



THE OLD LINER



Vicksburg National Military Park Invites Public Feedback on Plans to Redesign Park Entrance



October 5, 2026

VICK_NewsMedia@nps.gov

VICKSBURG, Miss. Vicksburg National Military Park invites public comment on the National Park Service's plan to redesign the primary gateway and entrance road access at the intersection of Clay Street and Old Highway 27 in Vicksburg, Miss.

“The entrance to Vicksburg National Military Park is an important arrival experience for our visitors, and it no longer meets the needs of our visitation patterns, pedestrian safety and operational needs,” said Vicksburg National Military Park Superintendent Treacy Stone. “We encourage visitors to review the design proposals and provide feedback. Public input will inform the final design of the entrance area to ensure that we provide our visitors with a safe and enjoyable experience.”

Currently, the roadway design creates congestion and threatens visitors' safety. The redesign proposal aims to:

- reduce pedestrian and vehicular conflicts
- enhance traffic circulation
- provide more efficient and intuitive access to park facilities
- accommodate current and future visitor use
- better protect and preserve significant historic monuments and commemorative features

The public comment period will run from Oct. 5 to Nov. 5. To access project details and submit written comments, visit the project website at <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/vickgateway>. To submit comments, select "open for comment" and then "VICK Gateway Redesign Project: Civic Engagement Newsletter."

Comments may also be mailed to:
Vicksburg National Military Park
3201 Clay St.
Vicksburg, MS 39183

The deadline for online submission or postmark is Nov. 5.
www.nps.gov

About the National Park Service.
Established in 1916, the National Park Service preserves America's most treasured natural and cultural places for the enjoyment, education and inspiration of current and future generations. Learn more at nps.gov.

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**Fall Events at Appomattox Court
House NHP**



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Appomattox, Va.— Appomattox Court House National Historical Park continues its commemoration of 250 years of American Independence with a series of special events this fall. These programs connect the history of Appomattox Court House with broader stories of American history. All programs are free and open to the public.

October 17, 2026- Tales and Tunes: Campfire Edition

Grab a seat around the campfire for an evening under the stars beginning at 6:30 p.m. The program brings together old-time traditions of storytelling and song featuring local folklore and music. Bring a chair, bug spray, and a flashlight for an evening around the campfire.

November 11, 2026 – Legacy of Service: Exploring Stories of Veterans at Appomattox Court House

On Veterans Day, a series of special programs and a visitor center display featuring veterans' accounts of their experiences at Appomattox will honor those who served in the Armed Forces.

1:00 p.m.- Veterans of Appomattox Court House From the Civil War to World War I, discover how veterans contributed to preserving the memory of the events at Appomattox Court House in April 1865.

2:00 p.m. – After the Surrender: Veteran Visits to Appomattox Civil War veterans from both sides often returned to Appomattox for the shared purpose of

healing and remembrance. Using their stories, a ranger-led tour of the village will follow in the footsteps of veterans who came back to Appomattox Court House after the war.

3:00 p.m.- United States Colored Troops at Appomattox More than 180,000 African American soldiers served in the U.S. Army during the Civil War. Seven regiments of United States Colored Troops, totaling more than 5,000 soldiers, participated in the Battle of Appomattox Court House on April 9, 1865. Learn more about the lives of these veterans before, during and after the war.

All programs are subject to change. Please visit the park's website for more information.

—NPS—

About Appomattox Court House National Historical Park: On April 9, 1865, the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia in the McLean House in the village of Appomattox Court House, Virginia signaled the end of the nation's largest war. The stories of Appomattox Court House go far beyond the final significant battles of this nation's Civil War. Learn more at www.nps.gov/apco.

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The Founders of the 'New York Times' Pledged to Cover 'Every Subject of Public Importance.' 175 Years Later, the Paper Continues to



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Publish ‘All the News That’s Fit to Print’

Much has changed since the publication debuted on September 18, 1851. What hasn’t changed, staff members say, is the paper’s mission



The New York Times building, with its newspaper logo sign above the entrance, seen in New York City on August 6, 2026
Marcin Golba / NurPhoto via Getty Images

By Kayla Randall | Digital Editor, Museums,
Smithsonian Mag.
September 18, 2026

On August 30, 1851, journalists Henry Jarvis Raymond and George Jones laid out their vision for a newspaper they planned to launch the following month. Called the *New York Daily Times*, the publication would be printed daily on a 24-column folio sheet, with morning and evening editions priced at 1 cent each.

Raymond, a politician who later co-founded the Republican Party, would serve as the editor of this new daily paper. Jones, a



former banker, would be its publisher and financial manager.

