ENTATION PAGE

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The Role of Union Cavalry During the Atlanta Campaign

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This study is a historical analysis of the effectiveness of Union cavalry during the Atlanta Campaign of the American Civil War. In a campaign noted for the highly skilled maneuver conducted by General William Tecumseh Sherman, the effective employment of the cavalry was essential. The Union cavalry had the missions of providing security to the flanks of the army and protecting the supply lines by guarding the railroad and by striking against the Confederate cavalry. Later in the campaign, the Union leadership introduced the task of destroying Confederate railroads as a cavalry mission. The Union cavalry failed to perform these missions adequately. First, this work investigates the tradition of the Union cavalry and the state of Sherman's cavalry at the beginning of the campaign. Secondly, an analysis of the cavalry operations breaks the use of cavalry into three phases and focuses on the various missions which were attempted. Finally, the study addresses the lessons learned and what the applicability is for modern operations. This study concludes that although the Union cavalry was well manned and well equipped, improper employment and deficient senior leadership caused it to play an unsuccessful and detrimental part in the overall campaign.

Civil War, Atlanta Campaign, Union Cavalry   146
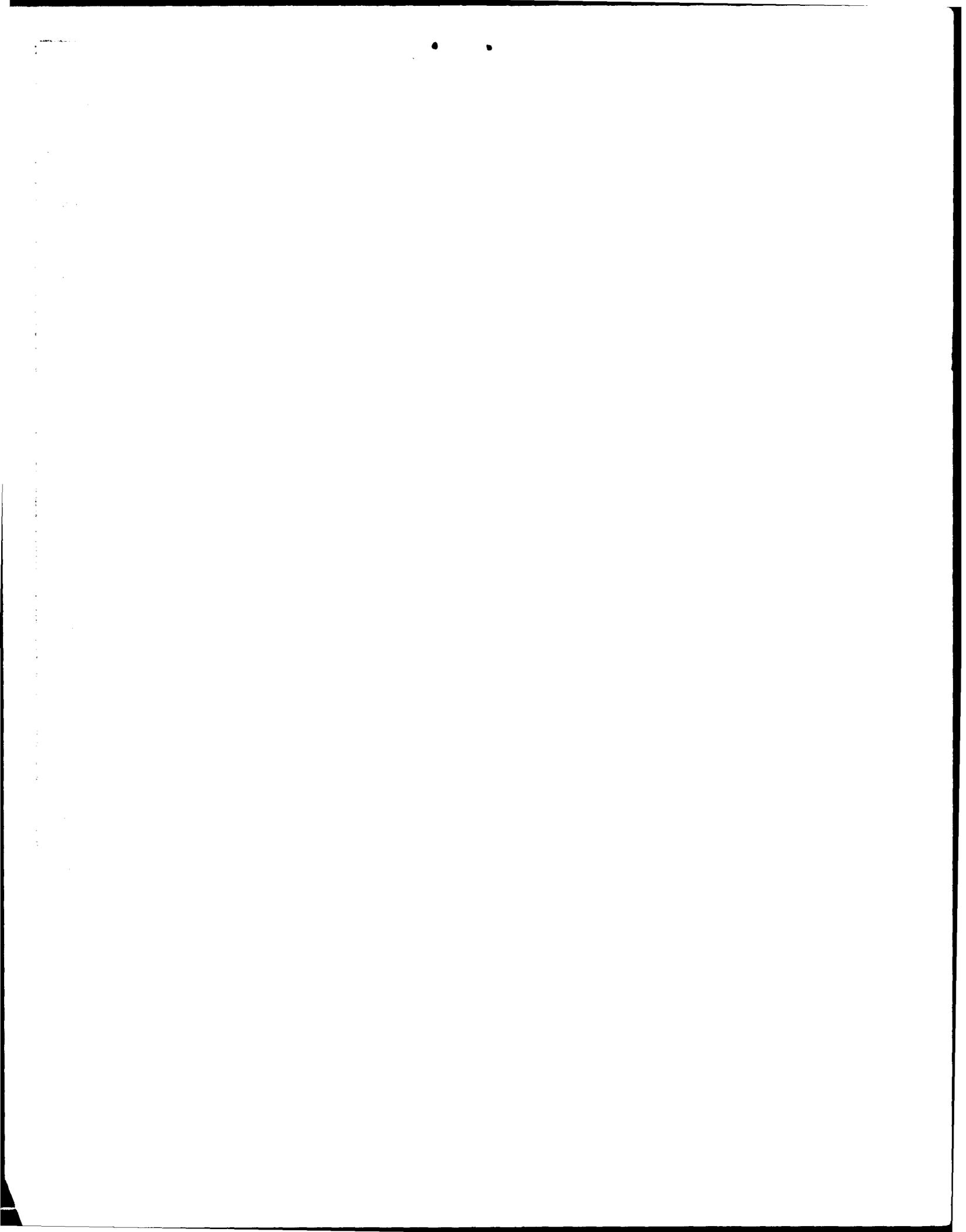
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THE ROLE OF UNION CAVALRY
DURING THE ATLANTA CAMPAIGN

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army
Command and General Staff College in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

by

ROBERT BLAKE LEACH, MAJ, USA
B.A., University of Kentucky, 1980

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Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
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MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

THE ROLE OF UNION CAVALRY DURING THE ATLANTA CAMPAIGN by
MAJ Robert Blake Leach, USA, 125 pages.

This study is a historical analysis of the effectiveness of
Union cavalry during the Atlanta Campaign of the American
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This study concludes that although the Union cavalry was
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deficient senior leadership caused it to play an
unsuccessful and detrimental part in the overall campaign.

