

# The Knapsack

Raleigh Civil War Round Table

The same rain falls on both friend and foe.

Nov. 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021  
Our 249<sup>th</sup> Issue



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## Nov. 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021 Event Features Colby L. Stevens Speaking on the Topic **Expansion Plans for the Bentonville Battlefield as Related to Mower's Charge and Hardee's Counterattack**

Our upcoming meeting will be on Monday, Nov. 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021. We are once again meeting in person at the NC Museum of History in Raleigh. **Per recent guidelines from our Governor, those attending in person are required to wear a mask, even those who are fully vaccinated for the Covid-19 virus.** For those unable to attend in person, a Zoom session will also be recorded live simultaneously.

Raleigh CWRT President, Josie Walker, should have already emailed an invitation to you, including instructions and a link for joining online if you are unable to attend in person.

**If you have not already received this invitation, please contact Josie at [RaleighCWRT@Yahoo.com](mailto:RaleighCWRT@Yahoo.com).**

November's meeting will feature a presentation by Colby L. Stevens, Site Manager at the Bentonville Battlefield State Historic Site, speaking on the topic **Expansion Plans for the Bentonville Battlefield as Related to Mower's Charge and Hardee's Counterattack**.



*Colby Stevens*

Formerly, Colby was Site Manager at House in the Horseshoe State Historic Site, located fifteen miles west of Sanford, NC. This plantation house was named for its location on a horseshoe bend in the Deep River. The house (ca. 1770) was owned by Philip Alston, whose band of colonists seeking independence from Britain was attacked there in 1781 during the American Revolution by British loyalists led by David Fanning. Later, four-term governor Benjamin Williams lived in the house, which now features antiques of the colonial and Revolutionary War eras.

Prior to that, Colby was Site Assistant at Aycock Birthplace State Historic Site, fourteen miles north of Goldsboro, NC. Charles B. Aycock was the 50<sup>th</sup> Governor of North Carolina from 1901 to 1905. He was known as the "Education Governor" for his advocacy for the improvement of North Carolina's public school systems.

Colby studied Public History at Appalachian State University and lives in Coats, North Carolina with his wife, Caroline Nance Stevens.

### *The Battle of Bentonville*

Bentonville Battlefield is a North Carolina state historic site at 5466 Harper House Road in Johnston County, North Carolina, about four miles southwest of the village of Bentonville. The Battle of Bentonville, fought March 19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup>, 1865 was not only the last battle between the armies of Union Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman and Confederate Gen. Joseph E. Johnston, but also the last full-scale action of the Civil War, and the largest battle ever fought in North Carolina. It was also the only major Confederate attempt to stop Sherman after the Battle of Atlanta in August 1864.



*The Harper House*

Much of the battlefield has been preserved. The Harper House, used as a hospital, still stands. A Confederate mass grave, the Harper family cemetery, and a tour trail leading to a section of Union earthworks are also accessible to the public. Reminders of the battle are on exhibit in the Visitor Center along with an audiovisual program about the battle. Roads in the area are marked with highway historical markers and waysides highlighting action that took place there.

Johnston's 22,000-man Army of the South consisted of the remnants of the Army of Tennessee, the Department of North Carolina, and the Department of South Carolina, Georgia & Florida, with other castoffs joining along the way. They were completely outnumbered by Sherman's 62,000-man army.

Sherman's Union army consisted of two wings which he had created following the successful conclusion of the

Battle of Atlanta prior to his March to the Sea. The Army of Georgia was formed by combining the remaining XIV Corps and the XX Corps of the Army of the Cumberland while The Army of the Tennessee consisted of the XV and XVII Corps. Each wing had about 30,000 troops.

The Battle of Bentonville represented three-fold irony. First, Sherman's army was part of his Military Division of the Mississippi, which controlled all military operations in the Western Theater (west of the Appalachian Mountains) from 1863 to the end of the War. And yet, Bentonville, itself, was deep in the Eastern Theater (east of the Appalachian Mountains), only 90 miles from the Atlantic Ocean. The Battle of Bentonville is considered part of the Western Theater because it was a continuation of an offensive by Sherman's western armies which had start-

Second, in this battle, the Confederates occupied a northern blocking position as the Union units approached from the south. Third, the Confederate leaders were a who's-who of command failures, consigned to the seemingly safe backwaters of North Carolina: Joseph E. Johnston, Braxton Bragg, Lafayette McLaws, Alfred Colquitt, Evander Law, and William B. Taliaferro.

As the right wing of Sherman's army under command of Maj. Gen. Oliver O. Howard (the Army of the Tennessee) marched toward Sherman's goal, Goldsboro, the left wing under command of Maj. Gen. Henry W. Slocum (the Army of Georgia), while marching in parallel with the east wing, encountered the entrenched men of Confederate Gen. Joseph E. Johnston's army.

On the first day of the battle, the Confederates attacked the XIV Corps and routed two divisions, but the rest of Sherman's army defended its positions successfully. The next day, as Sherman sent reinforcements to the battlefield and expected Johnston to withdraw, only minor sporadic fighting occurred. On the third day, as skirmishing continued, the division of Maj. Gen. Joseph A. Mower followed a path into the Confederate rear and attacked. The Confederates were able to repulse the attack as Sherman ordered Mower back to connect with his own corps. Johnston elected to withdraw from the battlefield that night. Sherman, after regrouping at Goldsboro, pursued Johnston toward Raleigh.

As a result of the overwhelming Union strength and the heavy casualties his army suffered in the battle, Johnston surrendered to Sherman little more than a month later at Bennett Place, near Durham Station. Coupled with Gen. Robert E. Lee's surrender on April 9, Johnston's surrender of the remaining 90,000 NC, SC, GA, and FL troops under his command represented the effective end of the war.

In summary, the Battle of Bentonville was the largest Civil War engagement fought in NC and resulted in a Union victory with approximately 4,133 total casualties during the battle. Union forces suffered 1,527 casualties (194 killed, 1,112 wounded, and 221 missing/captured) and Confederate forces suffered 2,606 casualties (239 killed, 1,694 wounded, and 673 missing/captured).



*Movements in the Carolinas Campaign. Map by Hal Jespersen, www.posix.com/CW*



*An engraving from Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, 22 Apr. 1865, showing Bentonville the morning after the battle. North Carolina Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Library.*

# Twelve Notable Instances of Rail Transportation During the Civil War

A Twelve-Part Series by Bob Graesser, Editor

## Introduction

This is part seven of a twelve-part series (listed below) in which I examine in chronological order some of the most notable instances of how rail transportation played a critical role in the Civil War. Part seven examines how James Longstreet's timely reinforcement of Braxton Bragg's forces by rail led to a Confederate victory at the Battle of Chickamauga on Sept. 9<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup>, 1863.

## Part 7 Sources

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- [\*Vicksburg and Chattanooga: The Battles That Doomed the Confederacy\*](#) by Jack H. Lepa, McFarland & Co., Illustrated ed. (Sept. 24<sup>th</sup>, 2014) [Kindle ed.], ASIN: B00NT9PSV0; McFarland & Co., Illustrated ed. (Sept. 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2014) [paperback], ISBN-10: 0786494123, ISBN-13: 978-0786494125.

