

VOLUME I

THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF

CIVIL WAR BATTLES

Jay Robert Nash

A

Advance (AKA: *LORD CLYDE*), Confederate blockade runner.

Background: A steam-powered paddle-wheeler built by Caird and Company, Glasgow, for the Dublin and Glasgow Sailing and Steam Packet Company, the *Advance* was of iron construction, 236 feet in length, 26 feet in beam, with two oscillating steam cylinders (63" bore and 78" stroke) powering paddlewheels 30 feet in diameter. The *Advance* was launched 07/02/62 at Glasgow, Scotland, under the name *Lord Clyde*. After excellent trial runs in 10/62, the *Advance* saw successful commercial service between Glasgow and Dublin. Purchased by John Key of Scotland six months later, the ship was immediately and secretly transferred to the Confederate state of North Carolina for use as a blockade runner. After 17 successful runs through the Union Blockade, 1863-64, the *Advance* was captured on 09/10/64 by the USS *Santiago de Cuba* and converted into a blockade vessel.

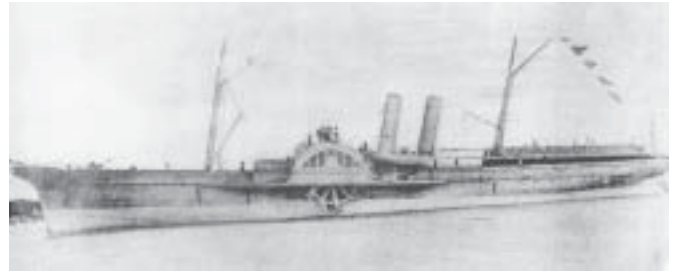
The fast steam-powered paddle-wheeler *Lord Clyde* was secretly purchased for the state of North Carolina by John White, special commissioner appointed by North Carolina Gov. Zebulon B. Vance. White paid \$170,972 to John Key, who had ostensibly ordered the ship built in Glasgow for commercial purposes, but who had been in league with White to make the vessel available for Confederate blockade running.

Refitted for its secret missions, the ship was rechristened *A. D. Vance* (a play upon Gov. Vance's name) and came to be known as the *Advance*. It was skippered by Captain Willie, who thought it to be one of the fastest ships in the blockade-running Confederate flotilla. With White purchasing a cargo of military supplies, the *Advance* was heavily laden on her first run from England to Wilmington, N.C. The ship took on coal at Nassau and then, under the cover of darkness, sailed up the coast and slipped quietly into Wilmington Harbor, delivering its precious goods.

The *Advance* made 17 safe runs through the Union Blockade between June 1863 and September 1864, bringing vital supplies, arms and equipment to Wilmington. A typical cargo delivered by the *Advance* in October 1863 consisted of 2,000 pairs of shoes, 5,000 pairs of socks, 1,700 blankets, 30,000 yards of flannel, 96 dozen cotton cards, and bagging and cord for the baling of cotton. On most outward-bound voyages, the ship was packed with cotton and chemicals.

Loaded with cotton and turpentine, the *Advance* set sail from Wilmington on the evening of Sept. 10, 1864. It successfully eluded Union war vessels patrolling Wilmington Harbor, but at latitude 34 N., longitude 76 W., Captain Willie spotted a ship bearing down rapidly on his position. Willie glumly recognized the advancing vessel as the USS *Santiago de Cuba*, which itself had once been a blockade runner and had been converted into a Union blockade ship.

The *Santiago de Cuba* boasted 11 guns, which were all trained on the *Advance*. When its captain, O. S. Glisson, signaled for the blockade runner to surrender, Willie had no choice but to run up the white flag. Glisson ordered a prize crew aboard the *Advance* and it was sailed to Boston, where



The Confederate blockade runner *Advance*, captured in 1864 and converted into a Federal gunboat, used in the Union blockade.

it was condemned by a U.S. prize court. Its cargo was auctioned off and prize money distributed to its Union captors. The ship was purchased by the U.S. Navy for \$120,000. It was then refitted with guns and sent to the North Atlantic Squadron maintaining the blockade.

The *Advance* joined a U.S. flotilla commanded by Rear Adm. David D. Porter (included in the squadron was the *Santiago de Cuba*) in the attack on Fort Fisher, N.C. on Dec. 25, 1864. Ironically, its guns pummeled the very Confederate shore batteries that had, months earlier, protected it as it slipped in darkness past Union ships. Following the war, the ship was rechristened the USS *Frolic*. J.P. Agnew of Alexandria, Va., bought the ship in 1883 for \$11,500 and sold it to a South American firm two years later.

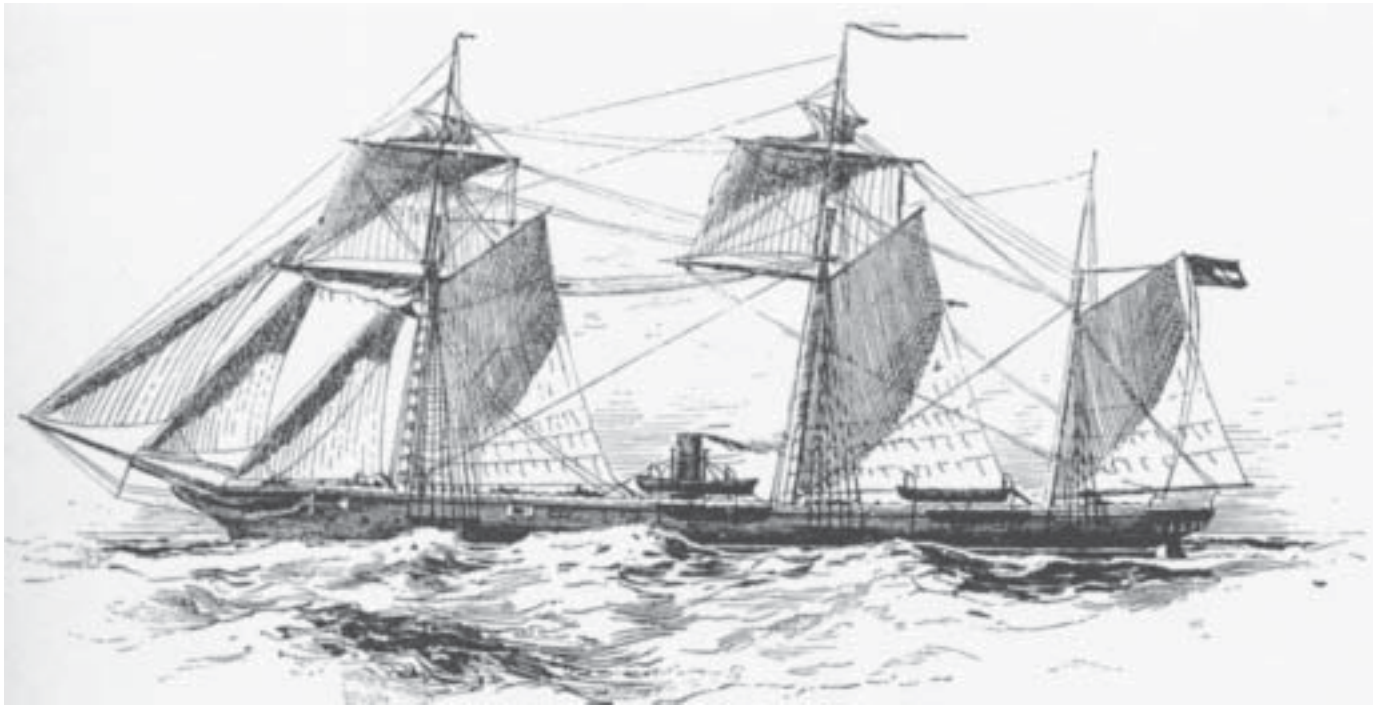
Also See: Blockade; Fort Fisher, N.C., 1864.

Ref.: Bernath, *Squall Across the Atlantic*; Bradlee, *Blockade Running during the Civil War and the Effect of Land and Water Transportation on the Confederacy*; Browning, *From Cape Charles to Cape Fear: The North Atlantic Blockading Squadron during the Civil War*; Carse, *Blockade: The Civil War at Sea*; Cocaran, *Blockade Runners of the Confederacy*; Horner, *The Blockade Runners*; Jones, *The Civil War at Sea*; Robinson, *The Confederate Privateers*; Silverton, *Warships of the Civil War*; Soley, *Admiral Porter*; Wise, *Lifeline of the Confederacy: Blockade Running during the Civil War*.

Alabama, CSS, 1862-1864, Confederate warship.

Background: Capt. James D. Bulloch, a Confederate Navy agent stationed in England, met with officials of the Laird shipyards in Birkenhead, near Liverpool, in June 1861, and ordered the building of a steam sloop, paying £47,500 (including hull, spars, sails, boats, anchors, cables and all equipment except armament; battery, magazine tanks, ordnance stores and small arms added later, at an additional cost of £4,216, for an overall cost of £51,716, the then rate of exchange being \$4.84 against £1, translating to \$250,305.44). Built in secret over the period of a year at Laird, the vessel, intended as a Confederate warship and raider of the open seas, was 220 feet long, 32 feet breadth of beam, with a 14-foot draft. The ship weighed 1,040 tons, was barkentine-rigged and had an average speed of 10 knots per hour (according to its skipper, Confederate Adm. Raphael Semmes: "Under sail alone, with the wind abeam, she occasionally made 10 knots per hour, and her best performance was 11¼ knots per hour under sail and steam combined." The ship's propeller was constructed so that it could be lifted out of the water, and when this was done, the vessel appeared to be a sailing ship.

The armament later added consisted of six 32-pounders in broadside, a 100-pound Blakely rifle in the forecabin and a smooth-bore 8-



The Confederate raider *Alabama*, a steam sloop with eight guns, was the terror of the Union sea lanes from 1862 to 1864.

inch shell gun abaft the mainmast. Launched on 07/29/62, the vessel, disguised under the name *Enrica*, steamed to the Azores, where it was met by Confederate supply ships. Armed and boarded by a crew of 149, captained by Semmes, the ship, on 08/24/62, was officially christened the C.S.S. *Alabama*. In September the *Alabama* embarked on its raiding voyages, cruising the North Atlantic for two months, destroying 20 vessels before sailing to the West Indies, avoiding capture at Martinique, then breaking the Union blockade at Galveston, Texas, before sailing back to the West Indies to take two more prizes, then to the waters off Brazil, where she captured eight more Union vessels. The *Alabama* then sailed to the East Indies, where it captured seven more Union vessels. Semmes then sailed to European waters, going to Cherbourg, France, for repairs on 06/11/64. The Union war sloop *Kearsarge*, summoned from Holland, waited outside the Cherbourg harbor. On 06/19/64, the *Alabama* sailed out to meet the Union foe, and after a fierce circling battle of an hour, the badly damaged *Alabama* headed for neutral waters but sank. Semmes and most of his crew were rescued.

The most celebrated Confederate sea raider of the war was the much-feared *Alabama*, a roving war sloop that sailed half-way around the world, taking dozens of prizes while confusing and vexing the Union Navy. Its legendary exploits created for the ship and its captain, Raphael Semmes, an image of invulnerability. Though large Union squadrons were assigned to hunt her down and destroy her, the *Alabama* escaped the naval dragnets time after time to reappear like a ghost ship, attacking and destroying more Union vessels. For two years, the *Alabama* sailed and struck at will, until a lone Union warship, the *Kearsarge*, bottled up the Confederate raider in Cherbourg Harbor, forcing it to do battle and embrace destruction.

The *Alabama* was built secretly in England, after Capt. James D. Bulloch gave Laird shipbuilders £47,500 to construct a fast war sloop that was to become the *Alabama*. Bulloch was a Georgian who had served in the U.S. Navy and

had been sent to England by Confederate Secretary of the Navy Stephen R. Mallory. A clever and resourceful man, Bulloch was provided with considerable sums and with instructions to spend this money on well-built warships constructed by the esteemed shipbuilding firm of Laird in Birkenhead. Many important Confederate warships were constructed by Laird, including the *Florida*, the *Shenandoah* and the *Stonewall*. The most famous of these British-built vessels was the *Alabama*, which Bulloch ordered from Laird in June 1861, two months after Confederate batteries in Charleston Harbor had pounded Fort Sumter into submission.

While the steam sloop was under construction it was known simply in the yards as "Number 290." Agents working for Union Minister to England Charles Francis Adams reported the construction of this mysterious sloop and Adams soon determined that the vessel was designed to be anything other than a peaceful ship of commerce. Adams went to British authorities, claiming that the ship was intended to be a Confederate warship, making an official protest, and insisting that the ship be detained. Meanwhile, the dashing Confederate Capt. Raphael Semmes was busy going about Liverpool and London recruiting officers and seamen for "Number 290." Semmes had by then become famous as one of the most daring sea raiders in the small Confederate Navy.

As skipper of the first Confederate sea raider *Sumter*, Semmes had spread terror across the Atlantic, taking and burning 18 U.S. merchant vessels until being chased to the coast of Spain. He took refuge in British-held Gibraltar, but Union vessels waiting outside the harbor prevented the *Sumter* from resuming its raids. The *Sumter* was left at Gibraltar in early 1862 with a skeleton crew and Semmes and most of his men departed for England. There Semmes formed another crew for the under-construction *Alabama*. Semmes was easily identified in Liverpool as he went about his duties. He was a distinguished

little man who had grown a long and luxuriant mustache, which he twisted in upward points and coated with wax, earning him the sobriquet "Old Beeswax" from his loyal and affectionate crew members.

Most of Semmes' crew from the *Sumter* rejoined him, experienced sea fighters such as his former first mate, First Lt. John McIntosh Kell, and lieutenants Richard M. Armstrong, Joseph D. Wilson, Arthur Sinclair and John Lowe. Ship surgeons were Francis L. Galt and assistant surgeon David H. Llewellyn, who was British and somehow managed to sign on with Semmes, despite the risk of violating the British Foreign Enlistment Act, which made it a crime to enlist British citizens as belligerents with foreign powers.

Construction of the ship was completed and it was launched on July 29, 1862, christened the *Enrica*. At that moment, British officials of the Foreign Office, urged by a frantic U.S. Minister to England, Charles Francis Adams, sent officers to the Laird yards to detain the ship, but by the time they reached the launching site, the *Enrica* was gone, already steaming down the Mersey toward the open seas. Seven days later, with a small crew, the ship arrived in Terceira in the Azores where it was met by the steamship *Bahama*, which carried Semmes and her crew. The bark *Agrippina* then arrived with the ship's armaments, which were quickly and expertly installed.

On Aug. 24, 1862, the *Enrica* passed from maritime registers, being formally rechristened the Confederate States Ship *Alabama*. In September 1862, Semmes and his crew sailed the *Alabama* through the American whaling fleet in the Azores, near the port of Fayal. This was at the height of the whaling season and Semmes found ample prey, the first of which was the U.S. whaler *Ocmulgee*, sighted on Sept. 5. Semmes, following a routine he would practice with deadly accuracy, flew the British flag and when the *Ocmulgee* hoisted the U.S. banner, Semmes struck the British pennant and raised the Confederate Stars and Bars.

The *Ocmulgee* was a lumbering ship, further encumbered by the fact that, when Semmes found her, she had a dead whale lashed to her side. A Confederate boarding party took over the *Ocmulgee* without firing a shot, rounding up its captain and crew of 36 and putting them in a longboat near the island of Flores. The raiders spent a day looting the ship, then burned it. Nine more whalers were captured and destroyed in the next few weeks, along with a Union supply ship and a commercial schooner. The crews of these ships were sent home where they told fantastic stories of the *Alabama* and its daring captain. Semmes was labeled a pirate by the Northern press and many tales were told that recounted the torturing of his prisoners. These were lies. Semmes and his men were more than kind to their captives, always making sure that before setting them adrift in small boats, they were well provisioned and near land.

On Oct. 3, 1862, the *Alabama* sailed to the Newfoundland Banks to devastate Union grain ships. Off the wintry New England coast, Semmes and his men captured eight Union vessels, releasing three on bond. The first wheat ship captured was the *Brilliant*, the second the *Emily Farnham*, with six more quickly following. Semmes seized their valuable cargoes and



The daring Admiral Raphael Semmes, skipper of the *Alabama*, who sailed the Confederate warship across the oceans of the world.



Semmes, foreground, leaning against a Blakely gun, is shown on the deck of the *Alabama*; Lt. John Kell, stands behind him.



Alabama's first officer, Lt. John McIntosh Kell (left), and Assistant Surgeon David H. Llewellyn.

either burned these prizes or returned them to New York under bond. One ship, the *Tonawanda*, carried 30 women and small children. The gallant Semmes refused to burn this ship, writing: "It was not possible to convert the *Alabama* into a nursery and set the stewards to serving pap to the babies. Although I made it a rule never to bond a ship if I could burn her, I released the *Tonawanda* on bond."

When the bonded ships arrived in New York Harbor with news that the *Alabama* was in American waters, a panic ensued. Insurance rates for Union commercial fleets soared and many captains refused to go to sea. The raiding cruiser had begun to create a crippling effect on U.S. shipping. Gideon Welles, U.S. Secretary of the Navy, ordered Union warships to track down the *Alabama* and destroy her.

This order, however, was next to impossible to carry out. Union warships scoured the sea lanes of New England but found no trace of the elusive *Alabama*. Semmes had already sailed southward, depositing his grain stores in the Carolinas and proceeding to the Gulf and West Indies where he anchored at Fort de France in Martinique. Here a small number of the *Alabama*'s crew smuggled liquor aboard and got drunk, refusing to obey their officers. Semmes responded to this one and only act of mutiny by having the drunken sailors doused with cold water.

A few days later the Union warship *San Jacinto* arrived at Fort de France, but it was forbidden to engage the Confederate raider by the French, who had imposed certain rules of conduct between belligerents. Neutral countries such as England and France insisted that Confederate and Union vessels allow each other 24 hours to sail before continuing pursuit. This the *Alabama* did, slipping out of the harbor of Fort de France at night, quickly sailing beyond the reach of the heavier armed and slower *San Jacinto*.

Sailing to Blanquilla, Venezuela, Semmes took on much needed coal from a Confederate tender and then sailed back to the West Indies with the intent of capturing gold ships sailing from California to New York. The seizing of these gold cargoes, Semmes knew, would provide the South with much needed funds to support its dwindling war effort. Late in the year, the *Alabama* lay in wait between Santo Domingo and Haiti. On Dec. 7, 1862, a vessel was sighted and quickly captured, but it turned out to be a passenger ship from New York, crowded with pioneers heading for a new life in California. Among them were 500 women and children. The Confederates took \$9,500 from the ship's safe and obtained a bond signed by the captain that promised to pay \$261,000 after the South had won the war. The plan to raid the gold ships had fizzled, one report later stating that Semmes "might have captured a million if he had taken one of the steamers bound into New York."

Abandoning the gold-raiding scheme, Semmes ordered the *Alabama* into Gulf waters, heading for the blockaded port of Galveston, Texas. The Confederate city had been seized without opposition on Oct. 5, 1862 by U.S. Navy forces under the command of Commodore W.B. Renshaw. Col. I.S. Burrell then occupied the city with 260 men of the 42nd Mass. Confederate Gen. John Bankhead Magruder, leading a strong force, surprised the garrison on Jan. 1, 1863, and easily recaptured Galveston. In retaliation, Union vessels, led by Commodore

Henry H. Bell, on Jan. 11, 1863, sailed into Galveston Harbor to conduct a relentless blockade.

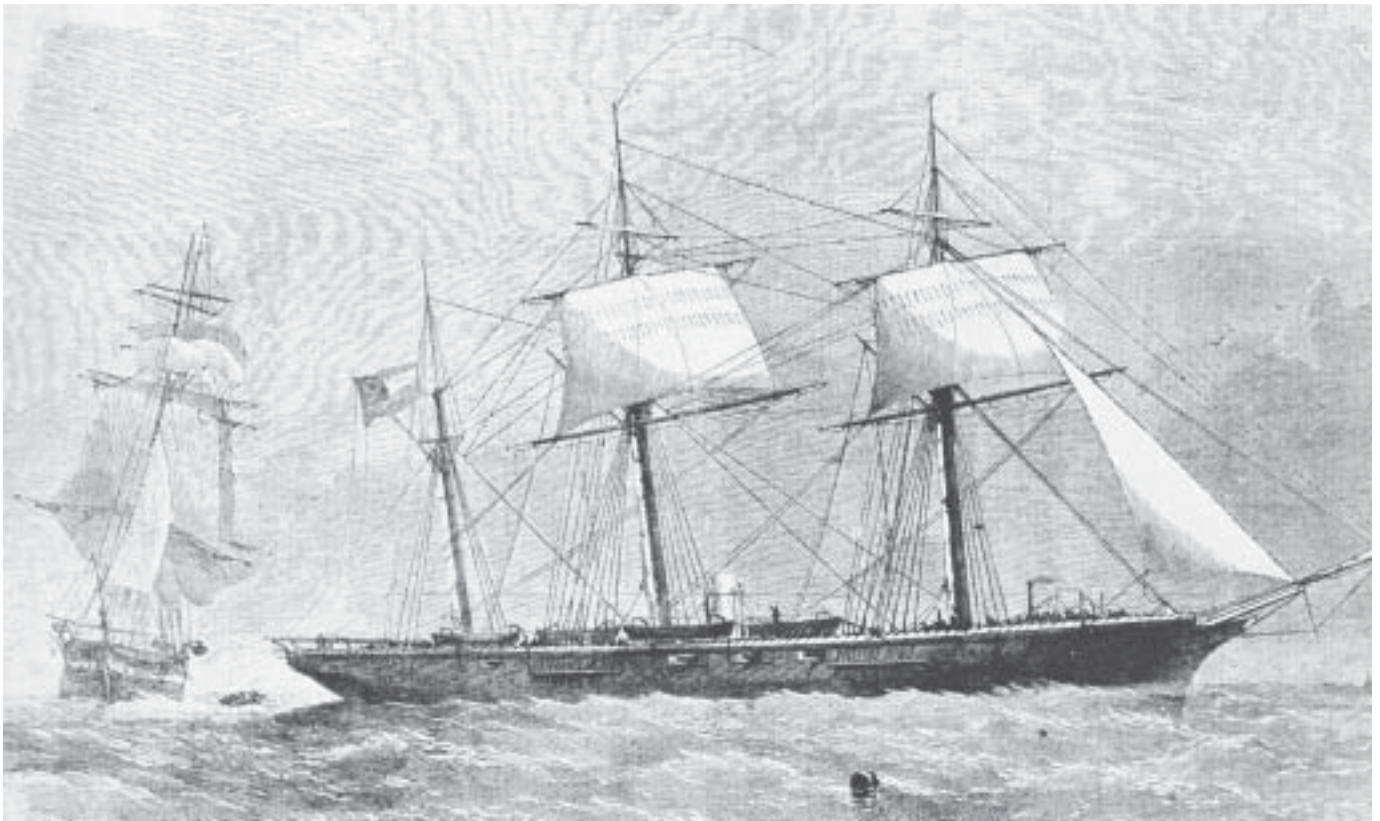
Commodore Bell commanded the Union squadron of six gunboats from his flagship, the 21-gun sloop *Brooklyn*, and he immediately began to bombard the Confederate-held city. Semmes had weeks earlier heard a report that Union forces were to attempt to retake the city by storming ashore from transports. He sailed to Galveston with the intent of destroying the transports before they could unload their human cargoes. The report Semmes had received, however, was wrong. The troop ships allegedly under the command of U.S. Gen. Nathaniel Prentiss Banks, had not gone to Galveston with the thought of a sea invasion, but had sailed to New Orleans. Instead of the troop ships, Semmes, on the night of Jan. 11, 1863, found Bell's heavily armed warships in Galveston Bay.

The *Alabama* appeared 12 miles off Galveston toward nightfall. Bell's spotters sighted the ship but the *Brooklyn* could not investigate since its boilers and engine were under repairs. The strange ship remained 12 miles at sea and the suspicious Bell signaled the nearby *Hatteras* to sail toward the stranger and identify it. The *Hatteras*, commanded by Lt. Homer C. Blake, was an excursion boat that had been converted into an iron side-wheeler gunboat and it moved off to sea with sluggish speed. Semmes, decoying the *Hatteras*, slipped farther out to sea, then halted when about 20 miles offshore. The *Hatteras* came on, though night had fallen. When it was about 100 yards from the *Alabama*, Blake hailed the ship, demanding that its captain identify the vessel.

Semmes answered: "This is her Britannic Majesty's steamer *Petrel*!" Blake then identified his ship and asked permission to board Semmes' vessel in order to inspect and verify its registry as a British ship. Semmes amiably gave permission. Blake ordered a boat with an officer and a squad of men put over the side, but before this boat had rowed a few lengths, Semmes called out: "This is the Confederate States steamer *Alabama*!" He then turned to his first officer Kell and gave the order to open fire on the *Hatteras*.

It was 9 p.m. when the *Alabama* fired its first broadside, which blasted into the *Hatteras*, tearing apart its thin armament, ripping holes in its decks. Broadside after broadside smashed into the Union ship, creating holes below its waterline. Within 13 minutes, the *Hatteras* was sinking, having fired some random shots at its foe, but these shots did little or no damage. Blake called to Semmes that he was sinking and asked for assistance. Semmes immediately ordered boats lowered from the *Alabama* and all of the *Hatteras* crew members were rescued, including five wounded men. Two Union sailors had been killed.

The raid against Galveston and the quick sinking of the *Hatteras*, though an inferior warship, further enlarged the fame of the *Alabama* and Semmes. The Confederate raider then sailed for Jamaica, anchoring and provisioning at Kingston. From this port, Semmes sailed for South America, cruising along the Brazilian coast. Once in the marine roads, the most heavily trafficked sea lanes, the *Alabama* struck again and again, capturing 24 ships, destroying all except the *Conrad*, which Semmes converted into the Confederate cruiser *Tuscaloosa*, fitting it with armaments and assigning it a crew before order-



The *Alabama*, foreground, leaving the captured merchant ship *Tonawanda*, at left; Semmes paroled the vessel and its crew on bond rather than burn her because she carried women and children.



A sea chart kept by the diligent Semmes of the *Alabama*'s worldwide cruises, 1862-1864, showing the raider's many prizes taken over vast stretches of ocean.

ing it into shipping lanes to raid Union commercial vessels.

Semmes then crossed the Atlantic, visiting Cape Town. In the next few weeks, the *Alabama* captured and burned two more Union ships. On July 28, 1863, the Confederate raider spotted the U.S. bark, *Sea Bride* five miles outside Saldanha Bay. Hundreds of Cape Town residents had climbed hills to see the famous *Alabama*, and witnessed its capture of the *Sea Bride*. According to one report: "The *Alabama* fired a gun and brought her to. Like a cat watching and playing with a victimized mouse, Captain Semmes permitted the prize to draw off a few yards, and he then pounced upon her. The *Alabama* first sailed around the Yankee from stem to stern, and stern to stem again. The way that fine, saucy, rakish craft was handled was worth riding a hundred miles to see. She went around the bark like a toy, making a complete circle, and leaving an even margin of water between herself and her prize of not more than twenty yards. This done, she sent a boat with the prize crew off, took possession in the name of the Confederate States and sent the bark to sea. The *Alabama* then made for port."

Though Semmes could not legally, under international law, sell the *Sea Bride*, he needed money for his coffers and to that end he had the prize sailed up the coast of Africa where, at Angra Pequena, off the Hottentot country, he sold the ship to an English merchant for \$16,000. The merchant, knowing he was risking the violation of British law, paid only a third of what the prize was worth, but he also knew that Semmes would take what he could get.

The *Alabama* continued to cruise the world's oceans throughout 1863, sailing through the Straits of Sunda, across the China Sea and through the Bay of Bengal, taking prizes at will, devastating the Union commercial fleets and selling off the plunder. Semmes faithfully sent on what money he raised from these captures to the Confederacy, reserving only that which allowed him to provision his ship. Meanwhile, morale on the *Alabama* remained high with each man loyally following his skipper's orders. Only one, Clarence Randolph Yonge, ever came afoul of Semmes. Yonge was the paymaster of the ship and had been expelled from the Confederate service for "debauchery" and theft of funds.

After he left the *Alabama*, Yonge served as a Union spy in England, snooping about British shipyards to discover vessels being built for the Confederacy. One such, the *Alexandra*, was detained by the British after Union diplomats made a formal protest and a trial ensued at which Yonge testified, claiming that the ship was scheduled to be secretly delivered to Confederate agents. Yonge was thereafter looked upon by the Rebels as "the worst sort of traitor."

As the months wore on and the *Alabama* sailed across endless tracts of ocean, the raider's crew grew restless. Desertions occurred. Replacements became more and more difficult to find. Finally, Semmes admitted that his crew was no longer the valiant band of dedicated Confederates with whom he had once set sail. He wrote: "I have a precious set of rascals on board, faithless in the matter of abiding by their contracts, liars, thieves and drunkards."

Sailing back to Brazil in the spring of 1864, Semmes captured two more ships. As the *Alabama* sailed northward, it encountered the *Tycoon* on April 27, 1864, capturing her easily.

This was the last prize of the notorious raider. The *Alabama* was by then in disrepair. Lt. Kell wrote that "her boilers were burned out, and her machinery was sadly in want of repairs. She was loose in every joint, her seams were open and the copper on her bottom was in rolls." Further, the news from home, which Semmes and his men learned through newspapers picked up in foreign ports, spoke only of one Confederate defeat after another in 1864. Worn out with his constant roving, Semmes seemed to lose heart, writing: "Might it not be that, after all our trials and sacrifices, the cause for which we were struggling would be lost? ... The thought was hard to bear."

Semmes decided to sail for Europe, where he would seek out a friendly port and have the *Alabama* overhauled. On June 10, 1864, Semmes arrived along the Normandy coast and sailed into the port of Cherbourg. Semmes realized that his ship was in such poor shape that Cherbourg might be its last harbor. Most of the men who remained with him were members of his original crew, and they expressed rigid loyalty to the Southern cause and to their captain.

At Cherbourg, Semmes asked the port admiral for permission to land the prisoners he had taken from the last two ships he had captured. This was granted. Then Semmes asked for permission to bring the *Alabama* to drydock, but was told that Le Havre would have been a better port to seek repairs, since Cherbourg offered no private drydocks, only government-owned docks, and these were not permitted to accept ships of belligerent nations.

The presence of the celebrated raider in Cherbourg was soon telegraphed to all European cities, and the U.S. Ambassador in Paris, after learning of the *Alabama*'s whereabouts, notified the captain of the U.S. warship *Kearsarge*, which was anchored at Flushing on the coast of Holland, about 300 miles distant. The *Kearsarge*'s skipper, Capt. John A. Winslow, a tough seahound, immediately ordered his ship to sail to Cherbourg, arriving there on June 14, 1864. His arrival came as no surprise to Semmes and his crew since they had heard of the *Kearsarge*'s coming days earlier. The *Kearsarge* did not enter the harbor but remained outside the breakwater, although it did send a small boat to shore.

Capt. Winslow requested that the prisoners Semmes had set ashore be allowed to go aboard the *Kearsarge*, but Semmes argued with French authorities that this was not in keeping with present laws—the prisoners would only serve to augment Winslow's crew. The French agreed and refused to allow the Union prisoners to join the crew of the *Kearsarge*. Winslow bristled at this rebuff, but kept his tongue. He knew well the wily ways of Raphael Semmes. The men had served together in the U.S. Navy during the Mexican War, and Winslow had commanded the *Kearsarge* when it bottled up Semmes' previous ship, *Sumter*, at Gibraltar in 1861.

Semmes then did what was expected of him—the unexpected. Instead of waiting for permission from Napoleon III to drydock at Cherbourg for repairs, he sent a note to Capt. Winslow, informing him that as soon as the *Alabama* could take on necessary coal, he would steam out to meet the *Kearsarge* and engage the Union ship in mortal combat. Semmes, in the dueling tradition of the Old South, had thrown down the gauntlet.

The great sea duel, however, would not be decided by foils,

but by heavy guns. The armament of the two ships was almost equal, but the *Kearsarge* had a slight advantage with its two 11-inch Dahlgren guns, which could fire heavier shells at shorter distances than the *Alabama*'s Blakely gun and the 8-inch smoothbore. Further, the *Alabama*'s stores of ammunition were considerably depleted and, as he knew, the French would refuse to sell Semmes more ammunition; his veteran gunners would have to make every shot count.

The *Kearsarge* had recently received extensive repairs and her boilers and engine were in excellent shape. She had recently been outfitted and her well-paid, well-fed crew of 163 outnumbered that of the *Alabama*. Yet, when Capt. Winslow received Semmes' note that he intended to meet him in battle, the Union skipper distrusted the message, believing it to be another trick of the sea wolf.

On board the proud *Alabama*, the crew took on 100 tons of coal and worked long hours to polish and clean the ship. Lt. Kell drilled his gunners while the boilers were repaired. On the night of June 18, 1864, Semmes went ashore to meet the Confederate agent at Cherbourg, turning over the ship's wealth, more than 4,700 gold sovereigns, the ransom bonds of the many ships he had captured, along with chronometers and other important valuables taken during the long voyages of the *Alabama*.

