

★ THE U.S. ARMY CAMPAIGNS OF THE CIVIL WAR ★

THE CIVIL WAR ENDS 1865



Cover: The Grand Review, by *Frank Wright*
(Frank Wright)

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1865



by
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INTRODUCTION

Although over one hundred fifty years have passed since the start of the American Civil War, that titanic conflict continues to matter. The forces unleashed by that war were immensely destructive because of the significant issues involved: the existence of the Union, the end of slavery, and the very future of the nation. The war remains our most contentious, and our bloodiest, with over six hundred thousand killed in the course of the four-year struggle.

Most civil wars do not spring up overnight, and the American Civil War was no exception. The seeds of the conflict were sown in the earliest days of the republic's founding, primarily over the existence of slavery and the slave trade. Although no conflict can begin without the conscious decisions of those engaged in the debates at that moment, in the end, there was simply no way to paper over the division of the country into two camps: one that was dominated by slavery and the other that sought first to limit its spread and then to abolish it. Our nation was indeed "half slave and half free," and that could not stand.

Regardless of the factors tearing the nation asunder, the soldiers on each side of the struggle went to war for personal reasons: looking for adventure, being caught up in the passions and emotions of their peers, believing in the Union, favoring states' rights, or even justifying the simple schoolyard dynamic of being convinced that they were "worth" three of the soldiers on the other side. Nor can we overlook the factor that some went to war to prove their manhood. This has been, and continues to be, a key dynamic in understanding combat and the profession of arms. Soldiers join for many reasons but often stay in the fight because of their comrades and because they do not want to seem like cowards. Sometimes issues of national impact shrink to nothing in the intensely personal world of cannon shell and minié ball.

Whatever the reasons, the struggle was long and costly and only culminated with the conquest of the rebellious Confederacy,

the preservation of the Union, and the end of slavery. These campaign pamphlets on the American Civil War, prepared in commemoration of our national sacrifices, seek to remember that war and honor those in the United States Army who died to preserve the Union and free the slaves as well as to tell the story of those American soldiers who fought for the Confederacy despite the inherently flawed nature of their cause. The Civil War was our greatest struggle and continues to deserve our deep study and contemplation.

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THE CIVIL WAR ENDS 1865

The year 1864 ended triumphantly for the Union armies of the Western Theater. On 16 December, Maj. Gen. George H. Thomas' Army of the Cumberland routed Confederate General John Bell Hood's Army of Tennessee at Nashville, Tennessee. Five days later, Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman's army group concluded the "March to the Sea" by capturing Savannah, Georgia. In contrast, the Union war effort in the east appeared less than impressive. On Christmas Day, a Federal joint expeditionary force failed to capture Fort Fisher, a massive earthen fort that guarded Wilmington, North Carolina, the Confederacy's last open seaport. In Virginia, the armies led by Union General in Chief Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant and his Confederate adversary, General Robert E. Lee, remained deadlocked around Richmond—the capital of the Confederacy—and Petersburg. Despite the apparent stalemate in the east, Grant and Sherman, the senior Union general in the West, were confident that their strategy to defeat the Confederacy was working. While Grant's Army of the Potomac and Army of the James kept Lee's Army of Northern Virginia pinned down in its fortifications, Sherman had torn a swath of devastation across Georgia from Atlanta to Savannah, and Thomas had crushed the Confederacy's second-largest field army.

The Union military strategy for ending the war in 1865 remained much as it had been the previous year, with Grant seeking to annihilate Lee's army and Sherman destroying the Confederacy's ability to wage war. With Hood's army virtually eliminated, Thomas' forces would be available for combat operations in Alabama, Georgia, and North Carolina, including far-reaching cavalry raids designed to wreck Confederate war resources that had thus far managed to escape "the hard hand of war." The intent of the raids was not only to deprive the Confederate Army of precious resources, but also to ensure that Southern guerrillas would be unable to mount an effective resistance following the collapse of the Confederacy.

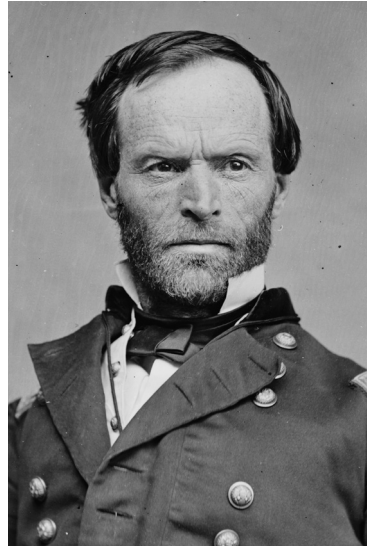
Many people mistakenly believe that the American Civil War ended when Lee's army evacuated Richmond and Petersburg after a long siege and surrendered to Grant at Appomattox Court House, Virginia, on 9 April 1865. Although the capitulation of the South's premier field army foreshadowed the Confederacy's ultimate demise, important operations took place concurrent with the struggle between Grant and Lee—operations which continued into May 1865. This brochure examines some of these events. The first half deals with the most important operation aside from the Petersburg-Appomattox Campaign in driving the Confederacy to its knees, the conquest of the Carolinas by General Sherman. The rest of the brochure describes how Federal commanders across the South compelled the Confederacy's remaining organized military forces to lay down their arms in the spring of 1865.

Strategic Setting

Having concluded his March to the Sea by presenting the city of Savannah to President Abraham Lincoln as a Christmas gift, Sherman considered his next step. He contemplated advancing northward through the Carolinas to Richmond, but General Grant had other plans for Sherman's army. For the past eight months, the forces under Grant's immediate command had failed to defeat Lee's army. Believing that Sherman's veteran soldiers would tip the balance in his favor, Grant directed that they board ships at Savannah and sail to Virginia as soon as possible.

Sherman objected to Grant's plan, arguing that his army on the march would cut Lee's supply lines to the Deep South and cause

thousands of Confederate troops from that region to desert. He also noted that a long ocean voyage would damage the morale and conditioning of his men. In the end, Grant gave his approval only after he learned that the transfer of Sherman's army by sea would take at least two months, about the time required to march that distance. Sherman received Grant's revised orders on Christmas Eve and sent an immediate reply to the general in chief. "I feel no doubt whatever as to our future plans," he assured Grant. "I have thought them over so long and well that they appear as clear as daylight."



General Sherman
(Library of Congress)

As he had done on the March to the Sea, Sherman would divide his army group into two wings. Maj. Gen. Oliver O. Howard's Army of the Tennessee was the Right Wing, while Maj. Gen. Henry W. Slocum's Army of Georgia was the Left Wing. Sherman's army group consisted of four infantry corps and one cavalry division: Maj. Gen. John A. Logan's XV Corps and Maj. Gen. Frank P. Blair's XVII Corps in Howard's wing, Brig. Gen. Jefferson C. Davis' XIV Corps and Brig. Gen. Alpheus S. Williams' XX Corps in Slocum's wing, and Brig. Gen. Judson Kilpatrick's Third Cavalry Division.

At the start of the Carolinas campaign, Sherman's army group numbered 60,079 officers and enlisted men. Most of the soldiers were veteran volunteers who had enlisted during the first two years of the war and then reenlisted after their two- and three-year terms had expired. These battle-toughened veterans were the survivors of what one soldier described as "a rigorous weeding-out process" effected by rebel bullets, hardship, and disease. Moreover, prior to both the Savannah and the Carolinas campaigns, Sherman ordered the Medical Department to examine all soldiers with health problems and ship out those deemed unfit for battle. As a result, the army group that Sherman

led into South Carolina was a seasoned fighting force that in the closing months of the war had no equal.

Sherman based his campaign plan on the use of deception to keep the Confederates divided. He would begin the drive by feinting toward Augusta, Georgia, and its gunpowder works to the west, and toward Charleston, South Carolina—the so-called Cradle of Secession—to the east. This would compel the Confederates to split their forces to defend the two important towns. Sherman would then advance via Columbia, the capital of the Palmetto State, to Wilmington, North Carolina, or some other point on the coast. At that time, he would rest and resupply his army before resuming the march to Raleigh, the North Carolina state capital, in early spring. “The game is then up with Lee,” Sherman wrote, “unless he comes out of Richmond, avoids you and fights me, in which case I should reckon on your being on his heels.”

On 2 January 1865, Sherman instructed Howard and Slocum to advance their forces into South Carolina. In mid-January, Howard’s wing established a lodgment at Pocotaligo, South Carolina, while Slocum’s wing and Kilpatrick’s cavalry began traversing the Savannah River at Sister’s Ferry, Georgia. Before Slocum could finish crossing, heavy winter rains carried off a portion of the Army of Georgia’s pontoon bridge and transformed the roads into quagmires. The flooding of the Savannah River compelled Sherman to postpone his campaign for almost a month.

While Sherman waited for the floodwater to subside, Fort Fisher fell to a second Federal expeditionary force on 15 January 1865, thereby closing Wilmington, the Confederacy’s last major blockade-running port. Grant was doubly pleased with the result, knowing that Sherman had selected the city as a potential target. As the Union general in chief studied his map of North Carolina, he found an even more advantageous objective from Sherman’s standpoint: the town of Goldsboro. Located about 450 miles north of Savannah, it was the inland junction of two coastal railroads—the Atlantic and North Carolina and the Wilmington and Weldon—providing rail connections with both Wilmington and Morehead City. Goldsboro thus made an excellent location for Sherman to resupply his army group.

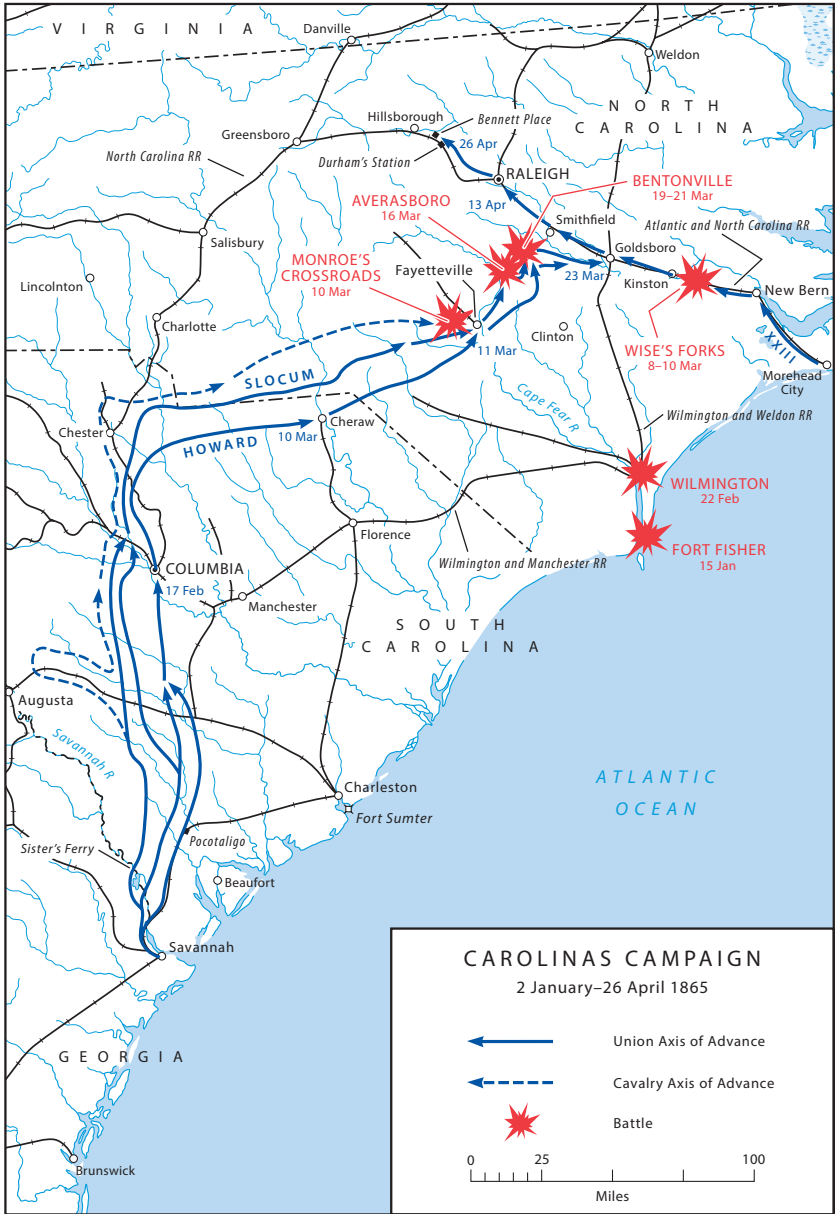
Grant therefore directed General Thomas at Nashville to transfer Maj. Gen. John M. Schofield’s XXIII Corps to North Carolina, where it would combine with Maj. Gen. Alfred H. Terry’s Provisional Corps,

which had captured Fort Fisher. As commander of the newly reestablished Department of North Carolina, Schofield was to advance on Goldsboro—either from Wilmington, once it had fallen, or from Union-held New Bern—and secure the rail junction for Sherman. When he received Grant’s letter explaining these dispositions, Sherman designated Goldsboro as his ultimate destination.

Before starting the march north, Sherman stripped his army group down to fighting trim. He reduced the number of wagons to 2,500 and the ambulances to 600, and while the ordnance trains carried an ample supply of ammunition, the commissary wagons hauled just seven days’ forage and twenty days’ provisions. As on the March to the Sea, the Federals would have to live off the land, relying on foragers, or “bummers,” to feed the army. Sherman also held the number of cannons to sixty-eight, or roughly one gun per thousand men.

Opposing the Federal invasion of South Carolina was a motley array of Confederate forces led by General Pierre G. T. Beauregard, the commander of the Military Division of the West. The Confederate commander claimed to have 33,450 troops, but he based this number on reinforcements he expected to receive as well as soldiers on hand. The actual number of officers and men present amounted to about half of Beauregard’s inflated estimate. Rather than risk his heavily outnumbered command by offering battle to Sherman at the start of the campaign, Beauregard chose to hold Charleston and Augusta “for as long as it was humanly possible” in order to negotiate from a position of strength. The “pending negotiations for peace” on which Beauregard based his strategy proved to be the Hampton Roads Conference. Held on 3 February 1865, the conference at Hampton Roads, Virginia, between President Lincoln and Confederate Vice President Alexander H. Stephens was amicable but failed to end the war. Beauregard’s decision to divide his forces thus played into Sherman’s hands, for it enabled the Federals to march virtually unopposed through the interior of the Palmetto State (*Map 1*).

As Sherman’s army group entered South Carolina, the scattered Confederates attempted to unite and give battle. Following its crushing defeat in the Battle of Nashville, the Army of Tennessee had fled into eastern Mississippi and made winter camp at Tupelo. “If not in the strict sense of the word, a disorganized mob, it was no longer an army,” reported inspection officer Col. Alfred Roman. In January 1865, Confederate President Jefferson Davis had ordered



MAP 1

Beauregard to send most of the remnant to South Carolina to oppose Sherman's army group. The Confederate soldiers covered the 500 miles from Tupelo to Augusta on foot, by boat, and by train. Discipline was uncertain at best. Beauregard's quartermaster, Capt. John M. Goodman, called the Army of Tennessee "a complete mob. I have never witnessed so much demoralization in my life. I have feared for my life in contending with our own troops and in the attempt to keep them in some kind of discipline."

Operations

Sherman opened the Carolinas campaign on 1 February under less than ideal circumstances. Indeed, Beauregard had assumed that heavy winter rains, combined with swampy terrain, would force Sherman to abort the drive. General Joseph E. Johnston, who lived in Columbia at the time, later related how Lt. Gen. William J. Hardee, the Confederate commander at Charleston, had assured him that Sherman's army group could never pass through the swamps bordering the Salkehatchie River in the southern part of the state. But Hardee was mistaken. "When I learned that Sherman's army was marching through the Salkehatchie swamps, making its own corduroy road at the rate of a dozen miles a day or more, and bringing its artillery and wagons with it," Johnston admitted, "I made up my mind that there had been no such army in existence since the days of Julius Caesar."

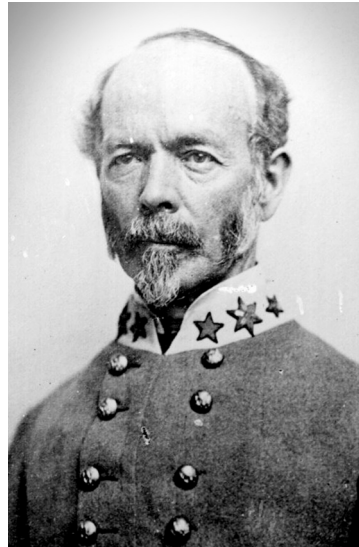
Sherman's modern-day legions captured Columbia on 17 February after encountering only token opposition from a small Confederate force. By the next morning, much of the South Carolina capital lay in ashes as a result of a conflagration caused by burning cotton—initially set afire by Southern cavalry—spread by high winds and drunken Federal soldiers. In the meantime, Hardee's command evacuated Charleston under orders from Beauregard, who realized that the fall of Columbia had rendered the port city untenable.

On 19 February, Sherman resumed his northward advance, and Beauregard once again misjudged his adversary's intentions. Believing that Sherman was en route to Petersburg, Virginia, via Charlotte and Greensboro, North Carolina, Beauregard ordered Hardee to board his troops on trains at Wilmington and to send them to Greensboro. There was just one problem: Schofield's

much larger Union force was about to capture Wilmington. On 21 February, General Braxton Bragg, the commander of the Confederate Department of North Carolina, warned Hardee that the Federals had cut the Wilmington and Manchester Railroad, requiring a change of route to Cheraw, South Carolina. Wilmington fell to Schofield on the following day, while Sherman's army group abruptly shifted its advance in a more easterly direction and threatened to beat Hardee to Cheraw.

By now the Confederacy's newly appointed general in chief, General Lee, had concluded that Beauregard could not stop Sherman. A subsequent message from Beauregard outlining a grandiose scheme in which the Confederate army would defeat Sherman and Grant separately and then "march on Washington to dictate a peace," convinced both Lee and Confederate President Davis that Beauregard could not come to grips with military reality.

