the wives and daughters of Southern soldiers the most opprobrious and obscene epithets, with more than one extreme outraged upon the persons of these victims of their hate and lust." It was the worst charge that could be leveled against a supposed gentleman of the time, and it virtually demanded immediate revenge.

Promising to attend to the Federals at Fort Pillow "in a day or two," Forrest ordered Brig. Gen. James Chalmers to bring up the rest of the cavalry corps from its base camp in northern Mississippi. Chalmers, a diminutive attorney in civilian life—his men affectionately called him "Little Un"—quickly obeyed. The first order of business was dealing with the much hated Hurst and his renegade Tennesseans. On March 29, Forrest subordinate Colonel James J. Neely trailed Hurst to Bolivar, Tennessee, and overran his camp with a swift surprise attack. As Chalmers reported later, "Colonel Neely met the traitor Hurst at Bolivar, after a short conflict, in which we killed and captured 75 prisoners of the enemy, drove Hurst hatless into Memphis and captured all his wagons, ambulances and papers, as well as his mistresses, both black and white." As subsequent events at Fort Pillow would prove, Hurst got off lightly with the mere loss of his hat and his girlfriends.

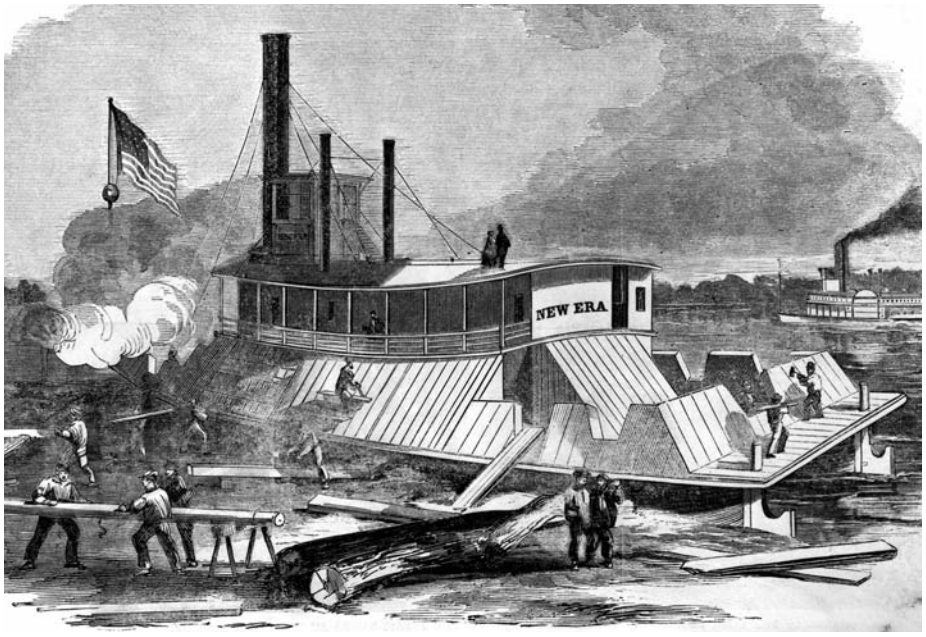
To lock Federal forces into place while he advanced on Fort Pillow, Forrest sent Colonel Abraham Buford back to Paducah, Kentucky, to seize the remaining 140 U.S. horses that Northern newspapers had bragged about the Rebels missing on their last go-round. Forrest also ordered Neely to pin down the Union garrison at Memphis. Meanwhile, Forrest personally headed west toward Fort Pillow with the remainder of his formidable command in a driving rainstorm. The bad weather did not improve the soldiers' moods.

Fort Pillow, constructed in 1861 on the east bank of the Mississippi River, was named after Confederate Brig. Gen. Gideon Pillow, another native Tennessean. It stood immediately below the intersection of the river and Coal (or Cold) Creek and featured three lines of earthen entrenchments—a semicircular outer line of earthworks, a shorter second line atop a prominent hill, and the fort itself, with earthworks six to eight feet high and four to six feet across. A 12-foot-wide, six-foot-deep trench fronted the fort. The fort's earthworks extended in a 125-yard-wide semicircle, behind which the land fell away rapidly to the river. Deep ravines crisscrossed the landscape in front of the fort, and four rows of barracks stood on an open terrace of land southwest of the bastion.

The fort had been abandoned by the Confederates after the fall of Corinth, Mississippi, in May 1862. Since then, Union forces had occupied the stronghold intermittently without bothering to strengthen or expand it beyond throwing up some more rifle pits and gun platforms. The presence of the Union gunboat *New Era,* anchored just offshore and commanded by Captain James Marshall, added to the defenders' false sense of security. As Forrest advanced implacably toward it, Fort Pillow now was garrisoned by 580 soldiers in three separate units. The 13th Cavalry, under Major Bradford, had quartered there for the past two months while recruiting new members and continuing to terrorize Confederate sympathizers in the region. Bradford's force was joined by two African American artillery units—the 6th U.S. Heavy Artillery and the 2nd U.S. Light Artillery, manning six pieces of artillery. The ill-starred black gunners had only been at the fort for two weeks and had taken no part in the cavalry's ongoing depredations. Fairly or not, they would share in the blame.

Fort Pillow's garrison was commanded by Major Lionel F. Booth, a Philadelphia native and Regular Army veteran of the Battle of Wilson's Creek. His appointment did not sit well with Bradford, who was also a major but was a few weeks shy of Booth in seniority. In truth, neither of the officers nor their men should have been there at all. Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman, who needed every available man for his upcoming Atlanta campaign, had pointedly ordered rear-echelon commanders to abandon strategically unimportant forts such as Fort Pillow. But Memphis-based Maj. Gen. Stephen Hurlbut had ignored Sherman's order and sent Bradford's and Booth's men into the fort anyway. The suspicion, although never proved, was that Hurlbut was involved in the lucrative cotton-smuggling trade—Northern mills were paying up to 80 cents per pound for cotton—and was using Fort Pillow as a convenient distribution point. If so, Hurlbut's subordinates would eventually pay for his suspected transgressions.

Whatever his reasons for reoccupying the fort, Hurlbut assured Booth that he would withdraw the garrison as soon as he learned that Forrest was preparing to attack it. In the meantime, Hurlbut advised



The Union gunboat *New Era,* shown under construction in St. Louis in 1861, proved little help to the desperate defenders of Fort Pillow. Captain James Marshall pulled back into the middle of the river, away from harm's way, during the final Confederate assault.

Booth to keep a sharp eye out for Forrest and his men, who were reportedly already moving into the area. Booth was either extremely confident or extremely careless. Things were quiet for 30 or 40 miles around Fort Pillow, he assured Hurlbut. "I think it is perfectly safe. I can hold the post against any force for forty-eight hours." Events would soon prove him tragically wrong on both counts.

Forrest rendezvoused with Chalmers at Brownsville, 38 miles east of Fort Pillow, on the afternoon of April 11. He directed Chalmers to head for Fort Pillow as early as possible the next morning. Chalmers, well schooled in Forrest's maxims of speed, obedience, and decisiveness, headed out the next day at 6 AM. Colonels Robert McCulloch and Tyree Bell, commanding Chalmers' two brigades, soon made contact with Federal pickets outside the fort. Captain Frank J. Smith of the 2nd Missouri, leading the Confederate advance, sent his men creeping around behind the pickets to pick them off. Only a handful of pickets managed to make it back to the fort with the unwelcome news that Forrest's Rebels had suddenly appeared as if out of thin air.

Forrest's veteran fighters quickly consolidated their position. The Federal defenders, with characteristic laxity, had failed to man the outer works, allowing the Southern troopers to concentrate their fire on the inner line of works. Sharpshooters quickly moved into place behind fallen logs, tree stumps and thick underbrush, and atop high knolls overlooking the fort. They began pouring devastating volleys into the surprised Union ranks, concentrating on the officers. "We suffered pretty severely in the loss of commissioned officers by the unerring aim of the rebel sharpshooters," Lieutenant Mack J. Leaming of the 13th Tennessee reported later. Among the first to fall was Major Booth, who had been strolling incautiously between the fort's two battery ports when he was fatally struck by a rifle bullet to the chest. His death, reported at 9 AM, abruptly left the fort under the command of the comparatively inexperienced Bradford, who now had the position he had wanted from the first. Doubtless, he would have wished for better timing.

Forrest arrived on the field an hour later and, as was his wont, immediately undertook a personal reconnaissance of the scene. By this time Chalmers' men had captured the second line of works and invested the fort itself. Fire from inside the battlements killed two of Forrest's horses, the second rearing up abruptly and falling backward onto the furious general, badly bruising his leg and doing little to improve his disposition. Forrest's adjutant, Captain Charles W. Anderson, suggested mildly that the general complete his reconnaissance on foot, but Forrest told him in no uncertain terms that he was "just as apt to be hit one way as another, and that he could see better where he was." Forrest skulked from no man.

With his experienced eye, it did not take Forrest long to pinpoint Fort Pillow's fatal flaws. Not only did the numerous ravines provide perfect cover for his men, allowing them to approach as near as 25 yards without detection, but the Union artillery pieces could not be depressed sharply enough to fire at the enemy with any success. Anderson summed up the morning's findings: "The width or thickness of the works across the top prevented the garrison from firing down on us, as it could only be done by mounting and exposing themselves to the unerring aim of our sharpshooters, posted behind stumps and logs and all the neighboring hills. They were also unable to depress their artillery so as to rake these slopes with grape and canister, and so far as safety was concerned, we were as well fortified as they were; the only difference was that they were on one side and we on the other of the same fortification. They had no sharpshooters with which to annoy our main force, while ours sent a score of bullets at every head that appeared above the walls. It was perfectly apparent to any man endowed with the smallest amount of common sense that to all intents and purposes the fort was ours." Unfortunately for the defenders, common sense was in short supply that day.

Bradford, the new commander, apparently believed that he could either hold out until reinforcements arrived in the form of two troop ships steaming up from Memphis, or he could somehow bluff Nathan Bedford Forrest into withdrawing. Bradford had read the misleading newspaper accounts of the Paducah incident; Forrest didn't read newspapers.

From their concealed vantage points, the Confederates continued to blaze away at the Federals huddling ineffectually behind their breastworks. Meanwhile, McCulloch's men moved into position among the barracks huts southwest of the fort that the hastily retreating soldiers had failed to set afire. At the northern end of the fort, Colonel Clark R. Barteau's 2nd Tennessee

"It was asked whether it was intended to include the Negro soldiers as well as the white, to which both General Forrest and General Chalmers replied that it was so intended and that if the fort surrendered the whole garrison, white and black, should be treated as prisoners of war."

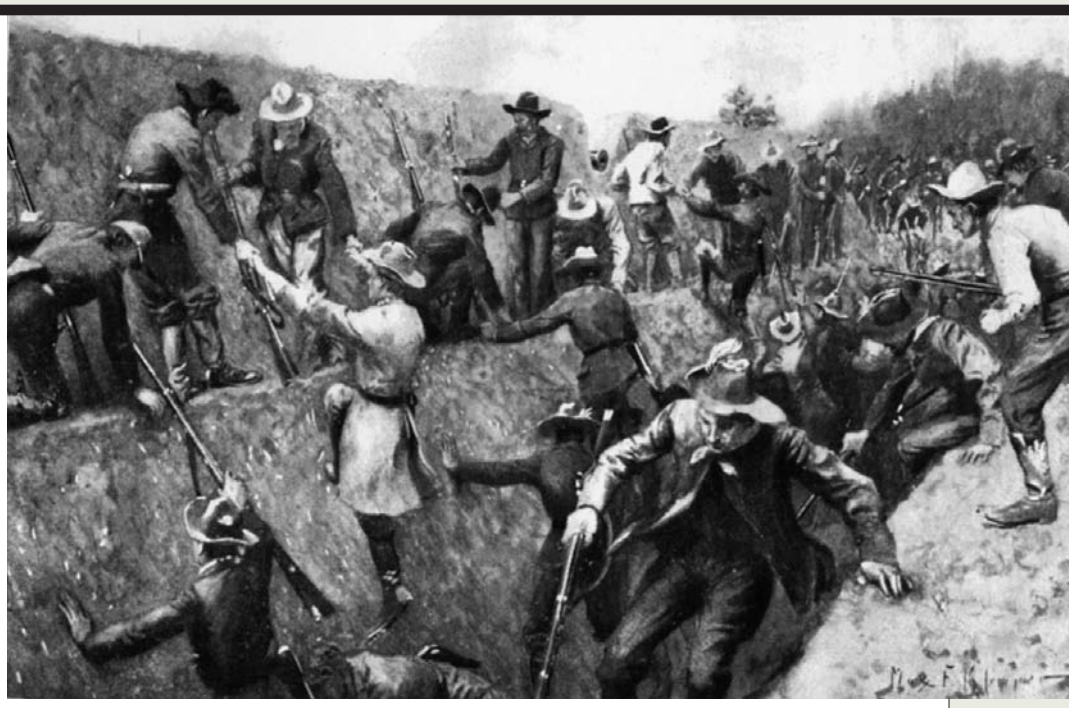
A well-turned-out artilleryman in the United States Colored Troops (USCT). Two African American units, the 6th U.S. Heavy Artillery and the 2nd U.S. Light Artillery, were stationed at Fort Pillow.

Regiment moved into place in a deep ravine below Coal Creek. The creek, swollen by heavy rains and backwater from the river, was completely impassable. The fort, with its back to the river, was literally surrounded by water.

With Forrest's riflemen keeping the defenders pinned down inside the fort, Captain Marshall brought *New Era* briefly into the fray, her guns sending 282 shells into the Confederate ranks before backing away from the bluff at 1 PM to avoid continuing sniper fire. Few of the shells did any real damage to the attackers—if anything, they merely angered the Southerners even more.

Forrest called a temporary halt to the firing while he waited for his ammunition train to catch up to the main body. The wagons, forced to struggle through churned-up dirt roads from Brownsville, finally reached the outskirts of the fort at 3:30. Unaware that Booth was already long dead, Forrest sent a trio of messengers into the fort under a flag of truce. The three, Captains Walker A. Goodman and Thomas Henderson and Lieutenant Frank Rodgers, bore the usual implacable Forrest surrender demand. "The conduct of the officers and men garrisoning Fort Pillow has been such as to entitle them to be treated as prisoners of war," Forrest wrote. "I demand the unconditional surrender of this garrison, promising that you shall be treated as prisoners of war. My men have received a fresh supply of ammunition, and from their present position can easily assault and capture the fort. Should my demand be refused, I cannot be responsible for the fate of your command."

Forrest, who had made millions as a slave trader before the war, was always unyielding in his surrender demands. He knew how to bluff and how to bargain. One aspect of the current note surprised Forrest's own officers. Standard Confederate procedure was to treat former slaves as recovered property, not prisoners of war. There were a number of such former slaves in the two black units at Fort Pillow. Despite dealing from an overwhelming position of strength, Forrest was apparently granting the defenders a significant concession. "There was some discussion about it among the officers present," noted Goodman, "and it was asked whether it was intended to include the Negro soldiers as well as the white, to which both General Forrest and General Chalmers replied that it was so intended and that if the fort surrendered the whole garrison, white and black, should be treated as prisoners of war."



Thinking quickly, Forrest's attackers boost themselves over the wall at Fort Pillow on each other's shoulders. The attackers, said Union survivors, seemed to spring out of the very ground itself.

Forrest was not typically motivated by excessive feelings of mercy toward the enemy, but he may have wanted to avoid needless casualties to his own troops by unilaterally eliminating the necessity on the part of the African American soldiers to hold out to the last man. If so, his pragmatic charity would fall on deaf ears—specifically Major Bradford's, which were the only ears that mattered. Later described as "too brave for his own good," Bradford falsely responded to Forrest's note under Booth's name and requested an hour's time to make his decision.