Along with presenting the news of the day, the co-founders asserted in their prospectus, the paper would share literary reviews; art criticism; and editorial articles “written with all the ability, care and knowledge which the abundant means at the disposal of the subscribers will enable them to command.”



A portrait of New York Times co-founder Henry Jarvis Raymond, taken between 1855 and 1865
Heritage Art / Heritage Images via Getty Images

The newspaper’s columns, the pair promised, “will be free from bigoted devotion to narrow interests and will be open, within necessary limitations, to communications upon every subject of public importance.”

The first issue of the *New-York Daily Times* was published on September 18, 1851. Now,



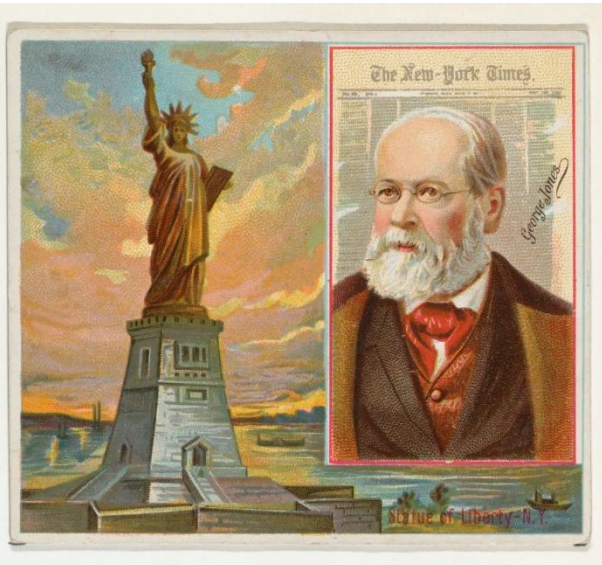
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175 years later, both the hyphen and the word “Daily” are gone, but the *New York Times* remains.

The *Times* has established itself as “the newspaper of record,” documenting the most significant events in both national and international history. Its past notable headlines include “President Lincoln Shot by an Assassin” in 1865, “*Titanic* Sinks Four Hours After Hitting Iceberg” in 1912, “The War in Europe Is Ended!” in 1945, “200,000 March for Civil Rights in Orderly Washington Rally” in 1963 and “Men Walk on Moon” in 1969.

And the paper’s influence is still growing: This year, the New York Times Company announced that it had amassed more than 13 million subscribers, “the largest paid subscriber base of any news organization in the world.”



An 1887 commercial color lithograph depicting New York Times co-founder George Jones Sepia Times / Universal Images Group via Getty Images

The *Times* has, of course, evolved since its founding. The past two decades in particular have ushered in rapid changes, says Sam Dolnick, a deputy managing editor at the paper.

Dolnick began working at the *Times* in 2009. Over his 17 years with the company, he’s seen it become “a completely different newsroom,” he says. “When I came, it was a print newsroom built around the print newspaper and print deadlines and the print front page. Now, it’s a digital newsroom around the clock, around the globe.”

David W. Dunlap, a longtime *Times* employee, serves as curator at the Museum at the Times, a showcase of the paper’s history on the 15th floor of the company’s New York City headquarters. At the museum, Dunlap—who started his career at the *Times* in 1975, right out of college, as a clerk in the Washington bureau—never loses sight of the publication’s beginnings. He manages archival materials and offers private tours to colleagues and invited guests. (The museum is closed to the public.)

On view at the museum is the front page of the paper’s very first edition. The article given the most space in the September 1851 layout centers on a Pennsylvania “fugitive slave riot.” Earlier that month, in the Lancaster County borough of Christiana, a group of African Americans killed a Maryland enslaver as he attempted to capture men who had fled from bondage on his farm.



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Raymond wrote multiple editorials about the event, condemning the killing while acknowledging that the men had “acted from their conscientious convictions of duty.” The editor argued that he understood “how such convictions may incline others to abstain from all active agency in sending an escaped slave back to his master,” but he maintained that the group should “be made to feel the utmost penalty of the law.”

In other words, Dunlap says, Raymond was “more concerned with the fact that the men ... have violated the law and have murdered someone than he is with the overall immorality of slavery.”

Beyond showing the front page of the *Times*’ first issue, Dunlap takes visitors through the storeroom that houses the museum’s off-view artifacts. An often-striking moment happens, he says, when he highlights two newspaper issues: One celebrates the [Union victory](#) in the Civil War, while the other reports on the assassination of Abraham Lincoln.

The papers are original copies that were later laminated, Dunlap notes. It’s “humbling,” he says, “to be that close, viscerally, to history.”

He adds, “I think to myself, ‘Golly, I work for an institution that covered the Civil War and the shocking death of the 16th president.’”



