

# The Knapsack

Raleigh Civil War Round Table

*The same rain falls on both friend and foe.*

April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2022  
Our 254<sup>th</sup> Issue



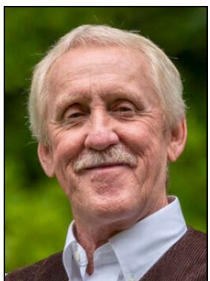
Volume 22  
Number 4

<http://www.raleighcwrt.org>

## April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2022 Meeting Features Freddie Kiger, M.A., Speaking on the Topic *"Sheer Adulterated Violence": The Battle of Sharpsburg/Antietam*

Our upcoming meeting will be in person on Monday, April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at the NC Museum of History in Raleigh. Please note that the wearing of a mask is optional. For those unable to attend in person, a Zoom session will also be recorded simultaneously.

Raleigh CWRT President, Josie Walker, should have already emailed an invitation to you, including instructions and a link for joining online if you are unable to attend in person. Please contact Josie at [RaleighCWRT@Yahoo.com](mailto:RaleighCWRT@Yahoo.com) if you did not receive an invitation.



Freddie Kiger

April's meeting will feature a presentation in Daniels Auditorium by historian, veteran storyteller, tour guide, and podcaster Freddie Kiger, M.A., speaking on the subject *"Sheer Adulterated Violence": The Battle of Sharpsburg/Antietam*.

Please join us at 6:30 p.m. for refreshments. The program starts at 7:00 p.m. EST. This event will also be live-streamed on Zoom. A video recording will be made available on <http://www.raleighcwrt.org>, our Raleigh Civil War Round Table website, following the event.

Freddie Kiger, M.A., has partnered with the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and its General Alumni Association (GAA) since 1995. He leads the popular *N.C. History Series*, including study programs on Civil War battlefields and leaders. He teaches several classes each semester, including a field trip to one or more Civil War battlefields plus stop-offs at museums and other buildings and historic sites of interest. He is the creator of the field guide *Civil War: A History of the War Between the States* (Workman, 1998). Freddie holds two degrees from UNC, a bachelor's in history and a master of arts in teaching with an emphasis in history.

He has taught classes on the American Civil War for over 40 years and can be heard on the GAA podcasts

*The Knapsack*

*Hark the Sounds* and *Threads from the National Tapestry: Stories from the American Civil War*.

A permanent link entitled [Freddie Kiger's CW Podcast](#) has been added to the Navigation panel on the left side of the front page of the [RaleighCWRT.org](http://www.raleighcwrt.org) website. Here you can find 48 podcasts (and counting) recorded by Freddie on the topic *Threads from the National Tapestry: Stories from the American Civil War*. As stated on the website:

*"History is, indeed, a story. With his unique voice and engaging delivery, historian and veteran storyteller Fred Kiger will help the compelling stories of the American Civil War come alive in each and every episode. Filled with momentous issues and repercussions that still resonate with us today, this series will feature events and people from that period and will strive to make you feel as if you were there."*

Finally, Freddie twice served as a co-lecturer with Shelby Foote, the distinguished American historian and novelist, on the *Cruising the Mighty Mississippi* travel program. He is also a member of Cambridge's *Who's Who for Higher Education*.

Freddie is equally passionate about sports. Since his early 20's, he has been a statistician for the UNC basketball team. As an ESPN statistician, he has garnered three Emmy awards for his work, not only a statistician, but also as a researcher, writer and associate producer. He's worked with ESPN, CBS, NBC and other networks for major events like the Olympics and the X-Games.

### *N.C. History Series: Gettysburg Field-Study Trip*

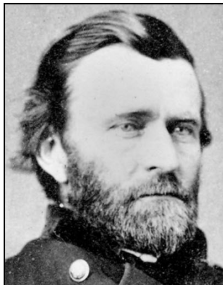
Don't miss out on a trip to Gettysburg with Freddie Kiger on Thursday, May 19<sup>th</sup> to Sunday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2022. Read more and sign up today at <https://alumni.unc.edu/events/n-c-history-series-gettysburg-field-study-trip-2022/>. Trip cost: \$995; GAA members save \$30; Solo travelers add \$250. View preliminary trip itinerary at <https://alumni.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/2022-Gettysburg-itinerary-preliminary.pdf>. Seating is limited so sign up now.

# Twelve Notable Instances of Rail Transportation During the Civil War

A Twelve-Part Series by Bob Graesser, Editor

## Introduction

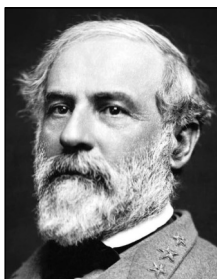
This is part eleven of a twelve-part series (listed below) in which I examine in chronological order some of the most notable instances of how rail transportation played a critical role in the Civil War. As recounted in part ten of the series, from May 4<sup>th</sup> to June 12<sup>th</sup>, 1864, Union Gen. Ulysses S. Grant had attempted to destroy Gen. Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. When that failed after repeated flanking maneuvers to Grant's left, he attempted to capture Petersburg outright from June 13<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup>. And when that also failed, Grant resigned himself to a protracted siege of Petersburg with the goal of capturing the five rail lines radiating out from Petersburg, thus eliminating all of Lee's supply to Petersburg and Richmond.



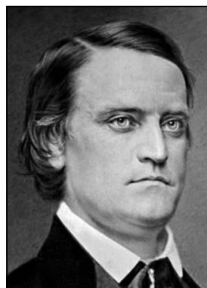
Lt. Gen.  
Ulysses S. Grant

Were Lee's supply lines to be cut, Grant foresaw that Lee's only choices would be surrender or retreat. During the fall of 1864 and the winter of 1864–1865, Grant slowly extended the Union Army line south of Petersburg westward. Lee extended the Confederate line to match the Union moves, but the defenders were stretched increasingly thin. As the Richmond–Petersburg campaign (also known as the siege of Petersburg) ended, Lee's army was outnumbered and exhausted from a winter of trench warfare over a front approximately 40 miles in length, numerous battles, disease, hunger and desertion. In comparison, Grant's well-equipped and well-fed army was growing in strength and morale.

By February 1865, Lee saw the writing on the wall: it was only a matter of time before the his ever-thinning line broke. On February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1865, Lee advised Confederate States Secretary of War John C. Breckinridge

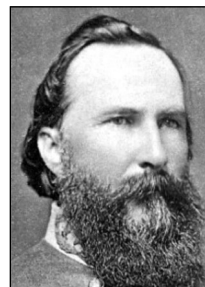


Gen.  
Robert E. Lee



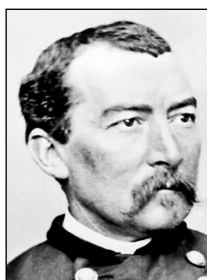
Sec. of War  
J.C. Breckinridge

that he expected Grant to "draw out his left, with the intent of enveloping me." He told Breckinridge and Lt. Gen. James Longstreet that supplies should be collected at Burkeville, Virginia, in preparation for the army to move west. Burkeville was near the junction of the 140-mile long Richmond & Danville RR line where it crossed the Southside RR line which ran 132 miles from Petersburg to Lynchburg, Virginia.