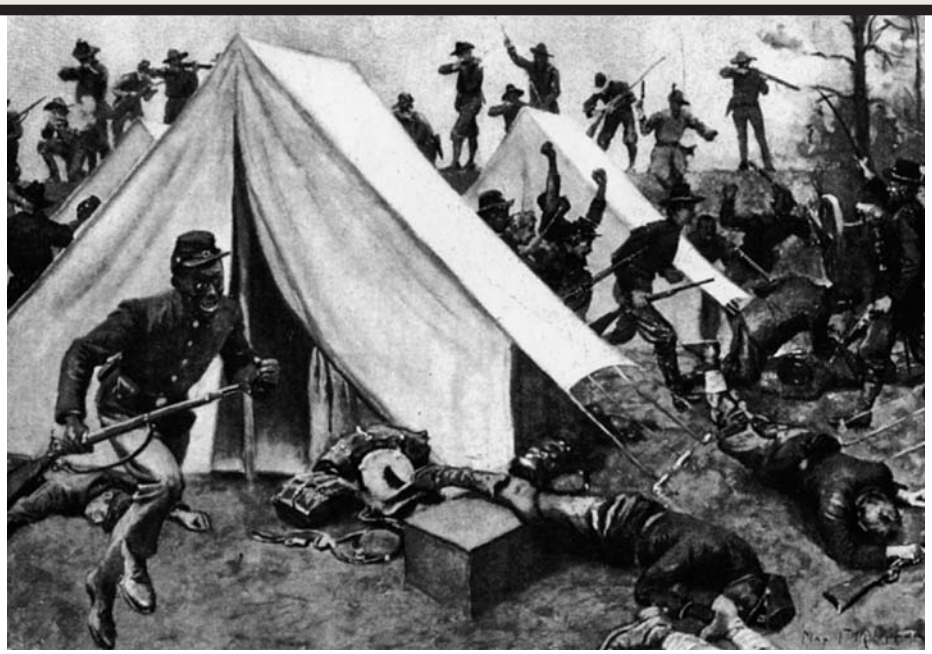
The usually wily Forrest agreed but immediately regretted his decision when he observed two new Union steamers, *Olive Branch* and *Liberty,* hastening upriver toward the fort. The first ship was loaded down with Union soldiers and artillery. Forrest immediately dispatched two squads of riflemen to the bluffs above and below the fort to prevent any enemy reinforcements from landing. "Shoot at everything blue betwixt wind and water," he ordered. Inexplicably, Captain Marshall, as overall commander of naval forces in the area, told the two boats to pass by without attempting to relieve Fort Pillow, and they proceeded on to Cairo, Illinois, blithely unaware of the fire and brimstone about to descend upon the fort and its beleaguered defenders.

Alarmed and angered by the apparent attempt to land Union reinforcements at Fort Pillow while under a flag of truce, Forrest sent a new message to Booth (actually Bradford) demanding that he make his decision within the next 20 minutes. Bradford conferred with the other officers in camp and sent word to Forrest stating vaguely, "Your demand does not produce the desired result." Forrest did not have the time or patience for subtle word games. "Send it back, and say to Mayor Booth that I must have an answer in plain English," Forest said. "Yes or no." Booth, of course, was beyond answering, but Bradford, still posing as Booth, returned a blunt new reply: "General: I will not surrender.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant, L.F. Booth, commanding U.S. forces, Fort Pillow." To a worried physician trapped inside the fort with the soldiers, Bradford gave a simple reason for his refusal to surrender. "My name is not Hawkins," he said, alluding to the much-derided surrender by Colonel Isaac Hawkins at Union City two weeks earlier.

Amazed and annoyed at the response, Forrest wasted no more time in mounting an attack. He signaled bugler Jacob Gaus to sound the charge, then retired to a hill 400 yards away to watch the assault. The bugle notes had scarcely drifted away on the breeze before the Confederate sharpshooters unleashed another devastating blast at the fort's parapets to cover the attack. The flummoxed defenders were unable to so much as raise their heads above the works for fear they would be shot off their shoulders. Meanwhile, Forrest's men sprang from concealment in the ravines and behind the barracks huts and tore across the remaining few yards to the ditch surrounding the fort.

Boiling into the ditch like a swarm of angry hornets, the Confederates began boosting one another onto the outer ledge below the fort's wall. Lieutenant Leaming, who left behind the only official Union report of the battle, said the attackers seemed to "rise from out of the very earth." Virtually unopposed, they leaped onto the top of the wall and began blasting away at the cowering Federals, many of whom reportedly were intoxicated after emptying barrels of whiskey that Bradford had ill-advisedly put out prior to the final assault.



Panicky Union troopers break for the Mississippi River as Confederates overrun their tent camp and fire into their ranks at Fort Pillow. Most of the casualties occurred during the confused flight to the river.

If he had hoped to strengthen the defenders' resolve, Bradford had badly miscalculated. Tennessee-born Captain DeWitt Clinton Fort, in the forefront of the attack despite having been born with a club foot, observed the enemy's reaction. "As we charged over the ramparts," reported Fort, "the enemy's garrison of mixed complexion retreated over the bluff down to the

FLAWED INVESTIGATION OF THE FORT PILLOW INCIDENT

The much feared Congressional Committee on the Conduct of the War moved quickly and eagerly to investigate claims of a Confederate massacre at Fort Pillow. Within six days, a special subcommittee was in Memphis, questioning—and leading—eyewitnesses to the events of April 12, 1864. Committee chairman Senator Benjamin Wade of Ohio and Massachusetts Congressman Daniel Gooch undertook a lengthy roundabout trip from Washington to Cairo and Mound City, Illinois, and southward to Fort Pillow, Union City, and Memphis.

In all, committee members interviewed more than 70 reported survivors of the battle, both black and white. At the same time, the committee ignored or suppressed testimony that put Confederate actions at Fort Pillow in anything but the worst possible light, while accepting at face value statements that were clearly false, including one from a witness who claimed to have seen Nathan Bedford Forrest personally ordering the killing of helpless soldiers. The so-called witness described the 6-foot, 2-inch Forrest as "a little bit of a man."

Despite obvious inconsistencies, the committee rushed out a final report accusing the Confederates at Fort Pillow of engaging in "an indiscriminate slaughter, sparing neither age nor sex, white or black, soldier or civilian. No cruelty which the most fiendish malignity could devise was omitted by these murderers." Going even further, the report charged that "the atrocities committed at Fort Pillow were not the result of passions excited by the heat of conflict, but were the results of a policy deliberately decided upon and unhesitatingly announced."

The committee's findings were typical of a body that one modern scholar has termed "the most influential, meddlesome, mischievous and baneful committee in the legislative history of the United States." Operating out of a dusty basement meeting room in the bowels of the Capitol, the seven-man committee had been formed in the wake of the disastrous Battle of Ball's Bluff in October 1861. It was dominated from the start by its fearsome chairman "Bluff Ben" Wade, a short, stocky, barrel-chested senator from Ohio who brought the rough-and-tumble politics of the western frontier to Congress. With his bushy eyebrows and a long upper lip that curled

water's edge. Here was assembled one wild promiscuous mass rendered senseless and uncontrollable by the three causes—fright, drunkenness, and desperation." It was a potent—and ultimately fatal—mix.

The terrified defenders, black and white, broke and ran for the open rear of the fort. One African American artilleryman, Private John Kennedy of the 2nd U.S. Colored Light Artillery, heard Bradford shout, "Boys, save your lives!" No one needed the advice. Kennedy urged Bradford to "let us fight yet," but the major, seeing Confederate attackers pouring in from all directions, said despairingly, "It is of no use anymore." The demoralized commander fled to the rear with the majority of his remaining troops.

Behind him, the interior of the fort was a scene of mass confusion. Some of the Federals threw down their weapons and attempted to surrender, while others continued firing. Still others simply ran away, spilling over the brow of the bluff and sliding down the vine-choked bank toward the river. Bradford and Marshall had worked out a prearranged signal for *New Era* to steam closer to the bank at the first sign of trouble and "give the Rebels canister." But now, in the midst of the developing rout, Marshall unaccountably flinched. To Bradford's horrified consternation, Marshall swung the gunboat away from the shore and began backing into the middle of the river. (In highly questionable testimony before a congressional committee a few months later, Marshall said weakly that he had abandoned the plan because he was afraid the Confederates "might hail in a steamboat from below, capture her, put on four or five hundred men, and come after me." Marshall was no one's idea of John Paul Jones.) Meanwhile, unhampered by return fire, Forrest's marksmen stationed above and below the fort caught the retreating Federals at point-blank range and enfiladed the frantic fugitives.

Pandemonium reigned inside Fort Pillow. The enraged Confederates, most of whom had ridden all night to the outskirts of the fort, run and sniped under enemy fire all morning, and then waited anxiously in the hot afternoon sun for the final assault to begin, were in no mood to be forgiving. To a man they believed the Federals had been fools for rejecting Forrest's generous surrender offer. That refusal had cost them another 100 good men, dead or wounded, in the interim. The sight of African American soldiers at the fort was an added insult to the white-supremacist Southerners, who seethed at the racially motivated gibes from some of the defiant, if overconfident, defenders.

Many extraneous factors now came to a head. The volatile mixture of racial animosity, long-simmering feuds with white Tennessee Unionists, reports of atrocities committed against their own women and children by those same Unionists, lingering embarrassment over the Paducah raid, physical exhaustion, battle excitement, and fear for their own lives produced a brief but deadly spasm of revenge. Given the prevailing racial politics of the time, the African American soldiers who had so recently been assigned to the fort and who had taken no part in the earlier outrages, now suffered the brunt of the blame.

In the swirling confusion inside the fort, the situation rapidly deteriorated. Before Forrest could mount up and ride into the fort to restore order, an untold number of Union troops were shot down attempting to surrender. Others continued to shoot back, further adding to the chaos. The fort's Union flag still flew above the ramparts, and Confederates below the bluff had no way of knowing what was going on inside the fort. As Dewitt Clint Fort

down at the corners, Wade closely resembled a bulldog, both literally and figuratively. His favorite parliamentary tactic was to pound on his wooden desk and curse at the top of his lungs until he got his way. By 1864 he was the most powerful politician in Washington except for President Abraham Lincoln and Secretary of War Edwin Stanton.

Prior to the Fort Pillow investigation, the committee had spent most of its time tormenting Union generals, beginning with Brig. Gen. Charles P. Stone, the scapegoat for the Ball's Bluff fiasco who was arrested and held without formal charges for six months at Fort Lafayette, New Hampshire, before being released and resigning from the Army in disgust. The committee's favorite target was Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan, a well-known Democrat and potential presidential candidate who the committee believe to be soft on slavery. Conversely, Republican Party stalwarts such as John C. Fremont, Benjamin Butler, and Joseph Hooker enjoyed consistent committee approval, even after they had committed repeated errors of military judgment.

The committee's Fort Pillow investigation, modern scholar Bruce Tap has noted, involved "a great deal of testimony that was exaggerated and undoubtedly elicited by suggestive leading questions to witnesses, many of whom were illiterate." However tainted, the final report served its ultimate goal, which was to inflame Northern sentiment against the Confederacy at the exact moment that Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant was preparing to lead the Union Army into a deadly new round of heavy fighting in northern Virginia.

Fort Pillow's congressional investigators: Benjamin Wade, left, and Daniel Gooch, right.

Meanwhile, the report inadvertently reduced the fallen at Fort Pillow, particularly the black soldiers who had fought fiercely and bravely against overwhelming odds, to the status of mere victims. Truth, as the old saying goes, is not merely "the first casualty" of war—it is sometimes the last, as well.

noted in his diary after the battle, "The wildest confusion prevailed among those who had run down the bluff. Many of them had thrown down their arms while running and seemed desirous to surrender while many others had carried their guns with them and were loading and firing back up the bluff at us with a desperation which seemed worse than senseless. We could only stand there and fire until the last man of them was ready to surrender."

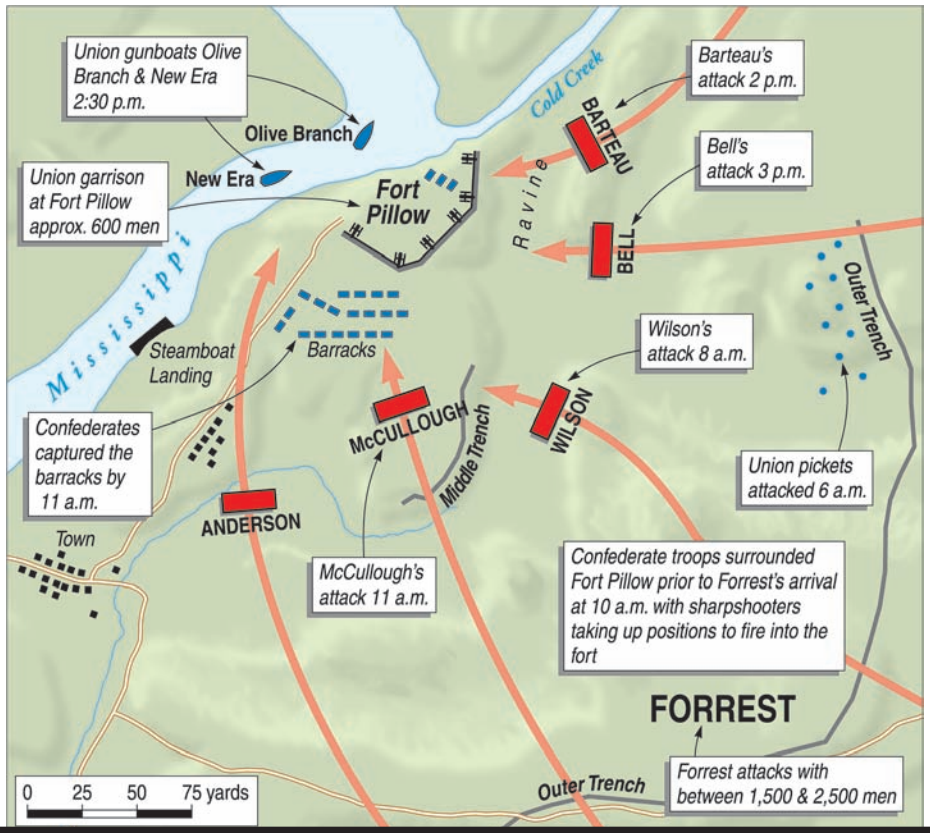
Other observers, Union and Confederate, told a more lurid tale of the fighting. Fellow Southerner Achilles V. Clark of the 20th Tennessee Cavalry reported in a letter home that "the slaughter was awful. Words cannot describe the scene. The poor deluded Negroes would run up to our men, fall upon their knees and with uplifted hands scream for mercy, but they were ordered to their feet and then shot down. The white men fared little better." Private George Shaw of the 6th USCHA alleged that he had been wounded after trying to surrender. Shaw said he heard a Confederate soldier shout, as he was raising his rifle, "Damn you, you are fighting against your master!"