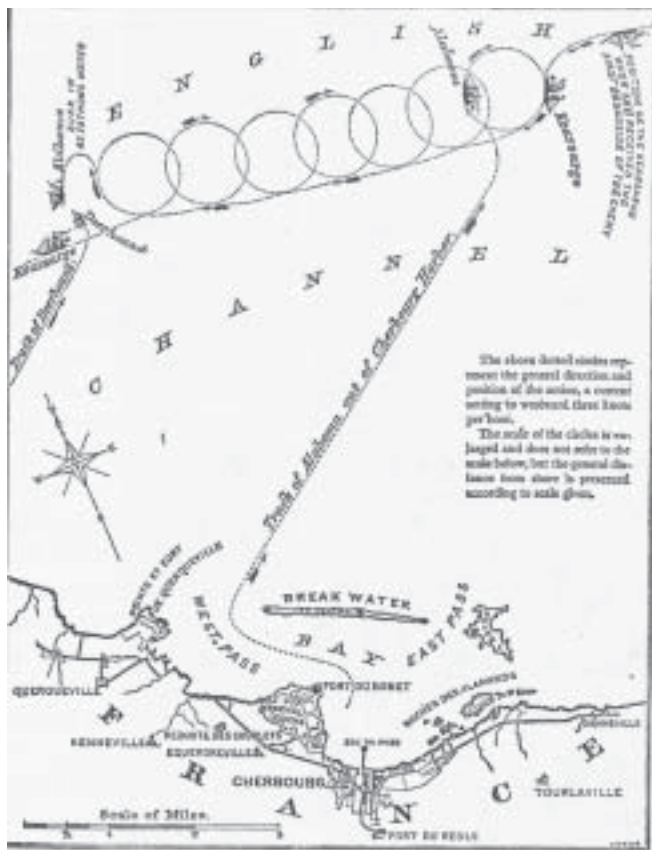
Despite invitations that night to attend several parties in their honor in Cherbourg, Semmes and his men returned to their ship early that evening and went to bed, intending to get a good night's sleep before the battle, planned for the next morning. It



Admiral John Ancrum Winslow, captain of the Union warship *Kearsarge*.



Admiral Winslow, eighth from left, stands with the officers of the *Kearsarge*; the ship's aft 11-inch Dahlgren pivot-gun is at right.



A chart showing the direction taken by Semmes when he sailed the *Alabama* out of Cherbourg on June 19, 1864, meeting the *Kearsarge* and then battling her in seven deadly circling movements (from right to left).

was as if Semmes and his crew members had decided to go out in a blaze of glory, battling the enemy to the last shell. They had repaired and cleaned the *Alabama* for its finest hour. As dawn broke the next day, Sunday, more than 1,000 citizens of Cherbourg climbed to hilltops to witness the forthcoming sea battle. It was a cool, clear day with a gentle breeze.

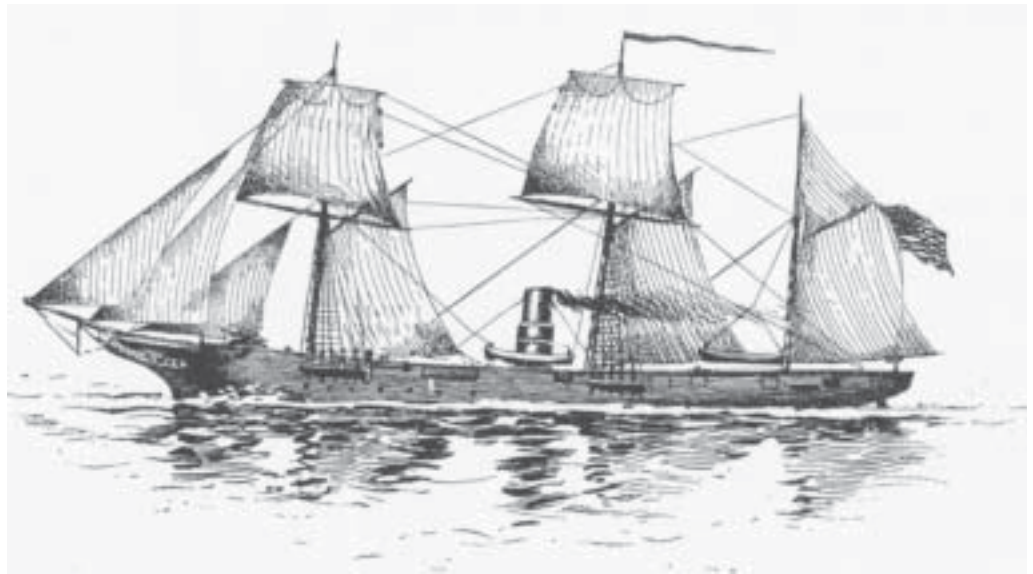
Capt. Semmes allowed his men to eat a large breakfast before ordering the boilers lighted and the sails set. At 9:45 a.m., the *Alabama* sailed out of Cherbourg Harbor to meet the waiting *Kearsarge*. Seven French pilot boats accompanied the *Alabama* to the open sea, as did the British yacht *Deerhound*, which was packed with spectators eager to witness the sea battle. The *Kearsarge* was 7 miles distant from the harbor, and it took some time for the *Alabama* to sail to her, time spent by the crew in preparing the cannons on board for battle. The *Kearsarge*, too, made its preparations. On board both ships, which began to circle each other, crew members opened the magazines and shell rooms. They threw sand upon the decks for traction and filled tubs of water in readiness against fires.

The dramatic Semmes then called most of his crew to the after deck. He stood upon a gun carriage and addressed them: "Officers and seamen of the *Alabama*! You have, at length, another opportunity of meeting the enemy, the first that has been presented to you since you sunk the *Hatteras*! In the meantime, you have been all over the world, and it is not too much to say that you have destroyed and driven for protection under neutral flags one-half of the enemy's commerce, which, at the beginning of the war, covered every sea. This is an achievement of which you may well be proud, and a grateful

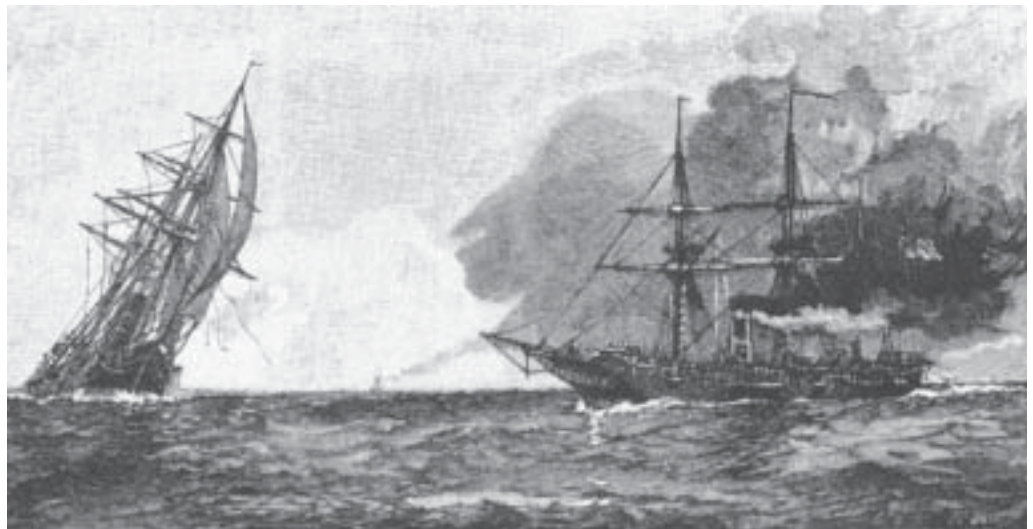


A gun crew on the *Kearsarge* working the ship's forward 11-inch Dahlgren pivot-gun during the battle with the *Alabama*; damage to the *Kearsarge*'s deck can be seen in the foreground.

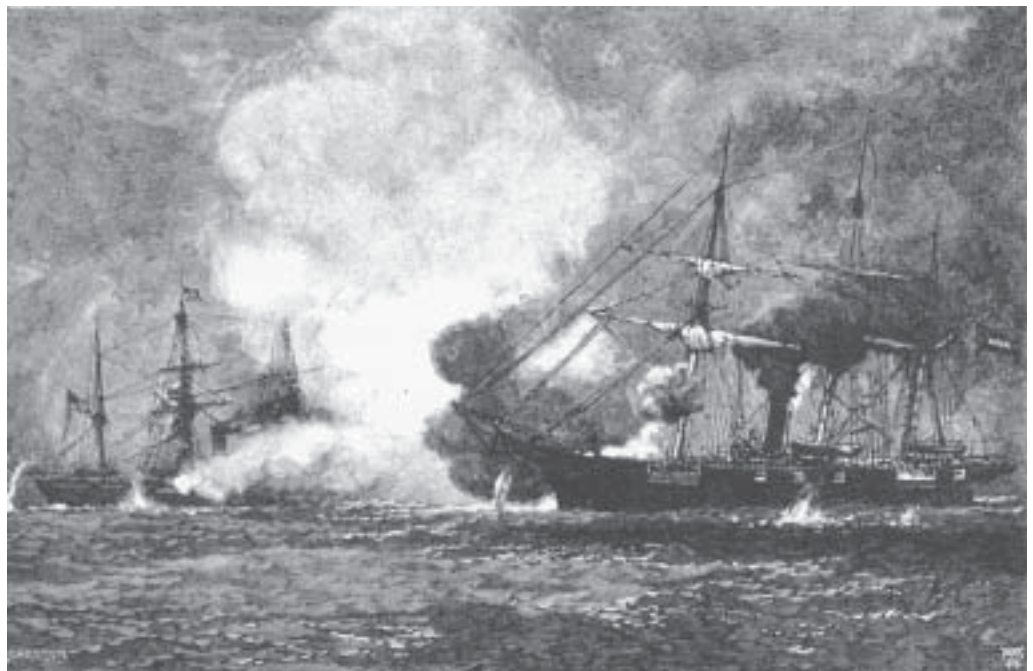
The *Kearsarge* is shown as it waited off Cherbourg for the *Alabama* to sail from the harbor and do battle.



The *Kearsarge*, left, getting into position to rake the *Alabama* with a broadside.



The *Kearsarge*, left, and the *Alabama* exchange broadsides in the most spectacular open sea battle of the war.





At left, the *Kearsarge*'s executive officer, Capt. James S. Thornton; at right, seaman William Gouin, who was fatally wounded during the battle.



William Smith, left, quartermaster of the *Kearsarge*, who commanded the aft pivot-gun that did the most damage to the *Alabama*; at right, James R. Wheeler, who commanded the forward pivot-gun.



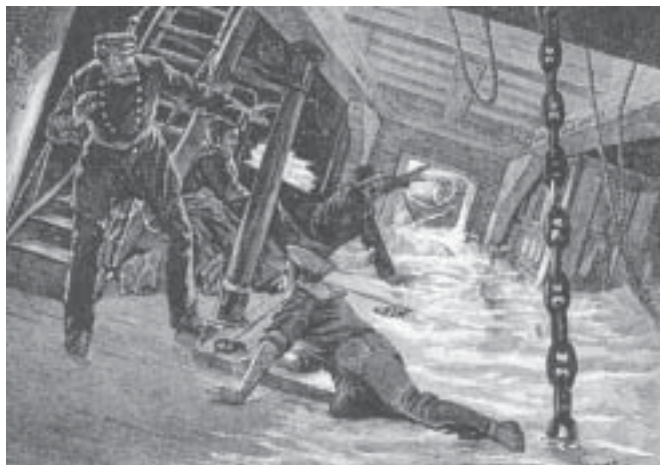
A boat from the *Alabama* comes alongside the *Kearsarge* to tell Winslow that the raider was surrendering and sinking; Semmes asked for assistance, but Winslow thought it a ruse.

country will not be unmindful of it. The name of your ship has become a household word wherever civilization extends. Shall that name be tarnished by defeat? The thing is impossible! Remember that you are in the English Channel, the theater of so much of the naval glory of our race, and that the eyes of all Europe are at this moment upon you. The flag that floats over you is that of a young republic, who bids defiance to her enemies whenever and wherever found. Show the world that you know how to uphold it! To your quarters!"

The crew of the *Alabama* stood in silence during Semmes' moving speech, interrupting their captain only once, when he asked his sailors if they would permit the name of their ship to be tarnished by defeat. At that moment they shouted, "Never! Never!" The crew then went to battle stations as the *Alabama* closed in on the waiting *Kearsarge*. The Union vessel seemed to be riding at anchor, but when the *Alabama* was about a mile distant, the *Kearsarge* suddenly wheeled about, showing its stern to the Confederate raider, so that Capt. Winslow could bring his 11-inch starboard battery to bear.

Semmes did not wait, but ordered his guns to fire on the *Kearsarge*. His gunners opened up with solid shot, and within a few minutes the Union ship roared a response. Both ships steamed in a common circle, firing broadsides at each other, keeping a distance of about three quarters of a mile and maintaining a speed of about 7 knots, which allowed them to pace themselves as they spun round and round in the sea, firing salvo after salvo. The *Alabama*'s guns reached their target first, a shell landing next to the aft Dahlgren gun and knocking three Union sailors to the deck, wounding all. But the *Alabama*'s guns lacked the range the *Kearsarge* possessed.

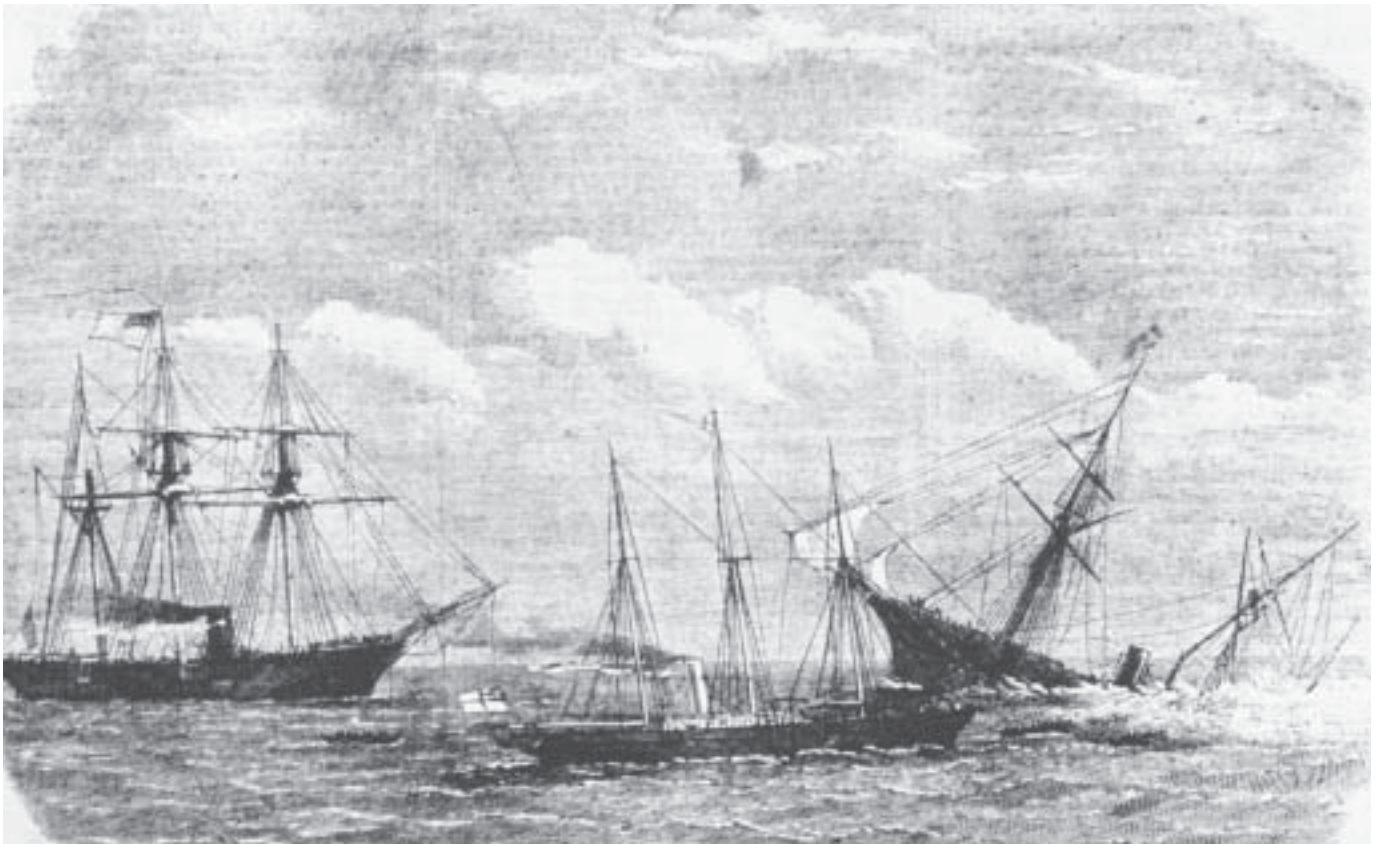
To correct this disparity, Semmes ordered his ship to close on the *Kearsarge*, telling his gunners to fire explosive shells. Many of these salvos found their mark on the deck of the *Kearsarge*, but the ammunition used by the *Alabama*'s gunners was old and much of it ineffective as was soon proved when the Confederate hits did not explode. An explosive shell from the Blakely gun struck the *Kearsarge*'s sternpost but did not explode, proving to be a dud. More hits failed to explode and Semmes, watching his shells land harmlessly on the *Kearsarge*, quickly gave orders to change to solid shot.



Lt. Kell, left, who went belowdecks on the sinking *Alabama* to retrieve the wounded. He managed to save several men before he and Semmes finally left the doomed *Alabama*.



ABOVE right, the badly-holed *Alabama* is sinking by the stern, while the *Kearsarge*, left, stands off without sending lifeboats, and the British yacht *Deerhound*, extreme left, makes for the stricken *Alabama*. BELOW, the *Deerhound* closes on the sinking *Alabama* to pick up survivors, including Admiral Semmes.



It was too late. The *Kearsarge's* salvos began to land with lethal accuracy, explosive shells ripping into the *Alabama* and exploding guns, ammunition and Southern sailors to pieces. The *Alabama* then took a full Union salvo broadside, the Dahlgren gun sending shells through the hull and decks of the Rebel raider, one shell killing the crew of a 32-pounder and wiping out the battery, a second shell mowing down a group of gunners rushing forward to the crippled gun, a third shell striking a gun carriage, sending it reeling down the length of the deck to crush several sailors.

Through six full circles, the warships fought at closer and closer range, frantically firing every gun, using every shell available, a ceaseless cannonade that deafened the attackers and sent booming echoes across the waters to those on shore gaping at the incredible death struggle between the two ships. As the warships entered the seventh circle of the battle, four shells from the *Kearsarge* landed atop the *Alabama's* aft pivot-gun so that four crews, one after another, were replaced and wiped out. Then Semmes took a shell fragment in his right hand. As a quartermaster hurriedly rigged a sling for his arm, Semmes sadly surveyed the once-proud *Alabama*. It had been hit many times with mortal blows. There were holes in the deck and below the water line so that it listed heavily to starboard. The decks were littered with dead and wounded.

Semmes called Lt. Kell to his side. The Confederate captain ordered his first mate to sail the *Alabama* to the coast. He confided to Kell that he feared the ship was in a sinking condition. "For some minutes I had hopes of being able to reach the French coast," Semmes later wrote, "for which purpose I gave the ship all steam and set such of the fore and aft sails that were available." The *Kearsarge*, however, was not about to let the elusive Confederate raider escape once more. Capt. Winslow followed closely, his ship pouring salvo after salvo into the crippled, limping *Alabama*.

Lt. Kell's duties were hampered in that while he was attempting to sail the *Alabama* toward the French shoreline, he was also attempting to beat off the nagging attacks of the *Kearsarge*, which followed the wounded *Alabama* as would a snapping crocodile. Kell and his gunners had difficulty clearing the decks of litter and dead. The first mate ordered the bodies of slain Southern sailors tossed overboard to make room for those living gunners rushing to unmanned cannon in order to fire back at the ever-closing *Kearsarge*.

Kell noticed his ship slowing and dashed belowdecks to find that the holds and engine rooms were fast filling with water and that the boilers had gone out and were under water. He passed the surgery to see Dr. Llewellyn about to operate on a wounded sailor. A shell suddenly tore through the surgery, crushing the patient and the table on which he was lying, knocking Llewellyn down. Returning topside, Kell reported to Semmes that the *Alabama* was sinking and that the ship could not stay afloat another 10 minutes.

"Then, sir," Semmes told him solemnly, "cease firing, shorten sail and haul down the colors." He ordered a boat be put over the side to row to the *Kearsarge* and inform his opponent that he required aid to remove his wounded. Capt. Winslow saw the Confederate banner hauled down and noted the lack of gunfire from the *Alabama*, but he refused to believe that his vaunted

adversary was really sinking. He suspected another trick. At a distance of only 400 yards, the *Kearsarge* continued to blast the sinking ship for five minutes, an attack that was later criticized as being vicious and vengeful. Semmes later wrote acidly: "It is charitable to suppose that a ship of war of a Christian nation could not have done this intentionally."

Semmes ordered all surviving crew members into the quarter boats, the waist boats having been shot away. As the *Alabama* began to rapidly sink, the Confederate sailors leaped into the few boats available to them and the remainder dove into the sea, thrashing wildly about for debris to which they could cling. Semmes and Kell were the last to leave the sinking *Alabama*, diving into the water at the last minute. Before leaving his ship, Semmes removed his sword and hurled it into the churning waters of the Channel. He later bitterly noted that "there was no appearance of any boat coming to me from the enemy until after my ship went down."

Winslow had waited for a white flag of surrender to be hoisted from the sinking *Alabama*, one that, despite certain wrongful accounts, was never raised. In fairness to Capt. Winslow, it was later noted that most of the *Kearsarge's* lifeboats had also been shot to pieces. Winslow did lower two boats, which rowed out to pick up Southern sailors, but by then the British yacht *Deerhound*, commanded by John Lancaster, had already sailed to the relief of the stricken *Alabama* and picked up Semmes, Kell and 40 crew members.

Semmes later stated that those of his crew members picked up by the *Kearsarge* quickly understood why the direct hits scored against the Union vessel failed to penetrate the ship. The vessel had been lined with iron sheets, then coated with wooden planks. The planks had been shot away but the iron sheeting had held against the *Alabama's* shells, having only dents instead of holes. On board the *Deerhound*, Semmes was shown to the captain's cabin. A boat from the *Kearsarge* pulled alongside the British yacht and demanded to know the whereabouts of Semmes.

"He's drowned!" shouted Kell from the deck of the *Deerhound*.

The Union officer in the boat held a gun and appeared to be ready to attempt to board the English yacht. Some of the *Alabama* crew members stood close to the rail, holding weapons. The *Kearsarge* officer then turned and gave orders for his men to row back to the Union warship. The *Deerhound* then sailed from the scene as the topmasts of the *Alabama* vanished beneath the waves.

Capt. Winslow of the *Kearsarge* continued to search for survivors and then sailed to Cherbourg, where he paroled his prisoners. Semmes, Kell and other Confederate survivors were taken to England by the *Deerhound*, where Semmes was feted and given another sword by admirers to replace the one he had surrendered to the English Channel instead of to the skipper of the *Kearsarge*. Semmes finally managed to return to the South and was promoted to the rank of rear admiral, being given the command of a fleet of ironclads. Following the war, he was arrested and charged with piracy. He was nevertheless pardoned by President Andrew Johnson, spending the rest of his life practicing law and writing about the incredible exploits of the great Rebel raider and the pride of his life, the CSS *Alabama*.



Death plunge—the *Alabama* goes down stern-first, its survivors struggling in the water. The *Kearsarge*, left, continues to stand off; its captain, Admiral Winslow, was later criticized for not sending what few lifeboats he had left to save the *Alabama*'s crew.

Also See: *Alabama Claims*; *Alexandra*; *Brooklyn*; *Florida*; *Kearsarge*; *San Jacinto*; *Shenandoah*; *Stonewall*; *Sumter*.

REF.: Adams, *Great Britain and the American Civil War*; Boynton, *The History of the Navy During the Rebellion*; Bradlow, *Here Comes the Alabama: The Career of a Confederate Raider*; Bree, *The Confederate Soldier in the Civil War*; Bulloch, *The Secret Service of the Confederate States in Europe*; Callahan, *The Diplomatic History of the Southern Confederacy*; Carrison, *The Navy from Wood to Steel: 1860-1890*; Carse, *Blockade: The Civil War at Sea*; Case and Spencer, *The United States and France: Civil War Diplomacy*; Cochran, *Blockade Runners of the Confederacy*; Delaney, *John McIntosh Kell and the Raider Alabama*; Durkin, *Stephen R. Mallory*; Eaton, *A History of the Southern Confederacy*; Ellicott, *The Life of John Antrim Winslow*; Heath, *Gray Raiders of the Sea*; Hoole, *Four Years in the Confederate Navy*; Jones, *The Civil War at Sea*; Kell, *Recollections of a Naval Life*; Luraghi, *The Southern Navy: The Confederate Navy and the American Civil War*; Maclay, *A History of the United States Navy from 1775-1894*; Merli, *Great Britain and the Confederate Navy, 1861-1865*; Nash, *A Naval History of the Civil War*; Niven, *Gideon Welles: Lincoln's Secretary of the Navy*; *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion*; Porter, *The Naval History of the Civil War*; Potter, *United States Navy*; Pratt, *The Compact History of the United States Navy*; Roberts, *Semmes of the Alabama*; Robinson, *The Confederate Privateers*; Scharf, *History of the Confederate States Navy*; Semmes, *Service Afloat*; or, *The Remarkable Career of the Confederate Cruisers Sumter and Alabama during the War between the States*; Sinclair, *Two Years on the Alabama*; Soley, *The Blockade and the Cruisers*; Sprout, *The Rise of American Naval Power, 1776-1918*; Stern, *The Confederate Navy*; Summersell, *The C.S.S. Alabama*; Taylor, *Confederate Raider*; Raphael Semmes of the *Alabama*; U.S. Navy Dept., *Civil War Naval Chronology*; Wells, *The Confederate Navy*.

Alabama Claims, Financial losses claimed by the U.S. as a result of prize-taking and other damages done by the CSS *Alabama* and other Confederate warships during the Civil War for which Great Britain was held responsible.

Throughout the Civil War, Confederate war vessels, many of them built in England and Scotland and secretly sold to the South with the collusion of British shipbuilders and even officials, sailed the Union sea lanes capturing Union merchant vessels, seizing their cargoes, and either destroying

these ships or releasing them on parole. Such feared Southern ships as the *Alabama*, *Shenandoah*, *Florida* and *Georgia* inflicted millions of dollars in damages on the Union.

Early in the war, when the *Alabama* became the terror of the Union sea lanes, Secretary of State William Seward asked Minister to England Charles Francis Adams to demand damages from Great Britain, since the Confederate warship had been built for the South in Scotland and had been secretly transferred to Confederate control with the tacit approval of the British government. The demand made by Adams was termed the *Alabama Claims*, but this later came to include all of the claims for damages inflicted by all other Confederate sea raiders.

When Adams made his formal demand for damages, Great Britain grew alarmed and curbed the building and outfitting of war vessels for the South in Scotland and elsewhere. This did not appease Adams, who persisted in seeking damages of \$19,021,000, a total of damages brought about by three Confederate ships, the *Alabama* (\$6,547,609), the *Shenandoah* (\$6,488,320) and the *Florida* (\$3,698,609). The British did not respond to Adams' demands, even though they were often repeated, especially after the Confederacy ended in 1865.

Great Britain not only refused to admit its responsibility for the damages, but insisted that no third-party nation had the right to arbitrate those damages. When Lord Russell's administration was replaced by Lord Stanley's, Adams again pressed the claims, but negotiations came to a standstill and were further complicated when Adams resigned in 1868.

In January of the following year, however, President Andrew Johnson pressed the claims with British Foreign Secretary George W.F. Villiers, earl of Clarendon, and they established a commission of two representatives from each country to study the claims and come to a resolution. Should the representatives not agree, an arbitrator would be named to decide the issue. If the representatives could not agree on an arbitrator, each side would nominate an arbitrator and lots would be cast to decide which would be accepted. This convoluted process was rejected by the U.S. Senate, which voted against the agreement in April 1869.

Massachusetts Sen. Charles Sumner then made an issue of the claims, publicly denouncing Great Britain as having

made no admissions or concessions whatsoever, accusing that country of violating Queen Victoria's neutrality proclamation during the war and causing \$100 million in damages to the Union's Merchant Marine. This created a new public outcry against Great Britain and incited U.S. politicians to thunder against the British. Michigan Sen. Zachariah Chandler went so far as to rise in the Senate and demand that Canada be ceded to the U.S. in payment for only *half* of the debt owed by Great Britain.

Not until Ulysses S. Grant became President in 1869 did the U.S. again press the *Alabama* Claims against Great Britain. Grant, unlike his predecessor, Johnson, indicated to the British that he was willing to compromise. The claims would be added to a list of grievances on both sides, included disputed fishing and trading agreements between the U.S. and Canada, and water boundaries.

In March 1869, a commission in Washington addressed the issues, and after involved negotiations, a treaty was drafted that was signed by the U.S. and Great Britain on May 8, 1871, ratification coming from Congress three weeks later. The British Parliament ratified the treaty in June. The treaty was then examined by an international tribunal of five jurists from the U.S., Great Britain, Brazil, Italy and Switzerland, who met in Geneva in December 1871. On July 22, 1872, after much debate, the tribunal determined that claims against the Confederate raider *Georgia* should be dismissed, but those involving the other three Southern vessels would be upheld, claims amounting to more than \$15 million.

With chagrin and no little reluctance, Great Britain, which had been held responsible for failing in her role as a neutral power, paid \$15,500,000 in gold to the U.S. The precedent-setting treaty allowed for claims to be settled by direct arbitration, a policy that wisely avoided war and eventually strengthened Anglo-American bonds, which survive to this day.

Also See: *Alabama*; *Florida*; *Georgia*; *Shenandoah*.

Ref.: Adams, *Great Britain and the Civil War*; Balch, *The Alabama Arbitration*; Beaman, *The National and Private "Alabama Claims" and Their "Final and Amicable Settlement"*; Bulloch, *The Secret Service of the Confederate States in Europe*; Callahan, *Diplomatic History of the Southern Confederacy*; Cook, *The Alabama Claims*; Dalzell, *The Flight from the Flag: The Continuing Effect of the Civil War upon the American Carrying Trade*; Davis, *Mr. Fish and the Alabama Claims*; Hearn, *Gray Raiders of the Sea: How Eight Confederate Warships Destroyed the Union's High Sea Commerce*; U.S. Dept. of State, *The Case of the United States to Be Laid before the Tribunal of Arbitration*.

Albatross, USS, See: *Enchantress Affair*.

Albemarle, CSS, 1864, Confederate ram.

Background: Made from scrap iron and hastily constructed near the Roanoke River in early 1864, the 152-foot Confederate ram *Albemarle* was 45 feet in the beam and had a 2-foot freeboard and six-inch iron-plated sides. Its central casement was 60 feet long with two layers of 2-inch iron plate bolted to wooden backing. The ram had two 8-inch Brooke rifled guns and it was powered by two 200-horsepower steam engines. The vessel was designed by John L. Porter and commanded by Commander James W. Cooke.

The *Albemarle* first appeared off the North Carolina coast on 04/19/64, sinking the U.S. gunboat *Southfield* and badly damaging another Union gunboat, the *Miami*. The *Albemarle* then aided Gen. Robert Frederick Hoke and 5,000 Confederates attacking Plymouth, N.C., by bombarding the town's forts and strongpoints. The city was taken by Hoke on 04/20/64, who captured 2,800 Federals and a large quantity of supplies—one of the few significant Southern victories in 1864.

On 05/05/64, the *Albemarle* engaged seven Union warships at the mouth of the Roanoke River, damaging several, inflicting four deaths and wounding 25 Union seamen (13 of whom were scalded on board the *Sassacus* when her boiler blew up) before being damaged and withdrawing up the Roanoke, leaving Federal gunboats still in possession of Roanoke Sound. On the night of 10/27/64, Union Lt. William B. Cushing, with a 20-man crew manning a 30-foot boat armed with a makeshift torpedo, attacked the *Albemarle* in the Roanoke River and successfully sank the Confederate ram. The 21-year-old Cushing, who became one of the Union's most celebrated heroes, escaped capture and injury, as did one other of his crew.

The Confederate ram *Albemarle* was an unlikely-looking warship, one that had been pieced together from junk iron, the scraps of wrecked cannon, railway cars and other iron leavings. The ram was actually constructed in a field next to the Roanoke River at Edward's Ferry in North Carolina. It was designed by John L. Porter, chief engineer of the Confederate Navy. Porter had been the naval genius who had converted the USS *Merrimack* into the CSS *Virginia*, and he envisioned a similar casemated, ironclad ram when he drew the plans for the CSS *Albemarle*.

