



# Lincoln Lore

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## Interview with Allen Guelzo on his latest book: *Gettysburg: The Last Invasion*

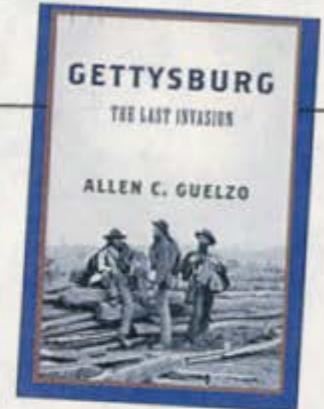
**SG:** This is such a magnificent book that it is difficult to know where to start, but the beginning is always good. I was interested in the dedication: To 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Jonathan E. Guelzo, U.S. Army, in remembrance of all the days we have walked the fields of Gettysburg together. Does your son's military experience give him a unique perspective on the battle?



*Gettysburg National Cemetery, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania  
LC-HS503- 1214 (ONLINE) [P&P]*

**AG:** Thank you for that lovely adjective; I would have been content just with 'pretty good,' but I won't complain about 'magnificent.' Jonathan's military specialty is armor, so there's not a lot that can be said about its applicability to 19<sup>th</sup>-century warfare. In fact, I think he'd be the first to say that not much in modern tactical doctrine or military practice can help us understand Gettysburg, since so much has changed in military experience since then. Professional military educators often like to use military history to teach 'lessons' about 'leadership,' and they frequently conduct 'staff rides' over the Gettysburg battlefield for that purpose. I am dubious about the value of such 'lessons,' except in the most general terms (such as illustrating the 'nine principles of war' – objective, mass, simplicity, maneuver, unity of command, surprise, offensive, security, and economy of force). The battle of Gettysburg was fought with infantry weapons which were only marginally-improved over the

weaponry of the Napoleonic Wars – single-shot muzzle-loaders which kicked out thick banks of gunpowder smoke and reduced visibility to a few feet – so that it was still possible to do things on a Civil War battlefield that no one in combat could do today, such as stand upright within operational range without running any out-of-the-ordinary risks. The artillery, likewise, was still a collection of direct-sight weapons, tremendously vulnerable to infantry skirmish fire and therefore limited in their use in support of an attack. Cavalry (the Civil War equivalent of armor) was almost entirely light cavalry, and existed in the Civil War armies in about half the proportion to infantry as could be found in the European armies of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was mainly useful for screening and raiding, and had virtually no shock-and-awe role to play against infantry on the order, say of



Napoleon's cuirassiers at Waterloo, much less armor in World War Two.

Above all, the weapons technology of the 19<sup>th</sup> century imposed a style of battlefield maneuver which today would be considered suicidal. The limitations I've mentioned meant that fire-power was likely only to make a difference when delivered in volume, rather than by unit – in other words, by large blocks of soldiers, volley-firing at an enemy formation. So, if we were to witness an actual Civil War battle (assuming we could see anything through the powder smoke), it would look to us like a slow-moving, badly-choreographed ballet, punctuated with infrequent blasts of massed rifle fire. That's the exact opposite of what Jonathan and other modern American soldiers have to expect today.

**SG:** In the first chapter, you mention that Americans seem to have an "ambivalence toward wars." You also include a comment from Horace Greeley: We have no more need of a Standing Army than of an order of nobility. Please comment.

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**John Marszalek**



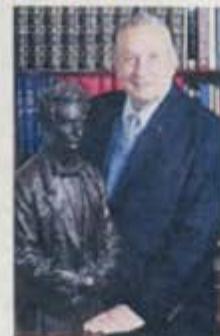
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**Frank J. Williams** is the retired Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Rhode Island. He is the author of: *Judging Lincoln*, *Lincoln as Hero*, and (with Michael Burkheimer) *The Mary Lincoln Enigma*.

**AG:** The American republic was founded in a revolt against a professional army – the British Army – so that experience created in American minds an immediate suspicion that some linkage existed between kingly despotism and military professionals. Given the record between 1750 and 1850 in Europe, this was not an unreasonable suspicion. It's not that Americans were natural-born pacifists; what Americans were ambivalent about on the subject of war was the use of a professional army to wage it. Another consideration that tended toward minimizing a professional military was economic. Professional forces, whether army or navy, are expensive. The American Republic was founded as a revolt against taxation (among other things) and taxation was regarded as an infringement on liberty. Perhaps a necessary infringement, but no more than absolutely necessary. And in that regard, Lexington and Concord set a bad example: it set up the idea that civilian militia had been all that was necessary to repel British professionals, and raised a convenient objection to taxing people to fund an army of long-service professionals. This conviction was reinforced by the association of the American republic with its Roman predecessor, and its leaders (like Cincinnatus) being called away from the plow to defend the republic from its foes. It did not hurt this mythology, either, that the United States was bounded by two oceans, acting as a natural moat that decreased the need for a large professional army.

In truth (as David Hackett Fischer showed in his classic *Paul Revere's Ride*) those militiamen had usually had a lot of practical military experience in the Seven Years War,

and very decidedly did not conduct their confrontation of the British by hiding behind trees and rocks. And the oceans protected only our two shores, and did nothing to shield us from the British to the north or the Spaniards to the south, as we learned to our sorrow in 1812. But the republican distaste for armies provided an ideological catalyst for the mythology, and so we arrived at 1860 with a ridiculously small Regular army.

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**SG:** You were recently quoted in an Associated Press article about Lee's failure to have a full vision of the field of battle. Please comment on the role terrain played in the Battle. Were there any combatants on either side who had first-hand knowledge of the area? If so, were they consulted?

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**AG:** The AP reporter was writing a puff piece for a Middlebury College geography professor who believed that certain forms of digital mapping would prove to be the key to understanding the battle. It was one of those eureka! moments the press likes to have about history – someone has found the 'real' secret, you know, like the Da Vinci Code. Actually what I said to the AP was that you cannot understand Lee's decisions by relying solely on whiz-bangs like digital mapping; you must climb up to the vantage points Lee used (the cupolas of Gettysburg College's Pennsylvania Hall, the Lutheran theological seminary, and so forth) and see for yourself, as well. And you cannot forget that all but a handful of the soldiers at Gettysburg had never been there before – never been in Pennsylvania, for that matter – and most of the time had only the dimmest idea of where they were (something which shows up in the vague and uncertain way they try to describe the

topography in their after-action reports). There was no comprehensive survey map of the north American continent (on the order of that commissioned by Napoleon in Europe) and in the days leading up to the battle, officers and staff were reduced to buying or begging local maps from civilians in order to find their way around. Certainly one of the greatest command blunders of the battle – Lee's decision to launch Longstreet's corps in a gigantic flanking maneuver against the presumably-undefended rear of Cemetery Hill – was based on an early-morning reconnaissance undertaken by Lee's staff topographer, who informed Lee that no Union troops were anywhere in the path of the planned attack. Heaven knows where he went that morning, but it couldn't have been where he claimed he had been. Even if Lee had owned a GPS, it wouldn't have saved him from the effects of faulty reconnaissance based on personnel error.

The other thing which undermines the uniqueness of this so-called discovery is the way in which the digital mapping employed data about foliage and topography as they appear on a number of post-battle maps (Warren, Cope, Bachelder and others). But none of those maps was created in order to define foliage and topography; they were created to indicate unit movements and locations. There is no guarantee that the forestation and viewsheds apparent on those maps is an exact replication of what was there on July 1-3, 1863; nor, for that matter, do those early battlefield maps agree with each other. But that doesn't make for a catchy headline, does it?



*Gen. Pickett taking the order to charge from Gen. Longstreet, Gettysburg, July 3, 1864*  
H.A. Ogden  
LC-USZ62-43635

**SG:** Did the “late arrival” of Stuart and his cavalry have a significant effect on the outcome of the Battle? Where was he and why was he late?

**AG:** In the aftermath of the battle, the search for scapegoats among the commanders of the Army of Northern Virginia was immediate and almost universal. Jeb Stuart was a likely target, first because he was such an obnoxious show-off and second because he did not actually catch up to Lee until late on the second day of the battle. This gave swift rise to the accusation that Stuart had been deliberately off joy-riding, as he had done on the Peninsula in 1862, thus depriving Lee of badly-needed intelligence about the movements of the Army of the Potomac and allowing Lee to stumble blindly into collision with the Union army. Frankly, I think this is absurd. Light cavalry, as I said before, provided screening and raiding, not intelligence-gathering, in the Civil War; the screening, at best, served to protect your army from someone else’s

intelligence-gathering efforts. Intelligence-gathering belonged, in these armies, to scouts (in other words, disguised military personnel who moved from place-to-place inside and outside enemy-controlled territory) and spies (usually civilians who remained in one place and reported clandestinely on enemy movements through their locality). And both armies were actually quite well-informed about each other’s movements during the Gettysburg campaign. Lee fully expected a battle along the road corridor between Frederick, Maryland, and Gettysburg; and the Union army had enough information about Lee’s movements that the commander of the Army of the Potomac’s left wing, John F. Reynolds, was able to move cavalry and infantry into Gettysburg ahead of the Confederates’ arrival. Gettysburg was no more an “accident” than any other Civil War battle, although it was also no less such an accident. Stuart, therefore, did not cause Lee’s defeat. That burden, it has to be said, lies entirely with Lee’s decisions – although that did not prevent Lee from joining in the finger-pointing at Stuart in the months after Gettysburg.

**SG:** The first time that I saw the site of Pickett’s Charge, I was overwhelmed with what I felt to be the futility of the operation. Was it doomed to failure or was it a sound military assault? I have read that Lee expressed remorse in retrospect. Is that true?

**AG:** If we judge by modern tactical procedures, or even by what we see in war movies, it looks like pure suicide – crossing those open fields, almost a mile in length, without any natural cover, in plain sight of Union soldiers and artillery. But this was not, after all, a modern battle, or even a modern war; it’s still a

Napoleonic set-piece, and Lee was doing nothing in ordering Pickett’s Charge but what had been done quite successfully by the British at the Alma only nine years before and by Napoleon III at Solferino only four years before – a direct frontal attack over wide stretches of open ground, carried to victory on the point of the bayonet. Add to this the fact that Lee knew – from interrogation of prisoners by officers and staff – (a) that four of the army corps of the Army of the Potomac had been mangled past usefulness during the previous two days’ fighting, (b) that one of the remaining three corps had only four brigades still operational, and (c) that the Army of the Potomac needed one of those corps to hold Cemetery Hill and the other to constitute the army’s reserve. That gives Lee a fairly reasonable argument for hurling an entirely fresh Confederate division (Pickett’s) at the Yankees and finishing them with one solid blow. If I had been in Lee’s boots, I believe I would have done the same thing.

It shocked Lee when the charge failed, and his immediate impulse was to say, ‘This has all been my fault.’ That impulse did not last long. In his preliminary report to Jefferson Davis, Lee begins shifting blame to others, first to Stuart but also including his own men. It’s a very deflected blame – Lee states that he expected too much from his men, was overly-confident in their ability to overcome any obstacle – but if you peer beyond the subtlety, what else is he doing but blaming his own men for not measuring up to his expectations for their success? But before I sound like I’m accusing Lee of ignoble motives, bear in mind that other surviving officers of the Army of Northern Virginia – most dramatically, Ambrose Wright – were saying a lot worse, and with a lot less subtlety.

**SG:** Much is made of Meade's failure to pursue the retreating Confederates. What were his reasons? Probably not a fair question, but could it have shortened the War or was it a risky venture at best?

**AG:** George Gordon Meade had been shoved into command of the Army of the Potomac only three days before the battle, so his entire approach to matters at Gettysburg was dominated by caution. His initial impulse had not been to fight at Gettysburg at all, but to withdraw to a defensive line behind Pipe Creek, twenty-five miles southeast of Gettysburg. Once it was clear that the Army of the Potomac had won a victory at Gettysburg – or at least that Lee had conceded defeat – Meade was equally cautious in pursuit, not wanting to throw away the Army of the Potomac's first clear-cut battlefield victory in a reckless pursuit that opened him to a disastrous counter-punch by the Confederates. This was not, of course, what Lincoln wanted, and he urged Meade to strike Lee on the retreat and complete the victory, even offering to take on himself all the blame if an attack proved fruitless. I don't think Meade really believed him. Meade was a McClellanite (despite the best efforts of his son and biographer, George Meade, jnr., to airbrush the McClellanism out of him) and he had seen what happened to other McClellanite generals – Charles Stone, Fitz John Porter, even McClellan himself – when the result was less than complete destruction of the rebels. Lincoln suspected Meade, too, because once it was clear that Lee had escaped across the Potomac, he immediately jumped to the conclusion that Meade was another McClellan Democrat who would rather let the

Confederates get away than present a Republican president and the Radical Republicans in Congress with the political gift of Lee's utter annihilation. My own sense is that Meade's decision not to attack at Williamsport really was a matter of caution more than politics; and yet, in this war, one always has to be careful to see that military decisions are never entirely uninfluenced by political ones. That was certainly true of several of Meade's personnel decisions during and after the battle, when abolitionist Republican officers were abruptly removed and replaced by McClellan Democrats.

Lincoln eventually relented and protested that he was "very—very—grateful" to Meade for the Gettysburg victory, but not without scolding him for missing what amounted to the greatest single military opportunity of the war. And in the spring of 1864, after Meade had conducted a resultless campaign in northern Virginia, Lincoln practically supersedes him by bringing Ulysses S. Grant east to take overall command.

**SG:** Did the defeat of troops led by the "invincible" Lee have a marked effect on: (1) Confederate military personnel; (2) Southern public opinion; (3) Union military personnel; and (4) Northern public opinion?

**AG:** One Southern soldier summed up the impact on his comrades of the Army of Northern Virginia when he wrote to his sister on July 17th, "The campaign is a failure and the worst failure that the South has ever made...and no blow since the fall of New Orleans has been so telling against us." Another, in the 11th Georgia, admitted that "the Army is Broken harted" and "don't Care which Way the War Closes, for we have Suffered very much." They

certainly had: Lee reported 2,592 killed, 12,700 wounded and 4,150 "captured or missing" after Gettysburg, which meant that fully a third of his army had been put out of action. And those numbers were probably at the low end. In the Confederacy as a whole, the defeat induced what the Southern Literary Messenger described as "great depression...in all parts of the country...and in many States positive disaffection." Even in the Confederate Congress, Gettysburg "produced a most chilling and fearful effect" and members of the government were "open in the acknowledgement that they had lost all hope, and were busy sowing the seeds of despondency and despair amongst the people at home."

On the other side, Meade suffered greater casualties, but the single fact of victory outweighed them in the minds of the Union soldiers. "What do the people of the North think now of the Old Army of the Potomac," exulted a soldier in the 28th Pennsylvania. John White Geary wrote to his wife that his division was "now refitting the clothing and equipments of the command.... The result of the war seems no longer doubtful, and...the beginning of the end appears." Lincoln, of course, was elated. But the larger impact of Gettysburg in the North was simple relief, especially in light of what a defeat might have meant. "The Northern sympathizers with secession," speculated one Union officer, "now taking their cue from the success of the rebel army, would have established mob rule over the whole chain of Atlantic cities...and thus paralyzed the whole machinery of our Government."

Gettysburg was not, however, what some people like to call the "turning point" of the Civil War. After all, Lee

did escape, the Army of Northern Virginia recovered its poise by the fall, and the war did drag on for twenty-one more bloody months. There was a great deal in between those points in which matters might have gone very much in the other direction, especially in 1864 when the re-election of Lincoln hung in doubt. But it did mark the end of Southern initiative in the war. There would be no more invasions of the North, only raids like Jubal Early's in 1864. And Gettysburg did crack the myth of Lee's invincibility and it did give the Army of the Potomac a badly-needed restorative, without which it might well have fallen apart. As Churchill said about Alamein, it was not the beginning of the end, but it might be the end of the beginning.

**SG:** In your book, you use previously unexplored stories of Gettysburg residents. Please comment on their experiences.

**AG:** There is actually comparatively little to say about the civilian experience in Gettysburg, apart from the 'human interest' aspect. An undetermined number of the town's residents fled; those who stayed, did so in the hope that occupying their homes or businesses would secure them from looting. They were wrong, since the Army of Northern Virginia looted pretty indiscriminately, and so most of the civilians ended up spending the three days of the battle cowering in their cellars, emerging only at night, and then only for necessities or to assist at the impromptu hospitals which sprang up under any large roof in town. Many of them then made the serious mistake of trying to compensate for the losses they sustained during the Confederate occupation of the town by trying to charge the victorious Union soldiers

inflated prices for sundries they saved from marauding Confederates – five cents for a glass of water, twenty-five cents for a glass of milk. This struck Union soldiers as singular ingratitude, and the *New York Times* made a national sensation of it by publishing a scathing article by reporter Leonard Crouse, denouncing the townspeople for being "so sordidly mean and unpatriotic, as to engender the belief that they were indifferent as to which party was whipped." Farmers in the surrounding townships performed their own version of looting by descending on the battlefield and scavenging thrown-away rifles, canteens, cartridge boxes and other equipment with a view toward selling it all back to the US government. This did not amuse the Provost Marshal of the Army of the Potomac, who arrested looters and scavengers and impressed them for burial details.

But there was little in the shape of heroic resistance, or the spirit of Barbara Freitsche. Less than a dozen civilians tried to participate in the fighting, and only on the first day. On the other hand the lack of story is, in itself, a story. Despite the

propensity of Southern soldiers to steal (quite literally) the wash off the laundry lines, there is no instance of any deliberate violence being offered to civilians – no reports of rape or murder, only eight instances of civilians wounded and one civilian death. The one exception to this record, however, concerns the widespread round-up of free black people by the Army of Northern Virginia in the Gettysburg area and during the campaign. It is estimated that as many as 500 Pennsylvania blacks were kidnapped by the Confederate army and marched off to Richmond to be sold in the slave markets there. And at least nine white citizens were taken off as hostages by the Army of Northern Virginia, to remain in Richmond until the end of the war. Whatever compliments people want to heap on the Army of Northern Virginia for its supposed good behavior in Gettysburg have to be erased when set beside the kidnappings and enslavements.



Robert E. Lee  
LC-USZ62-11452



Custis-Lee  
Mansion,  
Arlington, VA  
LC-DIG-ppms  
ca-18117

**SG:** Please give your opinion of the attitude and quality of volunteer soldiers, both Union and Confederate.

**AG:** What disconnects Gettysburg even more from modern military practice than the technology I was describing earlier is the sheer amateurism of the Civil War armies. The U.S. Army, at the outbreak of the war, was scattered company-by-company across the country as a sort of national constabulary. Its officers, even when West Point-trained, were only trained there as engineers, not combat tacticians, and even they were a minority. There was no general staff and no training in staff duties (most staffers were family members of whomever the commanding officer was), nor was there anything like the standardization we impose today in terms of the 'five-paragraph-order.' And that only described the West Pointers; most officers in the Volunteer service were as much amateurs as the men in the ranks, and that showed up in a clumsy, inept and sometimes lethal inability to move soldiers to their objectives. Daniel Harvey Hill – the other Confederate general named Hill – once said that the Confederate soldier "was unsurpassed and unsurpassable as a scout and on the skirmish line," but "of the shoulder-to-shoulder courage, born of drill and discipline, he knew nothing, and cared less. Hence, on the battlefield, he was more of a free lance than a machine. Whoever saw a Confederate line advancing that was not crooked as a ram's horn? Each ragged Rebel yelling on his own hook and aligning on himself."

We like to romanticize the Civil War soldier – he was, after all, the very model of the American

citizen-soldier, called temporarily out of civilian pursuits to serve his country but intending all the while to return to those pursuits. But a lot of those terrible casualty lists were really the product, not of improved weapons technology, but of the meager training of the soldiers and the uncertain control exercised over them by their officers. Those things will get men killed, even in modern warfare, a lot faster than high-tech weaponry.

**SG:** You refer to Lee as having an ambivalent attitude towards slavery? Did this cause a moral dilemma when he was asked to head the Confederate army? What were his thoughts about secession?

**AG:** Lee was actually a bundle of ambivalences. A professional soldier, he nevertheless advised younger men against soldiering as a career; reserved and gentlemanly, he nevertheless could turn into a volcano of aggressive impulses and manifest the indifference and ingratitude to his closest staffers; after the war, he publicly counseled young Southerners to accept the fact of Southern defeat, but at a number of other points, he was stubbornly unco-operative with the Union victors; and above all, although like many slaveholders in the Upper South he deplored slavery, he never lifted a finger to divest himself of slave-owning. He believed that slavery would eventually pass away; but that was what every well-intentioned slaveholder had been saying since Thomas Jefferson, and for all the good intentions, not one concrete step was taken by any of them to end slavery. To the contrary, Lee actually tried to override the provisions in his father-in-law's will which would have manumitted Custis slaves.

The outbreak of the war did indeed pose a dilemma for Lee, but not the one he liked to describe. Lee cast his decision to resign from the US Army as the conflict of two duties, to Virginia and to the Union. But it was not duty which drove him to embrace Virginia; it was a lifetime of being supported, shaped and rewarded by Virginia, whether it was the Fitzhughs and Carters who stepped in to save the Lee family after the feckless 'Lighthouse Harry' Lee abandoned them; it was the Custises who looked the other way around his brother's scandalous immorality. Lee owed them everything, and it was a lifetime of deep personal obligation to Virginia, not some abstract notion of duty, which drove him to throw away everything the Lincoln administration and Winfield Scott wanted to offer him. In the abstract, he thought secession was constitutional absurdity. But Lee did not live in the abstract.