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To three comrades-in-arms:

Michael Patrick Mead, my brother-in-law and friend, formerly of the United States Navy. His untimely death on November 5, 1993 prevented us from completing requirements for our master's degrees at the same time as we had planned.

Colonel Charles R. Leach, United States Army, my father, 1925-1975. His completion of the Master of Military Art and Science degree in 1965 gave his son a goal in 1994.

Lieutenant Washington Wayne Manning, an ancestor who belonged to Company D, 7th Ohio Cavalry, and commanded the escort for General Stoneman's Cavalry during the Atlanta Campaign. Taken prisoner by the Confederates, his service represented that of Union cavalrymen who performed well but were denied success due to faulty leadership and employment.

The legacy of such men was my inspiration.

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SETTING THE STAGE

By the end of 1863 the tide of the Civil War was clearly in favor of the Union Army. Confederate forces in the East under General Robert E. Lee had been repulsed at Gettysburg and were back in Virginia on the defensive. In the West, the siege of Knoxville ended as Lieutenant General James Longstreet retreated toward Virginia. On December 27, General Joseph E. Johnston took command of the Army of Tennessee, which had been pushed south into Georgia following the Battle of Missionary Ridge. The strategic city of Vicksburg on the Mississippi was in Union hands.

On March 18, 1864, Major General William Tecumseh Sherman assumed command of the principal Union armies in the West: the Army of the Cumberland, the Army of the Tennessee, and the Army of the Ohio. Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant ordered Sherman to initiate the Atlanta Campaign concurrently with his own advance into Virginia. Grant's order required Sherman to:

> ...move against Johnston's army, to break it up, and to go into the interior of the enemy's country as far as he could, inflicting all the damage he could upon their war resources; if the enemy in his front showed signs of joining Lee, to follow him up to the full extent of his ability.[1]

As he moved toward Atlanta, Sherman pursued a campaign plan of maneuver against Johnston. The marches and counter marches of the campaign have been likened to a dance, "a kind of gigantic waltz performed by 160,000 men who moved to the music conducted by two excellent generals."[2] For the army on the offensive in such a campaign, such a "dance" should have been ideal for the employment of the highly mobile cavalry in a variety of roles. The Union Army had a cavalry arm which was well manned and well equipped. Yet, due to improper employment and poor senior leadership, Sherman's cavalry played an unsuccessful part in an otherwise well-executed campaign.

The European Cavalry Heritage

The traditional role of cavalry in Europe was to protect the army flanks and to maneuver around the enemy infantry to strike his rear. This usage began when Frederick the Great abandoned mass attacks and adopted new tactics. He made full use of his artillery to soften the enemy defenses and his infantry to hold the enemy's line and assault one of its flanks, while his cavalry moved around towards the enemy's rear.[3]

In the days of Napoleon, infantry, artillery, and cavalry were in close contact and were easily controlled by the general on the battlefield. Following an artillery preparation, an army charged its opponent, who would still

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be in shock from the barrage. With the greatest mobility, cavalry was the logical choice for this shock action charge, with a subsequent pursuit. The other roles for the cavalry continued to be reconnaissance and security.

United States Cavalry Prior to the Civil War

In the early history of the United States, cavalry did not achieve any real prominence. During the French and Indian Wars, the dense woodlands in contested areas were not conducive to cavalry operations. Unlike the Plains Indians of the following century, Indians in the eastern woodlands did not use horses, so there was no threat that required the colonists to develop cavalry forces.

When the American Revolution began, General George Washington's army had no cavalry. Early military operations in New England convinced Congress to authorize a corps of four regiments of dragoons, but these dragoon regiments were not well equipped. The few properly mounted and armed men spent most of their time as couriers and escorts at Washington's headquarters. The dragoons never played the part a cavalry arm should have played in the campaigns between New York and Philadelphia in 1777-1778.[4]

Americans, such as Henry "Light Horse Harry" Lee, William Washington, and Francis Marion, commanded units which opposed British cavalry commanded by Colonel Banastre Tarleton. In the southern theater, the Americans who

fought on horseback used tactics that more closely resembled guerilla warfare than traditional European cavalry tactics.

Once the colonies gained independence, inherent distrust of a standing army prevented the existence of cavalry, which was a highly visible symbol of military presence. In 1784 there was no cavalry in the army which had less than 100 men. Fearing war with France a few years later, Congress again authorized the formation of dragoons. During the War of 1812, U.S. mounted troops were in the Battle of the Thames and in the campaign against the Creek Indians. At the end of this war the United States again abolished its cavalry. Facing another Indian threat in the Black Hawk War of 1832, the United States revived its cavalry. By this time there were many settlements in the Louisiana Purchase area, and because mounted troops of dragoons could be useful against the Indians, cavalry became a permanent part of the United States Army.

During the Mexican War, American dragoons helped Brigadier General Zachary Taylor achieve a victory at Resaca de la Palma in May 1846. Throughout this war, the Mexicans had more cavalry than the Americans, but the Americans were better equipped and their large horses were better than the small ones used by the Mexican Army. In September of that year, mounted Texas Rangers spearheaded the march to Monterrey. At Buena Vista in February 1847,

the Mexicans had between four and five thousand cavalrymen, but accurate rifle fire from Jefferson Davis's riflemen repelled an attack by many of these lancers.

Cavalry During the Early Years of the Civil War

Initially the Union Army showed little interest in cavalry. General Winfield Scott, the commander in chief of the Union armies, believed the terrain and new weaponry did not favor cavalry operations. The introduction of the rifle meant artillery and cavalry were now vulnerable to the infantry at a much greater range. Union cavalry was attached to infantry units and used as orderlies, messengers, and guards. Some cavalry units served as escorts for generals. In this capacity cavalrymen also performed courier duty and other details for the general and his staff. During campaigns, the Confederates often sent cavalry into the Union rear area to disrupt command, control, and communications, making a general officer and his staff lucrative targets. The mission of the escort company was to find these Confederate units, warn the general, and engage the enemy while the general escaped.