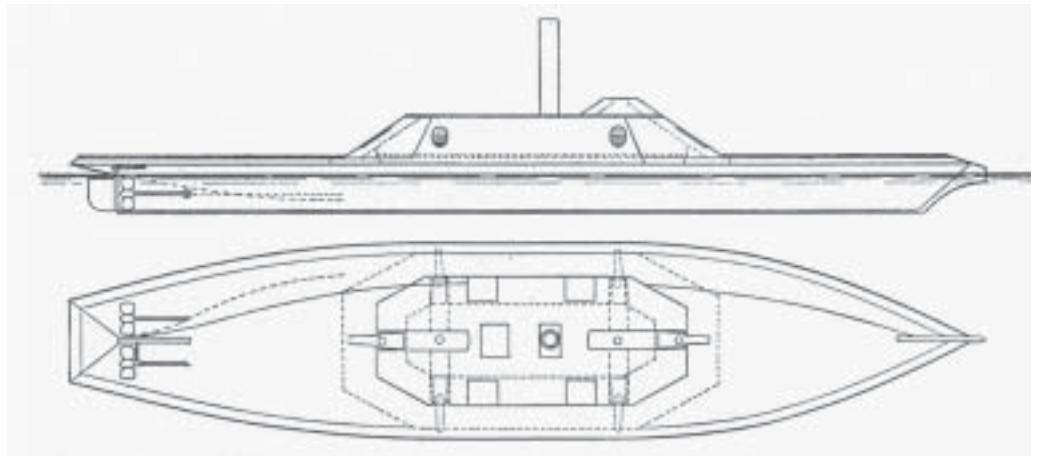
Porter used whatever materials were available in early 1864, his workers scavenging what they could find in an area that was almost stripped of war supplies. The ship had a flat bottom for easy navigation of the shallow coastal waters with a 2-foot freeboard. A 60-foot-long central casement was shielded by a double layer of 2-inch-thick iron plate, which was bolted to oak backing. The *Albemarle's* armor was 6 inches thick when completed and two 8-inch Brooke 100-pound rifled guns provided its firepower.

Commander James W. Cooke, who had been ordered to supervise the construction of the ram by Navy Secretary Stephen R. Mallory in January 1864, more or less argued the sorely depleted armory in Richmond into releasing the Brooke guns. (Some later claimed that Cooke and his men merely appropriated the weapons.) With the Confederate Navy almost in ruins in 1864, the launching of the *Albemarle* was a desperate attempt to bring back some semblance of naval power to the Carolina coast, which Union gunboats had been successfully blockading for many months.

The launching of the *Albemarle*—done with workers still on board and completing construction—worked in conjunction with a new Southern campaign against Plymouth, N.C., which, for many months, had been in Union hands, occupied by about 3,000 Union troops commanded by Gen. Henry Walton Wessells. In April 1864, Confederate forces, about 5,000 men under the command of Gen. Robert Frederick Hoke, advanced against Plymouth. Hoke, an able and fiery commander who reportedly had been promised a promotion if he could recapture Plymouth, vowed to take the city. Three



ABOVE, Commander James W. Cooke, who commanded the *Albemarle* in its one-sided battles; BELOW, Lt. Alexander F. Warley, who was commanding the *Albemarle* when it was blown up in its berth on the Roanoke River.



ABOVE, the Confederate ram *Albemarle* as designed by John L. Porter; BELOW, the *Albemarle* is shown being constructed next to the Roanoke River at Edward's Ferry, N.C.



times he demanded that Wessells surrender Plymouth, and he was three times rebuffed by the stubborn and outnumbered Wessells. Hoke fumed and then sent a bombastic message to his Union opponent: "I will fill your citadel full of iron! I will compel your surrender if I have to fight to the last man!"

Had it not been for the *Albemarle*, it is likely that Gen. Hoke would never have made his threat a reality. Outside Plymouth were two Union warships protecting the approach to the city by water, these being the wooden vessels *Miami* and *Southfield*. The *Southfield* was a converted ferryboat, and the more formidable *Miami* was a double-ender constructed along the lines of a ferryboat. Both ships were commanded by Lt. Commander Charles W. Flusser, a tough young Navy officer who was both inventive and aggressive.

Flusser knew all about the building of the *Albemarle*, reports of its hodge-podge construction being brought to him by Northern spies rowing down the Roanoke at night. To combat the ram, Flusser ordered the installation of booms and heavy chains linking his ships *Miami* and *Southfield*. Flusser thought to catch the Confederate ram between his two ships with the booms, turn in on it and, when close enough, board it, kill its crew, and then sink the vessel. The Union boarding parties were told by Flusser that one group would fire through the *Albemarle's* upper deck, shooting its crew members, while another group would drop powder down the ram's funnel and blow it up.

This bold, desperate plan was evident to Commander Cooke when he sailed the *Albemarle* down the Roanoke on April 19, 1864. He had served 33 years in the U.S. Navy and keenly knew the value of intelligence. His own spies had not only informed him of the booms between the two Union warships, but had provided detailed sketches of their lengths and Flusser's plan to ensnare the Confederate ram. To avoid being bagged by the booms, Cooke maneuvered his ram so close to the shore that it was impossible for Flusser to bring his two ships on either side of the enemy vessel. In the deepening twilight, as the ships exchanged opening shots, the *Albemarle* suddenly turned and raced toward the vulnerable broadside of the *Southfield*. The ram struck the Union vessel so hard that 10 feet of its iron prow was buried in the *Southfield's* side.

To Flusser's amazement, the *Southfield* began to sink immediately, going down so fast that it almost took the *Albemarle* with it. Water gushed through the forward gunport of the ram, but it managed to pull free at the last moment. Cooke then turned on the *Miami*, rushing toward it. Flusser ordered his large rifle gun to open fire on the *Albemarle*. The Union gunboat's chief armament, it was expected, would make short work of the ram. But the shell fired by the *Miami*—Flusser pulled the lanyard himself—struck the ram and simply ricocheted off its 6-inch iron plating, rebounding back against the *Miami* and exploding, blowing Flusser almost to pieces.



ABOVE, Lt. Commander Charles W. Flusser, captain of the ill-fated Union gunboat *Southfield*; AT RIGHT, the *Albemarle* ramming the *Southfield* and sending her to a watery grave.

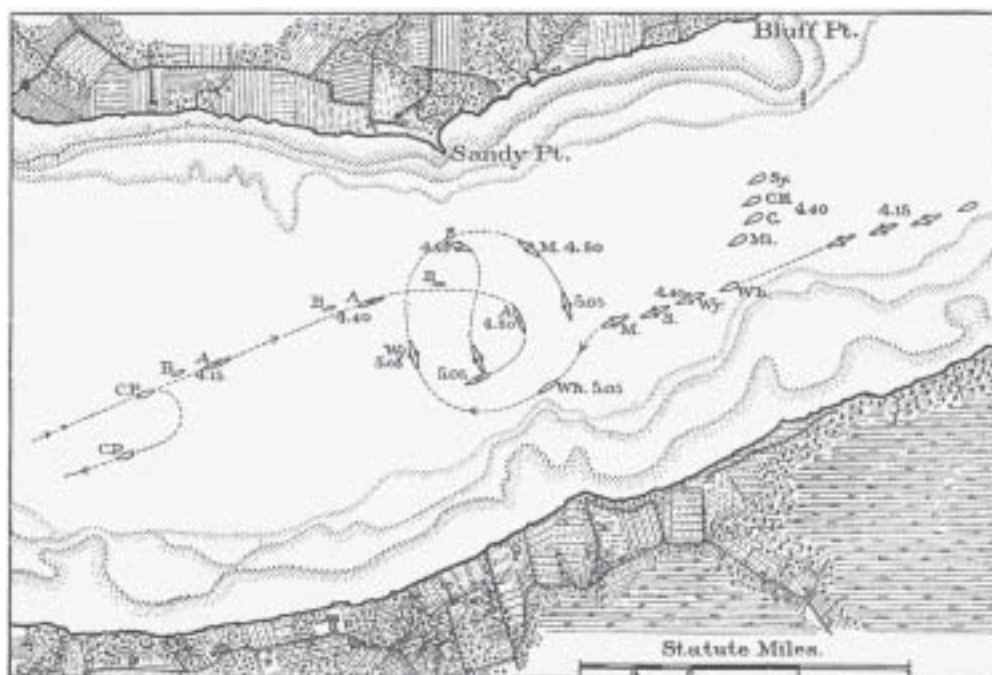
The marines on board the *Miami* who had lined up along the rails of the ship, ready to board the *Albemarle*, leaped upon the ram as it came alongside but they helplessly slid down its sloping sides into the water and were crushed when the two vessels came together. The *Miami* then managed to pull away from the Confederate raider, crippled but steaming off at considerable speed. Cooke fired his two rifle guns repeatedly at the fleeing *Miami*, but scored only a few damaging hits. The ram did not have the speed to give chase and the *Miami* survived, although the new Confederate ram was now master of the Roanoke River near Plymouth.

Union Admiral Samuel P. Lee, when hearing the news of the new Confederate menace on the Roanoke, desperately attempted to put together a force of ships to attack the *Albemarle*, but he faced a navigational and armament di-

lemma. He had no ironclad ships with drafts shallow enough to move into the Sound where the Confederate ram, on April 19-20, 1864, was assisting Gen. Hoke in the recapturing of Plymouth. The ram freely bombarded the Union fortifications of the town, which caused, in the words of Lt. M. Blakeslee of the 16th Conn. Regiment, "a furious attack ... over our heads came a peal of thunder from the ram."

The Confederate attack, made on April 20, 1864, was a success, with Hoke's superior numbers swarming into the forts of Plymouth and capturing the garrison, one of the few significant Confederate victories in that year so dire for the South. The Union Navy, however, vowed to end the *Albemarle*'s reign and sent a flotilla of ships to bottle up the mouth of the Roanoke. Astounding the captains of these ships, the audacious Cooke, on May 5, 1864, sailed out of the Roanoke to

Chart showing the track of the *Albemarle* on May 5, 1864, when she attacked the entire Federal fleet in Albemarle Sound. (A: *Albemarle*; B: *Bombshell*; CP: *Cotton Plant*; M: *Mattabessett*; S: *Sassacus*; Wy: *Wyalusing*; Mi: *Miami*; C: *Ceres*; Wh: *Whitehead*; CH: *Commodore Hull*).



take on the entire Union fleet. The *Albemarle* was accompanied by the *Bombshell*, a small armed tender, which saw little action in the battle, and the steamer *Cotton Plant*, carrying troops, which was not part of the forthcoming action and turned back up the Sound when the Federal flotilla came into view. Four Union warships, all wooden double-enders, attempted to encircle the ram. These were the *Mattabessett*, *Wyalusing*, *Sassacus*, and the *Miami*, which had been repaired after its last encounter with the *Albemarle*. The four large Union vessels were supported by three smaller ships, *Whitehead*, *Ceres* and *Commodore Hull*.

Union commanders had prepared for this battle, readying large nets that were intended to foul the ram's propellers. The *Wyalusing* carried a spar torpedo, which was to be implanted in the *Albemarle*'s side and then exploded. But Cooke was too crafty a seaman to allow his ship to be ensnared in nets, and he carefully navigated the ram away from close contact with the spar torpedo. The *Albemarle* attempted to ram each of the Northern ships, but their captains successfully dodged the ram while pouring onto it a murderous fusillade of 100-pound solid shot. The cannonade proved useless, with the shots bouncing harmlessly off the *Albemarle*'s thick iron hide.

The *Albemarle* at first attacked the *Mattabessett*, its two opening shots from its bow port so skillfully fired that both immediately hit their target, the pivot rifle on the Union ship, shells that cut away rails and spars and wounded all six men of the gun crew. The *Mattabessett* managed to distance itself from the ram, while the *Albemarle* attacked other Union vessels that found their target elusive. Moreover, the Union warships withheld much of their considerable firepower in fear of striking each other as the ram maneuvered between them.

The *Bombshell*, which valiantly sailed toward the Union fleet, was greeted by a broadside from the *Sassacus*, several Union shells hulling the small Confederate vessel. As the Union ship closed on the *Bombshell*, a brawny Federal gunner, naked to the waist, covered with grime and holding a long Navy pistol, leaped onto the railing and shouted, "Haul down your flag and surrender or we'll blow you out of the water!" The captain of the *Bombshell*, then badly damaged, complied, hauling down his flag and dropping out of action, anchoring away from the battle as ordered.

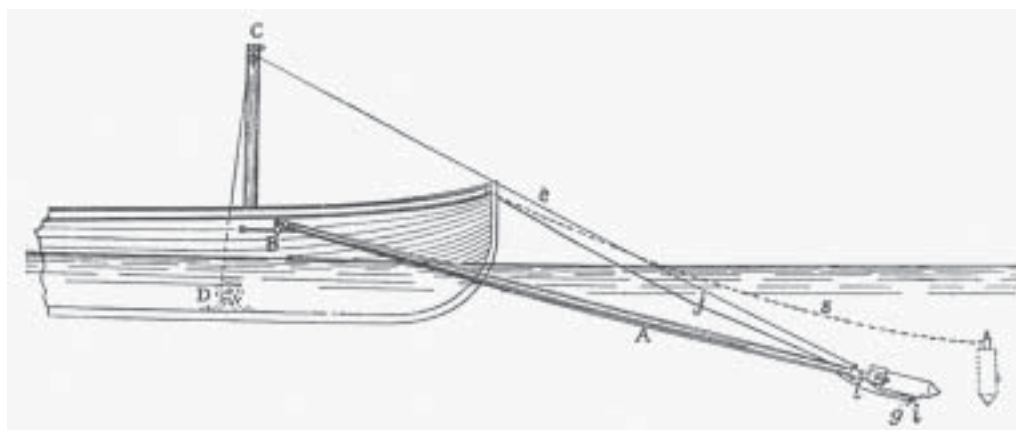
The *Albemarle* fought on alone in a battle that raged for some time in the afternoon, with the *Albemarle* unsuccessfully attempting to ram the four Union vessels, which were faster than the ram and managed to avoid contact, though



ABOVE LEFT, Lt. Commander F. A. Roe, the fearless captain of the *Sassacus*, and, ABOVE RIGHT, his Acting Master, Charles A. Boutelle, who directed the cannon fire against the Confederate ram.



The *Sassacus*, left, rams the *Albemarle*, while the Rebel ram blasted the Union gunboat, a shell exploding the *Sassacus*' boiler.



ABOVE, the design of the Union launch with its underwater torpedo and spar, controlled by pulleys and lanyards, and, **ABOVE RIGHT**, Lt. William B. Cushing, the man who concocted the daring plan to destroy the *Albemarle*.

these ships took many hits from the ram's guns. At about 5 p.m., Lt. Commander F.A. Roe, captain of the *Sassacus*, who had been watching for an opportunity, ordered his ship to ram the *Albemarle*'s starboard beam. In the collision, the *Sassacus* drove the *Albemarle* downward with the weight of its prow so that waves rushed over it.

Roe then ordered Acting Master Charles A. Boutelle to have his gunners unleash a torrent of shellfire at the ram. (The *Sassacus* carried four 9-inch Dahlgren guns and two 100-pounder Parrott rifles.) A shell from the *Sassacus* tore through an embrasure to blow away the tip of one of *Albemarle*'s two rifle guns. Even with his deck pitching downward at a perilous angle, Cooke managed to order a shot fired into the *Sassacus*, one that blew up the Union ship's boiler, scalding the ship's stokers. In the ensuing pandemonium, Commander Cooke managed to pull his ship away from the crippled *Sassacus*.

The shot fired into the *Sassacus* was seen coming almost point-blank by Edgar Holden, the ship's assistant surgeon, who stated later: "Through the starboard shutter, which had been partly jarred off by the concussion [when *Sassacus* rammed the *Albemarle*], I saw the port of the ram not 10 feet away. It opened and like a flash of lightning I saw the grim muzzle of a cannon, the gun's crew, naked to the waist and blackened with powder; then a blaze, a roar and the rush of the shell as it crashed through [the side of the *Sassacus*], whirling me round and dashing me to the deck."

The ram continued pounding the Union vessels but finally gave up the fight and steamed up the Roanoke. It had taken 54 direct hits but had received little damage, with three Confederate seamen wounded. Union forces fared worse, with 25 wounded and four dead. The *Bombshell* attempted to flee with the *Albemarle*, but fell behind and was captured. Lt. Roe of the *Sassacus* later reported to Admiral Lee that the *Albemarle* was "more formidable than the *Atlanta* or the *Merrimack* [CSS *Virginia*]."

On May 24, 1864, the *Albemarle* again appeared at the mouth of the Roanoke, which sent panic into the blockading Union vessels, but this time the Confederate ram did not seek open combat. The next day, five volunteers from the *Wyalusing* attempted to sink the *Albemarle* by lashing the ship's spar torpedo to an open boat and attempting to ram the

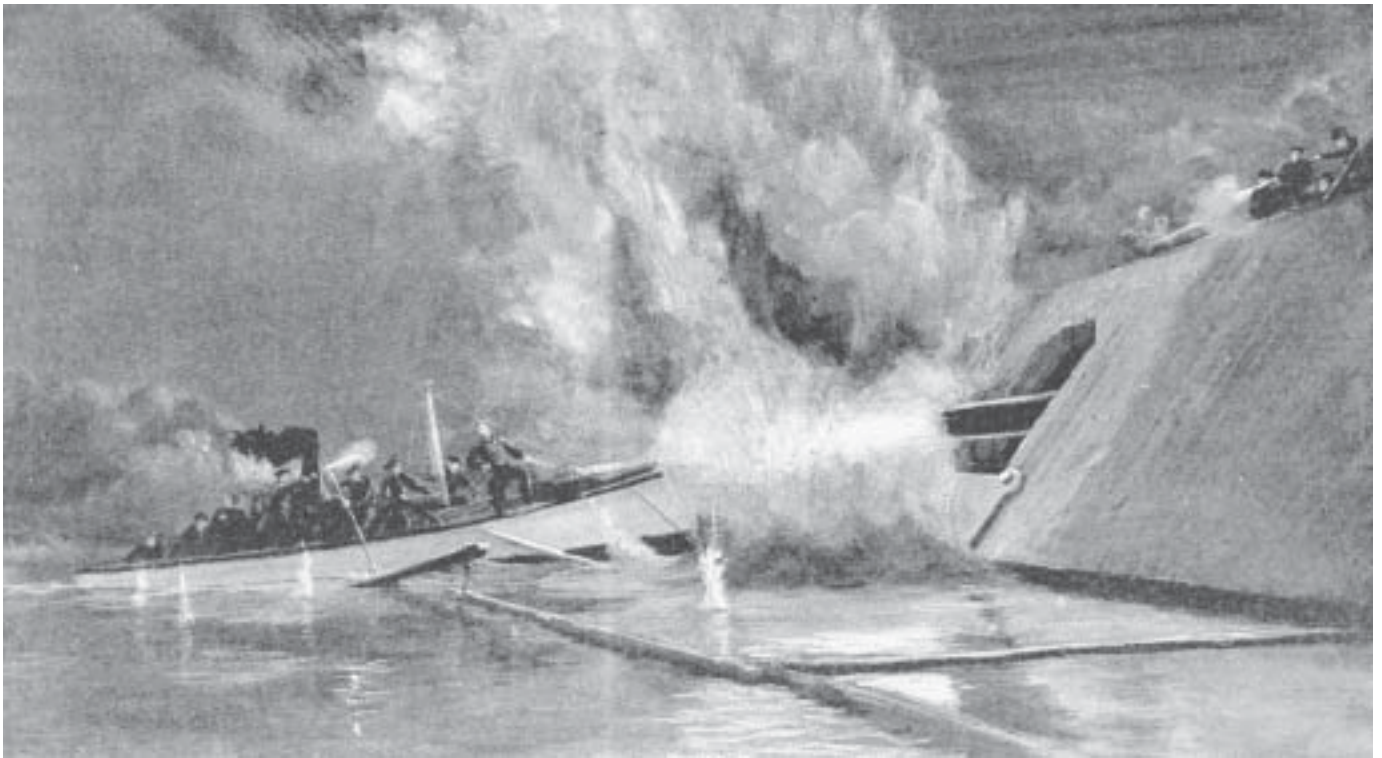
Confederate ship in a suicide mission. The *Albemarle*, however, slipped up the Roanoke. Some time later, 21-year-old Lt. William B. Cushing went to Admiral Lee with a daring plan to destroy the *Albemarle*.

Cushing then commanded the picket boat, *Monticello*, and he had been a close personal friend of Lt. Commander Charles W. Flusser, whose death he vowed to revenge. Cushing had watched with interest the attempt of the five men from the *Wyalusing* to torpedo the *Albemarle* and believed that this mission could be accomplished, but with a more sophisticated approach. Through the summer of 1864, Cushing, working with his chief engineer, W.W. Wood, constructed a buoyant torpedo affixed to the end of a wooden spar jutting from the bow of a 30-foot boat. The spar could be lowered by a pulley. By pulling a lanyard, the torpedo could be released and by pulling another lanyard the torpedo, once implanted into the side of the *Albemarle*, would be exploded. Cushing proposed to stealthily row up the Roanoke at night, implant the torpedo without detection and then blow up the Confederate ram.

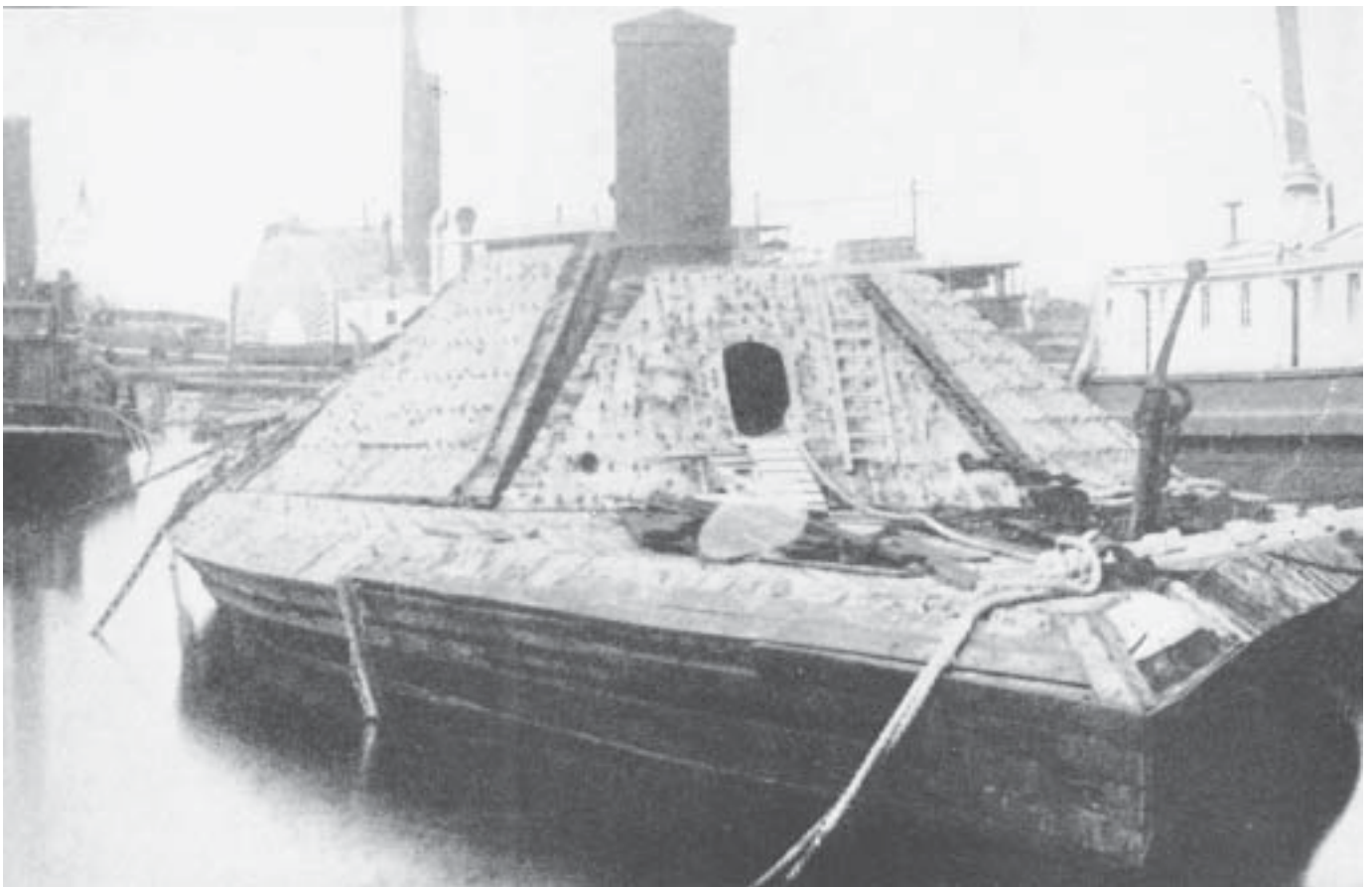
Admiral Lee studied the plan and quickly gave his approval. On the night of Oct. 27, 1864, Cushing, accompanied by a crew of 20 men, including six officers, quietly rowed up the river 8 miles and found the *Albemarle* protected by a boom of pine logs that surrounded the vessel, the boom going outward for 30 feet. Commander Cooke had had this boom constructed after the first attempt was made against his ship by the torpedo-carrying boat from the *Wyalusing*. Cushing's boat reached the wreck of the *Southfield*, a portion of which was still above water and served as a Confederate picket station. He was challenged, but called out that his boat was a Confederate patrol ship and he was allowed to pass.

As the small Union craft approached the ram at about 3 a.m., a sentry called out to it. Cushing gave a muffled reply. (Commander Cooke was not on board the *Albemarle* at this time; he had been in poor health for several months after the ram's last encounter with Union vessels and he was ashore in a hospital. He had been replaced by Capt. John N. Maffitt who was relieved of his command at his own request, with Lt. Alexander F. Warley taking his place.)

The sentry peered through the gloom to recognize blue uniforms. He suddenly called out: "They're Yanks!" He fired



Lt. Cushing is shown above with his men in a Federal launch as it rode over the log boom protecting the *Albemarle*, just moments before he released the torpedo and his own boat was blown to pieces. Cushing's feat was one of the most courageous and daring of the entire war and he was hailed a hero throughout the North.



The hulk of the once-feared Confederate ram, *Albemarle*, shown in the Norfolk Navy Yard, after it had been salvaged in April 1865; it was sold for scrap two years later.

and soon an infantry company on shore began shooting at the Union launch, which fired back with its howitzer. The top deck of the *Albemarle* was soon swarming with riflemen firing down onto the Union launch and its gunners attempted to ready one of the rifle guns to fire upon it. Cushing ordered the launch to draw back about 100 yards from the log boom and then rush forward with a full head of steam. The launch crashed up and over the log boom as the intrepid Cushing stood on its bow, holding the lanyards that operated the torpedo and the spar. Dozens of bullets chewed up the deck about him and passed through his clothes.

Cushing nervelessly remained in his position. As the launch continued forward, riding over the log boom, Cushing lowered the torpedo, angling the torpedo beneath the hull of the ram. At the same moment Cushing pulled the lanyard, which exploded the torpedo, the rifle gun on board the *Albemarle* was fired point blank at the Union launch, fragmenting it and causing it to slowly sink. The torpedo also exploded, tearing a huge hole in the ram's hull, causing it to fill rapidly and sink. As the two vessels sank, Cushing and his men tried to save themselves. Throwing off his sword, coat, and shoes, Cushing shouted for his men to swim for their lives. He then dove into the water as Confederate riflemen, still atop the sinking ram, poured volleys down upon the swimming Union sailors.

"Springing into the river," Cushing later stated, "I swam with others into the middle of the stream." A bullet struck his wrist, but Cushing continued to float downstream. Two of his men had been killed when the Union launch was struck by the final blast of the *Albemarle*'s rifle gun and two more managed to escape. The rest were captured. Cushing began to swim for the shore. As he did, he neared one of his crew members, Samuel Higgins, a fireman who, exhausted, "gave a great gurgling yell and went down."

Cushing remembered that "the rebels were out in boats, picking up my men, and one of the boats, attracted by the sound [Higgins' death cry], pulled in my direction." Cushing heard one of his own crew members call his name, but he slipped beneath the water and the boat passed him. He then began swimming downstream and, when he was beyond the distance of the searching Confederate boats, he swam to shore and hid in the woods along the bank.

Cushing found a skiff and paddled for eight hours to Valley City, where he was rescued by Union forces on Oct. 30, 1864. Cushing's exploit was one of the most daring and courageous in the annals of the Union Navy. Union Admiral David D. Porter was so elated at Cushing's successful mission that he promoted the dashing young officer to flag captain of the blockading fleet at Plymouth. Following the recapture of Plymouth, N.C., on Oct. 31, 1864, the *Albemarle* was refloated by Union vessels and put into drydock at Plymouth as a war trophy.

Also See: *Atlanta; Merrimack; Virginia.*

Ref.: Anderson, *By Sea and River*; Baxter, *The Introduction of the Ironclad Warship*; Boynton, *A History of the Navy during the Rebellion*; Carrison, *The Navy from Wood to Steel, 1860-1890*; Coggins, *Arms and Equipment of the Civil War*; Donovan, *Ironclads*

of the Civil War; Gibbons, *Warships and Naval Battles of the Civil War*; Johnson and Buel, *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*; Jones, *The Civil War at Sea*; MacBride, *Civil War Ironclads*; Maclay, *A History of the United States Navy from 1775-1894*; Nash, *A Naval History of the Civil War*; *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion*; Roske and Van Doren, *Lincoln's Commando: The Biography of Commander W.B. Cushing, U.S.N.*; Stern, *The Confederate Navy*; Still, *Iron Afloat: The Story of the Confederate Armorclads*; Wells, *The Confederate Navy*.

Albemarle County, Va.

Summary of cavalry skirmishes: 02/27-03/01/64 at Stanardsville near Charlottesville and Burton's Ford, Va. A strong diversion to cover the Kilpatrick-Dahlgren Raid on Richmond in early 1864 was conducted by Gen. George Armstrong Custer, leading between 1,500 and 2,000 troopers of his 3rd Cavalry. Custer was ordered to conduct a raid into Albemarle County, Va., to strike toward Gordonsville and then destroy the railway at Charlottesville. He was supported by Gen. John Sedgwick's VI Corps and by Gen. David Bell Birney's Division of the III Corps, which would advance to Madison Court House on Robinson's River. Custer's diversionary attack was designed to make it appear to Gen. Robert E. Lee that his left flank was being attacked in strength, drawing all of Lee's cavalry under Gen. J.E.B. Stuart away from the point of the Kilpatrick-Dahlgren attack.

Custer was to strike deep into Albemarle County, Va., his goal being the Lynchburg Railroad Bridge, which spanned the Rivanna River at Charlottesville. The Union cavalry advanced to the outskirts of Stanardsville, Va., but encountered large units of Confederate cavalry under Gen. J.E.B. Stuart's command and, after repulsing several charges and making several of his own, Custer retreated, burning three mills and a bridge over the Rivanna, returning to Union lines on 03/01/64, having captured about 50 enemy soldiers and 500 horses, without, Custer boasted, losing a man.

Gen. Judson Kilpatrick and Col. Ulric Dahlgren were to lead a massive cavalry raid against Richmond with 4,000 cavalrymen. Screened by Gen. George A. Custer's thrust into Albemarle County, Kilpatrick would strike at the city, which Union intelligence wrongly believed was mostly defenseless, the Union cavalry freeing the many thousands of Federal prisoners held at Belle Island and elsewhere around the city and then capturing the city from the South before Lee's army on the Rapidan or reinforcements from Petersburg could arrive. No more than 500 men under Col. Dahlgren, detached from Kilpatrick's main force, were to accomplish this spectacular and unrealistic goal.

The Kilpatrick-Dahlgren Raid was not created by the then top Union commander, Gen. George Meade (Ulysses S. Grant had not yet taken command). In fact, Meade disapproved of the Kilpatrick raid as reckless and founded upon shoddy intelligence. The War Department had approved of the scheme, however, and Meade did all he could to support Kilpatrick by coordinating Custer's 3rd Cavalry raid to work in unison with the strike at Richmond.

On the night of February 27, 1864, the commands of generals David B. Birney and John Sedgwick reached Madison Court House on Robinson's River. There they halted, watching as Custer's 3rd Cavalry rode past them. Custer sat



The always flamboyant Gen. George Armstrong Custer, who led the raid into Albemarle County, Va., in February 1864.



Custer's cavalry leaving a mill burning in Stanardsville, Va.



Gen. George Meade, who did not approve of the Kilpatrick-Dahlgren raid, or Custer's diversionary raid into Albemarle County.



Gen. Tom Rosser, the one Confederate cavalry commander Custer most feared meeting in the Albemarle raid.



Gen. J.E.B Stuart, whose cavalry almost trapped Custer in Albemarle County.

atop his horse with Sedgwick at his side and reviewed his eager troopers. Custer had recently married the love of his life, but his wife Libby was none too happy to see her cavalier ride off on another adventure. She would later write: "I found myself in a few hours on the extreme wing of the Army of the Potomac in an isolated Virginia farmhouse, finishing my honeymoon alone."

As he sat saddle to saddle with Sedgwick reviewing his troopers, the normally cocksure, audacious Custer seemed nervous, unsure of his mission. He quizzed Sedgwick; how important was his own raid, he wanted to know, and, more important, was the bridgehead near Charlottesville fortified and defended by infantry? Surely, the military council in Washington that drew up the plan of attack would be informed of these details. Sedgwick had no answers. Custer also wanted to know, and his questions were edgy in this regard, if Union intelligence had detected any movement of the 5,000-man Confederate cavalry force under the command of Thomas Rosser.

"I have received one report that Rosser is in the valley through which we must return," Custer told Sedgwick. To this Sedgwick could also give no reply, but he certainly must have known the reason for Custer's apprehension regarding the dashing Rosser. Both Custer and Rosser had been West Point classmates and close friends, Custer joining a Union cavalry command and Rosser joining the Southern cavalry at the beginning of the war. Custer had gone on to glorious victories and so had Rosser. Both had clashed at Buckland Mills in October 1863, where Rosser gave Custer a good drubbing, a defeat that brought Custer nightmares and caused him to become Rosser's fiercest rival. It was also evident that George Armstrong Custer feared only one man in the Confederate army—the brilliant, six-foot-two-inch Thomas Lafayette Rosser.