Only a sense of debt that emotional and that deep could explain why Lee chose to wager his all on a cause that, from the first, he strongly suspected had no real chance of winning. Lee understood all too well that the Confederacy lacked the resources and the manpower to win a protracted civil war against the North. Only by striking quickly and scoring a knock-down as quickly as possible on Northern soil did secession have a chance of beating the Union. The urgency of that all-or-nothing conviction was what brought him into Pennsylvania in 1863, and sent Pickett's division to its doom.

**SG:** Please comment on your program at Gettysburg College.

**AG:** Where else but at Gettysburg College would you expect to find a Civil War Era Studies program

which features a minor in Civil War Era Studies as well as a study-away program for undergraduates from other colleges and universities to spend an immersion semester at Gettysburg, doing Civil War 24/7? There are more than a few students, as you might expect, who come to Gettysburg College principally or partly because they want to get near this epicenter of Civil War interest and history. After all, what other place in America can offer you six full-time sutleries (the equivalent of department stores for re-enactors), three history bookstores, and the most famous battlefield in America? And what other College has, in addition to the CWES minor and the Gettysburg Semester, a student re-enactment group (the Pennsylvania College Guard), a student-run Civil War club, and buildings which were used in the battle of Gettysburg itself? Overall, we fluctuate between forty and sixty Civil War Era Studies minors year-by-year, which makes CWES larger than most of the majors on campus; and the Gettysburg Semester usually welcomes anywhere between four and eleven students each fall for a semester of 'all Civil War, all the time.' In addition to myself, we have Peter Carmichael and Brian Matthew Jordan as faculty, plus John Rudy (of Harpers Ferry NPS) and Col. Thomas Dombrowsky (US Army War College) as adjuncts. We read Civil War books like it's an Olympic sport; we field-trip to battlefields (Antietam, Chancellorsville, Fredericksburg, Harpers Ferry, Wilderness, Spotsylvania, Cold Harbor, Petersburg, Appomattox). If you know a college-bound student who orders Civil War for breakfast, tell him to come here. If you know an undergraduate who needs some time off from sociology and

calculus, slip her the news about the Gettysburg Semester. If you graduated from College years ago and hear yourself wishing this had been available in your day, you can come anyway. I usually have two or three retirees and alumni of the College who sign up for CWES courses every year. We are totally wild and crazy about Civil War Era Studies, and generally have as much academic fun as is legal.

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**SG:** Can you share with our readers your next publication project?

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**AG:** Oh, there are number of irons in the fire, and a number of suggestions have already been made about possible new projects. I delivered the Nathan I. Huggins Lectures for the W.E.B. DuBois Institute at Harvard back in February of 2012, and I have yet to pull those lectures – on Lincoln, race and emancipation – into publishable form for Harvard University Press. (The editor, Joyce Seltzer, has been very, very accommodating of the competition for my time provided by GTLI). There are also some loose ends

about Gettysburg I would like to tie up, especially concerning the remarkable case of the 72nd Pennsylvania and the law-suit it filed in the Pennsylvania Supreme Court over the location of its monument. It's the only occasion, apart from wartime Congressional inquiries, that sworn testimony about ordinary soldiers' actions, sights, and locations on a Civil War battlefield was collected in a civilian court; the trial transcript, which makes for wonderful reading, has never been edited or published, and I think that might make an interesting project. I have an agreement with Southern Illinois University Press to do a short volume on 'Lincoln and Democracy' in their Concise Lincoln Library series. And I have seen the idea of a Lee biography flit through my mind. In Dickensian fashion, something (I am sure) will turn up. But who knows? I may return to my long-delayed project of a history of the free-will debate in American thought, and only yesterday I was talking with a colleague from another university in the South about a book on the Popular Front of the 1930s and 1940s.



*Gettysburg College*

## *Ulysses S. Grant, the President* by John F. Marszalek

In the early 1950s, a historian with a background in journalism published a trilogy on the Civil War. The third volume entitled *Stillness at Appomattox* discussed Ulysses S. Grant and his victory over Robert E. Lee in Virginia. For his efforts, Bruce Catton won the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award. The following year he became the founding editor of *American Heritage* magazine and was the obvious choice to write the volume on Grant in the Library of American Biography series.<sup>1</sup>

This book was different from his earlier volumes because it dealt, not only with Grant's military career, but it also provided a brief overview of Grant's eight years in the presidency. He titled the section discussing Grant's Virginia campaign as "The Qualities of Grandeur," but he described Grant's presidency as "the tragedy of his eight years in the White House."<sup>2</sup>

Catton was obviously not impressed with Grant's time as president of the United States, but he was not nearly as critical as University of Wisconsin History Professor William B. Hesseltine, whose 1935 book ironically had been published during the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of Grant's death. In his book, Hesseltine correctly complained about "the lack of Grant manuscripts" but then concluded that "Grant himself was a poor writer and had but a limited correspondence with his political associates." In fact, Hesseltine said, "Grant's enemies were more literate than his



*U.S. Grant  
Bultema/Williams Photo No. 028  
Mississippi State University Digital  
Collections*

friends." A study of the few manuscripts available indicated to Hesseltine that "Grant's stupidity and corruption were born in partisan politics." In addition, "Grant [was] peculiarly ignorant of the Constitution and inept in handling men. His mental endowment was not great and he filled his state papers with platitudes rather than thoughts." Grant did learn as he went along, Hesseltine conceded, but "as he acquired the ideology of the politician he lost the vision of the statesman, and became the 'safe' representative of the more reactionary economic interests of his day."<sup>3</sup>

And so it was. Well-known historians like Hesseltine and Catton and the writers of the post-Civil War Lost Cause<sup>4</sup> might perhaps give grudging praise to Grant's generalship, but they

universally castigated what they labeled the venality and corruption of his presidency.

It was not much different among historians as a whole. Beginning in 1948 and at regular intervals to the present day, historians of United States history have recorded their evaluations of American presidents. In such polls, Grant has regularly been ranked in the bottom 25%. Beginning in 2002, however, Grant rose to the middle of such rankings, a giant step forward.<sup>5</sup>

Yet in a 2007 popular magazine, *US News and World Report*, the old view reappeared again. The writer of this article, mirroring the American public, ranked Grant as the seventh worst president in American history and the brief accompanying text indicated the alleged justification for such low status. "[H]e presided over an outbreak of graft and corruption."<sup>6</sup>

In fact, however, historians, as later polls and recent historical publications indicate, have come to the conclusion that Grant was a much better president than old views indicated. This important change can be traced back to 1962 when the Civil War Commissions of Illinois, New York, and Ohio joined with a number of leading historians, ironically including Bruce Catton, to form The Ulysses S. Grant Association. The organization's purpose, as stated in its By-Laws, was and remains today: to conduct "research into the life and writings of Ulysses S. Grant

and cause to be published a collection of his writings, speeches, and such other information about his life and times."<sup>7</sup>

Begun at the Ohio Historical Society, then on the campus of Ohio State University, the Association moved to Southern Illinois University in 1964, and to Mississippi State University in 2008 where it presently resides. During its first fifty years of existence, under the leadership of John Y. Simon, executive director and managing editor, it collected a photocopy of every known Grant letter and every known letter written to him. It published thirty-two volumes of these papers, a large number but representing only about 20% of the papers it holds. In 2009, it opened its collections to researchers.

Unlike the situation that William Hesselstine complained about in 1935, there are now available to researchers the Grant *Memoirs*, and a large cache of Grant letters. This public and private material indicates clearly that Hesselstine was wrong when he wrote that "Grant himself was a poor writer and had but a limited correspondence with his political associates."<sup>8</sup> Grant was a prolific writer, and his writing style compares favorably to his contemporaries. The establishment of the Grant Association, the publication of Grant's writings, the forthcoming scholarly edition of the *Memoirs*, and the availability of even more unpublished material is demonstrating that Grant was hardly the bumbling incompetent of his long-time historical reputation.

Scholars are reading his writings and are not simply rating him higher in presidential polls, but they are also producing books and articles which demonstrate his re-evaluation. Brooks D. Simpson, Jean Edward Smith, Josiah Bunting, and Joan Waugh are but four recent writers who have revised Grant's presidential reputation upward. Popular writer H. W. Brand has followed in their footsteps in an even more recent book,<sup>9</sup> while Ronald White, Charles W. Calhoun, and Ron Chernow are proceeding with forthcoming books which will provide even greater insight into the mind and life of one of the nation's leading generals, the only president between Andrew Jackson and Woodrow Wilson to serve two consecutive terms, and one of the world's leading figures during the late nineteenth century.

An appealing aspect of Grant was his oft-stated disinterest in being president. His repeated hesitancy about running for president found a ready audience in an American public tired of the political conflict of the Andrew Johnson years. Grant said that he had no real desire to be president, except for his belief that he had to. He sincerely believed that, only someone like him, that is a non-politician, could preserve the fruits of the Civil War victory. In 1868, when he accepted the Republican nomination for president, he ended his brief statement by saying: "Let Us Have Peace." That term was nebulous, yet it appealed to the public. Americans wanted no more war and no more arguments about the direction of the nation. These four words remain one of

the most popular campaign/presidential statements of any American chief executive.

In 1868, Grant was easily elected. In his March 1869 inaugural address, as was his habit, he did not speak long. However, he was clear about what he wanted to do during his term of office. He wanted to act in a way that would prevent the kind of turmoil between the President and Congress that had been on display during the Andrew Johnson presidency. He promised that "all laws will be faithfully executed whether they meet my approval or not." At the same time, he realized that the Civil War had created problems with which preceding administrations had never had to deal. He promised that such problems would "be approached calmly, without prejudice, hate or sectional pride."

As for the debt created during the war, he said that he would aim for the "payment of . . . [the] principle [*sic*] and interest as well as the return to a specie basis, as soon as it can be accomplished without material detriment to the debtor class, or to the country at large." In foreign affairs, Grant said that he "would respect the rights of all nations, demanding equal respect for our own; but if others depart from this rule, in their dealings with us, we may be compelled to follow their precede[n]t."

Grant also called for the fair treatment of the Indians "favor[ing] any course towards them which tends to their civilization, Christianization and ultimate citizenship." He also

wanted fair treatment for African Americans when it came to the vote, calling for the passage of the fifteenth amendment to the Constitution to insure voting rights for all.