The Confederate cavalry was better than the Union cavalry at the beginning of the war, in part due to the riding skills of the southern aristocracy. Southern cavalrymen outperformed the Union horsemen several times during the early war years, playing an important role in

some of General Robert E. Lee's famous battles. Brigadier

General J. E. B. Stuart's famous ride around the Union

forces provided information which allowed Major General

Stonewall Jackson to attack the Union flank and save

Richmond. Another of Stuart's rides in August 1862 gave

Lee the information which enabled the Confederate victory

at the Second Bull Run. Nathan Bedford Forrest, who would

ultimately become a Lieutenant General, distinguished

himself as a superior cavalry leader when he covered the

Confederate retreat from Shiloh and later conducted deep

raids against Union lines of communication in Tennessee.

Union cavalry had its first successful experiences

with deep raids, operating independently of main ground

armies, at the end of 1862. One of these operations was a

raid into East Tennessee, under the command of Brigadier

General Samuel P. Carter, from December 20, 1862 to January

9, 1863. This raid was successful, temporarily cutting the

East Tennessee & Virginia Railroad while suffering minimum

casualties in the face of only nominal resistance.

Colonel Benjamin H. Grierson led a cavalry force

into Mississippi and Louisiana in April 1863, as Colonel

Abel D. Streight took a force into Alabama. Faced with

simultaneous raids, Forrest pursued Streight, allowing

Grierson to reach Baton Rouge unopposed. Streight's raid

ended in failure, but these raids assisted Grant's campaign

near Vicksburg by keeping the Confederate cavalry occupied.

Major General George Stoneman led a tactically successful cavalry raid into Confederate territory during the Chancellorsville Campaign in Virginia. Stoneman's force, however, was too far from the main army to provide intelligence desperately needed by his commander. This forced Major General Joseph Hooker to operate blind against Confederate Generals Lee and Jackson. Chancellorsville was Lee's greatest battle, and much of the reason for the Union defeat was the improper use of its cavalry.

On a tighter rein following Chancellorsville, Union cavalry under Brigadier General Alfred Pleasonton performed on equal terms against Stuart's Confederate cavalry at Brandy Station, Virginia. At Gettysburg, Brigadier General John Buford's cavalry division set the stage by delaying Confederate forces, providing time for the Army of the Potomac to arrive. This time, Stuart's Confederates made a deep raid, forcing their army to operate without security and reconnaissance on the first two days of the battle. On the third day, during Pickett's charge, Union cavalry prevented Stuart's force from attacking the Union rear. In these actions, large Union cavalry units proved they could match Confederate forces of approximately the same size.

During the Chickamauga Campaign, cavalry failed to make a major contribution to the Union effort.[5] The Union cavalry efforts there were eclipsed by Confederate cavalry under Forrest and Major General Joseph Wheeler.

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Atlanta Campaign Overview

A key city near the geographical center of the Confederate states, Atlanta contained the junction of several railways of strategic importance.[6] Four railroads met in the city. The first went northwest toward Chattanooga where the two armies were situated at the beginning of the campaign. This was the Western & Atlantic Railroad, which both armies would use as their line of supply and communication. The second railway, the Georgia Railroad, went through Augusta and connected with railroads to Virginia, linking the armies of Generals Lee and Johnston. This railroad gave them an interior line of communication, along which they could send reinforcements if the Union armies in these theaters did not coordinate their campaigns. The third railroad, the Macon & Western, travelled to the center of Georgia and provided a link to the east coast. The fourth main line was the Atlanta & West Point Railroad, which provided a supply line to the states of Mississippi and Alabama.

Sherman's first attempt to flank the Confederates under Johnston failed at Dalton, Georgia, on May 9. As Sherman made a wider bypass of the Confederates, Johnston withdrew to Resaca on May 13. Another turning movement forced Johnston to abandon Resaca two days later. On May 19, Sherman flanked the Confederates out of their defensive line at Cassville, Georgia. Sherman left the railroad on

May 24, outflanking the Confederate defense at the Allatoona Pass. The Confederates formed in front of the Union lines, and on the next day, the two armies began to fight at New Hope Church. This battle raged for four days.

On June 4, the Confederates established new defensive lines on Lost, Pine, and Brush Mountains. When threatened by another flanking movement, Johnston withdrew from Pine Mountain to Kenesaw Mountain on June 19. The Confederates repulsed a major frontal assault on June 27 at Kenesaw Mountain. As Sherman again moved to flank the Confederate army, Johnston withdrew from Kenesaw Mountain to a defensive line along the Chattahoochee River in early July. Sherman's army marched around Confederate defensive positions along the Chattahoochee River and continued to advance on Atlanta. General Johnston again withdrew.

On July 17, 1864, General John Bell Hood assumed command of the Confederate Army of Tennessee, replacing General Johnston. Jefferson Davis changed the Confederate commander due to a perception that Johnston was unwilling to accept battle. Selected for his aggressiveness, Hood quickly took the offensive, attacking Union forces on July 20 at Peach Tree Creek. Sherman repulsed the attack and continued to cut Atlanta's rail connections. Hood was repulsed again in what became the Battle of Atlanta, in which Union General James B. McPherson was killed. On July 28, Hood's third attack failed at Ezra Church.

Sherman spent almost a month using his cavalry to cut rail lines to Atlanta. As the attempts faltered, Hood seized the opportunity to send Wheeler's cavalry into the Union rear area. Determining cavalry could not effectively destroy railroads, Sherman resorted to his infantry and cut Hood's last railroad on August 31. When Sherman reached the Macon & Western Railroad at Jonesborough, south of Atlanta, Hood evacuated the city, establishing a defensive line at Lovejoy's Station. Sherman occupied Atlanta on September 2, concluding the campaign a few days later.