In his talk with Sedgwick, Custer seemed less concerned that the road down which he would attack would be quickly blocked in his rear by Gen. J.E.B. Stuart and the main body of the Confederate cavalry—and this was really his task, to draw Stuart's horsemen away from Kilpatrick. To all of Custer's nervous questions, the stolid Sedgwick replied that all his concerns had been addressed by the war council. Beyond this rather ambiguous statement, Sedgwick would provide no details and certainly no assurances of success.

Custer then said in his typical flair: "Well, then, I may have to do one of two things—either strike boldly across Lee's rear and try to reach Kilpatrick, or else start with all the men I can keep together and try to join Sherman in the Southwest." Neither of these bold plans were part of Custer's assignment, and he and Sedgwick knew it. He was to simply create a noisy diversion, not attempt to slice through the Confederate army in a dash across hundreds of miles of enemy territory that would mean disaster for him and his men, and this, too, Custer and Sedgwick knew. It was only more "Custer talk" of achieving the impossible.

Without further comment, Custer spurred his horse down the road to join his men. Wrapped in coats and capes against the cold, Custer's troopers rode eagerly forward, even though they had gone without a meal when called to the saddle.



Custer's cavalry brigade is shown advancing into Albemarle County, Va., Custer, left, leading the way. The glory-hunter was almost hoodwinked into riding straight into the arms of Jeb Stuart's cavalry by a treacherous guide, but his instincts saved him at the last minute.



Custer is shown at left on horseback as he interrogates captured Confederate prisoners during his Albemarle County raid; he claimed to have done considerable damage without losing a single trooper in his brigade.

Where Custer led, they followed with zeal, for they, too, believed in the impossible. He had infected them to the marrow with his own unwavering belief in himself. That night his command crossed the river 40 miles upstream of Ely's Ford, and the next day Custer reached Stanardsville, close to Charlottesville, where, as he anticipated, Confederate infantry in strong fortifications at the bridgehead awaited him, a sea of bristling bayonets.

Custer learned at this time that Confederate cavalry under Gen. Fitzhugh Lee was in the area in strength, foraging for food and boots. Six miles from Stanardsville, Custer's vanguard encountered Confederate pickets, and after exchanging fire, the pickets raced back behind the fortifications of the town. The Confederate commander at Lynchburg received a frantic wire from his counterpart in Stanardsville: "Enemy's cavalry three miles from town—can you send me any assistance. I want infantry." The reply was: "I have none to send."

The fears of the defenders were unfounded, however. Custer had no intention of storming either Stanardsville or Charlottesville. He did put up a fierce fight at Stanardsville near Charlottesville on March 1. Custer retraced his march, but he soon learned that Stuart had expectedly blocked his retreat on the road down which he had advanced. "I discovered a superior force of the enemy's cavalry," Custer later stated in his battle report, "supported by four battalions of artillery."

Custer ordered the 5th U.S. Cavalry under Capt. Ash to charge the enemy's right flank, and Ash promptly dashed off with his men, soon riding pell-mell into a campsite of Stuart's horse artillery and startling Capt. M.N. Moorman, who suddenly saw blueback riders smashing through tents and leaping campfires. Said Moorman: "Finding it impossible to get out of camp unless some check could be given, I opened fire with a portion of the guns of each battery, while the drivers and remaining cannoneers caught and hitched up the horses, all of which were running loose. As fast as a carriage was horsed, it was moved off."

Moorman ordered his men to form a skirmish line, and the Rebels soon pushed Ash's men from the camp area. Custer retreated, believing Stuart was about to envelop him. With Stuart was almost all of the Confederate cavalry in the area. Custer learned of this through a guide whom he suspected of treachery. The Southern-born guide had truthfully reported Stuart's presence and location on the road of retreat, but cleverly suggested that the Union column avoid the Confederate trap by turning to the right, which it did. Had Custer continued in this direction, however, his force would have ridden straight into Lee's massed infantry and been cut to pieces.

Always on guard, Custer rode to the head of the column and ordered his advance unit to return to the main road. Realizing he was suspected, the guide fled in the darkness. Stuart, meanwhile, had learned of Custer's move off the road and ordered his force to a new position to attack him on the flank. Not knowing that Custer had returned to the main road, Stuart had actually left the way clear for the Union troopers to escape. Custer dashed back to the safety of the VI Corps, his rear guard fighting off Stuart's still-pursuing men at Burton's Ford while the main body of Union cavalry crossed the river.

Custer's diversionary raid had achieved its end—drawing

the Confederate cavalry away from Kilpatrick and Dahlgren—but that raid toward Richmond proved itself a disaster, one in which Dahlgren was killed and most of his command captured. Custer reported that his men had wreaked havoc in Albemarle County. They had burned three large grist mills, captured 50 Confederate soldiers and 500 horses, as well as liberated "100 contrabands [slaves]." Custer also pointed with pride to the fact that only a few of his troopers had been wounded and he had not lost a single man in his command.

Despite the success of this raid, Custer did fail in his mission to destroy the railway bridge at Charlottesville, a location where, ironically, his arch-enemy in the war, Rosser, decided to live out his life. Rosser became the town's postmaster and died there in 1910, 35 years after his rival, George Armstrong Custer, rode wildly with his 7th Cavalry across the Little Big Horn River into massacre and eternal legend.

Also See: Buckland Mills, Va., 1863; Kilpatrick-Dahlgren Raid, 1864.

Ref.: Carroll, *Custer in the Civil War*; Davis, *Jeb Stuart: The Last Cavalier*; Foote, *The Civil War* 3 vols.; Freeman, *Lee's Lieutenants*; Johnson and Buel (eds.), *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*; Kinsley, *Favor the Bold* (Vol. I, *The Civil War Years*); Lambert, *Major General George G. Meade*; Pennypacker, *General George G. Meade*; Stevens, *Three Years in the Sixth Corps*; Thomason, *Jeb Stuart*; Urwin, *Custer Victorious: The Civil War Battles of General George Armstrong Custer*; Van De Water, *Glory Hunter: A Life of General Custer*; Wellman, *Gray Riders: Jeb Stuart and His Men*; Whittaker, *The Complete Life of General George A. Custer*.

Aldie, Va. (battle), June 17, 1863, See: **Gettysburg Campaign**, 1863.

Alexandra, British vessel.

The *Alexandra*, a small wooden screw steamer built in 1862-1863 at Liverpool, England, by Fawcett, Preston and Co. at the William C. Miller and Co. shipyard, was seized in England just before its completion to prevent it from being acquired and outfitted as a warship by the Confederacy. The 145-foot by 20-foot by 10.6-foot vessel, displacing 286 tons, with an anticipated speed of 10 knots, had been built at the same shipyard that produced the Confederate raider *Florida*. When this was learned by Thomas H. Dudley, U.S. Consul at Liverpool, he reported his suspicions to U.S. Minister to England Charles Francis Adams.

Adams formally protested to Lord John Russell that the *Alexandra*, launched on March 7, 1863, had been secretly purchased by Confederate agents for the purpose of converting her to a warship for the Confederacy, violating the neutrality Great Britain had publicly claimed during the war. British authorities seized the ship on April 5, 1863. A trial was held in which the Crown stated that the Foreign Enlistment Act had been violated, but a jury almost immediately stated that the Act had not been violated. This decision was based on the fact that the ship had not been outfitted as a war vessel by British shipbuilders, who could take no responsibility for the purchaser later outfitting the *Alexandra* as a warship once it was outside waters governed by England and beyond British jurisdiction.

The case for the Crown was supported by three witnesses supplied by Charles Francis Adams: John Da Costa, a tugboat owner who claimed he had learned that the *Alexandra* had been secretly built for the Confederacy, and two Union spies, George Temple Chapman and Clarence Randolph Yonge. Chapman, according to Confederate agent James D. Bulloch, snooped about the shipbuilding area where the *Alexandra* was being constructed, saying that, though he was born a Northerner, he was a diehard secessionist and that his sympathies were with the South. In his testimony, Chapman could offer no concrete evidence that the ship was intended to be a Confederate war vessel and neither could Yonge.

Bulloch bristled at the appearance of Yonge in the British court in that Yonge had once been an officer in the Confederate navy, serving on board the famed raider *Alabama* as a paymaster until he was dismissed by Admiral Raphael Semmes for theft of funds. Earlier, Yonge had been Bulloch's own personal secretary before deserting the Southern cause and becoming a paid spy for Adams.

The builders of the *Alexandra* made a claim for damages and, after lengthy negotiations with the Crown, were paid £3,700. Though the *Alexandra* trial was considered a tactical Southern victory, it made the British more cautious in dealing with the Confederacy. Sec. of State William Seward commended Lord Russell for the "good faith and honour" expressed by the Crown in its attempt to halt the sale of potential warships to the South. Meanwhile, the *Alexandra* was held by British authorities until April 1864, when its name was changed to *Mary* and it sailed as a merchant vessel from Liverpool to Bermuda and then to Halifax, where British authorities monitored its captain, crew and movements.

In December 1864, the ship sailed to Bermuda and then to Nassau, where British authorities again detained her, with charges filed that the small ship might still be destined for Confederate service. The ship was not released until May 30, 1865, when a Nassau court determined that no "reasonably sufficient evidence" existed to prove "illegal intent" or to support a sentence of forfeiture to the Crown. By that time, the war was over and the *Mary* spent her remaining days in commerce on the high seas.

Also See: *Alabama*; *Florida*.

Ref.: Adams, *Great Britain and the American Civil War*; Baker, *The Diplomatic History of the War for the Union*; Bulloch, *The Secret Service of the Confederate States in Europe*; Cobden, *A Friendly Voice from England on American Affairs*; Jenkins, *Britain and the War for the Union*; Merli, *Great Britain and the Confederate Navy*; Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy*; Spencer, *The Confederate Navy in Europe*.

Alexandria, La. (skirmishes, river battles), May 1-8, 1864 See: **Red River Campaign**, 1864.

Allatoona, Ga. (battle), Oct. 5, 1864, See: **Franklin and Nashville, Tenn. Campaign**, 1864-1865.

Allatoona Hills, Ga. (battles), June 25, 27, 1864, See: **Dallas, Ga.**, same dates, under **Atlanta, Ga. Campaign**, 1864.

Alliance, 1863-1864, Confederate blockade runner.

A fast steam and sail sidewheeler, the *Alliance* successfully ran the Union blockade, beginning in late 1863, making several successful trips to Ireland and England with cotton as its cargo and returning to its Georgia ports with tons of guns, ammunition and powder. In April 1864, however, the *Alliance* was trapped by a small flotilla of Union warships and was run aground in the Savannah River, where it was captured.

Alsop House (Farm), Va. (battle), May 10, 1864, See: **Spotsylvania, Va. Campaign**, 1864.

Alvarado, 1861, Confederate blockade runner.

The bark *Alvarado*, a slow, elderly ship, had not long been in Confederate service when, on Aug. 5, 1861, it attempted to run the Union blockade off Fernandina, Fla. She was spotted by two Union vessels, the *Vincennes* and the fast sloop *Jamestown*, which attacked with such speed and ferocious broadsides that the *Alvarado* raced for shore, where it ran aground and was burned.

Amelia Springs, Va. (skirmish), April 5, 1865, See: **Appomattox, Va. Campaign**, 1865.

America (AKA: *Camilla*), 1862, Confederate dispatch ship.

Winner of the 1851 "Queen's Cup" (renamed after the victor), the *America* was a sleek wooden yacht displacing 100 tons, 111 feet long, 25 feet wide, built in 1825 by William H. Brown of New York. Rebuilt of teak in 1858, its owner, Capt. Henry Decie, sailed *America* to Savannah, Ga., in early 1861. He sold the ship to the Confederate government and remained in command.

Used as a blockade runner and renamed *Camilla*, the schooner was chiefly employed to carry important Confederate envoys and dispatches to Europe. She successfully slipped through the Union blockade and sailed to Ireland to deliver two government purchasing agents, naval Capt. James Heyward North and Maj. Edward C. Anderson.

Decie, who was British, sailed regularly to Europe, stating that his ship was merely a neutral racing vessel. To enhance that cover, he entered the ship in a regatta at Queenstown and another race, which took the ship around the Isle of Wight. Meanwhile, the vessel secretly took important Confederate dispatches back to Savannah and other ports.

In August 1862, the blockade-runner, while attempting to make a Florida port, sailed up the St. John's River. Decie saw that a Union flotilla was chasing him and he hid his ship in a shallow tributary, where he scuttled her. The USS *Ottawa* and other Federal ships located the partially sunken vessel and salvaged her. Refloated and repaired, the name *America* restored to her, she was sent to sea as a signal ship searching along the Southern coastal waters for blockade-runners.

Once the fast-moving *America* spotted a Confederate block-

ade-runner, it would signal to nearby Union warships by firing rockets in the direction of the fleeing Rebel ship to target its position, and thus guide Union vessels to the point of interception. The *America* was responsible for the capturing of many blockade-runners from 1862 to 1865.

Following the war, the yacht was berthed at Annapolis, where it was used as a training ship. In 1870, the *America* once more won the coveted cup, which had been named after her. In 1873 the vessel was bought by Benjamin Butler, and the ship remained in private hands for decades. In 1921 the *America* took a berth at Annapolis but, the relic was beyond preservation and was scrapped in 1945.

Also See: Blockade.

Ref.: Anderson, *Confederate Foreign Agent: The European Diary of Major Edward C. Anderson*; Bradlee, *Blockade Running during the Civil War*; Thompson, Stephens and Swan, *The Yacht America*; Wise, *Lifeline of the Confederacy*.

Andersonville, Ga., 1864-65, Confederate prison camp.

Background: Located at Anderson, Ga., a railroad station 12 miles north of Americus and 100 miles south of Atlanta, Andersonville Prison originally consisted of an enclosed stockade of 17 acres, later enlarged to 27 acres. The site was selected by Capt. W. Sidney Winder, son of Gen. John H. Winder, then commanding the Dept. of Henrico. Andersonville was originally intended to imprison 8,000-10,000 Union enlisted men in barracks. The stockade was established in February 1864 to handle the overflow of Union prisoners taken from Sherman's army, then beginning its March to the Sea, and from the eastern theater. With the overflow of Union captives, it soon became impossible to feed and house additional prisoners. The barracks were never completed for lack of construction crews and timber.

Prisoners were compelled to survive in the muddy, shadeless acres, creating tents from blankets, scraps of cloth, and even their own uniforms in seeking relief from the burning sun. By August 1864, Andersonville's population had swelled to more than 33,000 and, due to poor diet, disease, inadequate housing and sanitation, dozens began dying each day, with as many as 100 Union prisoners dying in a single 24-hour period. More than 13,000 of the 45,000 prisoners held in Andersonville died before its closing in April 1865. Andersonville was the most notorious of all prison camps, Union and Confederate, during the war, its infamy linked to horrific conditions and, in many instances, inhuman treatment. Its commander, Capt. Henry Wirz, was convicted of murdering prisoners through beatings, starvation and summary executions, despite mitigating circumstances. He was hanged on Nov. 10, 1865.

No prison camp in the Civil War was more infamous than the dreaded stockade at Andersonville, Ga. More than 30,000 Union soldiers were estimated to have died in Southern prison camps, and almost half of that number perished in the nightmare that was Andersonville. More than 25,000 Confederate prisoners died in Northern prison camps, but the treatment in these institutions was far superior to what Andersonville offered. At first, this prison stockade was intended to hold no more than 10,000 Federal prisoners—captured enlisted men who, for the most part, had been taken prisoner in the battles of the eastern theater, particularly those taken in Virginia.

The Confederate Commissary found that in early 1862, it had difficulty in feeding its own troops, let alone thousands of captured Union soldiers. Gen. John H. Winder, commander of

the Department of Henrico, and others proposed the establishment of a large prison stockade in the deep South as an area to be reserved for Union prisoners of war. This was to relieve the great pressure the South then had of feeding prisoners in Virginia and to remove prisoners to a distant spot where they could not easily be liberated. Winder's own son, Capt. W. Sidney Winder, scouted an area about 100 miles south of Atlanta, Ga. He finally selected a train station at Anderson, Ga., 12 miles north of the small town of Americus, property offered by Benjamin Dykes, a grist-mill owner.

The stockade was constructed of squared trunks of trees, each 20 feet long and buried 5 feet into the ground. The original area was about 17 acres, but this was later enlarged by an additional 10 acres, most of this being swampland with poor drainage. The ground sloped down to the only fresh water in the area, a tributary of Sweet Water Creek. The acres inside the stockade offered no shade from the hot Georgia summer sun, since all the pine trees in the area had been chopped down to make the fences for the stockade. A second stockade fence was made around the first, and a third was planned but never completed.

On Feb. 27, 1864, the first of the Federal prisoners arrived at Andersonville, 400 non-commissioned Union soldiers sent from Richmond. The stockade was not complete and the bake-house was still under construction; most of this construction was later completed by slaves. The 17 open acres offered no barracks, tents or shelter of any kind. Even with the cook (bake) house completed, authorities could not keep up with the arrival of prisoners, as reports from the then-commander, Col. A.W. Persons, confirmed. A barracks for hospital use was constructed, but this was soon filled to overcrowding. More than 400 Union prisoners arrived at Andersonville every day in the last weeks of February, and by March 1864 the stockade was teeming with more than 7,500 prisoners. Two months later the stockade was packed with 15,000 men, 5,000 more than it was designed to hold.

The space was incredibly confining with each man having about a 10-foot by 10-foot area in which to sleep, exercise, exist. Sanitary conditions were miserable and soon grew intolerable. There existed no washrooms, and the creek running through the land was soon polluted with human waste, giving rise to infection and diseases of all kinds. Prisoners had no real shelter and made living quarters by burrowing foxholes for themselves, covering these with branches, scraps of cloth, old planks, anything to keep out the driving rain and burning sun.

The camp was enlarged by another 10 acres in June 1864 but this did little to solve problems, since the camp, by August, was jammed with more than 32,000 men. By that time, Gen. John H. Winder had assumed command of Andersonville, but this was only one of several prisons he supervised. His aide, Capt. Henry Wirz, a Swiss-born, onetime medical student who had had his arm shattered at the battle of Seven Pines, was put in direct command of the stockade.

Andersonville, by the time of Wirz's arrival, was already a stinking pesthole, the entire stockade having been turned into a quagmire of mud with about 6 feet of slippery earth for each man. Prisoners were dying at the rate of more than 100 a day, and the burial squads could not keep up. Two meals were issued each day, the same rations issued to Confederate soldiers.



ABOVE, The sprawling tent city of Andersonville Prison camp in Georgia with thick forests in background; **BELOW,** a photo taken of the same camp with only a lone tree remaining—the forest had been chopped down to enlarge the stockade, then brimming with suffering Union prisoners.



Wirz asked Winder for additional rations, medical supplies and additional guards. (A total of 1,462 guards were assigned to Andersonville, but many of these were wounded veterans who served only briefly; most were young boys and old men.)

Winder, in response to Wirz's frantic appeals, sent an urgent telegram to Adjutant Gen. Samuel Cooper, requesting doctors and supplies. Cooper replied with a strange, ambiguous answer, promising supplies and medical assistance and instructing Winder to "place the prisoners properly."

Winder read this telegram and responded: "You speak of placing the prisoners properly. I do not comprehend what is intended by it. I know of but one way to place them and that is to put them in the stockade, where they have been four and five square yards to the man. This includes streets and about two acres of land about the stream." Wirz sent an endless stream of requests to his superiors for hoes, shovels and picks to clean out the area and attempt to build some habitable housing for the prisoners, but his pleas were, for the most part, ignored. By 1864, the South had little or no provisions or equipment for its own armies and citizens, let alone for prisoners of war.

Often enough, Wirz and his men could not serve available food, since there was a lack of proper containers, such as cups, bottles and plates. Prisoners were initially fed beef, bacon, cornmeal, rice, beans, molasses and vinegar. The ration was cut and cut again and then again, until prisoners received only a handful of cornmeal and some molasses, with occasional small portions of bacon.

The cornmeal, for lack of equipment, was not sifted, and corn, husk and cob were ground up and parceled out. The sharp particles in the husk injured the intestines and stomachs of the prisoners and soon all were suffering from diarrhea, so severe in hundreds of cases that it brought death. The hospital was swimming in filth, littered with dying men and even corpses. Exhausted burial squads could not dig the graves fast enough, even though these were shallow, only 4 feet down into the red Georgia clay.

There were few escape attempts from Andersonville. The prisoners were simply too weak and ill to make the physical effort to flee. Following an abortive escape within a week of the arrival of the first prisoners, a "deadline" consisting of small sticks surrounded the tents and foxholes of prisoners, and any prisoner stepping over this area was liable to be shot. Some prisoners, driven insane or delirious with the heat, purposely ran to the "deadline" and welcomed being shot by jittery sentries.

The guards were made up of young boys and old men who were overly cautious, and often as not they fired random shots at prisoners who wandered too close to the "deadline." Usually, a guard would warn a prisoner that if he did not move some distance away from the "deadline," he would be shot. On some occasions, the guards overreacted and shot the hapless prisoners without warning or without provocation. This led prisoners to believe the wild rumor—and it was never anything more than that—that guards received a 30-day furlough if they shot and killed a Yankee prisoner.

There were feeble attempts to tunnel out of Andersonville, but the prisoners had such little equipment with which to dig that the task was all but futile. The guards routinely inspected

the grounds, looking for tunnels by plunging steel ramrods or bayonets into the ground to discover hollowed-out areas. One sergeant found several such shallow tunnels leading only a few feet toward the stockade fence. He would invariably send a Negro down into the hole and the slave would emerge with a box that prisoners used to cart away excavated dirt. On one occasion, the Confederate sergeant handed the box to some scarecrow-thin prisoners and said, "This is the third time I have caught this box. Take it and go to work somewhere else, boys."

A group of determined non-commissioned officers spent several months attempting to dig their way out of Andersonville, but their tunnel came up short of the area targeted. The Union prisoners broke through the earth exactly under a large fire that the guards had started just outside the uncompleted third fence of the stockade. When the gaunt prisoners, their forms coated black with mud and slime, broke through the earth and leaped upward through the fire, the guards, terrified and believing that dead souls from Hades had suddenly appeared, let out yells and ran wildly into the night. Other guards rushed forward and recaptured the prisoners.

One Union soldier, Warren Lee Goss, along with some others, spent months tunneling toward the three fences that surrounded the stockade. His fellow prisoners laughed and hooted at his efforts, shouting, "Tell us when you strike pure water!" The chance of tunneling out of Andersonville was remote, as the distance from the beginning of the tunnel to the outer-most fence was great and would require weeks, if not months, of exhaustive digging. Goss and his friends nevertheless managed to dig just such a tunnel, and he and 19 others escaped. Most of these men were tracked down quickly with the help of the packs of bloodhounds surrounding the stockade. The ferocity of these dogs was later exaggerated; the dogs would certainly hunt down and surround escaping prisoners, but rarely attacked them. Goss himself managed to flee 75 miles, living on fruit given to him by slaves and on the flesh of a calf he killed. He was finally captured and returned to the stockade.

Informers were treated harshly by prisoners and guards alike. One informer who revealed the existence of a tunnel to Wirz as he walked through the compound with a squad of guards was later beaten severely. He was seen the next day being chased about the prison area by gangs of prisoners and the guards did nothing to stop the harassment. Desperate, the informer ran inside the deadline, begging the guards to protect him. The guards warned him to step outside the deadline, and when he refused, he was reportedly shot to death. Said prisoner John L. Ransom of the 9th Mich. Cav.: "A general hurrahing took place as the rebels had only saved our men the trouble of killing him."

The overcrowding became insufferable at Andersonville, with men fighting for 6 feet of space in which to lie down. Those possessing a tin pot, a spoon or other utensils were rich, and those with gold pieces were endangered. William Collins, a Union soldier from Pennsylvania, organized a band of cutthroats that victimized prisoners, terrorizing other inmates into turning over their most meager belongings, beating and even murdering those who resisted. Complaints to the commandant only brought a shrug and an explanation that not enough guards were avail-



ABOVE, Idling Union prisoners at Andersonville—they were confined to an area of only a few feet, many without tents and living in holes, mercilessly pelted by rain and baked by the sun.

In the rare photo below, Union prisoners at Andersonville pose for a Confederate cameraman; one-third of these men would be dead six months later, victims of malnutrition, disease and neglect.





ABOVE, An artist at Andersonville sketched the dead body of a Union soldier who was shot at the “deadline”; BELOW, A skeletal survivor of the dreaded prison camp.



able to police the prisoners. With permission from the commander (and Gen. Winder), Union troops organized a ragtag police force of several dozen stronger men who finally overwhelmed Collins and his men, hanging him and five of his henchmen on July 11, 1864 (under the authority of Wirz's General Order No. 57). The other terrorists were beaten so severely that three of them died. Other prisoners opened makeshift stores and “loaned” items to prisoners, charging them high interest rates and beating them up when payment was not forthcoming, an early-day “juice” racket. The camp divided into cliques and gangs, these preying upon weaker prisoners. The guards, mostly wounded Confederate veterans, had little or no power to prevent the prisoners from preying upon each other.

The hospital was first located inside the stockade, but it was removed and enlarged, placed outside the prison area. This facility was, by August 1864, hopelessly crowded and understaffed. Few doctors were available and their assistants were medically inexperienced. Most of the cases treated were suffering from malnutrition, dysentery and diarrhea. The lack of vegetables further added to the misery of the prisoners. Lice and vermin of all sorts infested the prisoners and unattended human waste caused further infection and disease. Excrement was everywhere inside the stockade and the stench, shimmering in the hot months, was overwhelming.

Dr. Joseph Jones, a Confederate physician, inspected Andersonville in September 1864 and filed a report describing conditions there. Jones stated: “In the stockade, with the exception of the damp lowlands bordering the small streams, the surface was covered with huts and small ragged tents, and parts of blankets and fragments of oilcloth, coats and blankets stretched upon sticks. The tents and huts were not arranged according to any order, and there was in most parts of the enclosure scarcely room for two men to walk abreast between the tents and huts.... Masses of corn bread, old bones, rags and filth of every description were scattered around or accumulated in large piles. If one might judge from the large pieces of corn bread scattered about in every direction on the ground, the prisoners were either very lavishly supplied with this article of diet or else this kind of food was not relished by them.”

By September 1864, the small stream slicing through the stockade was clogged with human waste and its water was unfit to drink. This condition increased the death rate alarmingly. Carts entered the compound several times during the day to remove the dead. Bodies were piled high on the carts and taken a quarter of a mile northwest of the stockade. Here slaves labored from dawn to dusk digging long trenches, about 4 feet deep. The dead were placed side by side without coffins and quickly covered to prevent their festering corpses from spreading more infection. These mass graves, for the most part, remained unmarked.

The hospital staff, such as it was, proved to be tireless and dedicated, but it was impossible to care for their patients. The hospital itself was called a barracks, but this housing really consisted of tents without walls and no bunks were available. Patients lay on the bare earth, as there was little straw to make beds. The food was little better than inside the stockade, although the staff obtained small quantities of flour and arrowroot and fed this to their patients. Still, scurvy, diarrhea, pella-

gra, dysentery and hospital gangrene flourished in these unsanitary medical quarters. They were, however, still preferable to the stockade facilities, and men fought, even killed each other, to gain a pass to the hospital.

Dr. W.J.W. Kerr, who worked in the hospital, reported: "From the crowded condition, filthy habits, bad diet, and dejected depressed condition of the prisoners, their systems became so disordered that the smallest abrasion of the skin from the rubbing of a shoe, or from the effects of the hot sun, or from the prick of a splinter, or from scratching a mosquito bite, in some cases took on rapid and frightful ulceration and gangrene."

Commandant Wirz, contrary to most evidence later brought against him, fought valiantly to save lives, not take them. He supervised work crews in an attempt to drain off the polluted stream waters and create some sort of sanitary conditions, but his crews were scant and he had few tools with which to accomplish his overwhelming chore. Wirz genuinely attempted to care for his hapless prisoners, according to most reports, and did not inflict cruel punishments, let alone murder, as he was later reported to have done. When Sherman's army sliced its way through Georgia, authorities at Andersonville feared that the Union Army might liberate the masses of men there, and it was reported that Gen. Winder gave an order to Wirz to train cannon on the camp and open fire if Sherman's men came within striking distance.

Wirz was a short-tempered man who was later described by one Union prisoner as "a man of mercurial temperament, prone to anger and prone to abuse. When things went well, he was kind and good-natured; when they went ill, he was the reverse ... He might have commanded a company well, and possibly a regiment, but thirty thousand men got away with him. He was at sea in their management."

When Sherman pushed through Georgia in September and October, the Confederate high command in Richmond believed that an attempt would be made to liberate the Federals held at

Andersonville. Though Andersonville was not foremost on Sherman's mind, he did authorize Gen. George Stoneman's cavalry to try to free Union prisoners at Macon and, if successful, ride southward to free those in Andersonville. Stoneman never got into Macon, however, and, after his forces were surrounded by Rebel cavalry, surrendered; many of his men, ironically, wound up in Andersonville as prisoners.

Nevertheless, with the threat of Sherman at hand, all the prisoners at Andersonville, except about 5,000 of those most ill, were transferred to prisons in Savannah, Ga., and Charleston, S.C. Col. C.G. Gibbs took over command of Andersonville and, with so few prisoners to feed, proper rations were restored and the death rate decreased dramatically. Additional prisoners and some of the former prisoners were returned to the stock-



Slaves burying Union prisoners at Andersonville in mass graves; more than 100 men died every day from lack of proper medical attention.



A sea of headstones erected at Andersonville after the war in memory of the more than 13,000 Union prisoners-of-war who perished in this worst of all Civil War prisons.

ade after Sherman's men veered eastward, but conditions at the camp were greatly improved, with the stream's pollution cleaned up and proper hospital sheds constructed.

At the close of the war, Andersonville gave up several thousand prisoners, and Wirz was later arrested and tried in Washington, where a great deal of evidence, later reported as falsified, was presented. The military tribunal, headed by Gen. Lew Wallace, convicted and condemned Wirz, who was hanged on Nov. 10, 1865. He protested his guilt to the last and died bravely.

Much of the misery and extraordinary deaths at Andersonville might have been avoided had the highest-ranking non-commissioned officers among the prisoners taken charge of their own men. Certainly they should have organized sanitary details, proper shelter, exercise and drill to maintain healthy conditions, morale and discipline. This was feebly attempted at times, but organizing a vast army of weak and ill prisoners was beyond the comprehension or ambition of the ranking sergeants, who had never been trained to solve the problems of prisoner survival. Vastly contributing to this situation was the fact that Union troops, as was the case with Confederate forces in Federal prisons, were bound together through fierce sectional loyalties—men of Illinois or New York “taking care of their own,” instead of practicing a universal allegiance and moral responsibility to all members of their own army.

It was estimated that more than 13,000 men out of more than 32,000 died at Andersonville, certainly the most horrible of all the prisons maintained during the war—but most others, Southern and Northern, though much better maintained, suffered almost as many deaths of their near-doomed populations.

Also See: Stoneman's and McCook's Raid to Macon and Lovejoy, July 26-31, 1864, under Atlanta Campaign, 1864.

Ref.: Abbott, *Prison Life in the South*; Atwater, *A List of the Union Soldiers Buried at Andersonville*; Averill, *Andersonville Prison Park*; Baker, *Andersonville: The Story of a Civil War Prison Camp*; Blakey, *General John H. Winder, C.S.A.*; Boggs, *Eighteen Months a Prisoner Under the Rebel Flag*; Braun, *Andersonville: An Object Lesson in Protection*; Brown, *The Tragedy of Libby and Andersonville Prison Camps*; Chipman, *The Tragedy of Andersonville*; Davidson, *My Fourteen Months in Southern Prisons*; Dufur, *Over the Deadline or Tracked by Bloodhounds*; Elarton, *Andersonville*; Futch, *History of Andersonville Prison*; Goss, *A Soldier's Story of His Captivity at Andersonville*; Hamlin, *Martyria, Or, Andersonville Prison*; Hanly, *Andersonville*; Harrold, *Libby, Andersonville, Florence: The Capture, Imprisonment, Escape and Rescue*; Hemmerlein, *Prisoners and Prisoners of the Civil War*; Hesseltine, *Civil War Prisons*; Howe, *Adventures of an Escaped Union Prisoner from Andersonville*; James, *Civil War Diary: Sumter to Andersonville*; Long, *Twelve Months at Andersonville*; Lyon, *In and Out of Andersonville Prison*; McElroy, *Andersonville*; _____, *This Was Andersonville*; Maile, *Prison Life at Andersonville*; Marvel, *Andersonville: The Last Depot*; Murray, *History of George W. Murray and His Confinement at Andersonville*; Ransom, *Andersonville Diary*; Roach, *History of Andersonville*; Smith, *From Andersonville to Freedom*; Speer, *Portals to Hell: Military Prisons of the Civil War*; Spencer, *A Narrative of Andersonville*; Stevenson, *The Southern Side, or, Andersonville Prison*; Stibbs, *Andersonville Prison and the Trial of Henry Wirz*; U.S. Quartermaster Dept., *The Martyrs Who, For Our Country, Gave Up Their Lives in the Prison Pens of Andersonville, Ga.*; Urban, *My Experience Mid Shot and Shell and in Rebel Den*; Vaughter, *Prison Life in Dixie*; Wirz, *The Demon of Andersonville, or the Trial of Wirz*; _____, *Trial of Henry Wirz*; Zeigler, *Half an Hour With an Andersonville Prisoner*.