Lee wished to replace Beauregard with General Johnston, but Davis had dismissed Johnston from command of the Army of Tennessee the previous July and had since kept him in virtual retirement. Nevertheless, Lee obtained Secretary of War John C. Breckinridge's permission—and by implication Davis' grudging consent—to restore Johnston to duty. On 22 February, Lee wired Johnston: "Assume command of the Army of Tennessee and all troops in the Department of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. Assign General Beauregard to duty under you, as you may select. Concentrate all available forces and drive back Sherman."



General Johnston
(National Archives)

Like many other refugees from Columbia, Johnston had fled to Lincolnton, North Carolina, in late February, hoping that Sherman would bypass that backwater of the Confederacy. But

Lee's order thrust Johnston back into the thick of it. "It is too late to expect me to concentrate troops capable of driving back Sherman," Johnston replied. "The remnant of the Army of Tennessee is much divided. So are other troops." He assumed command believing that the most the Confederacy could achieve by prolonging the war was "fair terms of peace."

On 23 February, Johnston traveled to Charlotte to begin concentrating his scattered forces. After meeting with Beauregard and appointing him second-in-command, Johnston assessed the remnants of his old Army of Tennessee. As the commanding general passed each brigade on review, "three cheers were given in a joyful tone and manner expressive of great satisfaction," wrote an Alabama soldier. "The old general looks as usual hearty and soldier like. He is the most soldierly looking general I have ever seen. He is as well loved in this army among the men, as an officer can be. They have every confidence in him, and that alone will benefit the army and the service."

Though Johnston was grateful for the enthusiastic welcome from the Army of Tennessee veterans, the reviews merely confirmed what he had suspected about his army's condition. On 25 February, Johnston informed Lee that his small army was "too weak to cope with Sherman." Altogether, the Army of Tennessee contingent, Hardee's command, and the Confederate cavalry led by Lt. Gen. Wade Hampton totaled fewer than 25,000 troops. In the words of Hampton, "it would scarcely have been possible to disperse a force more effectually."

While the Army of Tennessee concentrated at Charlotte, Hardee's corps evacuated Charleston and then raced Sherman's army group to Cheraw. According to Hardee's chief of staff, Lt. Col. Thomas B. Roy, a "great many desertions" occurred on the march from Charleston, with some units being "almost disbanded by desertion." A South Carolinian in Hardee's command believed that "the most influential cause of desertion was the news that reached the men of the great suffering of their wives and children, caused by the devastations of Sherman's army." On 22 February, Hardee consolidated his three divisions into two, having lost one-fourth of his troops since the fall of Charleston. The attrition resulted from straggling and desertion as well as South Carolina Governor Andrew Magrath's recall of several state militia units.

At first Hardee doubted that all of his command could reach Cheraw ahead of Sherman. "This [rail]road, like all others in the

Confederacy, is wretchedly managed,” Hardee complained on 28 February. “With proper management I ought to have had everything here by this time. . . . A rapid march of the enemy will bring him here tomorrow.” Hardee’s luck soon improved, however, as the rest of his troops began arriving that afternoon, and torrential winter rains had finally stalled Sherman’s army group. With the Federals occupied for almost a week in crossing the flooded Catawba River and Lynch’s Creek, Hardee’s corps succeeded in reaching Cheraw before the Union Right Wing.

While Sherman chafed at the delay, he learned that Johnston was back in command. Sherman later admitted, “I then knew that my special antagonist, General Jos. Johnston, was back with part of his old army; that he would not be misled by feints and false reports, and would somehow compel me to exercise more caution than I had hitherto done.” Sherman was right; Johnston would not be as easily deceived as Beauregard had been.

On 3 March, Hardee’s corps evacuated Cheraw just ahead of Howard’s wing and marched toward Fayetteville, North Carolina. When it became apparent that Sherman would enter the Old North State, Lee assigned Bragg’s Confederate Department of North Carolina troops to Johnston’s command. Bragg’s force consisted mainly of Maj. Gen. Robert F. Hoke’s division—a veteran unit from the Army of Northern Virginia—and the North Carolina Junior Reserves brigade, whose ranks were filled with teenage boys. Johnston, meanwhile, traveled from Charlotte to Fayetteville to be nearer Sherman’s line of march. Encouraged by the Federals’ difficult South Carolina river crossings, he planned to unite the Army of Tennessee contingent with Hardee’s corps in time to attack a part of Sherman’s army group as it traversed the Cape Fear River at Fayetteville. But Bragg, whose small force had retreated to Kinston, North Carolina, about eighty miles to the east, saw a better opportunity on his front and asked Johnston to send the Army of Tennessee troops to him.

THE BATTLE OF WISE’S FORKS

In early March, Schofield sent the Union XXIII Corps under Maj. Gen. Jacob D. Cox, about 12,000-strong, inland from New Bern to secure Goldsboro for Sherman. But Bragg intended to defeat Cox and prevent the junction of the XXIII Corps and Sherman’s army group. Abandoning his plan of attacking Sherman at Fayetteville, Johnston granted Bragg’s request but directed him to

send the Army of Tennessee troops to Smithfield, North Carolina, as soon as possible for use against Sherman. The troop transfer led to an uneasy alliance between Bragg and Maj. Gen. Daniel H. Hill, the commander of the Army of Tennessee contingent. The two men had been bitter enemies since Bragg had dismissed Hill eighteen months earlier. Johnston closed his message ordering Hill to join Bragg with a plea “to forget the past for this emergency.” Hill swallowed his pride and reported to Bragg as ordered. The addition of the Army of Tennessee contingent gave Bragg a total of about 8,500 troops.

On 8 March, Cox’s Federals collided with Bragg’s Confederates at Wise’s Forks, about four miles east of Kinston. At the start of the battle, the Southerners routed a portion of the Union force, capturing 1 cannon and 800 men. The remainder of Cox’s troops dug in that night, and the two sides skirmished the following day. On 10 March, the Confederates renewed the offensive, but the well-entrenched Federals inflicted heavy casualties on the Southern attackers. Learning that Cox had been reinforced, Bragg withdrew to Kinston that night. Once again, the hapless Bragg had seen an apparent victory end in retreat. In the Battle of Wise’s Forks, the Confederates sustained about 1,500 casualties compared to the Federals’ 1,100.

While Bragg fell back toward Goldsboro, Johnston resumed his efforts to field an army against Sherman by means of the North Carolina Railroad, which formed a 220-mile arc from Charlotte in the western part of the state to Goldsboro in the east. Unfortunately for the Confederates, a 120-car backlog of troops, artillery, and supplies had accumulated at Salisbury, North Carolina, while another 65 carloads waited at Chester, South Carolina. The bottlenecks had formed because the width of the track narrowed at Salisbury, and most of the narrow-gauge rolling stock sent to Bragg at Kinston had not yet returned from the front. Although Bragg’s monopolization of the railroad had caused the backlog, Johnston’s failure to intervene only exacerbated the problem. At stake was the Confederate chieftain’s ability to strike Sherman with every available soldier. When the moment of truth arrived, many of Johnston’s men would still be stranded at Salisbury.

With the Federals advancing in superior force on two fronts, the concentration of his own army impeded by delays on the railroad, and that army dependent on a sparsely settled region for subsistence, prospects appeared bleak for Johnston. “I will not give

battle with Sherman's united army," he informed Lee on 11 March, "but will if I can find it divided." Johnston, meanwhile, attempted to gather his own scattered army in the desperate hope that he could defeat either Sherman or Schofield before the two Union forces could combine.

THE BATTLE OF MONROE'S CROSSROADS

As Sherman's army group swept into North Carolina during the first week of March, Kilpatrick's cavalry division led the way, clashing repeatedly with Hampton's Confederate cavalry, which served as the rear guard for Hardee's corps during the march to Fayetteville. On 7 March, Hampton discovered that Kilpatrick had slipped around his flank and gotten between him and Hardee. "As soon as my command can be concentrated," Hampton informed Hardee, "I shall move round the left flank of the enemy to his front." This maneuver proved more difficult to execute than Hampton had anticipated, and Kilpatrick continued to obstruct his progress. But the Union cavalry commander remained unaware of his advantage until the afternoon of 9 March, when some captured Confederates revealed that a large force of Yankee cavalry had driven a wedge between Hampton and Hardee. Despite a recent order from Sherman to avoid battle for the present, Kilpatrick decided to block the roads to Fayetteville in an attempt to prevent Hampton from rejoining Hardee. In doing so, Kilpatrick recklessly divided his command, which contained about the same number of horsemen as Hampton's cavalry. Kilpatrick was inviting Hampton to defeat him in detail, and the latter eagerly accepted his invitation.

On the evening of 9 March, Kilpatrick and two of his four brigades—numbering about 1,500 troopers—made camp at Monroe's Crossroads. A torrential downpour and the presence of Confederate cavalry prevented his remaining two brigades from taking up their assigned positions, leaving the Union cavalry commander's bivouac isolated and vulnerable to attack—which was precisely what Hampton had in mind. During the cold, rainy night, Confederate troopers deployed for an assault on Kilpatrick's camp. Hopes ran high among the Southerners that they would deal the Federals a stunning blow at Monroe's Crossroads and perhaps bag "Little Kil" in the process. Hampton's force consisted of Maj. Gen. Joseph Wheeler's cavalry corps and Maj. Gen. Matthew C.

Butler's cavalry division from the Army of Northern Virginia, roughly 4,000 horse soldiers in all.

As dawn broke on the morning of 10 March, Butler's cavalry burst out of the woods from the north and Wheeler's horsemen from the west. Shrieking the rebel yell, they overran the lightly guarded Federal camp. Kilpatrick witnessed the onslaught from the porch of the Monroe house, which served as his headquarters. His first thought was, "My God, here's a Major General's commission after four years' hard fighting gone up with an infernal surprise." Wearing only his shirt, pants, and slippers, Kilpatrick fled into a nearby swamp along with a large number of his men, but many of them had the presence of mind to carry their weapons with them. This enabled the Union troopers to launch a counterattack when the initial Confederate charge lost momentum.

After a furious close-quarters struggle that lasted for over an hour, the Federals drove off the Confederates and regained their camp. But the Southerners had opened the road to Fayetteville and freed all of their captured comrades. The Battle of Monroe's Crossroads was a moral victory for the Confederates, who had demonstrated that they still posed a substantial threat to the Federals. It was also something of an embarrassment for Sherman's cavalry commander—after all, waggish Union infantrymen dubbed the rebel surprise attack "Kilpatrick's Shirttail Skedaddle."

Casualty figures for Monroe's Crossroads are sketchy at best. Although Kilpatrick reported a total of 190 killed, wounded, and missing, one of his two brigade commanders reported roughly the same losses for his unit alone. The Confederate casualty figures are likewise incomplete, amounting to fewer than 90, while Kilpatrick reported that his men buried about 80 Southern dead and captured 30 prisoners. Regardless of the Confederates' total casualties, the battle cost Hampton's cavalry dearly, resulting in the loss of one regimental commander killed and six division and brigade commanders with wounds of varying severity.

THE BATTLE OF AVERASBORO

Sherman's army group entered Fayetteville on 11 March and remained there for four days. While most of the men rested, the 1st Michigan Engineers and Mechanics demolished the Confederate arsenal there on orders from the commanding general. Sherman, meanwhile, plotted the final leg of his 450-mile march to Goldsboro. As usual, the plan included a feint—this time

due north toward Raleigh with Kilpatrick's cavalry and four divisions of Slocum's wing in light marching order. The remaining two divisions would escort all nonessential wagons in the rear of Howard's wing. Slocum would advance up the Plank Road to within four miles of Averagesboro, North Carolina, and then head east on the Goldsboro Road via Bentonville, North Carolina. In the meantime, Kilpatrick's cavalry and one infantry division would continue feinting on Raleigh before veering off toward Goldsboro. Of Slocum's march toward Bentonville, Sherman wrote, "I do think it is Johnston's only chance to meet this army before an easy junction with Schofield can be effected."

While Sherman's army group rested at Fayetteville, Hardee's corps halted at Smithville, North Carolina (not to be confused with Smithfield), about five miles south of Averagesboro. Since evacuating Charleston in mid-February, Hardee had lost one-half of his 13,000 troops to straggling, desertion, and Governor Magrath's militia recalls. The general decided that he had better fight or perhaps face the final disintegration of his demoralized command. He also hoped to buy time for the concentration of Johnston's army. Hardee deployed his corps in three lines, placing the relatively inexperienced soldiers of Brig. Gen. William B. Taliaferro's division on the first two lines and entrusting the third and main line to the more seasoned troops of Maj. Gen. Lafayette McLaws' division.

Sherman's army group resumed the advance on 15 March, with Kilpatrick's cavalry preceding Slocum's wing up the Plank Road. About midafternoon, Kilpatrick's lead regiment collided with Confederates from Hardee's command, and the two sides skirmished for several hours. While working their way through no-man's-land, three Union cavalry scouts captured one of Taliaferro's brigade commanders, Col. Alfred M. Rhett, who was riding between the lines with just one staff officer. Before being turned over to the provost marshal, Rhett spent the evening with some old acquaintances—namely Generals Sherman, Slocum, and Davis, who had been stationed at Charleston, Rhett's hometown, before the war. At nightfall, the fighting ceased, and the two sides frantically dug fieldworks in preparation for a battle the next day. "Hardee is ahead of me and shows fight," Sherman wrote early on 16 March. "I will go at him in the morning with four divisions and push him as far as Averagesborough before turning toward Bentonville and [Goldsboro]."

The Battle of Averasboro began at dawn on 16 March, amid a steady rain that fell for most of the day. Throughout the morning, Kilpatrick's cavalry and the Federal XX Corps probed Hardee's first line for weaknesses. About noon, Sherman directed Slocum to send a brigade around the Confederate right flank. Slocum chose Col. Henry Case's XX Corps brigade, whose surprise flank attack routed the Confederates of Rhett's brigade manning the first line. "I was never so pleased in my life as I was to see the rebs get up and try to get out of the way," wrote an Illinois soldier who participated in the assault. Soon afterward, the Federals drove back the second line held by Brig. Gen. Stephen Elliott's brigade. As Brig. Gen. James D. Morgan's division of the Union XIV Corps attacked on the left in an effort to outflank Hardee's third line, two small divisions of Wheeler's Confederate cavalry arrived just in time to plug the gap. With Hardee's line now extending from the Cape Fear River on his right to the swamps bordering the Black River on the left, Sherman decided to postpone making a general assault until the next morning. At nightfall, however, Hardee began to evacuate his position. When Federal skirmishers advanced at dawn on 17 March, they discovered that the Confederates had withdrawn.

Hardee's delaying action at Averasboro had succeeded in checking Sherman's movement for one day, buying Johnston invaluable time to concentrate his forces. In doing so, Hardee also had given his green troops their first taste of field combat and boosted their sagging morale. For his part, Sherman had driven Hardee toward Smithfield, thereby opening the road to Goldsboro. The Confederates suffered 500 casualties, most of them coming from Rhett's brigade, while the Federal losses amounted to 682. Of that number, 533 were wounded and had to be transported with the column, hence Sherman's decision to press Hardee on 16 March rather than risk a full-scale assault because he knew that each additional wounded man would further slow his progress.

SETTING A TRAP FOR SHERMAN

On the eve of the Battle of Averasboro, Johnston had traveled to Smithfield, where his army was converging. He chose that town as his point of concentration because it stood midway between Raleigh and Goldsboro, Sherman's two most likely objectives. Arriving at Smithfield were Hoke's division under Bragg and the remnant of the Army of Tennessee, which the Confederate commander placed under Lt. Gen. Alexander P. Stewart. Johnston

formed the Army of the South from the four distinct forces under his command: Hardee's corps, Hoke's division (which now included the Junior Reserves brigade), the Army of Tennessee contingent, and Hampton's cavalry. By mid-March, Johnston could field about 20,000 troops against Sherman's 60,000-man army group.

After the Battle of Averasboro, Hardee marched toward Smithfield to join Johnston's army. He told the Confederate chieftain that he believed Sherman was heading to Goldsboro. On the evening of 17 March, Johnston notified Hardee that it was time to act. "Something must be done to-morrow morning," Johnston wrote, "and yet I have no satisfactory information as to the enemy's movements. Can you give me any certain information of the force you engaged yesterday?" Hardee's reply is lost, but it probably indicated that Hampton was better informed as to the Federals' current status. Johnston ordered Bragg and Stewart to prepare to march at dawn. He then sent a message to Hampton instructing him to send all the information he had regarding the position and strength of the Federal columns, their distance from Goldsboro, and whether Hampton thought it possible to intercept one of the columns before it could reach its destination.

Hampton replied that the two Federal wings were indeed advancing toward Goldsboro and were widely separated. He noted that the nearest Union column—Slocum's wing—marching up the road from Averasboro was more than a day's march from his headquarters at the Willis Cole plantation south of Bentonville. The cavalry commander suggested that the plantation would make an excellent site for a surprise attack and assured Johnston that he could delay the Federal drive long enough to enable the Confederate army to arrive from Smithfield.

Johnston received Hampton's reply at dawn on 18 March. A glance at the map indicated that the two Federal wings were a dozen miles apart and separated by a day's march. He therefore decided to attack Slocum's wing as it moved up the Goldsboro Road. "We will go to the place at which your dispatch was written," Johnston informed Hampton. "The scheme mentioned in my note, which you pronounce practicable, will be attempted." But the Confederates were unaware that the maps were wildly inaccurate, leading Johnston to underestimate Hardee's distance from Bentonville while exaggerating the distance separating the Union columns. Although Bragg and Stewart reached Bentonville

at nightfall, Hardee's corps was still six miles north of the village when it halted at 2100.

The Federals, meanwhile, advanced to within five miles of the Cole plantation on the afternoon of 18 March. Sherman remained cautious as his army group approached Bentonville, the two Union wings only a few miles apart. "I think it probable that Joe Johnston will try to prevent our getting Goldsboro," he wrote Howard about 1400. A few hours later, Sherman received two messages that caused him to drop his guard. First, Kilpatrick informed him that Hardee was retreating toward Smithfield and Johnston was gathering his army a few miles south of Raleigh. (Apparently, the Union cavalry commander had already forgotten the Confederates' audacity at Monroe's Crossroads.) Second, XIV Corps skirmishers reported that the rebels had burned the bridge across Mill Creek on the Smithfield-Clinton Road. According to Sherman's faulty map, the Confederates had just cut their only approach route to Bentonville, indicating a retreat toward Raleigh. Unknown to the Federals, Sherman's map omitted the Smithfield-Bentonville Road—or the "Devil's Race Path"—that Bragg and Stewart were using. Sherman now believed that Johnston had conceded Goldsboro to him. Although several Union foraging details returned to camp that night reporting stiff resistance from Confederate cavalry, Union senior leaders ignored their warnings. On the evening of 18 March, the Federals' weak point was not the distance separating their columns but their growing overconfidence.