The first issue of the New-York Daily Times, which would eventually become the New York Times, published on September 18, 1851 New York Times



The front page of the April 15, 1865, issue of the New York Times announces that President Lincoln had been shot by an assassin New York Times



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Raymond was Lincoln's friend and biographer. The mourning badge he wore to the president's funeral is now housed at the New York Public Library alongside other records related to the New York Times Company. The trove is one of the library's "key collections," says manuscripts curator Meredith Mann.

The company records include letters, memos, exchanges between staff members, article drafts, newspaper policies, and guides and logistics related to the paper's printing and distribution. Some of the material is digitized, but the vast majority is only available to view in person.

"Every piece of the day-to-day running of the *New York Times*, and how each story went from the germ of an idea to something held in the hands of its many, many subscribers, is something that is documented in our collections," Mann says.

The *Times* lost one of its co-founders in 1869, when Raymond died suddenly at age 49. Jones then assumed control over the paper's editorial direction. In 1871, he famously refused a bribe from associates of the corrupt politician William M. "Boss" Tweed. Instead of accepting purloined funds, Jones published stories exposing Tweed's theft of public money—reporting that directly contributed to the politician's downfall and eventual prison sentence. This act of integrity would lay the groundwork for the newspaper's ethos 25 years later, under perhaps its most important owner: Adolph Simon Ochs.



A portrait of publisher Adolph Ochs, who bought the New York Times in 1896, and his daughter, Iphigene New York Times

After Jones' death in 1891 and the economic depression sparked by the Panic of 1893, the *Times*' circulation and financial prospects declined. Ochs, who'd made a name for himself at newspapers in the American South, purchased the publication in 1896, paying \$75,000 in mostly borrowed funds. Ochs wrote a brief announcement telling readers what they could expect from his leadership:

It will be my earnest aim that the *New York Times* give the news, all the news, in concise and attractive form, in language that is parliamentary in good society, and give it as early, if not earlier, than it can be learned through any other reliable medium, [and] to give the news impartially, without fear or



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favor, regardless of party, sect or interests involved.

The modern *Times* was greatly shaped by the philosophies that Ochs outlined in his statement. “What so astonishes me about it besides its modesty is that when the *Times* is at its best, that’s exactly what we do to this day,” Dunlap says. “There’s not an anachronistic clause in that credo.”

Ochs died in 1935, and the *Times* has stayed in his family ever since. His great-great-grandson, A.G. Sulzberger, is its current publisher and chairman.

Did you know? Slogan of the *Times*

- On the upper left corner of the *New York Times* front page is the phrase “All the News That’s Fit to Print,” a vow to readers about the breadth of the paper’s work.
- Introduced by Adolph Ochs in 1896, after he purchased the newspaper, it was moved to the front page in 1897.

“What Ochs is saying to readers is ‘You’ll find all shades of opinion in the columns of the *New York Times*, but when you’re reading our news report, you can be assured that we are trying our best to give it impartially,’” Dunlap says.

That impartiality extends to the museum, where some of the *Times*’ major missteps are explored.



The newspaper’s slogan, “All the News That’s Fit to Print,” was introduced in 1896. *New York Times*

“For instance,” Dunlap explains, “we acknowledge the fact that the *Times* was seemingly indifferent to the Holocaust for a number of years until, really, toward the end of the Second World War.” Additionally, he notes, “we deal in the museum with the fact that the *Times* was slow to cover the AIDS epidemic.”

Dunlap points to the publishing of “Overlooked,” a series of obituaries for noteworthy people whose deaths originally went unreported in the paper, as a way that the *Times* attempts to rectify gaps in its coverage.

As a curator, Dunlap must cover both the peaks and valleys of the paper. He mentions the case of Jayson Blair, a former staff reporter who was found to have fabricated and plagiarized much of his work. “We ran a huge story, we basically went back and re-reported all of the stories that Jayson



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covered to see where he had distorted things or invented things or plagiarized things, and then we told our readers what we found,” he says.

Dunlap also spotlights two journalistic high points in *Times* history: its coverage of the *Titanic* disaster and its reporting on the Pentagon Papers. The paper has been widely credited with being both early and accurate in its stories about the *Titanic*. These efforts were led by editor Carr Van Anda, who, alongside Ochs, “molded the *Times* into the institution that it remains to this day,”

Dunlap says.



The April 16, 1912, front page of the *Times* (left) and the June 13, 1971, front page (right) *New York Times*

In 1971, the *Times* began printing a top-secret history of the Vietnam War based on 7,000 pages of classified documents now known as the Pentagon Papers. The *Times* refused to submit to pressure by the then-attorney general, who called on the paper to cease publication of the documents. As the legendary *Times* editor A.M. Rosenthal wrote in 1991, 20 years after he presided over coverage of the Pentagon Papers, “If you know in your stomach that



information stamped secret is essential to public understanding of where the government is going, or has been, there is only one answer to the question asked of us at the time: ‘How can you print this?’ The answer is, ‘How can we not?’