Andrews' Raid (AKA: The Great Locomotive Chase; The Mitchel Raid), April 12, 1862, Union raid into Georgia.

Background: At the instigation of Union Gen. Ormsby McKnight Mitchel, 25 Federal raiders, led by spy James J. Andrews, embarked upon a raid deep into Confederate territory on 04/07/62, meeting in Marietta, Ga., and confiscating a Southern train called “the General” at Big Shanty, Ga., on 04/12/62. They drove the train north, cutting telegraph wires, tearing up track and attempting to burn railway bridges in an effort to disrupt Southern supply and troop routes along the Georgia State and East Tennessee railroads and thus block reinforcements being sent to oppose Mitchel's attack on Chattanooga. After doing some damage to the lines and being energetically pursued by Confederates in several trains, all of the Union raiders were captured. Since all the Union men were dressed in civilian clothes when apprehended, they were tried as spies; Andrews and seven others were hanged in Atlanta. Eight others escaped and the rest remained in prison until exchanged in 03/62. All of the men involved in this spectacular raid, which was also known as The Great Locomotive Chase, were awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. The raiders (those with asterisks following their names were executed) included James J. Andrews*; Samuel Robertson*; William Campbell*; Perry Shadrack*; James Smith; W.A. Fuller; Andrew Murphy; Mark Wood, Pvt., Co. C., 21st Ohio Inf.; W. J. Knight, Pvt., Co. E, 21st Ohio Inf.; Daniel A. Dorsey, Corp., Co. H., 33rd Ohio Inf.; Robert Buffum, Pvt., Co. H., 21st Ohio Inf.; J.A. Wilson*, Pvt., Co. C, 21st Ohio Inf.; William Bensinger, Pvt. Co. G, 21st Ohio Inf.; William Reddick, Corp., Co. B., 33rd Ohio Inf.; John Wollam, Pvt., Co. C, 33rd Ohio Inf.; W.W. Brown, Pvt., Co. F, 21st Ohio Inf.; Samuel Slavens*, Pvt., Co. E, 33rd Ohio Inf.; E.H. Mason, Sgt., Co. K, 21st Ohio Inf.; M.J. Hawkins, Corp., Co. A, 33rd Ohio Inf.; Marian A. Ross*, Sgt.-Maj., 2nd Ohio Inf.; John R. Porter, Pvt., Co. G, 21st Ohio Inf.; Jacob Parrott, Pvt., Co. K, 33rd Ohio Inf.; John M. Scott*, Sgt., Co. F, 21st Ohio Inf.

One of the most adventure-packed incidents of the war involved 25 Union volunteers dashing into Georgia to steal a train and cutting the vital Confederate supply lines between Marietta, Ga., and Chattanooga, Tenn. The raid was the brain-storm of a Union spy, an idea wholly embraced by Gen. Ormsby McKnight Mitchel, a truly eccentric but brilliant character. Mitchel had been chief engineer for the Little Miami Railroad and a professor at Cincinnati College, teaching philosophy and astronomy. He operated the largest telescope in America at the time, and his theories of life on other planets often shocked colleagues. Mitchel was appointed a brigadier at the war's beginning and he served well in the Department of the Ohio, fighting under the command of Gen. Don Carlos Buell in Tennessee and Alabama. He would later quarrel with Buell, resign his commission, be reinstated and fight in South Carolina, where he contracted yellow fever and died.

In early April 1862, Mitchel received orders to protect Nashville, Tenn., from Confederate attacks while Buell and Gen. Ulysses S. Grant, leading separate forces, converged on Corinth, Miss. Mitchel's forces consisted of 17,000 men, not enough to liberate eastern Tennessee, long a plan in his mind. Mitchel believed that if he could strangle the Confederate rail line leading from Georgia to Chattanooga, Southern forces would not be able to send reinforcements and supplies to Confederates operating in eastern Tennessee, and he would achieve victory in that theater. To that end, he planned a daring raid into Georgia wherein



The *General*, stolen along with a number of boxcars by Union saboteurs in what became known as the Great Locomotive Chase.

a group of volunteers would steal a train and travel northward, tearing up the track behind them and damaging other equipment as they raced ahead.

Selected to head this raid was a Union spy, James J. Andrews, who had worked for Gen. Buell. He was a tall, somber man with a long beard. Andrews, a Kentuckian, was known for his nerve and willingness to take risks. He had earned the confidence of many Confederate officers by smuggling much-needed drugs to their field hospitals and, in so doing, was able to spy on military movements. He had also, in March 1862, been sent with eight other men to burn all the bridges west of Chattanooga, a mission that was not a complete success. The spy then visited Atlanta, Ga., traveling the rail lines northward and noting the feeble security surrounding the Southern railways. It was then that Andrews conceived of stealing a train and racing northward, destroying the bridges and rails after him.

Mitchel, headquartered in Shelbyville, Tenn., gave orders to Andrews to proceed with his raid. The plan called for Andrews to burn all the bridges and tear up track on the Georgia State Railroad and, once across the border, to do the same to the East Tennessee Railroad. Andrews, two civilians and 22 volunteers from the Ohio brigade of Gen. J.W. Still donned civilian clothes, careful to pick out the type of clothes worn by Southerners. The men carried concealed sidearms. On the night of April 7, 1862, Andrews met with his men at a railroad siding a mile outside of Shelbyville.

Andrews outlined his plan, telling his men that they were to travel eastward into the Cumberland Mountains in units of twos and threes. They would then head south, taking trains, all of them to meet Andrews at a rendezvous in Marietta, Ga., three days later. If they were stopped and questioned by Confederate forces, Andrews cautioned, they were to tell their interrogators that they were Kentuckians and were going to join the Confederate Army. The men then traveled in small groups, going east, then southward. One man got lost and never appeared in Georgia. Two more were detained by Confederate provost marshals. They did not reveal their true identities or mission and were compelled to join the Southern army, marching away to fight battles for a cause they did not serve. Two more men reached Marietta, but failed to find the rendezvous.

The raiders consisted of 20 men when they met in Marietta.

Several voiced apprehension about their chances of success. Andrews stood before them and said, "I am committed to this raid and I shall perform my duty or die." He offered his men a choice of either withdrawing from the scheme then and there or joining him on the raid. None backed down. On the morning of April 12, 1862, these men, purchasing tickets for different destinations in the direction of Chattanooga, boarded a train at Big Shanty (now Kennesaw Station), outside Marietta. Andrews had noted that the trains heading north were crowded with Confederate troops, and the train the raiders took, the *General*, was clogged with soldiers. Most of these troops, however, got off the train at Big Shanty, along with the conductor, engineer and crewmen. They herded into a nearby restaurant, Lacy House, to have breakfast, and while they were occupied, Andrews and some men leaped into the engine cab and onto the tender. Others uncoupled the passenger coaches, leaving the engine with three empty boxcars behind it.

The Union engineers in the party started the engine, while Andrews leaned out of the engine cab to see the rest of his men jump into the last boxcar. The train pulled out of the station heading north, going past Confederate sentries with puzzled looks on their faces. Looking back at Big Shanty, the Union raiders in the boxcar could see the engineer and soldiers running onto the station platform, shouting and pointing muskets in their direction. The train, however, was soon around a bend and out of sight. Andrews gave orders to stop a mile or so from Big Shanty. His men leaped from the train and quickly tore up the rails of track behind the last boxcar and cut the telegraph wires. This act would be repeated over and over again.

Meanwhile, Mitchel and his troops had begun their march southward to meet Andrews, driving toward Huntsville, Ala. This forced several Southern trains, loaded with Confederate troops fleeing before Mitchel, to head south and eventually pass the stolen train. Andrews calculated these emergencies and noted various sidings where he ordered the train pulled over until the Southern troop trains passed. As Andrews and his men pulled into small stations, startled stationmasters began to rattle off threatening questions. To each query, Andrews coolly replied that he was in charge of a special train that was rushing much-needed gun powder to Confederate Gen. P.G.T. Beauregard, commanding forces at Corinth, Miss.

The real danger to the raiders lay not ahead, but to their rear. Anthony Murphy, a tough master mechanic and superintendent of the Georgia State Railway, along with conductor William A. Fuller and engineer Jeff Cain, had first pursued the stolen *General* on a handcar to the town of Etowah, where they commandeered a special train, the *Jonah*, and packed it with repair crews and troops. The *Jonah* was racing after Andrews, stopping to repair ruptured rail lines and rewire cut telegraph lines. The Great Locomotive Chase was on. (The indefatigable Murphy, Fuller and Cain would abandon the *Jonah*, commandeer the *William L. Smith*, and, when that train was stopped by a broken rail, race on foot northward to take over the *Texas* and its engineer, Peter J. Bracken, in their dogged pursuit of Andrews and his men.)

For William Pittenger of the 2nd Ohio Vol., who was in the last boxcar, watching the rails behind, the race northward provided the most exciting moments of his life: "There was a wonderful exhilaration in passing swiftly by towns and stations through the heart of the enemy's country in this manner. It possessed just enough of the spice of danger, in this part of the run, to render it thoroughly enjoyable."

At Kingston, the Andrews train was flagged onto a siding. A train from Rome, Ga., had arrived and was waiting for the morning mail from the very train Andrews had stolen. Andrews boldly delivered the mail to the conductor of the Rome train, which then pulled out. The stationmaster, however, refused to allow Andrews to continue, telling him that a freight train going south had the right-of-way. The freight arrived with a red flag on its engine. Andrews groaned and told his comrades that the flag meant that another train was behind it and they would also have to wait for that train to pass southward.

Andrews then returned to the stationmaster, pretending to be indignant at having his important powder train held up. "What does it mean that the road is blocked in this manner?" Andrews asked him. "I have orders to take this powder to Beauregard without a minute's delay!"

Replied the stationmaster: "Mitchel has captured Huntsville and is said to be coming to Chattanooga, and we are getting everything out of there."

Andrews was further frustrated when he learned that a third train would be passing through Kingston before he would be allowed to proceed northward. Meanwhile, the passengers from the two earlier trains and those working about the station, including many heavily armed Confederate soldiers, began to study the so-called "powder train" and to ask questions of Andrews, who replied tersely and with authority that he was an officer in Beauregard's command on a special mission. Several Southern soldiers began to investigate the third boxcar where most of the Union raiders were shut up, guns drawn, ready to do battle if necessary. The tension mounted but was broken by the sound of the whistle from the third train.

As soon as the third train glided into the station, passing the stolen train on the siding, Andrews ordered his engineer to give the engine full throttle and they were soon off again, but they were only about four minutes ahead of their pursuers, led by the intrepid Murphy. The Southerners arrived on handcars and soon commandeered one of the trains at Kingston, flying in

pursuit of Andrews and his men. Four miles from Kingston, the train stopped and the raiders cut the telegraph wire. They then began to pull loose a single rail, but were startled to hear in the distance the shrieking whistle of the following Confederate train. Eight men managed to break the rail, but this caused them to fall over the embankment, and by the time they scrambled back up to the train, already moving forward, more precious time was lost.

The next station was Calhoun, where, according to the timetable Andrews kept, an express was to arrive. He gave orders to move at top speed to beat the southbound express train into Calhoun. The nine miles to Calhoun were covered in 60 m.p.h. speeds, very fast for that era. The express train was already in the station and about to pull out. Andrews ordered the whistle blown and, hearing this, the express backed up to allow the stolen train to take to the sidetrack, then moved on.

As the stolen train neared Adairsville, the Union men could hear Murphy's pursuing train whistling behind them and saw puffs of smoke from its engine. The raiders tore up another track and when the pursuers were forced to stop, Murphy and his men ran along the track and stopped another southbound train, using this to continue the pursuit. The Confederates bore down, running their engine at top speed, and were soon overtaking the Union raiders. At one point, the Confederate train was only two minutes away from the raiders, who had stopped to loosen another rail, but they abandoned this effort when the Southern train came in sight.

To slow down the Confederates, Andrews ordered first one, then another boxcar uncoupled, but the Confederate train simply pushed these two cars ahead of its engine and continued the pursuit. The raiders by then were on a clear track all the way to Chattanooga. Their immediate goal was the wooden trestle bridge at Oostenaula, which they intended to burn. The Confederates followed so closely that it was impossible for the raiders to stop their train and take on wood and water for the engine.

The men in the last boxcar being pulled by the stolen engine tore the sides of the car apart and dropped these wooden slabs and some crossties onto the track, which slowed the pursuing engine enough so that the raiders could stop at two water and fuel stations and take on wood and water. Several times, the Union men stopped their train and attempted to take up rails, but the Southerners were hot on their heels and came within rifle range, firing at the raiders and causing them to flee again and again before they could damage the rails.

Murphy raced his pursuing train at reckless speeds, causing many in his party to fear for their lives. They begged Murphy to slow down, but he ignored these pleas and ordered his engineer to maintain top speed, threatening him with arrest if he did not perform his duty. Murphy was obsessed with catching the raiders, and he almost wrecked his train to do it. At one bend, the Southern train came upon a cross-tie thrown down by the raiders. The engine was almost thrown from the track, but somehow managed to right itself after striking the heavy timber.

On board the Union train, several raiders asked Andrews to stop and allow them to hide in ambush, wait until the Confederate train came close enough so that the raiders could use their pistols, but Andrews refused, saying that the road ahead could be blocked at any time if Confederates in the areas ahead learned



At left, James J. Andrews, leader of the daring raid; center, the Union raiders stealing the *General* at Big Shanty, Ga.; at right, William Pittinger, one of the raiders, who wrote several books about the Great Locomotive Chase.



of their coming. In that suspicion he was correct. Confederate officials had received a wire, sent through another undamaged telegraph system, that the raiders were heading that way in a stolen train. Southern trains jammed with Confederate soldiers began moving south to intercept the raiders.

The Union train went through Dalton, Ga., without incident and, a few miles outside of that town, came to a halt. Only 100 yards away was a large Confederate encampment where more than a regiment of men could be seen. One of the raiders climbed the telegraph pole next to the rails. A Southern sentry asked him what he was doing, and the raider simply smiled and said he was repairing the line. He then cut the wire and the Union train roared onward. The whistle of the pursuing train came nearer so that Andrews did not call a stop at the long tunnel bridge north of Dalton, which the raiders originally intended to burn.

Finally, the Union train reached the long, covered railroad bridge at Oostenaula. They uncoupled the last boxcar in the middle of the bridge and set fire to it. Smoke enveloped the car and small tongues of flame began to lick at the inside top of the bridge. Then the Confederate train appeared. As bad luck would have it, a light drizzle had been falling all morning, and this prevented the bridge from catching fire. The Confederates did

not hesitate when they saw the burning car in the middle of the bridge, but went forward at full steam, dashing into the flames and pushing the burning car through the bridge, out the other side and on to a siding. The raiders, low on water and fuel, chugged on, hoping to reach the outskirts of Chattanooga, where they planned to abandon the train, flee on foot, and hopefully join Mitchel's army, which was then 30 miles west of that city.

Mitchel had stopped his advance against Chattanooga largely because he had received no word that Andrews had accomplished his mission—destroying track and communications to prevent Southern armies from racing to Chattanooga ahead of his own troops. According to one of the raiders, Mitchel “probably believed to the day of his death, six months later, that the whole Andrews party had perished without accomplishing anything.”

The Andrews raiders now realized that escape by rail was impossible. About 18 miles south of Chattanooga, they abandoned the stolen train near Ringgold and fled on foot in small parties. Within two days, all but two of the raiders were captured. They were completely ignorant of the terrain over which they tried to escape, and all of those citizens they encountered were Southern sympathizers who helped in their capture. All of the raiders were eventually tracked down, including the two



Four surviving members of Andrews' Raid: from left to right, William Bensinger, W.W. Brown, W.J. Knight and John R. Porter, all winners of the Congressional Medal of Honor.

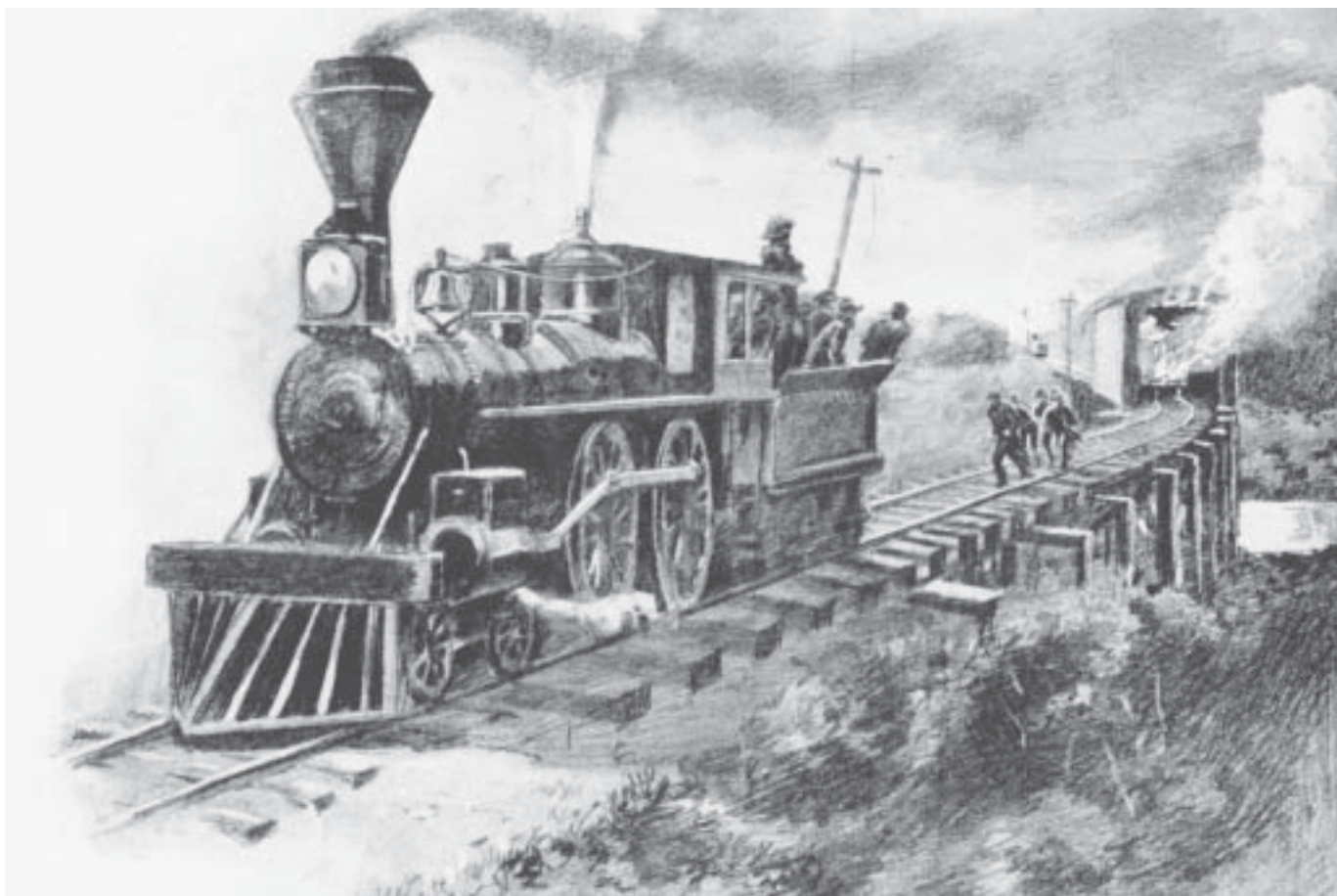


The raiders set the last boxcar on fire before reaching Oostenaula.

men who had failed to arrive at the secret meeting place in Marietta.

Since the raiders were wearing civilian dress when apprehended, they were held as spies and condemned by a military court-martial in Atlanta a short time later. Andrews and seven others were hanged on June 7, 1862. Eight of the raiders overpowered their guards in an Atlanta prison area and managed to escape, all returning safely to the Northern lines. The rest remained captives until they were exchanged in March 1863, under a special arrangement made by Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton. All of those raiders involved in the Andrews Raid received Congressional Medals of Honor.

Ref.: Commager, *The Blue and the Gray; Deeds of Valor*; Fuerlicht, *Andrews' Raiders*; Grose, *The Case of Private Smith and the Remaining Mysteries of the Andrews Raid*; Headley, *Old Stars: The Life and Military Career of Major-General Ormsby M. Mitchel*; McBride, *The Historic "General": A Thrilling Episode of the Civil War*; Markle, *Spies and Spymasters of the Civil War*; Mitchel, *Ormsby McKnight Mitchel: Astronomer and General, A Biographical Narrative*; Nashville, Chattanooga & St. Louis Railway and Western & Atlantic Railroad, *The Story of the General, 1862*; Ohio Boys in Dixie; O'Neill, *Wild Train: The Story of the Andrews Raiders*; Pittinger, *Capturing a Locomotive: A History of Secret Service in the Late War*; _____, *Daring and Suffering: A History of the Great Railroad Adventure*; _____, *The Great Locomotive Chase: A History of the Andrews Railroad Raid in Georgia in 1862*; Wilson, *Adventures of Alf Wilson: A Thrilling Episode of the Dark Days of the Rebellion*.



Uncoupling the burning boxcar in a covered trestle bridge at Oostenaula, Ga., the raiders hoped the blaze would destroy the span, but rain spoiled the scheme.

Anthony's Bridge, Ga. (battle), Aug. 31-Sept. 1, 1864, See: **Jonesboro, Ga.**, same dates, under **Atlanta, Ga. Campaign**, 1864.

Antietam (Sharpsburg), **Md., Campaign**, Sept. 5-20, 1862, consisting of the battles of **South Mountain** (Turner's Gap, Fox's Gap and Crampton's Gap), **Md.**, Sept. 14, 1862; **Harpers Ferry, W. Va.**, Sept. 12-16, 1862; **Antietam, Md.**, Sept. 16-18, 1862; **Boteler's Ford** (or Blackford's Ford), **W. Va.**, Sept. 18-20, 1862.

Summary of battles, engagements and skirmishes: Following a series of Confederate victories, Gen. Robert E. Lee believed it was necessary to take the initiative in the war and attack the Union forces in Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania. After informing President Jefferson Davis of his plans, Lee immediately invaded Maryland, crossing the Potomac on the night of 09/05-06/62 with approximately 45,000 troops (Livermore estimated about 51,000). Lee's objective was to seize the Union railhead at Harrisburg, Pa., and move against Philadelphia, Pa., and Baltimore, Md., then move against Washington.

The Union forces by this time were placed by President Lincoln under the command of the reinstated Gen. George B. McClellan, who organized more than 95,000 troops and moved into Maryland in slow pursuit of Lee. The Confederate commander split his troops into four forces, sending Gen. James Longstreet with three divisions, the reserve artillery and supply trains toward Pennsylvania, crossing South Mountain, Md., to Boonsboro.

Gen. Thomas Jonathan Jackson was to capture Martinsburg, W. Va., with three divisions after taking a circuitous route to the west, then descend upon Harpers Ferry, while Gen. Lafayette McLaws moved with two divisions against Harpers Ferry from the Maryland side of the Potomac, and Gen. John G. Walker, leading a single division, would recross the Potomac and attack Harpers Ferry from the Virginia shore.

South Mountain, Md., 09/14/62: Confederate positions at South Mountain, specifically Turner's Gap, Fox's Gap and Crampton's Gap, became untenable when attacked on 09/14/62 by superior forces of Franklin's VI Corps at Crampton's Gap, driving off McLaws' division, at Turner's Gap on South Mountain by Hooker's I Corps, and at Fox's Gap by Reno's IX Corps and Hooker's I Corps (forcing D.H. Hill's division to withdraw). Union Gen. Jesse Reno, commander of IX Corps (replaced by Cox but actually commanded by Burnside) was killed near Fox's Gap, where Confederate Gen. Samuel Garland, a brigade commander, was also killed. Losses at South Mountain were estimated to be 1,813 Union dead, wounded and missing; estimated Confederate losses were 2,685 casualties.

Harpers Ferry, W. Va., 09/12-16/62: Gen. Jackson attacked Harpers Ferry and, after a chaotic and brief resistance, captured this vital supply depot on 09/15/62 (the actual surrender occurred on 09/16/62), with more than 11,500 Federal troops taken prisoner—the largest capitulation of American troops up to that time—along with 73 guns, 13,000 small arms, largest supplies of ammunition, foodstuffs, medical supplies, clothing and equipment.

Antietam, Md., 09/16-18/62: With the arrival of McClellan's main forces, Lee reassembled most of his forces at Sharpsburg, Md., west of Antietam Creek, recalling most of Jackson's troops from Harpers Ferry. On 09/17/62, a Wednesday, with his back against the Potomac, Lee fought a defensive battle against McClellan who, piecemeal, hurled his huge corps against Lee's left flank (Hooker's I Corps, Mansfield's XII Corps and part of Sumner's II Corps), then center (Sumner's II Corps), then right flank (Burnside's IX Corps).

Lee's hard-pressed divisions under corps commanders Jackson and Longstreet barely managed to remain intact after the daylong battle of Antietam, which proved to be the bloodiest day in the Civil War. Lee's army was saved from destruction at Antietam by the timely arrival of A.P. Hill's division, which accomplished a forced march of 17 miles in a few hours, arriving in time to blunt the last Union attack of the day by Gen. Burnside and lead effective counterattacks.

According to the most reliable statistics (Livermore), Confederate losses were 10,316 men (1,546 killed, 7,752 wounded and 1,018 missing). Union losses were 12,410 (2,108 killed, 9,549 wounded, 753 missing). Total losses on both sides amounted to 22,726. Union losses at Harpers Ferry brought the Northern count of wounded, killed and captured to more than 27,000, twice that incurred by Lee.

Boteler's Ford, W. Va.: 09/18-20/62: Before the indecisive McClellan could again attack, Lee withdrew his battered army across the Potomac on the night of 09/18-19/62. Moving his army toward Martinsburg, Lee left a rear guard of two brigades and all his artillery, 44 guns, deployed on steep bluffs overlooking the Potomac on the south bank of the river under the command of Gen. William Nelson Pendleton, his artillery chief.

These Rebel forces were attacked by snipers from Gen. Fitz-John Porter's command, then three brigades from Gen. George Sykes' division, which crossed the Potomac at Boteler's Ford at 7 a.m., 09/20/62, only to retreat after going a mile along the Charleston road when faced by the return of A.P. Hill's division, which had been ordered by Jackson to save the Confederate artillery. The Union brigades fled back across the Potomac after one of their regiments, the 118th Pennsylvania, was routed and 269 of its 750 men were killed or wounded. Lee recouped his artillery, less four cannons seized by the Federals, and withdrew to Winchester in the Shenandoah Valley, 30 miles from the Potomac. McClellan did not pursue.

The Union Army was a sprawling, disorganized shambles after the humiliating defeat of Gen. John Pope by Gen. Robert E. Lee at the second battle of Bull Run on Aug. 29-30, 1862. Federal forces had abandoned Virginia altogether and Lee was quick to seize the opportunity of carrying the war to the North. In early September 1862, Lee met with President Jefferson Davis and strategized against keeping the Confederacy in a defensive position where it fought exclusively on its own soil. It was time, and quickly, he urged, to attack Union forces on Northern terrain. Davis agreed and Lee hastily ordered his divisions to prepare for the invasion of Maryland. (Actually, Lee did not directly consult Davis before putting the Army of Northern Virginia on the march; he informed Davis of his moves in dispatches from the field. Davis replied favorably in the same manner, his first endorsement of Lee's invasion plans not reaching Lee until he had already crossed the Potomac into Maryland.)

Meanwhile, President Abraham Lincoln was in a quandary, having no able-minded military leader to assume command of what was left of Pope's Army of Virginia, which was reconstructed into the Army of the Potomac. First, he summoned Gen. Henry Halleck to Washington. Halleck's record in the West looked impressive. His forces had driven Confederates from Missouri, Kentucky and western Tennessee. Union troops under his command had captured strategic areas such as Cumberland Gap in Tennessee and were slicing through Mississippi. Although other Union generals, such as Ulysses Simpson Grant and William Tecumseh Sherman, had really been responsible for much of Halleck's success, the ever-ambitious Halleck took the bows. Lincoln appointed him chief of

all Union armies and then began to look about seriously for a new field commander.

There were very few Union generals in whom Lincoln had any confidence and, wearily, he turned back to George B. McClellan, even though "Little Mac" had failed miserably to attack and destroy Lee's army during the Peninsular Campaign earlier that year. Halleck also selected McClellan as commander of the Army of the Potomac, knowing that McClellan was, like himself, an efficient organizer. Lincoln knew that the dispirited Union forces, down to the last footsore infantryman, held McClellan in such deep affection that it bordered on the reverential. He also felt that the Confederates under Lee could, at any time, sweep into Washington and capture the capital. The president felt that only George B. McClellan could prevent that disaster. Halleck expected McClellan to be grateful for another opportunity to redeem his military career. The diminutive McClellan, however, was as arrogant and strutting as ever when Lincoln and Halleck came to his Washington, D.C., home to ask him to assume command on the morning of Sept. 2, 1862.

Lincoln and Halleck entered McClellan's home as the general was eating a large breakfast. The President and chief of staff stood before Little Mac with their hats in hand, insisting that he take over the Army of the Potomac. "Without one moment's hesitation and without making any conditions whatever," McClellan later stated, "I at once said that I would accept the command and stake my life that I would save the city. The President verbally placed me in entire command of the city and the troops."

This appointment rankled many in Lincoln's cabinet, particularly the explosive secretary of war, Edwin McMasters Stanton, who told Lincoln that with McClellan in command, there was no one really responsible for the defense of the capital. Stanton, shouting, said that no order had been issued by the War Department, which officially appointed McClellan to command. With his usual quiet patience, Lincoln heard out Stanton's fulminations and then told his secretary of war that he, Lincoln, had made the decision and issued the order and that he would be responsible to the country.

Secretary of the Treasury Salmon P. Chase was crestfallen, later writing: "I could not but feel that giving command to him [McClellan] was equivalent to giving Washington to the Rebels." Both Stanton and Chase so deeply hated McClellan that they declared that they would prefer the loss of Washington, D.C. to the reappointment of the vain Little Mac. Lincoln stood firm, however. McClellan was his choice and that ended the matter.

McClellan wasted no time feeding his gigantic ego. On the afternoon of his reappointment, he donned his most magnificent gold-braided uniform and rode to the outskirts of Washington, inspecting detachments of the army as they straggled back from Virginia. Wrote McClellan: "Very soon a regiment of cavalry appeared, marching by twos, and sandwiched in the midst were [Gen. John] Pope and [Gen. Irvin] McDowell with their staff officers. I never saw a more helpless-looking headquarters. Pope could give me no information. He had evidently not troubled his head about the movement of his army and had coolly preceded the troops, leaving them to get out of the scrape as best they could."

Ignoring the defeated Pope, McClellan rode down the line, seeking the only good news of his heart, the adulation of Union troops, which he had formerly led. McClellan's vanity, as always, had to be fed by cheers and kudos from the ranks. He lived for this praise but, as events at Antietam later proved, he would not die for it. As he rode forward through the listless lines of soldiers, he struck his most valiant pose, head high, jawjutting, sweeping his hat from his head to salute the men now back under his command, acting every inch the savior of the army and the nation.

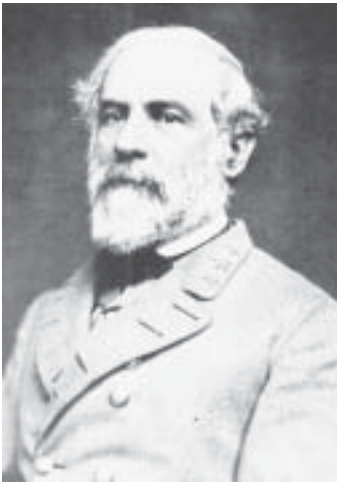
This attitude was accurately reflected in McClellan's own words: "I was recognized by the men, upon which there was great cheering; but when I came to Sykes' regular division the scene was most touching. The cheers had attracted their attention, and the men at once said that it could only be for 'Little Mac.' As soon as I came to them the poor fellows broke through all restraints, rushed from the ranks and crowded around me, shouting, yelling, shedding tears, thanking God that they were with me again and begging me to lead them back to battle. It was a wonderful scene."

McClellan immediately began to reorganize Pope's Army of Virginia into the Army of the Potomac, mustering more than 95,000 men, assigning new corps commanders, drilling his troops and making grandiose plans to attack Lee. McClellan then began to suffer from his old military malady, a gnawing fear that he did not have enough men. He began to badger Washington for more and more troops, and he looked about desperately for detached Union commands he could gather under his own supervision. One of these, about 10,000 to 12,000 men under the command of Col. Dixon S. Miles, was at Harpers Ferry and McClellan covetously eyed these troops.

Later stating that Secretary of State William Henry Seward came to *him*, uneasy about the troops stationed at Harpers Ferry, McClellan claimed that these men were dangerously exposed to being overwhelmed and captured. Harpers Ferry, McClellan told Seward, "was not under my control ... in my opinion the proper course was to abandon the position and unite the garrison (10,000 men about) to the main army; Harpers Ferry would be of no use to us and the garrison necessarily lost." Seward concurred and asked McClellan to see Halleck about removing these troops. Seward and McClellan then went to Halleck's home, finding the chief of staff in bed, field reports scattered over the covers.