Union cavalry operations during the Atlanta Campaign developed into three distinct phases. In the first phase, which lasted until July 9, Sherman used his cavalry in the reconnaissance and security roles, with limited attempts to cut Confederate supply lines. The second phase was short, lasting from July 10 to August 3, and consisted of deep attacks to cut Confederate railroads into Atlanta. The final phase, encompassing the remainder of the campaign, included one raid but primarily marked a return to the reconnaissance and security missions.

CHAPTER 2

THE STATE OF UNION CAVALRY

Three months prior to the beginning of the Atlanta Campaign, General Sherman commanded an expedition to the Confederate rail center at Meridian, Mississippi. His goal was to force the Confederates to react to the threat of Union troops in the Southern interior, which would cease harassment of Union forces along the Mississippi River. In many respects, Sherman planned to accomplish a cavalry mission, a raid, with infantry. Sherman frequently undertook such deep operations. After Shiloh he led a task force deep into Mississippi to burn a railroad bridge; while on the way to Chickasaw Bluffs, he detached a division to wreck a rail line in Arkansas; and both before and after the capture of Vicksburg he devoted considerable time to tearing up tracks around Jackson, Mississippi.[1]

The Meridian Expedition

Sherman, emulating techniques Grant demonstrated earlier in the Vicksburg Campaign, planned for his army to live off the land as it moved toward Meridian. This expedition was conducted simultaneously with several diversions to keep the Confederates from massing and

overwhelming the force. A joint army-navy task force formed to move up the Yazoo River to threaten the railroad center at Grenada, Mississippi, while Admiral David G. Farragut's Gulf Squadron planned to menace Mobile. In Georgia, Major General George H. Thomas would demonstrate against Johnston at Dalton to prevent any of those Confederate forces from reinforcing Meridian. Brigadier General William Sooy Smith was to march rapidly from Memphis with 7,000 Union cavalrymen and join Sherman's forces at Meridian, giving Sherman the additional strength and mobility needed to continue his advance into Alabama.[2]

Sherman's force consisted of 26,000 men organized into four infantry divisions, a cavalry brigade, and nine artillery batteries. He reached Meridian on February 14 and found the Confederates had evacuated everything of military value a few hours earlier. Upon his arrival, Sherman was surprised to find General Smith and the Union cavalrymen from Memphis had not already arrived, as was his expectation. Had Smith's cavalrymen arrived as scheduled, they could have halted the Confederate evacuation, but more significantly, Sherman knew that without Smith's cavalry it would be too risky to go on to Alabama.[3] This event had the potential to instill a lack of confidence in cavalry's ability. Sherman and his men spent five days at Meridian, waiting for Smith and destroying the town. On February 20, Sherman's force began its return march to Vicksburg.

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The cavalry force Sherman expected had a myriad of problems. Smith left Memphis 10 days late, having waited for additional regiments of mounted infantry which he knew were enroute. Once on the move, Smith's cavalry averaged less than 15 miles a day, opposed to the usual 20 to 25, as his men plundered houses, burned cotton, and liberated slaves, who joined and further slowed the column.[4] On the day Sherman quit waiting for Smith and began returning to Vicksburg, Smith was 150 miles away, at West Point, Mississippi. Realizing that further attempts at a rendezvous were pointless, Smith turned back toward Memphis. Shortly thereafter, Forrest's Confederate cavalry, having kept Smith under surveillance, attacked and routed him near Okolona, Mississippi, in spite of the Union cavalry having a three-to-one advantage.

In the demonstration that General Thomas conducted toward Dalton, he discovered the dominating feature, Rocky Face Ridge, would be difficult to assault, but could easily be flanked. On February 25, a mounted infantry regiment entered Dug Gap, five miles to the south of Rocky Face Ridge, drove away a Confederate infantry company, and then repulsed an attack by a Confederate cavalry regiment. The Confederates required an entire brigade to force the Union regiment from the gap. A larger Union force in the same situation would have the ability to interdict the railroad south of Dalton, cutting Johnston off from Atlanta.

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Sherman's Cavalry for the Atlanta Campaign

On March 12, 1864, Grant was promoted to Lieutenant General and became General-in-Chief of the armies of the United States. One of his first acts was to place Sherman in command of the principal Union armies in the West. Grant planned to advance into Virginia at the same time Sherman would advance into Georgia. The two armies were too far apart for cooperation, but could assist each other by making a simultaneous movement. Grant was to strike at the "head" and Sherman at the "heart" of the Confederacy.[5]

For the Atlanta Campaign, Sherman's cavalry had a strength of 12,455 men, roughly 10 percent of the total manpower in his Grand Army. The cavalry was primarily in the Army of the Cumberland's Cavalry Corps, and in the Army of the Ohio's force which approximated a division. The Army of the Tennessee had only two cavalry regiments, the 1st Alabama and the 5th Ohio, assigned to its corps which began the campaign. Other than a few small escort units for commanders, all the remaining cavalry from the Army of the Tennessee stayed at Memphis to operate against Forrest.

Sherman's greatest liability was in his cavalry.[6] In a campaign of maneuver which would rely on knowing where the enemy was, a deficient cavalry was a serious problem for the commander of a large army. With over 12,000 cavalrymen on his rolls, Sherman's problem was not in personnel strength, even though almost a half of these men

were in the process of being mounted, equipped, and organized. One of Sherman's problems was organizational. Instead of concentrating his cavalry in a single corps under one commander, as was the case with the Confederate cavalry under Wheeler, Sherman's cavalry was separated into four divisions and belonged to two of his armies.