While *Times* journalism is serious, elsewhere at the company, it’s all fun and games. Subscribers enjoy the paper’s famous crossword puzzle, introduced in 1942, along with Spelling Bee and Wordle. The museum showcases a memo from the *Times*’ Sunday editor, written in late 1941, days after the attack on Pearl Harbor, urging the paper’s publisher to move forward with the crossword. The *Times*, Dunlap says, “had to give its readers something more than just endless bulletins of disaster.”



A 1971 photo of *Times* staff working on an issue after the Supreme Court allowed publication of the *Pentagon Papers* *New York Times*

Dolnick notes that in 2017, the *Times* made another leap in its history with the launch of “The Daily” news podcast. “That pretty quickly became one of the most important things that we publish every day,” he says. “For a long time, reporters were competing to appear on the print front page, and now



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reporters were competing to appear on ‘The Daily.’ That led a really big cultural transition, where people understood that their expertise didn’t only have to be reflected through print. Their expertise carried through other mediums as well and could reach even more people that way.”

For the *Times* to adapt as nimbly as it has over the past 175 years, Dolnick says, staff must be vigilant about what doesn’t change—their core values—and then be open about everything else. “If you’re clear about those two things, then I think you can adapt, and that’s been our recipe,” he adds. At the New York Public Library, the company’s records feature artifacts that fascinate visitors and inform them about the storied history of a newspaper that became an institution—and even gave Times Square its name.



A visualization of the Times' masthead over the years New York Times

One of Mann’s favorite pieces in the collection is [a letter](#) to the newspaper from [Amelia Earhart](#). “She was written about in the *New York Times*, and she was referred to by her married name, as Mrs. Putnam



instead of Amelia Earhart,” Mann says. “So, she wrote a letter saying her name is Amelia Earhart and she would appreciate being referred to that way. You get a real sense of her personality even through a very short letter.”

Mann notes that these records are among the most frequently used collections at the library. Guests are deeply interested in the newspaper’s history.

“We are one of the busiest special collections reading rooms in the country,” Mann says, “and we have people in here every day that we’re open, learning about the *New York Times*.”

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**Senate Committee Advances
Legislation to Reauthorize Nation’s
Most Successful Battlefield
Preservation Grant Program
Following overwhelming support in
U.S. House of Representatives, the
bipartisan legislation heads to the
Senate floor after a unanimous
committee vote**

Jared Herr, jherr@battlefields.org
October 1, 2026

(Washington, D.C.) — In a major victory for the protection of America’s hallowed battlegrounds, the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee voted unanimously to advance bills to extend the American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP), the nation’s most effective historic battlefield preservation grant program.



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*The monument to Union Maj. Gen. Gouverneur K. Warren stands on Little Round Top at Gettysburg National Military Park.
Buddy Secor*

The bipartisan legislation, which garnered overwhelming support from both parties, marks a major investment in protecting America's hallowed ground as the nation commemorates the 250th anniversary of the Revolutionary War. In June, the U.S. House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed the ABPP Reauthorization Act with a 404-13 vote.

"This bill lays the groundwork for a preservation legacy that will endure for generations," said American Battlefield Trust President David Duncan. "We are deeply grateful these lawmakers, especially Chairman Lee (R-UT), Ranking Member Heinrich (D-NM), and Sen. Daines (R-MT) understand the power of America's historic battlegrounds and are helping to safeguard these hallowed grounds for generations to come."

U.S. Senators Dave McCormick (R-PA) and Tim Kaine (D-VA) introduced the bill last December. The companion House bill was introduced earlier this year by U.S. Representatives Jen Kiggans (R-VA) and

Seth Magaziner (D-RI), co-chairs of the Congressional Battlefields Caucus.

"The American Battlefield Protection Program has played a critical role in protecting the places that tell the history of Virginia and the United States," said Senator Tim Kaine. "I'm glad that our bipartisan legislation to strengthen protections of historic battlefields advanced, and I look forward to working with my colleagues and other stakeholders to get the bill across the finish line."



*Pamplin Historical Park, Petersburg, Va.
Jennifer Goellnitz*

"As this year, which marks our nation's 250th anniversary, draws toward its close, the progress of this legislation through the Senate takes on increased importance," said Senator Dave McCormick. "Protecting battlefield land is a meaningful, permanent and tangible legacy of this wonderful commemoration period."