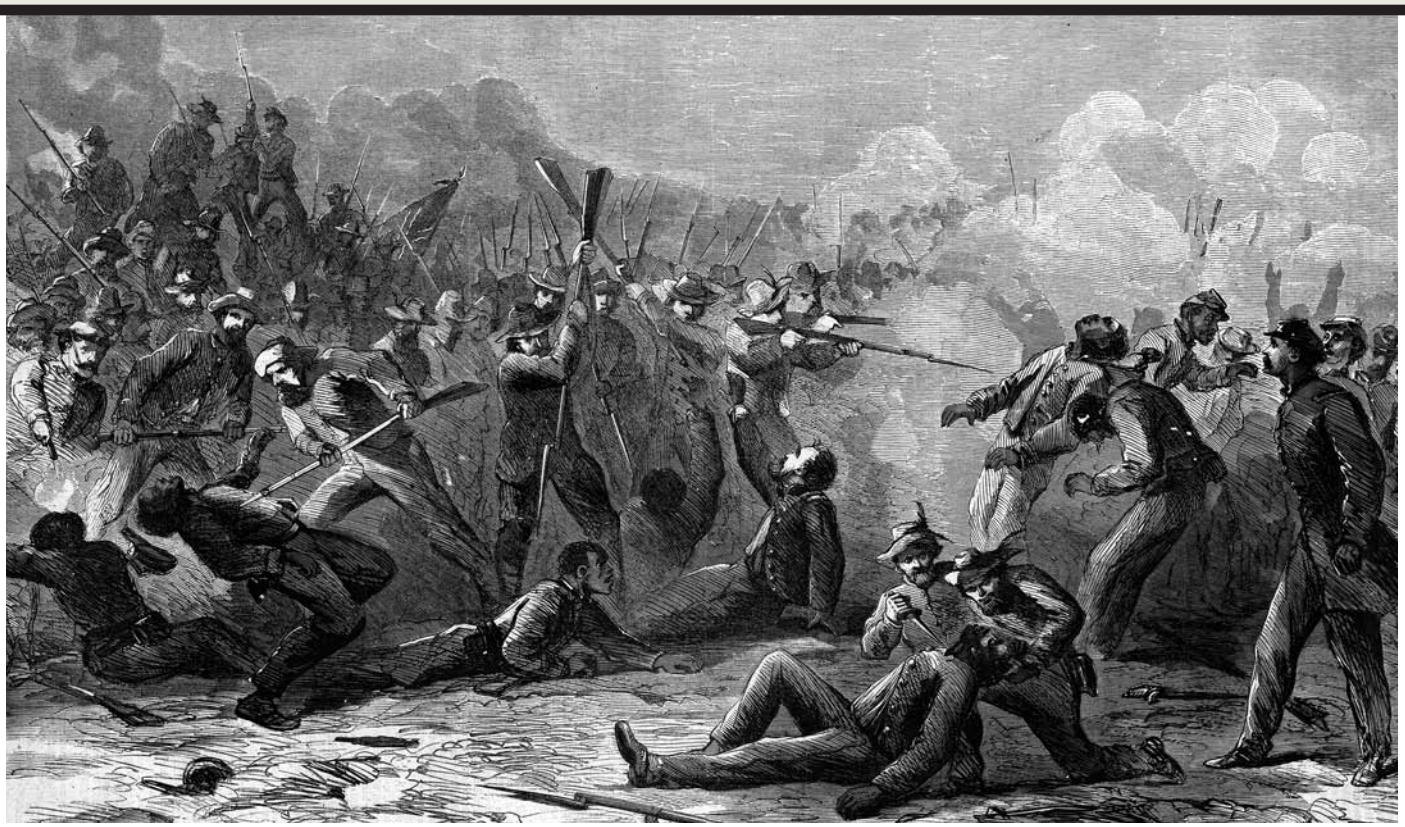
Other African American soldiers told similar horrifying stories. Private Benjamin Robinson told government investigators that he saw the Confederates "shoot two white men right by the side of me after they had laid their guns down." Fellow private Ransom Anderson testified that he was slashed with a bayonet while lying on the ground after surrendering and that he observed another member of B Company, Coolie Rice, "stabbed by a rebel soldier with a bayonet and the bayonet broken off in his body." White Union cavalryman Daniel Stamps later testified that "while I was standing at the bottom of the hill, I heard a rebel officer shout out an order of some kind to the men who had taken us, and saw a Rebel soldier standing by me. I asked him what the officer had said. It was 'kill the last damn one of them.' The soldier replied to his officer that we had surrendered, that we were prisoners and must not be shot. The officer again replied, seeming crazy with rage that he had not been obeyed, 'I tell you to kill the last God damned one of them.'"

Whoever—if anyone—had issued such an order, it was apparently not Forrest. Chalmers told a captured Union officer the next day that he and Forrest had "stopped the massacre as soon as we were able to do so." Another Confederate at the scene, Surgeon Samuel H. Caldwell of the 16th Tennessee Cavalry, wrote to his wife on April 15, "If General Forrest had not run between our men & the Yanks with his pistol and sabre drawn not a man would have been spared." Brigade commander Colonel Tyree Bell blamed what he called "promiscuous firing" by Forrest's men on the drunken, panicky behavior of the enemy. "The drunken condition of the garrison and the failure of Colonel Bradford to surrender, thus necessitating the assault, were the causes of the fatality," Bell told Forrest biographer John A. Wyeth 35 years later.

Within half an hour the battle was over. Of the fort's total garrison of 580 men, some 354 apparently were killed or wounded. Final figures are still hotly disputed. Of these, a large number drowned while attempting to swim out to the Union vessels that were steaming away without them. Another 226 were taken prisoner, including Bradford, who emerged from the river dripping and shivering and was taken to Colonel McCulloch's tent for safety. McCulloch allowed Bradford to temporarily leave his custody to superintend the burial of his brother, Captain Theodorick Bradford, who had been killed at Fort Pillow. Instead of returning to camp, Bradford attempted to escape only to be recaptured wearing civilian clothes near Covington, Tennessee. Two days later he was taken into the woods near Brownsville and shot by his guards. "A great many of the soldiers in Forrest's command felt that they had a personal grievance against this man," Forrest biog-

BELOW: By 10 AM, Forrest's experienced troopers had crashed through the lightly defended outer ring at Fort Pillow and invested the fort in a semi-circular iron ring. No one could believe the Federals would refuse to surrender. OPPOSITE: This sensationalized image of Confederates massacring African American soldiers at Fort Pillow was published in the April 30, 1864, issue of *Harper's Weekly*. Only 58 black soldiers, less than one in four, survived the battle.





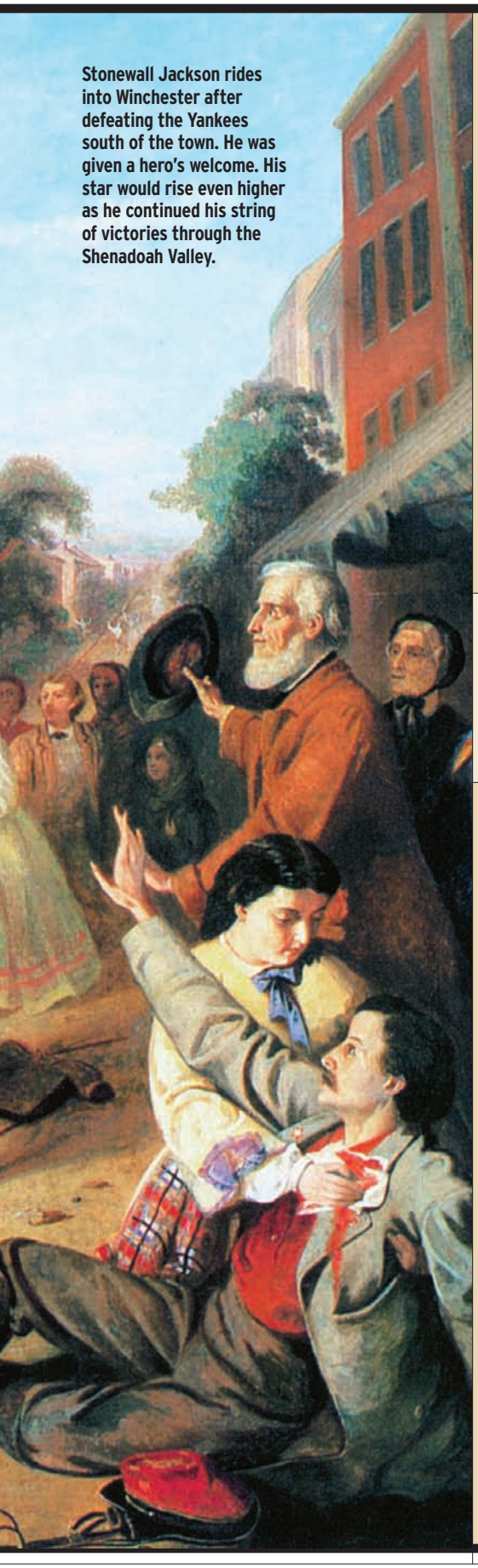
rapher Wyeth observed somewhat mildly. "It was not a matter of great surprise that opportunity was taken to exact private revenge upon him at this time." The fact that Bradford was captured in civilian disguise gave at least a patina of legality to his execution.

Almost immediately, word spread across both the North and the South that Forrest and his men had conducted a virtual massacre at the fort. Forrest's exultant first report, three days after the battle, encouraged such a reading. "The victory was complete," he announced. "The river was dyed with the blood of the slaughtered for 200 yards. It is hoped that these facts will demonstrate to the Northern people that Negro soldiers cannot cope with Southerners." Chalmers echoed those sentiments. The Confederate victory at Fort Pillow, he said, "had taught the mongrel garrison of blacks and renegades a lesson long to be remembered."

Within a week, the Federal government mounted a well-publicized investigation into the "massacre" at Fort Pillow. A special subcommittee of the U.S. Congress's Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War hurried to Tennessee to take—and sometimes invent—eyewitness accounts of the battle and its aftermath. The committee, chaired by radical Republican Senator Benjamin F. Wade of Ohio, issued a highly charged report accusing Forrest and his men of engaging in "an indiscriminate slaughter, sparing neither age or sex, white or black, soldier or civilian." The fact that no women or children were killed at the fort and only one civilian (who had taken up arms at the time of the attack), did not deter Wade's committee from releasing its findings as fact. The partisan report was useless as an evidentiary document, but it was inarguable that the vast majority of Union soldiers killed at Fort Pillow, either during or immediately after the battle, were black. Of the 262 African American soldiers at the fort, only 58—or 22 percent—were taken away as prisoners, as opposed to 168 white prisoners, nearly three times as many.

Forrest himself, in a little known postwar interview with fellow Confederate general Dabney H. Maury in the *Philadelphia Weekly Times,* went to some pains to mitigate his role in the battle. "When we got into the fort the white flag was shown at once," Forrest said. "The Negroes ran out down to the river, and although the white flag was flying, they kept on turning back and shooting at my men, who consequently continued to fire into them crowded on the brink of the river, and they killed a good many of them in spite of my efforts, and those of their officers to stop them. But there was no deliberate intention nor effort to massacre the garrison as has been so generally reported by the Northern papers."

Deliberate or not, the casualty figures at Fort Pillow would linger over Forrest for the remainder of the war, even after William Tecumseh Sherman—surely no Confederate apologist—determined that there was no cause for further investigation or retaliation. "Let the soldiers affected make their own rules as we progress," Sherman told Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton. "We will use their own logic against the enemy as we have from the beginning of the war." Subsequently, the battle cry "Remember Fort Pillow!" would rise from Union soldiers' lips for the remainder of the war. In many ways, it is still echoing today. □



Stonewall Jackson rides into Winchester after defeating the Yankees south of the town. He was given a hero's welcome. His star would rise even higher as he continued his string of victories through the Shenadoah Valley.

BY BROOKE C. STODDARD

Jackson CONFOUNDS THE YANKEES

Stonewall Jackson improvised his stunning Shenandoah Valley campaign of 1862 with good measures of hard work, cunning, and luck.

Arguably the most celebrated campaign feat of arms of the American Civil War is that of Stonewall Jackson in the Shenandoah Valley in May and early June 1862. Others might vie for honors: Grant's risky marches and battles to invest Vicksburg from the east; Sherman's dislodging of Johnston down the Western & Atlantic Railroad to Atlanta in 1864. These and others have their adherents, but Jackson's accomplishment remains an acme. He was surrounded by larger armies, but at every point of attack he possessed numerical superiority; he used geography superbly; and he exceeded almost beyond hopes the strategic aspirations of his commanding officer and national president.

Jackson was by turns crafty and lucky. Most of his Shenandoah Valley campaign was improvised; his genius was in devising shrewd solutions to shifting problems. He made mistakes, but he learned from them, and if he did not put the lessons he learned to use in the valley, then he did so during the year that remained to his life. The chief brilliance of his spring valley campaign was that he saw inaction and the status quo as defeat. He would not accept the situation as it presented itself. He had to change it, and radically. In this, he was like Grant across the river from Vicksburg, or Lee behind fortifications at Richmond in June 1862. The prevailing condition would only lead to frontal assaults, great loss of life, and no guarantee of success. The remedy was movement, to win battles not by the breasts of men presented in line of battle but by marching feet. And like Grant and Lee in their own situations, Jackson was faced by commanders who expected their opponent to accept the prevailing condition, who were not expecting movement, or at least of the radical kind Jackson—or Grant and Lee—set into motion.

No one can now "get into" or discern Jackson's mind. For that matter, no one really could in 1862 either and not a few observers, including many of his footsoldiers and some immediate subordinates,

The Valentine Richmond History Center

thought he might literally be insane. Certainly he was odd, and extremely secretive about his plans. But he could understand like no one else—with the exception of Robert E. Lee—the battleground of Virginia as a whole and how one part was not disconnected from the others, but instead strategically linked. He could see the Shenandoah Valley as a whole and how the varying military units in and near it were not isolated forces but rather more like pieces on a chessboard, each not only holding its own power but gaining or losing power depending on its position and all having an overall power depending on their positions taken together.

Indeed, no other field in the American Civil War lends itself more to the analogy of chess than the valley in the spring of 1862. The valley is the chessboard and the various Confederate and Union armies the opposing pieces. This valley has different definitions, but for our purposes it stretches from Staunton in the south to Williamsport and Harper's Ferry in the north, a total of 120 miles. Jackson's valley campaign was a campaign of distances. The distance from Winchester to Strasburg is 18 miles, from Strasburg to New Market, 30 miles. Even more important, Washington, DC, was 50 miles from Harper's Ferry.

From Strasburg nearly all the way to Staunton runs 55-mile-long Massanutten Mountain, dividing the valley down the middle into two parallel valleys. The western valley is about 9 miles wide and had much open country by way of farms. It also enjoyed the best road, the Valley Pike. The eastern, or Luray Valley, is about 6 miles wide, was largely wooded and had an inferior road. Only one road traversed Massanutten Mountain, running roughly east-west from New Market to Luray. Massanutten is a key feature on the chessboard. Armies marching up one side might not be detected on the other, and whichever army held the road that passed over its midpoint could control a good many possibilities for movement up and down the valley as a whole ("up" always meaning in the southerly direction owing to the northerly direction of the flow of the Shenandoah River). Conceivably, a Federal force could be marching up the western valley while a Confederate one marched down the Luray Valley to seize Front Royal.

But the Luray Valley could also be a trap. A strong Federal presence in Front Royal matched with Federals at the Massanutten crossing would require that a Confederate force abandon the Luray Valley by way of any of several gaps (from north to south—Thorton's, Fisher's, Swift Run, Brown's, and Rockfish) over the Blue Ridge and into the Piedmont area of Virginia, or remain bottled up in the southern Luray Valley, or retreat farther south.

Several other points need to be made in advance of a discussion of Jackson's valley campaign. One is cavalry. Jackson was fortunate to have men who not only loved to ride but who did it very well and, even more important, knew the valley as well as the backs of their horses' heads. The Federal cavalry was not nearly so good

and had the disadvantage of being on foreign ground. Jackson's cavalry under the dashing, often brilliant, sometimes irresponsible Turner Ashby could hold an effective screen in front of the Union armies, keeping them nearly blind to any movement of the Confederate infantry beyond the riders. Several times Jackson's army "disappeared" so far as Union commanders could discern, an extremely dangerous state of affairs for them.

And, of course, Jackson was working "on his own ground." He had been a professor of natural and experimental philosophy and of artillery tactics at the Virginia Military Institute in Lexington, up the valley 35 miles from Staunton. He knew the territory, and he could rely on a populace working on his behalf and against those of the "invaders." They would tell him of Federal movements while, if discoursing to Federals at all, disguising those of Jackson. These Jackson all put to his advantage.

One other point. Jackson in late March called to his tent Jedediah Hotchkiss, a 34-year-old teacher and transplanted Connecticut Yankee with a penchant for mapmaking. He asked Hotchkiss to make a detailed map of the whole valley from Lexington to Harper's Ferry, which Hotchkiss then commenced. Hotchkiss drew as much of the valley as he could, including topography, roads, railroads, buildings, rivers, bridges, and fords. The work of this mapmaker was invaluable to Jackson for the next six weeks.

On April 17 as the roads were drying, this is what Jackson faced. His valley army (in all Jackson commanded about 6,000 men at this time, including Ashby's cavalry) was between Mount Jackson and New Market. Union Maj. Gen. Nathaniel Banks' army of 21,000 was also on the Valley Pike threatening him from the north. West of the Shenandoah Valley, strung out parallel to the upper valley and with the vanguard under Brig. Gen. Robert Milroy at McDowell (about 27 miles west of Staunton) was the 17,000-man army of Maj. Gen. John Charles Fremont. He was opposed by 2,500 Confederates under Brig. Gen. Edward Johnson. If Johnson were defeated by Fremont, then Fremont could enter the valley via McDowell and be in Jackson's rear. To the east, Union General Irving McDowell (of First Manassas infamy and not to be confused with the aforementioned town) was at Fredericksburg with 30,000 men. Confederate Maj. Gen. Richard Ewell was just outside the valley on the eastern side of the Blue Ridge with 8,500 men. Thus within or close to the valley were about 68,000 Federals matched against 17,000 Confederates. In addition, Union Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan (a West Point classmate of Jackson's who finished far ahead of the Southerner) was threatening Richmond with 100,000 men against 50,000 under Joseph E. Johnston. Robert E. Lee at the time was in Richmond as a military adviser to President Jefferson Davis.

If McDowell were to march overland to Richmond, as was the Federal plan, thus becoming the right flank of McClellan's host, the fate of Richmond was likely sealed. But Jackson understood that U.S. President Abraham Lincoln was acutely sensitive to the defense of Washington, DC. Should the North's capital fall to Confederate troops, likely the war would be settled in favor of the South's secession. If Jackson did not at first know of Lincoln's—and his Secretary of War, Edwin Stanton's—sensitivity to Washington's defense, then he learned of it soon enough after Jackson's rebuff on March 23 at Kernstown, which lies on the Valley Pike just south of Winchester.

At that place, Jackson made a hasty attack on what he had been told—falsely, owing to a rare intelligence failure by Ashby—was a rear guard of Union troops quitting the valley for McDowell's command. Jackson had not confirmed the estimate with his own reconnoitering, and his men confronted far more than they had expected. Jackson bloodied the Union force, but then retreated up the Valley Pike past Strasburg. The rebuff, however, had some of the effects of the kind of victory Jackson coveted because it foiled reinforcements moving to McClellan. Lincoln stopped McDowell's intended advance to Richmond so he could thwart any Confederate move from the west on Washing-

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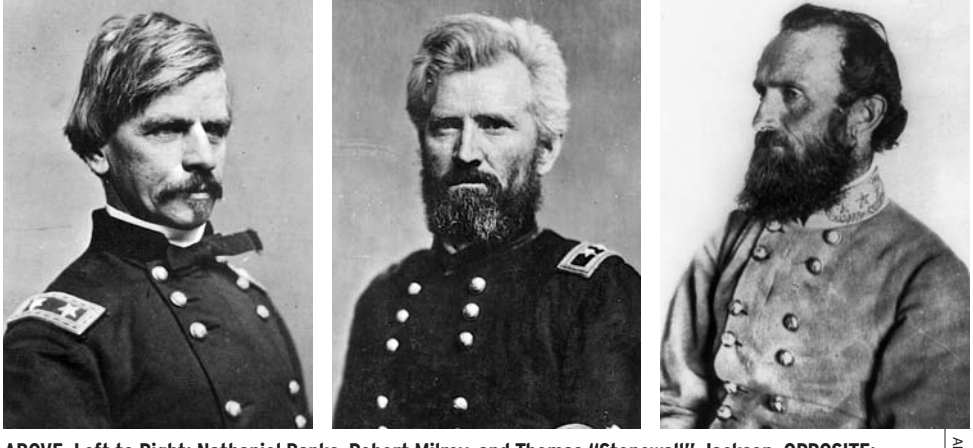


ABOVE, Left to Right: Nathaniel Banks, Robert Milroy, and Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson. OPPOSITE: Union and Confederate forces clashed time after time in the rich agricultural valley, prized by both sides for its food, livestock, and strategic position.

All National Archives

ton, and more forces were sent to the valley to deal with Jackson.

Other important lessons were learned at Kernstown and during the weeks before. On March 11, Jackson had called a council of war in preparation for a night attack against Banks when that general was encamped north of Winchester. Jackson's subordinates objected vociferously owing to the fact that many of the men had marched in the opposite direction to get rations and they would be exhausted if forced to Jackson's intended point of attack. Jackson was furious. He vowed he would never again hold a council of war with subordinates. He was true to his word and from that time forth he kept his own counsel, telling practically no one of his major plans. In addition, if the point was not already clear, he knew he would have to make sure of an enemy's strength and to exceed it if possible with greater numbers on his own part.

Deception, secrecy, movement, picking up disparate commands to strike with superior numbers: These were the hallmarks of Jackson's subsequent campaign in the valley.

On April 17, Banks moved south. Jackson, with less than half the Federal numbers, began to withdraw. Banks seized New Market. Two days later, he sent some Federal troops over Massanutten Mountain to Luray. If Banks had energy and dared much, he could push down both valleys. If he could get down the Luray Valley quickly, he could cut Jackson off from Ewell and then defeat Jackson on the Valley Pike or in the open ground south of Harrisonburg. Jackson saw the danger. He sent his men off in swift marches such that soon they would be known as Jackson's "foot cavalry." On the 18th they marched more than 20 miles to Harrisonburg. The next day they marched around the southern rump of Massanutten Mountain to a village called Conrad's Store, 25 miles south of Luray and near Swift Run Gap, in case they were pressed to leave the valley. In three days they had marched 55 miles and secured their communications with Ewell. Banks marched down to Harrisonburg on the 26th.

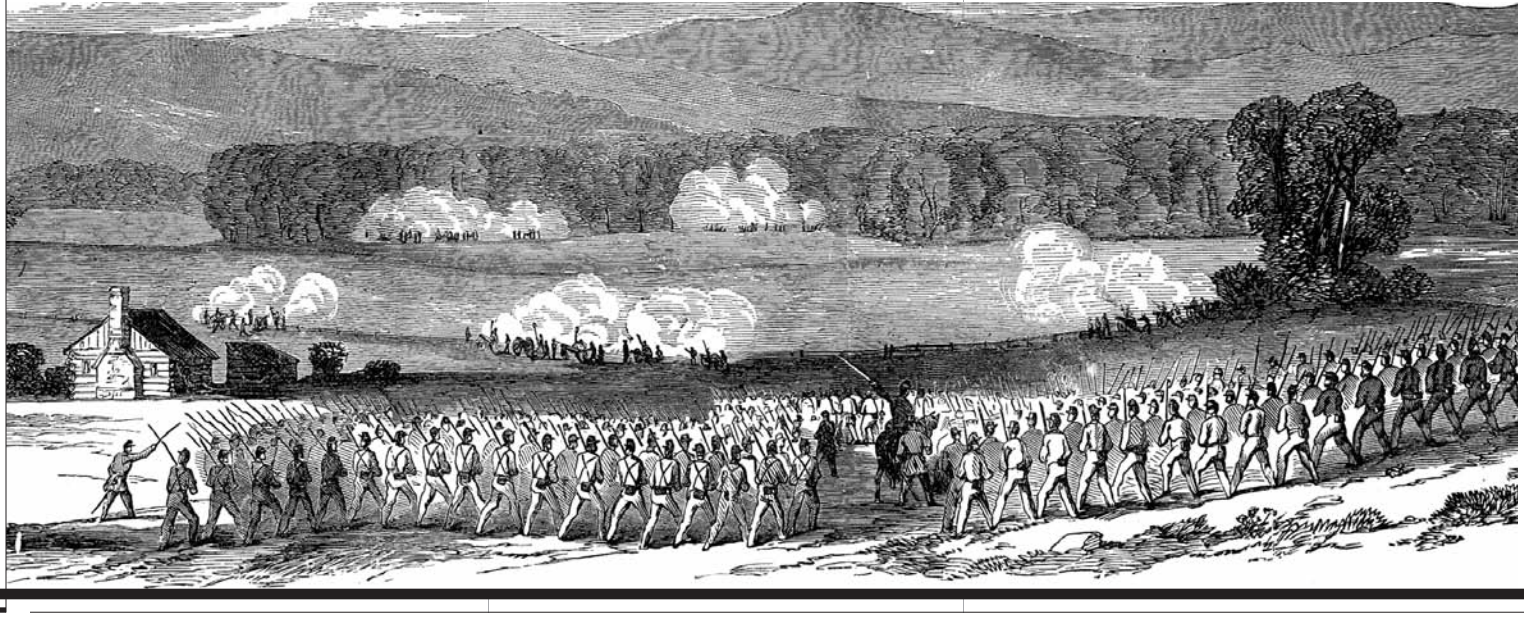
Jackson's new location was a safe one. The Blue Ridge was at his back and he could make a defense of it; moreover, Ewell could reinforce him. And he was checking any move by Banks on Staunton—through which ran the valley's only rail link to Richmond—because he could attack him in the flank as he marched. Still, the situation was not much use to Johnston in Richmond, and McDowell was again massing forces for a move on the Confederate capital.

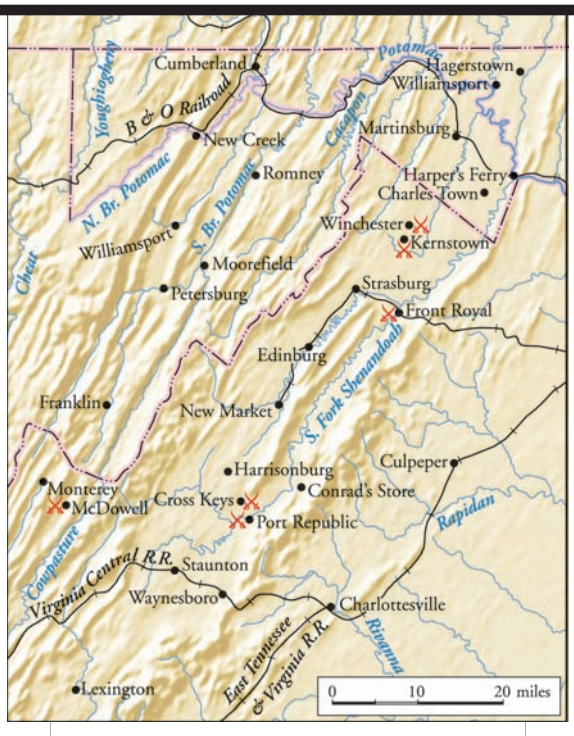
Jackson decided to act. He had Ewell march with his 8,500 men across Swift Run Gap to take over the valley army's camp sites. Ewell's orders were to watch Banks. Ashby, in fact, had been sent over to the Valley Pike to demonstrate against Banks. But even Ashby did not know Jackson's true intentions. Ewell knew somewhat more, but not much.

On April 30, Jackson, letting no one know his destination, put his men on a march southwest to Port Republic. The weather was awful and the march was slow. From Port Republic on May 3, Jackson turned east toward Brown's Gap and marched out of the Shenandoah Valley. Those who saw the move believed that Jackson was in retreat and abandoning Staunton. The soldiers were bewildered; if they were to help the people in Staunton, or to wrestle with Banks, they were going exactly the wrong way. Jackson marched to Mechum's River Station on the Virginia Central Railroad, loaded his men in rail cars, and had them hauled by rail back into the valley all the way to Staunton.

On the same day that Jackson moved, Banks assured Washington that Jackson had quit the valley and was headed for Richmond. Lincoln and Stanton took the opportunity to remove Shields' division from Banks and order Banks to retire toward Strasburg, he being weakened by the loss of Shields and there not being much more to do where he was. Shields was to go to McDowell at Fredericksburg and join in his overland march on Richmond.

At noon on May 4, men of the valley army unloaded at the Staunton station. Staunton citizens—who only hours and





ABOVE: The Shenadoah Valley contains broad flatlands but also has high ridges pierced only by occasional "gaps." OPPOSITE: Federals advance to do battle with Rebels at the hamlet of Cross Keys on June 8. Jackson held them off and then sent men to Port Republic.

days before were sending valuables out to the countryside and fearing a Federal occupation—rejoiced at the sight. Jackson ordered that no one leave the town and riders who had left for the west be tracked down and restrained. Then, because he did not like to work himself or his men on the Sabbath—the day they had traveled by train—Jackson gave his men two days of rest as atonement.

Federal Brigadier Milroy, who had been pressing Johnson eastward with his 3,000 men, caught wind of the Confederate reinforcement despite Jackson's blackout, and retired west again, taking up a position near the town of McDowell. Johnson with his 2,500 men followed and deployed on a hill across the Bull Pasture River as Jackson with about 6,000 men, came up. Milroy did not wait for developments. He attacked on May 8. Johnson was hard-pressed, but Jackson's men came into the fight and repelled the Federals. It was a sharp struggle and by no means a clear triumph for the Confederates, who actually lost more men than the attacking Unionists.

Nevertheless, Milroy could see that he was outnumbered and retreated the next day. Jackson, no doubt with a hunger to smite the foe utterly in the Old Testament sense, pursued for three days. Perhaps he had in mind to defeat Fremont at Franklin and then get into Banks' rear from the west. In any event, Jackson ultimately gave up the chase, turning back toward McDowell. He reentered the valley May 16—owing to embracing Johnson's command, which would now march with the valley army—with more men than he had when he left it for the battle at McDowell. Jackson figured—rightly—that Fremont was out of the picture for the time being, at least not a threat to Staunton.

So Jackson headed up the Valley Pike, soon treading ground recently surrendered by the retiring Banks. He reached New Market on May 20. Johnston in Richmond ordered Ewell to follow Shields out into the Piedmont and Jackson merely to watch Banks. This would have forestalled any offensive against Banks, so Jackson telegraphed Lee in Richmond. Lee telegraphed back that Jackson could keep Ewell and attack Banks.

The Union general was nervously awaiting developments at Strasburg, having established a defensive line south of the town and across the Valley Pike. Banks' strength was much reduced, down to 8,000 men, having lost Shields and others to the efforts farther east. His mission was to hold the lower valley, hence his defensive line at Strasburg. To protect his left flank, he sent a thousand men over to Front Royal 10 miles east and tried to keep his eye—through the cavalry screen—on Jackson, whom he knew to be on the Valley Pike at New Market.

But not for long. On the 21st, Jackson marched his command across Massanutten to Luray, there picking up Ewell's infantry. Jackson now had 16,000 men. He was in a position to block Banks should the Federal commander attempt to join General McDowell at Fredericksburg. All day long on May 22 the enlarged valley army marched north. By dark the lead elements were within 10 miles of Front Royal, but no Federals knew it—Banks thought Jackson was still in New Market. The next day, Jackson would strike.

Jackson's hope was to be so swift and so thorough that the thousand-man garrison at Front Royal could not escape, could not even send for, let alone receive, reinforcements from Banks at Strasburg, 10 miles west.

On the 23rd, Ashby cut the rail line to Strasburg, and thus potential retreat in that direction. Then Jackson moved his infantry toward Front Royal. He directed the van off the main road, which might be defended with artillery, to a road coming in from the flank, then ordered the attack. The Federals were surprised but nevertheless managed to hold for a time two vital bridges and then put up a good resistance north of the town. The issue, however, was not in doubt. Outnumbered 16 to 1, the Federal garrison retreated to north of the North Fork of the Shenandoah River and attempted a stand, which Virginia cavalry broke as the day was closing. Of the 1,000 Federals in Front Royal only 400 escaped, for casualties to Jackson's command of about 50 Southerners.

Jackson figured that Banks, with 7,000 men, did not have many options. His rail link and communications with Washington through Front Royal were severed. He could attack Jackson, or exit the valley westward to join Fremont, or retire toward Winchester. Jackson figured Banks would retire down the Valley Pike toward Winchester and set his gray columns in motion to attack him as he was strung out.

Banks at first thought Jackson was still in New Market and that only Ewell had struck at Front Royal, but when the true situation revealed itself, he acted promptly. He set his army in motion toward Winchester. When Jackson's men reached the Valley Pike—at Middletown, five miles north of Strasburg—they saw wagons and artillery strung out, a rare opportunity for

onslaught. Indeed, they made havoc on the column, capturing wagons and sending Federals to flight. But as it turned out, this was the rear of Banks' column; the remainder had gotten away. Much of Ashby's cavalry broke discipline to loot the rich loads of material they found in the wagons, some even took off to visit "the home folks." Rich as the rewards of the fight at Middletown were, it could have been far more ruinous for the Federals, and Jackson was furious.

The Northerners put up some skilled resistance in their flight toward Winchester. Nevertheless, Jackson pressed his men hard in pursuit, even through the night. The men were exhausted from their marching and fighting, but still Jackson pressed. "I am obliged to sweat them tonight, that I might save their blood tomorrow," he told a subordinate who pleaded for a short halt. "The line of hills southwest of Winchester must not be occupied by the enemy's artillery. My own must be there and in position by daylight." The men knew nothing of this, only that they were pursuing a crippled army. And if their feet were bleeding, their complaints and suspicions of their leader were dropping away as so many stragglers. The seemingly crazy orders of "Ol' Jack" might not be the product of a cracked mind after all; he was leading them to victory after victory.

Both Confederates and Federals were positioning before sunrise on the 25th. The Confederates had seized one line of heights south of the town, but Banks' men held the last ridge and their artillery could still play havoc on advancing graybacks. Jackson commanded the battle west of the pike. On the other side Ewell was coming up on a diagonal road his men had taken from Front Royal.

The Federal artillery and supporting infantry were holding well and stalling the Confederate advance. Jackson saw the need to outflank them to the west and sent Brig. Gen. Richard Taylor's Louisianians to the job. These men formed for the advance and then marched on the Northerners. A Confederate private nearby wrote: "That charge of Taylor's was the grandest I saw during the war: … every man was in his proper place. There was all the pomp and circumstance of war about it that was always lacking in our charges." The sun was not yet very high in the sky.

With Ewell pressing the Federal left flank, Taylor the right, and Brig. Gen. Charles Winder with the Stonewall brigade pressing the center, the Federal line collapsed. Union soldiers fell back through Winchester and the Confederates entered to the cheers of the townspeople. It was well nigh a celebration. Jackson was especially revered—the Liberator! But Jackson knew this was no time to rest on laurels; his enemy was in ragged retreat, so fragile it might break to pieces with a concerted blow. He called for Ashby, but Ashby was off chasing prizes of his own. Jackson called for the cavalry under Ewell, but had to wait two hours for two regiments of Virginia cavalry under Brig. Gen. George Steuart

Meanwhile, Banks had made good use of the time, heading for Williams- port where his army could cross the Potomac River, and leaving scores of wagons in his haste. "Never have I seen an opportunity when it was more in the power of cavalry to reap a richer harvest of the fruits of victory," Jackson lamented. Jackson threw his infantry into the pursuit, but the men had not been fed in two days and had been

MARCHING TO JACKSON'S TUNE

Marching is hard work under any circumstances. The men of the valley army marched in drizzle, thunderstorms, heat, and mud. Going all day—or even two days—without food was not uncommon. Tempers gave out first, then feet, then bodies.

Even as early in the campaign as the march from Staunton to McDowell, soldiers were feeling desperate. One private, despairing the weight of his pistol, offered it to anyone who would take it. No one would. He threw it into the bushes. He offered his sword, again no takers, and again the discard into the bushes. No one wanted his blanket either, and so the side of the trail reaped that as well. Thrown away were all the trappings of magisterial war that the soldiers earlier had believed would be theirs: high hats and uniform finery. The valley soldier was soon stripped to nothing but the essentials.

Straggling was always a problem, not so much owing to morale as mere exhaustion or physical breakdown. One Alabamian wrote, "My feet were blistered all over, on top as well as on the bottom. I was never so tired and sleepy."

Richard Taylor's Louisianians did better than most. Taylor had told his men to bathe their feet at the end of each day, instructed them on treating sores and how to pick boots, of which he wanted each soldier to have two pairs. On the march Taylor remained at the rear of his command to discourage straggling; so did his junior officers.

But Taylor's hopes of two pairs of boots per man could hardly be achieved, especially after the beginnings of the trials of the campaign. Shoes were soon held together with twine, or abandoned altogether. Hundreds of men marched barefoot.

The retreat from Harper's Ferry was especially devastating. Although Jackson lost 400 casualties in the fighting from Front Royal to Winchester, he lost thousands to straggling in the retreat from the Potomac back to Strasburg. Captain James Edmondson of the 27th Virginia Regiment, part of the Stonewall Brigade, observed: "I never saw a Brigade so completely broken down.... [It] has lost at least 1,000 men broken down, left on the way and captured." The 27th began with 418 men and finished with 150 ready for duty. Only half of the Stonewall Brigade arrived in Strasburg at the same time as its commander,

marching and fighting since Front Royal. They could not maintain the chase, and Jackson finally had to call it off, saving the destruction of Banks for another time.

Still, he had cause for contentment. He had taken his army 177 miles in 17 days and kicked the Federals all the way out of the Shenandoah Valley into Maryland. He had captured, wounded, or killed at least 3,000 of Banks' command of 8,000 and reaped voluminous supplies in Winchester, more medical supplies, one Rebel officer wrote, than "in the whole Confederacy." Southern losses since Front Royal were about 400.

This was not, however, the richest fruit of the victories of May 23-25. While Banks was being drubbed, Lincoln and Stanton descended to their deepest pessimism. They were certain that Banks was being driven by a superior force. They were not certain how numerous that force was or where it was headed, but to their eyes it could be a very large one indeed and perhaps set on crossing the Potomac or intent on capturing Washington. Lincoln issued orders to have the Federal government seize the railroads for military purposes, called on Northern governors for more troops, and rescinded a May 17 order to McDowell to march on Richmond in favor of sending some of his troops to the valley.

Once Winchester was secured, Jackson ordered the wealth of captured supplies to begin the trip up the Valley Pike. He also received orders from Richmond, confirming his own convictions, to demonstrate against Harper's Ferry. He set out with infantry to do so, up the rail line that ran from Winchester to Charles Town and Harper's Ferry. Through the 27th and 28th, Jackson kept up the demonstration. But by the latter day, Lincoln and Stanton could see Jackson's thrust for what it was, an understrength threat that could not be made good.

In fact, Jackson was now in danger. He had 13,000 worn troops within a few miles of 7,000 Federals in Harper's Ferry. Banks was north of the Potomac with 5,000 and being reinforced. Fremont was at Franklin 27 miles west of Harrisonburg with 15,000, and Shields was moving on Front Royal from the east with a division, another division not far behind. Anyone could see that Jackson was surrounded. If Fremont were at Harrisonburg, Banks and Shields could chase Jackson there and crush him in a vise. Fremont, however, declined the march to Harrisonburg—the roads having been blocked by Jackson's engineers after the fight at McDowell. Instead, Fremont set out through the Alleghenies for the more distant Strasburg. When his superiors at Washington learned this they were furious, but had Fremont continue toward Strasburg in hopes he could still block Jackson's path. The plan now was for Fremont and Shields to combine at Strasburg and cut off, if not annihilate, the valley army by attacking it from both west and east.

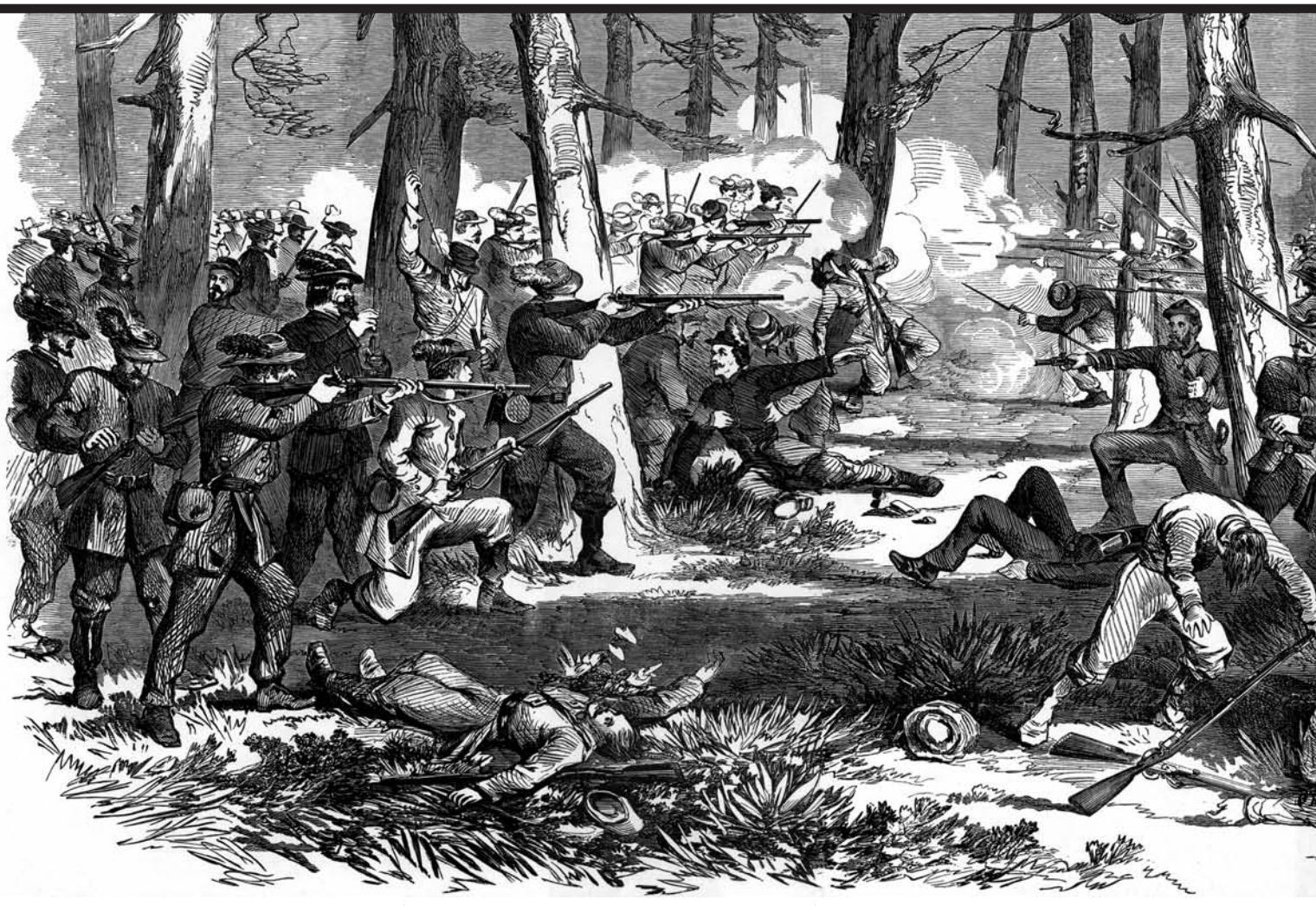
Jackson was told on the 29th that Fremont was en route to Strasburg. He must have surmised the Federal intent to combine Fremont and Shields at that town; still, to all observers he remained exceptionally calm. Perhaps he surmised that communication between Fremont and Shields would be tenuous and a simultaneous conversion on Strasburg difficult. In fact, each might be counted upon to be cautious for fear of being struck by Jackson before a combination could be

Jackson asked a lot of his men, and they delivered.

Charles Winder; the rest was strung out up the Pike. Those who could not catch up were captured or had to make their way through back ways and woods to rejoin the valley army.

During some hard marches, cavalry and infantry temporarily relaxed their rivalry and jibes. Cavalrymen offered to sling rifles for the foot soldiers, or let them mount, or allowed soldiers to hold onto stirrups. It was said that one man found a hot meal but fell asleep before he could eat it. At a rest period, men often fell right to the ground and were instantly asleep.

For all this exhaustion and misery, the Southern soldiers knew they were part of great deeds. Richmond newspapers hailed their achievements in the valley as heroic, and soon European observers were extolling the campaign's brilliance. The valley soldiers marched in misery but marched also into immortality.



ABOVE: Pennsylvania "Bucktails" engage Southerners outside of Harrisonburg as the Rebels are retiring up the valley on June 6. It was in this fight that Turner Ashby, Jackson's cavalry leader, was killed.

achieved. Jackson issued his marching orders for a withdrawal and set the valley army in motion toward Strasburg, 45 miles from Charles Town.

The army strung out for more than 10 miles with captured wagons and more than 2,000 Federal prisoners. The Stonewall Brigade, which had closed on Harper's Ferry, had the farthest to tramp. Rain hampered the march, but all in the valley army could sense that speed was essential to survival. Fortunately for the Confederates, both Fremont and Shields were timid. Shields took Front Royal but remained there while Ord's division marched toward him from Fredericksburg as reinforcement. Fremont was checked by a demonstration by Ewell just west of Strasburg. So Jackson won the race to Strasburg on the 31st. Then he held the gate open on June 1 for the Stonewall Brigade, which one day marched 42 miles through rain and muddied roads, all without food—one of the most extraordinary such acts during the war.

Jackson had leaped through the jaws of a closing vise, but he was not out of danger. The two forces opposing him were both formidable; he had to continue his retreat up the valley and determine some way of thwarting Federal aims. He had some idea from geography what these would be. Likely, Fremont would pursue up the western valley. Shields would march up the Luray Valley. At Luray, Shields might try to cross Massanutten Mountain to get in Jackson's rear or combine with Fremont in the pursuit. Failing this, he would likely march to Conrad's Store and Port Republic, covering exits from the valley into the Piedmont and trapping Jackson in a vise, the other part of which was Fremont, where Massanutten Mountain gave out.

Jackson sent men to burn the bridge at Luray that crossed the South Fork of the Shenandoah. Owing to all the rain, the rivers were high and the loss of the bridge would keep Shields on the east side of it, thus unable to march westward over Massanutten Mountain. Later Jackson would have the bridge at Conrad's Store burned also, further keeping Shields on the east side of the river and again thwarting any linkup with Fremont. South of the bridge at Conrad's Store there was only one other, at Port Republic. Up the valley from this town, armies could ford the tributaries and join as they pleased. If Jackson was to keep Fremont and Shields apart, he had to control the bridge at Port Republic; so here he

would stop and try to deal with each separately. And at Port Republic he also had an escape route, if need be, out of the valley for the Piedmont.

For several days the valley army marched south up the Valley Pike. Ashby's men harassed and attacked Fremont's men to slow their pursuit. In one of these attack's Ashby was killed leading a charge. For all of Jackson's consternation with his dashing cavalryman, he sorely missed him.

On June 6 the valley army rounded the southern end of Massanutten Mountain. Jackson had Ewell take up a defensive position just southwest of the hamlet of Cross Keys and placed the bulk of the rest of the valley army overlooking Port Republic. He had won the race with Shields to this place, but barely—a Federal force entered on June 8. These Federals came close to destroying the Port Republic bridge, which crossed the North River, one of two tributaries to the South Fork of the Shenandoah. The other tributary was the South River—Port Republic lies between the two. South River had no bridge, only a ford. Had the Federals destroyed the North River bridge the valley army would have been trapped on the side of the river with Fremont. As it was, Jackson had greater freedom of movement than either Federal army.