A second problem for Sherman was in use of the chain of command. Sherman personally assigned duties to the cavalry divisions. Frequently he would employ one division on each flank, one on his line of communications, and have the fourth ready for expeditions to the front. The commander of the nearest of Sherman's three armies usually exercised authority over the cavalry cooperating with him.[7] Sherman's orders to cavalry divisions in the Army of the Cumberland bypassed Thomas and the commander of the Cavalry Corps, Brigadier General Washington L. Elliott. Direct orders to the cavalry in the Army of the Ohio bypassed that army's commander, Brigadier General John M. Schofield.

In actuality, Sherman exercised the sole central control over his cavalry, an arm with which he had little experience and for which he had even less understanding or sympathy, as he demonstrated in the Meridian expedition.[8] General William Sooy Smith's failure to rendezvous with Sherman on that expedition clearly undermined his confidence in cavalry. Another reason Sherman retained a high level of control over his cavalry was because of his

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concern about the unknown actions of his enemy. During the
siege of Vicksburg, Sherman told a staff officer:

> I am a much brighter man than Grant, I can see
> things quicker than he can, and know more about
> books than he does, but I'll tell you where he
> beats me, and where he beats the world: he don't
> care a cent for what he can't see the enemy doing,
> but it scares me like hell![9]

Commander's Vision for Use of Cavalry

As the Atlanta Campaign began, Sherman had two
major assignments for his cavalry. One of these was to
accompany his army into Atlanta and perform the traditional
mission of reconnaissance and security. Shortly after the
campaign began, Sherman wrote, "Our cavalry must be kept on
the grand flanks and on our communications."[10]

The second mission for Sherman's cavalry was to
protect his supply line, the railroad which stretched to
Chattanooga and would lengthen with every mile he advanced.
Sherman planned for his cavalry to guard the railroad in
the narrow sense of the word, and to conduct preemptive
operations against the enemy's cavalry to keep them away
from the railroad.[11] Union cavalry would patrol the
railroads, man guardhouses along the tracks when infantry
was not available, and respond as a rapid reaction force
when Confederate cavalry appeared. North of Chattanooga,
these operations were performed by units assigned to rear
area commanders, including the cavalry from the Army of the
Tennessee which stayed in Memphis. Another Union cavalry

division, led by Brigadier General Alvan C. Gillem, also separate from Sherman's command, remained in East Tennessee to guard supply lines in that area. To protect the rail lines between Chattanooga and the front, Sherman required each cavalry division to provide one brigade.

Sherman's Cavalry Commanders

Brigadier General Washington L. Elliott, a 39-year-old native of Pennsylvania, commanded the Army of the Cumberland Cavalry Corps during the Atlanta Campaign. He had resigned from West Point in 1844 due to poor grades, but received a commission in the dragoons in 1846, serving in Mexico and on the frontier.[12] Early in the Civil War, he commanded the 2d Iowa Cavalry Regiment in the Army of the Mississippi's Cavalry Division. On April 8, 1862, his unit took possession of the deserted Confederate fortifications on the Tennessee shore of the Ohio River at Madrid Bend, in the vicinity of Island Number Ten.

In this early Civil War service, Elliott worked with Major General John Pope, who gave him command of the 2d Brigade of the Cavalry Division of the Army of the Mississippi on April 24, 1862. At the end of May, Elliott, with Colonel Philip H. Sheridan commanding one of his regiments, led a small cavalry raid on the Mobile & Ohio Railroad near Booneville, Mississippi. Elliott's superiors claimed this was the first Union cavalry raid of the war.

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The results of this raid were largely inflated as the report went from Pope through Major General Henry W. Halleck and on to Washington. As Washington heard the report, Elliott had destroyed 10,000 small arms, opposed to the 2,000 he had actually destroyed, and captured and paroled 2,000 prisoners, when in fact he had found about 2,000 sick men in Booneville, and had not had the time to capture or parole any of them.[13] Halleck also reported:

> A local farmer said when (General Pierre G. T.) Beauregard learned that Colonel Elliott had cut the railroad on his line of retreat he became frantic, and told his men to save themselves the best they could.[14]

For this raid and actions around Corinth, Elliott was promoted to Brigadier General on June 11, 1862, and assumed command of the Army of the Mississippi's Cavalry Division. After 12 days in this position, when Lincoln summoned Pope to Virginia to lead the army there, Elliott accompanied him to become his chief of cavalry. He was wounded at Second Bull Run, but still followed Pope, who was sent to Minnesota following that battle. At the end of 1862, Elliott commanded the Department of the Northwest.

Elliott commanded a brigade and a division in the Middle Department and in the Army of the Potomac between February and October of 1863. During the siege of Cha⁣nooga, on October 12, 1863, Elliott became commander of the 1st Division of the Cavalry Corps in the Army of the Cumberland. He assumed command of all Thomas's cavalry in

November, and sent some of his units to help relieve Knoxville. During the winter of 1863-64, Elliott had the majority of his cavalry at Athens, Tennessee.

1ST CAVALRY DIVISION

Brigadier General Edward M. McCook

1st Brigade	2d Brigade	3d Brigade
Col Joseph Dorr	Col Oscar LaGrange	Col Louis Watkins
8th Iowa	2nd Indiana	4th Kentucky
2d Michigan	4th Indiana	6th Kentucky
1st Tennessee	1st Wisconsin	7th Kentucky
1st Tennessee		

Artillery
18th Indiana Battery

Brigadier General Edward M. McCook, although experienced and aggressive, suffered from serious deficiencies of intellect and character.[15] Originally from Ohio, and belonging to an extended family that had 17 members fighting for the Union, McCook gave up his law practice to become a cavalry lieutenant in 1861. His promotions followed rapidly, and he soon commanded the 2nd Indiana Cavalry Regiment. His regiment was not engaged at Shiloh, but for his role as part of the relief force from the Army of the Ohio, McCook received a promotion following the battle. He commanded a brigade in the Perryville and Tullahoma Campaigns. McCook assumed command of the 1st Division, Cavalry Corps, Army of the Cumberland, during the Chickamauga Campaign. During that battle his division was

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employed on the Union right wing, skirmishing with Wheeler's cavalry. Later McCook led his division on operations against Confederate forces in eastern Tennessee.