"In conclusion," Grant said, "I ask forbearance one towards another throughout the land, and a determined effort on the part of every citizen to do his share towards cementing a happy union, and I ask the prayers of the nation to Almighty God in behalf of this summation."<sup>11</sup>

Viewing Grant's two terms in office according to the aspirations of his first address results in the recognition of a better record than has previously been credited to him. He said he wanted to avoid the turmoil between the president and Congress of the Andrew Johnson years, and he did restore more normal relations. He took a calm, even-keeled approach to his presidential duties. His foreign policy, most dramatically evidenced in the solution of Civil War era problems between the United States and Great Britain through arbitration agreed upon in the Treaty of Washington of 1871, demonstrated the mutual respect he had called for in his inaugural.

Finally there was his call for fairness among all Americans, and it was here and in the issue of the nation's economy that his presidency can best be evaluated.

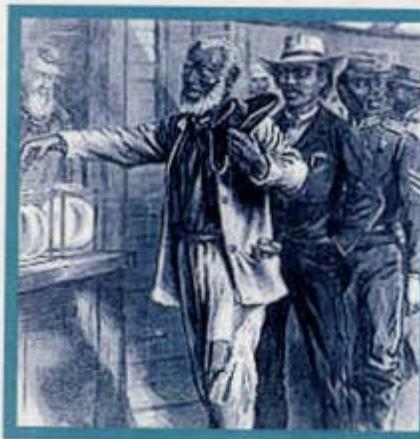
A major problem of his presidency was the Panic of 1873 which engulfed his entire second term. The financial chaos of the Civil War and the difficult movement from a war to a peacetime footing created economic dislocation. During the

nineteenth century, there were major financial crises every twenty years or so, in the Panics of 1819, 1837, 1857, 1873, and 1893. Grant deserved no more blame for his panic than did any of the presidents during other such times. The Panic of 1873 was an example of the boom and bust cycle of the nineteenth century,<sup>12</sup> and not the result of any supposed economic corruption or incompetence on Grant's part.

Then there was the problem of how to deal with the end of slavery. In fact, Grant did more than any other president during the late nineteenth century to try to insure a racially peaceful nation. He believed strongly that the former slaves now free should enjoy all the constitutional rights of any other American. The thirteenth amendment had ended slavery, and the fourteenth amendment guaranteed the rights of citizenship. These were already part of the Constitution when Grant became president in 1869. The fifteenth amendment was working its way through Congress and then state ratification, and he took every chance he could to support it. When it was ratified just a year

after he took office, he took the unusual step of issuing a statement of support. Presidents did not normally react formally to a new amendment, but Grant did so because he believed it was so significant for the nation. He asserted that "the adoption of the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution ...constitutes the most important event that has occurred, since the nation came into life."<sup>13</sup>

These words do not sound all that earth shattering to 21<sup>st</sup> century ears, but Grant said them to a society which still maintained white superiority and black inferiority. Even the abolitionists believed that there was no reason for their own existence since slavery had been destroyed. Most northerners believed that the reunification of the nation should not be held hostage to black equality, and white southerners were determined that black southerners should never become their equals. When President Ulysses S. Grant called for black-white political equality, the nation gasped. It made no sense to them then, and it made no sense to most Americans until after the Civil Rights movement one hundred years later. Grant was ahead of his time.



The first vote, A.R. Waud.  
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### *Fifteenth Amendment of the Constitution of the United States*

*(Ratified February 3, 1870)*

*Section 1. The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.*

*Section 2. The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation*

Grant backed his strong stand in favor of black civil rights by promoting legislation whose purpose it was to protect African Americans. He signed the Civil Rights Act of 1875, the Force Act, the Ku Klux Klan Act, and the Naturalization Act of 1870, the latter not all that well known, but significant because it allowed descendants of Africans to become naturalized American citizens. This was a major step forward. So, too, was Grant's establishment of the Department of Justice in 1870 to try to guarantee the enforcement of the fourteenth and fifteenth amendments.<sup>14</sup> Grant worked to insure racial peace and racial equality.

Grant also tried to use the power of the Federal government and the US Army to insure that the fifteenth amendment and the many civil rights acts were enforced. He sent the Army into trouble spots in the South on numerous occasions when whites used violence and intimidation to keep black citizens from enjoying the fruits of their newly gained rights. Many Americans, both northerners and southerners, were tired of troops occupying the South and failed to continue the public support the President needed to enforce civil rights.

Grant also did more for Native Americans than any president in the nineteenth century, and again he cut across the grain of public opinion. Prior to his time in office, the nation, through the agency of the U.S. Army, had practiced a policy of annihilation toward the Indians. Philip Sheridan's famous statement that "the only good Indian is a dead Indian" expressed the attitude of most military men. William T.

Sherman, who became commanding general when Grant gained the presidency, shared such views. He saw the Indians as allegedly inferior beings who stood in the way of the Manifest Destiny movement into the West of allegedly superior white Americans. It was all a matter of "survival of the fittest," Sherman said in reflecting contemporary Social Darwinism, and there was no doubt in Sherman's mind who the unfit were.<sup>15</sup>

Grant did not think in such terms, and from the earliest period of his presidency, he initiated what came to be called his "peace policy." He saw white society's role toward the Native Americans, as he stated it in the handwritten draft of his December 1870 annual message to Congress, as "Missionary work." Thus he looked to religious groups already working among the Indians, not the Army, to be the driving force behind his policy. He did not want to annihilate the Indians but have these agencies "to watch over them, and aid them, as missionaries, to Christianize and Civilize the Indian, and to train him in the arts of peace." Grant believed that, once such a policy was completely implemented, "I entertain the confident hope that the policy now pursued will, in a few years, bring all the Indians on to reservations, where they will live in houses, have school houses and churches, and will be pursuing peaceful and self sustaining avocations, and where they may be visited by the law abiding white man with the same impunity that he now visits the civilized White settlements."<sup>16</sup>

Grant even made his former Civil War aide, Ely S. Parker, a Seneca

Indian chief, head of his effort. When he appointed a Jewish man head of the chaplains' service to the Indian, this act demonstrated his desire to be fair to all people, but it infuriated many.<sup>17</sup>

Such tolerance made no sense to most white Americans of that day. Native Americans were inferior people, unfit individuals as William T. Sherman believed them to be. Consequently, Grant's Indian peace policies had to be corrupt. How else could it be explainable to a prejudiced American public?

The crookedness that people most often tie to Grant's presidency involved the Black Friday Gold Scandal and the Whisky Ring. Black Friday included Grant's sister's husband, Abel Corbin, who was brought into the gold scheme in the hopes of convincing Grant to participate. Two conniving businessmen, Jim Fisk and Jay Gould, came up with the idea of manipulating the public gold market to their financial advantage. The idea was to convince Grant to change the Secretary of the Treasury's weekly auction of government gold which had been driving the metal's price down. Instead, the two conspirators hoped to convince Grant to leave the market alone and let gold prices rise. If Gould and Fisk could find out what the government was going to do, they could make a fortune.

This is where Corbin came in. Although he was not aware of the scheme and simply accepted the two men's economic arguments, he regularly brought Grant and the two buccaneers together. At these times, they tried to

convince the president that the American economy would boom if the price of gold went up. Even though Grant refused to provide any forewarnings of what he would have the Secretary of the Treasury do, saying that it "would not be fair," they wrongly thought he agreed with them and began buying gold in earnest.

In fact, Grant told Secretary of the Treasury George Boutwell to continue selling as he had been doing. He had his wife, Julia, warn Corbin about his association with Fisk and Gould, and, when he met with Boutwell, Grant told him to do whatever he could to prevent a financial crisis that would benefit Fisk and Gould. Boutwell waited for the appropriate moment, sold a great deal of gold, and burst the bubble.

Corbin pled with Grant to take back the order, but Grant quietly refused. As biographer Jean Edward Smith points out: "The United States, for the first time, had intervened massively to bring order to the marketplace. It was a watershed in the history of the American economy." Ulysses S. Grant had not corruptly taken advantage of a situation to make himself personally wealthy. He had acted in defense of the integrity of the American economic system. Yet since that time, Americans have seen nothing but malfeasance in his actions.<sup>18</sup>

The worst of all was the Whisky Ring scandal.<sup>19</sup> As far back as the Andrew Johnson administration, public musings had existed that the lucrative whisky businesses were guilty of bilking the federal government out of a great deal of excise tax revenue and that a



*Grant Seated  
Bultema/Williams  
Photo No. 034  
Mississippi State University*

large number of low and high level government officials were included. Among them, it was said, was Orville Babcock, Grant's wartime and presidential aide. When Grant learned about Babcock's alleged involvement of presenting advice to the criminals, he was appalled, but he continued to support him because he believed in loyalty to friends. A St. Louis businessman sent Grant a letter which indicated the possibility of Babcock's wrong-doing, however, and Grant immediately referred the letter to his crusading Secretary of the Treasury Benjamin Bristow. He told Bristow: "Let no guilty man escape if it can be avoided—Be specially vigilant—or instruct those engaged in the prosecutions of fraud to be—again[s]t all who insinuate that they have high influence to protect, or to protect them. No personal consideration should stand in the way of performing a public duty."<sup>20</sup>

Despite these strong words, Grant still maintained his belief in Babcock's innocence and agreed



*Mrs. Grant  
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to give a deposition of support for Babcock during a military trial. Along with the fact that the case against Babcock was not conclusive, Grant's support of his long-time friend helped convince the jury to acquit him of any offences. Even before he testified, Grant wrote Babcock's wife to express his support for her husband. "I do not believe it possible that I can be deceived," he told Mrs. Babcock. "His services to the government, in every capacity where he has been employed, have been so valuable, and rendered with such a view to its good that it precludes the theory of his conspiring against it now."<sup>21</sup>

The public and the press became satisfied of Babcock's innocence. Grant cut off any possibility of continued accusations when he told Bristow that he wanted him to testify fully before any congressional committee. Any other member of his cabinet could do likewise,<sup>22</sup> Grant said, thus successfully putting the matter behind him. Yet past historians have found fault with him for his handling of the whisky scandal.

Grant's most significant economic action was his veto of the bill that would have put more greenbacks into the American currency system. The idea of the bill was to inflate the currency as a way to get the economy back on track as it veered into the Panic of 1873. Congress passed such a law, and Grant came under enormous pressure to sign it. Many financial leaders worried that a veto would only create greater problems and doom Republican chances for electoral salvation.

Grant later remembered how pressured he felt and how, for this one time, he thought he should act for political reasons: he would sign the bill. "I thought at last I would try and save the party, and at the same time the credit of the nation." He wrote out an explanation including every argument he had heard in favor of the bill. When he had completed his message, he read it to himself and quickly concluded that his words did not even convince him. "What is the good of all this?" he told himself. "You do not believe it. You know it is not true." Throwing it aside I resolved to do what I believed to be right—veto the bill."<sup>23</sup>

Contrary to all the forebodings, Grant's veto proved enormously helpful to the Republican Party and to the future economic history of the nation. Congress sustained this 1874 veto and

soon passed a specie resumption act to take effect in 1879. The day of the greenback (paper money unsecured by gold) was coming to an end. The result was a steadier currency which made possible late nineteenth century economic growth. From that point on, the Republican party became, what one of Grant's biographers calls "the party of economic conservatism, fiscal restraint, and a sound dollar. . . . Grant imparted to the Grand Old party a commercial, pro-capitalist stance that replaced emancipation as the party's *raison d'être*."<sup>24</sup> One can argue that the modern Republican Party continues this philosophy in 2013 and, depending on one's own economic viewpoint, can either praise or condemn Grant for this continued influence on contemporary politics. However, like it or not, Grant issued a policy which has had a major influence on the nation. And there certainly was no corruption involved.

Despite such successes, many in the public still see Grant's presidency as a total failure. Historians, in recent years, have looked at the variety of domestic issues with which he had to deal, and they disagree. They view Grant as the first modern president in American history, and his time in office as important for pointing the way for the future of the nation.

When Grant died in 1885, his funeral was and remains the largest assemblage of mourners in all of American history. His mausoleum is second in size only to that of Victor Emmanuel in Italy. And, until the 1920s, "Grant's Tomb" was the most visited tourist attraction in New York City, surpassing even the Statue of Liberty. He remained that popular that long.<sup>25</sup>

A small town newspaper recently printed an opinion piece, and the writer, an excellent amateur historian, evaluated Grant's stature. "Grant's contemporaries saw him as a gigantic figure. With the hindsight of 150 years, we should do so again."<sup>26</sup> Or as another writer has phrased it: "Grant is a president whose appraisal in history requires not merely a more balanced assessment, but a sweeping reexamination from its foundations."<sup>27</sup> In fact, Grant is rising in the minds of historians<sup>28</sup> and even in the public mind, although slowly. His advocacy of civil rights for blacks, fairness to Indians, and forthright actions to deal with the economy will continue to be important. Whereas such stands were once seen as being incompetent and corrupt, today and in the future they will show Grant to be far ahead of his time and deserving of admiration.

*Grant's Tomb*  
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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Thomas I. Crimando, "Catton, Bruce" in John A. Garraty and Mark C. Carnes *National Biography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999): 4:587-88.

<sup>2</sup> Bruce Catton, *U.S. Grant and the American Military Tradition*. Library of American Biography. (Boston: Little Brown, 1954), 119, 156.

<sup>3</sup> William Hesselntine, *Ulysses S. Grant: Politician* (New York: Dodd Mead, 1935), vii-viii.

<sup>4</sup> Joan Waugh, "How the 'Lost Cause' Poisoned Our History Books," Salon May 1, 2011, [www.salon.com](http://www.salon.com) (downloaded on May 7, 2013).

<sup>5</sup> [www.deadpresidents.tumblr.com](http://www.deadpresidents.tumblr.com) (downloaded on May 6, 2013).

<sup>6</sup> [www.usnews.com](http://www.usnews.com), February 16, 2007 (downloaded on May 5, 2013).

<sup>7</sup> Ulysses S. Grant Association, By-Laws, June 17, 1962, revised, May 4, 2010, USGA Collection, Ulysses S. Grant Presidential Library, Mississippi State University.

<sup>8</sup> Hesselntine, vii.

<sup>9</sup> Brooks D. Simpson, *Let Us Have Peace, Ulysses S. Grant and the Politics of War and Reconstruction, 1861-1868* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997); Jean Edward Smith, *Grant* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2001); Josiah Bunting III, *Ulysses S. Grant* (New York Times Books, 2004); Joan Waugh, *U.S. Grant American Hero, American Myth* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009); H.W. Brands, *The Man Who Saved the Union: Ulysses S. Grant in War and Peace* (New York: Doubleday, 2012)

<sup>10</sup> USG to Joseph R. Hawley, May 20, 1868, John Y. Simon ed. *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant (PUSG)* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1991), 18:264.

<sup>11</sup> USG, "Inaugural Address," *ibid*, 19:139-42.

<sup>12</sup> For an excellent account of the ramifications of The Panic of 1873, see Eric Foner's *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), 512-24.

<sup>13</sup> USG to the Senate and House of Representatives, March 30, 1870, *PUSG* 20:130-31.

<sup>14</sup> These laws were published in the US Statutes at Large. See 16 Stat. 254, 17 Stat. 13, 18 Stat. 335-37. For the famous Civil Rights cases which found key aspects of these laws unconstitutional see 109 US 3(1883). The law establishing the Department of Justice is found in 16 Stat. 162.

<sup>15</sup> Roy J. Morris, *Sheridan: The Life and Wars of General Phil Sheridan* (New York: Crown, 1992), 328; John F. Marszalek, *Sherman, A Soldier's Passion for Order* (New York: The Free Press, 1992), 380-81.

<sup>16</sup> USG, "Draft Annual Message," December 5, 1870, *PUSG* 21:41.

<sup>17</sup> Jonathan D. Sarna, *When General Grant Expelled the Jews* (New York: Random House, 2012).

<sup>18</sup> Kenneth D. Ackerman. *The Gold Ring: John Fisk, Jay Gould, and Black Friday, 1869*. (New York: Dodd Mead, 1988); Smith, *Grant*, 481-90.

<sup>19</sup> A contemporary account written by one of those implicated is John McDonald, *Secrets of the Great Whisky Ring* (Chicago: Belford, Clarke, 1880).

<sup>20</sup> USG endorsement, July 29, 1875, of William D.W. Barnard to USG, July 19, 1875, *PUSG* 26:231-41n.

<sup>21</sup> USG, "Deposition," February 12, 1876, *PUSG* 27:27-51; USG to Annie Campbell Babcock, December 17, 1875, *PUSG* 26:430.

<sup>22</sup> Smith, *Grant*, 192-93.

<sup>23</sup> John Russell Young. *Around the World with General Grant* (New York: American News, 1879), 2:155-56.

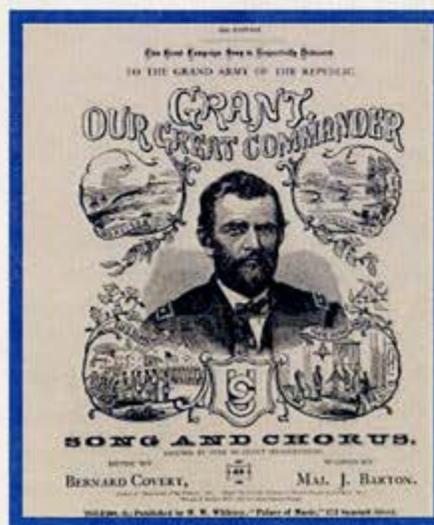
<sup>24</sup> Smith, *Grant*. 579-82.

<sup>25</sup> Waugh, *US Grant, American Hero*.

<sup>26</sup> William "Brother" Rogers, "Underappreciated American Hero: Ulysses S. Grant," *Starkville (MS) Daily News*, May 19, 2013, p. A-4.

<sup>27</sup> Frank Scatturo. *President Grant Reconsidered* (Latham, MD: University Press of America, 1998), 119.

<sup>28</sup> In a 2000 C-Span poll of historians, Grant was ranked 33 out of 41. In 2009, he jumped to 23, the greatest improvement of any former president. [www.legacy.c-span.org/PresidentialSurvey/Overall-Ranking](http://www.legacy.c-span.org/PresidentialSurvey/Overall-Ranking) (downloaded on May 6, 2013)



*Grant, Ulysses S. (Ulysses Simpson), 1822-1885; Popular music Mississippi State University Digital Collection*

**Richard W. Etulain, *Lincoln and Oregon Country Politics in the Civil War Era*  
Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2012.**

**Reviewed by Michael Green**

Historians have long since answered James G. Randall's question in 1936, "Has the Lincoln theme been exhausted?" with a resounding no. Nonetheless, they have yet to explore, fully or even in-depth, some important Lincoln themes. Perhaps the most glaring of these has been the chain of events and ideas that linked Lincoln and the Civil War to the West—not the west that Civil War historians define as battles in Shiloh or Vicksburg, but the far West, or at least the trans-Mississippi West. This has begun to change, with historians like Adam Arenson promoting the study of the Civil War in that region, and Elliott West, Heather Cox Richardson, and William Deverell demonstrating that reconstructing the Union meant uniting or reuniting the North, the South, and, yes, the West.

Happily, one of the West's most prolific and distinguished scholars, Richard W. Etulain, has decided to turn his discerning eye and witty style toward Mr. Lincoln. He has published an edited volume and articles on Lincoln and the West. Now, from Oregon State University Press, comes *Lincoln and Oregon Country Politics in the Civil War Era*. It is a welcome new addition to Etulain's dozens of books on the West and to the thousands of books on Lincoln—literally something new, and with something for everyone.

Etulain keeps several balls in the air in this book. One is what Lincoln was up to, first as a former congressman offered patronage jobs in Oregon Territory, then as a newly minted Republican, and finally as president, dealing with political appointments and campaigning. Etulain reminds us that Lincoln was a canny, curious politician who "looked for ways to advance his Republican Party throughout the country and paid a good deal of attention to launching it in the new states and territories of the American West" (81). At the same time, he faults Lincoln for some dubious choices. While Lincoln's need for political support for his party and the Union led to some problematic appointments in the army and the Cabinet, patronage appointees created problems for every president, and Lincoln was no exception. One of his choices, Caleb Lyon, Idaho's

territorial governor, "was as out of place as a city sophisticate at a frontier barbecue. Some consider him Lincoln's worst western territorial appointee" (97).

Etulain also focuses on the people who were part of what he refers to as the "Lincoln links," the Illinoisans he knew who relocated to the West Coast. The most prominent was Edward Baker, the U.S. senator from Oregon killed at Ball's Bluff, for whom the Lincolns named a son, but others headed to Oregon and played prominent roles in the territorial and early statehood periods. The migrations of Anson Henry, Simeon Francis, and David Logan speak to the lure of the West and the connections that those migrants maintained to their former homes and allies. All four add to our understanding of Lincoln and his dealings with others. A vast body of literature talks about how Lincoln mixed and matched politicians, generals, and friends, and how many of them could be so different from our image of him as even-tempered and temperate. Lincoln's friends could be alternately annoying and ambitious, but, with the exception of Logan, loyal, and thus similar to his relationship with other Illinois politicians and those in his inner circle in Washington, D.C. These are important contributions, but so is Etulain's study of politics in the Oregon Country, defined here as the state of Oregon and the Civil War-era territories of Washington, Idaho, and Montana. Those who concentrate on Lincoln will benefit from Etulain's fine introduction to western politics and society; those who study the latter will learn a lot about Lincoln and the Civil War. He also differs from previous scholars, most notably Robert W. Johannsen, who argued in his excellent study of frontier politics that those living in the Oregon Country were "spectators of disunion" (117). Etulain disagrees, respectfully but clearly, and explains the region's politics while tying them to wartime developments.

Even if Johannsen were right and Etulain were wrong, it would do nothing to diminish what Etulain has done. He has explained, lucidly and thoroughly, how Lincoln and the Far West affected, and were affected by, each other. He has provided one more building block in an edifice of Lincoln and western studies that demonstrates the connections between these subjects—not only their mutual connections, but also their mutual value. Those familiar with Etulain's work should be unsurprised that it is deeply researched and a good read, while the less familiar will enjoy, learn, and thank him...

# 1863—Midpoint

## By Hon Frank J. Williams

### Preamble

Approximately 65,000 books have been published on the Civil War, more than one a day since it ended, proving that one hundred and fifty years later, the conflict is as relevant as ever. The events of 1863 were both tragic and triumphant amid the nation's social, cultural, political and military change.

1863 started with great promise for the Confederacy, with victories at Fredericksburg in December 1862 and again at Chancellorsville in May 1863. The tide began to turn for the North with Union victories at Gettysburg and Vicksburg. The Confederate Army struck back at Chickamauga, but Union victories at Chattanooga pushed the Confederate Army out of Eastern Tennessee and opened the door for a Union advance into Georgia. Losses on both sides had been high, and many in the North and South were growing weary of the war, but the armies remained committed to the struggle.

### January 1863

On January 1, 1863, President Lincoln issued the final Emancipation Proclamation, replacing the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation of September 22, 1862. The final proclamation, in addition to freedom for slaves in Confederate territory, permitted enlistments of black soldiers and sailors in Federal service and paved the way to arming them. By war's end, approximately 200,000 African Americans served in the Union Army and Navy.

Not all in the North were pleased. Even in Lincoln's home state of Illinois, the Democrat-controlled legislature adopted a resolution criticizing the President for turning the war into a mission to free the slaves and claimed the Emancipation Proclamation was as "unwarranted in military as in civil law."

General John A. McClernand, a friend of Lincoln and a War Democrat who supported the war as well as raising troops for the North, is given command of Sherman's forces at Milliken's Bend, Louisiana, on January 4, the same day Lincoln revokes General Grant's Order No. 11 of December 17, 1862, expelling Jews from his theater of operation.

On January 5, President Lincoln nominates John P. Usher to succeed Caleb P. Smith as Secretary of the Interior.

The Confederate raider Alabama, on January 12, sinks the Union gunboat Hatteras near Galveston, Texas.

Also on this day, the Confederate Congress heard Jefferson Davis call the Emancipation Proclamation, "the most execrable measure recorded in the history of guilty man" and makes restoration of the Union "forever impossible." He also criticized France and Great Britain for refusing to recognize Confederate independence.

Joseph Hooker was given command of the Army of the Potomac. Lincoln had his doubts about the new commander and commented :

I have heard, in such way as to believe it, of your recently saying that both the Army and the Government needed a Dictator. Of course it was not for this, but in spite of it, that I have given you the command. Only those generals who gain successes, can set up dictators. What I now ask of you is military success, and I will risk the dictatorship... and now, beware of rashness... but with energy, and sleepless vigilance, go forward, and give us victories.

Under General Hooker, the Army of the Potomac's Grand Divisions were eliminated in favor of a corps command. He used the winter months to reorganize the army and increase the morale of the troops in time for a spring offensive that he believed would destroy Lee's Army of Northern Virginia.

On January 27, Grant assumed command of the operations against Vicksburg and assigned McClernand command of one corps. McClernand believed he would have command of an independent force.



Gen'l Joseph Hooker  
LC-DIG-ppmsca-19396

## February 1863

A sunset provision inserted by the Confederate Congress which gave Jefferson Davis the power to suspend the writ of habeas corpus expired. An extension did not take place until February 17, 1864.

On February 3, Secretary of State William H. Seward rejected a proposal by French foreign minister Edouard de Lhuys to commence peace talks between the Union and Confederacy. Queen Victoria addresses Parliament on February 5 and states that she thinks any British attempt to mediate the Civil War would fail.

The Cherokee Indian National Council, on February 17, repealed its ordinance of secession and revoked its alliance with the Confederacy. It now asserted support for the Union and abolished slavery in northeastern Indian Territory.

On February 24, Lincoln signed legislation creating Arizona Territory and also the creation of a national banking system authorized to issue bank notes in lieu of specie.

On February 25, the U. S. Congress passed the Conscription Act thus creating the first military draft in American history.

## March 1863

On March 3, President Lincoln signed the first Federal Conscription Law, "An act for enrollment in calling out the national forces, and for other purposes." All able-bodied males between twenty and forty-five eligible for service were subject to the draft, but it permitted eligible men to hire a substitute or, for \$300, exempt himself from service.

With the war not going well, the influence of the Peace Democrats, known as "Copperheads" for the poisonous snake and led by former U. S. Congressman Clement L. Vallandigham of Ohio, was on the rise. But the Confederacy, too, had organizations suing for peace and rejoining the Union. (An example was the Peace and Constitution Society in Arkansas.)

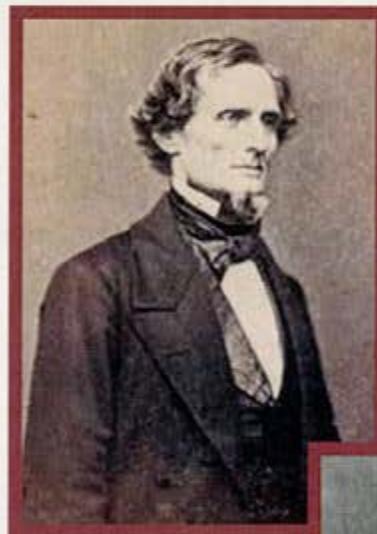
Also on March 3, the habeas corpus act was passed by Congress, formally legitimizing Lincoln's previous suspensions of the writ on April 27, 1861 and September 24, 1862, allowing the President to suspend the writ nationwide for the duration of the "present rebellion" but with limits on his powers to detain persons indefinitely without charge.

On March 10, in a five to four vote—with all three of Lincoln's appointments in the majority—the U.S. Supreme Court decided the Prize Cases in favor of the Lincoln administration. The case involved four vessels seized for violating the Federal blockade of

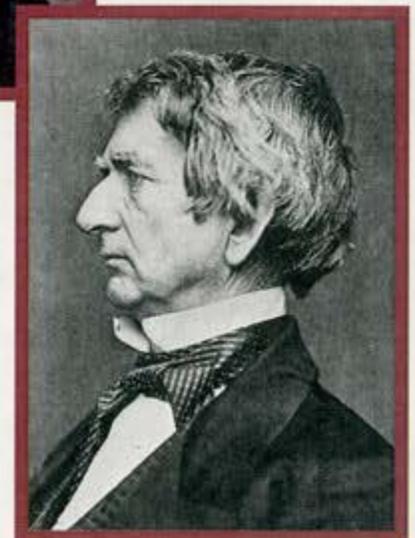
the South pursuant to Lincoln's order in July 1861 without a declaration of war by Congress. While re-confirming that only Congress can declare war, Lincoln did have the power to put down a rebellion. This decision would have additional consequences by arguably upholding the constitutionality of Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation as a military measure as well as his earlier suspension of habeas corpus.

Also on this date, Lincoln issued a proclamation granting amnesty to all soldiers who had deserted but returned by April 1.

On March 26, the Confederate Congress adopted the Impressment Act, which authorized agents to take black freedmen and private property, including food, clothing, slaves, railroads, horses and cattle in order to supply the army and navy. As expected, impressment brought strong public opposition with eight Confederate state legislatures lodging complaints that the act violated states' rights. On this day, West Virginia voters adopted an amendment to their new state's constitution abolishing slavery through gradual emancipation.



*Jefferson  
Davis, CDV  
Lincoln  
Financial  
Foundation  
Collection*



*William Henry  
Seward  
LC-USZ62-21907*

## April 1863

While Confederate armies in the field struggled to counter the press of Federal military, the capital at Richmond was also on the defensive against internal pressures. On April 2, a crowd of mostly women rioted in Richmond, Virginia, against food shortages. Cash crops such as cotton and tobacco were grown instead of food. Taxes and high prices for available commodities were becoming too high for many to afford. The militia was called and President Davis himself addressed the mob. While Davis sympathized with the crowd, he ordered the streets cleared. The ringleaders were arrested without bloodshed, and the "Bread Riot" ended. Reports of similar protests came from around the Confederacy. Cities across the South took emergency measures to ensure that the poor could obtain food at reasonable prices, and President Davis called on Southern planters to grow food crops to feed the population and the army.

On April 7, nine ironclad vessels—monitors, led by Flag Officer Samuel Du Pont, bombarded Fort Sumter and other fortifications around Charleston. The Charleston defenses repulsed the attack, sinking one ship and heavily damaging five others. It proved that Charleston could not be taken by the navy alone.

Captain David D. Porter, on April 16, led twelve Union vessels past Vicksburg's formidable defenses, bearing the first of General Ulysses S. Grant's army past Vicksburg on the way south to establish a base on the eastern shore of the Mississippi River.

President Lincoln's 1862 plan of colonizing free blacks began on April 14 with a ship containing 453 former slaves sailing to Ile de Vache off the Haiti coast.

On April 17, Colonel Benjamin H. Grierson's 1,700 Union cavalrymen began a two-week, six-hundred-mile raid through Mississippi in which the Federals destroyed railroads, took prisoners of war, and diverted attention from Grant's campaign to capture Vicksburg. Union casualties were slight.

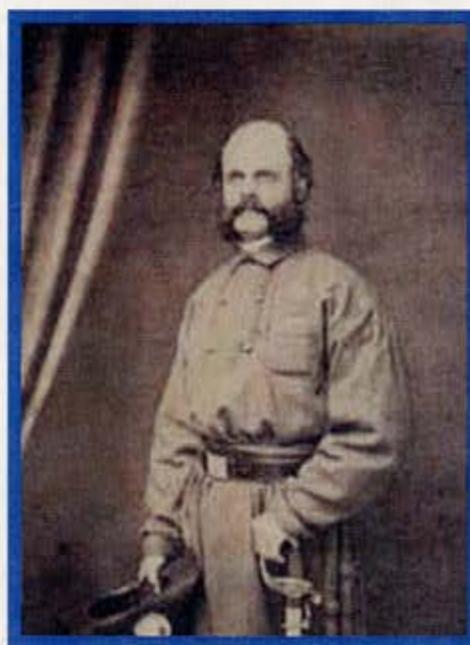
Federal transports and gunboats ran past Vicksburg defenses on April 22, while most of Grant's army moved down the west bank of the Mississippi below Vicksburg. The Confederate Congress adopted its first tax law on income, licenses and imposed a 10% "tax in kind" on agricultural products. There was much resentment as the tax did not apply to the slaves and land of plantation owners.

The Lincoln administration issued General Orders No. 100. Drafted by Columbia College Professor Francis Lieber, it codified the law of war and would be in use in America and adopted abroad for decades.

On April 29, General Hooker's Army of the Potomac marched out of the Wilderness area toward Fredericksburg and General Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. As Lee's lead elements came in contact with Hooker's advance, Hooker ordered a withdrawal to a defensive position around Chancellorsville. With General Longstreet's Corps detached from Lee's army for duty at Norfolk, Virginia, and 11,000 men left behind with General Early at Fredericksburg, Lee's army was badly outnumbered. In a rare move, Lee further split his army, with half remaining in the front, and half, led by General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson made a 15-mile march around the Union right flank which was vulnerable to attack.

General Ambrose Burnside, now commanding the Department of Ohio, angered by the anti-war activities of Peace Democrats, issued General Order No. 38: "... The habit of declaring sympathy for the enemy will not be allowed in this department. Persons committing such offenses will be at once arrested with a view of being tried... or sent beyond our lines into the lines of their friends. It must be understood that treason, expressed or implied, will not be tolerated in this department." Clement L. Vallandigham, now a candidate for governor of Ohio, had opposed the war from the beginning and now increased the number of incendiary speeches against President Lincoln, the war, and his administration.

General Grant crossed the Mississippi at Brunisburg, thirty miles southwest of Vicksburg, on April 30 with more than 20,000 troops.



Ambrose E. Burnside  
OC-0465

## May 1863

The Confederate Congress passed a resolution on May 1 mandating that captured officers of black regiments who are "deemed as inciting servile insurrection" should be "put to death or be otherwise punished at the discretion" of the military tribunal. African-American enlisted men were to "be delivered to the authorities of the State or States in which they shall be captured to be dealt with according to the present or future laws of such State or States." Because of this, the prisoner exchange established in July 1862 broke down. The U.S. Government refused to abide by different treatment of white and black soldiers.

Also on May 1, Grant defeated the Confederates at Port Gibson, Mississippi.

Clement Vallandigham denounced "this wicked, cruel, and unnecessary war... for the freedom of the blacks and the enslavement of the whites," in Mount Vernon, Ohio. He also criticized General Ambrose Burnside's General Order No. 38 as "a base usurpation of arbitrary authority." He was arrested on May 5 pursuant to the Order by soldiers in the middle of the night, causing his angry supporters to set fire to the offices of a Republican newspaper.

On May 2, General Jackson moved his force to the southwest in what looked like a Southern withdrawal. During the day, reports came in of a large Confederate force in the woods toward the Federal right, but General Oliver O. Howard did not take the reports seriously. By 6:00 PM, General Jackson's force was ready to attack. Howard's men were preparing their evening meal when suddenly a mass of forest animals rushed out of the woods, pushed by the Confederate advance. Lee opened an artillery barrage on his front to distract them from Jackson's advance. As the Union Army was being attacked from two sides, they were saved by darkness. Late in the evening, General Jackson rode out in advance of his lines to reconnoiter. Upon his return he and his staff were fired on by their own men. Jackson was seriously wounded and had to have his arm amputated. However, he died of pneumonia on May 10. General A.P. Hill was also wounded and unable to take command of Jackson's Corps. Command fell to cavalry commander General J.E.B. Stuart.

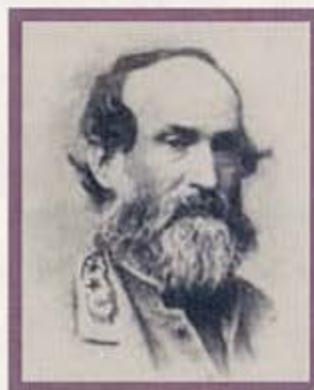
The battle hung in the balance on the 3rd, with over 21,000 casualties. It was, after Antietam, the second bloodiest day of the war. General Sedgwick's 6th Corps broke out of Fredericksburg, defeating General Early's force. Early, however, was able to conduct an effective fighting retreat toward Chancellorsville, slowing Sedgwick's advance. General Hooker was knocked senseless for a short time that morning by

a Confederate artillery shell that hit a column on the porch of the Chancellor House where he was standing. On May 5, Hooker ordered the Army to fall back to the Rappahannock River, thus ending the battle.

On May 6, Lincoln learned of Hooker's defeat at Chancellorsville. Correspondent Noah Brooks, who was with the president, recorded that the president, "clasping his hands behind his back, he walked up and down the room saying, 'My God! My God! What will the country say!'"

On May 7, a military commission sitting in Cincinnati, Ohio, convicted Vallandigham of having expressed "disloyal sentiments and opinions, with the object... of weakening the power of the Government in its effort to suppress the unlawful rebellion." He was sentenced to serve the duration of the war in prison. Lincoln was politically compelled to stick by General Burnside's actions but there were many protests leveled against the president including "demigod" and "despot." Lincoln, on May 19, commuted Vallandigham's sentence to exile in the Confederacy and on May 26, he was placed with Confederates at Murfreesboro, Tennessee. He then traveled to Canada to campaign for governor of Ohio. Notwithstanding, protests against Lincoln and his administration continued. In a letter to Erastus Corning of Albany, New York on June 12, meant to be widely published, the President insisted that Vallandigham, "was damaging the army, upon the existence and vigor of which the life of the nation depends," and Lincoln asked rhetorically: Must I shoot a simple-minded soldier boy who deserts, while I must not touch a hair of a wily agitator who induces him to desert?"

On May 16, Grant defeated General John Pemberton's Confederates at Champion Hill and captured crossings on the Big Black River on May 17. The Confederates were now forced to retire inside Vicksburg. Grant's assault on the city's defenses failed on May 19.



Jubal A. Early  
OC-0560



Brig. Genl.  
"Stonewall" Jackson  
OC-0728

### June 1863

On June 1, Burnside ordered the closure of the *Chicago Times* for "repeated expression of disloyalty and incendiary sentiments." Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton, at the direction of President Lincoln, revoked Burnside's suppression.

On June 3, while Lee planned an invasion of the North, French troops occupied Mexico City as Napoleon II tried to install Hapsburg archduke Maximilian as emperor of Mexico

The U.S. War Department decided to pay African-American soldiers as black laborers. This was less than white soldiers and hurt the morale of the U.S. Colored Troops. Until changed much later, black soldiers received \$3.00 less than white soldiers, \$10.00 rather than \$13.00 with an additional \$3.00 deducted for clothing, while white soldiers received a clothing bonus. Many black soldiers refused to accept pay until the inequity was corrected. The valor of black troops was demonstrated on June 7 at Milliken's Bend—on the Mississippi River above Vicksburg—when two newly formed regiments of U.S. Colored Troops drove off a Confederate brigade which tried to break Grant's supply line.

General Joseph Hooker learned on June 13 that Lee's army was moving north through the Shenandoah Valley. Hooker had his Army of the Potomac pursue by parallel march to keep the Army of the Potomac between Lee's army and Washington.

On June 14, Union General Nathaniel Banks asked 7,000 Confederates under siege in Port Hudson, Louisiana, to surrender. When they did not, he ordered a second assault on the Confederacy's second, after Vicksburg, remaining bastion on the Mississippi. This assault also failed.

General McClelland is relieved of command by General Grant on June 18 for insubordination.

On June 20, pursuant to an act of Congress passed on December 31, 1862, along with the presidential proclamation of April 20, 1863, 50 western counties of Virginia, formerly part of the Confederate state of Virginia, were admitted to the Union as the State of West Virginia with a state constitution requiring that children born of slaves after July 4, 1863 were free and all other slaves would become free upon reaching the age of 25.

Major General William S. Rosecrans of the Union Army, after rebuilding his army following the Battle of Murfreesboro from December 31, 1862 to January 2, 1863, began his Tullahoma campaign. This action prevented General Braxton Bragg from sending any of his Tennessee-based forces to Vicksburg in support of General John Pemberton who was

besieged there by General Grant's troops. By July 3, Bragg was forced to withdraw from middle Tennessee to Chattanooga.

General Hooker resigned as commander of the Army of the Potomac on June 27, following disputes with general in chief Henry W. Halleck. The President appointed General George G. Meade to replace him. He assumed command on June 28.

### July 1863

On two fronts, the future of the nation hung in the balance in July 1863. The Army of the Potomac and the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia marched into Pennsylvania, meeting at the small crossroads town of Gettysburg. The three-day battle became known as the high water mark of the Confederacy. For three days, General Lee tried to break the Union line, but in the end he was defeated and forced to retreat across the Potomac River. Lincoln was apoplectic that Meade had not pursued the retreating army with vigor and wrote Meade after Lee made the crossing the night of July 13, that he was "distressed immeasurably because" of Lee's escape. The letter was never sent. A total of 51,000 men were killed, wounded, or missing at Gettysburg.

In Mississippi, General Pemberton's 40,000 Confederates faced a six week siege at Vicksburg. General Grant's Army of the Tennessee initially tried frontal assaults against the stronghold, but soon settled down to the siege. Confederate troops and civilians in Vicksburg faced starvation. General Pemberton, a northerner by birth, felt he had no choice but to surrender or starve. Grant lived up to his "Unconditional Surrender" nickname. Twenty-nine thousand Southern soldiers were paroled and sent home to await exchange. Within a few days, word of the Union victory at Vicksburg had reached the besieged Southern Army at Port Hudson, the last Southern stronghold on the



*The Surrender of Vicksburg*  
LC-USZ62-96122

Mississippi. After its surrender on July 9, the Mississippi River was completely under Union control and the Confederacy was split in two.

The twin victories were an enormous boost to Northern morale, and a devastating blow to the South, but the Southern Armies were far from beaten. While the North celebrated, President Lincoln remained incensed that General Meade had not followed up on his victory and destroyed Lee's army. On July 6, President Lincoln refused to meet with Confederate Vice President Alexander H. Stephens who wanted to commence peace negotiations. On July 7, Union officials begin implementing the draft.

2,000 Confederate cavalry under the command of General John Hunt Morgan crossed the Ohio River on July 8 and raided southern Indiana and Ohio.

The first lots of the new Federal draft were drawn on Saturday, July 11, in New York City. The draft had long been a source of unrest in the North, especially the provision allowing substitutes and exemptions. When lots were drawn again on Monday morning, a large crowd began to gather and riot, attacking the draft headquarters, and then moving through the city looting and destroying businesses and residences. The mob, made up of mainly Irish laborers, began to target black citizens as the object of their wrath. Black churches and an orphanage were burned and many were killed. New York City police and militia were helpless against the growing furor, so Federal troops who had recently fought at Gettysburg were detached from the Army of the Potomac to quell the violence. The riot in New York raged for three days, when it finally ended on the 16th as the army took control and troops began to patrol the streets. Other riots had started in Troy, New York, and Boston, Massachusetts.

Union forces landed on Morris Island, the southern entrance to Charleston Harbor but failed to capture Fort Wagner on July 11. The 54th Massachusetts (US Colored Troops), with its colonel Robert Shaw, stormed the fort on July 18 but were repulsed.

### August 1863

On August 1, Jefferson Davis offered amnesty to soldiers who had deserted if they reported for duty within twenty days.

The Confederate Army of Northern Virginia and the Union Army of the Potomac faced each other along the Rappahannock River in Virginia, but remained relatively quiet as they recovered from the Gettysburg campaign. Robert E. Lee's offer to resign as Commander of the Army of Northern Virginia was rejected by President Jefferson Davis. Lee felt that a younger officer would be more suitable in command,

but by this time he had become a living symbol of the Southern cause and was needed as much for the respect he commanded and the love the Southern people felt for him, as for his tactical genius.

In the West, General Grant's army was reduced in number after the victory at Vicksburg in order to bolster other commands in need of troops. General Rosecrans planned to move south and attack General Bragg's Confederate Army at Chattanooga from the southwest. Meanwhile, General Burnside and his two army corps from the Department of the Ohio were moving into East Tennessee toward Knoxville.

At Charleston, South Carolina, Federal forces continued their siege of Battery Wagner on Morris Island. Federal artillery commenced a massive bombardment of Battery Wagner and Fort Sumter while infantry inched closer to Wagner by digging trenches. President Lincoln refused further delay of the draft in New York as requested by Governor Horatio Seymour on August 3. Lincoln refused on August 7 and it resumed on August 19 without violence as 6,000 Federal troops were in the city.

### September 1863

In response to U.S. minister to great Britain Charles Francis Adams, British foreign minister Lord Russell, on September 3, ordered the detention of the two ironclads built for the Confederate navy by the Laird shipyards in Liverpool. On September 5, Adams told Russell that the United States would go to war with Great Britain if the rams were allowed to leave England.

In Charleston Harbor, Federal artillery continued to pound Battery Wagner on Morris Island and Fort Sumter. On the 6th, while Confederate troops at Sumter remained defiant, Battery Wagner was evacuated on orders from General Beauregard commanding at Charleston. The evacuation of Wagner had little effect on the Federal attempts to take Charleston.

Lincoln, on September 15, suspended the writ of habeas corpus, including those cases where state judges had issued the writ releasing conscripted soldiers from service.

In the West, General Rosecrans led the Federal Army of the Cumberland across the Tennessee River southwest of Confederate-held Chattanooga. Northeast of Chattanooga, General Burnside's troops of the Department of the Ohio entered Knoxville, Tennessee, cutting the last direct Confederate rail line from Virginia to Chattanooga. Upon learning of

the Federal advance from the South, General Bragg withdrew his forces from Chattanooga to avoid being trapped between the two armies of Rosecrans and Burnside. Burnside seized the Confederate garrison at Cumberland Gap, an objective of Lincoln's since July 1861 and through which his ancestors had migrated to Kentucky. In Richmond, President Davis ordered General Longstreet's Corps to be detached from General Lee's Army of Northern Virginia and sent South to aid General Bragg. At the same time, President Lincoln ordered General Grant to send all available troops to Chattanooga to reinforce Rosecrans' forces.

The stage was set for the Battle of Chickamauga, named for a creek southeast of Chattanooga in northern Georgia. General George H. Thomas sent a portion of his Corps forward and they ran into Confederate dismounted cavalry under General Nathan Bedford Forrest. On the Confederate side, General Longstreet and part of his Corps arrived to support Bragg on his left. The fight on the first day was intense, but both sides held their ground. On the morning of the second day, the Confederates attacked first, but failed to break the Union line. Just before noon, General Longstreet spotted a hole in the Union line near the center. Orders were given to pull back a division to plug a hole in the Union line that did not exist, thereby creating an actual hole in the line. Longstreet took advantage of this Union weak spot and poured in his troops. Most of the Union army was soon in retreat, including Rosecrans. One Union Commander, General George H. Thomas, held firm. Thomas reformed his line at Snodgrass Hill and aided by a few other units, repelled repeated Confederate assaults throughout the afternoon, giving the army time to avoid defeat.

### October 1863

On October 5, the Confederate steamboat *David* used an underwater torpedo to damage the Union ironclad *Ironsides* near Charleston.

Lord Russell ordered the seizure of the Laird rams on October 8.

In the West, the Military Division of the Mississippi was created, placing General Grant in command of the combined departments of The Ohio, Cumberland and Tennessee. En route to Louisville, General Grant met with Secretary of War Stanton, who gave Grant orders that allowed him to relieve department commanders. Grant chose to relieve General Rosecrans and place General George H. Thomas in command of the Department of the Cumberland. General Sherman would take Grant's old post at the head of the Department of the Tennessee and General Burnside would remain in command of the Department of the Ohio. Grant immediately set out

for Chattanooga and reached there on the evening of October 23. After an inspection of the defenses, Grant ordered a new supply route opened from Brown's Ferry on the Tennessee River to Chattanooga. The new supply route or "cracker line," named for thehardtack crackers, was opened after two brigades of Union troops cleared the area of Confederate sharpshooters. The Union Army in Chattanooga soon received much needed supplies.

In Virginia, Lee's Army of Northern Virginia crossed the Rapidan River and marched northwest in an attempt to turn the right flank of the Union Army of the Potomac. Meade ordered the Army of the Potomac to fall back toward Washington to avoid being flanked. Both armies moved north toward Manassas, maneuvering for the best advantage. The Battle at Bristoe Station on October 14 was a tactical victory for the Union, as it gave Meade time to place strong defensive lines at Centerville, blocking any further Confederate advance. The Army of Northern Virginia returned to its old lines below the Rappahannock River.

### November 1863

Eleven seceding states elected representatives to the Second Confederate Congress, resulting in an increased number opposed to Davis. However, his supporters still held a majority when the Congress met in May 1864.

Union troops captured Brownsville, Texas on November 6 and occupied Corpus Christi on November 16.



*Battle of Chattanooga*  
LC-USZC4-2382

Although delayed by heavy rain, the Battle of Chattanooga took place on November 23, pushing the Confederate army back to strongholds on Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge. General Thomas's men attacked the Confederate works on the lower part of Missionary Ridge and then, without orders, continued up the steep hill and took the top of the Ridge. Grant sent troops to Knoxville to relieve Burnside's besieged troops. On the 29th, Longstreet attacked Burnside's defenses at Fort Sanders near Knoxville, but was repulsed. After his defeat at Chattanooga, Bragg tendered his resignation to President Davis, which was accepted.

President Lincoln had accepted an invitation to give "a few appropriate remarks" at the dedication of the National Cemetery at Gettysburg on November 19. "The Gettysburg Address" was delivered by him after a two-hour speech given by the nation's preeminent orator, Edward Everett. The President's brief comments, while praised in some quarters, were widely criticized in the press, but Mr. Everett wrote in a note to the President, "I should be glad if I could flatter myself that I came as near to the central idea of the occasion, in two hours, as you did in two minutes." Abraham Lincoln avoided the word "Union" in his Gettysburg declaration while using "nation" five times. As he in effect announced in his Emancipation Proclamation and magnificent Gettysburg Address, the war amounted to what historians have called a second American Revolution, one that sealed not just American nationhood, but also, according to many, established the kind of country the United States would be. By destroying the institution of chattel slavery that the founders had preserved and strengthened by writing it into the Constitution, the Civil War and the 13th Amendment determined that the United States would endure as a free-labor republic, and that the country's "new birth of freedom" would encompass, however imperfectly, black and white Americans alike.

### December 1863

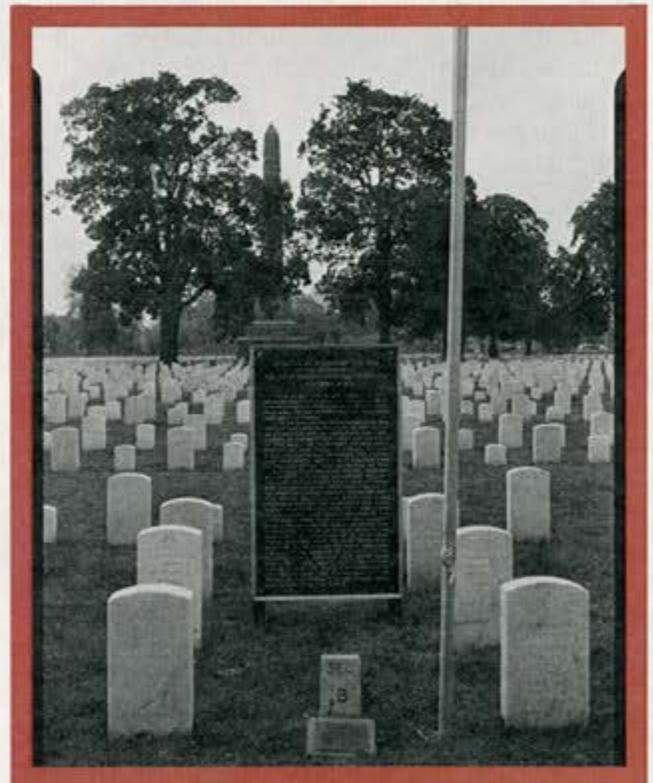
Most of the major fighting was over by December, but there were still active armies in the field. Meade's Army of the Potomac pulled back north of the Rapidan River after the ill-fated Mine Run Campaign. John Buford, commander of the Army of the Potomac cavalry corps, was promoted to Major General just hours before his death on December 16. Buford was offered command of the cavalry in the Army of the Cumberland, but died of typhoid before he could take command. His promotion to Major General was dated July 1 for his leadership at Gettysburg where his cavalry prevented the Army of Northern Virginia from seizing the high ground east of the town.

On December 2, General Bragg turned his command of the Confederate Army of Tennessee over to Lieutenant General William Hardee at Dalton, Georgia. On December 16, General Joseph E. Johnston was assigned command of the Army of Tennessee at Dalton, Georgia, relieving Hardee who had temporary command. General Longstreet moved his Corps to the Northeast of Knoxville after failing to take that city from Burnside. Longstreet then took his Corps to Greenville, Tennessee, to set up winter quarters.

In his annual message to Congress on December 8, Lincoln proposed his plan for restoration of the Union and restoring loyal governments in the rebellious states. President Lincoln issued an amnesty proclamation pardoning those who had participated in the rebellion - if they took the oath of allegiance to the Union. High ranking officers who had resigned from the United States Army or Navy to serve in the Confederate military were excluded from the proclamation.

The House of Representatives received proposals to end slavery through a constitutional amendment on December 14.

While the Civil War sealed a new nation, the war would continue for another terrorizing year and a half, and the war continues to smolder today, whether or not we are willing to recognize it.



Gettysburg Address Plaque  
LC HALS VA-6-A-15