About the time that the Federal reconnaissance was being driven out of Port Republic on June 8, Fremont's army of about 10,000 men attacked Ewell's 5,000 on a rise outside Cross Keys. Fremont did not make the best use of his forces, and Ewell repulsed them without great trouble. Jackson rode up about the time the fighting was closing. One of Ewell's brigadiers, 60-year-old Isaac Trimble, who had graduated from West Point two years before Jackson was born, urged Ewell to charge the Federals. But Ewell declined, not wishing to spoil whatever Jackson had in mind for the following day.

Indeed Jackson did have something in mind, formulated after dark on the 8th. He meant to have Trimble demonstrate against the timid Fremont. Ewell meanwhile was to join Jackson's force west of Port Republic. Together they would cross the solitary bridge into town before dawn and fall upon Shields' forward elements, commanded by Brig. Gen. Erastus Tyler of Ohio. After the Confederates had drubbed the Federals on this side of the river, they would recross, join Trimble, and whip Fremont. It was unprecedented audacity.

But the morning proved more difficult than Jackson had hoped. The Federals under Tyler were in good position. The Stonewall Brigade under Winder tried advancing across wheat fields only to be cut up by artillery set on a rise at the left of the Union line. Jackson ordered the Federal guns flanked and captured. But Confederates tasked with the job had to traverse deep forest, and then ran into Federal infantry protecting the guns. They attacked but were thrown back.

Meanwhile, reinforcements were slow to get to the field. There was confusion at the Port Republic bridge, compounded by the crossing of the South River via an improvised bridge built in the night; it was beginning to crack up. Jackson had no choice but to throw in more troops as they came up. He eventually ordered Trimble to Port Republic, burning the one good bridge behind him to isolate Fremont, and giving up his idea of going back for a blow at Fremont's army.

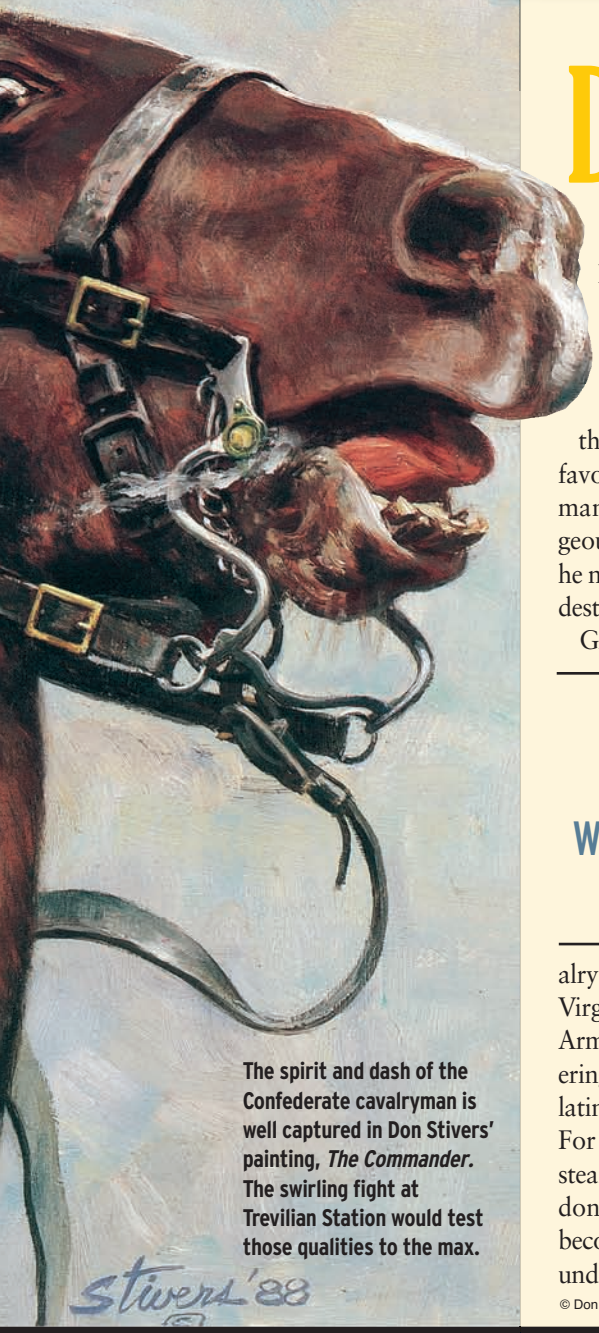
The key to success in the present fight outside Port Republic was the clearing in which the Federals had placed their artillery. Again and again Confederates charged, took it, and were forced back. Ultimately they retained the vital piece of battlefield and Tyler was beaten. He began retreating to Conrad's Store. Fremont, whom Jackson feared would follow hard on Trimble and at the least make lots of trouble in Jackson's rear during the fight against Tyler, remained cautious. Later in the day he began a retreat to Harrisonburg and then north of New Market.

As for Jackson, he pursued Fremont, but with less intent to attack than to confuse. He set out all sorts of intelligence that he would again pounce on Federals in the valley. And he gave his men a welcomed rest. They had earned it.

But for Jackson's dashes and fights throughout the Shenandoah Valley, McDowell would likely have marched on Richmond in May or June 1862, and Richmond might well have fallen. How the seizure of the Confederate capital in 1862 would have affected the war is anyone's guess, but as events unwound, three more years were needed for the effort. Jackson's campaign was successful strategically and astonishing tactically because Jackson—with Lee's support in Richmond—saw the effort not in lines of battle but in lines of movement. Moving skillfully, he could position himself to best advantage and wield his power most effectively. With 17,000 troops he tied up 50,000 Federals and confounded the drive on Richmond.

The man sucked on lemons, told no one of his plans, and passed out religious leaflets on Sundays, but he had a genius for getting results. □

Swirling Cavalry Fight at TREVILIAN STATION



The spirit and dash of the Confederate cavalryman is well captured in Don Stivers' painting, *The Commander.* The swirling fight at Trevilian Station would test those qualities to the max.

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At Trevilian Station, a two-day cavalry fight in June 1864 matched Phil Sheridan's Union forces against Wade Hampton's Confederates. It would be the largest cavalry battle of the war. By Arnold Blumberg

Despite costing the Union Army 55,000 men in five weeks of hard marching and grueling combat, Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's Overland Campaign of 1864 still had not accomplished its goal of defeating Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. By early June, Lee's legions, although reduced by another 33,000 casualties, remained close to Richmond's fortifications and the nearby swamplands of the Chickahominy River. There was no favorable ground upon which Grant could maneuver his larger army to advantageously fight. Reluctantly, he realized that he needed to review his options if he was to destroy his determined opponents.

Grant's new plan called for sending cavalry west toward Charlottesville to cut the Virginia Central Railroad, then shifting the Army of the Potomac south and west, severing the rest of Lee's supply lines and isolating the Confederate forces at Richmond. For the scheme to succeed, Grant had to steal another march on Lee. Once this was done, the ensuing military action would become a siege, which both Grant and Lee understood would eventually spell the Confederacy's doom.

Grant initiated his new strategy by preparing to march the Army of the Potomac to the south bank of the James River. This maneuver would place him within striking distance of the city of Petersburg, 23 miles south of Richmond, which served as the rail center and supply transit point for much of the material for Lee's army from the Deep South. On June 5, Grant wired Maj. Gen. Henry W. Halleck in Washington. Once he passed south of the James River, Grant said, "I can cut off all sources of supply to the enemy except what is furnished by the [James River] canal." If Maj. Gen. David Hunter, Union commander of the Department of West Virginia, could capture Lynchburg, the use of the vital James River Canal would be lost to the Confederacy. If Hunter did not succeed, Grant observed, "I will make the effort of destroying the canal by sending cavalry up the south side of the [James] river."

Grant's plan demanded strict secrecy. He had to slip away so stealthily that Lee would not realize the absence of the Federals until they were storming the gates of Petersburg. In the meantime, some sort of

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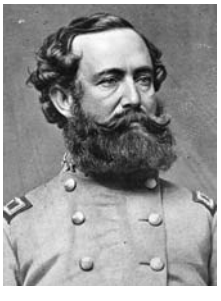

ABOVE: Union cavalry horses are tethered around the Old Church Hotel near Cold Harbor, Virginia, which functioned as Maj. Gen. Phil Sheridan's headquarters during the run-up to Trevilian Station. RIGHT: Phil Sheridan and Wade Hampton.

adjunct operation had to be embarked upon to sever Lee's vital supply line to Virginia's Shenandoah Valley, which provided the Army of Northern Virginia with a majority of its foodstuffs, finished goods, and other necessities.

On June 6, Grant ordered Hunter to move to Charlottesville and destroy as much of the Virginia Central Railroad as possible as he moved eastward. Hunter was then directed to link up with a mounted force under Maj. Gen. Phil Sheridan at Charlottesville. After he and Sheridan had completed their work destroying rail lines and canals, Hunter was to proceed east and join the Army of the Potomac.

Sheridan had gained much of his battlefield experience as an infantry division leader at Perryville, Murfreesboro, Chickamauga, and Chattanooga, but he retained a firm grasp of cavalry tactics and organization from his brief service as a cavalry colonel in Mississippi earlier in the war. These traits had attracted Grant's attention, and Sheridan seemed the perfect candidate to whip the Army of the Potomac's cavalry branch into a more aggressive fighting force than it heretofore had been. As a result, when Grant came east to take command of all the United States armies, he brought Sheridan with him. Sheridan quickly justified Grant's faith in him by retooling the eastern cavalry through intensive training, reequipping, and assigning competent new commanders to ensure maximum fighting capacity.

With full confidence in Sheridan's ability to operate independently and achieve the desired results the mission called for, Grant directed him to commence his raid on June 7. Sheridan took two of his three cavalry divisions on the raid. One was the 1st Division under Brig. Gen. Alfred T.A. Torbert, which contained three brigades under Brig. Gen. George A. Custer, Colonel Thomas C. Devin, and Brig. Gen. Wesley Merritt.

The 2nd Cavalry Division was also slated to take part in the operation. It was headed by Brig. Gen. David M. Gregg, like Torbert a West Point graduate. Modest, firm, and fearless in combat, Gregg was hailed as the finest type of cavalry leader. The 2nd Division included two brigades: the 1st under Brig. Gen. Henry E. Davies, and the 2nd led by Colonel John I. Gregg. Neither officer was a professional soldier, but each had proved his mettle under fire.

The 3rd Cavalry Division, led by Brig. Gen. James H. Wilson, remained with the Army of the Potomac to act as its eyes and ears. Along with the 1st and 2nd Divisions, four batteries of horse artillery under Captain James M. Robertson accompanied Sheridan's expedition. A total of 9,300 men and 20 cannons made up his strike force. A wagon train comprising 125 ambulances and wagons hauling bridge-building equipment completed the expedition.

The units spent the better part of a day moving from their camps along the Chickahominy River 12 miles east of Richmond to the Pamunkey, a tributary of the York River located east of the Chickahominy. Before they departed for the new rendezvous point, the Federal troopers were issued three days' rations, two days' grain for their horses, and 100 rounds of ammunition.

It was apparent to the troopers from the detailed preparations that a big event was about to occur. Veteran bugler Carlos McDonald of the 6th Ohio Cavalry observed that the preparations meant "we are to have some long marches away from our base of supplies, and in all probability some fighting." Such speculation aside, few officers or enlisted men foresaw a major cavalry raid in the offing. As one member of the 9th New York Volunteer Cavalry Regiment observed, "Much reticence was observed by the officers since Grant had taken command, and only division commanders were informed of contemplated movements before their execution. To the men and subordinate officers this move was an enigma."

On Tuesday, June 7, the sun rose at 4:45 AM on what would be a rather humid day, even though the temperature would not exceed 74 degrees. Fifteen minutes after daylight, the Union cavalry camps echoed with the bugle call "Boots and Saddles," followed by "To Horse." Within the hour an eight-mile-long column of Federal horsemen—Gregg's division followed by Torbert's—traveling at a pace of four miles an hour, filled the road heading northwest along the south bank of the Mattapony River. After a march of only 15 miles, the column halted and bivouacked for the night.

A major cause for concern on the first day was the alarming number of horses that broke down only hours after the raid began. The slow pace of the Union riders was calculated to prevent excessive horse wastage on the march. Such losses would greatly impair the force's mobility and striking power when it came time to confront the enemy. Unfortunately for Sheridan and his troopers, the expedition would continue to lose horseflesh at an ever more quickening rate as their advance continued. The animals that could not keep up with the march were shot and left by the roadside, their riders tramping through the countryside looking for new mounts to avoid joining the growing number of dismounted.

The next day the pace of the Federal expedition picked up with a respectable 25-mile march reaching Pole Cat Station on the Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac Railroad in the late afternoon. While most of the brigades went into camp or foraged the area, Merritt's reserve brigade was tasked with tearing up the nearby rail line.

As the Union marauders splashed across the Pamunkey on June 7, they were shadowed by Confederate scouts who hovered around the blue column, watching and exchanging sporadic gunfire as the Federals marched on. Reports of the Union move reached Maj. Gen. Wade Hampton, commanding the Confederate 1st Cavalry Division, early on the morning of June 8 at his Atlee's Station headquarters near Cold Harbor. Hampton immediately sent a report of Sheridan's activities to Lee, who ordered him to counter any threat Sheridan's riders posed. Hampton would prove to be more than up to the challenge.

Officers and men of the 1st U.S. Cavalry, photographed in February 1864. By the time of the Battle of Trevilian Station, they were a well-trained cavalry force.

Reputed to be the richest man in the South on the eve of the Civil War, Hampton was an avid outdoorsman and an expert horseman. The handsome, brown-haired, gray-eyed South Carolina aristocrat did not smoke and only sparingly drank alcohol. At the start of the war, he raised troops for the Confederacy and saw action as an infantry colonel at the First Battle of Manassas, where he received the first of several wounds he would suffer during the war. The next year he transferred to the cavalry and became a brigadier general under the fabled Maj. Gen. James Ewell Brown Stuart, commander of Lee's cavalry arm. Hampton subsequently fought in all the major battles of the Army of Northern Virginia before being badly wounded at Gettysburg.

After returning to active duty in early 1864, Hampton assumed command of one of the three cavalry divisions that comprised the newly reconstituted Cavalry Corps. After Stuart was mortally at Yellow Tavern in May 1864, Lee was unable to choose his successor. Both Hampton and Fitzhugh Lee, the general's nephew, reported directly to the army commander for instructions. This unsatisfactory chain of command situation was still in place when Sheridan's new sortie got underway.

By the opening of the 1864 campaign, Union horse soldiers were more numerous, better mounted, and better armed than their Confederate counterparts. Hampton

realized that to charge such a superior force on horseback was seldom feasible. His alternative was to fight dismounted. One subordinate described Hampton's fighting method: "He could dash his forces, mounted, to favorable points with great celerity, dismount and rush in, and if advisable, draw them out as quickly and hurl them fiercely on some other weaker position." Hampton always brought the maximum force possible to the point of attack or defense, turning his men into good, hard-fighting infantry and at the same time preserving their good qualities as cavalry. Although his soldiers' rate of fire using muzzle-loading weapons was slower, it was more accurate and longer-ranged, and therefore caused more damage to the enemy. The impact of his careful style of generalship gave the men serving under him unwavering confidence, and the disorganized stampedes so common under Stuart were unknown under Hampton.

Hampton's 1st Brigade was led by Colonel Gilbert J. Wright. An attorney by profession, Wright was a wounded combat veteran of the Mexican War. He possessed great courage and dogged determination and proved to be a fine combat leader. Second Brigade was commanded by Brig. Gen. Thomas Rosser, a member of the West Point Class of 1861. He had been an officer in the Confederate cavalry since 1862 and was esteemed as a good fighter. Brig. Gen. Matthew C. Butler handled Hampton's 3rd Brigade. Butler was known for his courage and calmness in the midst of combat, the sort of leader who sat on his horse quietly watching while shots and shells exploded around him. Butler had lost his right foot a year earlier at the Battle of Brandy Station, but this did nothing to diminish his performance as a cavalry officer.

Fitzhugh Lee was a graduate of the West Point Class of 1856 and had fought in the Regular Army against the Plains Indians prior to the Civil War. The nephew of Robert E. Lee, Fitz Lee was a competent leader of mounted forces whose service during the war swung between brilliant and lackluster. His division included the 1st Brigade under Brig. Gen. Williams C. Wickham, a Virginian lawyer, politician, and planter. Wickham was ably assisted by his senior colonel, Thomas Munford, a graduate of the Virginia Military Academy. Brig. Gen. Lunsford L. Lomax commanded the 2nd Brigade. Lomax had attended West Point and served on the frontier before the Civil War; he was deemed a steady and competent officer. Colonel Bradley T. Johnson's 1st Maryland Cavalry Battalion, along with the Baltimore Light Artillery Company, an independent command, were attached to Lomax's unit. For artillery support, Hampton had the services of Major Robert P. Chew's four-battery Horse Artillery Battalion. In all, Hampton commanded 6,400 men and 14 cannons.

Anticipating that the enemy's targets were the rail hubs and supply depots at Gordonsville and Charlottesville, Hampton set his division in motion on June 9, intending to get between Sheridan and his goals. He directed Fitz Lee to follow as soon as possible. Most of the Southern riders had no idea what sort of mission Hampton had embarked on, but Sergeant George M. Neese of Chew's Horse Artillery Battery spoke for many when he wrote in his diary: "General Hampton with a good force of cavalry is after the raiders in hot pursuit, and when he strikes a warm trail there is usually some blood left in the track and some game bagged."

Moving at a steady walk with hardly any stops, Hampton's force covered 30 miles the first day. Meanwhile, Sheridan, unaware he was being pursued, covered 24 miles along the route of the Virginia Central Railroad north of the North Anna River, leaving a trail of dead horses in his wake. As the blue column moved on, its rearguard and detached foraging parties were constantly harassed by Rebel scouts.

On the 10th the chase continued with Hampton's horsemen reaching Fredericks Hall Station. Lee's troopers followed a few miles behind. By 3 PM the Southerners went into camp at Louisa Court House on the Virginia Central Railroad, just south of the North Anna River. Rosser's brigade settled in several miles west of Louisa astride the railroad and the direct route to Gordonsville. Wright's and Butler's commands were just east of Trevilian Station, Fitz Lee's division a half mile from Louisa on the Virginia Central. Hampton had accomplished his first objective of interposing himself between the enemy and Gordonsville, but it had cost his command a large number of horses. This translated into a significant number of men who would not be present for battle in the coming days. In addition, a tactical problem remained for Hampton: a four-mile gap between his and Lee's position, with the Marquis Road running through the gap from Carpenter's Ford on the North Anna River to Louisa Court House.

As the Confederates closed on Louisa Court House, the Federals crossed to the south bank of the North Anna at Carpenter's Ford, six miles northeast of Louisa. By the end of the hot day, they went into camp. Merritt was six miles north of Trevilian Station, Devin five miles northeast, and Custer four miles north of Louisa. Gregg's division was still marching and strung out along the roads from Carpenter's Ford. The Union column had lost another 500 horses. As darkness covered his command, Sheridan was unaware that Hampton was in his front and that Lee held Louisa Court House.

Sheridan intended to capture Trevilian Station the next day, cutting the Virginia Central and the Lynchburg branch of the Charlottesville rail line. Hampton planned to launch an assault in the morning, using his division to drive the Federals frontally while Lee flanked them. The result would leave Sheridan pinned against the North Anna River and exposed to utter destruction.

As events unfolded, neither scheme would see fruition, primarily because the terrain around Trevilian Station was not suited for mounted combat. Not only was the station located between two creeks, but the surrounding countryside was filled with farmsteads, rolling hills, ridges, thick undergrowth, and woodlands, all of which greatly impeded horse and foot movement. The main thoroughfare in the area, the Louisa Court House-Gordonsville Road,

was an unimproved avenue winding along the Virginia Central Railway and crossing the tracks at 12 different locations between Louisa and Gordonsville.

At 5 AM on June 11, Merritt's reserve brigade, led by the 2nd U.S. Cavalry Regiment, passed Bibbs Crossroads then turned south on the Fredericksburg Road, heading toward the Virginia Central. Trevilian Station was a mile or so distant. Torbert rode with the Regulars. Confederate pickets were encountered and driven in. Hearing the news, Hampton, who had just come up from his headquarters at the Netherland Tavern, hastily deployed Butler's South Carolina Brigade. Arranged from left to right were the 4th, 5th, and 6th South Carolina Cavalry regiments across the Fredericksburg Road just below the crossroads. Meanwhile, Merritt sent the 2nd U.S. Regiment ahead to capture Trevilian Station. Butler's command immediately charged the Federals, who in turn countercharged the Rebels and held them in check.

Reacting to the clash on Fredericksburg Road, Hampton ordered Butler to attack again and directed Wright to act as reserve and guard the latter's flanks. Earlier that morning Hampton had sent Fitz Lee instructions to move up the Marquis Road east of the Fredericksburg Road and head north to Clayton's Store and the North Anna River. Rosser, five miles west of Trevilian Station, was ordered to protect the western flank against the appearance of Hunter's army and act as the cavalry's reserve.

Butler shouted to his men, "Dismount to fight, action left and action right!" A lawyer before the war, the 27-year-old Butler led a brigade whose members, about 1,000 strong, carried muzzle-loading Enfield rifles and functioned more like mounted infantry than traditional cavalry. Ordered forward, the South Carolinians drove the 2nd U.S. back three-quarters of a mile, with the fighting becoming hand to hand. Part of the 4th South Carolina Regiment almost gave way during the fight, but Butler managed to rally the men and sent them forward once again.

As Butler contended with the 2nd U.S., Merritt formed the rest of his brigade in thick brush close to the enemy. The 1st New York Dragoons were placed on the right, followed by the 6th Pennsylvania and 2nd U.S. in the center, and the 1st U.S. Cavalry on the left. Merritt's 5th U.S. Cavalry and Lieutenant Edward Williston's artillery battery were posted in the rear of the Federal line. A crisp firefight soon developed, followed by the entire Union line advancing on foot and driving back the Confederates. Colonel B. Huger Rutledge, commanding the 4th Carolina Cavalry, sent an urgent appeal to Butler for help, saying his regiment was being out-flanked. Butler quipped that the colonel should "flank back," then asked Hampton for reinforcements. Hampton ordered Wright's brigade and a section of Captain James Hart's South Carolina Horse Artillery Battery to support Butler's men.

As Wright's unit arrived on the field, Butler placed it on the left of his line in a

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Union forces destroying Southern rail lines. Commanding General Ulysses S. Grant hoped Sheridan's raid would be able to do the same thing, cutting off Robert E. Lee's food supplies at Petersburg. The Confederates had other things in mind for Sheridan.

patch of heavy undergrowth. Wright's four regiments and one battalion dismounted and fought on foot. Aided by the effective fire from the Confederate horse artillery batteries perched atop a hill, Wright's force made an immediate impact on the battle. Hampton later reported that Butler and Wright had "pushed the enemy steadily back and I hoped to affect a junction with Lee's division at Clayton's Store in a short time."

Responding to the setback, Torbert committed Devin's brigade to the fight. After connecting with Merritt's left and right flanks, Devin was told that a general assault would take place as soon as J. Irvin Gregg's brigade of David M. Gregg's division arrived on the battlefield. The fighting intensified while Torbert waited for Gregg. Butler reported that his and Wright's men "were thus struggling with a superior force in my front, and the stubborn fight [was] kept up at close quarters for several hours."

Growing increasingly impatient with the existing stalemate, Sheridan, patrolling the Union front, sent the 220 troopers of the 9th New York Cavalry, Devin's brigade, in a charge through the enemy lines toward the Poindexter House, located on the west side of the Fredericksburg Road a mile north of Trevilian Station. Although their colonel was mortally wounded along with 40 others in the charge, the New Yorkers, joined by some of the Regulars and the 4th New York Cavalry, managed to force back the Confederates, who retreated from their wooded position. The grayclad riders were driven almost to Trevilian Station, a distance of nearly two miles, losing 380 prisoners in the process.

Butler's and Wright's retreat for the most part was an orderly one, and they took up a position along a fence and poured concentrated rifle fire at the approaching foe, even mounting a few futile counterattacks. At 9:30 AM, Gregg's brigade came up on Devin's left, bringing a new artillery battery with it. Continuing to fight his men as infantry, since the undergrowth and wooded areas made mounted combat impractical, Torbert drove the defenders south of Trevilian Station before stopping his pursuit.

At noon a lull fell across the battlefield. Although satisfied with the battle's progress so far, Torbert was concerned about the whereabouts of his third brigade, commanded by Custer. Earlier in the day the 1st Division leader had ordered Custer to march on Trevilian Station by way of Nunn's Creek Road, an avenue that ran parallel to and between the Marquis Road and the Fredericksburg Road, about 1½ miles distant, and outflank any enemy at the station. Torbert had received no word from Custer, and he was worried about his lost brigade. As it turned out, his fears were well founded.

At 5 AM, Custer's Michigan Brigade had commenced its march down Nunn's Creek Road to Trevilian Station. Not long after, elements of the 7th Michigan Cavalry, reinforced by the 1st Michigan Cavalry, were attacked along the Marquis Road by Wickham's brigade. After an hour of skirmishing, the Virginians withdrew to Louisa Court House. Custer resumed his march at 6 AM. The blue column snaked its way south to the Gordonsville Road, which ran through Trevilian Station 1½ miles to the west.

Around 8 AM, Hampton's wagon train was sighted east of the station. A charge by the 5th Michigan Cavalry soon bagged the

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Opposing horsemen at Trevilian Station, clockwise from top left: John Graffam, 1st Maine; Clement Waldron, 1st Michigan; Michael Bowman, 7th Virginia; John Anthony, 2nd Virginia.

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In this contemporary drawing by battlefield artist James E. Taylor, Confederate Generals William C. Wickham, left, and Thomas Rosser, center waving hat, attack George A. Custer's Union cavalry brigade. Custer can be seen at center-right, reaching for his headquarters flag after his color-bearer is hit.

caravan, netting several hundred prisoners, 1,500 horses, and 50 wagons. Alerted by the commotion in his rear, Butler hurried some of his men, along with the 7th and 20th Georgia, back to Trevilian to cut off the 5th Michigan. At the same time, Custer sent the 6th Michigan to support the 5th. A squadron of the former charged and broke the 7th Georgia, which fell back to protect the Confederate wagon train. Custer then ordered the 6th Michigan to guard the Gordonsville Road near the intersection with Nunn's Road.

Learning that the Federals were behind him, Hampton directed Rosser's brigade and regiments from Butler's and Wright's commands to form a defensive barrier near Netherland Tavern. Custer had driven a wedge between Hampton's and Lee's divisions, and even after the latter sent word to Lee to hurry and join him Lee took an unaccountably long time to comply.

Quicker to come to Hampton's aid was Rosser, who led his Laurel Brigade east. Chew, alerted by Hampton to the seriousness of the situation, rushed six cannons to a hill overlooking Trevilian Station and began shooting at Custer's Wolverines. From the north the Jeff Davis Mississippi Legion, in Wright's brigade, pitched into Custer's men, routing one regiment with a mounted saber charge. The Mississippians, in turn, were forced to retreat when attacked by another Federal unit.

Rosser's men struck Custer's command in the flank, driving it back in confusion and capturing many members from the 5th Michigan while almost colliding with Wright's troopers. As his men ran east along the Gordonsville Road, Custer joined his attached artillery battery just going into position near the rail line. Soon he and the guns were surrounded by dismounted Rebels. The Union general broke through the attackers, rallied portions of his command, and escorted the threatened cannons to safety. Custer formed a new battle line supported by the artillery a mile east of Trevilian Station at the Gordonsville-Nunn's Creek Road intersection. While Custer was forming his defensive position, one of his officers mistakenly led the captured Rebel wagons back into the Confederate lines.

Custer had no time to stew over the loss of the wagon train—Fitz Lee's cavaliers were finally entering the battle area. Their appearance hemmed in the Michigan Brigade on three sides. The 15th Virginia, Lomax's brigade, wasted no time in attacking the Wolverines in the flank, scattering the 1st Michigan Cavalry with sabers and pistols and seizing five Union artillery caissons and Custer's headquarters wagon, as well as three of his personal horses. The fighting grew heavier as more of Lomax's regiments joined the fray and Lee's men connected with Hampton's flank. Custer's command was surrounded and fighting on every front.

Following Lomax down the Louisa Court House Road, Wickham's men eagerly engaged the encircled Michiganders. Custer was seemingly everywhere, rallying his men and even leading two frontal attacks to recapture a lost artillery piece. During three hours of desperate combat, Custer lost 11 killed, 51 wounded and 299 captured from his command of fewer than 1,000 men. In

addition, he was hit in the arm and shoulder by spent bullets.

Around noon, Hampton, fearing a renewed attack from Torbert, withdrew Butler and Wright from the enemy front and placed them on a low ridge west of the railroad. The Confederate pressure on Custer continued. At about the same time, Torbert learned of Custer's critical situation from one of his staff officers, who was able to pierce the Southern cordon surrounding the Michigan Brigade.

Determined to save Custer and his command, Merritt charged without orders into the Southern troopers surrounding Custer, scattering the enemy and relieving the pressure on Custer. Sheridan quickly directed Torbert to strike Butler's and Wright's new line with Merritt's, Devin's, and Gregg's brigades. The renewed attack on Butler forced him back to a new position Hampton was forming around Trevilian Station. With great skill and calm, Butler put his units and those of Wright and Rosser into a defensive stance on a low rise near the station, where they drove off another attack by Custer.

The Confederate situation deteriorated after repeated Union assaults created gaps between Butler and Wright and drove Fitz Lee's troops back toward Louisa Court House. Irvin Gregg's brigade appeared then and delivered a decisive blow. At 3 PM, the 10th New York Cavalry, part of Davies' command but attached to Irvin Gregg's brigade, entered the attack. The 4th and 16th Pennsylvania Cavalry, supported by artillery, cleared the area around Netherland Tavern of a Confederate artillery battery and dismounted troopers.

At Trevilian Station, the 1st New Jersey Cavalry routed Wright's brigade. To the east, Custer faced Lee's division but did not attack due to the heavy fire coming from Lee's superior numbers. To the west of Trevilian Station, Rosser was heavily engaged, holding his own but slowly being encircled. Rosser was wounded by a bullet below the knee and evacuated from the field. Not long after, yielding to the incessant pressure from his antagonists, Hampton ordered a general retreat several miles to a point along the Gordonsville Road but still blocking Sheridan's route to Gordonsville and its vital rail center. Lee's division fell back toward Louisa Court House. During the day's fighting, 699 Union soldiers were lost, while the Confederates had suffered 530 wounded and killed and an additional 500 captured.

Sheridan's command spent the night of June 11 camped on the battlefield. The next day the Federals tore up five miles of the Virginia Central. Meanwhile, Hampton established a new defensive position a mile west of the Gordonsville and Charlottesville Road intersection. It was L-shaped and rested behind the Ogg House, with the left anchored along a railroad cut that was reinforced by crude breastworks fashioned from fence rails. This part of the line was held by Butler's men. Wright's and Rosser's brigades extended the line on the right. Artillery was placed along the entire position. Directly across the Gordonsville Road, on the east side of the tracks, defenders manned fortified entrenchments topped with fence rails. Danne's Store marked the southern end of the Confederate line and the Gentry farm the northern margin.

At 3 PM, Sheridan dispatched Torbert's division, with Davies' brigade in support, to the west of Trevilian Station to conduct a reconnaissance of the enemy positions. At the same time, Custer's command moved along the Gordonsville Road on the left with Merritt's troopers in the center and Devin's men on the right. Coming upon Butler's right, Custer dismounted the 6th and 7th Michigan Regiments on either side of the rail line and sent them forward. After the Wolverines' attack stalled in the face of severe small-arms and artillery fire, Custer threw in his remaining two regiments. Realizing the superior strength of the enemy's position, Custer did not press the attack, staying 500 yards away from Wright's lines for the duration of the battle.

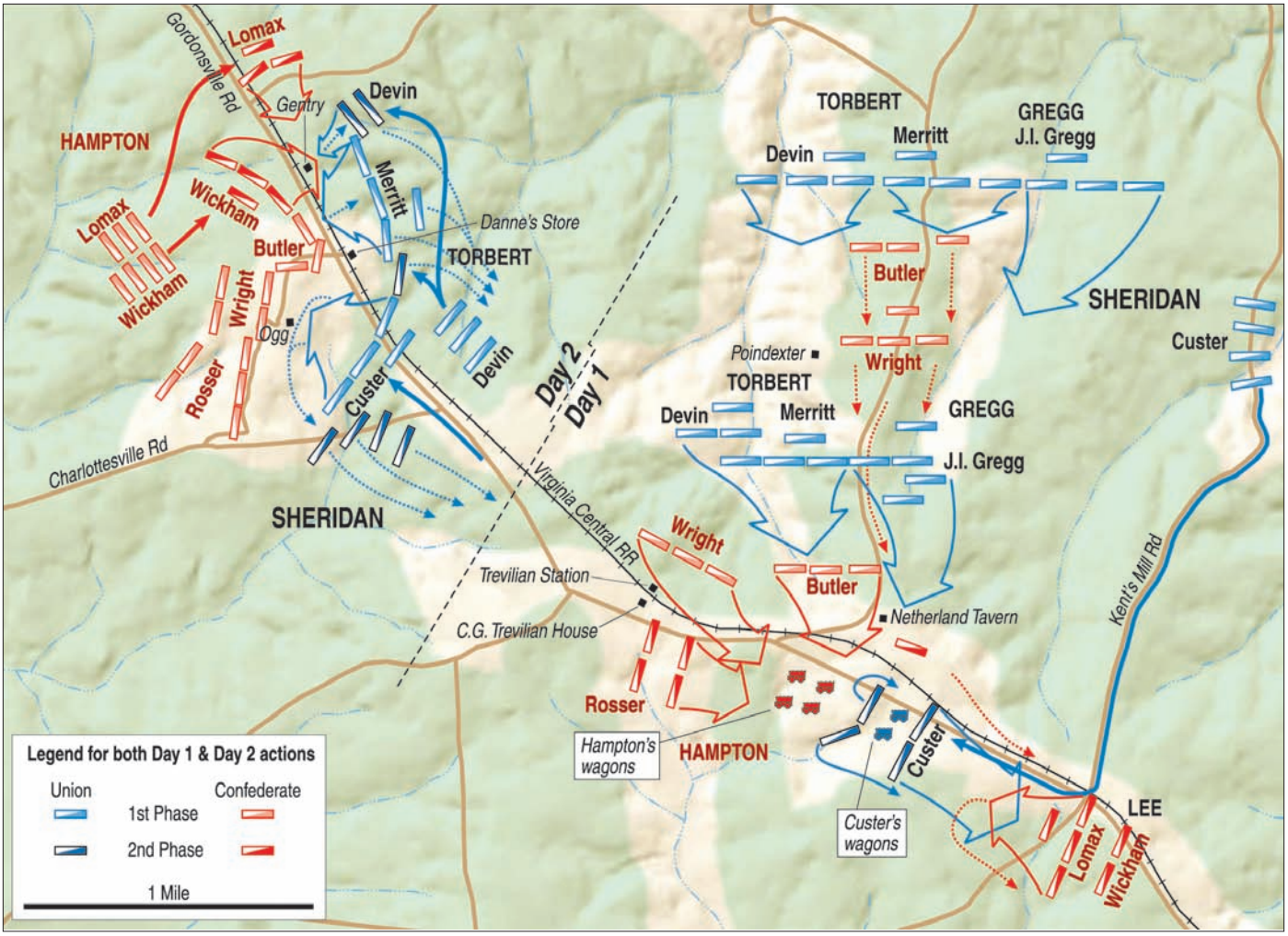
While Custer dithered, at 3:30 PM the reserve brigade came up and connected with Custer's right flank, occupying an area on the north side of the railroad on the reverse side of the ridge joining Danne's Store and Gentry's farm. Devin's men massed in Custer's rear. Merritt's force, in conjunction with three of Devin's regiments and supported by Williston's guns, attacked the Confederate left on foot after crossing a 500-yard open field. The target of the Union thrust, which came to be called the Bloody Angle, was held by the 6th South Carolina and two pieces of artillery. Southern musket and cannon fire repulsed the Union assault, and concentrated fire from Hart's artillery battery silenced the enemy guns.

On the right of Merritt's line the 6th Pennsylvania and 2nd U.S. Cavalry fought at the Gentry House and in the woods nearby but could not take the homestead. The 6th and 4th New York entered the fight below the Gentry farm, but after pushing some of Butler's men back across a field they too were forced to retreat by tremendous small-arms fire.

By nightfall Butler had driven back six separate Union attacks along the railroad at or near the Bloody Angle. A seventh erupted after dark as the 6th South Carolina was replenishing its dwindling supply of ammunition. A compact column of Union soldiers managed to reach the Confederate breastworks before breaking and fleeing under heavy fire.

Just before the Federals' final attack, Lee's division joined Hampton's defenders, and Hampton sent Lomax's and Wickham's men against the Union right. They were joined by Hampton's troopers in a dismounted charge that crashed into the surprised left flank of Merritt's division, hurling the bluecoats back in confusion. A member of the 6th Virginia Cavalry called the Confederate attack "one of those sublime spectacles sometimes witnessed on a battle field." As Lomax pushed the flank attack, the Federals stampeded toward Trevilian Station. Davies' brigade covered the retreat. Of the 4,000 Union troops involved in the second day's fighting, 38 were killed, 169 wounded, and 37 captured. The vast majority of the Union losses were from Torbert's division. Davies was only lightly engaged and Irvin Gregg not at all.

With part of his command bled dry and hundreds of wounded in need of being



Day one of the battle (right) saw two Union divisions attack north of Trevilian Station, driving back Confederate defenders to the Gordonsville Road. Meanwhile, other Confederates attacked Custer's isolated brigade east of the station. On the second day (left), fighting centered on the Ogg House and Danne's Store, where Confederates beat back repeated Union frontal attacks on their L-shaped defensive line.

transported back to friendly lines, Sheridan had no choice but to retreat. His expedition was a complete failure. He had not destroyed the Virginia Central Railroad, not made contact with Hunter, and would not be able to escort Hunter's force back to the Army of the Potomac.

With Hampton following close behind but unable to mount a major attack of his own due to his men's fatigue and lack of supplies, Sheridan moved slowly eastward toward White House Landing on the Pamunkey River, arriving there on June 20 after marching 120 miles and skirmishing daily with Hampton's pursuers. Sheridan crossed the James River and rejoined the Army of the Potomac on June 25 after skirmishing with Hampton's exhausted troopers at White House Landing, St. Peter's Church, and Samaria Church.

Sheridan's Trevilian campaign had significant repercussions. His failure to destroy large parts of the Central Virginia Railroad and James River Canal allowed vital supplies to reach Lee's entrenched army at Richmond and Petersburg and enabled other Confederate forces under Maj. Gen. Jubal Early to move by rail to the Shenandoah Valley and open a new front that diverted vital Federal resources from the fight against Robert E. Lee's army.

The failure at Trevilian Station also called into question Sheridan's ability as a cavalry commander. Rosser's claim that Little Phil had displayed no skill at the battle regarding maneuver and that Hampton had whipped him was a criticism Sheridan could never fully shake for the rest of the war. Fairly or not, the accusations spilled over to some of his division and brigade leaders as well.

If Sheridan's reputation was damaged by the battle at Trevilian Station, Butler's and Rosser's were enhanced. Their steady control of their men and coolness in the face of fire marked both as able cavalry commanders. As for Hampton, his stellar performance earned him the overall command of the Cavalry Corps on August 11. His subsequent management of Robert E. Lee's horsemen throughout the rest of the war reinforced the wisdom of that appointment. For that, Hampton had Phil Sheridan to thank. □

SOUTHERNERS

Continued from page 20

a violation of the agreement between the two nations relative to prisoners, responded to the threat by ordering that 800 Confederate prisoners be selected and held as hostages for the safety of the loyal Alabamians, thereby saving them from the hangman's noose.

In 1865, despite Brig. Gen. Judson Kilpatrick's efforts to prevent it, the 1st Alabama burned Barnwell, South Carolina. According to Confederate Colonel Charles C. Jones, "The conduct of Sherman's army and particularly of Kilpatrick's cavalry and the numerous parties swarming through the country in advance and on the flanks of the main columns during the march from Atlanta to the coast, is reprehensible in the extreme. The Federals on every hand and at all points indulged in wanton pillage, wasting and destroying what could not be used. Defenseless women and children and weak old men were not infrequently driven from their homes, their dwellings fired, and these noncombatants subjected to insult and privation. The inhabitants, white and black, were often robbed of their personal effects, were intimidated by threats—and occasionally were even hung up to the verge of strangulation to compel revelation of the places where money, plate and jewelry were buried, or plantation animals concealed—horses, mules, cattle and hogs were either driven off, or were shot in the fields, or uselessly butchered in the pens."

In March 1865, the 1st Alabama finished the war in North Carolina skirmishing with Confederate cavalry led by Generals Wade Hampton and Joe Wheeler. After the war, Spencer settled in Alabama and won election to the United States Senate. It is fair to say that few if any former Confederates voted—or were even allowed to vote—for Spencer. Henceforth, the struggle would move from the military to the political realm, and conservative "redeemers" ultimately would reclaim the region for the former slave owners and their supporters. In a sense, Southern Unionists helped win the war, only to lose the peace. □

JEFFERSON DAVIS

Continued from page 41

Kirby Smith. Each man's career would end in failure. Johnston was removed from command by Jefferson Davis after failing to prevent Union General William Tecumseh Sherman's relentless advance to Atlanta. Hood was similarly dismissed and reduced in rank to lieutenant general after dismally losing the Battles of Franklin and Nashville in the late fall of 1864. Smith had the distasteful task of surrendering the Confederacy's last Trans-Mississippi army at Galveston, Texas, in June 1865. Serving as Confederate major generals during the war were William Hardee, Fitzhugh Lee, and Charles Field.

Along with Albert Sidney Johnston, Jeb Stuart and Earl Van Dorn also died in the Civil War. Stuart was killed by Union cavalry at the Battle of Yellow Tavern, Virginia, in the spring of 1864. One year earlier, Van Dorn, a notorious womanizer, was shot and killed in his tent by a jealous husband at Spring Hill, Tennessee, an inglorious end to his once promising career.

Union Army veterans of the prewar western cavalry units also provided a mixed bag of victories and defeats. George McClellan, whose service with the frontier cavalry was mainly on paper (he resigned his commission in 1857 to go into the railroad business), later rose to command the Union Army of the Potomac against Robert E. Lee, winning the crucial Battle of Antietam in September 1862 before being sacked by an exasperated Abraham Lincoln shortly afterward for insufficient aggressiveness (and a too prominent Democratic Party affiliation). In 1864, McClellan ran for president against Lincoln and lost in a landslide, helped in large part by the failure of his former cavalry comrades Joseph E. Johnston and John Bell Hood to prevent William T. Sherman from capturing Atlanta a few weeks before the election.

Edwin Vose Sumner, the rough-hewn commander of the 1st Cavalry, served as a corps commander under McClellan at Antietam, where he ironically was criticized for leading his division "like a colonel of cavalry" instead of remaining at the rear like other two-star major generals. Stung by the criticism, Sumner asked to be relieved of active duty. He died of pneumonia a few months later, drinking a final toast to the United States while he languished on his deathbed.

George H. Thomas, one of the few native Southerners from the western cavalry to remain in the Union Army during the Civil War, won fame as "the Rock of Chickamauga," where his stubborn stand helped save the Union Army of the Cumberland from total destruction. Thomas later led the same army to a smashing victory over his old comrade-in-arms John Bell Hood at the Battle of Nashville. His unfortunate knack for alienating his superiors continued, and Thomas's postwar career languished under the baleful gaze of now-President Ulysses S. Grant, who banished Thomas to the Pacific coast, where in 1870 he died of a stroke aggravated by his frustration at being underappreciated for his Civil War service.

Fellow 1st Cavalry Major John Sedgwick later served as a major general in the Union Army of the Potomac, where he achieved a certain mordant immortality at the Battle of Spotsylvania in May 1864, shaming his soldiers for ducking and dodging Confederate sniper fire. "They couldn't hit an elephant at this distance," Sedgwick scolded. An instant later a bullet struck him flush in the face, killing him instantly. His last words were shortened, falsely but memorably, to: "They couldn't hit an elephant at this dis—."

Major General Samuel Sturgis, who served as a captain under Sedgwick in the 1st Cavalry, won a signal victory for the North at the Battle of Pea Ridge, Arkansas, in March 1862, a victory that preserved Union control of Missouri for the remainder of the war. Other Union major generals who had served on the western frontier included George Stoneman, Thomas J. Wood, and David S. Stanley—the same Stanley whose life Jeb Stuart saved at the Battle of Solomon's Fork in 1857, when Stuart nearly lost his own in the process. □

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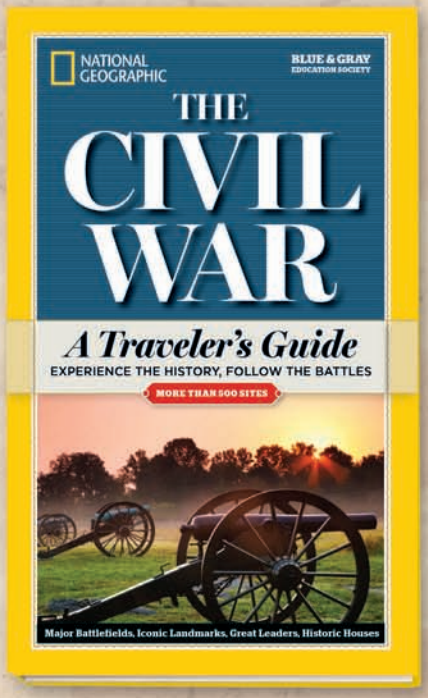

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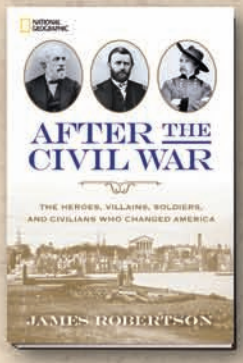

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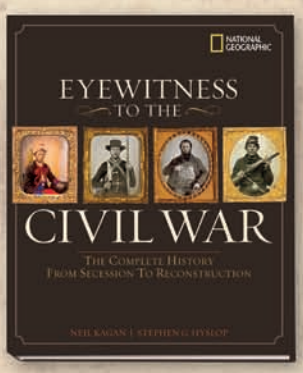

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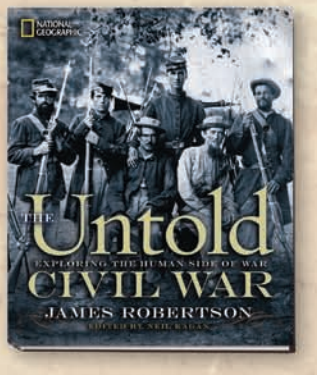

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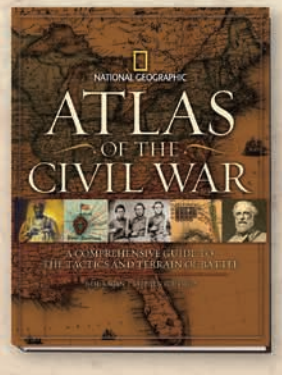

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