While Sherman camped several miles to the southwest, Johnston conferred with Hampton at his headquarters in Bentonville. Having arrived too late to reconnoiter the proposed battlefield, Johnston relied on Hampton to devise a plan of attack based on his own study of the ground. The plan exploited the densely wooded terrain surrounding the Cole house, where Hampton recommended launching the assault. The Confederate cavalry commander suggested that Johnston deploy Hoke's division across the Goldsboro Road to block the Federals' advance and conceal Hardee's corps and Stewart's Army of Tennessee contingent in the thick woods north of the road. At a designated time, Hardee and Stewart would burst out of the woods and rout the Union column before it could deploy into line of battle. Although he regretted that Hardee's corps stood farther than the Federal advance from the battlefield, Johnston approved Hampton's plan and directed the

deployment to begin at dawn, bearing in mind that this might be his final opportunity to strike Sherman with any hope of success.

THE BATTLE OF BENTONVILLE

Sunrise on Sunday, 19 March, revealed a beautiful spring day. The awakening Union soldiers enjoyed the mild early morning air and the sight of budding apple and peach trees. Their thoughts were far removed from battle and focused instead on reaching Goldsboro, where new shoes, clean clothes, and mail from home awaited them. “We feel in excellent spirits,” Lt. John M. Branum of Morgan’s XIV Corps division jotted in his diary. “Everything promises for a smooth entry into Goldsboro.” This entry was Branum’s last, for within a few hours, he would be killed in action.

Believing that the danger of a Confederate attack had passed, Sherman prepared to rejoin Howard’s wing at dawn on 19 March in order to communicate with Schofield. Before his departure, Sherman conferred with Slocum and other Union generals at the crossroads leading to Howard’s column. During the conversation, General Davis said that he thought his XIV Corps would have to face more than the usual cavalry opposition. “No, Jeff,” Sherman replied. “There is nothing there but [Col. George G.] Dibrell’s cavalry. Brush them out of the way. . . . I’ll meet you tomorrow morning at Cox’s Bridge.” With that, Sherman led his staff and escort down the road toward Howard’s column, unaware that Slocum’s wing would not reach Cox’s Bridge for another four days.

At first the Federal advance, consisting of Brig. Gen. William P. Carlin’s XIV Corps division, easily drove back Dibrell’s small cavalry division. But the Southerners’ resistance stiffened at the Cole plantation, where Carlin collided with a force far larger than Dibrell’s cavalry. Carlin deployed all three of his brigades and still met with fierce opposition. Ignoring Carlin’s plight, Slocum sent word to Sherman that he was merely skirmishing with stubborn rebel cavalry and needed no assistance from Howard. Growing impatient, Slocum then ordered Carlin to launch an attack to develop the enemy’s position and strength. About noon, Carlin assaulted the Confederate line at several points, only to meet with a bloody repulse.

Undaunted, Slocum brought up Morgan’s XIV Corps division on Carlin’s right and was preparing to deploy the XX Corps on the same line in a more determined effort to outflank Johnston’s position. But a Union prisoner of war who had made his escape

during Carlin's attack brought Slocum some startling intelligence: Johnston's entire army was on the field, and Joe Johnston himself had ridden among his troops, telling them that they would crush one wing of Sherman's army at Bentonville and then attack the other wing and destroy it as well. If Slocum required additional evidence of his predicament, he received it from a XIV Corps staff officer who reported, "Well, General, I have found something more than Dibrell's cavalry—I find [Confederate] infantry intrenched along our whole front, and enough of them to give us all the amusement we shall want for the rest of the day."

Slocum received the staff officer's report about 1330 and immediately shifted to the defensive. The left wing commander kept his two XIV Corps divisions at the front to absorb the shock of the expected Confederate onslaught while deploying his two XX Corps divisions on more defensible ground at the Reddick Morris farm a mile to the rear. Slocum also sent Sherman a far more accurate assessment of the situation. As the afternoon wore on, Slocum's messages to the commanding general became increasingly urgent and were invariably accompanied by appeals for reinforcements from Howard's wing.

For Johnston, the afternoon of 19 March was filled with aggravating delays. With only one approach route from Bentonville to the battlefield, the Confederates' deployment "consumed a weary time." When Carlin launched his noontime strike, only Hoke's division and Stewart's Army of Tennessee contingent were in position, while Hardee's corps was just arriving on the field. Worse yet for the Confederates, Carlin's probing attack delayed Johnston's own assault and led Bragg, the commander of Hoke's division, to call for reinforcements. In response, Johnston sent him McLaws' division of Hardee's corps. This proved to be the Confederate chieftain's worst blunder of the day. By the time McLaws reached Bragg's position, Hoke's division had already repulsed the Federal attack. Bragg then held the 4,000-man division for much of the afternoon, depriving Johnston of one-fourth of his infantry when he needed it most.

Johnston finally launched his assault at 1445. Hardee led the right wing of Johnston's army, consisting of the Army of Tennessee contingent and Taliaferro's division of Hardee's corps. An onlooker thought that the Confederate advance "looked like a picture and was truly beautiful." He also found it "painful to see how close their battle flags were together, regiments being scarcely

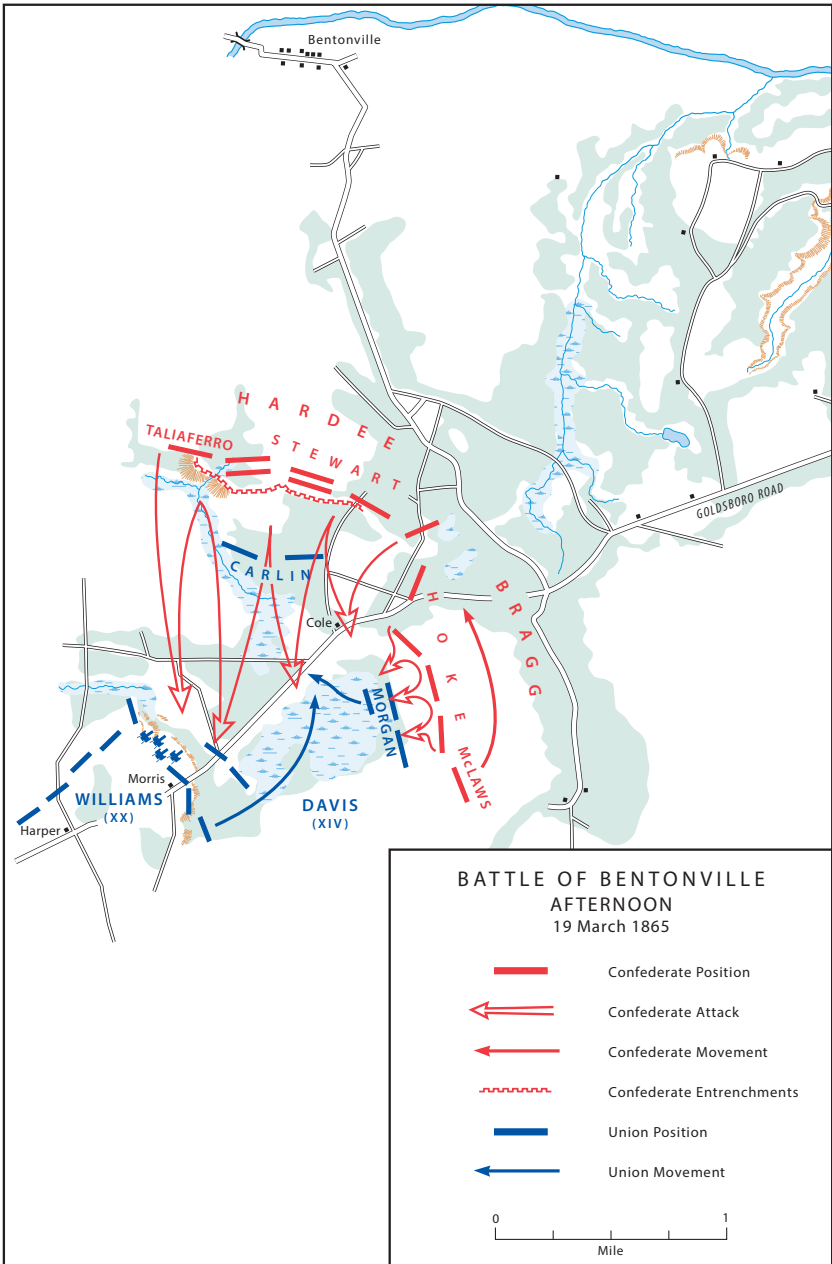
larger than companies.” Despite its depleted ranks, Hardee’s wing overran Carlin’s position north of the Goldsboro Road. “[We] stood as long as man can stand,” wrote a Michigan soldier in Carlin’s division, “& when that was no longer a possibility [we] run like the duce.” During the rout, Hardee’s men captured two Union cannons and drove off Carlin’s troops south of the road. Thus far, the Confederate assault was an unqualified success (*Map 2*).

The Confederates’ accomplishment might have been greater still had Bragg’s wing, consisting of Hoke’s and McLaws’ divisions, attacked when ordered. Instead, Bragg waited until 1600, more than an hour after the time Johnston had designated. Bragg may have delayed his assault pending the outcome of Hardee’s charge, but such a course is indefensible, since it would have been in defiance of Johnston’s orders. In any event, Bragg gave the Federals of Morgan’s division a precious extra hour to strengthen their field fortifications.

Morgan’s stand south of the Goldsboro Road proved to be the turning point of the 19 March battle at Bentonville. Attacked in quick succession by Hoke’s division along their front and left flank and by several brigades of the Army of Tennessee from their rear, Morgan’s Federals stubbornly clung to their swampy salient. In the course of the struggle, the soldiers in blue fought on both sides of their log works. Aided by the timely arrival of Col. William Cogswell’s XX Corps brigade, Morgan’s troops repulsed the Confederates and turned the tide in the Federals’ favor.

The Southerners’ final assaults of the day were launched against the XX Corps’ position on the Morris farm. Spearheaded by troops from Taliaferro’s division and Maj. Gen. Benjamin F. Cheatham’s corps of the Army of Tennessee, the attacks constituted the Confederate army’s high-water mark at Bentonville. Advancing several times to within point-blank range of the Union line, the Southerners braved a blistering small-arms and artillery fire before Johnston called off the offensive and ordered his army to return to its jump-off point. After some anxious moments, the Union line at Bentonville had held, and the 19 March fight ended in a draw.

Sherman, meanwhile, received Slocum’s appeals for reinforcements and ordered Howard’s column to march to the Left Wing’s support. Early on the morning of 20 March, the Union Right Wing headed west on the Goldsboro Road toward the Confederate rear. While using his cavalry to delay the Federals’ advance, Johnston



MAP 2

swung back Hoke's and McLaws' divisions on a new left flank that slanted northeast toward Bentonville. Howard's vanguard reached the vicinity of Bentonville around noon. Johnston now faced a Union force three times the size of his own army. The Confederates occupied a tenuous, four-mile-long bastion that defended their sole line of retreat across a flooded Mill Creek at Bentonville.

Sherman was surprised that Johnston—contrary to his usual cautious nature—held his ground. “I cannot see why he remains,” Sherman wrote Slocum, “and still think he will avail himself of night to get back to Smithfield. I would rather avoid a general battle if possible, but if he insists on it, we must accommodate him.” Why *did* Johnston stay at Bentonville? Having failed to defeat one wing of Sherman's army group, did he expect to fare better against both wings? Johnston provided two reasons for remaining. First, he intended to evacuate his wounded before retreating, and second, he hoped that Sherman might attempt a costly frontal assault against his well-entrenched line. Perhaps Johnston had a third reason—his army's morale. By standing toe to toe with Sherman's larger army while evacuating his wounded, Johnston would achieve a moral victory, whereas if he abandoned the field on the night of 19–20 March, he would admit defeat. Johnston doubtless believed that his army's morale was worth the risk of staying at Bentonville.

The Confederate commander's decision to remain nearly proved to be his undoing. On the morning of 21 March, the First Division of the XVII Corps deployed on the extreme right of the Union line. Commanding the division was Sherman's most aggressive general, Maj. Gen. Joseph A. “Fighting Joe” Mower. Although under orders to avoid a general engagement, Fighting Joe intended to assail the Confederates, perhaps hoping to draw Sherman into the pitched battle he did not want. Facing Mower's division was Hampton's cavalry, spread out in a futile attempt to cover the Confederates' vulnerable left flank.

Mower began his assault about noon in a driving rain. His two attacking brigades struggled through the briar-infested swamp that separated them from Hampton's position and then drove back the heavily outnumbered Confederates. Hampton, meanwhile, reported the breakthrough to Johnston, who assigned Hardee the task of repulsing the assault. At stake was Johnston's only avenue of retreat across Mill Creek, which could not be forded in its flooded state. Fortunately for the Confederates, Mower halted his main line even as his skirmishers overran



*General Mower's charge, by James E. Taylor
(Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper)*

Johnston's headquarters at Bentonville, enabling Hardee to counterattack with a hastily assembled force. One of the regiments was the 8th Texas Cavalry—or "Terry's Texas Rangers"—whose newest recruit was General Hardee's only son, sixteen-year-old Pvt. Willie Hardee. The youth was mortally wounded while charging in the Rangers' front rank. The Confederates managed to repulse Mower's charge, but Fighting Joe was preparing to attack again when Sherman sent him orders to halt. Johnston's army had survived to fight another day.

On the night of 21–22 March, the Confederates retreated across the Mill Creek bridge and marched toward Smithfield. Aside from some skirmishing the next morning, the Battle of Bentonville was over. The Confederates sustained about 2,600 casualties while the Federals lost roughly 1,500 killed, wounded, and captured. Most of the losses occurred on 19 March, by far the bloodiest day of the battle. The culminating event of Sherman's Carolinas campaign, the Battle of Bentonville, nevertheless proved indecisive. Although the Federals had opened the road to Goldsboro, they had failed to crush Johnston's army, and, while the Confederates had won a moral victory, the Southerners had been unable to defeat even Slocum's wing.

CLOSING OPERATIONS

After the battle, Sherman's army group resumed the march to Goldsboro and began arriving there on 23 March. Schofield's XXIII Corps had occupied the town a few days earlier, and the men found the procession of Sherman's tattered army a comic spectacle. Schofield's troops "lined the road as spectators, cheered uproariously and laughed till the tears ran down their faces whenever the panorama of raggedness became unusually ludicrous," recalled one of Sherman's veterans. "It was as good as a picnic and three circuses," quipped a soldier in Schofield's command.

With his army group united and ensconced around Goldsboro, Sherman traveled north to Grant's headquarters at City Point, Virginia, hoping to persuade the Union general in chief to postpone his upcoming campaign long enough to enable Sherman's army group to participate in the defeat of Lee's army. Much to Sherman's dismay, Grant refused to delay the operation for even one day. While at City Point, Sherman had an opportunity to confer with President Lincoln aboard the steamship *River Queen*. Although they briefly discussed the end of the war, Lincoln gave no indication of the precise terms he would offer the defeated South. Sherman nonetheless left City Point convinced that Lincoln "contemplated no revenge—no harsh measures, but quite the contrary. . . . I know, when I left him, that I was more than ever impressed by his kindly nature, his deep and earnest sympathy with the afflictions of the whole people, resulting from the war."

When Sherman returned to Goldsboro, he was pleased to find "all things working well." As supplies rolled in from the coast, his force began to look like an army once more. On 6 April, momentous news arrived from Virginia: Richmond had fallen, and Grant's forces were pursuing Lee's army as it fled toward Danville, Virginia, and the North Carolina border in a desperate bid to link up with Johnston's army. "Great rejoicing among us tonight—Victory! Victory!" Union staff officer Lt. C. C. Platter scribbled in his diary. In response, Sherman shifted his destination from Richmond to Raleigh, and he ordered the campaign to begin on 10 April. With the addition of Schofield's command—which Sherman designated the Army of the Ohio—Sherman's army group numbered roughly 90,000 soldiers. The Army of the Ohio consisted of Terry's X Corps (formerly the Provisional Corps) and Cox's XXIII Corps.

While the Federals celebrated the news of the Confederate capital's fall, morale plummeted in Johnston's army, which was camped around Smithfield. "The shades of sorrow are gathering upon us—horrible rumors!" wrote Confederate staff officer Capt. Bromfield Ridley. "We, today, have heard of the distressing news that the fall of Richmond took place the [second] day of the month. . . . Heavens, the gloom and how terrible our feelings!" Johnston, meanwhile, renamed his force the Army of Tennessee and reorganized it into three corps commanded by Hardee, Stewart, and Lt. Gen. Stephen D. Lee, with Hampton retaining command of the cavalry. On 7 April, Johnston's army numbered around 31,000 soldiers, making it larger by half than the command that he had led at Bentonville, and yet it remained just one-third the size of Sherman's army group.

The Federals broke camp early on 10 April and began the sixty-mile trek from Goldsboro to Raleigh. In the meantime, the Confederate infantry at Smithfield fell back toward the state capital about a day's march ahead of the Union advance, which skirmished with Hampton's cavalry for much of the way. Sherman reached Smithfield on the afternoon of 11 April and made his headquarters in the courthouse square. About 0500 on 12 April, two riders arrived at the commanding general's tent and delivered a dispatch from General Grant announcing Lee's surrender at Appomattox Court House on 9 April. "I hardly know how to express my feelings, but you can imagine them," Sherman wrote Grant. "The terms you have given Lee are magnanimous and liberal. Should Johnston follow Lee's example I shall of course grant the same." The news spread like wildfire through Sherman's army group. As an excited courier galloped down the XXIII Corps' marching column shouting, "Lee has surrendered! Lee has surrendered!" one wag yelled back at him, "Great God! You're the man I've been looking for these last four years."

That evening, Sherman met with a deputation from North Carolina Governor Zebulon B. Vance requesting a suspension of hostilities in order to open peace negotiations with the U.S. government. While Sherman informed the peace commissioners that an immediate suspension of hostilities was unlikely, the general also told them that he intended to let Vance remain in office. He assured the governor, "I will aid you all in my power to contribute to the end you aim to reach, the termination of the existing war." The peace delegation returned to Raleigh the next morning.

While Sherman's army group converged on the state capital, Johnston was trying to convince President Davis that the war was lost. After the fall of Richmond, Davis and his cabinet had fled by train to Danville. While there, the Confederate president had received an unofficial report of Lee's surrender and had passed it on to Johnston. Continuing south to Greensboro, Davis met with Johnston and Beauregard on 12 April. Instead of inviting the generals to brief him on the military situation, Davis launched into a scheme to raise a large field army in a few weeks by recalling the thousands of men who had deserted or evaded conscription. Johnston argued that it would be impossible to persuade deserters and shirkers to rejoin or enter the army "upon mere invitation" when the cause appeared lost. At that point, Davis abruptly adjourned the meeting with the announcement that Secretary of War Breckinridge was expected to arrive that evening with news of Lee's army.

Breckinridge arrived as anticipated, confirming that Lee had indeed surrendered. Johnston told Breckinridge that the president had "but one power of government left in his hands—that of terminating hostilities." He offered to so advise Davis if the secretary of war provided him with the opportunity, and Breckinridge said that he would arrange a conference for the next day.

Johnston and Beauregard met for a second time with Davis on the morning of 13 April. Despite Lee's surrender, the president remained confident that the Confederacy could prevail "if our people will turn out." When Johnston had his opportunity to speak, he described a Confederacy on the verge of collapse and argued that "it would be the greatest of human crimes to continue the war." The general then urged Davis to "exercise at once the only function of government still in his possession, and open negotiations for peace." The president asked Beauregard and his cabinet for their opinions, and with one exception, they agreed with Johnston. Davis yielded to the majority and dictated a letter to Sherman requesting a suspension of hostilities "to permit the civil authorities to enter into the needful arrangements to terminate the existing war." Johnston then signed the letter and ordered it sent at once to General Hampton for delivery to the Federals.

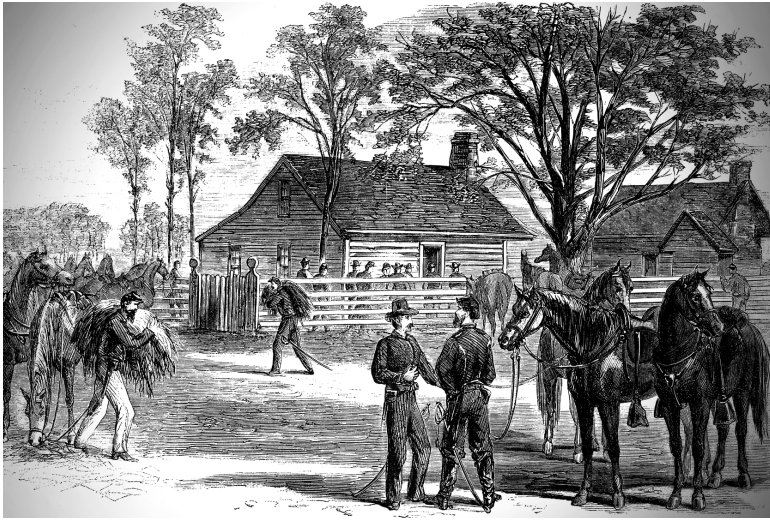
The Union army, meanwhile, entered Raleigh on the morning of 13 April. A lone Confederate cavalryman fired on Kilpatrick's advance as it rode into town—a futile gesture that defied Mayor William H. Harrison's formal surrender of the state capital. The

Federals captured the Southern horseman and hanged him for violating the city's surrender. Soon afterward, Sherman established his headquarters at the Governor's Palace and discovered that Vance had fled with Johnston's army after receiving a report that his peace commissioners had been captured.

At midnight on 15 April, Johnston's letter proposing an armistice reached Sherman's headquarters. The Union chieftain dashed off a reply accepting his Confederate counterpart's proposal. "That a basis of action may be had," Sherman wrote, "I undertake to abide by the same terms and conditions as were made by Generals Grant and Lee at Appomattox Court-House." Sherman sent his message to Kilpatrick at Durham's Station, North Carolina, with instructions to forward it immediately to Hampton's headquarters near Hillsborough. Instead, the Federal cavalry commander held Sherman's dispatch at his forward outpost for one day to make it appear that the Confederates, who continued marching west toward Greensboro, were willfully violating Johnston's proposed cease-fire. Sherman refused to be taken in by Kilpatrick's subterfuge, however, and, after receiving Hampton's message proposing a conference midway between the opposing picket lines on the Hillsborough Road, the Union commander wired his acceptance to Kilpatrick with a pointed order to forward it without delay.

THE BENNETT PLACE NEGOTIATIONS

On the morning of 17 April, as Sherman prepared to board a train for his meeting with Johnston, a coded message from Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton arrived at the railroad depot. The dispatch informed Sherman that an assassin had shot President Lincoln on the evening of 14 April and that he had died the next morning. "Of course it fell on me with terrific force," Sherman later wrote of the dispatch, "but I had dealt with death in so many familiar forms that no one with me, from my words or bearing, dreamed of the contents." After ordering the telegraph operator to say nothing to anyone about the contents of the message, Sherman rode the train to Durham's Station, where he was met by Kilpatrick. The generals and their escort of Federal cavalry headed west on the Hillsborough Road until the Union flag-of-truce bearer met his Confederate counterpart about four miles west of Durham's Station. Sherman and Johnston saluted, shook hands, and introduced their respective subordinates. The two commanders then entered the James Bennett farmhouse and began their conference.



*The Bennett Place, by Theodore R. Davis
(Harper's Weekly)*

Sherman opened the meeting by showing Johnston the telegram announcing Lincoln's assassination. The Confederate commander reportedly said that "the event was the greatest possible calamity to the South." The Union chieftain then stated that he had not yet announced the news to his army and dreaded the reaction of his troops. Johnston agreed that Sherman's situation was "extremely delicate" indeed. Speaking in a tone that Johnston believed "carried conviction of sincerity," Sherman said that he wanted to spare the South further devastation. Observing that Johnston's army was hopelessly outnumbered, Sherman offered his Confederate counterpart the same terms that Grant had given Lee at Appomattox Court House. While acknowledging that those terms were generous, Johnston also noted that Lee's army had been surrounded, whereas he and Sherman were a four days' march apart, with the Federals camped around Raleigh and the Confederates around Greensboro. The Confederate commander then played his trump card, proposing that they "make one job of it" by negotiating the surrender of all remaining Confederate forces. When Sherman asked how he intended to arrange such a capitulation, Johnston replied that he would obtain President Davis' authorization.

The two generals discussed the terms of the proposed surrender. Sherman related Lincoln's wish to end the war without further bloodshed, and he indicated that the late president's first priority had been to preserve the Union. Johnston inferred that all else—with the possible exception of emancipation—was negotiable. The Confederate chieftain recalled that he and Sherman agreed to terms with one important exception—the Union commander's refusal to include Davis and his cabinet in a general amnesty. Sherman, however, remembered that his sole concern was whether Johnston could secure Davis' approval of the terms. The two men ended their conference at 1430 to give Johnston time to communicate with Davis and to enable Sherman to reach Raleigh before word of Lincoln's assassination could spread. They agreed to meet at the Bennett house at noon the next day.

When Sherman arrived at Raleigh, he discovered that the news had already spread throughout the capital. A crowd of angry soldiers met him at the depot, shouting, "Don't let Johnston surrender! Don't let the Rebels surrender!" An Illinois soldier wrote in his diary: "The army is crazy for vengeance. If we make another campaign it will be an awful one." After writing the order announcing Lincoln's assassination, Sherman strengthened the guard patrolling Raleigh, posted pickets on the roads into town, and ordered all unauthorized soldiers in Raleigh arrested and jailed. He also spent the night riding through the surrounding camps, attempting to calm his men. Despite these precautions, a mob of several thousand soldiers from the XV Corps advanced on the capital amid shouts that Raleigh was "a Rebel hole and ought to be cleaned out." General Logan, the XV Corps commander, confronted the mob on the outskirts of town and tried to reason with the men. When that failed, he brought forward an artillery battery and warned the troops that if they did not disperse, he would order the cannons to open fire. The men returned to their camps. After an anxious night, dawn revealed that the North Carolina capital had been spared the fate of Columbia.

While Sherman attempted to save Raleigh, Johnston spent the early morning hours of 18 April at Hampton's headquarters discussing the proposed terms with two Confederate cabinet officials: Secretary of War Breckinridge and Postmaster General John H. Reagan. Johnston related the details of his meeting with Sherman, noting that the Union commander had refused to grant amnesty to Davis and his cabinet—a matter of obvious concern

to Breckinridge and Reagan. When Johnston had finished his briefing, Reagan offered to write down the surrender terms. Later that morning, as Reagan made a clean copy of the terms, Johnston announced that he was going to his second meeting with Sherman. Leaving Reagan to complete his memorandum, Johnston and Breckinridge rode off for the Bennett farm at 1000.

The flags of truce met before the Bennett house at noon on 18 April. Sherman and Johnston entered the dwelling, and the Confederate chieftain said that he now had the authority to surrender all remaining Confederate forces. Johnston also requested that Breckinridge be allowed to participate in the negotiations, since he was responsible for the comprehensive surrender. Sherman initially refused because the former U.S. vice president was a member of Davis' cabinet but relented when Johnston stated that the Kentuckian was also a major general in the Confederate Army. The commanders repeated the main points of their discussion for Breckinridge. The two Southerners conceded that slavery was dead, but they stated that the Confederate soldiers desired some guarantees concerning their political status.

During the conversation, Reagan's memorandum arrived from Hampton's headquarters. Johnston read the document aloud, noting that it differed from the terms discussed only insofar as it guaranteed universal amnesty. Sherman was unimpressed, finding Reagan's memorandum "so general and verbose" that he deemed it "inadmissible." Johnston nevertheless handed him the paper to study. Breckinridge then gave a short speech in favor of the Reagan document. At the conclusion, Sherman took out pen and paper and wrote his "Memorandum or Basis of Agreement," while bearing in mind his conversations with Lincoln at City Point.

Having dismissed Reagan's terms as too verbose, Sherman's own memorandum proved to run twice the length of the Texan's, and it offered the Confederates a good deal more. There were four key items. First, the units composing the remaining Confederate armies were to proceed to their respective state arsenals and deposit their arms there for use in maintaining law and order. Second, the president of the United States would recognize the Southern state governments, provided their officials and legislatures took the oaths prescribed by the U.S. Constitution. Cases involving conflicting state governments established during the war (such as the newly formed state of West Virginia) would be decided by the U.S. Supreme Court. Third, the president would

guarantee the Southern people their personal, political, and property rights as defined by the U.S. and state constitutions. As a courtesy to Johnston and Breckinridge, who conceded that slavery was dead, Sherman omitted any mention of its demise in this clause. Fourth, the president would grant a general amnesty to the Southern people for their part in the war if they lived in peace and obeyed the laws in force in their respective states. Although he had not consciously intended to, Sherman was thus granting a full pardon to all Southerners, including Davis and his cabinet officers. Realizing that he had delved into political matters beyond his authority as a military commander, Sherman inserted a clause at the end of his memorandum stating that he and Johnston pledged to obtain the prompt approval of their respective civilian leaders before carrying the terms into effect.

After the two commanders had signed the agreement, Sherman returned to Raleigh with his copy. Late that night, he sent a staff officer to Washington, D.C., with the surrender document and a letter to Grant. "I inclose herewith a copy of an agreement made this day between General Joseph E. Johnston and myself," Sherman wrote, "which, if approved by the President of the United States, will produce peace from the Potomac to the Rio Grande." Supremely confident that his agreement would meet with no opposition, Sherman asked Grant to "get the President to simply indorse the copy and commission me to carry out the terms."

Grant received Sherman's papers late on Friday afternoon, 21 April. Reading the terms with growing concern, the Union general in chief realized that he must notify Secretary of War Stanton at once. Stanton read Sherman's agreement and then called a special cabinet meeting for 2000 at President Andrew Johnson's temporary residence. An outraged Stanton voiced his objections to the terms, calling it "a practical acknowledgement of the Rebel government" that would enable "the Rebels to renew their efforts to overthrow the U.S. government at a later time." He also contended that the agreement relieved the rebels of all "pains and penalties" for their crimes and would enable them to reestablish slavery. The president and his cabinet unanimously rejected Sherman's agreement. Stanton then ordered Grant to "proceed immediately" to Sherman's headquarters "and direct operations against the enemy."

Grant's appearance at the Governor's Palace in Raleigh on 24 April, both "surprised and pleased" Sherman, but he was neither surprised nor pleased to learn that the president had rejected his

terms and ordered him to resume hostilities. Since penning his agreement, Sherman had come to realize that the mood in the U.S. capital following Lincoln's assassination was hardly conciliatory. As instructed, Sherman notified Johnston that the truce would end in forty-eight hours as agreed on, that there could be no civil negotiations, and that the troops affected would be limited to Johnston's immediate command. "I therefore demand the surrender of your army on the same terms as were given General Lee at Appomattox . . . purely and simply," Sherman wrote. Pleased with Sherman's handling of the situation, Grant disregarded Stanton's order to "direct operations."

At 1700 on 24 April, Johnston received President Davis' approval of Sherman's terms. (Davis and his entourage had since moved to Charlotte.) One hour later, Sherman's dispatches arrived ending the truce, rejecting the agreement, and demanding the Confederates' surrender in accordance with the Appomattox terms. Johnston immediately wired Breckinridge for instructions, but the Confederate commander was at no loss for a course of action: "We had better disband this small force to prevent devastation to the country." This was the last piece of advice that Davis wanted from his ranking field commander. The Confederate president expected Johnston to maintain his army as long as the Federals refused to offer acceptable terms. Breckinridge adroitly couched Davis' order as a suggestion to disband the infantry and artillery while sending a mounted force to the Trans-Mississippi. In response, Johnston summoned Beauregard and his corps and division commanders to a conference at 1000 on 25 April. This meeting proved to be the Army of Tennessee's final council of war. Johnston asked his subordinates to assess Breckinridge's proposal and the condition of their forces. The consensus was that the troops would no longer fight and the secretary of war's plan was impractical. Johnston notified Breckinridge and suggested, "We ought to make terms for our troops and give an escort of cavalry to the President." In the meantime, Johnston replied to Sherman's dispatches, proposing another armistice to resume negotiations.

Due to a railroad accident, Johnston arrived at the Bennett farm at 1400 on 26 April, two hours behind schedule. Although Grant had remained in Raleigh, Sherman brought several high-ranking subordinates with him, including General Schofield. The two commanders shook hands and entered the Bennett house. Their third conference began inauspiciously. Sherman offered

the Appomattox terms, but Johnston called them inadequate and insisted on additional guarantees for his men. While he conceded the need for supplementary terms, Sherman doubted that they would be approved in Washington. After further discussion proved fruitless, the Union commander summoned Schofield to resolve their impasse.

Schofield suggested drafting a surrender document almost identical to the Appomattox agreement and a second document listing the additional terms that Johnston sought for his men. "I think General Schofield can fix it," Johnston said. Sherman directed his lieutenant to put the "new" terms in writing. Schofield's "Terms of a Military Convention" strongly resembled the terms Grant had offered Lee at Appomattox Court House. The crucial fifth provision ensured that all officers and men in Johnston's command could return to their homes, not to be disturbed by the U.S. government as long as they observed their paroles and the laws in force where they resided. On 27 April, Johnston would draft a list of eight "Supplementary Terms" based on his discussion with Sherman and Schofield at the Bennett house. Schofield would then write a revised version consisting of six "Supplemental Terms" that permitted each brigade or independent unit to retain one-seventh of its small arms, that enabled the soldiers to keep their horses and other personal property, and that provided water-borne transportation for troops from the Trans-Mississippi. A few days later, he would offer rail transportation to Johnston's troops as well. The Bennett Place surrender was the largest of the war, embracing almost 90,000 Confederates stationed in North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. Both Sherman and Johnston would announce the momentous news to their troops on 27 April.

On the evening of 26 April, Sherman returned to Raleigh and submitted the surrender agreement to Grant, who approved the terms and complied with Sherman's request to sign the document. The general in chief then carried the document back to Washington. Sherman now believed that the troublesome matter "was surely at an end." He could not have been more mistaken.

Johnston, meanwhile, traveled to Greensboro. In compliance with the surrender agreement, he ordered his corps commanders to make out their muster rolls in duplicate and to collect all cannons, artillery equipment, and draft animals, as well as four-fifths of the soldiers' small arms, ammunition, and accoutrements. (He did not

receive Schofield's stipulation to collect six-sevenths of the arms until 30 April.) For the final time, the Army of Tennessee lurched into action, as long lines of troops stacked arms and headquarters staffs filled out rolls. To maintain a semblance of cohesion during the journey home, the men would remain with their units for as long as possible and receive their paroles only when they neared their homes.

Now that the war in North Carolina was over, Sherman directed Schofield's Army of the Ohio and Kilpatrick's cavalry to remain in the state as an occupation force while Howard's Army of the Tennessee and Slocum's Army of Georgia marched to Washington, D.C., to be mustered out of the service. In the meantime, Sherman would conduct an inspection tour of his command that would take him to Wilmington, Savannah, and Hilton Head, South Carolina.

Just before his departure on 28 April, he received a copy of the 23 April *New York Times* that contained the following headlines: "Sherman's Action Promptly Repudiated. The President and All His Cabinet Rebuke Him. Gen. Grant Gone to North Carolina to Direct Our Armies. Possible Escape of Jeff. Davis with His Gold." Among the items contained in the news bulletin were Sherman's "Memorandum or Basis of Agreement" and Stanton's list of nine reasons for rejecting it. The eighth reason asserted that Sherman's terms were more generous "than the rebels had asked in their most prosperous condition," which ignored the Confederates' insistence on Southern independence as a prerequisite for peace negotiations. Stanton's artfully edited bulletin ensured the unanimity of the Northern press in condemning Sherman's first agreement. Although the furor over the terms soon subsided, Sherman later admitted that he was "outraged beyond measure, and was resolved to resent the insult, cost what it might." As peace returned to the land, Sherman declared war on Secretary Stanton.

STONEMAN'S LAST RAID

In March and April 1865, while Sherman conducted operations and negotiated for the surrender of Johnston's army, Maj. Gen. George Stoneman led his 4,000-man cavalry division on a raid through western North Carolina and southern Virginia from Knoxville, Tennessee. The long-deferred strikes occurred at General Grant's urging. The objective was to support Sherman's and Grant's campaigns by destroying facilities, equipment,

and supplies in North Carolina and Virginia that could aid the Confederate Army. Grant directed that, "As this expedition goes to destroy and not to fight battles, but to avoid them when practicable . . . , it should go as light as possible."

Stoneman was fortunate to be leading the cavalry operation. He enjoyed the dubious distinction of having been the highest-ranking Union prisoner of war, following his capture near Macon, Georgia, during the disastrous raid in July 1864 by him and Brig. Gen. Edward M. McCook. Secretary of War Stanton was no admirer, calling Stoneman "one of the most worthless officers in the service." But he had a staunch supporter in General Schofield. In September 1864, after Stoneman's release from captivity, Schofield, then commanding the Department of the Ohio, had appointed the cavalryman as his second in command. Stoneman had repaid Schofield's unwavering faith in him by leading a successful strike into southwestern Virginia in December 1864. Two months later, Stoneman was named commander of the District of East Tennessee. He had been eager to launch a raid into South Carolina in support of Sherman's march, but several delays had forced him to abandon that undertaking and shift his focus to North Carolina and Virginia.



General Stoneman
(Library of Congress)

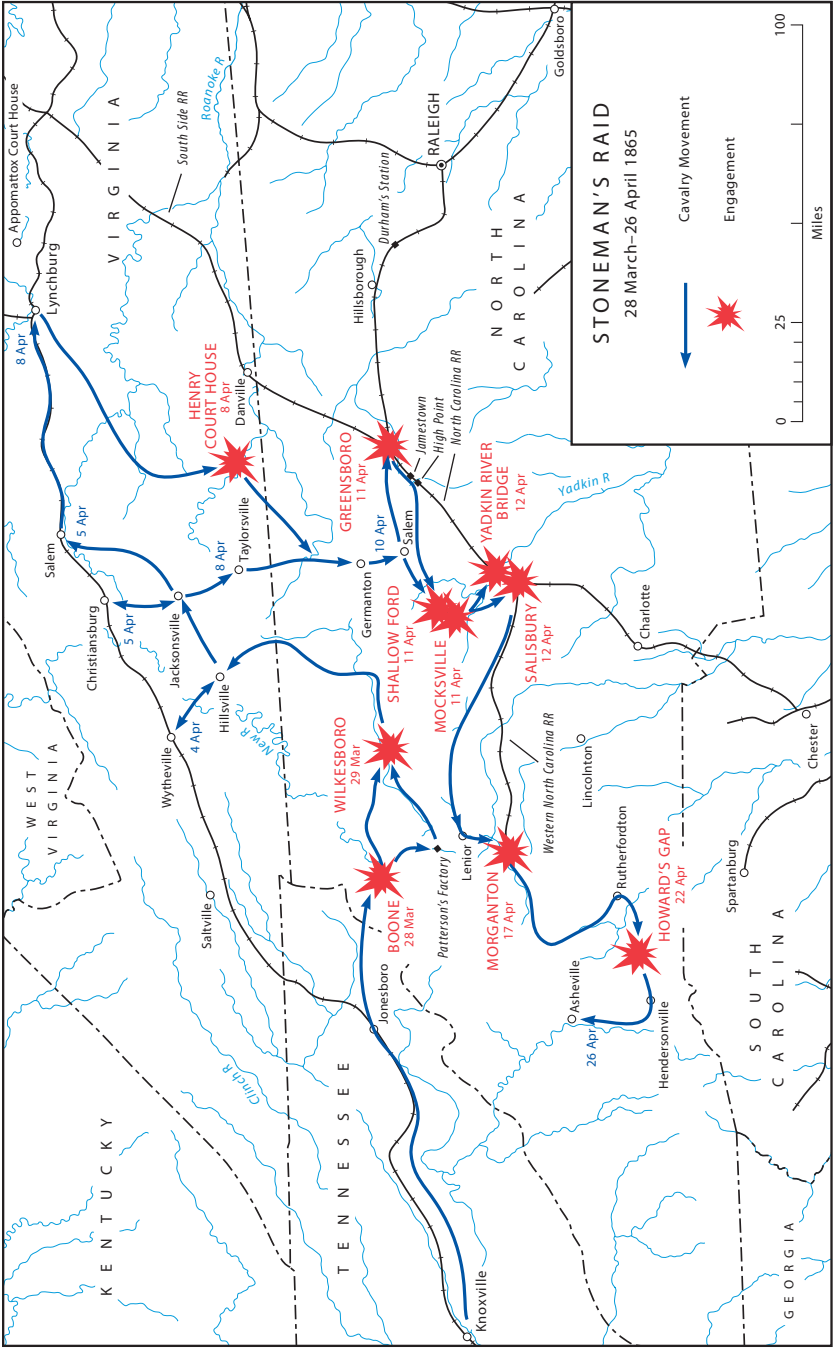
Stoneman's raiders struck first in western North Carolina. As he would do throughout the operation, Stoneman divided his force to maximize its destructive potential. On 28 March, one Union mounted column rode into Boone, where the bluecoats routed a home guard unit and burned the town's jail. That evening, a second Federal column headed south and torched Patterson's Factory, a large cotton mill in Caldwell County. The raiders next headed east to Wilkesboro and then swung north in early April, making a brief detour into southern Virginia. On 8 April, one

of Stoneman's columns pushed as far north as Lynchburg, just twenty miles west of Appomattox Court House, putting the Federal raiders in an excellent position to cut off Lee's retreat had such a maneuver been necessary. The next day, a second Union column briefly clashed with the 6th Tennessee Cavalry at Henry Court House, about thirty miles west of Danville, where President Jefferson Davis and his cabinet had halted following their flight from Richmond. On the same day as Lee's surrender to Grant, Stoneman's cavalry reentered North Carolina. The timing was fortuitous, for Lee's surrender had made Johnston's army the main target of Stoneman's raid (*Map 3*).

In late March, as Stoneman headed east, Johnston had entrusted General Beauregard, his second in command, with the task of stopping the Federal raiders. He also had directed General Bragg—left without a command since the Battle of Bentonville—to assist Beauregard. Together, Beauregard and Bragg assembled a patchwork defensive force consisting of various infantry, cavalry, and artillery units, which they deployed at several key points along the railroad from Chester northward to Danville.

Unaware of these dispositions, Stoneman once again divided his force. At Germanton, North Carolina, he directed Col. William J. Palmer's brigade to strike Salem, twelve miles to the south, and then proceed twenty-five miles east to Greensboro, destroying railroad bridges and supply depots on his route. Stoneman, meanwhile, led his other two brigades toward Salisbury, his main geographic objective. Colonel Palmer reached Salem on the afternoon of 10 April and burned 7,000 bales of cotton. That night, he sent out several detachments to the south and east. At noon the following day, the first detachment destroyed the Piedmont Railroad bridge spanning Reedy Creek, ten miles north of Greensboro. Unknown to the Federal raiders, the train carrying President Davis and his cabinet had crossed that bridge just an hour beforehand. When informed of his close call at Reedy Creek, Davis had remarked, "A miss is as good as a mile." But the destruction wrought by other detachments of Stoneman's cavalry would prevent the Davis party from traveling beyond Greensboro by rail.

Palmer's second detachment made a bold feint on Greensboro. After routing the 3d South Carolina Cavalry in a surprise assault, the Federals rode to within a few miles of Greensboro, where they cut a telegraph line and burned the North Carolina Railroad bridge



MAP 3

across Buffalo Creek. The third detachment attacked Florence and Jamestown, about fifteen miles southwest of Greensboro, burning a gun factory, some Confederate cotton and commissary stores, and the North Carolina Railroad bridge over Deep River. A few miles south of Jamestown, Palmer's fourth detachment hit High Point, burning 1,700 bales of cotton and 2 trains loaded with medical and commissary supplies. Having completed its work of destruction, Palmer's brigade rejoined Stoneman's main column on the evening of 12 April. Palmer's multipronged strike wreaked untold havoc on the enemy, but Stoneman could not judge his raid a success until he had captured Salisbury.

Salisbury had both strategic and symbolic importance. The town was the junction of two railroads—the North Carolina and the Western North Carolina. It also boasted a foundry, an arsenal, and numerous warehouses filled with supplies, and it was the site of a notorious military prison. Stoneman hoped to redeem his reputation by liberating the Union prisoners incarcerated there.

After a few brushes with Confederate home guard units at Shallow Ford and Mocksville on 11 April, Stoneman reached Salisbury early on the morning of the twelfth. The town was defended by a scratch force consisting of 3 veteran artillery batteries, a few hundred prison guards, several companies of home guards and reserves, 400 state employees, a handful of civilian volunteers, and some “galvanized Yankees”—foreign-born Union captives who had agreed to serve in the Confederate Army rather than rot in Southern prisons. Oddly enough, most of the regular Salisbury garrison and its commander, Brig. Gen. Bradley T. Johnson, were at Greensboro because General Beauregard believed the latter town was Stoneman's main target.

Brig. Gen. William M. Gardner, a journeyman officer, commanded the motley crew protecting Salisbury. Gardner established his defensive position along Grant's Creek north and west of town, deploying his 1,000-man force on a tenuous two-mile line to cover the incoming roads. At dawn, Stoneman divided his two available brigades into five columns and launched a general assault. Deploying into line of battle, the Union horsemen easily turned Gardner's right flank, capturing most of the defenders in that sector, including a contingent of galvanized Yankees who threw down their weapons when the blue-clad riders approached. The Confederates on the left proved more stubborn. The Southern batteries repulsed the

initial Union charge by firing double-shotted canister, but the Federal cavalymen rallied, forded the creek beyond range of the cannons, and then attacked from the rear. The Northerners' sudden appearance panicked the Confederates, who abandoned their guns and fled. Stoneman then ordered a general charge, and the Federals routed the entire Southern line. According to Stoneman's second in command, Brig. Gen. Alvan C. Gillem, "The pursuit was kept up as long as the enemy retained a semblance of organization and until those who escaped capture had scattered and concealed themselves in the woods." By noon on 12 April, Salisbury was firmly in Union hands. The Battle of Salisbury cost the Federals about 40 casualties, while the Confederates lost 1 killed, 6 wounded, and roughly 1,300 captured.

Stoneman was chagrined to discover that the thousands of Union prisoners he hoped to liberate had been transferred elsewhere in March and that the handful of inmates who remained were either too lame or too sick to travel. He was further disappointed to learn that a detachment sent to destroy the 660-foot Yadkin River bridge north of town had been repulsed by a Confederate force under Brig. Gen. Zebulon York. But Stoneman was unaware that Colonel Palmer's detachments had already shut down rail traffic in central North Carolina by destroying three railroad bridges and several miles of track to the north.

In addition to intercepting several trains attempting to escape, Stoneman's troopers seized an enormous quantity of supplies at Salisbury, including 1 million rounds of small-arms ammunition, 250,000 army blankets, 35,000 pounds of cornmeal, and 7,000 bales of cotton. The raiders piled the goods in the streets and took what they wanted. The civilians then helped themselves to the remainder. About 2000 on 12 April, the Federals set fire to the last of the supplies and to the prison, the arsenal, the foundry, several hospitals, and four cotton factories. That night, the red skies above Salisbury could be seen for miles, and the resulting explosions sometimes reached the volume of a pitched battle.

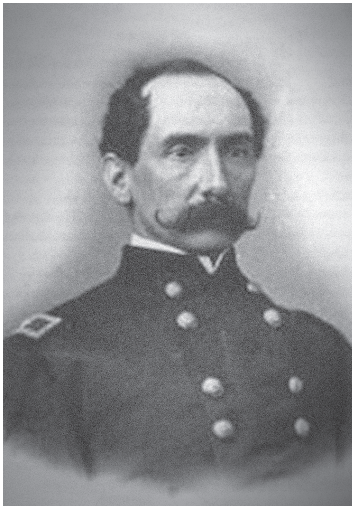
On the morning of 13 April, as Sherman's army group entered Raleigh, Stoneman's horse soldiers headed west in a driving rain-storm. Four days later, Stoneman left the main column at Lenoir, North Carolina, and returned to Knoxville, having fulfilled his mission. He turned over command to General Gillem, whose brigades once more separated and then headed west toward Morganton, North Carolina, or south toward Charlotte. The raiders continued their destructive work in the Old North State

for two more weeks. While crossing the Blue Ridge Mountains, the Federals skirmished with the Confederates at Howard's Gap (22 April) and several other rugged passes. On the same day, captured rebels informed them of Lee's surrender and Lincoln's assassination. "The one [event] so sad, filling our hearts with the greatest sorrow," recalled one Union cavalryman, "left little room for the joy that otherwise would have filled our hearts" with the news that the war was almost over. On 27 April, the raid underwent a surprising twist: Stoneman received instructions to capture Confederate President Jefferson Davis. In the meantime, the Union mounted columns ranged through western North Carolina, so it took several days for the order to reach Stoneman's subordinates. As a result, the Federals did not embark on their new mission until 30 April—four days after Davis had headed south from Charlotte with a large cavalry escort. The chase was on.

POTTER'S SOUTH CAROLINA RAID

In mid-March, while en route to Goldsboro, Sherman had written Maj. Gen. Quincy A. Gillmore, the commander of the Department of the South, informing him of "a vast amount of rolling stock" on the Wilmington and Manchester Railroad in

General Potter
(North Carolina Office of
Archives and History)



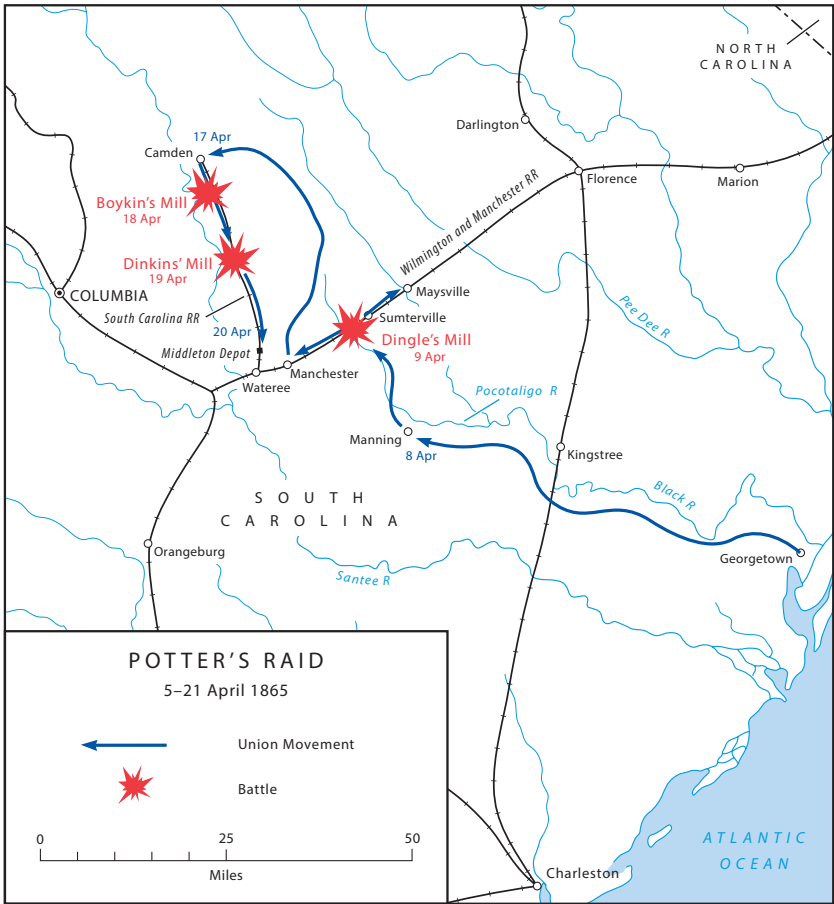
eastern South Carolina, which had somehow eluded his army group. Determined that the railroad cars be destroyed, Sherman had urged Gillmore to do so at once, even "if to do it costs you 500 men." Sherman directed Gillmore to have the expedition travel light and to subsist as much as possible by foraging. On 5 April, Gillmore sent a 2,700-man expeditionary force under Brig. Gen. Edward E. Potter from Georgetown on the South Carolina coast. Potter's command consisted of two infantry brigades—one composed of four white regiments under Col. Philip P. Brown, the other of three black

regiments led by Col. Edward N. Hallowell, including the famed 54th Massachusetts Infantry. The foot soldiers were augmented by a two-gun section of artillery, a cavalry squadron, and an engineer detachment.

On the first day of the raid, Potter's troops destroyed some cotton gins and bales of cotton, and they occasionally skirmished with South Carolina militia. Over the next few days, the Federals passed through a region that Lt. Edward L. Stevens, a white officer in the 54th Massachusetts Infantry, described as the "most desolate imaginable." As a result, the men were unable to live off the land and instead had to draw supplies from Union naval vessels plying the Santee River. The troops nevertheless pillaged many of the homes in the sparsely settled region while their officers looked the other way. The Federals continued to skirmish with small militia detachments, resulting in several wounded Union soldiers (*Map 4*).

On 8 April, Potter's column reached the town of Manning, where the Federals found a mile-long causeway interspersed with six bridges over the Pocotaligo River, each span more or less burned. By midnight Hallowell's soldiers had made the bridges passable for foot traffic and then crossed. The artillery and cavalry followed later, after the engineers had completed the repairs. Following a brief rest, Potter's raiders advanced on the morning of 9 April and collided with an enemy force at Dingle's Mill, about three miles south of Sumterville on the Wilmington and Manchester Railroad. Though numbering fewer than 1,000 men, the Confederate force was by far the largest that Potter's command had faced. The troops consisted of about 500 South Carolina militia, a handful of Confederate cavalry, and a detachment of the famed "Orphan Brigade"—so called because it hailed from Kentucky, which remained loyal to the Union, leaving its members "orphans." The veteran foot soldiers were now operating as mounted infantry.