2D CAVALRY DIVISION

Brigadier General Kenner Garrard

1st Brigade	2d Brigade	3d Brigade (Mtd Inf)
Col Robert Minty	Col Eli Long	Col Abram O. Miller
4th Michigan	1st Ohio	98th Illinois Mtd Inf
7th Pennsylvania	3d Ohio	123d Illinois Mtd Inf
4th United States	4th Ohio	17th Indiana Mtd Inf
		72d Indiana Mtd Inf

Artillery
Chicago Board of Trade Battery

Brigadier General Kenner Garrard had limited field experience with cavalry, especially large formations. Commissioned as an artillery officer, he transferred to dragoons and served on the frontier before the Civil War. His primary combat experience had been as commander of the 146th New York Infantry Regiment and the brigade to which it belonged at Gettysburg. In late 1863, he served for two months as the head of the Cavalry Bureau in Washington before being assigned as commander of the 2d Division of the Cavalry Corps of the Army of the Cumberland.[16] Garrard's three brigade commanders were among the best in the Union cavalry. Colonel Robert H. G. Minty and Colonel Eli Long had commanded their respective brigades in a division which played a key role in the Chickamauga

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Campaign the previous autumn. Garrard's 3d Brigade, known
as the "Mounted Lightning Brigade," was actually still
commanded by the ailing Colonel John T. Wilder, who spent
the opening days of the campaign confined to an ambulance,
was last seen by his men on June 9, and officially retired
six days later.[17] Command of the brigade fell to Colonel
Abram O. Miller, who had distinguished himself as the
regimental commander of the 72d Indiana Mounted Infantry.

3D CAVALRY DIVISION

Brigadier General Hugh Judson Kilpatrick

1st Brigade	2d Brigade	3d Brigade
Lt Col Robert Klein	Col Charles Smith	Col Eli Murray
3d Indiana (battalion)	8th Indiana	92d Illinois Mtd Inf
5th Iowa	2d Kentucky	3d Kentucky
	10th Ohio	5th Kentucky

Artillery
10th Wisconsin Battery

Brigadier General Hugh Judson Kilpatrick, of New
York, had earned recognition from Sherman for being crazy
and foolish. Kilpatrick possessed reckless personality
traits similar to his West Point classmate, Brigadier
General George A. Custer. In February 1864, Kilpatrick led
a brash raid toward Richmond, Virginia to free Union
prisoners in Libby Prison and Belle Isle. Kilpatrick took
about 4,000 men on this raid, but the Confederates received
word he was enroute, established a defense, and drove him

away. His men came within five miles of Richmond, which proved to be the nearest any Union troops came to the city before its fall.[18] After the raid, Kilpatrick assumed command of the 3d Division, Cavalry Corps, Army of the Cumberland. While this unit was robust on paper, Kilpatrick actually had a force more closely resembling a brigade because three regiments remained in Alabama preparing to make a raid against railroads there. The 3d Indiana Cavalry had only one battalion, as the other was in the Army of the Potomac. The 8th Indiana Cavalry, designated the 39th Indiana Mounted Infantry until the previous October, was a veteran regiment commanded by a proficient cavalry officer, Colonel Thomas J. Harrison.

ROUSSEAU'S EXPEDITION FORCE
Major General Lovell H. Rousseau

1st Brigade	2d Brigade
Col Thomas J. Harrison	Lt Col Matthewson T. Patrick
8th Indiana	5th Iowa
2nd Kentucky	9th Ohio
4th Tennessee	

Artillery
One Section, Battery E, 1st Michigan Artillery

Major General Lovell H. Rousseau exercised command over three units detached from Kilpatrick's division. Sherman had a contingency plan for a diversion to be performed at some point during the campaign. To implement

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this plan he had approximately 2,000 cavalrymen in Decatur, Alabama, with orders to move south and destroy the railroad at Opelika, Alabama, once he sent them word by telegraph. Rousseau, commander of the District of Tennessee, received Sherman's permission to lead this raid. A native of Kentucky, Rousseau led one of the infantry brigades which arrived on the second day of Shiloh, and commanded an infantry division at Perryville and Murfreesboro. In Washington, attempting to secure funding to improve his unit, he was not present during the Battle of Chickamauga. More importantly, he had no experience with cavalry. As was the case with Garrard, Sherman placed a large portion of his cavalry under the command of an infantry officer.

STONEMAN'S CAVALRY

Major General George Stoneman

Independent Brigade	2d Brigade	3d Brigade
Col Alexander Holeman	Col James Biddle	Col Horace Capron
1st Kentucky	16th Illinois	14th Illinois
11th Kentucky	5th Indiana	8th Michigan
	6th Indiana	McLaughlin's Ohio
	12th Kentucky	

Artillery
24th Indiana Battery

Major General George Stoneman of New York commanded the cavalry in the Army of the Ohio. Stoneman graduated from West Point in 1846 and entered the United States Army in the 1st Dragoons. After serving in the Mormon Battalion

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during the Mexican War, Stoneman was assigned to on the Pacific coast. Stoneman commanded Fort Brown, Texas, when the war began. After refusing to surrender to secession authorities, he evacuated the fort and returned north.