The bill reauthorizes three ABPP grant programs through 2036, designating \$20



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million annually to battlefield preservation efforts, including historic property acquisition, landscape restoration and site interpretation. Additionally, the legislation directs the National Park Service (NPS) and the Department of the Interior to consider detailed strategic studies of sites related to the French and Indian War and the Mexican-American War, a major step toward expanding program eligibility.

For a quarter-century, the ABPP's Battlefield Land Acquisition Grant Program (BLAG) has been the principal mechanism for protecting America's irreplaceable historic landscapes — with more than 40,000 acres saved and counting. These matching grants are more important than ever as land prices skyrocket throughout the nation, driven by an explosion of data centers and related commercial development that is driving per-acre acquisition costs to record highs. Nearly \$200 million in federal grants has been competitively awarded through the program, matched many times over by private donations and grants from states and localities. This process has allowed nonprofit groups to save battlefield land associated with some of the most iconic clashes in our country's history, including Appomattox, Brandywine, Chattanooga, Gettysburg, Petersburg, Princeton, Saratoga and Vicksburg. Overall, more than 40,000 acres of historic land at 100-plus battlefields have been preserved in 20 states.

Currently, BLAG funding can be used to preserve land outside NPS boundaries at high-priority battlefields from the



Revolutionary War, War of 1812 and the Civil War. The bill directs NPS to investigate the feasibility of expanding eligibility for BLAG grants to sites related to the French and Indian War and the Mexican-American War, building on 2020 studies funded by ABPP and conducted by Michigan State University and the American Battlefield Trust.

The American Battlefield Trust is dedicated to preserving America's hallowed battlegrounds and educating the public about what happened there and why it matters today. The nonprofit, nonpartisan organization has protected more than 63,000 acres associated with the Revolutionary War, War of 1812 and Civil War across 160 sites in 25 states. Learn more at www.battlefields.org.

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Orange County Moves to Change Positions in Wilderness Crossing Lawsuit A statement from American Battlefield Trust President David Duncan

Jared Herr, jherr@battlefields.org
September 30, 2026

(Orange, Va.) — This morning, Orange County filed a motion to change their position in the lawsuit brought by the Trust and its allies to stop the planned Wilderness Crossing mega-development at the gateway of the Wilderness Battlefield. The County, which had previously defended the



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Wilderness Crossing rezoning, has formally asked to withdraw its opposition to the lawsuit and all its defenses, leaving the developers to defend the project alone.



*A wheat field with a tree in the distance.
Jackson's Flank Attack, The Wheatfield, The
Wilderness, Spotsylvania and Orange Counties,
Va. Buddy Secor*

"We have known from the start that the Wilderness Crossing development was not only a detriment to the battlefield, but arose out of an illegal process, and we are thrilled Orange County has reached the same realization," said David Duncan, president of the American Battlefield Trust.

"Hopefully, the developers behind this wrong-headed mega-development will soon also reach the same conclusion. We look forward to working with the county to find a win-win solution that protects the battlefield as well as the interests of residents and park neighbors."

The motion comes after a special meeting of the Orange County Board of Supervisors yesterday, where the board unanimously passed a resolution acknowledging that the creation of the Planned Development-Mixed Use (PDM) Zoning District, which paved



the way for the Wilderness Crossing mega-development rezoning in 2023, violated Virginia State Code.

The board's finding echoes one of the claims in the lawsuit brought by the American Battlefield Trust, Friends of Wilderness Battlefield (FOWB) and the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust (CVBT), with the support of nearby residents, against the Wilderness Crossing Rezoning. The defective initiation of the PDM Zoning District is one of several grounds advanced in their lawsuit to set aside the rezoning as illegal.

The Wilderness Crossing project was approved over near-unanimous public opposition in the spring of 2023. Ahead of its vote, the Board ignored repeated requests from the preservation community, the National Parks Service, and others to study the impact of this largest rezoning in Orange County history. It allows the building of up to 5,000 residential units, and intense development of more than 800 acres of commercial and industrial development. Nearly 750 acres could be occupied by data centers and distribution warehouses. All this would be built just across Route 3 from where 160,000 Union and Confederate soldiers clashed in May 1864, during one of the most important battles of the Civil War.

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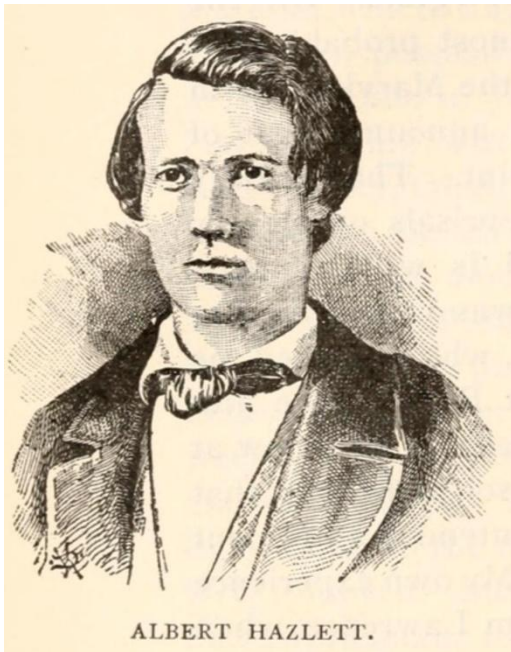
The Final Hangings of John Brown's Raiders

By Doug Cubbison

October 5, 2026 | Blue and Gray Education Society



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Portrait of Albert Hazlett | public domain

John Brown was an insurgent and abolitionist famous for his violent raid on Harpers Ferry, (West) Virginia, on October 16–18, 1859. However, several of his Raiders were not captured or killed but escaped.

Albert Hazlett was one of them. Born in 1836, Hazlett had lived in Indiana County, Western Pennsylvania. By 1857, the young man could be found fighting in Bleeding Kansas with John Brown, where Hazlett was a "brave and efficient" soldier.

During Brown's Harpers Ferry Raid, Lieutenant Albert Hazlett and friend Osborne Perry Anderson were guards and sentries at the Arsenal's Engine House. The authorities arrived and exchanged fire with Brown on Monday, October 17, 1859, and as evening approached, knowing they were

trapped and fearing death or capture, Anderson and Hazlett escaped using fog, mist, and darkness to do so. They found their way carefully into the community of Harpers Ferry, located a small boat on the Potomac River, and continued through Pennsylvania's Franklin and Cumberland Counties. Anderson returned to York, Pennsylvania, to his family, crossed into Canada, and was saved.



Cumberland County Old Courthouse, 1836, Carlisle, PA



Judge Graham's Small Office, Cumberland County Courthouse, Carlisle, PA



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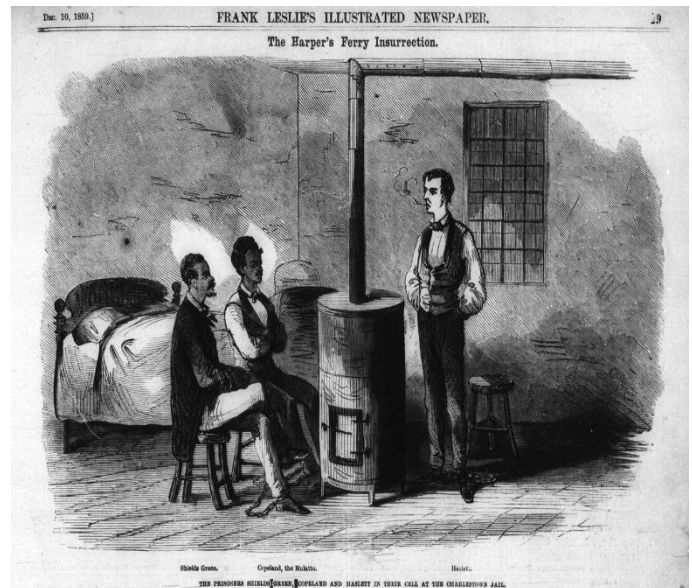
Cumberland County Prison, 1854, Carlisle, PA

Above three photographs courtesy of Douglas R. Cubbison Photographs, permitted by Cumberland County Historical Society

Hazlett attempted to pass as a stranger and fugitive as he arrived in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. He had a coarse, rough beard, clothing torn and ragged, and was filthy, dirty, and exhausted. The sheriff felt he was, in fact, a vagrant. Unfortunately, he also had in his possession four loaded revolvers and two Bowie knives. He was thrown into the new 1854 Cumberland County Prison, one block east of the square. He claimed the alias "William Harrison," and was six feet tall, in a red flannel jacket with pockets, a striped muslin shirt, dark pants, and a dark slouch hat.

On October 29, Hazlett appeared before a judge in Carlisle on a writ of habeas corpus, inside the Cumberland County Courthouse.

There was not a jury for his hearings; rather, all met in the small office of Judge James H. Graham. Present were the prisoner, sheriff, Judge Frederick Watts of Cumberland County—serving as counsel representing the interests of the State of Virginia—and a defense team led by attorney W. J. Shearer, with assistance from attorneys William H. Miller and Alexander Sharp. A reporter from the Carlisle newspaper was also present. There was a warrant from the Pennsylvania governor requesting the release of Albert Hazlett to Virginia authorities.



Albert Hazlett and fellow raiders Shields Green and John Anthony Copeland in their cell in the Charles Town, Jefferson County, Virginia (now West Virginia) jail | public domain

Hazlett claimed that he was the wrong person but failed to convince the judge. While "there is no evidence that we have any man in our custody named Albert Hazlett," Judge Watts, from the Virginia warrants, mentioned "clothing the prisoner allegedly wore the day of the raid" and that



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“the revolvers found on the stranger were identical with those found in the hands of the insurgents.” Watts had three witnesses, although they did not support the claims in question. Still, Hazlett’s four revolvers were relatively rare, being from the Massachusetts Arms Company, and just like those Brown had purchased.

Following three hearings, Judge Graham ruled “...that strict justice has been done. ...” Judge Graham confirmed Hazlett’s revolvers from the Harpers Ferry Raid and ordered Hazlett back to Virginia, “even though the evidence linking him to Harpers Ferry was circumstantial.” Hazlett arrived at the Charles Town Courthouse on November 5, was arraigned, and—after what was not really a legitimate judicial trial—was executed on March 16, 1860, along with another of Brown's Raiders, the last of the group to be hanged.

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Alabama’s General John Forney at Vicksburg: Holding the Center

By Norman Dasinger, Jr.
September 28, 2026 | Blue and Gray
Education Society



*Statue of John Horace Forney at Vicksburg
National Military Park | NPS*

John Horace Forney was not born in Alabama, but the state became his adopted home and the place from which he entered the military career that eventually brought him to Vicksburg. Born in North Carolina in 1829, Forney was appointed to the United States Military Academy from Alabama in 1848 and graduated in 1852. In January 1861, while teaching tactics at West Point, he resigned his U.S. Army commission and offered his services to Alabama Governor Andrew B. Moore.

Forney helped form the 10th Alabama Infantry and became its colonel. At Dranesville, Virginia, in December 1861, he was wounded while leading his regiment. Brigadier General J. E. B. Stuart praised him as “that gallant son of Alabama,” whose bravery under fire was “the admiration of all.”

Forney's reputation and experience brought rapid promotion. He became a brigadier general in March 1862 and a major general in October. After his promotion, he was assigned to the Department of Alabama and West Florida, headquartered at Mobile.

In the spring of 1863, as Confederate forces in Mississippi faced mounting pressure, Forney was transferred to the Vicksburg theater and given command of a division in Lieutenant General John C. Pemberton's army. His division included the brigades of Brigadier Generals Louis Hebert and John C.



Moore, with troops from Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas.

Forney's division initially operated outside Vicksburg, but Ulysses S. Grant's advance forced the Confederate army back toward the city. On May 17, as Pemberton's army retreated into its defenses, Forney wrote that he had "reassumed command of my division proper." He ordered supplies brought in from Snyder's Mill and moved Moore's brigade into the trenches along the Baldwin's Ferry Road.



John Horace Forney | public domain

Forney's division held the center of Pemberton's line, with Moore's brigade occupying important works along Baldwin's Ferry Road and Hebert's brigade positioned nearer the Jackson Road. The Jackson Road position was especially important. Forney later explained that if Federals captured the

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main work there, the Confederates would have to abandon a considerable stretch of their trenches because the captured position would allow the enemy to pour enfilading fire down the line.

The danger became real on May 22, when Grant launched a major assault against Vicksburg's defenses. Forney's reports reveal a commander closely following the fighting along his line. After a day of heavy firing and repeated attacks, he reported that assaults had been repulsed at three points. In a brief postscript, he added almost matter-of-factly: "General Moore is again hotly engaged."

The fighting continued for weeks, with Forney's division remaining in the line. Forney also understood the condition of his men. In a May 27 report, he noted that Moore's men were "much worn in the trenches" and said he would favor giving them rest if the enemy were not so close.

Moore's brigade included the 37th, 40th, and 42nd Alabama, the 35th and 40th Mississippi, and the 2nd Texas. Colonel Ashbel Smith, commanding the 2nd Texas, later wrote that his men were still at the "highest pitch of fighting valor" when the siege ended.

Vicksburg surrendered on July 4, 1863, and Forney was captured and paroled with the garrison. He was exchanged on October 13 and later returned to active command. In 1864, he was sent to the Trans-Mississippi Department, where he eventually



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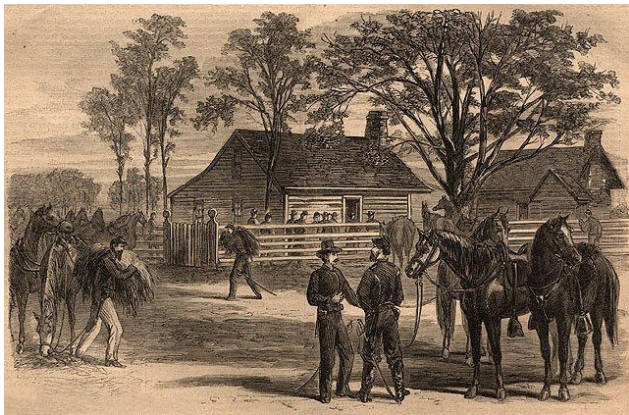
commanded a division of Texas troops. He remained in Confederate service until the end of the war and was paroled at Galveston, Texas, on June 20, 1865.

After the war, Forney returned to Alabama and became a farmer and civil engineer. He died at Jacksonville in 1902. His Civil War career had taken him from colonel of the 10th Alabama to major general. At Vicksburg, he held one of the most important commands: the division entrusted with defending the center of Pemberton's line.

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When Jefferson Davis Agreed to Surrender

By Michael C. Hardy, September 25, 2026 |
Blue and Gray Education Society



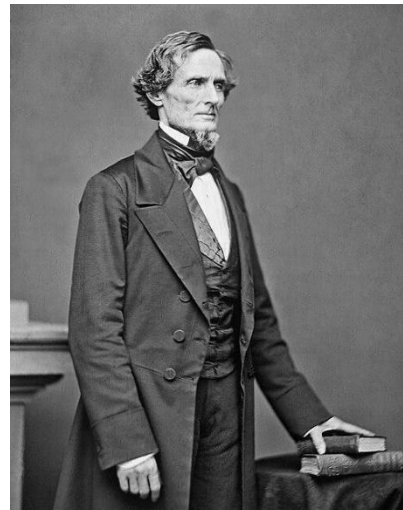
Johnston's surrender | public domain

Jefferson Davis sat in silence at a table in a bank building in Charlotte, North Carolina. Two weeks earlier, the Confederate president and members of his cabinet had fled Richmond while flames engulfed the

Confederate capital. Their train took them to Danville, where, for a week, they awaited news of Robert E. Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia. When word arrived that Lee had surrendered at Appomattox, Davis and most of his cabinet boarded another train and headed for Greensboro, North Carolina.

Greensboro was seriously overcrowded. From a train car, Davis met with Confederate generals Joseph E. Johnston and P.G.T. Beauregard. They counseled that the war was at an end, and Davis begrudgingly agreed to allow Johnston to reach out to Union commander William T. Sherman. Believing negotiations with the Federals would prove futile, Davis then set out on horseback for Charlotte. With much of the railroad wrecked, he and part of his entourage rode into the Queen City on April 19, 1865.

While addressing a crowd from the porch of a private home, Davis learned about the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln, news that left him visibly moved.





Jefferson Davis in 1859 | public domain

Johnston's request for a ceasefire reached Sherman on April 14. Sherman agreed but told Johnston he could only proffer the same terms Ulysses S. Grant had given Lee. Johnston and Sherman met at the Bennett farm outside Durham, North Carolina, on April 18.

The Confederates wanted terms that would give the civilian authorities time to meet and work out their differences. Quickly, Sherman dismissed those terms, drafting his own. Confederate armies would be disbanded, weapons deposited at state capitals, political leaders required to take the oath of allegiance, and civil courts reestablished. The United States government would not "disturb any of the people by reason of the late war, as long as they live in peace and quiet, abstain from acts of armed hostility, and obey the laws in existence at the place of their residence."

Sherman sent those terms to Washington, D.C., while Johnston likewise sent a copy to Davis.

Davis asked his cabinet for their views in writing. While they agreed that the resources for continuing the war were available, they all concurred that Southerners had lost the will to fight. Davis should accept the terms.

Yet Davis hesitated, writing to his wife that he feared the "long night of oppression" that would beset the Southern people if the

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Confederacy surrendered. Finally, on April 24, Davis agreed to the terms.

Yet at 6:30 that evening, a note arrived from Johnston. The United States government had rejected the terms, castigated Sherman, and sent Grant to North Carolina to assume negotiations.

Davis met one final time with his entire cabinet in Charlotte before heading south into South Carolina. After a late-night session with Grant, Sherman and Johnston met again at the Bennett farm, where, on April 26, 1865, Johnston agreed to surrender the Army of Tennessee.

Davis continued southward. On May 10, he was captured in Georgia. He would spend the next two years in prison.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michael C. Hardy is the author of 29 books, including General Lee's Immortals (2018), a history of the Branch-Lane Brigade, and Feeding Lee's Army of Northern Virginia (2025). Visit his website, www.michaelchardy.com, to learn more.

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