## Prologue

The summer and fall campaigns of 1863 marked the pivotal five-month-long turning point of the Civil War. Famous campaigns around Vicksburg, Mississippi, and Gettysburg, Pennsylvania quickly come to mind. Less well-known, however, are the campaigns that occurred in Middle and East Tennessee between June and Nov., 1863. Despite being overshadowed by Vicksburg and Gettysburg, the 1863 Tennessee campaigns initiated broad military, logistical, political, and social changes. Specifically, the second half of 1863 involved a series of maneuvers and clashes between Confederate General Braxton Bragg's Army of Tennessee and Union Maj. Gen. William Rosecrans's Army of the Cumberland. This fighting occurred in south central and southeastern Tennessee, all near the Georgia border.

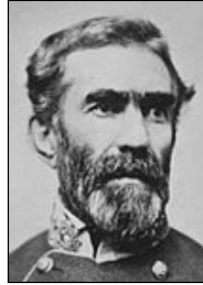
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- Part 1: Lincoln's Whistle-Stop Inaugural Journey from Springfield, IL to Washington City, Feb. 11<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup>, 1861
  - Part 2: Jefferson Davis's Inaugural Journey from His MS Plantation, Brierfield, to Montgomery, AL, Feb. 11<sup>th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



**Maj. Gen.  
William Rosecrans**

The ultimate goal for Rosecrans, as the strategic aggressor, was the capture of Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Although home to less than 3,000 residents, Chattanooga was an important manufacturing center for the production of iron and coke, located on the navigable Tennessee River. It was of critical importance to both the Union and the Confederacy because of its location. Located in a valley situated between Lookout Mountain, Missionary Ridge, Raccoon Mountain, and Stringer's Ridge, just north of the Georgia border, Chattanooga was the most important rail center after Richmond and Atlanta that the Confederacy still controlled.



**General  
Braxton Bragg**

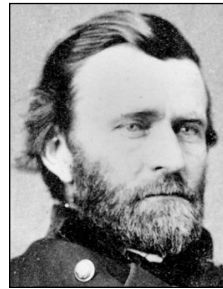
The Virginia & Tennessee Railroad (V&T RR) ran from Richmond through Knoxville and all the way to Chattanooga. The Western & Atlantic Railroad (W&A RR) ran south from Chattanooga through Dalton, Georgia, and then to Atlanta and other points south. The Georgia Railroad (G RR) connected Augusta, Georgia with Atlanta. The Nashville & Chattanooga Railroad (N&C RR) headed west from Chattanooga through the mountains to Stevenson, Alabama, where it turned north to Nashville. Also from Stevenson, the Memphis & Charleston Railroad (M&C RR) connected with Memphis and the Mississippi River. Almost every important point in the Confederacy east of the Mississippi was linked by the railroads that ran through or connected with Chattanooga. It didn't take a military genius to see that Chattanooga was the key to the heart of the Confederacy.



**Civil War railroads in the Western Theater**

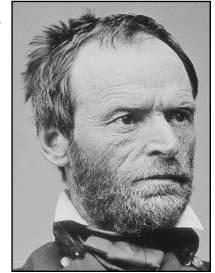
The period to be discussed can be broken down into three sequential phases:

- 1) the Tullahoma Campaign (June 24<sup>th</sup> to July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1863), in which Union Maj. Gen. William Rosecrans's Army of the Cumberland drove Confederate Gen. Braxton Bragg's Army of Tennessee out of Middle Tennessee.
- 2) the Chickamauga Campaign (Aug. 21<sup>st</sup> to Sept. 20<sup>th</sup>, 1863), which began with the Union occupation of Chattanooga and culminated in the Battle of Chickamauga (Sept. 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup>, 1863).
- 3) the Chattanooga Campaign (Oct. to Nov., 1863), in



**Maj. Gen.  
Ulysses S. Grant**

which Bragg bottled up Rosecrans in Chattanooga until Maj. Gen. U.S. Grant took charge of the Union forces, brought in reinforcements, broke the siege, drove Bragg's Army of Tennessee out of Tennessee, and opened the door for an invasion of the Deep South, leading to Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman's Atlanta Campaign of 1864.



**Maj. Gen.  
William T.  
Sherman**

The Tullahoma campaign was a military operation conducted from June 24<sup>th</sup> to July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1863, by the Union Army of the Cumberland under Maj. Gen. William Rosecrans. It is regarded as one of the most brilliant maneuvers of the American Civil War as it drove the Confederates out of Middle Tennessee and threatened the strategic city of Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Located midway between Rosecrans's starting position at Murfreesboro and his goal at Chattanooga, Tullahoma, Tennessee in 1863 served as the headquarters for Confederate General Braxton Bragg's Army of Tennessee. It lay on the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad (N&C RR) line in south-central Tennessee near the Georgia border and was noted for having a nearby spring which provided water for the steam locomotives.

Tullahoma was little more than a rough frontier outpost, and had no paved streets. 1863 was a wet year, and the place became known to the troops of both sides as a place of endless mud. An aide on Confederate General William Hardee's staff is said to have written his own account of the origin of the name: "It is from two Greek words – 'Tulla' meaning mud, and 'Homa,' meaning more mud."

The selection of Tullahoma as a headquarters by Confederate General Braxton Bragg has been much criticized by military historians. Although the location was strategic with regard to the road and rail network, it had no strong natural defenses. Bragg did little to fortify it while his forces occupied the area. Instead, Bragg had established a strong defensive position in the surrounding mountains.

Moving southeast from his starting base in Murfreesboro, TN, Rosecrans, over a nine day period, conducted a series of well-rehearsed feints, capturing the key passes, and being helped by the use of the new seven-shot Spencer repeating rifle. The Confederates were handicapped by dissension between generals, as well as a lack of supplies, and soon had to abandon Tullahoma.

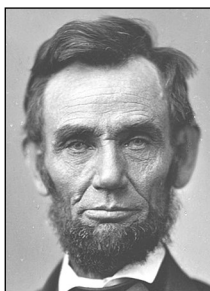
The Tullahoma campaign ended in the same week as the two historic Union victories at Gettysburg and Vicksburg. Despite his army having suffered only 569 casualties (83 killed, 473 wounded, and 13 captured or missing), Rosecrans later complained that the other two victories had caused his achievement to be overshadowed. However, Confederate casualties had also been few,

and Bragg's army, although having been maneuvered by July 3<sup>rd</sup> all the way to the temporary safety of Chattanooga, soon received compensatory reinforcements.



**Maj. Gen.  
Henry W. Halleck**

General-in-Chief Maj. Gen. Henry W. Halleck and President Abraham Lincoln immediately insisted that Rosecrans move quickly to take Chattanooga. Seizing the city would open the door for the Union to advance toward Atlanta and the heartland of the South.



**President  
Abraham Lincoln**

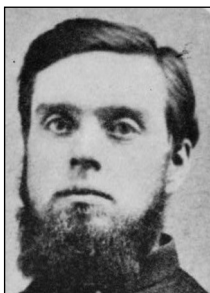
In addition, Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton telegraphed Rosecrans, "Lee's Army overthrown; Grant victorious. You and your noble army now have a chance to give the finishing blow to the rebellion. Will you neglect the chance?" Rosecrans was infuriated by this attitude and responded, "Just received your cheering telegram announcing the fall of Vicksburg and confirming the defeat of Lee. You do not appear to observe the fact that this noble army has driven the rebels from middle Tennessee. ... I beg in behalf of this army that the War Department may not overlook so great an event because it is not written in letters of blood."



**Sec. of War  
Edwin M. Stanton**

Rosecrans did not immediately pursue Bragg and "give the finishing blow to the rebellion" as Stanton urged. A cautious soldier, Rosecrans paused to regroup and study the difficult choices of pursuit into mountainous regions.

After a halt of six weeks, Rosecrans, on August 21<sup>st</sup>, 1863, launched his campaign to take Chattanooga. He first had Col. John T. Wilder's brigade of the Union 4<sup>th</sup> Division, XIV Army Corps, march to a location northeast of Chattanooga where the Confederates could see them, reinforcing Gen. Braxton Bragg's expectations of a Union attack on the town from that direction.



**Col.  
John T. Wilder**

Arriving at the Tennessee River opposite Chattanooga, Wilder ordered the 18<sup>th</sup> Indiana Light Artillery (Capt. Eli Lilly's battery) to begin shelling the town. The shells caught many soldiers and civilians in town in church observing a day of prayer and fasting. The bombardment sank two steamers docked at the landing and created a great deal of consternation amongst the Confederates. [Aside: yes, this was the same Eli Lilly who later created the eponymous drug company which exists to this day.]



**Capt.  
Eli Lilly**

Continuing periodically over the next two weeks, Lilly's shelling helped keep Bragg's attention to the northeast while the bulk of Rosecrans's army crossed the Tennessee River well west and south of Chattanooga. When Bragg learned on Sept. 8<sup>th</sup> that the Union army was in great numbers southwest of the city, he was forced to abandon Chattanooga without a fight and retreat his Army of Tennessee into Georgia so as not to lose contact with his supply base in Atlanta.

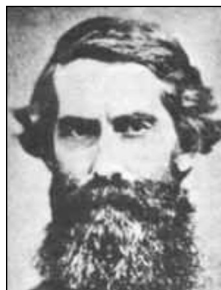
This allowed Rosecrans to occupy Chattanooga beginning on Sept. 9<sup>th</sup>. Bragg's army marched down the LaFayette Road and camped in the city of LaFayette, Georgia, which lay 28 miles due south of Chattanooga's city center. LaFayette lay 27 miles due west of Dalton, GA, Bragg's nearest depot on the Western & Atlantic Railroad (W&A RR) coming out of Atlanta.

Actually, Rosecrans assumed that Bragg's demoralized army would have retreated even further south into Rome, Georgia, a distance of 39 miles from LaFayette. Therefore, Rosecrans divided his army into three corps and scattered them throughout Tennessee and Georgia. But this was a mistake since Bragg's concentrated force at LaFayette was close to one of Rosecrans's three corps, making this isolated corps vulnerable. In addition, Bragg was expecting reinforcements by rail any minute. With these additional troops, Bragg's force would outnumber any of the separated Union corps. Bragg realized that he could attack them one at a time with overwhelming force since they were too far apart to support one another.

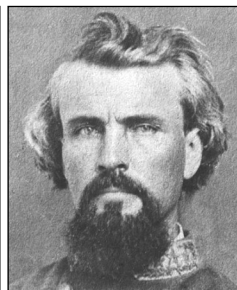
Unknown to Rosecrans, Bragg halted his retreat and bolstered his army with reinforcements from Mississippi, Knoxville, and Virginia.

Troops from Mississippi serving under:

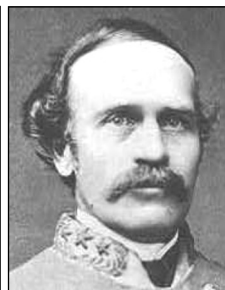
- Maj. Gen. William H. T. Walker, commander of the Reserve Corps,
- Brig. Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest, commander of Forrest's Cavalry Corps, and
- Maj. Gen. Bushrod Johnson, commander of Johnson's Provisional Division.



**Maj. Gen. William  
H. T. Walker**



**Brig. Gen. Nathan  
Bedford Forrest**



**Maj. Gen.  
Bushrod Johnson**

Troops from Knoxville, Tennessee serving under Maj. Gen. Simon Bolivar Buckner, commander of Buckner's Corps:

- Maj. Gen. Alexander P. Stewart's Division
- Brig. Gen. William Preston's Division



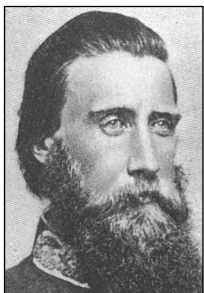
*Maj. Gen.  
Alexander P. Stewart*



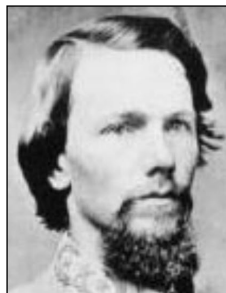
*Brig. Gen.  
William Preston*

Troops from Virginia serving under Lt. Gen. James Longstreet, commander of the 1<sup>st</sup> Corps, Army of Northern Virginia:

- Maj. Gen. John B. Hood's Division, commanded by Brig. Gen. Evander M. Law, the ranking brigade commander (since Hood commanded Longstreet's 1<sup>st</sup> Corps while Longstreet was acting as the left wing commander).
- Maj. Gen. Lafayette McLaws's Division, commanded by Brig. Gen. Joseph B. Kershaw, the ranking brigade commander (since McLaws was still enroute from Virginia)



*Maj. Gen.  
John B. Hood*



*Brig. Gen.  
Evander M. Law*



*Maj. Gen.  
Lafayette McLaws*



*Brig. Gen.  
Joseph B. Kershaw*

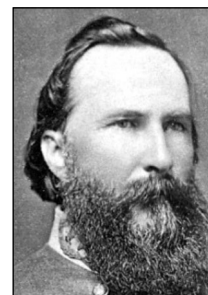
### Longstreet Moves West

It is the Virginia reinforcements, however, that are the focus of this article. As Lt. Col. Moxley Sorrel, Adjutant-General on Lt. Gen. James Longstreet's staff, later put it in his memoirs: "Never before were so many troops moved over such worn-out railways, none first-class from the beginning. Never before were such crazy cars –

*The Knapsack*

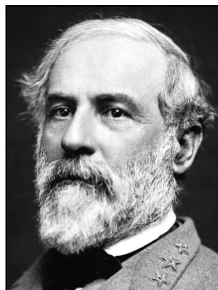


*Lt. Col.  
Moxley Sorrel*



*Lt. Gen.  
James Longstreet*

passenger, baggage, mail, coal, box, platform, all and every sort wobbling on the jumping strap-iron – used for hauling good soldiers. But we got there nevertheless."

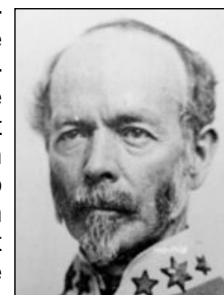


*Gen. Robert E. Lee*

Sorrel was recalling one of the most incredible feats by the Confederacy during the war: the movement of the battle-scarred veterans of Longstreet's 1<sup>st</sup> Corps from General Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia to reinforce General Braxton Bragg's Army of Tennessee at Chickamauga. It proved to be a massive undertaking that taxed the limits of the Confederacy's rail resources and ultimately involved sixteen different rail lines over

several routes.

In his own memoirs, Longstreet describes a conversation with Gen. Lee on May 4<sup>th</sup>, 1863 right after the conclusion of Lee's greatest victory, the Battle of Chancellorsville. Longstreet suggested to Lee that Gen. Joseph E. Johnston, currently attempting to raise forces to relieve Vicksburg from Grant's siege, should rather be sent to aid Bragg in middle Tennessee against Rosecrans. Furthermore, Longstreet suggested that he (Longstreet) should take his two divisions, just up from Suffolk, and hasten to reinforce Bragg as well. Longstreet thought that this might cause Grant to abandon the siege of Vicksburg to come to the aid of Rosecrans. Longstreet felt that the combination of Bragg, Johnston and himself would overwhelm Rosecrans, allowing them to then march for the Ohio River and Cincinnati.



*Gen.  
Joseph E. Johnston*

Lee considered this for a day or two but came up with a different plan. He would carry the war onto Northern soil. This, he thought, would have the same effect of pulling Grant away from Vicksburg. So, Longstreet was already envisioning the relief of Bragg fully four months before such a move actually came to pass. And in fact, by 1863, James Longstreet had already approached Lee several times to be transferred to what he viewed as the greener pastures of the Western Theater. It appears that Longstreet dreamed of escaping Lee's shadow and commanding his own army.

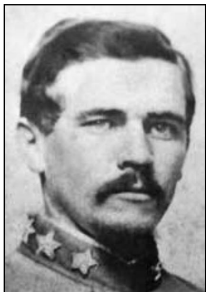
As we know, Lee's foray onto Northern soil resulted in defeat at Gettysburg. Following the retreat, the Army of



*Col. Edward Porter Alexander*

Northern Virginia rested on the south bank of the Rapidan River. Once again, Longstreet, on Sept. 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1863, proposed to Lee that he be sent with his two divisions, McLaws's and Hood's, plus Col. Edward Porter Alexander's batteries west to reinforce Bragg. Lee wanted to know how long it would take Longstreet to get to Chattanooga. Since at that time the five railroad lines comprising a direct route between Richmond and Chattanooga were open and in good working order, Longstreet informed Lee that the journey would take two days. Lee approved the plan and passed the request on to President Davis.

Davis, realizing that Chattanooga held the key to the South's future, knew he could not risk having Bragg

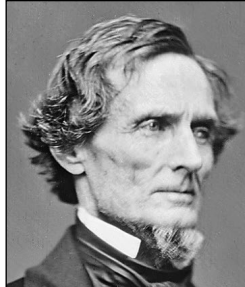


*Brig. Gen. Micah Jenkins*

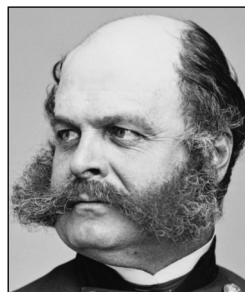
fail to retake Chattanooga. Therefore, he gave Longstreet his opportunity, ordering him to bring the divisions of Maj. Gen. LaFayette McLaws and Maj. Gen. John Bell Hood, the brigade of Brig. Gen. Micah Jenkins, and the artillery battalion of Col. Edward Porter Alexander to Chattanooga. It was not until Sept. 9<sup>th</sup>, however, that the first train came to Orange Court-House near the Rapidan River to start loading troops. On top of that, although Richmond authorities were aware that Knoxville had been captured by Union Maj. Gen. Ambrose Burnside on Sept. 3<sup>rd</sup> and that the Cumberland Gap, through which the direct rail line ran, had been captured by Burnside's forces on Sept. 9<sup>th</sup>, i.e., on that very day, neither Lee nor Longstreet were appraised of this situation. By the time Longstreet found out, the move was so far advanced that it could not be recalled.

Longstreet and his troops had to make a round-about 900 mile circuit utilizing sixteen different rail lines through the Carolinas to Augusta, Georgia, and then through Atlanta to Dalton and Ringgold. There were four cleared routes between Richmond and Augusta, two via Wilmington, and two through Charlotte, North Carolina, but only a single track from Augusta to Chattanooga. The gauges of the roads were not uniform, nor did the railroads connect at the cities (except by wagon or cart). The railroads had not been heavily used before the Civil War, so that their rolling stock was light in number and limited in variety.

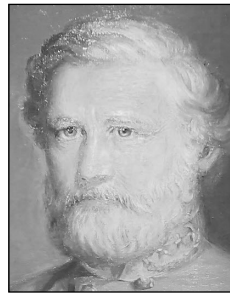
While making their way south through the Carolinas, the troops were greeted in numbers reminiscent of early



*President Jefferson Davis*

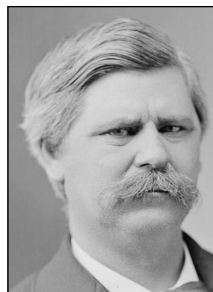


*Maj. Gen. Ambrose Burnside*



*Brig. Gen. Henry Benning*

days of the war. Augustus Dickert, of the 3<sup>rd</sup> South Carolina Regiment in Kershaw's Brigade, remembered cheering crowds greeting them at every station "waving handkerchiefs and flags." One incident, however, was not so joyful. As related in 2013 by William Lee White, park guide at Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park, "as Brig. Gen. Henry Benning's Georgia Brigade stopped in Raleigh, N.C., some of the Georgians decided they had a score to settle with newspaper owner William Woods Holden, who used the North

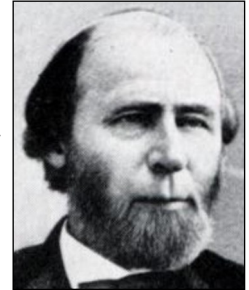


*NC Governor Zebulon Vance*

Carolina Standard as a platform to criticize Jefferson Davis and North Carolina Governor Zebulon Vance. The Georgians ransacked the newspaper's office and completely destroyed the printing press. A riot almost ensued before the Georgians returned to their waiting train and departed. For the rest of the traveling troops, things were much quieter, with many troops enjoying short stops at town feasts along the way." As stated by Jerry Korn in *The Fight for Chattanooga: Chickamauga to Missionary Ridge*, "Longstreet's troops were traveling light; Gen. John Bell Hood -- his crippled left arm still in a sling from a serious wound received at Gettysburg -- commented that the men 'were destitute of almost everything, I might say, except pride, spirit, and forty rounds of ammunition to the man.' They did, however, have something rare in the Confederacy: new uniforms, supplied by Gov. Zebulon Vance from North Carolina mills. Curiously, the new clothes were blue and, except for the tight cut, resembled the standard Union uniforms."

Instead of two days, Maj. Gen. John Bell Hood's division, which was shipped first, arrived near Ringgold on Sept. 17<sup>th</sup>, an eight day journey. Its men joined General Bragg's army starting on Sept. 18<sup>th</sup>. (The rest of Longstreet's Corps would continue to arrive in bits and pieces over the ensuing several days. Alexander's batteries, bringing up the rear, did not arrive until Sept. 25<sup>th</sup>.)

Bragg, having been reinforced with Hood's two divisions and Brig. Gen. Bushrod Johnson's Mississippi division, now had numerical superiority over the nearest Union corps. With renewed confidence that Chattanooga could be recaptured, Bragg marched his army to the west bank of Chickamauga Creek, hoping to position his troops between Chattanooga and the Federal army, cutting off their line of retreat. Chickamauga Creek, which meanders near the subsequent battle area in northwest Georgia, ultimately flows into the Tennessee River about

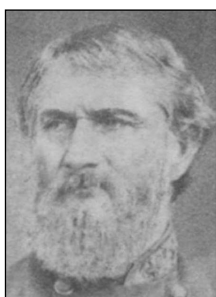


*William Woods Holden*

3.5 miles northeast of downtown Chattanooga. It is said that "Chickamauga" is a Cherokee term meaning "River of Blood". The creek, itself, was deep, tree-lined, and bordered by rocky banks. As Bragg's infantry crossed this creek on the afternoon of the 18<sup>th</sup>, they skirmished with Federals in an opening engagement. Bragg had been hoping that his advance would be a surprise; Rosecrans, however, had observed the Confederates marching in the morning and anticipated Bragg's plan. By the time Bragg's army crossed the creek, just 12 miles south of Chattanooga, Union reinforcements had arrived.

The battle proper began on the morning of the 19<sup>th</sup>. The land being fought over, which lay between Chickamauga Creek and the north-south LaFayette Road, was gently rolling but almost completely wooded, with the thickets presenting, as one historian has called it, a "bristling, sticky, irritating obstacle." In the woods no officer above brigadier could see all his command at once, and even the brigadiers often could see nobody's troops but their own and perhaps the enemy's. Throughout Sept. 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>, the terrain made clearly drawn battle lines impossible: commanding officers on both sides had little-to-no view of the field, and the armies constantly shifted positions as they unexpectedly ran into each other. The fluid battle lines in dense woods led to vicious, close quarters combat. The units could not easily see or cooperate with each other, causing extremely high casualties.

At about 2:00 pm on the afternoon of the 19<sup>th</sup>, Longstreet and part of his staff finally reached Ringgold, Georgia, 10 miles east of the Chickamauga battlefield. The follow-up train with their horses arrived two hours later. Bragg had not bothered to send anyone to greet them and guide them back to his headquarters. All Longstreet's party could do was to ride to the sound of the guns mid-battle at Chickamauga. By then it was dark and several times they almost stumbled into enemy camps. They finally reached Gen. Bragg's headquarters at 11:00 pm, nine hours after their initial arrival.



Lt. Gen.  
Leonidas Polk

Earlier that evening, Bragg had gathered his officers to inform them that he had decided to reform his army into two wings, putting Longstreet in charge of the left wing and Lt. Gen. Leonidas Polk, the senior lieutenant general on the field (but junior to Longstreet) in charge of the right wing. Bragg repeated this information to Longstreet, stating that they would attack early the next morning, Sept. 20<sup>th</sup>.

The battle resumed at 9:30 a.m., with coordinated Confederate attacks on the Union left flank. About an hour later, Rosecrans, believing a gap existed in his line, ordered Brig. Gen. Thomas J. Wood's division to fill the gap. Wood, however, knew that the order was a mistake; no such gap existed in the Federal line, and moving his division would, in turn, open a large swath in the Union position. However, Wood had already been berated twice in the campaign for not promptly following orders.

Continued on p. 10 →

## Numerical Key to Black's Railroad Maps

The following numerical keys identify the railroad lines on the map displayed on the facing page. Both the keys, the railroads map, and gauge key are from *The Railroads of the Confederacy* by Robert C. Black III.

Shown below are the five possible railroad routes from Richmond, VA to Chattanooga, TN. All the routes except the first one were used.

### Direct Route From Richmond, VA to Chattanooga, TN (blocked at Bristol [Cumberland Gap] and at Knoxville) (RED Marker):

- 9 - Richmond & Danville RR
- 10 - Southside RR
- 14 - Virginia & Tennessee RR
- 77 - East Tennessee & Virginia RR
- 76 - East Tennessee & Georgia RR

### Route From Richmond, VA to Chattanooga, TN via Greensboro and Charlotte, NC (GREEN Marker):

- 9 - Richmond & Danville RR
- 15 - Piedmont RR
- 20 - North Carolina RR
- 27 - Charlotte & South Carolina RR
- 29 - South Carolina RR
- 36 - Georgia RR
- 38 - Western & Atlantic RR

### Route From Richmond, VA to Chattanooga, TN via Raleigh, Greensboro, and Charlotte, NC (BLUE, ORANGE, and GREEN Markers):

- 8 - Richmond & Petersburg RR
- 12 - Petersburg RR
- 16 - Raleigh & Gaston RR
- 20 - North Carolina RR [west]
- 27 - Charlotte & South Carolina RR
- 29 - South Carolina RR
- 36 - Georgia RR
- 38 - Western & Atlantic RR

### Route From Richmond, VA to Chattanooga, TN via Raleigh, Goldsboro, and Wilmington, NC (BLUE, VIOLET, and BLUE Markers):

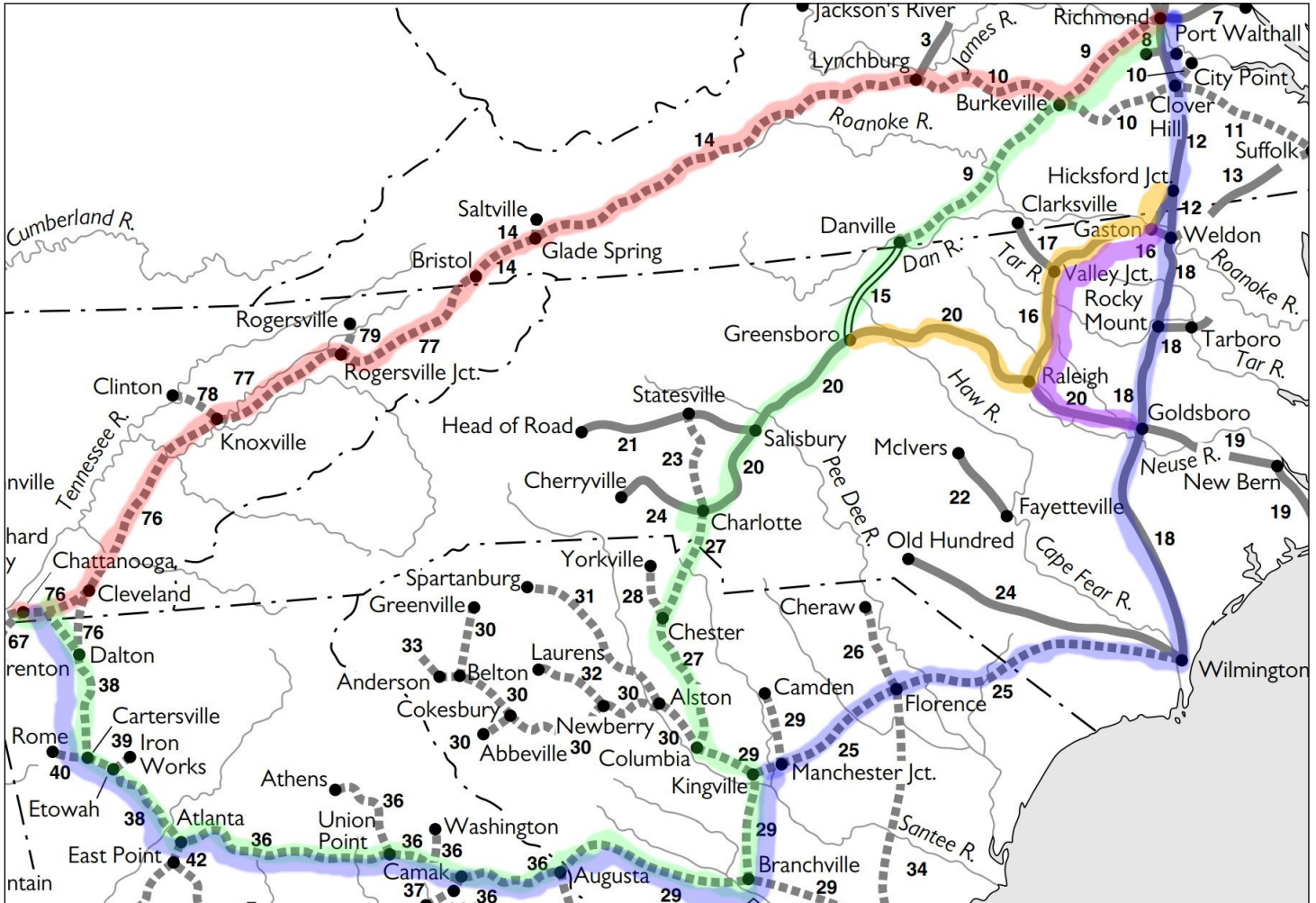
- 8 - Richmond & Petersburg RR
- 12 - Petersburg RR
- 16 - Raleigh & Gaston RR
- 20 - North Carolina RR [east]
- 18 - Wilmington & Weldon RR
- 25 - Wilmington & Manchester RR
- 29 - South Carolina RR
- 36 - Georgia RR
- 38 - Western & Atlantic RR

### Route From Richmond, VA to Chattanooga, TN via Wilmington, NC (BLUE Marker):

- 8 - Richmond & Petersburg RR
- 12 - Petersburg RR
- 18 - Wilmington & Weldon RR
- 25 - Wilmington & Manchester RR
- 29 - South Carolina RR
- 36 - Georgia RR
- 38 - Western & Atlantic RR



# Routes Taken by Elements of Lt. Gen. James Longstreet's 1<sup>st</sup> Corps, Army of Northern VA, from Richmond, VA to Chattanooga, TN from Sept. 9<sup>th</sup>-to-25<sup>th</sup>, 1863 to Reinforce Gen. Braxton Bragg's Army of TN



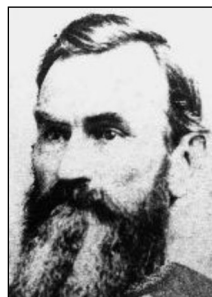
The above railroads map and gauge key and the facing page's numerical key identifying the railroad lines are taken from *The Railroads of the Confederacy* by Robert C. Black III.

(Continued from p. 8)



Brig. Gen. Thomas J. Wood

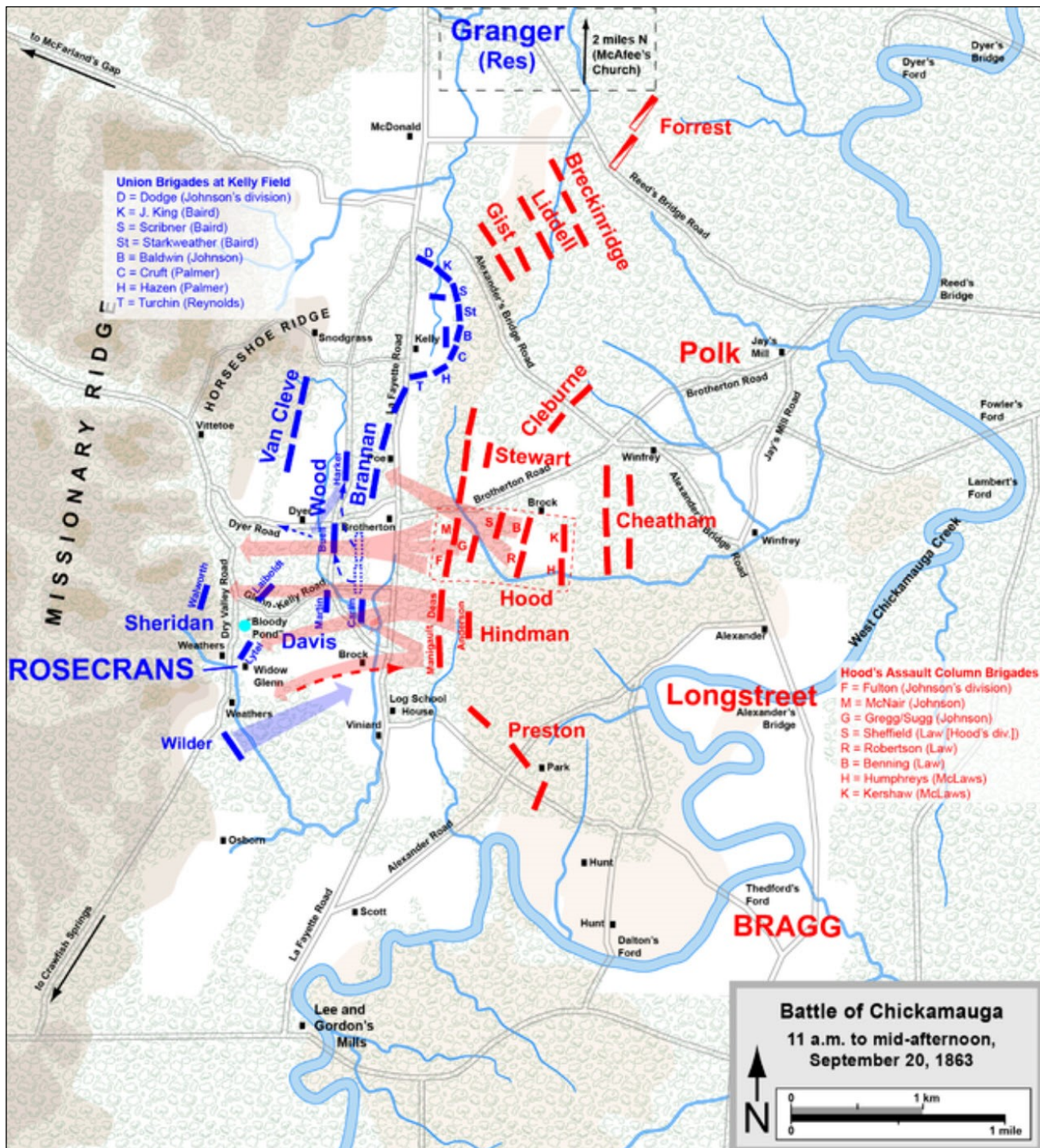
To avoid further reprimand, Wood immediately moved, creating a division-wide hole in the Union line. This was the chance that the Confederates needed. By sheer coincidence, Longstreet had just massed a striking force in the vicinity, led by Hood and including part of Maj. Gen. Lafayette McLaws' Division, i.e., Brig. Gen. Joseph Kershaw's South Carolina Brigade and Brig. Gen. Benjamin Humphreys's Mississippi Brigade. →

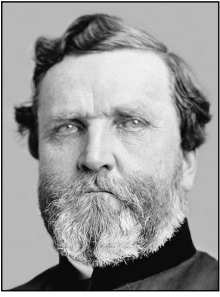


Brig. Gen. Benjamin Humphreys

Longstreet's men (indicated by **F**ulton, **G**regg/Sugg, and **M**cnair on the map below) surged through the gap that Wood had created, and Union resistance at the southern end of the battlefield evaporated as Federal troops, including Rosecrans himself, were driven off the field and back to Chattanooga.

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

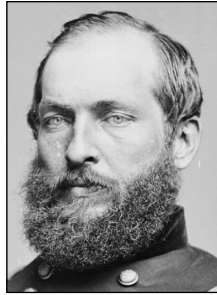




**Maj. Gen. George H. Thomas**

Some Northern soldiers, led by Maj. Gen. George H. Thomas, eventually formed a line on a series of steep, wooded knolls known as Snodgrass Hill and Horseshoe Ridge. Although the Confederates continued to attack Snodgrass throughout the afternoon, they were unable to capture the position.