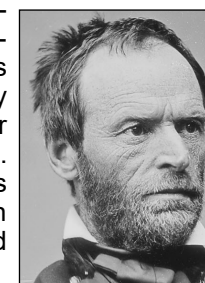


Lt. Gen. James  
Longstreet

Lee wanted to move when local roads became passable as spring rains decreased and before Union reinforcements from Sheridan's cavalry from the Shenandoah Valley, recent new recruits for Grant's force, and possibly even men from Major General William T. Sherman's armies already operating in North Carolina, could arrive at Petersburg.



Maj. Gen.  
Philip Sheridan



Maj. Gen. Wil-  
liam T. Sherman

## Part 11 Sources

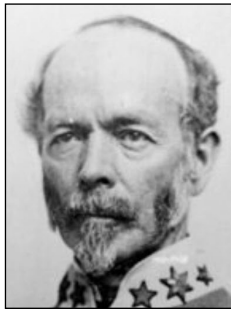
- [\*Flight Into Oblivion\*](#) by Alfred Jackson Hanna; Golden Springs Publishing (Mar. 28<sup>th</sup>, 2016), Kindle edition
- [\*Lee's Last Retreat: The Flight to Appomattox\*](#) by William Marvel; The University of North Carolina Press (Oct. 15, 2003), Kindle edition
- [\*The Appomattox Campaign: March 29<sup>th</sup>–April 9<sup>th</sup>, 1865\*](#) by Chris M. Calkins; Da Capo Press (July 21<sup>st</sup>, 1997), Kindle edition
- [\*The Strange Journey of the Confederate Constitution, And Other Stories from Georgia's Historical Past\*](#) by William Rawlings; Mercer University Press (Sept. 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017), Kindle edition

- Part 1: Lincoln's Whistle-Stop Inaugural Journey from Springfield, IL to Washington City, Feb. 11<sup>th</sup>–23<sup>rd</sup>, 1861
- Part 2: Jefferson Davis's Inaugural Journey from His MS Plantation, Briarfield, to Montgomery, AL, Feb. 11<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup>, 1861
- Part 3: Reinforcement Via Rail Enables the Confederates to Win the Battle of Bull Run, July 18<sup>th</sup>–21<sup>st</sup>, 1861
- Part 4: The Great Locomotive Chase, a.k.a. Andrews' Raid, April 12<sup>th</sup>, 1862
- Part 5: Greatest Troop Movement by Rail: Rebel Troops from Tupelo, MS to Chattanooga, TN, July 1862
- Part 6: Supplying the Union Troops by Rail During the Gettysburg Campaign, June 11<sup>th</sup>–July 7<sup>th</sup>, 1863
- Part 7: Longstreet's Reinforcement of Bragg by Rail to Win the Battle of Chickamauga, Sept. 9<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup>, 1863
- Part 8: Union XI & XII Army Corps Reinforce and Rescue Rosecrans by Rail in Chattanooga, Sept. 25<sup>th</sup>–Oct. 6<sup>th</sup>, 1863
- Part 9: Supplying Sherman's Atlanta Campaign via Rail, May 1<sup>st</sup>–Sept. 5<sup>th</sup>, 1864
- Part 10: Supplying the Union Troops During the Siege of Petersburg, June 15<sup>th</sup>, 1864–April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1865
- Part 11: Supplying the Confederate Troops During the Appomattox Campaign, April 2<sup>nd</sup>–11<sup>th</sup>, 1865**
- Part 12: Lincoln's Whistle-Stop Funereal Journey from Washington City to Springfield, IL, April 21<sup>st</sup>–May 4<sup>th</sup>, 1865



## Situation in Early March 1865

In early March 1865, Lee decided that his army must break out of the Richmond and Petersburg lines, obtain food and supplies at Danville, Virginia, or Lynchburg, Virginia, and join General Joseph E. Johnston's force opposing Major General Sherman's Union army.



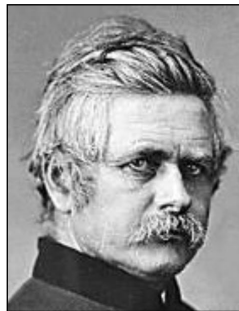
*Gen.  
Joseph E. Johnston*

The situation on the ground at that time was as follows:

- Grant's Union forces totaled approximately 140,000 men. This included the Army of the Potomac (under Maj. Gen. George Meade), the Army of the James (under Maj. Gen. Edward O.C. Ord), and the Army of the Shenandoah (under Maj. Gen. Philip Sheridan).

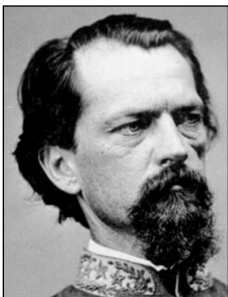


*Maj. Gen.  
George Meade*

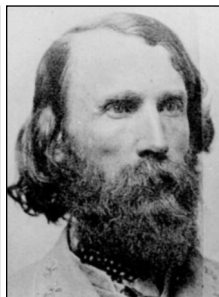


*Maj. Gen.  
Edward O.C. Ord*

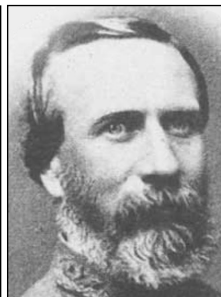
- Lee's Confederate Army of Northern Virginia was comprised about 56,000 men and was organized into four infantry corps and a cavalry corps. This included I Corps (under Lt. Gen. James Longstreet), II Corps (under Maj. Gen. John B. Gordon), III Corps (under Lt. Gen. A.P. Hill), Anderson's Corps (under Lt. Gen. Richard H. Anderson), and Cavalry Corps (under Maj. Gen. Wade Hampton). Also under Lee's command in this campaign was the Department of Richmond, and the Department of North Carolina and Southern Virginia.



*Maj. Gen.  
John B. Gordon*

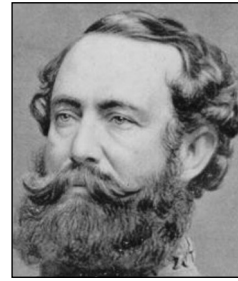


*Lt. Gen.  
A.P. Hill*



*Lt. Gen.  
Richard Anderson*

Following the death of Lt. Gen. A.P. Hill on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1865, III Corps was dissolved and its units assigned to I Corps.



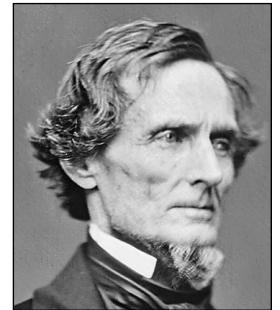
*Maj. Gen.  
Wade Hampton III*

## Union Breakthrough

Part eleven begins with Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's completion of the Siege of Petersburg at the end of March 1865.

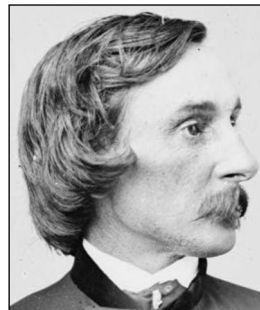
On March 29<sup>th</sup>, 1865, the Union Army began an offensive that would stretch and break the Confederate defenses southwest of Petersburg and cut their supply lines to Petersburg and the Confederate capital of Richmond, Virginia.

As a precaution, President Davis had Mrs. Davis and their four small children leave Richmond on March 31<sup>st</sup> for Charlotte, NC on a special train that also carried some of the more valuable government records. These had been quietly packed during the previous few weeks.



*CSA President  
Jefferson Davis*

A Union victory by Maj. Gen. Phil Sheridan and his cavalry force in a joint attack with Maj. Gen. Gouverneur K. Warren's Fifth Corps infantry at the Battle of

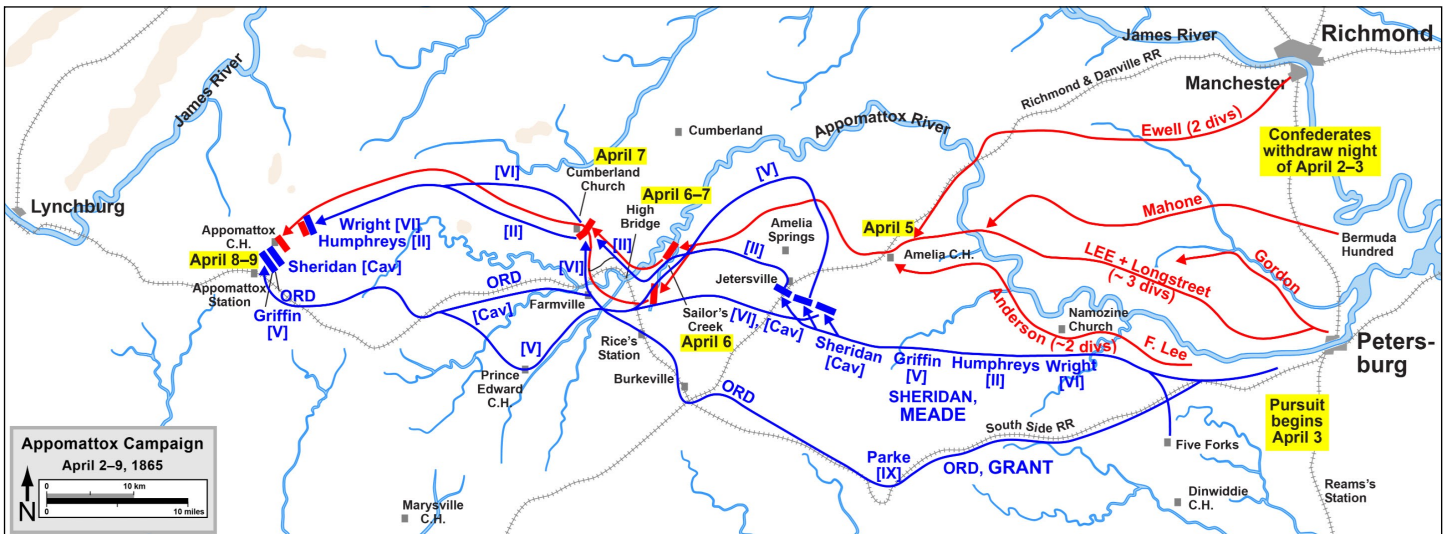


*Maj. Gen.  
Gouverneur Warren*

Five Forks, aka the "Waterloo of the Confederacy", on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1865 was followed by a Union infantry victory at the Third Battle of Petersburg, aka the "Breakthrough at Petersburg", on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1865. This severed the one remaining supply line, the South Side RR, and opened Petersburg and Richmond to imminent capture. Consequently, Lee ordered the evacuation of Confederate forces from both Petersburg and Richmond on the night of April 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> before Grant's army could cut off any escape.

Railroads were to play three significant roles in the exodus resulting from the fall of Richmond on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1865. First, they served to evacuate President Davis, his Cabinet, other government functionaries, and important government documents from Richmond so as to prevent their capture by Union forces. Second, they were intended to rendezvous with Lee and his westward retreating Army of Northern Virginia to supply much needed food, forage, ammunition, and clothing. Third, they were assigned the task of carrying the contents of the Confederate treasury to safety.

## Union Pursuit of the Army of Northern Virginia



Map by Hal Jespersen, [www.posix.com/CW](http://www.posix.com/CW), CC BY 3.0

Marching on previously determined routes, Confederate forces from Richmond, Bermuda Hundred, and Petersburg all marched west toward Amelia Court House, 40 miles southwest of Richmond on the Richmond & Danville RR line, arriving there on April 4<sup>th</sup>. Having reassembled his army, Lee planned to head south along the line of the Richmond & Danville Railroad to link forces with Joseph E. Johnston's Army of Tennessee, which was moving north from North Carolina. With the two armies joined, Lee could establish a defensive line near Danville and possibly even take the offensive against Sherman.

The one member of the Cabinet who remained in Richmond, Maj. Gen. John C. Breckinridge, Secretary of War, was left behind to supervise the evacuation. Early Monday morning, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1865, Breckinridge, accompanied by a group of high army officials, rode out of Richmond and proceeded toward General Lee's headquarters. As Breckinridge neared the rear of the Army of Northern Virginia near Amelia Springs, he saw that Federal cavalry had attacked and burned a long line of army trains.

When Lee arrived at the concentration point of Amelia Court House, he found that the rations he was expecting to have been stockpiled there were woefully inadequate. Thus, he spent two crucial days, April 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>, desperately awaiting supplies and some tardy infantry units from Richmond. When the train finally arrived, Lee was shocked to discover that the train carried only a shipment of government documents.

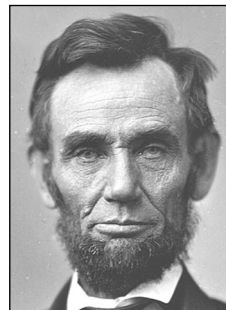
Resuming his march westward, the next day, April 6<sup>th</sup>, Lee's army became bottlenecked attempting to cross two small bridges at Sailor's Creek, located 15 miles west of Amelia Courthouse and 10 miles east of Farmville, VA. Due to almost constant heavy early Spring rains, the Appomattox River and the tributaries flowing into it, such as Sailor's Creek, were full or over-

flowing their banks.

With a limited number of bridges not underwater, precious march time was wasted arriving at a crossing, finding it unpassable, and then having to backtrack to a road leading further west to the next potential bridge. This allowed Grant and the Army of the Potomac to catch up and engage the Confederates in the last major battle of the War between these two armies. The result was that over 20% of the remaining Confederate force, about 7,700 men, was lost. Sheridan and his cavalry force's aggressive and well-executed performance at this battle effectively sealed the fate of Lee's army.

Lee and the remnants of the Army of Northern Virginia continued their march west with two possible destinations, depending upon circumstances: Danville, VA or Lynchburg, VA. Lee planned to resupply his army at one of those cities and march southwest into North Carolina where he could unite his army with the Confederate army commanded by General Joseph E. Johnston.

Although the Confederate Commissary General had sent 80,000 rations to Farmville via the South Side RR line, the constant pressure from the rapidly-closing Federals prevented Lee's army from lingering there to eat. Additionally, Lee was notified that the Richmond & Danville RR line had been severed by Union troops at Jetersville, 7.5 miles west of Amelia Courthouse. The only remaining alternative was to march hungry along the stage road on the northern side of the Appomattox River toward Lynchburg, 59 miles to the west of Sailor's Creek.



Union President  
Abraham Lincoln

President Lincoln sent Grant a telegram on April 7<sup>th</sup>: "Gen. Sheridan says 'If the thing is pressed I think that Lee will surrender.' Let the thing be pressed." Grant's Union Army continued to pursue Lee's fleeing Confederates relentlessly, cutting off or destroying Confederate supplies and blocking their paths to the south and, ultimately, to the west.



On April 8<sup>th</sup>, Breckinridge wired President Davis, who by this time was at Danville, VA: "I left General Lee at Farmville yesterday morning where he was passing the main body across the river for temporary relief. He will still try to move around toward North Carolina." Breckinridge concluded the message by stating "the straggling has been great, and the situation is not favorable." This was soon confirmed as the first of Lee's troops, totally exhausted, began drifting into Danville.

On the afternoon of April 8<sup>th</sup>, the main Confederate column halted northeast of Appomattox Court House, while the reserve artillery and the ambulance and wagon trains approached Appomattox Station, several miles farther west. There, trains arrived from Lynchburg on the South Side RR containing, among other supplies, 120,000 rations needed to feed Lee's army.



*Maj. Gen. Fitzhugh Lee*

But at about 4 p.m., Custer's Union cavalry division captured the trains and then, in three assaults, overran the reserve artillery, securing twenty-five cannon, a thousand prisoners, and some one-hundred wagons. They also blocked Lee's line of retreat. Meanwhile, unbeknownst to Lee, Union infantry marched more than thirty miles into positions to Lee's south and west. That night, the Confederate general held a council of war with Longstreet, Gordon, and Fitzhugh Lee. Together, they determined to attempt a breakout from the tightening encirclement.

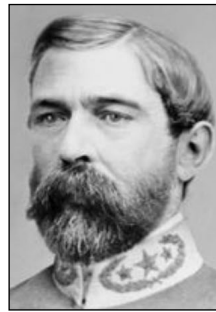
At 7:50 a.m. on April 9<sup>th</sup>, Gordon's corps, supported by Fitzhugh Lee's cavalry, attacked Colonel Charles Smith's Union cavalry brigade, which blocked Lee's line of retreat on the stage road. Although initially successful, the assault faltered as Union infantry arrived on the field. Gordon sent word to Lee that "my command has been fought to a frazzle ... I can not long go forward." Receiving the message, Lee said, "There is nothing left for me to do but to go and see General Grant, and I would rather die a thousand deaths."



*Col. Charles Smith*

Cornered, short of food and supplies, deprived of sleep, and outnumbered, Lee surrendered the Army of Northern Virginia to Grant later that day at the McLean House near the Appomattox Court House, Virginia. Grant summed up Sheridan's performance in these final days: "I believe Gen. Sheridan has no superior as a general, either living or dead, and perhaps not an equal."

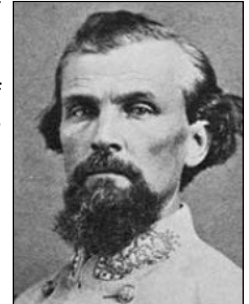
Lee's surrender triggered a domino effect. Taking his cue from Lee, Gen. Joseph E. Johnston, on April 26<sup>th</sup>, surrendered the Army of Tennessee and all remaining Confederate forces still active in North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. It was the largest sur-



*Lt. Gen. Richard Taylor*

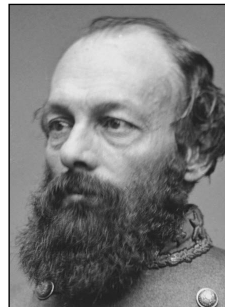
render of the war, totaling 89,270 soldiers. President Davis considered that Johnston, surrendering so many troops that had not been explicitly defeated in battle, had committed an act of treachery. Johnston was paroled on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1865 at Greensboro, NC.

When news of Johnston's surrender reached Alabama, Lt. Gen. Richard Taylor, the son of President Zachary Taylor and commander of some 10,000 Confederate men, concluded a similar peace with his Union counterpart in the region and surrendered his army on May 4<sup>th</sup>.



*Lt. Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest*

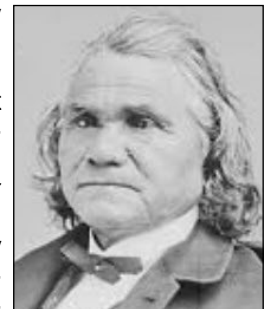
Lt. Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest surrendered his cavalry corps on May 9<sup>th</sup>, 1865, telling his men to "submit to the powers to be, and to aid in restoring peace and establishing law and order throughout the land."



*Lt. Gen. E. Kirby Smith*

On May 26<sup>th</sup>, Lt. Gen. E. Kirby Smith surrendered his Army of the Trans-Mississippi at Galveston, TX.

In Indian Territory (now Oklahoma), Brig. Gen. Stand Watie, the first Native American to serve as a Confederate general, kept his troops in the field for nearly a month after Smith gave up the Trans-Mississippi Army. On June 23<sup>rd</sup>, Watie finally acknowledged defeat and surrendered his unit of Confederate Cherokee, Creek, Seminole and Osage troops at Doaksville, near Fort Towson, becoming the last Confederate general to give up his command.



*Brig. Gen. Stand Watie*



*Lt. Cmdr. James Waddell*

Only in August 1865, when its skipper, Lt. Cmdr. James Waddell, got word that the war had definitively ended, did the last Confederate belligerent, the Confederate raider CSS Shenandoah, stow its guns and surrender at Liverpool, England.

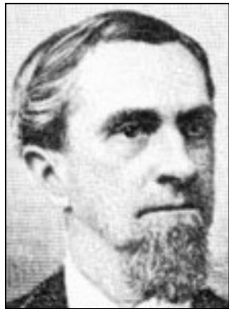
## Flight of the Confederate Government

Members of Congress, various bureaucratic officials, and dignitaries clamored for places on all available trains of the Richmond & Danville RR which began leaving the Confederate capital late in the afternoon of April 2<sup>nd</sup>. As the presidential counselors reached the railroad station, they were forced to push their way through hundreds of excited people seeking ways and means of leaving Richmond.

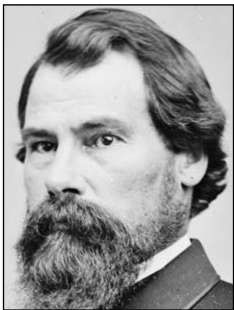
The following members of President Davis' Cabinet would accompany him southwestward:



Sec. of State,  
Judah P. Benjamin  
(LA)



Attorney Gen.,  
George Davis  
(NC)

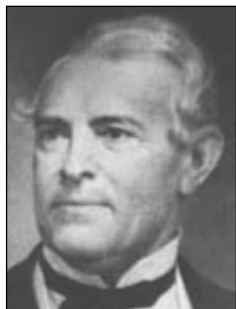


Postmaster Gen.,  
John H. Reagan  
(TX)\*

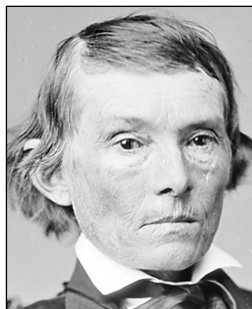


Sec. of the Navy,  
Stephen R. Mallory  
(FL)\*

\*Reagan and Mallory were the only members of the Cabinet who held their positions during the entire life of the Confederacy.

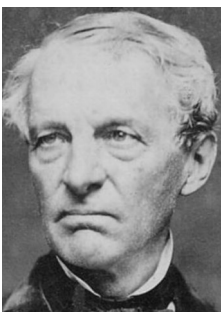


Treasury Sec.  
George A. Trenholm  
(SC)



Vice President  
Alexander H. Stephens  
(GA)\*\*

\*\*Not on the train was Vice President of the Confederacy, Alexander H. Stephens of Georgia. Shut out by the micromanaging Davis, Stephens had remained at his Georgia home during much of the Civil War.

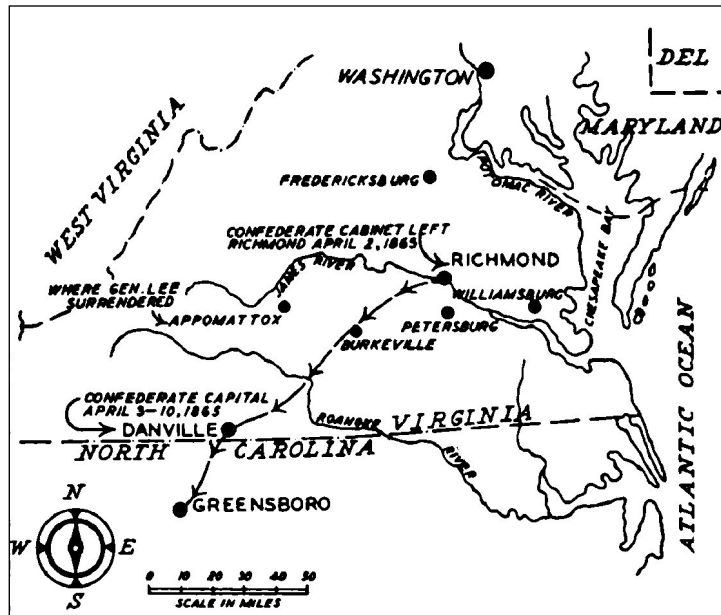


Numerous bureaucratic officials helped President Davis, the Cabinet, and General Samuel Cooper, the Adjutant-General of the Confederate Army, move the government from the doomed Richmond on the night of April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1865.

Adjutant-Gen.  
Gen. Samuel Cooper

*The Knapsack*

Upon the arrival of President Davis, the official train finally limped out of the Richmond station and headed for Danville on the Richmond & Danville RR line.



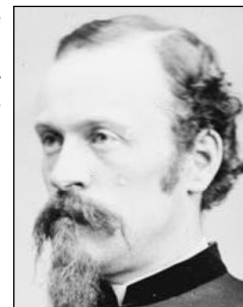
From *Flight Into Oblivion*, p. 35.

Momentarily expecting an attack, the Cabinet's train followed the only available rails southwest from Richmond to Burkeville and then southward. The uncertainty of their situation was intensified by the ever-present threat of an attack by Sheridan's cavalry. Frequent stops of their train, made necessary by the condition of the roadbed, slowed the journey throughout the night of April 2<sup>nd</sup> and most of the next day.

The long ride from Richmond southwest to Danville through the sloping Piedmont section, a distance of only 140 miles, was so difficult and slow that Danville was not reached until the middle of the afternoon of April 3<sup>rd</sup>. Danville would serve as the temporary capital of the Confederacy for a week, April 3<sup>rd</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>, 1865. Subsequently, Davis and his party traveled by train to Greensboro, NC on the Piedmont RR, spending April 11<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> there.

The Charlotte & South Carolina RR extending 110 miles south of Greensboro to Columbia, SC had been wrecked by Stoneman's raiders; hence there was little choice in the means of transportation. Secretaries Breckinridge and Mallory and Postmaster General Reagan rode on horseback with President Davis, while Secretary Benjamin, Attorney General Davis, Secretary of the Treasury Trenholm and some of the older army officers, including General Cooper, were accommodated in ambulances, carriages, and wagons. The exodus was extremely slow and was accompanied by endless confusion.

From here on, there would be no train service. One by one, Davis' band splintered the further south they went. Eventually, Davis, his wife, and his remaining entourage would be captured by a detachment of Union Gen.

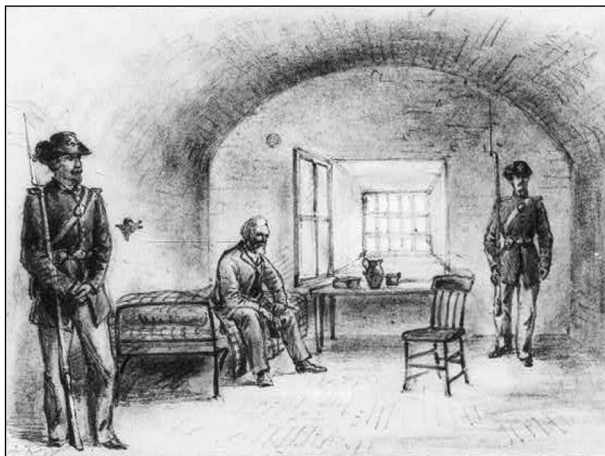


Maj. Gen.  
James H. Wilson



James H. Wilson's cavalry near Irwinville, Georgia on May 10<sup>th</sup>, 1865. There were two exceptions: both Breckinridge and Benjamin traveled through Florida. From there, both went to Britain, Breckinridge via Cuba and Benjamin via The Bahamas. Benjamin never returned to America. Breckinridge settled for a time in Canada. On Dec. 25<sup>th</sup>, 1868, President Johnson issued a general pardon and amnesty for all former Confederates. Taking his time, Breckinridge finally returned to his native city, Lexington, KY, on March 9<sup>th</sup>, 1869. Although he would spend the rest of his life there, he never bought a house but lived first in hotels and then rented a home.

As to Jefferson Davis, Johnson's pardon and amnesty also applied to him. Upon his capture, Davis had been indicted for treason, imprisoned in Fort Monroe for two



Sketch by [Alfred R. Waud](#), British born American artist and illustrator, of Jefferson Davis imprisoned in the Fort Monroe casemate (1865)

years, but never tried because the Federal government feared that Davis would be able prove to a jury that the Southern secession of 1860 to 1861 was legal. His wife, Varina, worked tirelessly for his release, and in May 1867, he was released on bail of \$100,000, with the help of several wealthy Northerners. The case against him was finally dismissed by a Federal circuit court on Feb. 15<sup>th</sup>, 1869.



First Lady, Mrs. Varina Davis

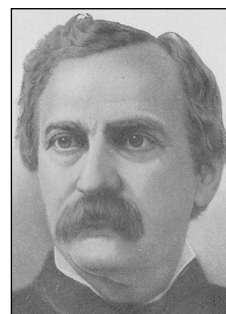
### The Fate of the Confederate Treasure

Picking up the third thread to our story, all the cash reserves of the Confederacy had been loaded, during the afternoon of April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1865 on one train under the supervision of Walter Philbrook, Senior Teller of the Treasury Department, and a group of his assistants. The treasure included about \$500,000 in double eagle gold pieces, in Mexican silver dollars, in copper coins and in silver bricks, gold ingots and nuggets, packed in sacks and boxes. It also included \$451,000 in gold reserves owned by Richmond's banks and a large amount of jewelry donated by Confederate women to the cause.

The sum total of Confederate Treasury hard currency may seem small for a national treasury, and in the weeks after Lee's surrender, the Federal government, i.e., Stanton, fueled wild speculation that millions were missing--possibly between \$6 million and \$13 million in Treasury bullion and coins. From such discrepancies, rumors abound and fables, legends, and myths are born. More likely, Stanton may have inflated the value of the Confederate treasure hoping to instill a sense of urgency among the Federal troops seeking the fugitive Davis and his government.

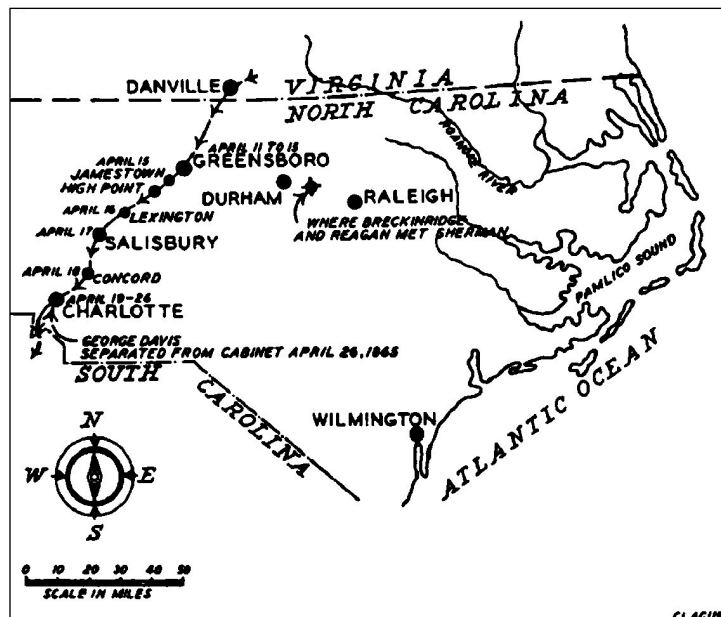
The simple truth is that the Confederacy was probably much nearer to being broke than the Federal government realized. The cost of waging war, steady losses of economic resources to Union armies, and the successful Union naval blockade had withered the Confederate economy and drained the Treasury by 1865. For comparison, \$500,000 in 1865 has the equivalent buying power of \$8,702,944 in 2022.

The train was guarded by Confederate Navy Capt. William H. Parker and sixty young midshipmen under his command from the Confederate States Naval Academy. They had scuttled their vessel in the James River and had arrived just in time to prevent what might have developed into a serious pillaging of the treasure by a mob. In an account he made to a Richmond newspaper in 1893, Parker recalled that the government funds placed in his charge totaled only "about \$500,000 in gold, silver and bullion." In any event, the total weight of the treasure was more than nine tons.

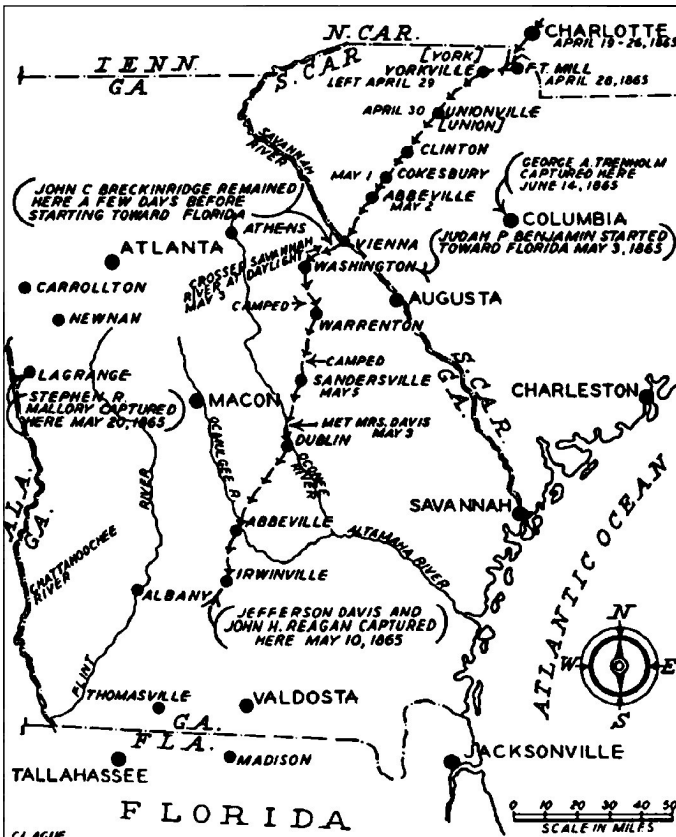


Navy Capt. William H. Parker

On April 6<sup>th</sup>, when the treasure train, on the Piedmont RR line, reached Greensboro, NC, Capt. Parker left \$35,000 in gold sovereigns for the President and Cabinet, and \$39,000 for Johnston's army. He took the balance of the treasure on to Charlotte, NC, deposited it in the mint there, and placed a heavy guard over it.

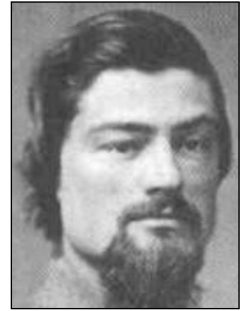


From [Flight Into Oblivion](#), p. 57.



From *Flight Into Oblivion*, p. 108.

was again transferred to wagons and carried across the Savannah River to Washington, GA. From there, the treasure was taken to Augusta, GA on the Georgia RR. Breckinridge rode into Abbeville, South Carolina on the morning of April 28<sup>th</sup>. While there, Breckinridge and Brig. Gen. Basil W. Duke finally convinced Davis that further prosecution of the war was hopeless. Breckinridge was put in charge of the \$150,000 in gold remaining in the Confederate treasury; traveling southward by rail toward Washington, Georgia, a group of soldiers in his military escort – unpaid for months – threatened to divide the gold among themselves before it could be captured by federal troops. Breckinridge convinced them to abandon their scheme after paying them their wages from the treasury, but some of them refused to escort Breckinridge and the bullion any further.



Brig. Gen. Basil W. Duke

Davis' and Breckinridge's party arrived in Washington, GA on May 4<sup>th</sup> and, after paying out several requisitions from the treasury, deposited the rest in banks there. It was here that Davis, Breckinridge, and the other few remaining advisers made the decision to disband the Confederate government. They entrusted some \$86,000 of the remaining treasury funds to two Confederate naval officials and tasked them with smuggling it out of the country to Britain. These funds were never to arrive there and what became of them is unknown.

Also during the group's disbandment on May 4<sup>th</sup>, as his last official act as President, Davis appointed Capt. M.H. Clark as Acting Treasurer. Clark had previously been Chief Clerk of the President's office. Except for \$35,000 in gold which Davis took with him, Capt. Clark was entrusted with the remaining Confederate treasure. The table on page 9 itemizes expenses incurred from the time they left Danville, VA. This accounted for \$327,000. Since the treasure totaled \$500,000 when they left Richmond, it is unclear what happened to \$173,000 between there and Danville, VA.

On May 10<sup>th</sup>, when members of the 4<sup>th</sup> Michigan Cavalry captured Davis' group near Irwinville, Georgia, they had only a few dollars with them. It's unclear what happened to the rest of the money. Was it stolen by the Michigan cavalymen? Did Davis and his group hide it?

As for the Richmond bank gold in Washington, GA, it quickly fell into the hands of the Federal troops who occupied the town within days after Davis left. According to these troops, on the night of May 24<sup>th</sup>, as they made camp for the night in Lincoln County, Georgia, near Danburg Crossroads, some 20 armed men on horseback stormed the camp and absconded with as much gold as they could carry. How convenient! Of the \$451,000 in the bank gold, the robbers made off with \$251,000. Federal soldiers were eventually able to "recover" about \$111,000 of what had been taken. That leaves \$140,000 unaccounted for and probably absorbed into the local economy. Today, over a century and half later, it is rumored that some local fortunes were founded on the basis of the gold stolen from the Richmond banks' assets.

According to the historian A.J. Hanna in his 1938 book "Flight Into Oblivion", President Davis and his group paid \$108,000 to the troops escorting them when they neared the Savannah River, separating South Carolina from Georgia. An additional \$40,000 was paid for supplies in Washington and Augusta, Georgia.

The fleeing Confederates didn't touch the \$451,000 in Richmond bank gold because it didn't belong to the Confederate government. Those bank funds were deposited in a local vault in Washington, GA for safe-keeping. Then, learning that Union cavalry Maj. Gen. George Stoneman and his force was in the area, Capt. Parker immediately had the treasure removed from the mint at Charlotte and packed onto a train with a large supply of provisions from the nearby naval storehouse. He then convinced Mrs. Davis and her children to join his train to avoid Stoneman as well. Finally, Parker acquired additional guards for the treasure train, bringing the total to 150.



Maj. Gen. George Stoneman

When the treasure train, traveling on the Charlotte & SC RR line, reached Chester, SC, on April 13<sup>th</sup>, the gold and silver had to be transferred to wagons, since there was no railroad to the next destination. Arriving in Newberry, SC, on April 16<sup>th</sup>, the treasure was transferred to a train on the Greenville & Columbia RR line and carried to Abbeville, SC, where Mrs. Davis decided to remain with friends. From Abbeville, the treasure

additional guards for the treasure train, bringing the total to 150.



Amount of gold and silver coin and silver bullion in the Confederate Treasury when the treasure train left Danville, April 6, 1865, about		\$327,000.00
Paid to soldiers in Greensboro, about	\$39,000.00	
Removed from the treasure train at Greensboro and taken with the Brought forward	39,000.00	327,000.00
President and Cabinet; separated from Davis near Sandersville, Georgia, May 6, and sent on to Florida (for disposition of these funds, see pages 115-116), about	35,000.00	
Paid to Major E. C. White near Savannah River to pay escorting officers and troops about \$26 each, about	108,000.00	
Paid to Major R. J. Moses for soldiers' provisions in Washington and Augusta, about	40,000.00	
Paid to John C. Breckinridge, for transmission to the Trans-Mississippi Department	1,000.00	
Paid to James A. Semple, a bonded officer of the Navy, who, with an assistant, agreed to take it, concealed under the false bottom of a carriage, to Charleston or Savannah and then ship it to a Confederate agent in Bermuda, Nassau, or Liverpool, or some other foreign port for the account of the Confederate Government, about	86,000.00	
Brought forward	309,000.00	327,000.00
Paid to Colonels Johnston, Lubbock, Thorburn, and Wood, \$1,510 each (taken by Federals except amounts carried by Wood and Lubbock)	6,040.00	
Paid Captain Given Campbell for scouts	300.00	
Paid Acting Secretary of the Treasury Reagan (taken by Federals)	3,500.00	
Paid to midshipmen and other naval guards of the treasure train	1,500.00	
Paid to Lieutenant Bradford for the marines	300.00	
Paid for miscellaneous expenses	6,360.00	
Total expenditures,* about	<u>\$327,000.00</u>	<u>\$327,000.00</u>

From *Flight Into Oblivion*, p. 111.

## Aftermath of the Appomattox Campaign

The following is from: [Appomattox Campaign | Military Wiki | Fandom](#)

The Appomattox campaign was an example of masterful, relentless pursuit and maneuver by Grant and Sheridan, skills that had been in short supply by previous generals, such as Meade after Gettysburg and McClellan after Antietam. Lee did the best he could under the circumstances, but his supplies, soldiers, and luck finally ran out. The surrender of Lee represented the loss of only one of the Confederate field armies, but it was a psychological blow from which the South did not recover. With no chance remaining for eventual victory, all of the remaining armies capitulated by June 1865.

Confederate casualties in the campaign are difficult to estimate because many of their records are lost and reports were not always submitted. National Park Service historian Chris M. Calkins estimates 6,266 killed and wounded, 19,132 captured; surrendering at Appomattox Court House were 22,349 infantry, 1,559 cavalry, and 2,576 artillery troops.

William Marvel has written that many of the Confederate veterans bemoaned that there were only "8,000 muskets" available at the end against the enormous Union Army, but this figure deliberately ignores cavalry and artillery strength and is much lower than the total number of men who received certificates of parole. Many men who had slipped away from the army during the retreat later returned to receive the official Federal paperwork allowing them to return to their homes unmolested. Union casualties for the campaign were about 9,700 killed, wounded, and missing or captured.

## Destroyed Richmond-Petersburg Railroad Bridge Over the James River at Richmond



The bridge was destroyed by the retreating Army of Northern Virginia on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1865 in anticipation of the evacuation of Richmond. Shortly after the war ended, the federal government and the railroad company rebuilt the bridge over the James River, a 400-foot-long, 12-foot-high trestle bridge. It opened on May 26, 1866 and was built at a cost of \$118,245.

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Lincoln Funeral Train Commemoration

### April 22 - 23

Take a step back in history to April, 1865 as we commemorate 157 years since the Lincoln Funeral Train crossed Stone Gables Estate!

Witness and participate in this one-of-a-kind living history event.



- See the Lincoln Funeral Train Museum
- Visit our Lancaster County Civil War collection
- Receive a FREE booklet on President Lincoln
- See Reenactors in period dress
- Sign up to register as a Reenactor
- Free admission wearing period dress

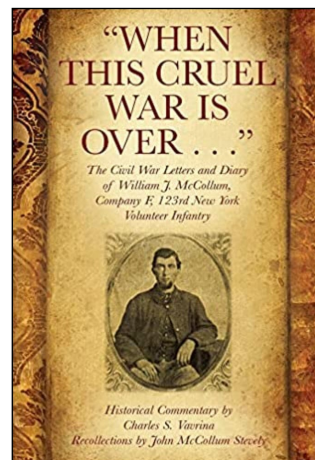
Information and Tickets  
Reenactor Registrations  
[StoneGablesEstate.com](http://StoneGablesEstate.com)

For information:

<https://stonegablesestate.com/event-calendar/>

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[When This Cruel War Is Over . . . The Civil War Letters and Diary of William J. McCollum, Company F, 123<sup>rd</sup> New York Volunteer Infantry](#) by Charles S Vavrina; Outskirts Press (Dec. 13, 2021); ISBN-10: 977225179; ISBN-13: 978-1977225177



This book contains 100 letters and a year (1865) of diary entries by one William McCollum of Argyle, NY. The book itself covers the exploits of the 123<sup>rd</sup> NY Voluntary Infantry (the only regiment composed solely of soldiers from Washington Co., NY) from mustering in at Salem, NY through Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, and the Atlanta and Carolina's Campaigns (covering the Battles of Averasboro and Bentonville, especially where the 123<sup>rd</sup> NY Voluntary Infantry is concerned).

It is 332 pages in length, contains 38 period photographs including several of soldiers in the 123<sup>rd</sup> itself, 36 literary references, 12 battle maps drawn specifically to show positions of the 123<sup>rd</sup> NY, 537 footnotes (heavily drawn from the Official Records and including all the soldiers mentioned in the text), 4 appendices of McCollum family heirlooms associated with William during his enlistment, and a fully annotated 14-page index.

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# News of the RCWRT



## Upcoming 2022 RCWRT Meetings

For March, we will once again meet in person at the NC Museum of History's Daniels auditorium with a simultaneous Zoom cast. The wearing of a mask is optional.

Date	Speaker(s)	Topic
Apr. 11 <sup>th</sup> , 2022	Freddie Kiger	"Sheer Adulterated Violence": The Battle of Sharpsburg/ Antietam
May 9 <sup>th</sup> , 2022	Cindy Pratt	The 135th U.S. Colored Troops Civil War Trail Marker to be displayed in Goldsboro, NC

### For Sale

A Civil War library of about 300 volumes. If interested, contact Jack Bowling at [jwbowling42@yahoo.com](mailto:jwbowling42@yahoo.com).



**AMERICAN  
BATTLEFIELD  
TRUST** ★ ★ ★

### Save the Slaughter Pen Farm at Fredericksburg, VA

The Battle of Fredericksburg (VA) on Dec. 13<sup>th</sup>, 1862 is often misunderstood to have been an easy Confederate victory. In fact, it was a close-fought thing. The Slaughter Pen Farm witnessed some of the most desperate fighting during the battle. The main Union assault on the Confederate line struck at a weak point that touched off a seesaw battle that raged from the wooded slopes of Prospect Hill and across the shell-swept plain of what is now known as Slaughter Pen Farm.

Your donation will be matched \$2-to-\$1 thanks to an anonymous benefactor! A \$12 million loan was taken out years ago to secure the preservation of this property. A deadline is looming in mid-May for paying off the balance of this loan ahead of time, saving tens of thousands of dollars of interest payments. A sum of \$400,000 must be raised in 2022 to secure the \$800,000 match.

A donation of \$100 or greater will get your name on the new donor signs being installed at the Slaughter Pen Farm. For more information, and to donate, go to <https://www.battlefields.org/spfarm22>.



## The Knapsack

is the official newsletter of the RCWRT and is published around the 1st of each month.

(March 2022 Circulation: 404)

### Staff

**Bob Graesser, Editor**

### Contributors

**Griff Bartlett**

**Readers are encouraged to submit photos, events, & articles for publication to Bob Graesser, Editor**  
([RaleighCWRT@yahoo.com](mailto:RaleighCWRT@yahoo.com); 919-244-9041)

## RCWRT Board of Directors (2020-22)

Name	Position
Josie Walker	President / Program Committee
Ted Kunstling	Past President
Johnny Wood	Vice President / Program Committee
Griff Bartlett	Secretary / Treasurer
Pattie Smith	Program Committee
Bob Graesser	Knapsack Editor / Webmaster
Wayne Shore	Member
Lloyd Townsend	Member

**Paying Memberships / Total Members: 132 / 163**

**One New Member Joined the RCWRT in March 2022:**

**We welcome Larry Zeph of Durham, NC**

## Civil War Round Table Congress Event

### The Great What Ifs of the American Civil War

Published March 4, 2022

By Historians

Chris Mackowski and Brian Matthew Jordan  
Join them via Zoom on April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at 7:00 pm

To sign up, go to [https://www.aplos.com/aws/events/109\\_mackowski\\_jordan](https://www.aplos.com/aws/events/109_mackowski_jordan)

The Raleigh Civil War Round Table was formed on March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2001 and is a 501(c)(3) "tax exempt organization."

We meet on the second Monday of each month (except this Dec.). We are once again meeting in person at the NC Museum of History, 5 East Edenton Street, Raleigh, NC starting at 6:30 p.m. to allow 30 min. for mingling.

Annual membership dues are \$30 (individual and family) and \$10 for teachers. Student membership is free. Half-year memberships are available March through May for \$20. Dues should be submitted to Griff Bartlett, Treasurer, 908 Kinsdale Drive, Raleigh, NC 27615-1117 by **Sept. 15<sup>th</sup>** each year.

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