The Southerners were dug in on the opposite side of the millpond, which proved too wide and marshy to ford. Potter sent Brown's brigade forward to carry the bridge over the pond, but the Kentuckians' steady fire stopped them cold. Meanwhile, the two Union guns roared into action, firing fifty-five rounds. One well-aimed projectile disabled a Confederate cannon and killed the officer in command of the piece. While Brown's troops kept the Southern defenders occupied, Potter sent Hallowell's brigade on a path that supposedly wound around the Confederate left



MAP 4

flank, but the guide became lost, and Hollowell had to retrace his steps. Brown's brigade was more fortunate, however. Two of the regiments succeeded in turning the Southerners' right flank and routed them toward Sumterville. According to Lieutenant Stevens, some of the captured militia "were old men, some little boys, the cradle & grave." The Union casualties at Dingle's Mill totaled twenty-six compared with the Confederates' sixteen losses.

After the fight, Potter's force resumed marching and occupied Sumterville that evening. The next morning, Potter sent several

detachments into Maysville to the east and Manchester to the west. Over the next two days, the details destroyed 11 locomotives, 74 cars, 200 bales of cotton, 2 bridges, and a machine shop. On 12 April, the raiders headed north toward Camden, the northern terminus of the South Carolina Railroad, and they found their foraging prospects much improved. "We are living splendidly with no expense to us," Lieutenant Stevens wrote. "Poultry, Honey, Potatoes, Corn Bread[,] Molasses, &c."

On 17 April, Potter's raiders entered Camden, where they learned that all the locomotives and rolling stock had been moved eight miles south to Boykin's Mill. The Federals arrived there on 18 April and found the Confederates occupying a strong position similar to the one at Dingle's Mill. Once again, Potter attempted to turn the Southerners' flanks. Lieutenant Stevens was shot and killed while leading a detachment of the 54th Massachusetts Infantry around the Confederate left. He died on the day that Sherman and Johnston signed the first surrender agreement at the Bennett house.

Soon afterward, the Union soldiers drove off the heavily outnumbered Confederates, only to discover that the elusive rolling stock had been moved to Middleton Depot. The Federals and Confederates clashed yet again, this time at Dinkins' Mill on 19 April, with the same result as in the previous two skirmishes. On the morning of 20 April, Potter's column pressed on to Middleton Depot and destroyed the locomotives and rolling stock collected there. On 21 April, a courier brought news of the Sherman-Johnston armistice and orders to cease all military operations.

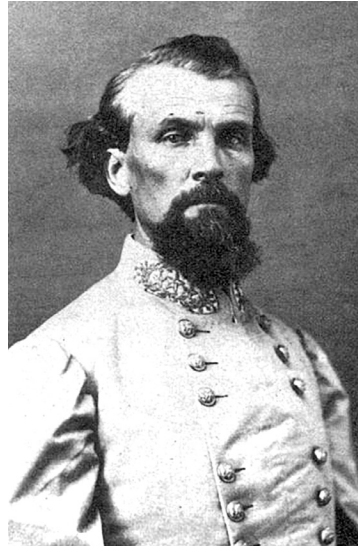
The Union raiders turned east and marched back to Georgetown, arriving there on 25 April. They had destroyed 32 locomotives, 250 railroad cars, 100 cotton gins, and 5,000 bales of cotton. Throughout the operation, former slaves had flocked to Potter's column, and the general estimated that about 3,000 of them had accompanied the Federals to Georgetown. Potter's raid proved to be the last significant military operation in South Carolina.

WILSON'S RAID: ALABAMA

While Sherman's Carolinas campaign was drawing to a close, Union Brig. Gen. James H. Wilson was launching a mounted raid through Alabama. A former engineer and staff officer under Grant and Sherman, the 27-year-old Wilson had briefly headed the Cavalry Bureau of the War Department before he was assigned to command a cavalry division in the Army of the Potomac, where he



General Wilson
(Library of Congress)

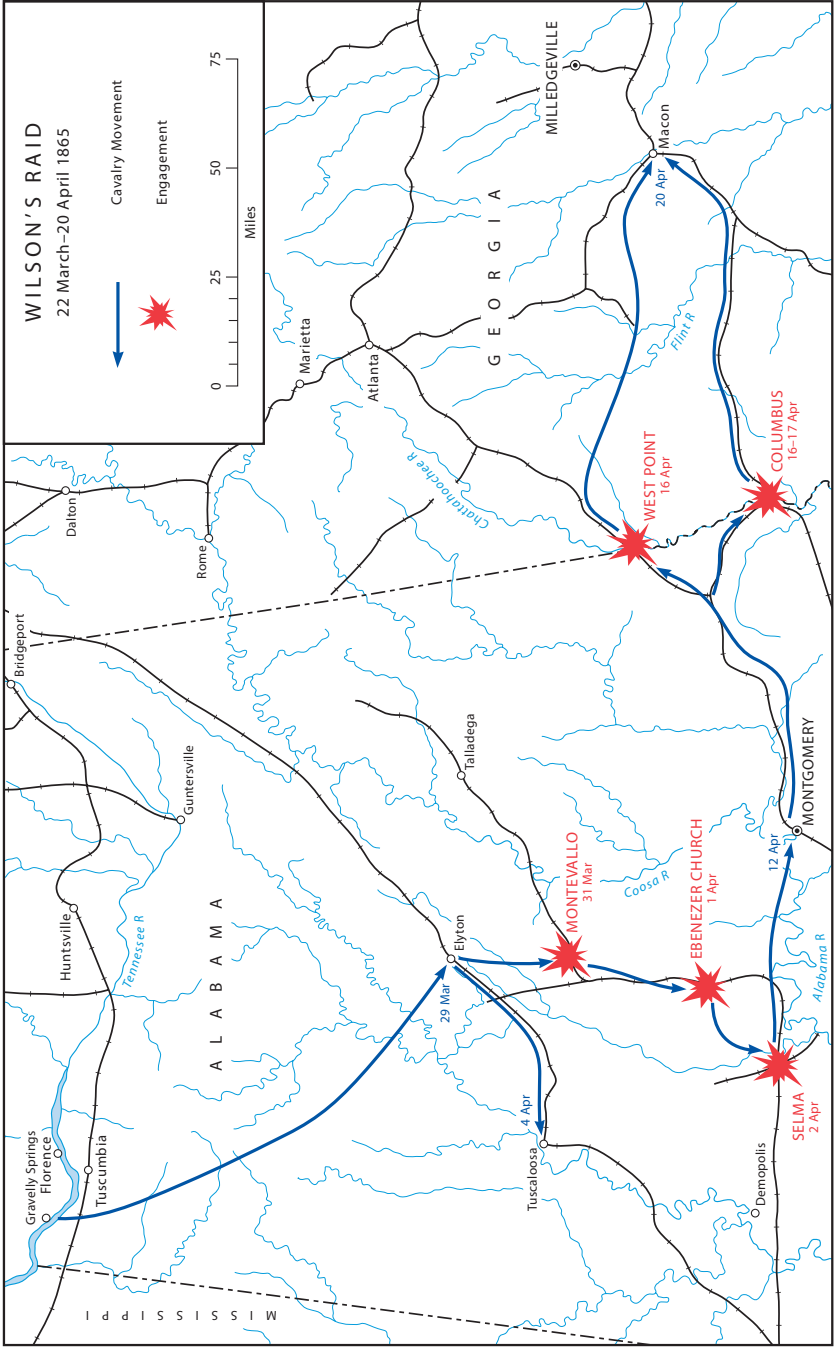


General Forrest
(Library of Congress)

soon displayed a talent for combat command. Transferred to the Western Theater in October 1864, Wilson led the Federal cavalry in the battles of Franklin and Nashville, both Union victories.

On 22 March 1865, Wilson's 13,480-man cavalry corps—the largest and best-equipped mounted force of the war—broke camp at Gravelly Springs in northwestern Alabama and headed south toward Selma and other industrial centers in the heart of the state. After crossing the rain-swollen Tennessee River, Wilson led his three divisions to Elyton (present-day Birmingham), arriving there on 29 March. The Federals destroyed several ironworks in the area, while Brig. Gen. John T. Croxton's brigade rode southwest to Tuscaloosa, where they burned a cotton factory, several ironworks, and most of the University of Alabama "military school" (*Map 5*).

Continuing south toward Selma, Wilson clashed with a force of roughly 2,000 Confederate cavalry and state militia led by Lt. Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest at Montevallo on 31 March. Not even the famed "Wizard of the Saddle" could overcome such odds. Worse yet, in addition to being heavily outnumbered, Forrest was outgunned by Wilson's troopers, who wielded seven-shot Spencer repeating carbines. After routing the Southerners, the Federals



MAP 5

destroyed the area's ironworks and other factories. They also captured an enemy courier carrying messages that revealed the strength and location of Forrest's forces. This enabled Wilson to prevent the scattered Confederates from uniting before he could reach Selma. On the following day, Wilson collided with Forrest a second time at Ebenezer Church, about twenty miles north of Selma, and routed him again. During the fight, a Union captain slashed Forrest with his saber before the latter shot him to death. Union casualties at Ebenezer Church were 12 killed and 40 wounded, while the Confederates lost roughly 300 captured.

Withdrawing to Selma on the afternoon of 1 April, Forrest deployed his troops in a semicircular ring of fortifications that guarded the town, anchoring both of his flanks on the Alabama River to the south. Selma was a tempting military target. Situated in the heart of the state, the town's relatively secure location, combined with its proximity to rail and river transportation, had drawn a wide variety of war industries there. By 1865, Selma boasted a large arsenal, a munitions plant, a powder mill, a naval foundry, eleven ironworks, and several factories that manufactured uniforms and equipment. Two years earlier, Confederate officials had used slave labor to construct an elaborate system of defenses, and, while formidable, the earthworks required a much larger force than Forrest had at his disposal. The defenders consisted of about 4,000 men and boys, including Confederate cavalry, state troops under one-eyed Brig. Gen. Daniel W. Adams, and a sizable contingent of local citizens pressed into service for the emergency. Even with the civilians, the Southerners manning the trenches were ten feet apart.

Wilson's cavalry reached the outskirts of Selma about 1400 on 2 April, with Brig. Gen. Eli Long's division leading the way, followed by Brig. Gen. Emory Upton's division. Wilson deployed Upton's troopers across the Range Line Road, north of town, and Long's men astride the Summerfield Road on Upton's right. The two Federal divisions numbered roughly 9,000 men. After making a reconnaissance of the Confederate defenses, the Union commander decided to launch a general assault after nightfall, spearheaded by Upton's division.

At 1630, however, Wilson's plan suddenly flew out the window, as Long had his troopers dismount and commence a frontal assault without first notifying Wilson. Long ordered the attack in response to a strike on his wagon train by Confederate

cavalry, believing it the best way to counter the threat to his rear. “The entire line started up with a bound, yelling, shooting, and all pushing forward under a most terrific cannonade and through a perfect shower of bullets,” recalled a Union officer. Supported by their artillery, the Federal troopers raced across the 600 yards of open ground along Summerfield Road and then struggled through rows of sharpened logs and other obstructions fronting the Confederate works. Firing as rapidly as they could, the defenders briefly held their ground, but the sheer number of attackers in blue soon overwhelmed them. The militia and local defense personnel were the first to flee, with Forrest’s veteran cavalymen giving ground more stubbornly. During the assault, General Long was severely wounded in the head—his sixth combat wound of the war. Several Union regimental commanders were also injured.

Hearing the small-arms and artillery fire on Long’s front, the men of Upton’s division did not wait for orders but immediately broke for the enemy fortifications, working their way through underbrush and across a swamp as they advanced along the Range Line Road. On nearing the earthworks, Upton’s men “expected a deadly volley,” one officer noted, but when the Federals scaled the works, they were relieved to see the rebels “skedaddling in all directions.”

Noticing that some Confederates were attempting to rally, Wilson led his escort—the 4th U.S. Cavalry—in a charge to break the enemy’s developing line. As the Federals attacked, Wilson’s horse suddenly plunged to the ground. Though shot in the chest, the animal quickly regained its feet, and Wilson resumed the charge. Reinforced by two other regiments, the regulars broke the Confederate line and sent the soldiers in gray racing to the rear.

Union cavalry swept into Selma from the north and northwest, moving through streets choked with fleeing Confederates and panicked civilians. In the chaos that followed, fires broke out all over town, and many of Wilson’s men broke ranks to plunder homes and stores. Skirmishing also continued long after nightfall. As a result, it took Wilson and his subordinates most of the night to restore order.

The capture of Selma had cost the Federals about 350 killed, wounded, and missing, while the Confederates lost roughly 2,700 captured and an unknown number of killed and wounded. Forrest did not know it, but he had fought his last battle, and his demoralized command had ceased to pose a threat to Wilson’s raid. While awaiting the return of several detachments, Wilson’s

men destroyed Selma's arsenal, iron foundries, workshops, and railroad facilities. Amid the demolition work, his pontoniers built an 870-foot pontoon bridge across the Alabama River.

On 9–10 April, Wilson's raiders crossed the bridge en route to their next destination—Montgomery—the Alabama state capital and the first capital of the Confederacy. The town was also a manufacturing and transportation center, boasting an arsenal and a rifle factory. Encountering only scattered opposition, the Federals reached the vicinity of Montgomery on the evening of 11 April. A small force consisting mainly of General Adams' militia defended the town, but Adams received orders to evacuate Montgomery at once and escort Governor Thomas H. Watts and other Alabama state officials to Columbus, Georgia. Before his departure, Adams threw open the doors of the commissary to the public, and he directed the burning of 85,000 bales of cotton in order to leave behind as little as possible for the Yankees. During the night, firefighters and other concerned citizens managed to prevent the fires from spreading to their homes and stores.

As Wilson approached Montgomery on the morning of 12 April, he could see thick columns of smoke rising from the smoldering cotton bales. He was met on the outskirts by Mayor Walter L. Coleman and other civic officials, who surrendered the town to him. Instead of fighting their way into Montgomery, the Federals would make a triumphal entry, with flags flying, bands playing, and mounted soldiers advancing in perfect order. An Illinois trooper described the scene as "truly a fine display." Wilson's raiders remained in Montgomery for two days, destroying the arsenal and other facilities. On Good Friday, 14 April—the day of Lincoln's assassination—they were back in the saddle and headed for Columbus, Georgia. Wilson, meanwhile, had learned of the fall of Richmond and had decided to continue his raid into the Carolinas.

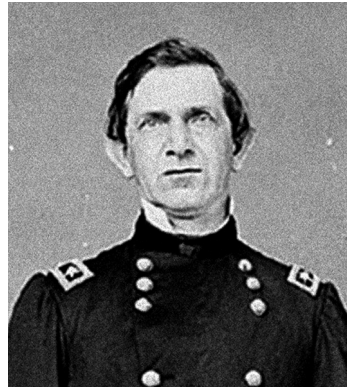
ASSAULT ON MOBILE: SPANISH FORT AND FORT BLAKELY

In mid-March 1865, while Sherman and Johnston fought in eastern North Carolina, Union Maj. Gen. Edward R. S. Canby, the commander of the Military Division of West Mississippi, prepared to attack the Confederate defenses at Mobile on Alabama's Gulf coast. The city had ceased to function as a port on 5 August 1864, when R. Adm. David G. Farragut's West Gulf Blockading Squadron defeated a Confederate naval force in the Battle of Mobile Bay. But

Mobile had remained in Southern hands because it was situated thirty miles up the bay and was protected by a lethal array of underwater mines called torpedoes. Although General Grant deemed Selma and Montgomery—two of Wilson's main targets—as more important military objectives, Canby did not want to advance into the interior of the state until he had eliminated the Confederate force at Mobile. He also wanted the port city as a base for future operations.

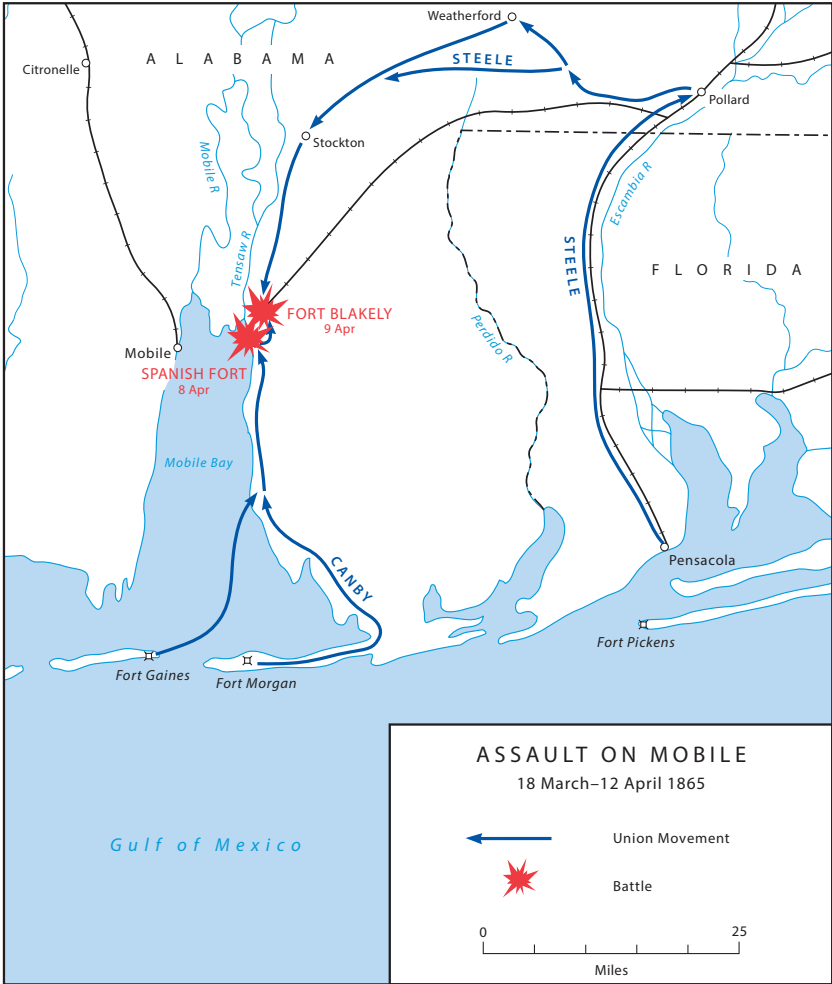
Canby's Army of West Mississippi numbered about 45,000 troops. It consisted of the XIII Corps commanded by Maj. Gen. Gordon Granger; the XVI Corps led by Maj. Gen. Andrew J. Smith; a 13,000-man expeditionary force from Pensacola, Florida, under Maj. Gen. Frederick Steele; and a cavalry corps headed by Brig. Gen. Benjamin Grierson (*Map 6*). Canby focused his attention on the two Confederate forts that guarded the eastern shore of Mobile Bay because he deemed the defenses on the western shore too strong to carry by direct assault. As its name suggested, Spanish Fort was built on the site of an eighteenth-century Spanish *presidio*, while three miles to the north, Fort Blakely stood just east of the village for which it was named and about ten miles northeast of Mobile. The commander of the Confederate forces defending Mobile was Maj. Gen. Dabney H. Maury, whose geographic command was the District of the Gulf.

General Canby
(Library of Congress)



General Maury
(Library of Congress)

The Mobile campaign began on 18 March—the eve of the Battle of Bentonville—when Union warships opened fire on Spanish Fort. One week later, the XIII and XVI Corps commenced



MAP 6

siege operations against it. After feinting on Montgomery, Steele's troops approached Fort Blakely from the northeast on 1 April. The Union cavalry screen collided with a small Confederate force and routed it, capturing seventy enemy soldiers and driving the rest into Fort Blakely. Steele's division of U.S. Colored Infantry (USCI) led by Brig. Gen. John P. Hawkins pursued the Confederates and

began to surround the fort. By nightfall on 2 April—as Wilson’s cavalry entered Selma—Steele’s troops had cut off all land approaches to Blakely. For the next five days, the Federals worked around the clock, bombarding the two forts and converging on them by means of hastily dug siege works. The Confederates countered with artillery fire from the forts and three gunboats, and they launched several sorties in the early morning darkness in a futile effort to dislodge the Federal skirmishers from their rifle pits.

Canby ordered the assault on Spanish Fort for 8 April, preceded by an artillery barrage at 1730. The commander of the Confederate garrison, Brig. Gen. Randall L. Gibson, suspecting that a Union attack was imminent, opened his own bombardment moments before Canby’s began, but it was soon overwhelmed by the continual roar of the Federals’ ninety pieces of artillery. On the Union right, skirmishers of the 8th Iowa Infantry of Brig. Gen. Eugene A. Carr’s division advanced through a swamp under a heavy fire and succeeded in turning the Confederate left flank. The Iowans were soon heavily reinforced, and they managed to repulse two enemy counterattacks. Seeing that the Federals threatened his only line of retreat, Gibson ordered his troops to evacuate the fort under cover of darkness. According to a Southern officer, the garrison retreated through four miles of “mud & water and a dense thicket of marsh canes.” The exhausted Confederates reached Fort Blakely at sunrise and then traveled by steamer to Mobile. In capturing Spanish Fort, the Federals took more than 600 prisoners while sustaining 657 killed, wounded, and missing.

On receiving word of the fall of Spanish Fort, Canby ordered an assault on Fort Blakely for 9 April, the day that Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox Court House. The Union commander believed that capturing the fort would be no easy task. He noted that Blakely’s fortifications stretched across high ground for 2½ miles, with a swamp covering each flank. Along the approaches to the fort, the Confederates had buried dozens of deadly torpedoes and placed abatis—a series of obstructions consisting of felled trees, sharpened stakes, and telegraph wire strung at knee height. Canby therefore decided to strike with overwhelming strength—four divisions totaling 16,000 troops. General Steele would command the assault force. As the Federals deployed for the attack, the commander of the Blakely garrison, Brig. Gen. St. John R. Liddell, ordered his roughly 4,000 foot soldiers and gunners to their stations. The defenders ranged

from battle-hardened veterans to teenage reserves who had not yet received their baptism of fire.

At first, the Federals inferred from the steamer traffic running between Fort Blakely and Mobile that the Confederates were evacuating. On the Union right, skirmishers from Hawkins' USCI division swept forward around 1600 to reconnoiter. They immediately came under fire, indicating that the defenders had not abandoned the fort. The Federals drove the Southern skirmishers from their rifle pits, but the Confederates shot down those blue-coats who attempted to storm the fort. Though repulsed, Hawkins' skirmishers quickly rallied, and, at 1730, the Federals advanced on Fort Blakely with a strong skirmish line, closely followed by an even heavier line of battle. In addition to Hawkins' nine regiments of black troops, three divisions of white soldiers from the XIII and XVI Corps participated in the assault.

The Federal skirmishers worked their way through the abatis while under a heavy small-arms and artillery fire, their movement punctuated by an occasional explosion as an unfortunate Union soldier tripped a torpedo. "Many brave men fell," recalled an Iowa soldier, "but still we pressed forward as fast as we could run, and without firing a shot." A short distance to the rear, the main line of battle advanced "in most gallant style," noted a Federal officer, "on the full run, in the face of a heavy fire, falling at every jump." A Northern artilleryman called the 16,000-man assault "the greatest sight I ever saw." As the Federals overran the fort, many of the defenders either fled or surrendered, but others fought to the last, including a contingent of teenage reserves. The final struggle was hand-to-hand with bayonets and clubbed muskets. As resistance inside the fort collapsed, some Confederates threw down their weapons and begged for their lives, fearing that the black troops would butcher them. But according to Col. Hiram Scofield, a brigade commander in Hawkins' division, his men treated the Southern prisoners in their charge "with kindness and courtesy."

Rounding up the garrison probably took longer than the main assault, which lasted about twenty minutes. The Federals captured some 3,700 Confederates, including General Liddell, while the Union losses numbered 571 killed, wounded, and missing. With Spanish Fort and Fort Blakely fallen, General Maury decided to evacuate Mobile. For the next two days, Confederate troops boarded steamers that took them up the Tombigbee River while a few remaining detachments destroyed supplies that could not be

carried off. Maury left Mobile early on the morning of 12 April, one of the last Confederates to do so. A few hours later, Canby sent two divisions to occupy the city, and Mayor Robert H. Slough surrendered to the advance guard at noon. Mobile was now in Union hands.

WILSON'S RAID: GEORGIA

With Mobile under Federal control and the industrial core of Alabama in ruins, Wilson pushed on to the overflowing Chattahoochee River, which formed the Alabama-Georgia border. To save time, he planned to seize an intact bridge at either Columbus or West Point, Georgia. To that end, he sent Col. Oscar H. LaGrange's brigade of Brig. Gen. Edward M. McCook's division on the West Point mission while leading the rest of his command toward Columbus, thirty-five miles to the south.

The Confederate defenses at West Point consisted of a thirty-five-foot square redoubt on the Alabama side of the river dubbed Fort Tyler in honor of the commander, Brig. Gen. Robert C. Tyler. A former brigade commander in the Army of Tennessee, the thrice-wounded Tyler moved about on crutches, having lost a leg in the Battle of Missionary Ridge. The fort's armament consisted of a 32-pound siege gun and two 12-pound fieldpieces. On the morning of Easter Sunday, 16 April, LaGrange's artillery and the bulk of the cavalry—which was fighting dismounted—maintained a steady fire on Fort Tyler to occupy the defenders, while the mounted 4th Indiana Cavalry charged the bridge and captured it. With the crossing in Union hands, LaGrange's troopers focused their efforts on capturing the fort. They dismantled several nearby houses to fashion gangways across the steep trench that fronted the redoubt. Union sharpshooters posted within the houses picked off several Confederates, including Tyler, who was the last general officer killed in action during the Civil War.

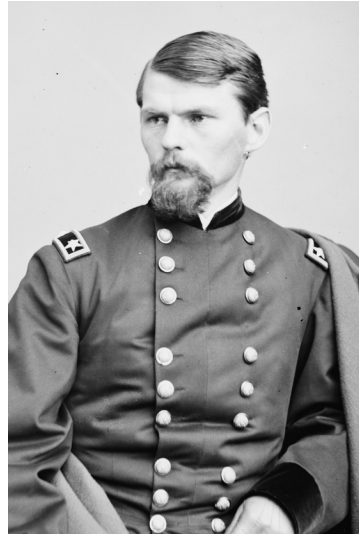
The Union assault began about dusk. The bluecoats swept into the ditch or across the gangplanks and then clambered up the embankment. After the Union artillery had silenced the Confederate guns, the Federals "sprang to the top of the embankment like a swarm of bees," noted one Union officer. "Up goes the white flag, [the rebels] have surrendered!" Fort Tyler and the West Point bridge were now in Union hands. During the operation, the Federals lost 36 killed or wounded. The Confederate casualties numbered 18 killed, 28 wounded, and 218 captured. With the

seizure of West Point, an important Confederate railroad hub fell into the Federals' hands. LaGrange's men destroyed 19 locomotives and 245 cars there—many of them loaded with supplies that the Confederates had attempted to move beyond the Yankees' grasp.

While the fighting at Fort Tyler wound down, the battle for the Columbus crossing was just beginning. Like Selma, Columbus was a major transportation and manufacturing hub, with an arsenal, a weapons factory, a naval ironworks, several mills, and a Confederate quartermaster depot. When Wilson's raiders reached the vicinity of Columbus on the afternoon of 16 April, they found a mixed force of Confederate soldiers, Alabama and Georgia state militia, and local defense units awaiting them. They occupied fortifications on the west bank of the Chattahoochee in the town of Girard (present-day Phenix City), Alabama, opposite Columbus, which stood on the east bank. The Confederates defended two bridges, with the strongest works protecting the upper bridge located a few blocks north of the lower bridge. The Federals accordingly rushed the lower bridge, only to discover that most of the planking had been removed. Before the bluecoats could attempt a crossing, the Southerners put the lower span to the torch, and it was soon wrapped in flames.

Wilson then shifted his attention to the upper bridge. He had planned to seize it before nightfall, but his strike force from Upton's division was still moving into position as the sun went down. Faced with making a night assault or waiting until morning, Upton urged Wilson to let him attack at once. "As we had already become pretty well accustomed to night fighting and its advantages," Wilson later noted, "it occurred to me that an attack after dark would be accompanied by less loss and greater success than one in full daylight." Wilson therefore authorized Upton to proceed with the night assault. This was

General Upton
(Library of Congress)



the sort of assignment that appealed to the 25-year-old Upton, enabling him to apply an innovative solution to a knotty tactical problem. In this instance, he decided on an attack employing a one-two punch: he would lead with a dismounted charge to break open the Confederate line and then follow with a mounted dash through the gap to seize the bridge before the enemy could burn it.

Col. Edward F. Winslow's brigade drew the assignment of capturing the bridge. The assault began at 2000 on 16 April, as 300 dismounted Union cavalymen rushed forward, following the Summerville Road amid a heavy—albeit mostly inaccurate—small-arms and artillery fire. The Federals soon overran the enemy position, leading Upton and Wilson to believe that they had broken through the main Confederate line. Upton accordingly sent in the mounted force to seize the bridge. In fact, the Federals had merely carried one of the Southerners' outer works, and the main fortifications still loomed ahead. As the Union horsemen rode toward the Confederate line, "There was a shot, another, and in a second 10,000 more," recalled a Union officer. "The whole country seemed to be alive with demons." In the darkness, many Southern defenders mistook the charging Federals for fleeing rebels or missed them altogether. The Union troopers also became disoriented, and some units "got tangled up" in trying to find the bridge. While the veteran bluecoats soon restored order, the largely untrained and untested Confederates panicked and broke for the rear. The enemy's confusion enabled the Federals to seize the bridge and prevent it from being burned, even though the wooden frame reeked with turpentine. Wilson crossed the Chattahoochee at 2300, and, by the following morning, Columbus was in Union hands.

The casualty figures for the Battle of Columbus are sketchy at best. Wilson reported that his command sustained about 25 casualties and captured roughly 1,000 Confederate prisoners. Wilson's raiders had fought their last battle. On 17 April, the Federals wrecked the arsenal, the naval ironworks, the quartermaster depot, the weapons factory, a paper mill, several textile and flour mills, and the ironclad CSS *Jackson*, along with 15 locomotives and over 200 cars.

His destructive work at Columbus finished, Wilson was eager to press on to Macon, the temporary capital of Georgia, about a hundred miles to the northeast. Leaving Columbus on the morning of 18 April, the Union raiders set a blistering pace,

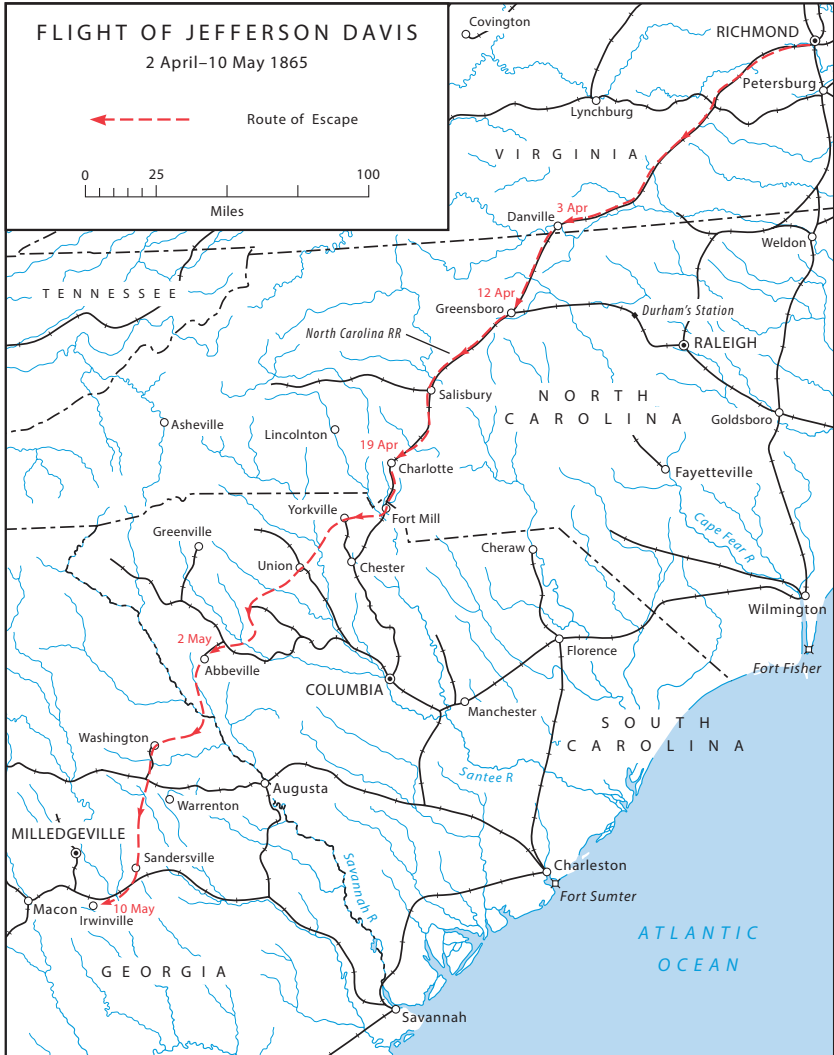
reaching the vicinity of Macon just two days later. After brushing aside a small force of Confederate cavalry, Wilson's lead division under Col. Robert H. G. Minty (replacing the wounded General Long) was met by a Confederate flag of truce thirteen miles west of Macon. The officer in charge of the flag bore a message from Maj. Gen. Howell Cobb, the commander at Macon, indicating that Generals Sherman and Johnston had agreed to a cease-fire and that the Federals should immediately halt their advance. Minty flatly refused to do so, informing Cobb's representative that his party had five minutes to clear the road. Soon after resuming the march, Minty's lead brigade encountered the Confederate flag of truce, which apparently was dragging its feet to impede the Federals' progress. Minty ordered a charge and pushed all the way into Macon. Faced with the inevitable, Cobb surrendered the town under protest. When Wilson arrived, he upheld Minty's actions and informed Cobb that he would heed only a direct order from General Sherman. On the evening of 21 April, Wilson received a coded message from Sherman instructing him to "desist from further acts of war and devastation until you hear that hostilities are resumed." In the words of historian Noah Andre Trudeau, "The greatest cavalry raid of the Civil War had come to an end."

CAPTURE OF JEFFERSON DAVIS

On 26 April, Confederate President Davis received a telegram from Johnston stating that he was on his way to confer with Sherman. Assuming that his ranking field commander intended to surrender, Davis decided to leave Charlotte at once, rejoin his family in South Carolina, and push on to the Trans-Mississippi, where he would continue the war. At noon on the twenty-sixth, Davis and his entourage resumed their flight on horseback, Stoneman's raiders having done extensive damage to the railroad. The presidential escort consisted of five brigades of Confederate cavalry, whose morale was doubtful at best (*Map 7*).

The Davis party reached Abbeville, South Carolina, on 2 May, where the rebel president held what is often referred to as the Confederacy's final council of war. After making a rousing speech in which he urged his generals to fight on, he received a terrible shock: to a man, the cavalry commanders informed him that their sole purpose for accompanying him was to see him to safety. Shaken to the core, Davis at last realized that the war was

lost. On 3 May, he and his entourage crossed the Savannah River into Georgia. Later that day, Secretary of War Breckinridge—fearing an outright mutiny—authorized the cavalry escort to be paid from the gold and silver specie in the Confederate treasury. On the seventh, Davis was reunited with his wife and children.



MAP 7

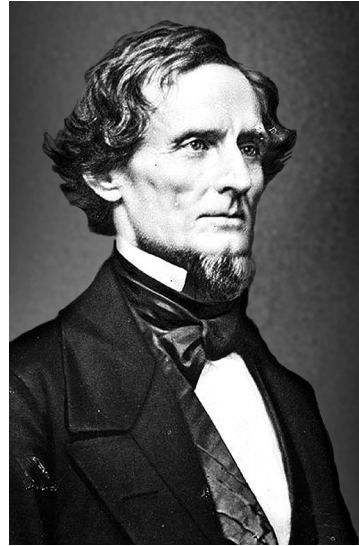
Two days later, the Davis party made camp near Irwinville, Georgia, confident that they remained a step ahead of their Federal pursuers.

They were greatly mistaken. Thus far, the Confederate president had managed to elude Palmer's division of Stoneman's cavalry, but avoiding Wilson's cavalry, which was patrolling the roads into Georgia, was another matter. With the collapse of organized resistance in the Peach State, capturing Jefferson Davis had become Wilson's top priority. He accordingly offered a reward of \$500,000 for Davis' capture, calculating that the Confederate treasury would supply the funds. Unknown to Wilson and his men, on 2 May, President Johnson had issued a proclamation accusing Davis of complicity in Lincoln's assassination and placing a \$100,000 bounty on his head.

After several close calls, two of Wilson's best regiments, the 1st Wisconsin Cavalry and the 4th Michigan Cavalry, picked up Davis' trail in southern Georgia. Early on the morning of 10 May, the two Federal mounted units converged on Davis' camp a mile and a half north of Irwinville. The Davis entourage was whittled down to his family, three aides, a seventeen-man cavalry escort, and just one cabinet official—Postmaster General Reagan.

In the darkness, the two Union regiments collided and opened fire on each other, thinking they had struck Davis' escort. Soon realizing their mistake, the Michigan and Wisconsin troopers stopped shooting, but only after friendly fire had killed two Union soldiers and wounded four others. As it developed, the Confederates were utterly surprised and never fired a shot. The Federals captured Davis as he tried to escape with his wife's shawl wrapped about his shoulders. His captors

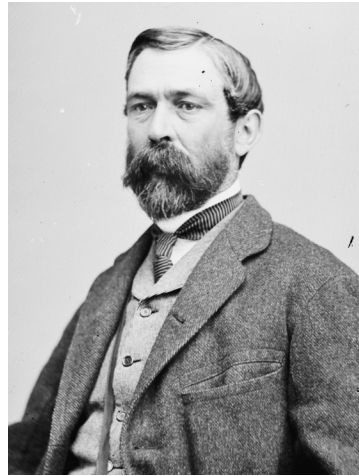
Confederate President Davis
(National Archives)



embellished this fact to absurd proportions, and word soon spread that Davis had been caught while wearing one of his wife's dresses. Northern journalists and artists had a field day portraying Davis fleeing in a hoopskirt and riding boots. The Federals took Davis and his entourage to Wilson's headquarters at Macon. From there, Davis was sent north, ultimately serving two years' imprisonment at Fort Monroe, Virginia, for treason. Wilson's troopers arrested numerous other Confederate officials, ranging from Alexander H. Stephens, Davis' archrival and the former vice president of the Confederacy, to Capt. Henry Wirz, the notorious commandant of Andersonville prison who was later executed for war crimes.

SURRENDER AT CITRONELLE

By late April 1865, news of the first Sherman-Johnston armistice had reached both General Canby at Mobile and his Confederate counterpart, Lt. Gen. Richard Taylor, at Meridian, Mississippi. As the commander of the Department of Alabama, Mississippi, and East Louisiana, Taylor commanded roughly 12,000 troops, including Forrest's cavalry and Maury's infantry. The generals agreed to arrange a truce under the terms of the Sherman-Johnston agreement. They met on 29 April at the Jacob Magee farmhouse, about twenty miles north of Mobile. The two men presented a striking contrast. Clad in a faded and threadbare gray uniform, Taylor arrived at the conference on a railroad handcar, accompanied by just one staff officer, while Canby and his staff appeared in splendid dress uniforms at the head of a brass band and a brigade of soldiers. Within minutes, Canby and Taylor worked out a truce behind closed doors. Their business concluded, the officers then enjoyed "a bountiful luncheon," Taylor recalled, "with joyous poppings of champagne corks for accompa-



General Taylor
(Library of Congress)

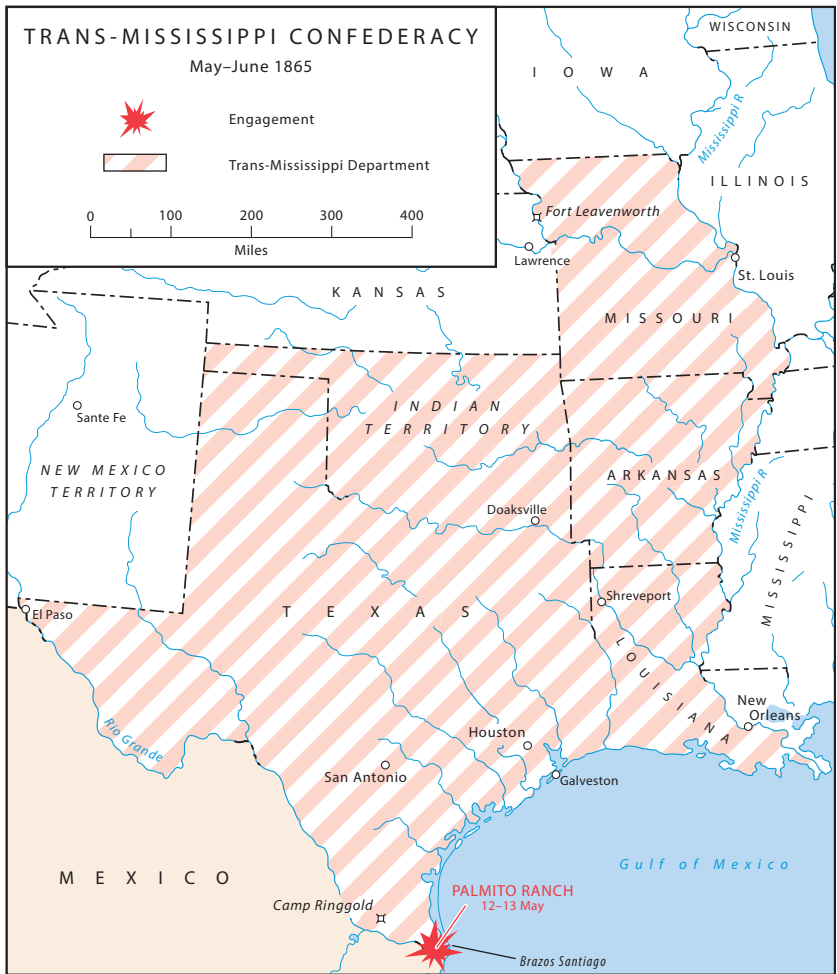
niment, the first agreeable explosive sounds I had heard in years.” The band, meanwhile, serenaded the officers with “Hail Columbia” and “Dixie”—the unofficial national anthems of the Union and the Confederacy.

On the next day, Canby received word from Secretary of War Stanton that the president had rejected Sherman’s terms and had ordered him to resume hostilities. Canby had no choice but to notify Taylor that, in accordance with their truce, the cease-fire would end in forty-eight hours. He also proposed that Taylor accept the terms Lee had received at Appomattox Court House. On 2 May, the two men agreed to meet at Citronelle, Alabama, about thirty-five miles north of Mobile. In notifying his subordinates of his decision to surrender, Taylor urged them to keep their commands “in an organized state, faithfully respecting public and private property.” He warned that failure to surrender as an intact organization would subject the men to being “hunted down like beasts of prey” and their families to persecution, bringing ruin “upon thousands of defenseless women and children.”

Canby and Taylor met at Citronelle on 4 May. Their agreement bore many similarities to the Appomattox and Bennett Place surrender documents. The officers and men paroled under the agreement could return to their homes, “with the assurance that they will not be disturbed by the authorities of the United States so long as they continue to observe the conditions of their paroles and the laws in force where they reside.” Officers could keep their sidearms and personal baggage, and officers and men alike could retain their horses. The U.S. government would provide transportation and rations for all parolees in Taylor’s command. With the surrender at Citronelle, the last organized body of Confederate troops east of the Mississippi River had ceased to exist.

SURRENDER IN THE TRANS-MISSISSIPPI

In early May 1865, General Edmund Kirby Smith, the commander of the Confederate Trans-Mississippi Department, pondered his next move. As word of Lee’s surrender spread throughout his command—which embraced Missouri, Arkansas, Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma), Texas, and Louisiana west of the Mississippi River—morale plummeted and troops in his 36,000-man force deserted in droves. He had also just received a message from Union Maj. Gen. John Pope offering terms of surrender (*Map 8*).



MAP 8

While Smith considered Pope's offer at his headquarters in Shreveport, Louisiana, a 500-man Union force led by Col. Theodore H. Barrett embarked on what he later referred to as "a foraging expedition" from his coastal base at Brazos Santiago, Texas. The raid began on the evening of 8 May. One critic maintained that Barrett simply wanted "to establish for himself some notoriety before the war closed." On 12-13 May, Barrett's Federals clashed with a few hundred Confederates under Col. John S. "Rip"

Ford at Palmito Ranch near the Southerners' base at Brownsville, Texas. By the end of the engagement, Ford's Confederates had driven Barrett's Federals back into Brazos Santiago. The Union force suffered about 120 casualties, most of them captured during the retreat, while the Confederate losses totaled fewer than 10 wounded and missing. The fight at Palmito Ranch is widely regarded as the last land battle of the Civil War.

In the Trans-Mississippi, the Confederate victory at Palmito Ranch was scarcely noticed amid the furor over Lee's surrender, closely followed by the news of Johnston's surrender in North Carolina and Taylor's surrender in Alabama. Kirby Smith, however, refused to capitulate to Pope, deeming his terms too harsh. Instead, he decided to transfer his headquarters to Houston, Texas, to rally his troops in that state. Before his departure on 20 May, Smith appointed Lt. Gen. Simon Bolivar Buckner as his chief of staff and left him in charge at Shreveport. During the 250-mile stagecoach journey, Smith received reports from subordinates at Galveston, Texas, and Houston that their forces were rioting and plundering government stores. By the time he reached Houston on 27 May, Smith realized that he commanded an army in name only. Soon afterward, he learned that his chief of staff had surrendered the Trans-Mississippi Department behind his back.

On 26 May, General Buckner had met with Canby at the St. Charles Hotel in New Orleans, Louisiana, and the two men had agreed to terms of surrender. During the negotiations, Buckner had informed Canby that the convention was subject to the department commander's approval. On 2 June, Kirby Smith boarded a Union steamer anchored off Galveston and signed the surrender agreement, formally terminating the last military department of the Confederacy. Nevertheless, a few thousand Trans-Mississippi

General Smith
(Library of Congress)



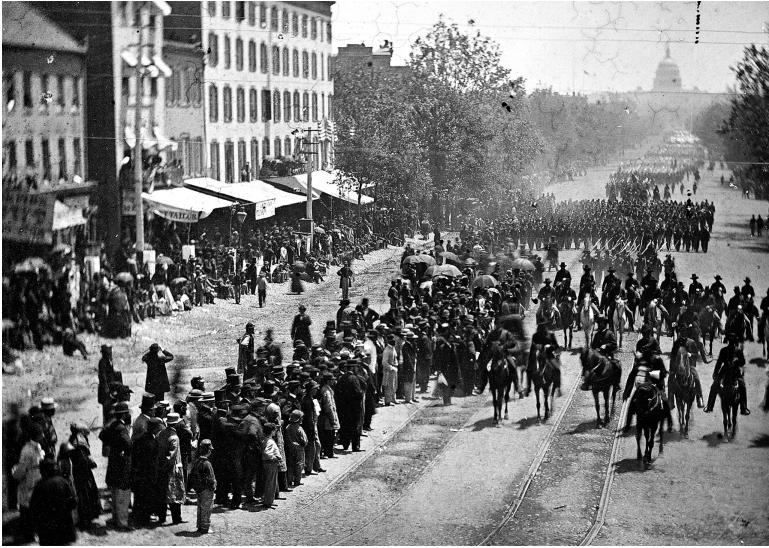
Confederates refused to accept defeat and crossed the border into Mexico. Perhaps the largest such group was Brig. Gen. Joseph O. "Jo" Shelby's thousand-man contingent, which included four Southern governors and Kirby Smith.

The surrender of the Trans-Mississippi Department did not include the tribes located in the Indian Territory that were loyal to the Confederacy. On 10 June, they held a Grand Council of the United Indian Nations and decided that each tribe should surrender individually. Nine days later, the Choctaw nation was the first to capitulate to a commission headed by Lt. Col. Asa C. Matthews of the 99th Illinois Infantry. On 23 June, Brig. Gen. Stand Watie rode into the Indian Territory settlement of Doaksville and surrendered his battalion of Cherokee, Creek, Seminole, and Osage warriors to Matthews. The 58-year-old Cherokee chief-tain was the last Confederate general to lay down his arms. The last Confederate-affiliated tribe to surrender was the Chickasaw nation, which capitulated on 14 July.

THE GRAND REVIEW

On 17 May 1865, Secretary of War Stanton announced that a formal review of the Union armies gathering about Washington would be held over two days in the coming week. The Army of the Potomac, Maj. Gen. George G. Meade commanding, would march on the first day, followed by General Sherman's Army of the Tennessee and Army of Georgia on the second. Since their arrival in the nation's capital, Sherman's western troops and Meade's easterners had tangled in countless street fights and barroom brawls in an effort to prove their preeminence. In the soldiers' eyes, the Grand Review was a golden opportunity to demonstrate that superiority to the nation at large.

At 0900 on Tuesday, 23 May, cannon fire signaled the start of the Grand Review of the Army of the Potomac. Meade and his staff led the army's roughly 80,000 infantry, artillery, and cavalry down Pennsylvania Avenue before thousands of onlookers lining both sides of the street. The parade route stretched for about a mile and a half, from the Capitol to the reviewing stand in front of the White House, where President Johnson, General Grant, and numerous other senior military leaders and high-ranking government officials watched. On reaching the reviewing stand, Meade dismounted and joined the dignitaries. The victors of Appomattox marched past for more than six hours, impressing the crowd with



The Army of Georgia marching in the Grand Review, 24 May 1865
(Library of Congress)

their smart appearance and parade-ground precision. “The buildings were all draped in national colors,” recalled one soldier. “The sidewalks were packed with spectators . . . the bands all played the national airs; the people cheered until they were hoarse; banners waved and handkerchiefs fluttered.”

Wednesday, 24 May, dawned clear and pleasant. Once again, cannon fire signaled the Grand Review to begin at 0900, as Sherman led his 60,000-man army group onto Pennsylvania Avenue. Following him was the rough-and-tumble XV Corps, better known for its fighting qualities than its spit-and-polish appearance. As he approached the Treasury building, Sherman could not resist the temptation to look back. What he saw filled him with pride. “The sight was simply magnificent,” he later recalled. “The column was compact, and the glittering muskets looked like a solid mass of steel, moving with the regularity of a pendulum.”

Following each division were symbols of the army’s marches through Georgia and the Carolinas. First in line were the ambulances advancing two or three abreast, each with a bloodstained stretcher hanging from either side. Next came a motley procession of bummers on rawboned horses and mules; black cooks leading

pack animals loaded down with kitchen utensils; brawny black pioneers carrying axes, picks, and shovels at right shoulder shift; and crowds of black women and their children. Each regiment seemed to have at least one mascot, ranging from dogs and squirrels to raccoons and gamecocks. Last of all was a herd of livestock, including cattle, hogs, goats, chickens, and sheep. The bystanders greeted the exotic spectacle with laughter and loud applause.

By the time Sherman had reached the reviewing stand, he and his horse were covered with floral wreaths. As he walked up the steps, the applause became deafening. Among those who greeted him were his wife and eldest son, his father-in-law, and his brother, Ohio Senator John Sherman, along with President Johnson, Grant, and Stanton. As thousands of spectators looked on, the secretary of war extended his hand but hastily withdrew it when Sherman snubbed him and shook hands with Grant instead. Sherman thus gained his revenge for Stanton's rough handling of him following the rejection of his first agreement with Johnston.

After the Grand Review, the laborious process of demobilizing the million-man Union Army began. While some units remained in the South on occupation duty, the rest started the long journey north. Several hundred thousand Confederate veterans also made their way home—most carrying little more than their paroles—to begin rebuilding a region devastated by four years of war. Commanders in blue and gray alike issued farewell orders to their troops, expressing gratitude for their years of service and sacrifice and wishing them well in their civilian pursuits. Union General Wilson's farewell message ranks among the best. In the conclusion, he adopted the language of Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address: "Having discharged every military duty honestly and faithfully," Wilson wrote, "return to your homes with the noble sentiment of your martyr President deeply impressed on every heart, 'With malice against none, and charity for all, strive to do the right as God gives you to see the right.'"

Analysis

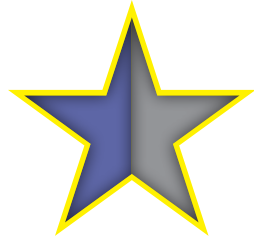
The Civil War did not end with Lee's surrender at Appomattox Court House on 9 April 1865. The fighting raged on, from the Carolinas to Texas, for another month. Nevertheless, Confederate commanders Johnston, Taylor, and Buckner could read the handwriting on the wall, and they wasted little time in obtaining

generous terms from their Union counterparts. High-ranking Southern diehards such as Jefferson Davis and Kirby Smith soon discovered that their forces had disintegrated around them, leaving just two alternatives: either flee the country or fall into the hands of the Union Army. The systematic destruction of the South's transportation, manufacturing, and industrial facilities during the closing months of the war had ensured the futility of further armed resistance, but it also made a swift economic recovery next to impossible, leaving ex-Confederates destitute and bitter over their harsh fate. The bloodiest war in U.S. history—final death toll estimates range from 600,000 to over 800,000 fighting men—had settled the critical issues of secession and slavery but left much else unresolved, above all the former slaves' civil, political, and economic status in the postwar South. The U.S. Army's occupation force in the former Confederate states faced the daunting task of keeping the peace and implementing Federal policy. Although the soldiers in blue would find their new mission less dangerous than fighting the Civil War had been, they would find it no less challenging.



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For more information on the U.S. Army in the Civil War, please read other titles in the U.S. Army Campaigns of the Civil War series published by the U.S. Army Center of Military History (www.history.army.mil).