It was at this point that future president Brig. Gen. James Garfield, Rosecrans's Chief of Staff, delivered a message to Thomas from Rosecrans ordering him to retreat. After Thomas said he would have to stay behind to ensure the Army's safety, Garfield reported back to Rosecrans that Thomas was "standing like a rock." The name stuck and Thomas became known as the "Rock of Chickamauga". Late in the afternoon, Thomas, whose outstanding performance that day had prevented a significant Union defeat from becoming a hopeless rout, withdrew his forces from the battlefield to the safety of a gap in Missionary Ridge.



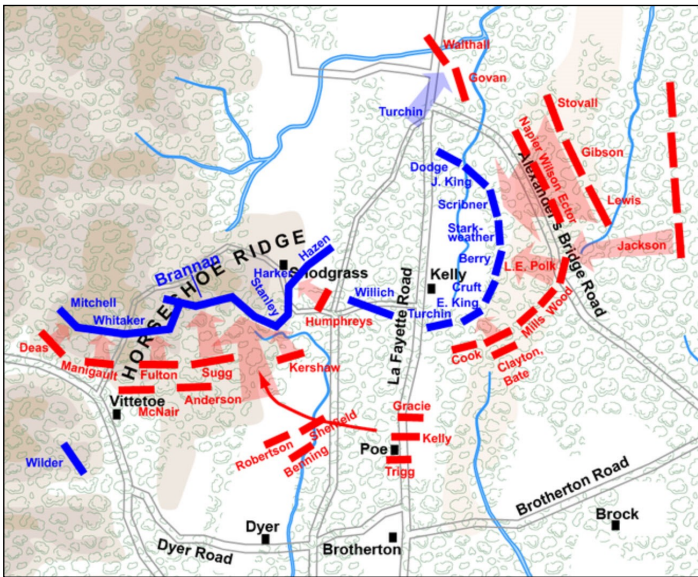
**Brig. Gen. James A. Garfield**

ate generals had been killed or wounded, and overall Confederate casualties numbered close to 20,000. The Union had suffered some 16,000 casualties, making the Battle of Chickamauga the costliest one in the war's western theater. It was also the first major battle of the war fought in Georgia, the most significant Union defeat in the Western Theater, and involved the second-highest number of casualties during the Civil War after the Battle of Gettysburg.

Bragg's inaction turned a tactical triumph for the South into a strategic defeat, as Union forces were allowed to get safely to Chattanooga. The Confederates subsequently put that city under siege, but Ulysses S. Grant arrived with reinforcements in October and took over the Union command in the region. As a result of Grant's great victory at Vicksburg, Lincoln had just promoted Grant to major general in the regular army (as opposed to his previous rank of major general of volunteers).

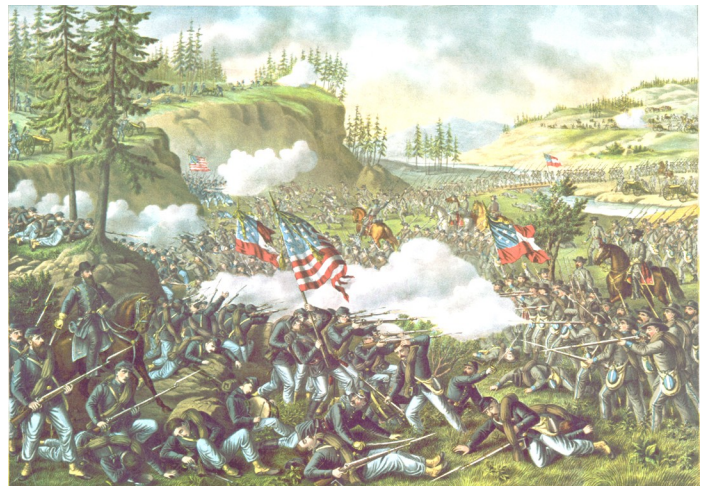
Grant, in turn, promoted Thomas to command of the Army of the Cumberland, succeeding Rosecrans. Shortly thereafter, Thomas helped Grant's forces reverse the results of Chickamauga with a decisive victory over the Confederates in the Battles of Chattanooga (Nov. 23<sup>rd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup>, 1863), a stunning Union victory that was highlighted by Thomas's troops storming the Confederate line on Missionary Ridge.

After spending the winter of 1863–64 in northeastern Tennessee, Longstreet's force was transported by rail back to Virginia in time to reinforce Robert E. Lee for Grant's 1864 Overland Campaign. But that's a story for another time.



**Battle of Chickamauga — Sept. 20<sup>th</sup>, 1863 Union defense of Horseshoe Ridge, led by Maj. Gen. George H. Thomas, and subsequent successful retreat**

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



**The Battle of Chickamauga by Kurz & Allison (1890)**

All told, Longstreet's Corps contributed over 6,700 men to the Battle of Chickamauga, roughly half of those who originally boarded the trains in Richmond. Their breakthrough in the gap left by Wood played a significant role in the Confederate victory. The rest of Longstreet's Corps would arrive in the following days.

Though Longstreet and his fellow general Nathan Bedford Forrest wanted to pursue the enemy the following morning, Bragg was preoccupied with the toll taken on his army by the battle at Chickamauga. Ten Confeder-

The above print was created on the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the Civil War, and shows Confederate soldiers on the right attacking Union soldiers on the left. The wide-open spaces as depicted contradict the descriptions of the battleground being covered in dense thickets and woods. One wonders if the artist had not witnessed the battle or interviewed any of the participants. Since a ridge line or bluff is shown with Union soldiers firing down onto the Confederates, perhaps the artist is taking license in an attempt to show the gallant desperate Union defense on Horseshoe Ridge.

~ o ~

## What Future U.S. President Fought at Chickamauga?

James Garfield, the future 20<sup>th</sup> president of the United States, joined the Union Army in 1861 and served with distinction at the battles of Shiloh and Corinth. By Sept. 1862, he carried the rank of Brig. Gen. and was named chief-of-staff to Maj. Gen. William Rosecrans.

While Maj. Gen. George H. Thomas was trying to rally his broken units after an exhausting fight at Chickamauga on Sept 20<sup>th</sup>, 1863, Rosecrans thought all was lost and fell back to Chattanooga. Garfield, however, believed otherwise and, with Rosecrans's approval, rode out to assess the situation.

Garfield's intuition proved to be correct. He wired Rosecrans from the field to report that Thomas was "standing like a rock." But Rosecrans had already retreated—mentally and physically—and remained in Chattanooga, exhausted and defeated. Later, Garfield's actions were glorified, while Rosecrans's were seen as a failure of leadership. In fact, Grant was so impressed with Thomas's initiative, determination, and grit that he gave Thomas command of the Army of the Cumberland, replacing Rosecrans.

A few months after the battle, Garfield resigned his army commission to enter the United States Congress. He was often faulted for exploiting his role at Chickamauga for political purposes, playing up his importance at the expense of Rosecrans, his former commander.

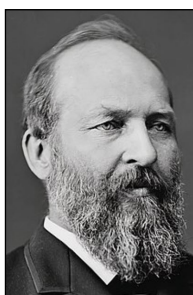
Despite this, Garfield, a Republican, was elected president in 1880. He was and is the only sitting member of the United States House of Representatives to be elected to the presidency.

Four months after his inauguration, he was shot by a mentally unstable man in a Washington, D.C. train station. Doctors tried to extract the bullet but did more harm than good. The president lingered on for almost three months, but the wound became infected and he died on Sept. 19<sup>th</sup>, 1881. Ironically, the 18<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Chickamauga.

The last third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century saw five military veterans of the Civil War, all Republicans, and all from Ohio, become U.S. President:

- Ulysses S. Grant (1869-1877)
- Rutherford B. Hayes (1877-1881)
- James A. Garfield (1881)
- Benjamin Harrison (1889-1893)
- William McKinley (1897-1901)

All but McKinley were Civil War generals, he being an enlisted man who attained the rank of major. The first three, Grant, Hayes, and Garfield, served in sequential order. Two, Garfield and McKinley, were assassinated. McKinley was the last president to have served in the Civil War.



President James A. Garfield

## Current Status of the Coronavirus Pandemic

Editor's note: The Johns Hopkins University of Medicine has had a public Coronavirus Resource Center website since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020 (COVID-19 Map - Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center (jhu.edu)). They have recently begun tracking Vaccine Doses Administered, both Total and within a sliding 28-Day Window. Number of Cases and Number of Deaths are also being tracked within a sliding 28-Day Window as well as by Total. Both U.S. and World figures are tracked for all these parameters.

United States						
Since 1/1/2020	11/7/2021	10/9/2021	9/8/2021	8/6/2021	7/4/2021	6/3/2021
Total Cases	46,461,714	44,290,052	40,343,255	35,541,106	33,717,458	33,323,356
Pct Change from Previous Month	+4.9%	+9.8%	<b>+13.5%</b>	+5.4%	+1.2%	+2.9%
Total Deaths	754,278	712,693	651,448	615,816	605,526	596,359
Pct Change from Previous Month	+5.8%	+9.4%	+5.8%	+1.7%	+1.5%	+3.4%
Total Vaccine Doses Administered	427,664,862	399,175,036	374,724,113			
Pct Change from Previous Month	+7.1%	+6.5%	NA			
Past 28 Days						
Total Cases	2,124,146	3,428,197	4,224,866			
Pct Change from Previous Month	<b>-38.0%</b>	<b>-18.9%</b>	NA			
Total Deaths	40,285	52,833	32,190			
Pct Change from Previous Month	<b>-23.8%</b>	+8.8%	NA			
Total Vaccine Doses Administered	23,774,666	19,205,517	19,033,691			
Pct Change from Previous Month	<b>+23.8%</b>	+0.9%	NA			
The World						
Since January 2020	11/7/2021	10/9/2021	9/8/2021	8/6/2021	7/4/2021	6/3/2021
Total Cases	249,538,695	237,227,127	222,273,570	201,430,552	183,738,373	171,917,046
Pct Change from Previous Month	+5.2%	+6.7%	<b>+10.3%</b>	+9.6%	+6.9%	<b>+13.3%</b>
Total Deaths	5,044,795	4,842,478	4,591,915	4,274,316	3,976,162	3,581,030
Pct Change from Previous Month	+4.2%	+5.5%	+7.4%	+7.5%	<b>+11.0%</b>	<b>+12.4%</b>
Total Vaccine Doses Administered	7,226,136,580	6,424,712,258	5,557,958,436			
Pct Change from Previous Month	<b>+12.5%</b>	<b>+15.6%</b>	NA			
Past 28 Days						
Total Cases	11,862,348	13,461,577	17,912,568			
Pct Change from Previous Month	<b>-11.9%</b>	<b>-24.9%</b>	NA			
Total Deaths	194,691	226,443	272,104			
Pct Change from Previous Month	<b>-14.0%</b>	<b>-16.8%</b>	NA			
Total Vaccine Doses Administered	711,127,530	760,800,039	978,127,682			
Pct Change from Previous Month	-6.5%	<b>-22.2%</b>	NA			

Key: a green box indicates a % decrease in the rate of an illness parameter versus the previous month. A box with a red % indicates a % increase in the rate versus the previous month. Double figures are indicated in bold. Opposite rules apply to vaccines, where higher percentages over time are better.

For the first time, all metrics are trending favorably in the U.S., indicating that mask wearing, vaccinations, social distancing and increased herd immunity are all making contributions. It remains to be seen if this trend is affected as the cold of winter forces more people indoors. Please continue to follow guidelines.

# News of the RCWRT



## Upcoming 2021-22 RCWRT Meetings

We are once again meeting in person. Those unable to attend in person can join in remotely via Zoom software. **In person attendees should wear masks to comply with the Governor's new guidelines, brought about by the delta variant of the Covid-19 virus.**

Date	Speaker(s)	Topic
Nov. 8 <sup>th</sup> , 2021	Colby L. Stevens	Expansion Plans for the Bentonville Battlefield as Related to Mower's Charge and Hardee's Counterattack <b>(meet in person)</b>
Dec. 2021	Holiday Break	No Meeting
Jan. 10 <sup>th</sup> , 2022	Freddie Kiger	Battle of Antietam / Sharpsburg
Feb. 14 <sup>th</sup> , 2022	Gary Dyson	Ambush of the Isaac P. Smith

## A New Technology Contributed to the High Death Toll at the Battle of Chickamauga

Repeating rifles demonstrated their fatal efficiency at the Battle of Chickamauga. Col. John T. Wilder's famous "Lightning Brigade" of mounted infantry was the first brigade in the Federal army to be armed with Spencer rifles, which enabled the shooter to get off 14 rounds per minute, as opposed to the 2-3 shots per minute of an average Civil War rifle.



Their superior guns enabled the Lightning Brigade to hold Alexander's Bridge on Sept. 18<sup>th</sup> in the face of two charges from Gen. St. John

Liddell's Confederates, delaying the Southerners from crossing the creek. The superiority of the repeating rifle would again be demonstrated by the Lightning Brigade on Sept. 20<sup>th</sup> when, during Longstreet's breakthrough of the Union line, a division under Gen. Thomas Hindman reached the Widow Glen's House and were pushed back by unexpected fire from the Spencers of Wilder's Brigade. The fire was so heavy that Longstreet momentarily thought a new Federal corps had arrived on the battlefield.

Another unit, the 21<sup>st</sup> Ohio, also demonstrated the usefulness of repeating rifles at Horseshoe Ridge. These men were armed with Colt repeaters and were vital to holding the last Union stronghold on the field. The carnage caused by the rifles shocked even the Union men wielding them. After the battle, Wilder wrote "It actually seemed a pity to kill men so. They fell in heaps; and I had it in my heart to order the firing to cease, to end the awful sight."



## The Knapsack

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

(October 2021 Circulation: 415)

### Staff

**Bob Graesser, Editor**

### Contributors

**Griff Bartlett**

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

## RCWRT Board of Directors (2020-22)

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

**Paying Memberships / Total Members: 127 / 157**

**One New Member Joined the RCWRT in Oct. 2021: We welcome Ken Long of Raleigh**

### Did You Know?

Toward the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Civil War veterans rallied support for creating a national park to preserve the battlefield at Chickamauga as well as nearby sites at Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge. Congressman Charles H. Grosvenor (who commanded the 18<sup>th</sup> Ohio at Chickamauga) introduced the bill in Congress in 1890; it was signed by President (and fellow Civil War veteran) Benjamin Harrison in August of that year. Dedicated on the Battle of Chickamauga's 32<sup>nd</sup> anniversary in 1895, the Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park became the first such park established by the Federal government.

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

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

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

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