As a single lamp flickered on the bedstand, McClellan stood in the dim light and repeated his misgivings about Harpers Ferry. Halleck, a dour, gloomy man whose hours were consumed with statistical reports, listened with a scowl on his long face. He told McClellan that his notions about the troops at Harpers Ferry were "entirely erroneous" and then jerked his head toward the bedroom door, a mute order for Seward and McClellan to leave him to his reports.

Still, as McClellan tightened his control over a huge army of about 95,000 men and began to move units northwest toward Virginia through Maryland, he kept up his barrage on Washington for more men, and still more men. The frustrated Stanton ordered the reopening of recruitment stations in the North. At one point it was felt that the Union Army had all the volunteers it needed. Now, with McClellan demanding more



Gen. Robert E. Lee decided to bring the war to the North in early September 1862; he marched the Army of Northern Virginia into Maryland, planning to invade Maryland and threaten Washington.



Ragged but confident, Confederate troops waded across the Potomac on the night of Sept. 5-6, 1862; they sang "Maryland, My Maryland," but they received a lukewarm reception from citizens.



Union scouts are depicted watching Lee's invading troops in their nocturnal crossing of the Potomac into Maryland.

men, even though he outnumbered Lee by more than 40,000 troops, the North was scrambling for raw recruits. McClellan's Army of the Potomac crawled forward while its commander waited for more men.

Robert E. Lee did not wait. On the night of Sept. 5-6, 1862, he began moving his army across the Potomac into western Maryland. His objectives were many and clear. By swinging north and taking Harrisburg, Pa., Lee would be in control of the vital Northern rail center and could paralyze Union troop movements and necessary supply lines. He also believed that his invasion of the North would galvanize large numbers of Southern sympathizers in Kentucky and Maryland into joining the Confederacy. Moreover, Union troops would be committed to a static defense of Washington and, as a result, foreign powers would then intervene on the side of the South.

Lee had no illusions, but he was riding the tide of victory after the triumph over Pope at Bull Run. "We cannot afford to be idle," he had written President Davis, "and, though weaker than our opponents ... must endeavor to harass them if we cannot destroy them." His men, though poorly clothed and shod and receiving meager rations, were in high spirits. They made up a ragged army in butternut, but they had been winning battles and they were led, they fully believed, by the greatest general in America. He did not appear such when he led his men across the Potomac. In August, Lee had been startled by a Union scouting party and had stumbled while attempting to mount his horse, falling on both hands and breaking the finger of one and spraining the other. Both hands were put in splints and this prevented him from riding horseback across the Potomac shallows into Maryland. He rode in an ambulance on the first night of his invasion of Maryland. Gen. Thomas Jonathan "Stonewall" Jackson, his right-hand field commander, had also been incapacitated, having earlier been thrown from a horse. He, too, sat in an ambulance rumbling into Maryland. Even the reliable Longstreet was physically impaired by a large blister on one foot that caused him to hobble about his headquarters wearing slippers.

Marylanders were mixed in their greetings of the Southern soldiers. One citizen watched the Confederates splash across the fords of the Potomac and typified these soldiers as scarecrows, their bodies darkened by the sun, heavy-bearded, unwashed and some with vermin: "They were the dirtiest men I ever saw, a most ragged, lean and hungry set of wolves ... Yet there was a dash about them that the Northern men lacked. They rode like circus riders. Many of them were from the far South and spoke a dialect I could scarcely understand. They were profane beyond belief and talked incessantly." The Confederates shouted "On to Maryland!" as they forded the Potomac. At first, the Confederates were met with teaming crowds that pressed food and flowers into their hands, cheering them.

William M. Owen, an officer of the Washington Artillery, wrote: "Everyone we meet says he is a 'Rebel,' and we are most hospitably received wherever we go. We get plenty to eat and to drink. The young ladies are wild to see General Lee; in the afternoon a caravan is made up of all the old family carriages and filled with pretty girls and we escort

them to where 'Uncle Robert' is resting. He is immediately surrounded and kissed and hugged, until the old gentlemen gets very red in the face and cries for mercy ... But all pleasures have an end and the bugle sounds 'Forward,' and away we march."

By Sept. 7, 1862, Lee's army of about 50,000 was encamped outside Frederick, Md. The following day, Lee issued a proclamation that he hoped would induce Maryland citizens to side with the South. (The proclamation had been sent to Lee by President Davis and Lee issued it without change under his own hand.) It read:

PROCLAMATION OF GENERAL LEE

Headquarters Army N. Va.

Near Fredericktown, Sept. 8, 1862

TO THE PEOPLE OF MARYLAND

It is right that you should know the purpose that has brought the Army under my command within the limits of your State, so far as that purpose concerns yourselves.

The People of the Confederate States have long watched with the deepest sympathy, the wrongs and outrages that have been inflicted upon the Citizens of a Commonwealth, allied to the States of the South by the strongest social, political and commercial ties. They have seen with profound indignation their sister States deprived of every right, and reduced to the condition of a conquered province.

Under the pretense of supporting the constitution, but in violation of its most valuable provisions, your Citizens have been arrested and imprisoned upon no charge, and contrary to all forms of law; the faithful and manly protest against this outrage made by the venerable and illustrious Marylander to whom in better days no citizen appealed for right in vain, was treated with scorn and contempt; the government of your chief city has been usurped by armed strangers; your Legislature has been dissolved by the arrest of its members; freedom of the press and of speech has been suppressed; words have been declared offenses by an arbitrary decree of the Federal Executive, and citizens ordered to be tried by a military commission for what they may dare to speak.

Believing that the people of Maryland possessed a spirit too lofty to submit to such a government, the people of the South have long wished to aid you in throwing off this foreign yoke to enable you again to enjoy the inalienable rights of freedom, and restore independence and sovereignty to your State. In obedience to this wish, our Army has come among you, and is prepared to assist you with the power of its arms in regaining the rights of which you have been despoiled. This, Citizens of Maryland, is our mission, so far as you are concerned. No restraint upon your free will is intended, no intimidation will be allowed. Within the limits of this army, at least, Marylanders shall once more enjoy their ancient freedom of thought and speech. We know no enemies among you, and will protect all of

every opinion. It is for you to decide your destiny, freely and without constraint.

This Army will respect your choice, whatever it may be; and while the Southern people will rejoice to welcome you to your natural position among them, they will only welcome you when you come of your own free will.

—R.E. LEE, General Commanding

The response of Maryland citizens to this offer to join the Confederacy was far from overwhelming. On Sept. 10, 1862, Lee marched his troops through Frederick. According to artilleryman Owen, “the citizens crowded the streets and windows to see the troops pass. Ladies were demonstrative and waved their handkerchiefs, but the men looked coolly on. On the 12th we reached Hagerstown and found the people here more demonstrative. Many young girls approached us as we marched through the streets and presented us with beautiful flowers.”

Food, clothing and shoes were the real desires of Lee’s ragged troops, not flowers. Lee had given strict orders against looting or confiscation and those who violated those orders were placed under arrest and punished. As his men marched through Maryland towns, large groups of Confederates dashed into stores and scooped up sugar, coffee, whiskey, ale, even champagne, and always shoes, paying the disgruntled merchants exorbitant amounts, but paying them nevertheless in Confederate currency, which was considered worthless. Reported Owen: “One merchant had upon his top shelf about one hundred old-fashioned bell-crowned beaver hats, just the style our fathers wore. The store was soon relieved of the stock of beavers and the streets were thronged with men with the new hats. They wore them upon the march,

and went into the battle with this most peculiar headgear for warriors.”

Exactly where the next battle was to take place was not known by either Lee or his slow-moving opponent, McClellan. As Lee’s men moved northward, McClellan sent probes in his general direction, but his scouts failed to learn the whereabouts and direction of the Southern army. In Washington, Gen. Halleck was beside himself with doubts as he received conflicting reports on the possible movement of Confederate troops. He began to barrage McClellan with urgent messages that did nothing but further confuse the para



A rare photo shows Confederate troops as they march through the streets of Frederick, Md.

Union troops, arriving in Frederick after the Rebels had departed, are shown being showered with food and drink by grateful residents.



noid McClellan. On Sept. 11, Halleck sent a telegram to McClellan that read: "I think the main force of the enemy is on your front." On Sept. 14, Halleck completely contradicted himself by wiring McClellan: "Scouts report a large force still on the Virginia side of the Potomac."

For his part, McClellan operated in the dark, but in that murk, he envisioned a nightmare, a huge, menacing Confederate army about to envelop the Army of the Potomac. Though he outnumbered Lee almost two-to-one, McClellan was convinced that his opponent had vastly superior numbers and he typically called for more reinforcements, fielding about anywhere to glean additional Union troops. He kept pestering Halleck for the troops stationed at Harpers Ferry, but Halleck insisted that these troops under Col. Miles remain at their post. McClellan sent wires to Washington, stating that Miles and his men would be overrun in short order. In that estimation, McClellan was correct.

Lee realized before entering Maryland that Harpers Ferry was the linchpin of his campaign and that by taking this Potomac crossing, he would be protecting his supply lines that ran through the Shenandoah Valley. In a bold move, Lee split his forces, sending half of his command under his most brilliant general, Thomas Jonathan "Stonewall" Jackson, to attack Martinsburg, then Harpers Ferry. The remainder of the Army of Northern Virginia was split into three other forces that had separate objectives and were often separated by a distance of 25 miles or more, a condition that vexed Gen. Longstreet, who had vainly argued against the dividing of Lee's forces. Instead of an entire army, McClellan was left to face Confederate cavalry under Gen. J. E. B. Stuart and a division of hardened veterans commanded by Gen. D.H. Hill.

Jackson then began one of his famous fast marches toward Harpers Ferry, but all was not well in the Confederate high command. At the early stages of the Confederate invasion, several of Lee's best division commanders had to be reprimanded by superiors. The Texas division commanded by the dashing Gen. John Bell Hood had captured a number of Union ambulances, which were immediately ordered confiscated by Gen. Nathan George "Shanks" Evans, Hood's superior. Hood refused to give up the vehicles, telling Evans that he sorely needed them for his own command. Evans went to Gen. Longstreet, a corps commander, who, in turn, ordered Hood to return to Virginia to stand trial for insubordination. Lee, not wanting to lose one of his best division commanders, rescinded Longstreet's order, telling Hood to accompany his division into Maryland.

Worse, Lee's finest division commander, Gen. Ambrose Powell Hill, had had a violent confrontation with the great Stonewall Jackson. While en route to the Potomac, Hill's division had difficulty keeping up with Jackson's main force. Jackson rode back down the line and discovered that Hill had not called for regular rest periods and, as a result, his men were exhausted and thousands straggled far behind their regiments. Hill himself had remained at the head of his column and had not bothered to police his formations, which incensed the by-the-book Jackson.

Jackson halted one of Hill's worn-out brigades and when Hill heard of this, he rode back down the line to confront his

commander. The diminutive Hill, wearing his famous red flannel "battle shirt," dismounted before Jackson who sat towering above him on his horse. Furious, Hill unbuckled his sabre and held it out to Jackson, almost shouting: "If you are going to give the orders, you have no need of me!"

Jackson peered down at Hill and said: "Consider yourself under arrest for neglect of duty. You are not fit to be a general."

Hill saluted and then rode back to the head of his column. By the time Lee had entered Maryland, he had pacified his volatile commanders so that they were once more working together, a situation necessary to the survival of the army and a hoped-for victory in Maryland. On Sept. 9, Lee drew up Special Orders 191, his plan for capturing Harpers Ferry, sending Jackson in overall command of this movement. Jackson's three divisions, another two divisions under the command of Gen. Lafayette McLaws, including a division commanded by Richard Heron Anderson, and another division commanded by Gen. John G. Walker, would all converge from separate points on Harpers Ferry, occupying the heights surrounding this town, and soon compel its Union defenders to surrender. Longstreet and his four divisions, supported by D.H. Hill, would, at the same time, move north and occupy Boonsboro, Md.

Lee's Special Orders 191 was full of exact details about the entire operations of his army for the next four days. When Longstreet received a copy of this order, he grew nervous, realizing that if a copy of this order fell into enemy hands, it could spell disaster for the army. He committed the order to memory and then tore up the order and chewed the bits, swallowing them. D.H. Hill received a copy of these orders and gave them to his adjutant to file. The adjutant, however, considered the order a historic document and intended to keep it as a souvenir. He reportedly wrapped three cigars in the order and placed this in his pocket.

McClellan was still fumbling about, looking for Lee's main force and believing the thin Confederate lines vaguely to his front to be Lee's entire army. Lee counted on McClellan's apprehensive nature, telling Gen. Walker: "He is an able general but a very cautious one. His enemies among his own people think him too much so. His army is in a very demoralized and chaotic condition and will not be prepared for offensive operations." In this, Lee was mistaken. McClellan's army was in high spirits, having received top rations and moving confidently toward the enemy with the belief that Little Mac would lead them to victory. Moreover, a great piece of luck befell George B. McClellan on Sept. 13, 1862.

On the morning of that day, Company E of the 27th Ind. was encamped in an open field outside of Frederick, Md. This spot had been occupied by Confederate forces only days earlier. Cpl. Barton W. Mitchell relaxed on the grassy plain. His eyes spotted a long envelope nearby and he picked it up. It contained three cigars around which was wrapped an official-looking document. The names on the document startled Mitchell as he read, mouth gaping, Lee's revealing order to his army, which detailed the Confederate movements over the next several days. Mitchell (who would be severely wounded by buck-and-ball shot four days later at Antietam)

rushed the document to his superiors and Special Orders 191 was soon in the hands of Gen. McClellan. With widening eyes, McClellan read:

Special Orders No. 191
Headquarters, Army of Northern Virginia
September 9, 1862

The army will resume its march tomorrow, taking the Hagerstown road. General Jackson's command will form the advance, and, after passing Middletown, with such portions as he may select, take the route towards Sharpsburg, cross the Potomac at the most convenient point, and, by Friday night, take possession of the Baltimore and Ohio railroad, capture such of the enemy as may be at Martinsburg, and intercept such as may attempt to escape from Harpers Ferry.

General Longstreet's command will pursue the same road as far as Boonsboro, where it will halt with the reserve, supply and baggage trains of the army.

General McLaws, with his own division and that of General R.H. Anderson, will follow General Longstreet; on reaching Middletown, he will take the route to Harpers Ferry, and, by Friday morning, possess himself of the Maryland heights, and endeavor to capture the enemy at Harpers Ferry and vicinity.

General Walker, with his division, after accomplishing the object in which he is now engaged, will cross the Potomac at Cheek's ford, ascend its right bank to Lovettsville, take possession of Loudon heights, if practicable, by Friday morning; Key's ford on his right, and the road between the end of the mountain and the Potomac on his right. He will, as far as practicable, cooperate with Gen. McLaws and Gen. Jackson in intercepting the retreat of the enemy.

General D.H. Hill's division will form the rear guard of the army, pursuing the road taken by the main body. The reserve artillery, ordnance and supply trains, etc., will precede General Hill.

General Stuart will detach a squadron of cavalry to accompany the commands of Generals Longstreet and McLaws, and, with the main body of the cavalry, will cover the route of the enemy, and bring up all stragglers that may have been left behind.

The commands of Generals Jackson, McLaws, and Walker, after accomplishing the objects for which they have been detached, will join the main body of the army at Boonsboro or Hagerstown.

Each regiment on the march will habitually carry its axes in the regimental ordnance wagons, for use of the men at their encampments, to procure wood, etc.

By command of General R.E. Lee
R.H. Chilton
Assistant Adjutant General

At first glance, Little Mac pronounced the document a fake, a plant intended to lead Union forces astray, chasing a

Confederate ghost army, which would never be found at the locations stipulated in the order. One of McClellan's staff officers, however, examined the document and noticed that it was signed by Lee's Adjutant General, R.H. Chilton. The Union officer told McClellan that he had known Chilton well before the war and recognized the signature on the order as genuine. The startled McClellan immediately grasped his opportunity. Lee had revealed how he had split his army and McClellan seized the opportunity to destroy the Confederate command piecemeal, first attacking Longstreet at Boonsboro and overwhelming these divisions, and then trapping Jackson's divisions, which would be exposed while surrounding Harpers Ferry.

McClellan was suddenly jubilant. Complete victory would soon be his and he said so. It meant the utter destruction of the enemy and the end of the war, and he, George B. McClellan, would be the instrument in saving the Union. Little Mac, beaming and holding the document above his head, fairly shouted to Gen. John Gibbon: "Here is a paper with which if I cannot whip Bobby Lee I will be willing to go home!" At that moment McClellan saw the perfect opportunity to defeat and destroy Lee's entire army in detail, as Napoleon, his idol, had done at Castiglione.

According to one report, at McClellan's headquarters that day were several dignitaries from surrounding Maryland towns. One of these, pretending to welcome the Union forces, was a man of deep Southern sympathies. The story had it that he had witnessed the delivery of Lee's lost dispatch to McClellan and Little Mac's acceptance of the document as genuine. The Marylander excused himself and slipped from McClellan's tent, mounting a horse and riding quickly toward the Confederate lines. He would arrive 24 hours later before Gen. J.E.B. Stuart, Lee's great cavalryman, informing Stuart that McClellan possessed Lee's plans. And, knowing that McClellan knew his plans, Robert E. Lee could avoid destruction and lay his own counter-traps and ambushes at which he was a master.

This story has been challenged by several historians, even though Lee himself, following the war in 1868, in a letter to D. H. Hill, stated that he had been informed of McClellan's discovery of his plans. Yet, Lee had made no mention of this in his official report of the battle of Antietam to President Davis. He did state unequivocally that a Maryland citizen had informed Stuart that McClellan's army had suddenly become active, but whether or not this Southern sympathizer informed Stuart that McClellan had, indeed, come into possession of Lee's lost order, remains in doubt.

For all his exuberance and bravado in the discovery of Lee's orders, McClellan was still a commander gripped by doubt and fear. He doubted his own position as commander in the field, remembering that Lincoln had given him *verbal* orders in which he was given "command of the fortifications of Washington and all of the troops for its defense." He had far exceeded the scope of this order, pushing out into Maryland after Lee, taking the offensive, not remaining in Washington and manning defensive fortresses. He later claimed that he was operating "with a halter around my neck. If the Army of the Potomac had been defeated and I had survived, I would, no doubt, have been tried for assuming authority without orders."

No one could say that Lincoln knew of his commander's real or imagined dilemma and merely let him stew in it. Much of the nagging doubt that habitually plagued McClellan probably stemmed from his own paranoid nature. He was nevertheless expendable to the practical Lincoln. To John Hay, one of his secretaries, the President stated: "I am of the opinion that this public feeling against him [McClellan] will make it expedient to take important command from him ... but he is too useful just now to sacrifice."

Clutching Lee's Special Orders 191, McClellan, however, crowed speedy triumph to Lincoln in a wire: "I have the whole rebel force in front of me, but I am confident, and no time shall be lost. I have a difficult task to perform, but with God's blessing will accomplish it. I think Lee has made a gross mistake, and that he will be severely punished for it. The army is in motion as rapidly as possible. I hope for a great success if the plans of the rebels remain unchanged ... I have all the plans of the rebels, and will catch them in their own trap if my men are equal to the emergency. I now feel that I can count on them as of old ... My respects to Mrs. Lincoln. Received most enthusiastically by the ladies [of Maryland towns through which Union troops marched]. Will send you trophies."

But for 16 precious hours, McClellan worried over Lee's orders, pondering details that were not present in the captured document, anxious over exactly how many men were with Jackson, were with Longstreet. His own scouts had grossly exaggerated Southern strength, reporting a Confederate army of 120,000 men in Maryland, more than twice the number of Lee's actual command. McClellan carefully, methodically, drew up his plan of attack. He would send three forces against Longstreet's troops, one under Gen. William Buel Franklin with 18,000 men through the Catocin Mountain range and then through Crampton's Gap of the South Mountain range to trap Longstreet. Two more federal corps, headed by Gen. Ambrose Burnside and Gen. Edwin Vose Sumner, would push through Turner's Gap, also in the South Mountain range, moving against Longstreet. In support would be Gen. Fitz-John Porter's corps. After destroying Longstreet, McClellan concluded, he would then turn on Jackson's divisions and annihilate them. After conferring with his field commanders and issuing his orders, McClellan ordered his army to turn in and get a good, long night's sleep so his men would be fresh for battle at dawn.

By then the element of surprise had evaporated. Lee had already learned that McClellan was in possession of his Special Orders 191, or so it was later reported. Irrespective of the validity of this report, Lee had a very clear picture of McClellan's movements in that his cavalry had scouted the Union forces well. So precise was this intelligence that Stuart was able to inform Lee on the morning of Sept. 14 that McClellan was moving his ponderous army at a speed of six miles an hour toward Longstreet.

By then, however, Longstreet's rear was protected with the arrival at Turner's Gap of battle-hardened troops commanded by Gen. Daniel Harvey Hill. As the long and impressive columns of Burnside and Sumner snaked up toward the gap, Hill, his men already in defensive positions, peered down upon the enemy and stated that it was "a grand and glorious

spectacle and it was impossible to look at it without admiration." He added that, at this moment when he and his division were about to battle against enormous odds, he "experienced a feeling of greater loneliness. It seemed as though we were deserted by 'all the world and the rest of mankind.'"

Longstreet's main force was 14 miles distant, but he rushed his divisions southward to Hill's support. These men were some of Lee's best soldiers, tough and willing to endure any hardship. Lee was with some of the leading troops and he sat his horse, watching them quick march toward Turner's Gap. In the distance, the sound of battle could be heard, and Lee knew that Hill and his men were fighting for their very lives. A Texas brigade swung past Lee as he held the reins of his horse in a painful grasp (his hands were still in splints). The Texans looked affectionately toward their commander and then began to shout: "Hood, Hood! Give us Hood!" Gen. Hood, who was under field arrest for insubordination, was still traveling with his men who now demanded that he lead them into battle.

"You shall have him, gentlemen!" Lee told the Texans and raised his hat. At the end of this column rode John Bell Hood, a tall, long-bearded Texan with a mercurial temperament. He was still embittered about his arrest. Lee approached him, saying: "General, here I am just on the eve of entering into battle, and with one of my best officers under arrest. If you will merely say that you regret this occurrence [Hood's earlier clash with Evans], I will release you and restore you to the command of your division."

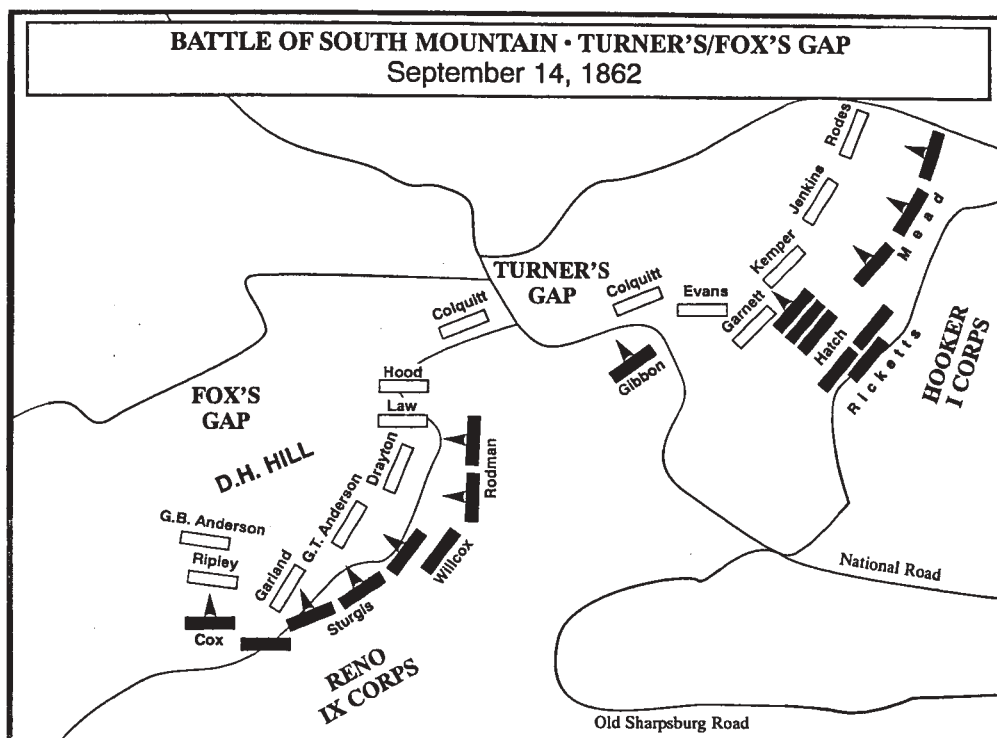
The stubborn Hood shook his head, stating that he "could not consistently do so." He maintained that he had had a right to refuse turning over ambulances to Gen. Evans, especially since his own men had fought and died to capture them. Again Lee asked Hood to at least acknowledge his transgression, but Hood again refused. Lee was a disciplinarian, but was also indulgent when it came to his best fighting generals and none surpassed Hood in this regard. After a few moments of silence, Lee said to Hood. "Well, I will suspend your arrest till the impending battle is decided." With a wide grin, Hood saluted and rode off to join his Texas regiments. Cheers rippled through the ranks of the 1st, 4th and 5th Texas when the battle-hardened veterans from the Rio Grande and the Red River saw their idol galloping to the head of their columns.

South Mountain (Turner's Gap, Fox's Gap), **Md.**, Sept. 14, 1862.

As Lee accompanied Longstreet's corps of 10,000 troops to Hagerstown, Gen. D. H. Hill was left at Boonsboro with 5,000 men to act as a rear guard. Meanwhile, Gen. McLaws split his forces into several attacking columns and soon invested Harpers Ferry, literally surrounding the Federal garrison there and besieging it, just as McClellan predicted would happen. To relieve the unpredictable Col. Dixon S. Miles at Harpers Ferry, McClellan ordered Gen. William Franklin's corps of 12,000 men, then camped at Buckeystown, Md., five miles south of Frederick, and the 7,200-man division of Gen. Darius Couch, near Licksville, to cross South Mountain at Crampton's Gap, attack the Confederate troops besieging Harpers Ferry and relieve the Federal garrison.



ABOVE, Confederate division commander D. H. Hill was confronted at South Mountain by two Union corps; RIGHT, IX Corps under Reno attacked Fox's Gap, overwhelming Garland (killed), while Hooker's I Corps assaulted the Rebels at Turner's Gap.



Lee received a message from D. H. Hill, whose troops were entrenched at Turner's Gap, Fox's Gap and at Crampton's Gap. Hill stated that a great many Federal campfires were burning near Middletown. Lee read McClellan's strategy, now knowing that McClellan had sent troops to relieve the siege of Harpers Ferry. He sent messages to Jackson and McLaws, ordering them to complete the siege of Harpers Ferry and quickly capture the garrison before McClellan's forces were upon them. He also knew that Turner's Gap had to be "held at all hazards" to prevent Franklin from reaching Harpers Ferry. Hill was to stand firm at Turner's Gap, no matter the odds.

Those odds were considerable and mounting by the hour as Federal brigades marched toward Turner's Gap. Early Sunday morning, Sept. 14, a hot, sun-filled day, Brig. Gen. Jacob Cox ordered the two brigades of his division in IX Corps to break camp. Cox, leading 3,000 men from Ohio and West Virginia, was to form the vanguard of Federal troops pushing through Turner's Gap. Cox believed that his brigades would merely support a large Union cavalry reconnaissance by Gen. Alfred Pleasonton. He quickly learned otherwise.

As he rode forward, Cox spied a familiar figure standing in the road, Col. August Moor, commander of the 28th Ohio, who had been captured by Confederate cavalry two days earlier outside of Frederick. Moor hailed his commander, stating that he had been paroled by the Rebels and was making his way toward the Union lines. Cox told Moor that his command was marching on Turner's Gap, and Moor, startled, gasped: "My God! Be careful." He then reminded himself of the terms of his parole, which prohibited him from providing information about the enemy, and he fell silent and began trudging toward the rear.

The fact that Moor would keep his word to the enemy and not relate intelligence to his commander, vital information that might save the lives of his own men, reflected the cavalier

code of the day, a conduct that would appear strange and inexplicable to any modern-day soldier. Moor had been paroled on his own honorable promise to keep silent and that is exactly what he did. Moor's blurted response, however, was enough to forewarn Cox, and he ordered his second brigade to close ranks with the first and then sent a courier to inform IX Corps commander Gen. Jesse Reno that the Confederates were at Turner's Gap, waiting.

At Turner's Gap, Hill and his division awaited the onslaught of Federal troops. Turner's Gap was not impregnable. Flanking the gap were rising ridges and other small gaps through which the enemy could infiltrate. To plug these defensive holes, Hill had to spread his troops thinly over a great deal of hilly terrain. The entire South Mountain range ran for many miles and Hill knew it would be impossible to defend against any sustained Federal attacks at more than one point of his line.

Pleasanton and Cox, meanwhile, conferred and agreed that Turner's Gap was too strongly held. They decided to shift their troops southward, following the Old Sharpsburg Road, and cross South Mountain at Fox's Gap. When reaching Fox's Gap, Cox ordered his brigades to climb a steep slope that stretched upward for two miles. Before the crest, an open field greeted them and at the far end of the field were 200 Rebel cavalymen and a 1,000-man brigade from North Carolina under the command of Virginia-born Brig. Gen. Samuel Garland, Jr., thought to be one of Lee's most promising officers. Garland had wisely positioned his men behind a stone wall that ran beside a road snaking along the crest of the ridge from Fox's Gap to Turner's Gap.

Cox wasted no time, ordering his men to attack about 9 a.m. Artillery and musket fire filled the field with smoke. Col. Eliakim Scammon, who commanded one of Cox's brigades, believed he could flank Garland's troops to the left and or

dered Lt. Col. Rutherford B. Hayes, commander of the 23rd Ohio, to take his regiment southward and then attack through dense woods.

Hayes led his men through the woods and then up the slope. At the head of his advancing men, and just as he spotted Confederates above, Hayes shouted to his troops: "Give them hell! Give the sons-of-bitches hell!" The Federals let loose one terrible volley after another as they advanced and were greeted by volley fire from the Rebel defenders. As the 23rd neared the crest of the hill, Hayes, still frantically urging his men forward, suddenly stood still, struck in the left arm with a musket ball. He spun to the ground, fainting.

When Hayes revived, he saw a great deal of blood pulsing from his wound and felt that he was living out his last day on earth. Looking about, he saw a wounded Confederate nearby and asked him to take a message to his wife Lucy in the event that he died. The Rebel nodded. Hayes, however, survived. Some of his men picked him up and carried him to the rear where doctors told him he had a severe fracture of the arm. He would live to deliver his own messages. He would also live to become the 19th President of the U.S. (1877-81). Ironically, within the ranks of the same regiment was a supply sergeant named William McKinley. He, too, would become chief executive of the land, surviving that awful day and many other battles, only to be assassinated in 1901 by a political malcontent, Leon Czolgosz.

The 23rd Ohio won fame that day by reaching the summit and turning the Confederate right flank, but at a high cost, 130 casualties, including 32 dead. Still, Gen. Garland was able to shore up his right flank and extend this line, holding back further Federal assaults. He then had to contend with the Union attack at his front on the open field where Col. Scammon had brought up two guns from the 1st Ohio Battery. The gunners were killed by Rebel sharpshooters, but other artillerymen sprang forward to fill their places and soon the guns were pounding the center of Garland's line.

Garland rode along his line, holding his North Carolinians at their posts. Just then Scammon sent the 12th Ohio in a charge against the center of Garland's defenses. The front ranks of the 12th Ohio melted away under the intense fire from the stone wall, but the rear ranks kept coming, racing forward and pouring over the wall to struggle with the enemy in desperate hand-to-hand fighting. At that moment, Gen. Garland was with Col. Thomas Ruffin, Jr., of the 13th N.C., son of a distinguished North Carolina statesman. Both men were trying to decide whether to give ground or attempt to hold the field. Ruffin suddenly grabbed his hip where he had been hit and sagged to the ground. He heard a groan and saw Garland writhing in pain next to him, dying from a mortal wound.

Seeing that Garland and Ruffin were both down, the North Carolinians lost heart and they broke, fleeing down the westward slope of the ridge, losing more than 200 men as prisoners-of-war. By 11 a.m., Cox and his two badly mauled brigades were in command of Fox's Gap and were marching northward on the dusty little road that led to the National Road and Turner's Gap.

As Cox marched stoically forward, one of his officers informed him that burial squads had not had time enough to

bury all the dead, especially the Confederates. Cox (or one of his aides, the facts are unclear) told the aide to bury the Rebels in a common grave. A Federal officer selected an unusual site—the deep well on the farm of Daniel Wise. Into this well, Union soldiers threw more than 60 decaying Confederate bodies. Farmer Wise stood watching in shock and was then paid \$1 for each body tossed into his well. He threw the money to the ground, saying that his well had been polluted for generations to come.

At Turner's Gap, Gen. Daniel Harvey Hill, peering through field glasses at Mountain House, an inn near the crest of the mountain, watched open-mouthed as he spied a seemingly endless column of Union brigades marching in his direction from Middletown. He was then brought news of Garland's death and the destruction of his brigade at Fox's Gap. He had only one more brigade positioned at South Mountain and this was at Turner's Gap, a brigade to face the entire army of George McClellan. Though four more of Hill's brigades were marching from Boonsboro, he did not know if they would arrive in time to plug Turner's Gap and prevent the Union divisions from pouring through to attack the Confederates closing in on Harpers Ferry.

For lack of real troops, Hill created imaginary legions. He mustered all of his cooks, orderlies, teamsters, couriers and dismounted staff officers to give the appearance of massive battery support troops, marching these men up and down the ridge behind two of his guns. He then ordered the two guns to fire on the advancing Federals with canister. When these two guns opened up, Cox saw them plough up fields and thought they sounded like "the cutting of a melon rind."

Cox ordered his men to stop while he sent reconnaissance patrols forward. The delay worked as Hill had hoped, providing enough time for one of his brigades to arrive at Turner's Gap from Boonsboro. These fresh Confederate regiments soon turned back Cox's new thrusts. Believing he was facing formidable odds, Cox ordered his men to retreat back to Fox's Gap, where he would wait for fresh Union troops to relieve his exhausted men.

Cox had already warned Gen. Jesse Reno, commander of the IX Corps, that the Confederates were putting up stiff resistance at South Mountain and that he should expect a hard fight. Reno promised Cox support and ordered Gen. Orlando B. Willcox's division to attack the Rebel positions at Turner's Gap. This division moved slowly, starting for the mountain at about 11 a.m., long after Cox had pulled his men back, and did not reach Cox's line of battle until about 2 p.m. Two more divisions, commanded by Gens. Samuel Sturgis and Isaac Rodman, were even later in arriving on this line. Gen. Ambrose Burnside, who commanded the so-called right "wing" of the I and IX Corps, then arrived to hold up Rodman and Sturgis until Gen. Joseph Hooker's I Corps could get into position to support a coordinated attack by Cox, Sturgis, Willcox and Rodman.

By the time the Federals were in position, Hill, too, had been reinforced with the brigades of Generals George B. Anderson and Roswell Ripley, these two Rebel brigades filling the gap left by Garland's decimated brigade. Then two more Confederate brigades from Boonsboro, arriving almost on the run,



ABOVE, Brig. Gen. Samuel Garland, Jr., CSA, killed at Fox's Gap; **RIGHT**, the Union attack against Fox's Gap by Gen. Cox's brigades; near the wagon shown at bottom left is a wounded Lt. Col. Rutherford B. Hayes, a future president of the U.S.



those of George T. Anderson and Thomas Drayton, were thrown by Hill into line to the left of G. B. Anderson's and Ripley's brigades.

McClellan heard of the battle at South Mountain with some alarm. He had not expected the Rebels to make a stand until his forces had crossed the South Mountain range and confronted them at Boonsboro. Riding from his headquarters in Frederick to the foot of South Mountain, Little Mac arrived at the headquarters of Gen. Burnside. Here he was told that the battle had commenced and that the Rebels were throwing in new brigades to stop the Federals from crossing South Mountain.

McClellan did little except to pose before his trudging regiments as he sat atop his horse, Dan Webster. As his men passed him, they cheered and hurrahed him, waving their caps. McClellan sat silent in the saddle, every now and then raising his arm and simply pointing in the direction of Turner's Gap, where the distant booming of cannon could be heard—Hill's much overworked two-gun battery.

One Union soldier passing McClellan later remarked that "it seemed as if an intermission had been declared in order that a reception might be tendered to the general in chief. The general pointed with his finger to the gap in the mountain through which our path lay. It was like a great scene in a play, with the roar of the guns for an accompaniment."

As the Union troops flooded toward South Mountain, D.H. Hill peered through his field glasses at the sea of Federals rolling toward his position at Turner's Gap. He later stated: "From the top of the mountain, the sight was grand and sublime, but the elements of the pretty and the picturesque did not enter into it." Among those dogged ranks working slowly up the mountain was Pvt. David L. Thompson of the 9th N.Y., who looked over his shoulder to see that "each column was a monstrous, crawling blue-black snake miles long, quilled with the silver slant of muskets at a 'shoulder,' its sluggish tail rising slowly up over the distant eastern ridge, its bruised head weltering in the roar and smoke upon the crest above..."

At Fox's Gap, Gen. Ripley received an order from Hill to attack the Union forces of Willcox and Cox, but Ripley led his men in a circuitous direction and all but got lost. The brigades of Drayton and the two Andersons went forward slowly, groping for the enemy, and skirmishes broke out throughout the afternoon. Willcox, feeling the pressure, ordered two of his regiments, the 17th Mich. and the 45th Pa., both untried and full of green troops, to attack the Confederate front.

The 17th Mich., its troops crouched behind a rail fence, leaped over the fence and rushed across an open field for 80 yards only to be greeted by volley fire from a stone wall where Rebel marksmen mowed them down. Still, the Michigan boys kept racing onward over the fallen bodies of their dead comrades, leaping the stone wall and driving the Rebels into some nearby woods. The Union regiment then rested, its survivors looking back to the open field where they had left 30 dead and more than 100 wounded, out of a force of 500.

The Union advances were short-lived. By 3:30 p.m., Longstreet's corps had reached the western base of the mountain and the reinstated Hood led his division toward Fox's Gap. These men had been marching on and off for 19 hours to move 13 miles over rugged terrain. They were nevertheless full of fight.

On the eastern slope of the mountain, Hooker's I Corps arrived, three divisions strong, and began a ponderous turning movement on the right side of the Union line, the three brigades of Hatch's division leading the way. In the vanguard was the 21st N.Y., and as its pickets moved cautiously forward, they were startled to see an old woman walking slowly toward them. She explained that she had been driven from her mountaintop cabin when the battle began. Then she wagged a finger at the Federal scouts and said: "Don't you go up there, don't you go! There are hundreds of them up there. Don't go up there. Some of you might get hurt." With that, the old woman continued walking down the mountain slope, cautioning the soldiers she met. All smiled and promised that they would be careful.

Beyond Hatch's frontline troops stumbling up the mountain were 1,200 Alabamans under the command of Gen. Robert E. Rodes, who, like Garland, was considered a promising candidate for higher rank. Rodes did not wait for the enemy to burst upon his main line of defense, but sent a strong line of skirmishers down the slope and into thick underbrush to greet the advancing Federals. These men moved rapidly behind trees, picking off the point guards of Hatch's men, then dashing to other positions and firing again and again. These Indian tactics delayed but did not prevent Hatch's regiments from gaining higher ground to confront Rodes' main line of defense.

Rodes, like Garland, was faced with the same dilemma of combating enormous numbers of the enemy with a thin line of defense and with no reserves. As Hatch pressured his front, Rodes soon realized that Gen. George Meade, commanding John Reynolds' all Pennsylvania division, had sent regiments to his far left flank and was attacking at this point, forcing Rodes to extend his lines farther to the north to cover the high ground at Turner's Gap. Just as Meade's and Hatch's troops seemed to gain the advantage, Longstreet personally arrived with several regiments to stop the Yankee threat.

Yet, Longstreet's troops were so exhausted by their forced march from Boonsboro that they were initially of little use to Rodes' much-pressed Alabama regiments. Of these, the 6th Ala., commanded by Col. John B. Gordon, one of the finest regimental commanders in Lee's army and soon to become a general, faced and threw back several of Meade's regiments. They had the advantage of being dug in, firing downward from trenches at Federals struggling up the slope of the mountain and, for the most part, in plain view.

The firing from the Confederate rifle pits seemed to be exceptionally deadly, Meade's officers noted, before they realized that the Rebels were necessarily shooting high because of their elevated positions, and, as such, were striking Union troops in the head. The wounds received that day by members of the 107th Pa. and the 76th N.Y. were mostly head wounds. It was the same with Hatch's men, who were pressing Rodes at the center of his line, until one, then another of his regiments advanced against a cornfield fence, being repulsed by terrific volley fire, but continuing forward, then dashing to the fence to wrest control of it from fiercely fighting Rebels in hand-to-hand contests. The Confederates grimly retreated into the cornfield, leaving the Federals in control of the fence.

As two North Carolina regiments tried to retake the cornfield by storming a Federal battery, three Union regiments, including the 89th N.Y., these troops at first prone and concealed in the cornstalks, rose as one man and let loose a terrific volley that cut down the advancing Confederates. Pvt. David Thompson of the 89th later wrote how the Rebels had already fired a volley at the Federal battery and when the Federals leaped to their feet, "the Confederates stood before us not 20 feet away ... but helpless, with empty muskets. The 89th simply rose up and shot them down." The slaughter of the enemy troops sickened Thompson and he wrote compassionately of them, "their beards clotted with thick blood, groaning & cursing on all sides—these made me wish myself back home."

While Meade and Hatch pressed the Confederate left,

Burnside ordered Gen. John Gibbon to lead his Black Hat brigade from I Corps straight up the National Road and at the heart of Turner's Gap. Gibbon knew well the Confederate commander atop South Mountain. A native North Carolinian, Gibbon had been the best man at D. H. Hill's wedding. Yet, Gibbon found it hard going against a Georgia brigade commanded by Gen. Alfred Colquitt. These were fresh Rebel troops who had seen little or no action and they fought for every yard of ground, from tree to tree, from fence to fence.

Gibbon brought up two 12-pounder Napoleon cannons and placed them in the middle of the road, having them fire and then slowly advance, while, on either side of the guns, the 7th Wis. and 19th Ind. marched in columns along with the slowly advancing guns. Behind these units marched the 2nd Wis. and 6th Wis. Maj. Rufus Dawes of the 6th Wis. described how "for half a mile of advance, our skirmishers played a deadly game of 'Bo Peep,'" hiding behind logs, fences, rocks and bushes. Also to Dawes, his commander, Gibbon, seemed to be everywhere, but mostly "on the highest ground, where he could see the whole line, giving his orders in a voice so loud and clear as to be heard throughout."

Colquitt's guns by then opened fire on the advancing Federals, shells bursting amidst their startled ranks. One shell burst through a rank of the 2nd Wis., killing and wounding seven men. But the Yankees kept marching forward, seemingly oblivious to the Rebel cannon fire. Finally, Gibbon's regiments ran up against Colquitt's main defense line, a strong one. The Confederates were positioned behind stone walls on ground high above Gibbon's formations. Gibbon ordered his men to halt and, as night began to fall, the opponents, rather than firing at each other, traded shouted insults. One Georgian voice cried out: "You damned black hats! We gave you hell at Bull Run!" One of Gibbon's men shouted back: "You thieving scoundrels, no McDowell after you now!"

With that both sides unleashed volleys, but this was a firefight Gibbon knew he could not win. His lone brigade, he knew, was too weak to break the Confederate defenses. His action was a diversionary one, but it had not altered the stiff resistance offered to Meade and Hatch to the right of the Union line. As darkness fell, Colquitt and Gibbon continued to exchange cannon and volley fire. Down the mountain, at McClellan's camp, Little Mac and his entourage watched in silent fascination as the blazings from cannons and muskets flared in the falling darkness, the distant bursts of light reminding them of fireflies. Then these guns fell silent and Colquitt's and Gibbon's men heard the rattling clank of steel on steel along their fronts. All were affixing bayonets and waiting silently for a night attack that did not come. Colquitt's losses that day were estimated to be slightly more than 100 men killed and wounded; Gibbon suffered more, sustaining more than 300 casualties, about one-third of his force.

The Confederate front commanded by Rodes was much more in peril than the line defended by Colquitt. Rodes had been losing a large number of men—his brigade would suffer the loss of 218 men killed and wounded—but he knew this was the price for buying the much-needed time to defend Turner's Gap and to prevent McClellan from smashing into Lee's rear. His men slowly gave ground, inflicting severe losses



ABOVE, Union Gen. John Gibbon (shown mounted at right next to tree) sent his troops straight up a road to attack the Rebels at Turner's Gap; **BELOW**, Federal troops break through the Confederate lines at Turner's Gap, causing the Confederates to lose their positions at South Mountain.



on Hatch and Meade, and, by twilight, Rodes had lost the high ground to Union troops. It was too dark, however, for the Federals to continue, and, in the dark, Confederate reinforcements were streaming through Turner's Gap.

As the sun was setting, Felix de Fontaine, former New York *Herald* correspondent and one of the finest Southern reporters of the war (who wrote under the pseudonym of "Personne"), returned to Boonsboro to write a report of the battle he had witnessed that day at South Mountain, describing the overwhelming numbers of Federal troops and the valiant defense made by the outnumbered Confederate soldiers determined to hold back the blue tide. "We barely held our own," wrote de Fontaine. "Advance we could not. The enemy in numbers were like a solid wall ... Retreat we could not, and thus we fought, doggedly giving and taking the fearful blows of battle until long after nightfall." (This report first appeared in the Charleston *Daily Courier* on Sept. 29, 1862.)

Three miles to the south of Turner's Gap, IX Corps also ground to a halt because of darkness. Frustrated, Gen. Reno learned that his men had at first made headway, but were then halted by stiffer resistance from the Confederates than expected. That meant only one thing to Reno—that the Rebel lines had been reinforced. This was true. Hood had arrived at dusk with two brigades and more Confederates were filling the gaps in the Rebel defense line.

Reno's troops had unleashed so many volleys at the enemy that his frontline regiments soon ran out of ammunition. In the absence of immediate supplies of cartridges, Reno's regimental commanders simply advanced a fresh regiment with cartridges to replace one with depleted ammunition. Thus, the 9th N.H. replaced the 46th N.Y., but the green recruits from New Hampshire were so jittery in the growing darkness that they mistook the retreating New Yorkers for the enemy and began firing on their own men.

This commotion caused Gen. Reno to ride to the front of his lines. Though the sun had set and darkness was closing in around the mountain, Reno wanted to continue his advance. He rode to the very front of his lines, close to where Gen. Garland had been killed that morning, urging his frontline regimental commanders to take their men further up the slope, even though his men were now groping almost blindly through the enveloping darkness.

Reno felt that there was still enough light by which to seek out and destroy the enemy. This thought was much in the minds of Confederate sharpshooters well-positioned on the slopes above. One of them had just enough light by which to see Gen. Jesse Reno riding along the front of his leading regiment and fired a fatal bullet into him. Reno reeled from his horse and was rushed back to the headquarters of Gen. Samuel Sturgis on a stretcher.

When Reno arrived, he said loudly to Sturgis: "Hello, Sam! I'm dead!" At first Sturgis thought Reno was joking, since he spoke in such a natural, almost cheerful voice.

"I hope it is not as bad as that," Sturgis said.

"Yes, yes," replied Reno. "I'm dead. Goodbye." Reno was right. Within a few minutes a regimental doctor pronounced Reno dead.

Gen. Cox took command of IX Corps, but he could not

order his men to attack further. Night had fallen and Confederate cannon, which appeared to have arrived in considerable numbers, were occasionally pounding his positions. IX Corps was now only about a half mile from Turner's Gap.

Gen. Lee was aware of all this when he arrived to confer with Longstreet and Hill at Turner's Gap. He decided to pull out all of his troops under the cover of night. The Confederate forces had achieved their objective; they had gained time, allowing Jackson to envelop Col. Dixon S. Miles' 12,500 Federals at Harpers Ferry. Lee praised Hill's men for their heroic defense, as well as those who had fought that day at the equally important Crampton's Gap to the south of the mountain range.

South Mountain (Crampton's Gap), Md., Sept. 14, 1862.

McClellan had not pinned all his hopes on Burnside, Hooker and Reno in pushing through Turner's Gap. He had sent Gen. William Franklin and his VI Corps further south from Buckeystown to smash through Crampton's Gap. Franklin, however, was slow to his assignment. Though he began his march at 6 a.m., Franklin waited with two divisions for several hours on the morning of Sept. 14 at the village of Jefferson, so that his third division, commanded by Gen. Darius Couch, could join him. Couch did not appear, not arriving on the battle line until 10 p.m. that night. (Couch never gave a satisfactory explanation for his tardiness, ambiguously reporting that his regiments had encountered "unexpected delays.")

Franklin was a resolute but sometimes overly cautious commander who was slow to take initiative. He moved his troops along at an almost leisurely pace. It was almost noon when his two divisions arrived at Burkittsville, about a mile from Crampton's Gap on the eastern side of South Mountain. As soon as the Federals began marching through the little town, Confederate cannon began shelling the place. This did not dissuade the Unionist population from appearing and shouting encouragement to the passing Federals. Remembered Maj. Thomas W. Hyde of the 7th Me.: "Through the street we went while cannon balls crashed among the houses, and the women, young and old, with great coolness, waved their handkerchiefs and flags at us."

The Confederate force facing Franklin's VI Corps was commanded by Col. Thomas Taylor Munford, who had been ordered by Gen. J. E. B. Stuart to hold Crampton's Gap at all costs. Stuart had earlier ordered Munford's two cavalry regiments and his light artillery to support two brigades of Gen. Lafayette McLaws' corps that had been posted at Crampton's Gap. McLaws, after receiving a warning from Lee that McClellan would try to penetrate Crampton's Gap in force, sent a third brigade, one commanded by Gen. Howell Cobb, to reinforce the Rebels already dug in on the high ground. With two batteries positioned high on the slope of the mountain range, Munford had at his command no more than 1,000 men.

Though they were in a commanding position, the Confederates knew well that they were facing overwhelming odds. They could literally see those odds—12 to 1—marching toward them in the form of Franklin's two divisions. "They were so numerous," said Confederate gunner George Neese of the

approaching Yankees, "that it looked as if they were creeping out of the ground." Neese wondered why the Federals approached so slowly, so cautiously. To him, the sluggish Federal formations creeping toward the Confederate position appeared to be "a lion making exceedingly careful preparations to spring on a plucky little mouse."

Further perplexing Munford and his command was the obvious fact that Franklin would take his time to enter battle. Once his columns had marched from Burkittsville, Franklin ordered his troops off the road leading to Crampton's Gap, with instructions that they should rest in the fields. The Federals lay sleeping on their bedrolls, lolling, gossiping, as an occasional Rebel shell went whizzing through their ranks.

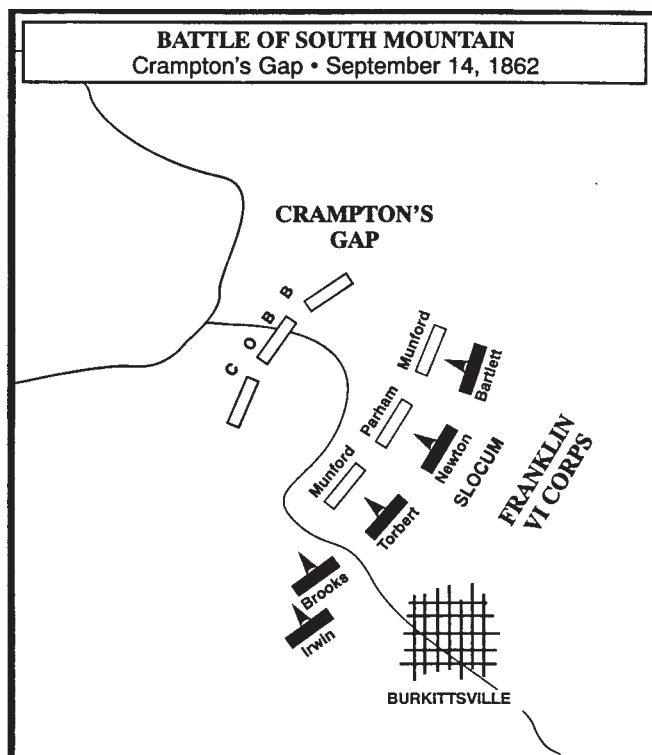
Franklin had been given no timetable by McClellan in his mission to seize Crampton's Gap. Moreover, he was vexed by the option that he could, instead, attack through Brownsville Gap, but he eventually discarded this notion and focused upon a plan of attack against Crampton's Gap. His pickets had already probed the base of the slope leading up the mountain to discover that Confederates were strongly entrenched behind a lengthy stone fence line that ran along the base of the mountain through several farms.

Franklin sent Gen. William F. "Baldy" Smith's division to the south of the Burkittsville Road in an attempt to envelop the enemy's right flank, while ordering the division of Gen. Henry F. Slocum to advance directly against the Confederate positions. Facing Slocum were three Virginia regiments under the command of Col. William Parham and Munford's two dismounted cavalry regiments. Munford had ordered the horses taken up the mountain for safekeeping and to make sure that his men knew they would fight as foot soldiers throughout the coming battle.

On the heights above the defenders and the Federals slowly pushing toward them was a Rebel battery of two rifled guns. The Confederates also positioned several small naval howitzers nearby, but these guns were limited in range and proved to be ineffective in their shelling of advancing Union troops. At about 3 p.m., Franklin received a message by flag signal from McClellan, which told him rather ambiguously that if he met with the enemy "in very great force at any of these passes let me know at once, and amuse them as best you can, so as to retain them there."

About 20 minutes later, Franklin replied to McClellan by stating: "I have been severely engaged with the enemy for the last hour. I have two brigades in action with musketry & two others just going in. Of course I have no troops but my reserves, and Gen. Couch has not come up. I have sent to hurry him. The force of the enemy is too great for us to take the pass to-night, I am afraid. Shall await further orders here & shall attack again in the morning without further orders."

Franklin's message clearly indicated his lack of intelligence about the Confederate forces facing him. His own forces outnumbered the Rebels more than 12 to one, and the resistance his advance units met clearly showed him that he was facing regimental, not brigade strength at every sector of the battlefield. Gen. Henry Slocum did not share his commander's view. He would not wait until dawn; he intended to charge the Confederate defense line and take it there and then.



Union Gen. Henry Slocum, contrary to his corps commander's intentions, vigorously attacked the thin Rebel positions at Crampton's Gap, collapsing Munford and Parham and then routing Howell Cobb's Georgia brigade.

At about 4 p.m., Slocum ordered the regiments of Torbert, Newton and Bartlett to charge the stretched-out Confederate line, and these regiments went forward with a rush. Crouched behind the stone and rail fence were Parham's infantry and Munford's dismounted cavalry. These veteran troops waited until the first ranks of Federals came into range before delivering volley fire. The Union troops wavered, but did not break, closing the gaps in their ranks and going on almost at a run. The Rebels began rapid fire, using up a good deal of their ammunition, but the sheets of flame that burst from their line and scythed the advancing Yankee lines seemed only to inspire the Federal troops to continue the advance.

The Federals stopped every now and then to let loose their own volley fire, and these blazing walls of bullets tore into the fence and ripped the defenders behind it to pieces. George Bernard, a private in the 12th Va., was struck by a ball in the right leg. To stop the bleeding, a fellow soldier made a crude tourniquet, wrapping this about Bernard's leg. So intense was the Federal fire that the only shelter Bernard could find was to lay as close as possible to the stone footing of the fence, while bullets and balls buzzed and smashed above him into the fence and his comrades behind it. Said Bernard later: "I lay with arms and legs drawn about as close to my body as possible, well knowing that I could not afford to occupy one inch of superfluous space."

The fire increased in intensity and soon sparks from the Federal volley fire set dry leaves along the fence line blazing. Bernard, rather than burn to death, was forced to drag himself away, and he vainly attempted to crawl up the mountain slope. By then he could hear the screaming voices of hundreds of

Federals as they rushed the fence line. These were the troops of Col. Alfred Torbert's New Jersey brigade, all hardened veterans. Sgt. John Beach of the 4th N.J. remembered how quick his regiment was to respond to Torbert's shouted command to charge: "We bounded forward with a cheer."

The 4th N.J. swept over the fence, leaping it and racing onward at the now retreating Rebels, capturing dozens of prisoners, including the near helpless George Bernard. The Confederates did not go in pandemonium and there was no rout. Parham's and Munford's men went up the slope of the mountain grudgingly, stopping to regroup in skirmish lines that blasted the pursuing enemy, shooting down those Federals who had raced far ahead of their formations. "I can safely say that I brought one fellow down, sure that day," remembered one Rebel defender, John Sale. "I was behind a tree ... and when they charged us I loaded my gun and took aim at an officer who was as large as Pa, and who was behaving very bravely, bringing his men up cheering and talking to them all the while. I waited until they were about 75 or 100 yards from where I was. I let fly at him and he threw his arms up in the air and fell...."

The attack up the slope was slow and confusing, with rag-tag Rebel formations stubbornly resisting, forming lines of defense and firing. In some instances, these Confederate stands actually reversed the Union tide, but only momentarily. Out-numbered and outflanked, the small knots of Rebels were repeatedly forced to clamber up the slope as the blue tide swept forward. As they neared the summit, the Federals found it more difficult to climb with large stone and rock outcroppings blocking their paths. In one instance, a Vermont soldier slipped off a large boulder and fell into a rocky crevice. There he found a Confederate soldier who had suffered the same fate.

Both men pointed their muskets and glared at each other. Finally, the Rebel said: "We're both in the same fix. You can't gobble me, and I can't gobble you. Let us wait until the firing is finished. If your side wins, I will be your prisoner. If we win, you will be my prisoner." The Vermont man nodded and both waited for the shooting to end, but they continued to point their muskets at each other's hearts.

What was left of Parham's and Munford's commands raced toward the summit just as two of three regiments under the command of Gen. Howell Cobb took up defensive positions at this spot, the third regiment just then preparing to go into line. These Confederate reinforcements, 1,300 strong, were met with a rush of Rebels fleeing toward the rear, going past them on the run and shouting that thousands of Federals were on their heels.

Then over the rocks and through the trees of the mountaintop the 4th N.J. came on the run, its banners flapping in the evening breeze, these men screaming like banshees and firing, reloading and firing again like men possessed. They had been inspired into a breakneck charge by Sgt. Jacob Ostermann who had shouted out the name of Gen. Philip Kearny, their former beloved commander who had been killed at Chantilly two weeks earlier. There was no stopping the 4th N.J.

Gen. Howell Cobb, a political general with little battle-field experience, was overwhelmed by the circumstances and seemed befuddled as Parham's and Munford's men ran through

his lines, spreading panic and despair. At first his regimental commanders managed to have their men unleash several volleys at the advancing Federals, but, when viewing the huge numbers advancing against them, Cobb's men lost heart and began to leave their defensive positions. Cobb tried to stem the tide by grabbing the colors and waving them frantically at his troops. They ignored him, fleeing after their comrades to the top of the summit and then running pell-mell down the western slope of the mountain.

After a Federal sharpshooter shot the staff of the flag in his hand away, Cobb dejectedly followed his fleeing troops. "That I should live to experience such a disaster," Cobb later moaned. "What can be done? What can save us." On the western slope of the mountain, Cobb began rounding up his men, then joined with Parham and Munford, who had established another defense line a mile down from the crest on the western side of South Mountain in Pleasant Valley, waiting for the next attack. This line was quickly reinforced by several regiments sent by Gen. McLaws. The Confederate defeat that day left Col. Munford embittered and angry. He blamed the disaster on the rout of Cobb's regiments, whom he described as "a flock of frightened sheep." He had spotted Cobb's men "running in great disorder on the Harpers Ferry Road, followed a short distance by the enemy." Munford admitted that his own men had, indeed, fled, but only after putting up a bitter fight and being overwhelmed. Cobb's men, he pointed out, had deserted a position that had hardly been defended. That was the difference.

It mattered little now. Slocum's regiments had won the day at Crampton's Gap, and despite his lack of resolve and planning, Gen. Franklin appeared to McClellan as an aggressive and fearless corps commander. He had taken Crampton's Gap. Moreover, he reported that he had captured four Confederate battle flags. Added to this were hundreds of captured Springfield rifles dropped by the fleeing Confederates; these weapons replaced the old smoothbore muskets used chiefly by Slocum's troops.

The price paid by Franklin at Crampton's Gap was a little more than 500 men killed and wounded, with an estimated 750 Confederates lost, 400 of these being prisoners. Even though McClellan stated that the battles at South Mountain had produced "a glorious victory," more than 1,800 Federal troops had been killed or wounded, while Lee managed to get his forces away to safety under the cover of darkness. An estimated 2,300 Confederates were lost at the battles of Fox's Gap, Turner's Gap and Crampton's Gap along the South Mountain range. Worse for the already depleted ranks of Lee, more than 800 Southerners had been captured. The battles at South Mountain ended when Lee gave the final order to withdraw from Turner's Gap under the cover of darkness. The Army of Northern Virginia was still in peril and Lee's plans were known only to himself. He needed a victory somewhere and he hoped that it would come from his most reliable corps commander, Gen. Thomas Jonathan "Stonewall" Jackson. It would.

It was at this moment, one of many to come in the next three days, that McClellan refused to press his advantage. His wait-and-see attitude was shared by many of his field commanders. Gen. Willis A. Gorman, who led a Wisconsin brigade, was typical. Even though Gorman had received orders to re-

lieve a unit that had fought all day through Turner's Gap, he refused to send fresh men to renew the attack. The sun was down, the battle ended for the day, so far as Gorman was concerned. When a courier arrived reminding him of his orders to send out reinforcements, Gorman snapped: "I can't send men into that woods tonight! All men are cowards in the dark!"

Although darkness brought relief to the bloodied Confederates, Lee's position remained precarious. He realized, with only 14 brigades on hand out of the total of 40 in his entire army, that McClellan outnumbered him four or five times to one and could, if Little Mac chose to order one headlong attack, crush his force. Lee's ambition to invade Pennsylvania and then descend upon Philadelphia and Baltimore and threaten Washington was no longer a reality. He was being forced back to the Potomac, where he would have to make some sort of fight. He sent a message to McLaws, who, with Anderson, was battling Union forces under Franklin as they tried to force their way through Crampton's Gap to attack Jackson at Harpers Ferry. "The day has gone against us," Lee told McLaws through a courier, "and this army will go by Sharpsburg and cross the river. It is necessary for you to abandon your position tonight."

To Jackson at Harpers Ferry, Lee sent word to cross the Potomac and meet his forces at Sharpsburg, Md. The Confederate army, Lee had momentarily concluded, would retreat back to Virginia. Jackson, however, informed Lee that he was about to capture Harpers Ferry and would then quick march to Lee's side. Jackson's message, written at 8:15 p.m. on the night of Sept. 14, as his men were in a commanding position at Bolivar Heights, encouragingly stated: "Through God's blessing, the advance, which commenced this evening, has been successful thus far, and I look to Him for complete success tomorrow.... Your dispatch respecting the movements of the enemy and the importance of concentration has been received."

Lee revised his strategy; he had come to believe that he might salvage his invasion of Maryland if Jackson could, indeed, take Harpers Ferry before McClellan brought his main army through the South Mountain gaps. At Crampton's Gap, Franklin pushed his massive force through Confederate lines, which consisted of the rear guard of McLaws' two divisions. These forces were stretched all the way to Harpers Ferry, engaging, as was Jackson, the 12,500 Union troops under the command of Col. Dixon S. Miles, a thick-witted alcoholic commander whose military competence was seriously flawed.

McLaws heard the distant noise of battle at his rear, but Gen. Stuart, whose cavalry arrived to support McLaws, told McLaws that the Yankees at Crampton's Gap to his rear amounted to little more than a brigade. McLaws pressed his attack at Harpers Ferry, but the thunder of battle to his rear increased to the point where he decided to investigate personally.

McLaws rode to the sound of the battle to find his rear guard fleeing past him in a near rout. He learned that his small force under Cobb, Parham and Munford had faced an entire Union corps under Franklin and, after putting up a strong defense, finally cracked and fled. Franklin, however, did not press the attack, although McClellan had specifically ordered him to "cut off, destroy, or capture McLaws' command." The Federals had fought hard all day through the gap and Franklin decided

to rest his troops, ordering his men to sleep in the battle lines they had reached by nightfall. At dawn on Sept. 15, these men ate a cold breakfast and were then ordered forward. Confederate resistance was stiff—McLaws had strongly reinforced his defense line along the western base of South Mountain. Suddenly, the worn-out Union troops heard a great and rolling cheer from the Confederate lines.

A Union soldier leaped up from his position and shouted to the Southern lines: "What the hell are you fellows cheering for?"

A Confederate soldier yelled back: "Because Harpers Ferry has gone up, God damn you!"

"I thought that was it," said the Union man and he sat down, disgusted at the news that Harpers Ferry had been captured.

Harpers Ferry, W. Va., Sept. 12-16, 1862.

Actually, three Confederate forces—those of Jackson, McLaws and Walker—had surrounded Harpers Ferry within the last four days. Jackson was the last to arrive there, having taken his troops in a long sweeping movement to the northwest before turning south to threaten the 2,500-man garrison at Martinsburg, W. Va. This force evacuated that town and moved toward Harpers Ferry, W. Va., to join the more than 10,000 Federal troops at Harpers Ferry, a force commanded by Col. Dixon S. Miles. Jackson followed. While McLaws and Walker invested Harpers Ferry from the east and south, Jackson's troops and artillery slowly took commanding positions on the height to the west.

Jackson, following his usually meticulous procedures, brought his artillery to Bolivar Heights on Sunday, Sept. 14, while the battles at South Mountain were raging. Two Confederate batteries consisting of four Parrott rifle guns were laboriously dragged up to Maryland Heights. More than 200 men pulled ropes attached to each gun as they hauled the pieces upward through a path that had been hacked out of the thick timber by hundreds of axmen. Jackson had sent couriers to McLaws and to Walker, stating that he wanted the bombardment of Harpers Ferry to be a unified effort and that all of the guns should commence firing at the same time.

Gen. John G. Walker, who occupied a commanding position at Loudoun Heights, preferred not to wait. He began shelling Harpers Ferry at 1 p.m. on Sunday. The first shell exploded at the outskirts of the town, where the 125th N.Y. was encamped, and the regimental chaplain was just then concluding his Sunday service. Only minutes later, more Confederate batteries joined the cannonade. Col. Miles ordered his own batteries, positioned in lower areas, to respond, but the Union guns did not have the range to reach the high-ground Confederate positions, and their shells fell harmlessly short.

At Harpers Ferry, there was deep concern if not resignation by Col. Miles, who was no more than a caretaker commander in charge of a railroad guard, ostensibly protecting the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad from Confederate attacks. Gen. Julius White, who commanded the 2,500-man Federal garrison at Martinsburg and who had fled before Jackson to join Miles, gave over command of his troops to Miles, since Miles

was more familiar with Harpers Ferry. In so doing, however, White, who had actual seniority, turned over responsibility to an inept drunkard.

Miles had a terrible reputation in Washington, as well as with his own troops. In the fall of 1861, Miles was brought before a board of inquiry, charged with being drunk while leading his division at the first battle of Bull Run and largely contributing to that Union disaster. He was found guilty, but was somehow spared the disgrace of being cashiered. Miles, through his political connections, it was reported, had remained in the army and even managed to be posted to Harpers Ferry, although this was considered a backwater assignment of no significance.

Miles' immediate superior was Gen. John E. Wool, the elderly commander of the area department stationed in Baltimore. Wool was a contemporary of Gen. Winfield Scott and had little or no familiarity with the valley garrisons under his control. He offered Miles no advice whatsoever as Confederate forces slowly surrounded Harpers Ferry. His superior, Gen. Henry Halleck, also had offered no contingency plans for just such a siege, putting all responsibility for the defense of Harpers Ferry on Wool, telling him on Sept. 5: "I leave all dispositions there to your experience and local knowledge." Wool, in turn, put all responsibility on Miles, wiring Miles on the same day he heard from Halleck: "Be energetic and active, and defend all places to the last extremity. There must be no abandoning of a post, and shoot the first man that thinks of it, whether officer or soldier."

Compounding the Federal problems at Harpers Ferry was the lack of experience on the part of most of the garrison's troops and officers. The force consisted of untried militia and detachments of the Maryland home guard. Of the nine regular army regiments, only two, the 32nd and 60th Ohio, had any battle experience, and that was painfully learned against Jackson during his amazing Shenandoah campaign.

Because of this inexperience, the Federals had allowed the Rebels to take every advantage of their poorly defended positions in the last several days, beginning on Sept. 12-13, 1862, when two of McLaws' best brigades, led by Gens. Joseph Kershaw and William Barksdale, came over Elk Ridge and through Solomon's Gap, smashing through a small Federal detachment of 40 men before turning south and marching along the ridge, or rather inching along the high mountain path, one so narrow that the Rebels had to hold on to shrubs and small trees to prevent themselves from tumbling down the steep slopes. By sunset, Kershaw and Barksdale encountered thick Federal abatis in the form of fallen trees and were stopped for the night.

At dawn, Kershaw's South Carolinians attacked through the abatis and drove off a small Union force. After going down the ridge for another 400 yards, the Rebels encountered another Federal formation and charged over and through its ranks, driving the Union troops back to their last line of defense on Maryland Heights, a hastily constructed line of logs and stones. Behind these fortifications were 1,600 Federal troops under the command of Col. Thomas H. Ford, whose 32nd Ohio had the only real battle experience of any troops present. In contrast, the 126th N.Y. was an entirely green regiment of rookies, the regiment having been raised only three weeks earlier.

The goal of Kershaw and Barksdale was a menacing Union battery consisting of two 9-inch Dahlgren rifle guns, a 50-pounder Parrott rifle gun and four 12-pounder smoothbore guns. This battery was positioned halfway up Maryland Heights and guarded the approaches to Harpers Ferry from the west and south, but the Confederate attack came from the unexpected area to the north. Miles and his officers had wrongly concluded that the Rebels would not attempt to come over the high precipices in that area.

Col. Ford was not with his troops at the defense line on the ridge. A politically appointed officer with limited military background, he informed his second-in-command, Col. Eliakim Sherrill, commander of the untried 126th N.Y., that he was ill and that Sherrill was to take command. Ford remained almost two miles behind his own lines, hoping for the best. Sherrill watched as his pickets were driven in from the dense woods above; these men came streaming back to the defense line in a panic and on their heels came Kershaw's and Barksdale's men, the Rebel yell piercing the air, and fierce volleys following that slammed into the Union defenders.

Kershaw charged directly at the center of the Union line, which was fronted by abatis, while Barksdale attacked the weaker right flank of the Federal line, which was farther down the mountain slope. Kershaw sent his regiments twice against the Union line and was repulsed with heavy losses. Sherrill, a former U.S. congressman with some militia experience, showed his mettle by stoically marching up and down his line, pistol in hand, shouting for his men to hold their positions. His New Yorkers held, but when Kershaw's men came on a third time, Sherrill boldly mounted the breastwork to get a better view of the attackers and as he did so, the front line of the advancing Confederates let loose a volley.

A bullet tore into Sherrill's cheek, slicing through his tongue, and when he tried to speak, all that came out of his mouth was a gush of blood. He collapsed and was carried to the rear by some of his men. Seeing their heroic commander carried from the field, the New York recruits spread the rumor that someone had ordered a retreat. The green soldiers began to leave the breastworks in twos and threes, then whole groups fled. Then the regiment broke and ran before Kershaw's determined attackers, throwing down their muskets and fleeing for their lives, shouting and shrieking doom.

Major Sylvester Hewitt, Ford's aide, rode along the line trying to turn the New Yorkers back, but the recruits streamed past him, oblivious to his commands. Hewitt did manage to hold other formations in line for brief moments, but these troops, too, joined the stampede down the south slope toward Harpers Ferry. Few turned to fight the pursuing Confederates. Most tried to hide under bushes or behind rocks, and they were rooted out at bayonet point by the enemy.

Col. Miles himself had ridden halfway up Maryland Heights only to be told of the ensuing disaster. Soon he saw groups of men running toward him, the terrified recruits of the 126th N.Y., followed by routed troops from other commands. At his position halfway up the slope, Miles had a fresh regiment of 900 men, the 115th N.Y., but he did not order them forward to stop the rout and create a new defense line. Instead, he had an angry conversation with Col. Ford.

Ford begged Miles for reinforcements, but Miles shook his head and said: "You can't have another damned man. If you can't hold it, leave it!"

Ford told Miles that since the Confederates appeared to have swarmed over the main Union defense lines and were pouring about the Federal right flank, he would leave Maryland Heights to the enemy. At 3:30 p.m., Ford ordered the big guns on the heights spiked. Some of these guns were shoved over the ridge to prevent them from falling into the hands of the enemy. Then all the Federal troops were pulled out.

A short time after the retreat from Maryland Heights, Miles was informed that two other large Confederate forces had arrived to threaten his post. One of these forces was the division of Gen. John G. Walker, whose two brigades had a short time earlier arrived at the foot of Loudoun Heights, their pickets cautiously ascending the slope to find to their amazement that not a single Union soldier occupied this commanding position. At about the same time, Gen. Jackson arrived from the west with three divisions, 11,500 men, deploying his formations a few miles from Bolivar Heights, the last remaining Federal position.

Gloom settled over the Union command at Harpers Ferry that night. Col. Miles did not believe he could hold out against the Confederate forces that surrounded his position and told this to a Capt. Charles H. Russell of the 1st Md. Cav., whom he had summoned to his headquarters, ordering Russell and nine of his men to ride across the pontoon bridge and break through the Confederate lines. Russell was to gallop to the headquarters of Gen. McClellan at Frederick with this news. According to Russell, Miles said sarcastically: "Try to reach somebody who has ever heard of the United States Army, or any general of the United States Army, or anybody that knew anything about the United States Army, and report the condition of Harpers Ferry." Russell later stated that Miles told him he thought he could hold out for 48 hours, "but if he was not relieved in that time he would have to surrender the place."

Russell and his nine men rode off on a harrowing journey toward McClellan. He and his patrol managed to avoid Jackson's pickets in the dark night and then went along back roads until they found an upstream ford where they crossed the Potomac. They found an unguarded pass at South Mountain and arrived at Middletown. Russell secured a fresh horse and galloped on to Frederick where he delivered Miles' desperate message. McClellan wrote a do-or-die message to Miles: "Hold out to the last extremity. If it is possible, reoccupy the Maryland Heights with your whole force. If you can do that, I will certainly be able to relieve you." Little Mac sent off three couriers with this message to Miles, but none of them ever arrived at Harpers Ferry.

Oddly, several of Miles' officers suggested the same action that very night, proposing that Miles order most of his force back up to Maryland Heights and push through the enemy lines. Others suggested that the entire force break out of the enemy noose and abandon Harpers Ferry altogether. "I am ordered by General Wool to hold this place," Miles almost shouted, "and God damn my soul to hell if I don't hold it against the enemy."

Then Col. Benjamin Franklin "Grimes" Davis confronted

Miles with another plan, saying that the approximately 1,500 cavalymen at Harpers Ferry had nothing to do except try vainly to protect their horses during the shelling of the town and that they should be allowed to break out of the encirclement. He, Davis said, would lead them out. At first, Miles would not hear of it, saying that the daring plan was "wild and impractical." But Davis persisted and Miles relented, giving Davis the authority to take out the cavalry. (One story held that Davis never got that authority and acted on his own responsibility. Still another insists that Davis insubordinately told Miles that "I'll be damned if I will make the Rebels a gift of two thousand horses!")

Davis gathered the troopers of the 8th N.Y., the 12th Ill., the 7th R.I., nicknamed the College Cavaliers (so named because these troopers were all volunteers from Dartmouth College in New Hampshire and from Vermont's Norwich University), Cole's Battalion, a battalion of the 1st Md., a squadron from the 1st R.I., and an unattached company of Maryland cavalry. When he told them he intended to lead them out of doomed Harpers Ferry, they were jubilant. Particularly anxious to escape was the commander of the unattached Maryland company, S. C. Means, a "renegade" Virginian who believed that if he were captured, he would be hanged as a traitor to his state.

The same could be said of Col. Davis, who had been born in Alabama and raised in Mississippi. An 1854 graduate of West Point, Davis had been a classmate of the famous Gen. Jeb Stuart. He had fought Indians on the frontier and was a tough and clever cavalry leader. He, too, had been called a traitor when the war broke out and he elected to stay with the Union. His 8th N.Y. had been mustered into service on Nov. 28, 1861, and had spent its first seven months fighting Jackson in the Shenandoah, but as foot soldiers under the command of Gen. Nathaniel Prentiss Banks. Not until July 1862 was this regiment given horses, and a month later it was posted to Harpers Ferry.

As the College Cavaliers were cinching the girths of their horses, their commander, Maj. Augustus W. Corliss went through their ranks and told them bluntly that "by dawn you will either be in Pennsylvania, or in hell, or on the way to Richmond [as prisoners]." Davis held a meeting with his officers and agreed that the cavalry would carry only the necessary equipment, arms, water and short rations. No bugle calls would be employed for assembly, Davis warned, as Col. Miles did not want the Union infantry and artillery units to know that their cavalry was departing, lest they all want to leave. (Some infantry and artillery officers had learned of the daring plan and asked to be taken along, but were told that they must stay behind to put up a defense, and that they would not be able to keep up with the cavalry, in any event.)

The troopers would leave Harpers Ferry at nightfall, crossing the pontoon bridge to the Maryland shore. They would then be guided by "an old settler," named Norakes who would take them along the "John Brown Road," which ran west along the foot of Maryland Heights, now occupied by the Rebels, and then over a network of connecting mountain paths that led to Sharpsburg. The elderly Norakes would see them through, he promised.

As soon as it was dark, Davis was the first cavalryman on the pontoon bridge, leading his troopers quietly across as they walked their horses in pairs. Once assembled on the Maryland shore, the Union cavalry rode off at a gallop. The pace slowed, however, when the troopers were led "through lanes and byroads, woods and fields." The night was "intensely dark," as Davis set a grinding pace, and in that moonless, almost pitch-black night, each trooper remained with the column by watching intently for the sparks from the shoes of the horse in front of him as they struck the pebbly roadway or by listening to the rattle of sabers in front of him. Company D of the 12th Ill. nevertheless got lost when it took a wrong turn down a narrow road that led them into a Confederate position at Sandy Hook. Rebel pickets fired at them, and the cavalymen turned about and dashed rearward, fortunately relocating the Federal column.

The column was strung out for several miles as it detoured around Sharpsburg and then went up the Hagerstown Road. The exhausted troopers half-slumbered in the saddle as they plodded along, sometimes traveling past Confederate campsites where Rebels slept about smoldering fires. Some of the troopers fell asleep and tumbled from their horses, losing their mounts. They doubled up on the horses of their comrades.

As Davis led his men northward, he suddenly heard the soft rumble of wagons and ordered his men off the road and into some woods. He soon spied a wagon train coming from Hagerstown carrying Gen. Longstreet's reserve supply of ammunition. Davis boldly rode up to the lead teamster, a man half asleep, and told him in his thick southern accent that Federal cavalry was on the road. He ordered the teamster to turn off at the next fork. In the darkness, the driver thought Davis to be a Confederate officer and he obeyed. The train followed Davis up the road leading to Greencastle, Pa., a Union stronghold.

This wagon train, however, was under escort by a small Confederate cavalry detachment. Its commander rode forward from the rear of the train, demanding to know why the wagons had taken another route. Davis immediately ordered the 12th Ill. to charge the Rebel horsemen and the Confederate cavalry was driven off. The teamsters did not realize they had been captured until dawn broke and they could see the blue uniforms of the troopers riding alongside of them.

As the Federal horsemen entered Pennsylvania, according to Lt. William F. Luff of the 12th Ill., they were greeted by enthusiastic residents who handed them "fruits, cakes and pies." Luff would always remember "the long train of heavily loaded wagons rumbling over the hard, smooth road as rapidly as they could be urged forward, enveloped by clouds of cavalymen with a solid column in their rear, the clouds of dust, the crackling of whips, the cries of the drivers, and the shouts of the officers and men, formed a striking contrast to the long march in the silence and darkness of the previous night."

When Davis entered Greencastle, he proudly displayed his captured wagons, variously estimated at between 75 and 97, along with the train's escort of between 200 and 300 Confederate infantrymen and a large herd of beef cattle. The zigzag course Davis had taken covered a distance of about

60 miles, and both his men and horses were exhausted, unfit for duty for several days. He had lost 178 men in the night journey, but many of these troopers eventually straggled back to their commands.

Davis was the hero of the hour and McClellan later promoted him to the rank of major in the regular army. He was lionized by Pennsylvania Gov. Andrew G. Curtin, who sent a wire to Secretary of War Stanton detailing the heroic breakout of the cavalry. (The total number escaping has been estimated to be between 1,300 and 2,500, but the most reliable sources fix the number at between 1,500 and 1,600.) With this jubilant news came a dire footnote from Curtin to Stanton: "Colonel Davis says he thinks Colonel Miles will surrender [Harpers Ferry] this morning."

That morning, Gen. Jackson had completed his encirclement of Harpers Ferry. He had moved A. P. Hill's division down the west bank of the Shenandoah River so that Hill's infantry and artillery were in position to flank the Federals on Bolivar Heights. With more than 50 guns positioned on Harpers Ferry and Bolivar Heights, Jackson ordered his cannonade to open at dawn on Monday, Sept. 15, 1862. The bombardment of the town was so fierce that Col. William H. Trimble of the 60th Ohio later wrote that there "was not a place where you could lay the palm of your hand and say it was safe."

The Rebel batteries on Loudoun Heights and Maryland Heights also tore up the Federal defense line on Bolivar Heights, these Union troops caught in a murderous fire that raked their front, flank and rear.

Miles ordered his own guns to respond, but these guns did not have the range to reach the Confederate positions. They nevertheless banged away in futile rage and were soon running out of shells. Jackson, by 8 a.m., was preparing his infantry regiments to launch a full-scale attack on the town from several positions. Miles, at this time, held a desperate conference with his officers, telling them that his guns were almost out of ammunition and that it appeared that McClellan could not or would not send help. There was only one conclusion to their dilemma—surrender. Most of his officers agreed and those that fell silent later claimed that they had protested.

Miles ordered white flags shown, and when these makeshift banners appeared—one was cut from a white tent and waved from a tree by a cook in the 115th N.Y.—the Rebel guns fell silent one by one. Miles by then was walking about the streets and appeared to be in a daze—some later claimed that he had had so much to drink that morning that he was in an alcoholic stupor—and was talking to aides in a meandering sort of way, at times almost incoherent. "Where can McClellan be—where?" he asked an aide.

Just at that moment, even though a truce was in effect, a Confederate shell exploded close to Miles and almost severed his left leg. The shell had been fired by one of the Rebel guns on Maryland Heights. A battery commander had informed his superior that his guns were still loaded and asked what he should do. Col. Andrew Jackson Grigsby of the Stonewall Brigade told an aide to tell the battery commander to "fire them off the way they are pointed. He won't kill more of the



The trestle bridge at Harpers Ferry, W. Va., shown destroyed in 1862; Gen. Thomas J. Jackson besieged 12,500 Union troops here with an equal number of men, shelling the garrison into submission on Sept. 15-16, 1862.

damn Yankees than he ought to!" It was one of these randomly fired shells that mortally wounded the confused and hapless Miles.

While Miles was carried to a surgeon's table—he would die the next day—Gen. Julius White rode toward Maryland Heights to surrender to Stonewall Jackson. Gen. A. P. Hill met White en route and escorted White to Jackson's camp. The meeting was well remembered by Kyd Douglas, a Jackson aide: "There was nothing strikingly military about [Gen. White's] looks, but he was mounted on a handsome black horse, was handsomely uniformed, with an untarnished saber, immaculate gloves and boots, and had a staff fittingly equipped. He must have been somewhat astonished to find in General Jackson, the worst dressed, worst mounted, most faded and dingy looking general he had ever seen anyone surrender to, with a staff not much for looks and equipment."

When White asked for terms, Jackson said they would be unconditional, but he then told Hill that all Federal officers and men—except for Confederate deserters, with whom Jackson always dealt harshly—would be paroled. Officers would be allowed to keep their sidearms and private baggage. Munitions and public property were to be turned over to the Confederate victors. These would constitute the signed official terms of surrender. Jackson then generously added that the Union troops could keep their overcoats and blankets, and



Col. Dixon S. Miles, the inept and alcoholic commander of Harpers Ferry, who surrendered the largest number of U.S. troops up to that time.

each regiment would have two six-mule teams to pull wagons with their baggage. He would also provide them with two days' rations, even though this considerably depleted the stores at Harpers Ferry.

In taking Harpers Ferry, Jackson had captured more than 11,500 men, the largest capitulation of any U.S. force in American history, although approximately 1,600 Union cavalrymen under Col. Benjamin Franklin Davis and Lt. Col. Hasbrouck Davis (12th Ill. Cav.) had made their daring escape. The real prize was Harpers Ferry itself, where Jackson's men also captured 73 cannon, 13,000 small arms, and a treasure trove of food and clothing, all much needed by the Confederates.

Jackson rode through conquered Harpers Ferry wearing a dusty old uniform and a crumpled forage cap. He looked like anything but a victorious general, more like a scavenger. One Union prisoner looked at Jackson and said to his companions:

"Boys, he isn't much for looks, but if we'd had him we wouldn't have been caught in this trap!" Jackson was edified at the booty taken at Harpers Ferry, but was chiefly concerned with hurrying to Lee's aid. He sent the following message to Lee: "Through God's blessing, Harper's Ferry and its garrison are to be surrendered. As Hill's troops have borne the heaviest part of the engagement, he will be left in command until the prisoners and public property shall be disposed of, unless you direct otherwise. The other forces can move off this evening so soon as they get their rations."

Even though A.P. Hill was then under arrest for being insubordinate to his commander, Jackson, he had been allowed to assume command of his division during the attack on Harpers Ferry. Jackson, ever the man of military protocol, informed Hill that he would occupy Harpers Ferry and then march his division after Jackson's five divisions to aid Lee. Following the forthcoming battle, it was understood that Hill, if still alive, would stand charges for his insubordinate behavior.

Where Hill would never stand court-martial, a military inquiry awaited Col. Thomas Ford. The disaster befalling the Union force at Harpers Ferry would later bring about a military inquiry in Washington where Miles would be posthumously censured. The military court would also find that Ford had "abandoned his position without sufficient cause." Though he proved he had little stomach for battle at Maryland Heights, Ford's order to retreat from that place was tacitly endorsed by the erratic Miles, said Ford, who claimed that he had received a written order from Col. Miles, which allowed him to exercise his own discretion in either holding or abandoning the critical Maryland Heights position. When Ford's superiors demanded that he produce Miles' order, Ford said he had lost it. Following his court-martial, Ford was spared punishment and allowed to resign after Lincoln granted him clemency. McClellan later wrathfully wrote: "In any other country he would have been shot."

Antietam, Md., Sept. 16-18, 1862.

Lee, meanwhile, had withdrawn his forces to Sharpsburg, 14 miles distant, with his back to the Potomac. The area Lee chose for a defensive position around Sharpsburg favored the Southern lines, but only slightly, and the Potomac, running north and south behind Lee's defensive position, lent little or no protection. There was only one ford of the Potomac at this point that was available to the Confederates and this was described as "rocky and deep."

While McClellan's ponderous corps groped for Lee, the men of Jackson's five divisions wore out their legs in a forced march of 17 miles from Harpers Ferry to Sharpsburg. En route, Jackson dwelled on Little Mac's recent aggressive maneuvers, startling attacks from a man who, in the past, had shown every reluctance to commit troops to battle. Jackson told an aide: "I thought I knew McClellan but this movement of his puzzles me."

On the morning of Sept. 15, Lee had formed his defensive lines between Sharpsburg and Antietam Creek. Longstreet saw the steep banks of Antietam Creek and immediately realized that this was an excellent position for his artillery. He ordered

At the battle of Antietam (map shown at right), McClellan threw four corps piecemeal against Lee's defenses, first Hooker's I Corps (top center), along with Mansfield's XII Corps and part of Sumner's II Corps, then Sumner's II Corps (right, which was positioned east of Antietam Creek), then Burnside's IX Corps (bottom right), also east of Antietam Creek—three separate attacks with different timetables that resulted in three separate stalemate battles. Gen. A. P. Hill (position shown at bottom, center) saved Lee's army by arriving late in the day with his division from Harpers Ferry to shore up the collapsing Confederate right flank.

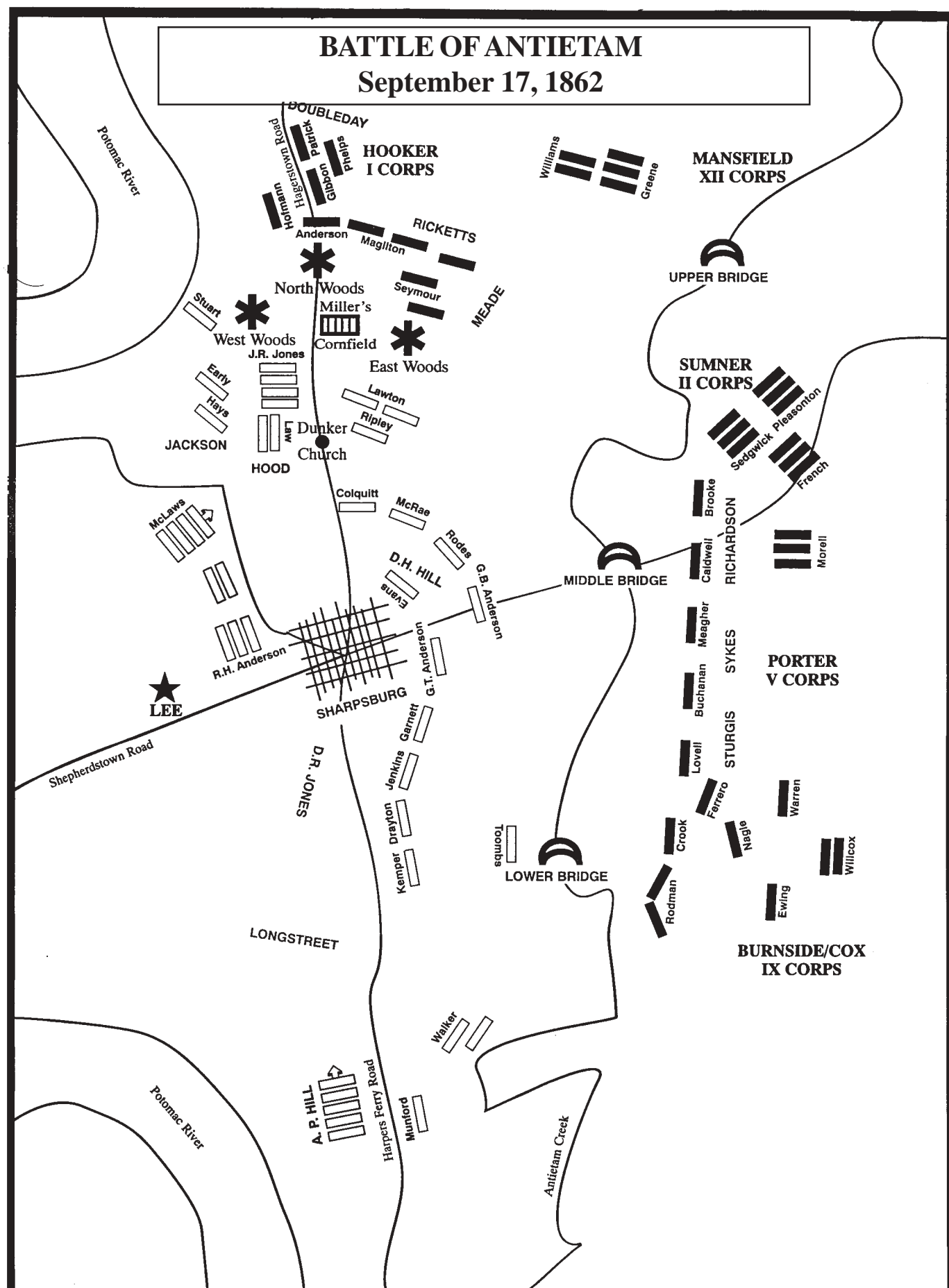
all batteries aligned along this ridge: "Put them all in, every gun you have, long range and short range," he told his artillery chiefs. When Lee was handed a message announcing Jackson's victory at Harpers Ferry, he turned to an officer and said: "This is indeed good news. Let it be announced to the troops." Several officers galloped up and down the Confederate lines to spread the news of triumph, which was greeted from brigade to brigade with loud hurraing.

Still, Lee's forces numbered only about 20,000 men, facing almost 100,000 Union troops rolling toward him. Jackson and Hill were moving up from Harpers Ferry, and McLaws with 10 brigades was supposed to be withdrawing from the South Mountain range to also join Lee. All of Lee's men were worn out, thousands and thousands of them on the brink of utter exhaustion. These veterans had fought many major engagements in recent months, through the Seven Days' Battles and, after that, Bull Run (Second Manassas), then South Mountain and Harpers Ferry. They were footsore, many without shoes, poorly equipped and clothed, and they had been eating short rations, hardtack and handfuls of dried corn, until, of course, they replenished their food supplies from captured Union wagon trains or from goods purchased in Maryland stores with unwanted Confederate currency.

The Army of Northern Virginia had suffered the loss of between 15,000 and 20,000 men from illness and casualties before Lee's troops sloshed across the Potomac into Maryland, and even when all his available units had finally been gathered at Antietam, Lee would have no more than 45,000 effectives to fight off McClellan's army of more than 95,000. (Lee's total forces were estimated by one source to be as high as 51,000.)

At no other time during the war, except at the very end at Appomattox, would Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia be so depleted in numbers and so destitute for supplies. What this army did possess, almost to a man, was undying belief that it could defeat any Union army that came against it, no matter how large and powerful, that Southern arms and steel were invincible. Robert E. Lee and the victories he had brought the South had instilled that belief to the very core of his army. He would test that belief to the limit at Antietam. This he knew well as he awaited McClellan's massive formations to assemble before him.

Union artillery arrived on Sept. 16 and was arranged before Lee's positions. Both Union and Confederate batteries exchanged shots, but this shelling was merely to test range and was mostly ineffective. During the sporadic shellings, Gen. Lee was seen walking up the main road to Sharpsburg, leading his horse by the bridle. One observer noted that "the shells of



the enemy were falling in close proximity to him, but he seemed perfectly unconscious of danger."

Why Lee remained north of the Potomac inviting battle with a vastly superior force puzzled his lieutenants, including his brilliant artillery commander, Col. Edward Porter Alexander, who later wrote: "The most sanguine hope which Lee could reasonably entertain, with his inferior force, was to fight a drawn battle and then safely withdraw what was left of his army. Against it he risked its utter destruction, which would have been the speedy end of the Confederacy. Lee took a great risk for no chance of gain except the killing of some thousands of his enemy with the loss of, perhaps, two thirds as many of his own men. It was a losing game for the Confederacy. Its supply of men was limited. That of the enemy was not. That was not war!"

Lee himself never explained his reasoning, but electing to fight at Antietam was certainly a mistake, not dissimilar to that terrible error he would later commit on the third day of battle at Gettysburg the following year. It is possible that Robert E. Lee had veiled and deep contempt for the military abilities of George B. McClellan and believed that, even outnumbered by Little Mac two or three-to-one, he could out-general the Union commander, play on his fears, employ his timidity against him, brazen out a battle and by bluff, bravado and boldness, somehow turn the tide in his favor. Lee apparently thought he had come to know McClellan during the Peninsular campaign, believing him to be a man who would fight only when forced into combat and then withdraw with as much of his arms intact as possible, appearing to have fought the good fight but never decisively meeting the enemy to face either defeat or victory, while preserving a successful military image.

McClellan, indeed, was a man of appearances. If he managed to fight a battle and escape with most of his army intact, he would create the illusion of a great victory. By such mental machinations, McClellan would have won the battle in his own mind, whether or not he had left his opponent whole enough to face him again. And always, he craved more and more men, an army bloated, clogged and thronging with men as if the sheer mass of his army somehow enlarged his own small body, made of him the military colossus he believed himself to be. McClellan was not a protector of his men but a hoarder of men, surrounding himself with a sea of bluecoats, an endless army whose powerful numbers brought him comfort and confidence.

Though McClellan realized full well that Lee was poorly positioned by having his army's back to the Potomac, he failed to press an all-out attack. Some claimed that McClellan sincerely believed that he was outnumbered by Lee, but Union intelligence provided no real basis for this belief. Perhaps it was the sheer legend of Lee that prevented McClellan from a headlong confrontation and the deep-rooted fear of that legend with its military secrets and magic that could defeat him, crush him, despite superior force of arms, despite logic, as Lee had defeated Pope at Second Bull Run.

To McClellan, Robert E. Lee was mythical, an Olympian foe possessing almost supernatural powers, and he fought him as such, as a foolish mortal might dare to deflect the thunderbolts of Zeus. And, given Lee's always bold, even contemptuous challenges to McClellan, one might assume that Lee him-

self had somehow peered deep into the military wellsprings of his adversary and saw there, for all of Little Mac's fierce posturings, a tenuous if not trembling opponent.

On Sept. 16, 1862, all of McClellan's huge army corps had arrived, for the most part, before Sharpsburg and could have, with a well-coordinated, unified attack, overwhelmed and captured most of Lee's army, but once again McClellan hesitated, gathering his divisions to his bosom while he prepared an elaborate plan of attack. And again, McClellan gave Lee's lieutenants enough time to come to his support, swell his ranks to formidable numbers that would withstand the onslaught of the next day.

Throughout Sept. 16, McClellan repeatedly visited the battlefield, peering toward the Confederate positions with his field glasses, taking extensive notes, which he would later that day use to prepare his battle plan as would a college professor prepare a lecture. Meanwhile, artillery of both sides argued inconclusively with one another. Between these brief cannonades, gunners lay down on deep, sweet grass and played cards and joked. As the sun grew high and hot overhead, the ranks of both sides lazed about, sweating with handkerchiefs over their faces, which appeared to one observer as premature shrouds for the next day's awful carnage.

Before the arrival of Jackson, Lee positioned Longstreet's corps, including D.H. Hill's division, Stuart's cavalry and the artillery, west of Antietam Creek, situated on rising ground that afforded a good view of the enemy terrain. The Rebels looked slightly downward across rolling plains across which the magnificent battalions of McClellan slowly appeared. Jackson, his men tired but full of fight, arrived on the night of Sept. 16, and immediately took positions on the Confederate left flank, first the infantry division of Gen. Jubal A. Early, then Jackson's own division commanded by Gen. John R. Jones, and, aligned further out, the division of Gen. Richard Stoddert Ewell, which was then commanded by Gen. A.R. Lawton. Protecting the Hagerstown Road was the division of D.H. Hill, which had been badly mauled at South Mountain. There were no Confederate reserves, except the division of A.P. Hill, which had yet to come up from Harpers Ferry.

By dawn, Sept. 17, 1862, the Union and Confederate lines faced each other along a three-mile front. Longstreet's corps, D.H. Hill's division, with most of the Confederate artillery, was positioned at the Confederate center of the line, with Jackson's corps strung out on the left flank where Stuart's cavalry and horse artillery held positions. Facing the Confederates were five corps of Union troops. On the Union right, facing Jackson and Stuart, was the powerful I Corps, commanded by Gen. Joseph "Fighting Joe" Hooker. Division commanders here were of high caliber and included Gen. George Gordon Meade, Gen. James Brewerton Ricketts, and Gen. Abner Doubleday. Hooker's I Corps occupied ground on the west side of Antietam Creek and north of Sharpsburg. In support of Hooker was XII Corps, commanded by Gen. Joseph King Fenno Mansfield.

At the Union center, east of Antietam Creek, was Sumner's II Corps, reinforced by VI Corps under Gen. William Franklin. The Union left was occupied by IX Corps under the command of Gen. Ambrose Burnside, situated east of a stone bridge arching Antietam Creek. These Union troops were about a mile