Stoneman was promoted to major in the 1st Cavalry on May 9, 1861. After serving in western Virginia, he was commissioned a brigadier general on August 13 and appointed Chief of Cavalry in the Army of the Potomac. He commanded the Union cavalry in the 1862 Peninsular Campaign, where he paled in contrast to his famous adversary, Confederate General J. E. B. Stuart. After the Second Battle of Bull Run, Stoneman assumed command of a division.

In late 1862, Stoneman was promoted to major general and commanded a corps at Fredericksburg. In early 1863, he commanded the Cavalry Corps, Army of the Potomac. During the Chancellorsville Campaign, Stoneman raided so deep into enemy territory that he was unable to provide intelligence to General Hooker. Hooker's serious error of strategic judgment in sending the major portion of his cavalry under Stoneman on a poorly conceived raid far to the rear of Lee's army and completely out of touch with his own, made an important contribution to Lee's success.[19] Stoneman's command did not accomplish anything substantial, did not deter Lee, and deprived Hooker of the security and reconnaissance missions his cavalry could have performed. Without the "eyes of the army" Hooker suffered through the

battle from self-inflicted blindness. With proper cavalry employment, the Union flank would not have been exposed and Lee might not have risked Jackson's flank march.[20]

Following this campaign, Stoneman was transferred, or, in the words of General Grant, "exiled to the West."[21] Until April 1864, Stoneman commanded the XXIII Army Corps, wintering in the vicinity of Knoxville, Tennessee. He was subsequently assigned to command the cavalry of the Army of the Ohio. This cavalry force had roughly the strength of a division. The previous month, Grant transferred the IX Army Corps to Virginia, making the Army of the Ohio synonymous with the XXIII Army Corps, commanded by General Schofield. Because of Stoneman's brevet rank of major general, the cavalry was often called the Cavalry Corps, Army of the Ohio, but more frequently simply had the designation as "Stoneman's Cavalry." Attachment of Stoneman's cavalry to the Army of the Ohio was nominal, and further complicated Stoneman's personality. Some historians have gone so far as to brand Stoneman as "a conceited incompetent."[22] As the Atlanta Campaign opened, Stoneman's 1st Brigade remained in Kentucky to pursue a Confederate force commanded by Brigadier General John Hunt Morgan. In early 1864, General Grant called Stoneman "an officer who had failed."[23] With this background, Stoneman was willing to gamble to repair his reputation. This need of the commander to redeem his name, and the lack of

experience among his men, later proved to be disastrous for the Union cavalry during the Atlanta Campaign.

Union Cavalry Logistical State

The Union cavalry was well equipped. The standard issue of a cavalry soldier was a saber with metal scabbard, pistol, carbine, haversack and nosebag, poncho, spur, conewrench and wiper, cartridge box, and canteen. All soldiers had full uniforms, with a long blue overcoat.[24]

During the second year of the war, the first Federal cavalry units began to receive magazine rifles. One of these was the Spencer rifle, or the shorter-barreled carbine version, with a tube magazine which held seven rounds. This was a superior weapon because it allowed the soldier to fire seven shots in approximately 10 seconds, as opposed to the Springfield or Enfield muzzle-loading weapons which could fire three shots in approximately 60 seconds. If the cavalryman was mounted, the procedures required to reload a muzzle-loader were extremely difficult, making the Spencer even more desireable. In 1864, the Spencer rifle was standard issue for Union cavalrymen, and quartermasters continued to supply these weapons to cavalry units throughout the Atlanta Campaign. As late as August 13, the 3rd Ohio Cavalry turned in its Burnside and Sharps carbines and drew Spencer repeaters.[25] The advantage the Union cavalry possessed with these

weapons diminished when the cavalrymen fought dismounted. In some engagements during the Atlanta Campaign, Spencers were inferior to the short Enfields, which had longer range and greater accuracy and were favored by Wheeler's men.[26]

As the Atlanta Campaign began, Union cavalry was in better shape with horses than it had been since the war began. Elliott made favorable remarks about the quality of mounts as he inspected his subordinate units. Some regiments were even able to selectively issue the same color of horses to their subordinate companies. A member of the 1st Ohio Cavalry of Garrard's 2d Brigade noted:

> When the horses arrived, the companies were colored, three of bay, two of sorrel, one of black, one of iron gray, one of white, one of brown, one of dun, and light sorrel, this was a new departure, and added much to the appearance of the regiment.[27]

While the Union cavalry had sufficient numbers of horses, they were recent issues from government corrals. The majority of these horses were untrained, and the majority were too young for cavalry duty.[28] The new recruits received these horses, as leaders did not expect veteran soldiers to give up their trained mounts. The campaign on which the Union cavalry was about to embark was into an area that would be harsh on new men and new horses.

The quality of personnel and training varied throughout the command. Many units had over two years of service, including the battles of Perryville, Murfreesboro, and Chickamauga. Other units, particularly Stoneman's

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Cavalry, had served for extended periods of time, but never on arduous campaigns. In the summer of 1864 a few of these regiments, notably the 1st and 11th Kentucky Cavalry in the Independent Brigade of Stoneman's division, were near the end of their three-year enlistments. Close to mustering out, many soldiers in these units became disciplinary problems in camp and on marches, and were hesitant to close with the enemy in battle. A few units had their ranks swelled with new recruits who enlisted during the veteran furloughs. During April, some units were able to seriously train and drill. Captain William L. Curry, of the 1st Ohio Cavalry, recalled the period:

> After a few days' mounted drill with sabers, the carbine was brought into use, and at first the test of firing would be by fours, then by platoons, and next in company front. A horse will become accustomed to firing about as quick as a man, and after a few drills the majority of horses will quiet down so that they can be easily handled....[29]

Some regiments spent the entire month on picket duty or travelling to the front. Stoneman's command had the longest march, moving from Kentucky to Georgia. On this march, Stoneman required each regiment to have a rear guard to prevent men from straggling. His Independent Brigade, made up of two regiments of Kentucky soldiers, many of whom would be passing a short distance from their homes, still found ways to leave the column. A soldier in the 1st Kentucky Cavalry reflected on Stoneman's measures:

> While he had made effective arrangements for rear guards, not yet being informed of all our boys'

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peculiarities, he had neglected to make efficient provisions for front and flank guards to keep them in column....A report being called for, showed only 71 men and two officers present, out of over 800 effective men for duty."[30]

The Confederate Cavalry Threat

Opposing the cavalry in Sherman's army, Major General Joseph Wheeler commanded the Cavalry Corps in the Army of Tennessee. This force had three divisions, commanded by Major General William T. Martin, Brigadier General John H. Kelly, and Brigadier General William Y. C. Humes, as well as two independent brigades and four batteries of artillery. Wheeler's strength was 7,800 cavalry with 18 artillery pieces. The Army of Mississippi cavalry, commanded by Brigadier General William H. Jackson, was in northern Alabama in position to reinforce the Army of Tennessee. Jackson's cavalry division consisted of three brigades and three artillery batteries, totalling 4,900 cavalry with 14 artillery pieces. If Jackson reinforced Wheeler, the Union and Confederate cavalry forces would be roughly equal in size. The Union cavalry definitely faced an experienced and formidable foe.

CHAPTER 3

THE FIRST PHASE: MAY 1--JULY 9, 1864

General Sherman noted during April that his troops were still dispersed, "and the cavalry, so necessary to our success, was yet collecting horses at Nicholasville, Kentucky, and Columbia, Tennessee."[1] While Sherman's entire cavalry force numbered over 12,000, substantially fewer cavalrymen were actually at the front. As the campaign began, Sherman had 3,828 cavalrymen in the Army of the Cumberland, 624 in the Army of the Tennessee, and 1,679 in the Army of the Ohio, for a total of 6,131.[2] On May 6, Sherman estimated the Confederate army at Dalton, Georgia, had approximately 10,000 cavalrymen. Initially Sherman used his cavalry for security and reconnaissance close to the main army, as an economy of force. This phase of cavalry operations began at the commencement of the campaign and continued through July 9, 1864, the day before Rousseau began his raid from Decatur, Alabama.

The Union Cavalry Assembles

Campaign preparation began in late April when Sherman directed a concentration of his three armies under Generals Thomas, McPherson, and Schofield for upcoming

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operations. The Army of the Cumberland under General Thomas had its three corps in the vicinity of Chattanooga, and the Cavalry Corps was spread around the city. This army formed the center of the Grand Army.

General McPherson's Army of the Tennessee had its headquarters in Huntsville, Alabama, with one of its subordinate elements, the XV Army Corps, which Sherman had once commanded. The XVI Army Corps, also a part of this army, was at Athens, Alabama. The XVII Army Corps, was widely scattered along the Mississippi River, with a majority of its men on veteran furlough. McPherson's army was on the right side of the Grand Army.

General Schofield had one of his divisions at the rendezvous point, Charleston, Tennessee, but the remainder of his command was widely dispersed. Because he brought only three infantry divisions, Schofield's army was actually the size of a large corps. Sherman ordered the Army of the Ohio to be the left wing of the Grand Army.

As the armies moved toward their rendezvous point, Union cavalry probed enemy lines and skirmished with Confederate cavalrymen from General Wheeler's command. The 10th Ohio Cavalry, of Kilpatrick's 2d Brigade, captured a Confederate outpost at Tunnel Hill in the final days of April. The men burned buildings and executed Confederate prisoners, supposedly in retaliation for similar actions by Confederates the previous week.

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General Elliott, the Cavalry Corps commander in the Army of the Cumberland, reported that General McCook's division marched from Cleveland, Tennessee, to Dalton, Georgia in early May. Upon arrival in Georgia, McCook's men guarded the left flank of the Army of the Cumberland and the Army of the Ohio, whose cavalry, under Stoneman, was still in Tennessee, marching toward the front. On the far right flank of the army was Union cavalry commanded by General Kilpatrick. On May 6, Garrard's division was still in Alabama, delayed by the need to bring wagons full of forage and supplies along the bad roads.

On the morning of May 7, McCook's cavalry division manned outposts near Varnell's Station, to the left and front of the infantry line. The next day, Confederate cavalry under General Wheeler attacked the Union cavalrymen near the Cleveland and Dalton road. In this first major cavalry skirmish of the campaign McCook initially held his position, but by the afternoon one of his brigades had been defeated and he withdrew his men from the field.

With three of the four cavalry divisions present, Garrard's division was conspicuously absent. His division, still moving toward the main army, was near the Alabama state line in the vicinity of Trenton, Georgia. Sherman ordered initial assaults on Rocky Face Ridge and Tunnel Hill near Dalton as diversions for his planned flanking maneuver in which the Army of the Tennessee would occupy

Snake Creek Gap and cut the railroad at Resaca. The absence of Garrard's cavalry meant McPherson had to make this important maneuver without substantial cavalry. On May 8, the Army of the Tennessee reached Snake Creek Gap, but Garrard's cavalry was so far away that Sherman ordered Kilpatrick to provide cavalry support. While waiting for Kilpatrick's cavalry, McPherson improvised and used his only regiment of mounted infantry, the 9th Illinois, from his XVI Army Corps, to provide security.

Cavalry at Snake Creek Gap and Resaca

When McPherson approached Resaca on May 9, he was unaware of the fact that he vastly outnumbered Confederate troops defending the town. McPherson also found his maps of the area were inaccurate. