

National Park Service awards \$4.3 million to protect more than 782 acres of battlefield land across seven states

WASHINGTON - The National Park Service today announced \$4,313,407.02 in grants from the American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP) to help protect 782.86 acres of significant battlefields in Kentucky, North Carolina, New York, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia threatened with damage or destruction by suburban development.

“Through public-private partnerships, local communities are able to permanently protect and preserve historic battlefield lands,” National Park Service Deputy Director David Vela said. “Future generations will be able to visit and learn about the events that helped shape this country.”

The American Battlefield Protection Program’s Battlefield Land Acquisition Grant program provides up to 50 percent in matching funds for state and local governments to acquire and preserve threatened Revolutionary War, War of 1812, and Civil War Battlefield land through the purchase of land in fee simple and permanent, protective interests in land. Eligible battlefields are listed in the Civil War Sites Advisory Commission’s 1993 “Report on the Nation’s Civil War Battlefields” and the 2007 “Report to Congress on the Historic Preservation of Revolutionary War and War of 1812 Sites in the United States.”

Kentucky

Grantee: Boyle County Fiscal Court
Land Acquired: Perryville Battlefield, White Tract, 128.5 acres (Fee Simple) to be

transferred to Perryville Battlefield State Historic Site

Project Partner: American Battlefield Trust and Commonwealth of Kentucky Department of Parks

Amount: \$520,261.50

The Battle of Perryville (also known as the Battle of Chaplin Hills) was fought on October 8, 1862, in the Chaplin Hills west of Perryville, Kentucky, as the culmination of the Confederate Heartland Offensive (Kentucky Campaign) during the American Civil War. The battle is considered a strategic Union victory, sometimes called the Battle for Kentucky, since Confederate Gen. Braxton Bragg withdrew to Tennessee soon thereafter. The Union retained control of the critical border state of Kentucky for the remainder of the war. Considering the casualties relative to the engaged strengths of the armies, the Battle of Perryville was one of the bloodiest battles of the Civil War. It was the largest battle fought in the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

New York

Grantee: Town of Fort Ann, New York
Land Acquired: Fort Ann Battlefield, Caprood Tract, 40.85 acres (Fee Simple)
Project Partner: American Battlefield Trust and Agricultural Stewardship Association
Amount: \$49,473

The Battle of Fort Ann was a battle in the American Revolutionary War that occurred between the American Patriots and the British. The battle was part of the decisive Saratoga Campaign. In June 1777, a British army led by Maj. Gen. John “Gentleman Johnny” Burgoyne invaded New York from Canada. By the first week of July, Burgoyne had captured Fort Ticonderoga. With the Americans in full retreat, Burgoyne dispatched a contingent to pursue a column

under Col. Pierson Long. On July 7, 1777, Long attacked the British at Fort Ann. Long's actions held up Burgoyne's advance for two days. Continued delays in the coming months eventually contributed to the final British defeat and surrender at Saratoga in October. The victory prompted France to enter the war as an ally of the United States.

North Carolina

Grantee: North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

Land Acquired: Bentonville Battlefield, Denning Tract, 143 acres (Fee Simple)

Project Partner: American Battlefield Trust

Amount: \$355,675

The Battle of Bentonville, the last battle between the armies of Sherman and Johnston, occurred from March 19-21, 1865 and resulted in Johnston's surrender almost a month later on April 26 at Bennett Place near present day Durham, NC.

Pennsylvania

Grantee: Commonwealth of Pennsylvania/Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission

Land Acquired: Gettysburg Battlefield, Lutheran Theological Seminary Tract, 7.32 acres (Easement)

Project Partner: American Battlefield Trust and Land Conservancy of Adams County

Amount: \$241,425

Grantee: Commonwealth of Pennsylvania/Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission

Land Acquired: Gettysburg Battlefield, United Lutheran Seminary Tract, .28 acres (Fee Simple)

Project Partner: American Battlefield Trust and Land Conservancy of Adams County

Amount: \$168,550

The Battle of Gettysburg was fought July 1–3, 1863, in and around the town of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, by Union and Confederate forces during the American Civil War. The battle involved the largest number of casualties of the entire war and is often described as the war's turning point.

South Carolina

Grantee: South Carolina Department of Archives and History

Land Acquired: Eutaw Springs Battlefield, Daniels Tract, 10.4 acres (Fee Simple)

Project Partner: American Battlefield Trust

Amount: \$31,499.03

Grantee: Lancaster County, South Carolina

Land Acquired: Hanging Rock Battlefield, Horton IV Tract, 30.84 acres (Fee Simple)

Project Partner: American Battlefield Trust and Katawba Valley Land Trust

Amount: \$162,153

The Battle of Hanging Rock (August 6, 1780) was a battle in the American Revolutionary War that occurred between the American Patriots and the British. It was part of a campaign by militia General Thomas Sumter to harass or destroy British outposts in the South Carolina back-country that had been established after the fall of Charleston in May 1780. Future President Andrew Jackson partook in the battle. The Battle of Eutaw Springs (September 8, 1781) was a battle of the American Revolutionary War, and was the last major engagement of the war in the Carolinas. Both sides claimed victory.

Tennessee

Grantee: Tennessee Historical Commission

Land Acquired: Shiloh Battlefield, Cotner Tract, 40.773 acres (Fee Simple)

Project Partner: American Battlefield Trust

Amount: \$50,812.57

Grantee: Tennessee Historical Commission

Land Acquired: Stones River Battlefield, O'Reilly Tract, 42 acres (Fee Simple)

Project Partner: American Battlefield Trust

Amount: \$2,075,000

Grantee: Tennessee Historical Commission

Land Acquired: Jackson Battlefield, Yarbrow Farms Tract, 120 acres (Fee Simple)

Project Partner: American Battlefield Trust

Amount: \$345,336.95

The December 19, 1862 Battle of Jackson, also known as the Battle of Salem Cemetery, was a small but locally significant Civil War engagement. Cotton Grove Road, a pioneer-era road, runs alongside the cemetery and remains largely unchanged since the Civil War, giving the area a high degree of historic integrity. The area is an example of how the Civil War's military strategists used topography and existing landscape features to their advantage when time was scarce and earthwork construction was not an option.

At the Battle of Stones River in December 1862, Union and Confederate forces clashed near Murfreesboro, Tennessee. On December 31, Confederate General Braxton Bragg's 35,000 troops successfully attacked the 42,000-strong Union force commanded by Major General William Rosecrans. Union troops withstood the assault, but retreated to a defensive position, which they would hold against repeated attacks over the next two days. On January 2, 1863, another

Confederate assault was repelled by overwhelming Union artillery fire, forcing Bragg to order a Southern retreat. With approximately 23,000 total casualties, Stones River was one of the deadliest battles of the war. Rosecrans claimed victory and the battle provided a much-needed boost to Union morale following their defeat at Fredericksburg, Virginia.

The Battle of Shiloh took place April 6 - 7, 1862 and was one of the major early engagements of the American Civil War (1861-65). The battle began when the Confederates launched a surprise attack on Union forces under General Ulysses S. Grant (1822-85) in southwestern Tennessee. After initial successes, the Confederates were unable to hold their positions and were forced back, resulting in a Union victory. Both sides suffered heavy losses, with more than 23,000 total casualties, and the level of violence shocked North and South alike.

Virginia

Grantee: Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation

Land Acquired: First Battle of Rappahannock Station Battlefield, Engh Tract, 219.26 acres (Easement)

Project Partner: American Battlefield Trust

Amount: \$311,075

The First Battle of Rappahannock Station, also known as Waterloo Bridge, White Sulphur Springs, Lee Springs, or Freeman's Ford, took place from August 22 to August 25, 1862, in Culpeper County and Fauquier County, Virginia, as part of the Northern Virginia Campaign.

For more information about ABPP, including these grants, please visit: <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/2287/index.htm>.

Marines Were on the Front Lines the Night Lincoln Was Shot



1865 engraving depicts the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln by John Wilkes Booth. In the presidential box at Ford's Theatre, from left, are Major Henry Rathbone, his fiancée Clara Harris, and Mary Todd Lincoln. (Library of Congress)

By Dick Camp and Suzanne Pool-Camp.
History.net

Leathernecks witnessed the assassination and played a role in the roundup of the conspirators

MARINE FIRST LIEUTENANT Richard S. Collum was reading the April 14, 1865, morning paper after a quiet breakfast in his quarters at the Marine Barracks when he spotted an announcement about a live performance at Ford's Theatre, Washington, D.C.'s "magnificent thespian temple." The play, *Our American Cousin*, headlined by popular British actress Laura Keane, was billed as an eccentric comedy. According to the announcement, "President Lincoln, General Grant and other distinguished men would be present." On the spur of the moment, "I determined to go," Collum remarked.



Marine Corps historian Richard S. Collum, at the time a first lieutenant, witnessed the assassination from the first level of Ford's Theatre. (Library of Congress)

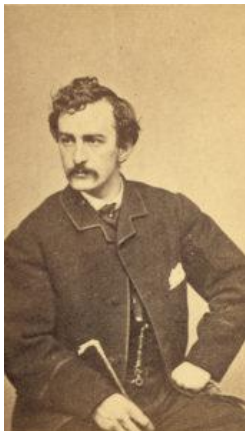
Collum, 27, had been a Marine since 1861. During the war he served in the Atlantic and participated in the attacks on Fort Fisher, near Wilmington, N.C. After commanding the Marine guards at the Washington Navy Yard in 1865, he served at Mound City, Ill., and Boston. In Washington after General Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appomattox Court House, Va., Collum thought it would be a good opportunity to see the two men who had led the Union to victory. A relaxing evening at the theatre also offered him a welcome respite from the hectic duties of the past few days. Lee's surrender five days before had unleashed the emotions of the war-weary residents of the capital. They had exploded in riotous celebrations, often leading to drunken bouts of mayhem, which Collum's men at the Washington Navy Yard had to bring under control.

Another barracks officer, Major George R. Graham, agreed to accompany Collum to the theatre. Graham suggested that they stop off

at the Kirkwood House, an upscale hotel at the corner of Pennsylvania Avenue and 12th Street, whose current residents included Vice President Andrew Johnson.

The two men left the barracks about 6 p.m. and leisurely strolled past the joyous crowds to the hotel. After buying drinks, they made their way to the reading room to relax and watch the patrons come and go. At about 7 p.m. “a man in dark clothes with spurs on his boots briefly spoke to the major and then entered the bar,” Collum recalled. Graham explained that he knew the man’s father: “He used to work as a clerk at the Navy Yard. His name is Herold—a ne’er-do-well.”

Neither Collum nor Graham was yet aware that David Herold was part of a group of Confederate sympathizers that was planning to kill the president. Nor did they know that John Wilkes Booth, the leader of the conspiracy, had gone to the Kirkwood about an hour earlier and left a note for Johnson. It was part of Booth’s plot to kill not only Lincoln, but also the vice president and Secretary of State William H. Seward.



Actor and Confederate sympathizer John Wilkes Booth boasted he would be “the most famous man in America” after that night. (Library of Congress)

Booth, a 26-year-old actor, came from a family of famous Shakespearean players. He had a lean and athletic build, and curly black hair that framed his face. Called by some “the handsomest man in America,” Booth won his celebrity status by his romantic personal attraction. By this time, he had performed on the stages of major American cities from New York to Richmond, Va.

Booth had frequently performed at Ford’s Theatre, and as a result, he was well acquainted with the staff. He knew William Withers, leader of the orchestra and former member of the Marine Band, as well as some of the players, who were moonlighting Marine bandsmen. Since Booth was the leader of the conspiracy and knew the layout of the theater like the back of his hand, he would carry out the plan to kill Lincoln. He enlisted the assistance of David Herold, a clerk at a nearby drugstore and a skilled horseman. Knowing the back roads of the countryside south of Washington, D.C., he would help Booth escape.

George Atzerodt, a young carriage painter with a weakness for drinking, was supposed to shoot the vice president. Lewis Powell, who had had been going by the name Payne since he deserted from the Army of Northern Virginia, was assigned to murder Seward in his home. Other accomplices included John Surratt, who acted as a Confederate courier, carrying military secrets, and his widowed mother, Mary Surratt, who ran a boarding house frequently used as a meeting place for the conspirators. In preparation for the evening of evil deeds, Booth had purchased a horse and placed it in the stable behind Ford’s Theatre, where it would be waiting so he could escape.

Collum and Graham walked the two blocks to Ford’s Theatre on 10th Street, arriving in time for the 8 p.m. showing. As they entered

the lobby, they were immediately taken in by the ebullient mood of the crowd—ladies in their elegant evening dresses, men in black tie, soldiers and Marines in their brass-buttoned uniforms—talking and laughing excitedly as they waited for the performance to begin.

The two officers found their seats three rows from the stage on the left side; from there they had a good view of the president's box in the second level on the right side. They were fortunate to get good seats, because the house was packed "from pit to dome" with an audience of approximately 1,600. The curtain had already risen for the play when Lincoln and his wife, Mary, arrived with their guests, Army Major Henry Rathbone and his fiancée, Clara Harris, the daughter of Senator Ira Harris of New York. The young couple had replaced Lt. Gen. Ulysses Grant and his wife, who had declined the invitation earlier that day so that they could visit their children in New Jersey.

As the president entered his box, the play was stopped. The orchestra leader, William Withers, raised his baton, brought it down dramatically and the orchestra struck up "Hail to the Chief." The audience clapped and cheered; Lincoln smiled in appreciation. The play resumed. Collum later recalled that he saw Booth walk down the left aisle to the edge of the stage, where he turned and "took in the situation with an apparently cool and critical eye." He was dressed in an evening suit with a white satin waistcoat and departed as quickly as he had arrived. This fleeting appearance made little impression on the two Marines at the time.

During the intermission, Collum noticed that Lincoln was chatting with his guests and appeared to show "a buoyancy of spirits, greatly in contrast to his usual manner." In a terrible breach of security, John Parker, the

policeman sent by the White House staff to accompany the Lincolns for the evening, went for a drink after the first act and did not return to his station. Before the second act, Collum noticed that "Lincoln arose laughing from his chair" to put on his overcoat and then settled into his seat. Years later Collum wrote: "The dread shadow of death was even then...approaching and soon its icy hand would blot out forever a noble life."



President Lincoln was in a light-hearted mood that night, laughing and joking with well-wishers. (Library of Congress)

The theater darkened as the curtain rose for the resumption of the comedy. Halfway through Scene Two of the third act, Harry Hawk, the actor on stage, delivered one of the play's funniest lines. Just as the audience laughed, "a muffled pistol shot was heard." Collum thought it came from behind the curtain, but then suddenly "a woman's piercing shriek rang out, a noise of scuffling in the president's box was heard and immediately an agile form sprang from the rail of the box."

It was later determined that while all the audience had been focused on the play, Booth had slipped into the narrow hallway leading to a door opening on the presidential box. He carefully placed a wooden block across the door, so that it couldn't be opened from the outside. He then opened the door to the box, aimed his Derringer and fired a single shot into the left side of Lincoln's head.

Rathbone lunged for Booth, who dropped the pistol and pulled a long knife out of his boot. As the blade ripped open Rathbone's upper arm, the major fell backward just as Booth leaped up on the rail. Collum recalled how Booth stood for a second with a knife in his uplifted right hand "to shout in stentorian tones those memorable words *Sic semper tyrannis*" [Thus always to tyrants], and jumped 12 feet down to the stage. His spur caught in the flag draping the railing of the presidential box, causing him to fall off balance and break his leg just above the ankle.

Limping badly, Booth rushed to exit the stage, "facing the audience as he passed, his eyes glaring with the wild light of insanity and disappeared from view," Collum wrote later. Clara Harris cried out, "He has shot the president!"

Several men tried to pursue Booth through the backstage passageways, but he slashed anyone who got in his way. As he came up to orchestra leader Withers, who was backstage at the time of the shooting and still totally unaware of what had happened, Booth yelled hysterically: "Let me pass!"

"He made a rush at me...waving his dagger [that] cut a gash through the left side of my coat," Withers later recounted. Booth slashed again, cutting the orchestra leader's shoulder, and shoved him, sending him

"sprawling to the floor." Withers recalled: "As I lay there on the floor, I wondered in a vague sort of way what I had done to Booth that he should want to murder me." Booth ran to the alley exit, jumped on his horse and galloped into the night.

Wild confusion and shock rippled through the audience. Collum and Graham saw people crying, cursing and calling for vengeance. Laura Keene stood in the footlights and "with uplifted hands to heaven cried in impassioned tones: 'Kill him! Kill him!'"

Meanwhile, several doctors from the audience eased Lincoln from his chair and placed him on the floor, where they examined his wound. The doctors permitted Keene to rest the president's bloody head in her lap. As soon as it was determined Lincoln had to be taken to a more suitable place, a few men carried him down the steps in the theater. Initially, the doctors were going to move Lincoln next door to the Star Saloon, but decided against it. The saloon was jointly owned by two members of the Marine Band, Peter Taltavull, one of the best French horn players in the country, and Scipiano Grillo. Just before show time, Withers had gone for a drink at the bar and Booth was the first person he met. "He was standing at the bar in his shirtsleeves, his coat thrown over one arm and his hat in his hand," Withers recalled. Someone made a joke at Booth's expense. "I remember seeing an inscrutable smile flit across his face and he said, 'When I leave the stage for good, I will be the most famous man in America.'"

Lincoln was carried gently across the street to the home of William A. Petersen, where he was lain diagonally on a bed in a back bedroom.

Hysterical crowds filled the street as the two Marines made their way back to the barracks, which was already on full alert. The next morning, Collum anxiously scanned the morning newspaper, which was filled with news of the assassination. He noted that the secretary of war was requesting “all officers who had witnessed the assassination to report at the Department.”

As Collum made his way along Pennsylvania Avenue to the War Department, he noticed the buildings draped with black cloth and all the flags at half-staff. When interviewed by the assistant secretary of war, Collum related what he had witnessed, adding the comment that if he had the presence of mind and if he had been armed, he “could easily have shot Booth.”

Security was tight throughout the city. Collum doubled his Marine sentries and strengthened the guard at the Navy Yard. Cavalry patrols combed the surrounding area in search of Booth and his confederates. Two ironclads, USS *Saugus* and USS *Montauk*, were moored at the Navy Yard wharf awaiting the conspirators once they had been detained.

Lewis Powell was the first man arrested. He had attacked Seward, who was bedridden because of a carriage accident, at his home on Lafayette Square. Powell stabbed Seward, his son Augustus, a guard and a messenger, and bludgeoned Seward’s other son, Assistant Secretary of State Frederick Seward, into unconsciousness. A jaw splint saved Seward’s life and the others’ injuries, while bloody, were not life-threatening. Powell, who ran from the house screaming, “I’m mad,” was supposed to meet Herold outside, but the commotion scared Herold off, leaving Powell wandering the streets. He was arrested three days later at Mary Surratt’s boarding house. “He was brought

at midnight to the Navy Yard in a closed carriage,” Collum recalled. The next one received was Atzerodt. After his capture in Maryland, he was confined on *Montauk* and shut in a windowless room. Atzerodt was eventually transferred to *Saugus*, where he was held with Powell and other suspected conspirators including Michael O’Laughlen, Samuel Arnold, Mary Surratt and Ford’s stagehand Ned Spangler.



Lewis Powell, also known as Lewis Payne, left a bloody trail of havoc at the home of Secretary of State William Seward, but failed in his mission to kill the secretary. (Library of Congress)

At one point, Atzerodt asked the Marine sentry to call the officer in charge. When Captain Frank Munroe arrived at the cell, Atzerodt told him that he had refused Booth’s order to kill the vice president, despite Booth’s threat to blow out his brains if he didn’t comply. Munroe signed an affidavit spelling out details of the prisoner’s claims of innocence. Others detained for their alleged roles in the Lincoln assassination included John T. Ford, owner of Ford’s Theatre, John “Peanuts”

Burroughs, an African-American boy who held Booth's horse for him in the alley outside the theater, Mary Surratt's brother, John Z. Jenkins, and Honora Fitzpatrick, a 15-year-old girl who boarded at Mary Surratt's house.

Late on 26 April, the news spread that a pursuing cavalry patrol had cornered and killed Booth in a barn on Garrett's farm near Bowling Green, Va. David Herold was taken prisoner; the next day he and Booth's decomposing body were brought aboard *Montauk* and placed under Marine guard. No one was permitted to enter, "except with a pass signed jointly by the Secretaries of War and Navy," Collum stated. Even Surgeon General Joseph K. Barnes and Dr. John May were stopped until Captain Munroe verified their orders. The two commenced the autopsy of the bloated and stinking body as it lay upon a "carpenter's bench."

The corpse was confirmed to be Booth's by a scar on his neck and a "JWB" tattoo on the back of his left hand, according to two Marine guards, Privates Henry W. Landes and John Peddicord, who overheard the doctor say, "This is Booth."

Despite the strict order against doing so, Peddicord decided to take a souvenir after the autopsy had been completed. Years later he admitted: "While the steward wiped the instruments...I picked up a scissors and cut from...the top of Booth's head a lock of hair. General Barnes heard the grating of the scissors and turned sharply around, but I evaded him by attempting to drive some sailors back who had crowded too close out of curiosity."

Following the autopsy, Booth's body was taken by ship to the Old Penitentiary at the Washington Arsenal where it was buried in

an unmarked plot. In 1869, Booth's brother Edwin was granted permission to remove the body and in Collum's words, "the dust of John Wilkes Booth reposes in the family lot in a Cemetery in Baltimore."

Within days, the prisoners were removed to USS *Key Port* and transferred to the authority of the provost marshal. After a seven-week trial, the nine judges of the military tribunal rendered a verdict on July 5: Atzerodt, Herold, Payne and Mary Surratt were found guilty and sentenced to hang. Three others were given life imprisonment and one, a sentence of six years' hard labor.



Four of the conspirators, from left, Mary Surratt, Lewis Powell, David Herold, and George Atzerodt, in the last moments before their hangings at Washington's Old Arsenal Penitentiary. (Library of Congress)

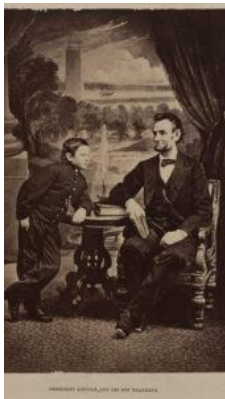
In 1872, Collum, now a captain, was made fleet Marine officer of the Asiatic Station. He wrote "The History of the United States Marine Corps" in 1890; it was given favorable reviews and was deemed to have "lasting value." He continued to write various articles about Marine history, such as "The First Time Our Marines Went to Panama," which gave his personal experiences during the expedition. Collum retired with the rank of major in Philadelphia in June 1897. He always will be known as the first uniformed historian of the Marine Corps.

Calling himself a “subordinate actor” in the historic events surrounding Lincoln’s assassination, Collum wrote his recollections “after a lapse of many years” and concluded, some important incidents may have been forgotten.”

Indeed some of what Collum recalled does conflict with other eyewitness accounts. “Nevertheless,” he said, “it was my great and sorrowful misfortune to have been an eyewitness of the greatest tragedy of modern times.”

“They Have Killed Papa Dead!”

While the Lincolns were attending the play at Ford’s Theatre, their 12-year-old son Tad was at Grover’s Theatre to see “Aladdin.” He was accompanied by Alphonso Dunn from the White House staff. As they were watching the play, someone suddenly came on the stage and announced that the President had been shot in Ford’s Theatre.



Thomas “Tad” Lincoln was the youngest of the four Lincoln sons. He was 12 when his father was murdered. (Library of Congress)

Dunn immediately took Tad back to the White House, where the young boy ran into the arms of the chief doorkeeper, Thomas

Pendel. ‘Oh, Tom Pen! Tom Pen! They have killed Papa dead! They have killed Papa dead!’”

Pendel, a 41 -year-old retired Marine and policeman, soothed the grieving child through the long night. With his tall, body and thick black beard, he bore a striking resemblance to the president.

Pendel had enlisted in the Marine Corps at the age of 20 in Philadelphia and soon after sailed in USS *Ohioto* Veracruz, Mexico. In 1862, he received an appointment in the Washington Metropolitan Police. From this position, he was selected to serve at the White House as guard and doorkeeper during the Lincoln administration. He continued to serve at the White House for 36 years.

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Did General Discord Undermine the Union Army’s 1862 Maryland Campaign?



On September 17, 1862, soldiers of Maj. Gen. Ambrose Burnside’s 9th Corps rushed across the Antietam Creek Bridge that now bears the general’s name. (Anne S.K. Brown)

Military Collection/Brown University Library)

By Kevin Pawlak

New look at sources erodes story about commanders' infighting contributing to Lee's escape

The late summer of 1862 was not a good time for Union fortunes in the Eastern Theater.

During the August 28-30 Second Battle of Bull Run, Maj. Gen. John Pope's Army of Virginia went down to defeat at the hands of General Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. Lee then turned his columns to the northwest, and the Federal high command rushed to merge Pope's force with Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan's Army of the Potomac to meet the threat.

At the September 17 Battle of Antietam, McClellan won a blood-drenched victory, but Lee managed to escape to fight another day.

Over the years, it has been fashionable for some historians to rely on conspiracy theory to portend why the Federal victory at Antietam was not greater, that discord among the Army of the Potomac's high command precluded destruction of the Army of Northern Virginia.



This hand-colored engraving depicts the November 7, 1862, conversation between Maj. Gen. George McClellan and Burnside when the latter took over command of the Army of the Potomac. Engraving after a drawing by Alfred R. Waud. (Granger, NYC)

The characters in this supposed ego-over-country drama were all professional soldiers of the U.S. Army. McClellan; Maj. Gen. Ambrose Burnside, one of his wing commanders; and Maj. Gen. Fitz John Porter, leader of the 5th Corps, knew each other before the war and were considered friends. Each graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point within a three-year period from 1845 to 1847. Pope, an 1842 West Point graduate, also played a role in the drama.

The old story is that the crucible of war caused McClellan and Porter to backbite their formerly affable comrade, Burnside. That infighting weakened the Federal resolve during the critical fighting at Antietam, costing the Army of the Potomac total victory, and hampering the pursuit of Lee's battered army afterward. A closer look at the sources, however, does not indicate such a controversy existed, and that much of it was a postwar construct.

The generals' animosity toward each other supposedly originated in Northern Virginia in the summer of 1862. After McClellan's campaign against Richmond on the Virginia Peninsula came to a close and his army, including Porter's corps, headed back to Washington, D.C., to join Pope's Army of Virginia, Burnside also transferred his command from the Carolinas to the Eastern Theater.

As McClellan organized the withdrawal of his command from the Peninsula, Porter and Burnside worked hand in hand during Pope's campaign against the Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. On August 26, Confederate troops sliced Pope's communications with Washington. Only Burnside's telegraph line to the capital city remained open. Lincoln turned to Burnside to keep him apprised of the situation at the front.



Fitz John Porter was criticized by Pope for his performance at Second Bull Run. Pope's displeasure led Lincoln to order Porter removed from command so an inquiry could be conducted, but the inquiry was so sub rosa that Porter did not learn of it until long after the war. (Library of Congress)

Porter passed many of his dispatches along to Burnside during the campaign, especially after the Confederates severed Pope's

communication line. While they included useful military information, Porter also took the opportunity to express to his old friend Burnside his animosity toward Pope and his favoritism of McClellan. "I hope Mac's at work, and we will soon get ordered out of this," said Porter in one such dispatch. "It would seem, from proper statement of the enemy, that he was wandering around loose, but I expect they know what they are doing which is more than anyone here or anywhere knows." With Washington starving for information, Burnside dutifully passed Porter's messages—slights toward Pope and all—to the War Department.

During the Second Battle of Bull Run, Burnside and McClellan monitored the situation from afar while Porter and his 5th Corps engaged in the fierce fighting. On August 29, Pope's desired assault by Porter on the Confederate right did not materialize. The next day, Porter's men attacked straight into the enemy lines, which prompted a Confederate counterattack that ultimately swept Pope's army back toward Washington.

As Pope's beaten Federals trudged toward the nation's capital, trouble began to brew among the Union high command, especially between officers of the Army of Virginia and the Army of the Potomac. The two groups mixed together about as well as oil and water. On August 31, Porter had interactions with the commanders of both armies, writing to McClellan and speaking directly with Pope. In his dispatch to McClellan, he summarized the decisive fighting on Second Bull Run's final day, August 30, and wrote of the army's wavering morale, "The men are without heart, but will fight when cornered."

Porter's August 31 dispatch, which explained "the true condition" of the Army of Virginia, reached the hands of Lincoln

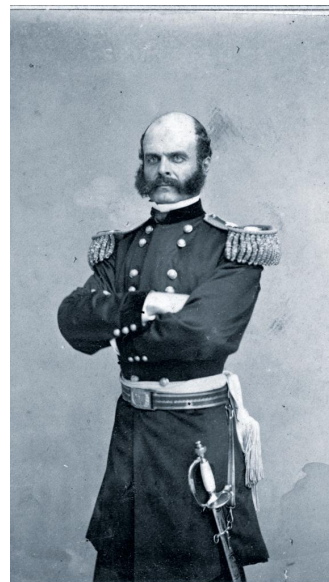
administration officials, however. President Lincoln saw it as early as September 1 and thus, according to McClellan, “had reason to believe that the Army of the Potomac was not cheerfully cooperating with and supporting General Pope.” Lincoln requested that McClellan “as a special favor...use my influence in correcting this state of things.” Specifically, McClellan wired Porter.

On the front lines outside the Washington fortifications, Pope called his corps commanders together on September 2. When Pope arrived, Porter was already present. Porter was confused by the telegram he had received from McClellan the day before and asked Pope for clarification. Pope pulled Porter aside and the two sat in a separate room on a sofa to sort matters out.

Now alone, Pope first related that he had been told by close associates in Washington of Porter’s dispatches to Burnside. Surprisingly, according to Pope’s own questionable account of the meeting, Pope brushed aside these dispatches as “an expression of his [Porter’s] private opinion, in a private letter to another officer.” Pope expressed some displeasure with Porter’s recent performance but believed his conduct at Second Bull Run was “entirely satisfactory.” Pope confided to Porter that he did not plan to “take any action” against the general.

Satisfied with this discussion and Pope’s conciliatory nature, Porter replied to McClellan, “You may rest assured that all your friends...will ever give, as they have given, to General Pope their cordial cooperation and constant support in the execution of all orders and plans.” But the tables turned suddenly on Porter’s career.

John Pope paid a visit to the White House on September 3 and personally spoke with the president. The two were friends, and Lincoln thanked Pope for his performance in the recent campaign and the two spoke freely. At some point, Porter became a topic of conversation. To fuel the discussion, Lincoln showed Pope the earlier dispatches Porter wrote to Burnside, who then subsequently forwarded them to the War Department. As Pope later recalled, these notes “opened my eyes to many matters which I had before been loath to believe, and which I cannot bring myself now to believe.”



Major General Ambrose Burnside passed along to the War Department messages from Maj. Gen. Fitz John Porter that denigrated Maj. Gen. John Pope and spoke favorably of Maj. Gen. George McClellan. (Library of Congress)

After seeing Porter’s dispatches, Pope composed his initial report of the campaign that evening to present to Lincoln the next day. In his report, Pope took Porter to task. “I do not hesitate to say that if the corps of Porter had attacked the enemy in flank on the afternoon of Friday [August 29], as he

had my written order to do, we should utterly have crushed Jackson before the forces under Lee could have reached him,” he wrote. “Why he [Porter] did not do so I cannot understand.” Pope sought to publish the report, but Lincoln’s Cabinet voted down such a measure. Lincoln sympathized with Pope, however, and ordered Maj. Gens. Porter, Charles Griffin, and William B. Franklin removed from command so a court of inquiry could examine Pope’s claims against them.

The court of inquiry lasted 10 short days and disbanded “without taking any action.” It was so insignificant that neither Porter, Franklin, nor Griffin knew about it in 1862. In fact, Porter did not learn of its existence until 1879, nor did he hear of Lincoln’s order relieving him from command until 1889.

Though that information never reached Porter in the wake of Second Bull Run, Pope’s battle report did when it was published in *The New York Times* on September 8. Porter himself first heard rumors of the report on September 10 but, based on their September 2 discussion, could hardly believe Pope’s disparaging remarks. Based on that, Porter requested an examination into the charges, though he wrongly believed Pope was “himself a witness in my favor.” On September 11, Porter managed to find a copy of the New York papers and read the report. It spurred his desire for a quick investigation to clear himself of Pope’s accusations, but the Confederate invasion of Maryland halted his attempts to clear his name.

Although Porter was ignorant of Lincoln’s order removing him from command, as well as the formation of a court of inquiry, McClellan was aware of it. Not pleased, “Little Mac” requested that Porter, Franklin,

and Griffin be retained in their commands at least for the extent of the Maryland Campaign. Halleck, Stanton, and Lincoln relented.

The night after Porter read Pope’s campaign report, Halleck ordered him to take his 5th Corps and rejoin the Army of the Potomac in Maryland. Porter arrived at McClellan’s side on the morning of September 14, with the Battle of South Mountain under way. It was at this moment, as Porter and McClellan stood side by side watching Burnside direct his wing of the army—the 1st and 9th Corps—in its assault against Fox’s and Turner’s Gaps, that the story of a McClellan–Porter conspiracy to undermine Burnside picked up steam. Jacob Cox, a 9th Corps division commander and one of the most fervent proponents of the theory, wrote in 1900 “that the first evidence of any change in McClellan’s friendship toward Burnside occurs within a few hours from Porter’s arrival.” More contemporary evidence, however, tells a different story.

Pope claimed that he informed Porter of the rumors that his dispatches to Burnside had been disseminated throughout the Lincoln administration. That did not, however, fuel any vengeful feelings from Porter against Burnside. Pope’s charges mentioned only Porter’s battlefield conduct, not his letters to Burnside. Additionally, it is important to remember that Porter remained unaware of the Court of Inquiry formed to investigate him. There was no selfish reason for him and McClellan to undermine Burnside.

On the morning of September 15, though, the relationship between McClellan and Burnside changed, and Porter was caught in the middle. Burnside’s wing, under the general’s direction, had achieved success at Fox’s and Turner’s gaps the previous day and had driven the Confederate army from

the field. Seeking to pursue Lee's army quickly, McClellan urged Burnside, "Move promptly."

To expedite the pursuit, McClellan "temporarily suspended" Burnside's wing command, freeing the 1st and 9th Corps to operate separately. This is often portrayed as a slight against Burnside, but McClellan likewise divided Edwin Sumner's wing—the 2nd and 12th Corps—on the night of September 16 when the 12th Corps crossed Antietam Creek to be placed under Maj. Gen. Joseph Hooker's orders. Burnside was present when McClellan ordered the separation and supposedly objected to the order, but he mounted his horse and rode to push the 9th Corps in its pursuit out of Fox's Gap.



John Pope's animosity toward Porter stemmed from his learning that Porter had written disparagingly of him in reports circulated in the Lincoln administration. (Library of Congress)

Porter's corps received orders to follow the 9th Corps through Fox's Gap, but when the 5th Corps arrived in the gap several hours later, they discovered, much to their surprise, the 9th Corps was still there. McClellan's

order for haste was not obeyed. Instead, "Burnside permitted the troops to view the Battlefield they fought on yesterday," recorded James Wren of the 48th Pennsylvania in his diary, because "this being a victory for them, he would grant them the privilege." No record exists that Burnside informed McClellan of the delay. McClellan needed Burnside to move expeditiously to finish off Lee's army, but Burnside's delay upset the commanding general's plans.

Porter, smarting from Pope's charges, asked army headquarters about what to do since the 9th Corps blocked his path. McClellan ordered Burnside to let Porter pass through. He also asked Burnside to explain his delay.

On his personal copy of the order to move through the 9th Corps, Porter endorsed it with the following note: "Burnside's corps was not moving three hours after the hour designated for him, the day after South Mountain, and obstructed my movements. I, therefore, asked for this order, and moved by Burnside's corps."

McClellan wrote to Burnside the next day demanding "explanations of these failures on your part." Burnside replied on September 17, the day of the Battle of Antietam. All of this—McClellan's suspension of Burnside's wing command, the severe rebukes, and Porter's asking for orders to push through the 9th Corps on September 15—have led credence to the idea a Porter and McClellan tag team took down Burnside. It is a myth that has been promulgated in multiple histories of the Maryland Campaign.

Without concrete knowledge, however, that his personal correspondence with Burnside had been passed along to the government and without any knowledge of the Court of

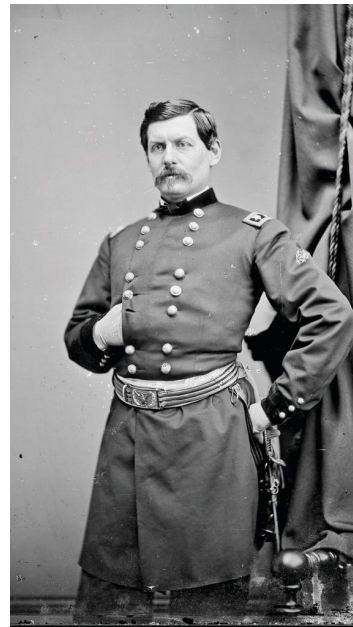
Inquiry formed to investigate him, it seems strange then that Porter's supposed maliciousness would have come out of thin air. Instead, the campaign strained McClellan's and Burnside's relationship but left Porter's and Burnside's friendship intact.

While preparing his campaign report, McClellan told his wife, "I ought to rap Burnside very severely & probably will—yet I hate to do it. He is very slow & is not fit to command more than a regiment. If I rap him as he deserves he will be my mortal enemy hereafter—if I do not praise him as he thinks he deserves & as I know he does not, he will be at least a very lukewarm friend." In his initial report, McClellan took the middle road. He acknowledged Burnside's "difficult task" of carrying the Lower Bridge on September 17 but failed to praise Burnside specifically, though it should be noted that McClellan did not single out any of his commanders for specific commendation in the report.

Burnside, in turn, felt ill will toward McClellan. One of his staff officers, Daniel Larned, wrote on October 4, 1862, "I find a bitter feeling against McClellan on the part of all the staff, and the higher power [Burnside] is very quiet." Eleven days later, a private conversation Larned had with Burnside confirmed "all I have said to you as to the present footing between himself & McC." But the spat was short-lived. On the eve of the subsequent campaign into Virginia, Larned concluded, "There is no break up of friendship between the two Generals."

Their friendship faced another extreme test when Burnside replaced McClellan as head of the Army of the Potomac. "Poor Burn feels dreadfully," McClellan told his wife after receiving the news and speaking with Burnside. "[H]e never showed himself a

better man or truer friend than now." McClellan even wrote to Burnside's wife informing her of "the cordial feeling existing between Burn & myself." McClellan's and Burnside's relationship did not deteriorate until after McClellan's second report—more damning to Burnside—was published in 1863. But at the time of the Maryland Campaign, their relationship was stressed but not broken.



Contemporary evidence shows that Maj. Gen. George McClellan did not scheme with Porter against Burnside, despite stories that circulated later. (National Archives)

Fitz John Porter's feelings toward Burnside were more affable than McClellan's in the days of the Maryland Campaign and after. When Porter voiced his anger in the aftermath of the campaign to Manton Marble, editor of the *New York World*, he vehemently criticized Halleck, Stanton, Lincoln, and Hooker but said nothing of Burnside. Lincoln visited the Army of the Potomac shortly after Porter wrote these words. According to one account, Porter and Lincoln had a private

conversation, in which the president said, “I am pleased with your conduct at 2nd Bull Run, and thank you for your telegrams which gave me the only correct information I had of that campaign. You need fear nothing from [the dispatches], for I am grateful to you.”

Until his final days in the Army of the Potomac, Porter held true to Burnside. After Burnside replaced McClellan, Porter wrote: “General Burnside will receive the earnest support of every officer....He is a friend of mine, and if he were not, I should do the same.”

Burnside’s and Porter’s friendship did deteriorate, though not until almost two decades after the Maryland Campaign. In 1880, Porter, after being cashiered from the army in 1863, was fighting for reinstatement. Porter wanted his dismissal reversed and his commission in the Army returned to him. It became a contentious issue in the American political sphere. Burnside, who testified favorably on Porter’s behalf in 1863, found himself embroiled in the discussion again, this time as a U.S. senator from Rhode Island.

Senator Burnside, formerly a Democrat but now a Republican, differed with Porter about the process. Porter wanted everything reversed and revoked; Burnside believed a new trial should be held. Shortly before giving a speech on the floor of the Senate to state his opinion, Burnside met with President James A. Garfield. Porter’s situation was not new to Garfield. In his younger days, the future president sat on the general court martial board that had convicted Porter. He later said of his assignment, “No public act with which I have been connected was ever more clear to me than the righteousness of the finding of that court.”

It is impossible to say what influence Garfield had over Burnside in 1880. But one thing is clear: Until that night, Porter proclaimed Burnside to be “my professed friend, at times my social comrade.” When it came his time to speak, however, Senator Burnside stood in front of his congressional colleagues and implored them to vote a new trial. The measure failed.

Ultimately, it was within the labyrinth of Washington, D.C., in 1880, where the close relationship of Fitz John Porter and Ambrose Burnside shattered, not on the slopes of South Mountain or along the banks of the Antietam in 1862.

Porter’s Great Trial

The fallout from John Pope’s defeat at the Second Battle of Bull Run fell on several Army of the Potomac generals, all associates of George B. McClellan. Though McClellan shielded Fitz John Porter and the others from censure during the Maryland Campaign, McClellan’s removal from command on November 7, 1862, left Porter vulnerable. Three days later, Porter lost his command and soon fell under arrest to be put on trial.

Pope’s charges against Porter amounted to five counts of disobeying a “lawful command of his superior officer” and three counts of misconduct in the face of the enemy during the August 1862 fight along Bull Run. Secretary of War Edwin Stanton personally approved the nine men presiding over the trial. In this highly politicized case, the stakes for Porter were high. A simple majority of judges was all that was required to convict Porter while a two-thirds majority might inflict the death penalty.



Artist Alfred Waud depicted Porter's December 1862 court martial. The guilty verdict, delivered by a number of top generals, was a disaster for the proud West Pointer. (Library of Congress)

The court opened on December 3, 1862, and lasted until January 6, 1863. On January 21, the court declared Porter guilty of both charges. He lost his rank in the U.S. Army and was barred from ever holding a position in the federal government.

Porter did not sit idly by, and fought the decision for the next 24 years. The case remained politically charged. The 1878 Schofield Board suggested an exoneration of Porter. It was not until 1886, however, that a Democrat-controlled Congress returned Porter to the rank of colonel in the Army. He retired five days later. —K.P.

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Reaction to the Fall of Richmond



*General view of the burned district of Richmond
Library of Congress*

American Battlefield Trust

*On May 20 [1861], the Confederate Congress voted to move the government to Richmond...With that, Virginia's capital had become the very symbol of the Confederacy, and the ultimate prize in a bloody war.
--Ernest B. Furgurson, Ashes of Glory*

Robert E. Lee

When the Confederate government moved from Montgomery, Alabama to Richmond, Virginia, the quiet, prosperous Virginia state capital was transformed into a noisy, crowded metropolis that, as Furgurson notes, was capital, military headquarters,

transportation hub, industrial heart, prison, and hospital center of the Confederacy. It was also a target for the Union army. In fact, the effort for both the Union and the Confederate armies during much of the Civil War in the east focused on capturing or threatening the enemy's capital city. Since the Union capital--Washington D.C.--and the Confederate capital--Richmond--were located a mere 100 miles apart, much of the fighting raged between these two cities. Washington was never seriously threatened by Southern forces, but Richmond experienced more than its share of alarms and battles.

By early spring 1865 the citizens of Richmond had become used to the threat of capture by the Federal army whose soldiers the Richmond newspapers described with great imagination as the vilest of humanity. Richmond had endured some frighteningly close chances, and its inhabitants had grown accustomed to the sound of artillery fire from just ten miles outside the city. Their faith in Robert E. Lee was so complete that they knew beyond the shadow of a doubt that he would never allow Richmond to be taken.

But the time had come for [General Lee](#) to consider just such a necessity. He had been able to hold back the Union forces for almost 10 months at Petersburg until his depleted forces were worn out and his supplies dwindled to nothing. Finally, he came to believe that he could best serve the Confederate cause by abandoning its capital. Furgurson records that Lee asked Lt. Gen. John B. Gordon for his opinion as to the Confederate Army's next steps. Gordon advised that the Confederacy should seek peace terms. If the terms were not acceptable, Gordon argued, the army should leave Richmond and Petersburg and retreat south to join Gen. [Joseph E. Johnston](#)'s army

in the Carolinas where their combined forces could concentrate on defeating the Union army under General [William T. Sherman](#).

From a "moral and political" viewpoint, Richmond's fall would be "a serious calamity," Lee...conceded, but once it happened, he could prolong the war for two more years on Virginia soil. Since the war began he had been forced to let the enemy make strategic plans for him, because he had to defend the capital, but "when Richmond falls I shall be able to make them for myself."

--Ashes of Glory

Lee had always felt constrained by the duty to defend the Confederate capital. But abandoning it, he knew he could move more freely. So when General Philip Sheridan's troops overran Confederate defenses at Five Forks on Saturday April 1, Lee made the decision to abandon the Petersburg defenses and, in doing so, to abandon Richmond.

Jefferson Davis

Confederate President [Jefferson Davis](#) had discussed the probability of quitting Richmond with Lee a month earlier, and he had already sent his wife and family out of the city. Despite these precautions, Davis still believed Lee could stave off disaster. The people of Richmond knew far less of what was happening at the Petersburg lines than Davis, and they went about their business on Saturday ignorant of their impending fate. Frank Lawley, the correspondent for London newspaper, The Times, observed: "Upon the afternoon of Saturday, the first of April, Richmond, long familiar with the signs and sounds of war, wore its usual look of unconscious security, and there were few persons acquainted with the fact that [Sheridan](#), with some 6,000 or 8,000 cavalry, supported by Warren's corps

of infantry and artillery, was at work upon General Lee's right, that he was opposed only by a handful of Confederate cavalry, and that momentous events were probably at hand."

I advise that all preparation be made for leaving Richmond tonight.

--General Lee's telegram to President Jefferson Davis

Davis read General Lee's telegram while attending Sunday morning church service. He immediately issued the first orders for the Confederate government's evacuation. Word spread across the city. Lawley reports, "...quickly from mouth to mouth flew the sad tidings that in a few hours Richmond's long and gallant resistance would be over." Officially, the citizens of Richmond did not hear anything for hours, but they could not help but notice the fires in front of the government offices as official documents burned. They kept asking each other what was happening.

Crowds gathered at the Spotswood and at General Ewell's office, a block away at Seventh and Franklin Streets, swapping rumors, trying to confirm them. At first those who knew had been evasive; one man with government connections told a friend he was "not at liberty to communicate" what he knew - but there had been terrible fighting near Petersburg ... "I'll tell you that I shouldn't be surprised if we are all away from here before twenty four hours."

--Ashes of Glory

Official word of the Confederate government's departure was finally announced at 4 o'clock. Lawley reported: "The scene that followed baffles description. During the long afternoon and throughout the feverish night, on horseback, in every description of cart, carriage, and vehicle, in

every hurried train that left the city, on canal barges, skiffs, and boats, the exodus of officials and prominent citizens was unintermitted."

Davis refused to believe it was necessary to leave. His train was scheduled to depart on April 2 at 8:30 Sunday night. He kept hoping that somehow Lee would send news of a reversal of fortunes and that the government would not have to abandon the city. Finally, at 11 o'clock, he boarded the train and began the sad trip to Danville. Lawley wrote: "Up to the hour of their departure from Richmond I can testify that Mr. Davis and the three most prominent members of his cabinet went undaunted forth to meet the future, not without hope that General Lee would be able to hold together a substantial remnant of his army, and to effect a junction with General Johnston."

All through the night preparations for fleeing from the city kept the Richmonders busy. When the last Confederate soldiers rode across the pontoon bridge to catch up with Lee's troops, those left behind believed they would return soon, to take the city back from the Yankees. In the city small fires of document still burned.

Richard S. Ewell and Godfrey Weitzel

Despite every effort made on the part of the few remaining Confederate soldiers and the city's officials, chaos ruled Richmond that night. Knowing that the Union army was about to enter the town, and having heard how badly the city of Columbia, South Carolina had fared when Union soldiers discovered the stores of whisky, Richmond's officials ordered all liquor to be destroyed. In the need for haste, however, those men

charged with going through the stocks of every saloon and warehouse found the most expedient way was to smash the bottles and pour the kegs into the gutters and down the street drains. The stench attracted crowds. They gulped the whisky from the curbstones, picked it up in their hats and boots, and guzzled it before stooping for more. So the action taken to prevent a Union army rampage started a rampage by the city's own people.

Lt. Gen. [Richard S. Ewell](#), Richmond's military commander, was also under orders to destroy the city's tobacco, cotton, and foodstuffs before the Yankees got to them. To destroy the tobacco, Ewell had it moved to buildings that he believed could burn without setting the rest of the city on fire and asked the fire department to stand by to keep the fire from spreading.

In a city that had been suffering from scarcity, where high officials held "Starvation Balls," no one believed there could be much food left to destroy. But they were wrong. "The most revolting revelation," wrote LaSalle Pickett, "was the amount of provisions, shoes and clothing which had been accumulated by the speculators who hovered like vultures over the scene of death and desolation. Taking advantage of their possession of money and lack of both patriotism and humanity, they had, by an early corner in the market and by successful blockade running, brought up all the available supplies with an eye to future gain, while our soldiers and women and children were absolutely in rags, barefoot and starving." The crowd, seeing the commissaries filled with smoked meats, flour, sugar, and coffee, became ugly.

Enraged, they snatched the food and clothing and turned to the nearby shops to loot whatever else they found. They were

impossible to stop. Ewell tried, but he had only convalescent soldiers and a few army staff officers under his command at this point. Not nearly enough men to bring order back to the streets. The fires, though, grew out of control, burning the center of the city and driving the looters away.

Embers from the street fires of official papers and from the paper torches used by vandals drifted. The wind picked up. Another building caught fire. The business district caught fire. Worse, as Admiral Raphael Semmes wrote, "The Tredegar Iron Works were on fire, and continual explosions of loaded shell stored there were taking place....The population was in a great state of alarm." Lawley reported that as he walked toward the railroad station he saw a column of dense black smoke. Semmes had set his ironclads on fire to keep them out of Union hands. Moments later, the warships' arsenals exploded blowing the windows out for two miles around, overturning tombstones, and tearing doors from their hinges.

The Union cavalry entered town. By 7:15 Monday morning, April 3, two guidons of the Fourth Massachusetts Cavalry flew over the capitol building. Not long after, two officers of the 13th New York Artillery took down the little triangular flags and ran up the great United States flag. Union General Godfrey Weitzel sent a telegram to General Grant: "We took Richmond at 8:15 this morning. I captured many guns. The enemy left in great haste. The city is on fire in two places. Am making every effort to put it out. The people received us with enthusiastic expressions of joy."

Weitzel ordered his troops to put out the fire. The city's two fire engines worked, bucket brigades were formed. Threatened buildings were pulled down to create firebreaks. Five

hours later the wind finally shifted, and they began to bring it under control. All or part of at least 54 blocks were destroyed, according to Furgurson. Weitzel wrote "The rebel capitol, fired by men placed in it to defend it, was saved from total destruction by soldiers of the United States, who had taken possession." And the city rested.

Abraham Lincoln

At City Point a few miles downstream, U.S. President [Abraham Lincoln](#) had learned of Richmond's capture and was eager to visit the city. Rear Admiral [David Dixon Porter](#) arranged for a grand trip upstream for his president on Tuesday. His gunboats, flags flying, lined the river and the sailors cheered as Lincoln, in Porter's flagship, the *Malvern*, sailed upstream. The trip, however, was not as smooth as the admiral would have liked. The *Malvern* encountered sunken Confederate boats in the James River. He transferred the president into a barge, which was tugged upstream. But then the tug encountered another Confederate obstruction. The ropes were thrown off the tug and the sailors leaned into their oars. They pulled against the current until they came to the rapids. The sailors jumped into the river, freed the boat, and headed toward the first safe landing spot they could find.

The barge landed at Rocketts, two miles from their destination, Capitol Square. No Union soldiers met them, but those on the shore recognized the tall man. A crowd, many recently freed slaves, formed as they strode along the streets. Recalled one contemporary: "Every window was crowded with heads. But it was a silent crowd. There was something oppressive in those thousands of watchers without a sound, either of welcome or hatred. I think we would have welcomed a yell of defiance." Others were exuberant, laughing, yelling.

They tried to grab Lincoln's hand and kiss his boots. The sailors formed a guard around him. Admiral Porter and his men were anxious; the crowd could crush his president or an assassin could come close without ever being seen. The sailors cleared the way with bayonets until, at last, a cavalry party met them and escorted the president to what had been the Confederate Executive Mansion. According to Carl Sandburg,

Any one of many kinds of fools could have taken a pot shot at Lincoln that day.

--Carl Sandburg

Soon afterward Lincoln set out on a sightseeing tour of the burned-out, sad-looking Confederate capital with General Weitzel as his guide and a large cavalry escort to protect him. He visited Libby Prison and Castle Thunder, the two prisons where not long before Union soldiers had suffered. They rode to Camp Lee where the U.S. Colored Troops had set up their camp. They drove around the burned out business district. Weitzel asked President Lincoln for guidance: how should he treat the people of the city? "If I were in your place," Lincoln told him, "I'd let 'em up easy, let 'em up easy."

After the afternoon tour, the presidential party returned to Porter's flagship, to Admiral Porter's relief.

Word of Richmond's fall had been telegraphed across the United States. Newspaperman George Townsend wrote, "This town is the rebellion. It is all that we have directly striven for; quitting it, the Confederate leaders have quitted their sheet-anchor, their roof-tree, their abiding hope. Its history is the epitome of the whole contest, and to us, shivering our thunderbolts against it for more than four years, Richmond is still a mystery." To honor the

long struggle to take the Confederate capital, an official order was given. And so, at noon, while Lincoln toured the city, a one-hundred-gun artillery salute was fired at all military posts, arsenals and naval bases.

Five hard-fought days later General Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia surrendered to [U.S. Grant](#). And four days after that, Lincoln was assassinated. Johnston surrendered his army to Sherman on April 18. Lee had gambled that the Confederacy could survive the fall of its capital--that leaving Richmond would offer him a freedom of movement that could spell hope. But hope died when Richmond fell.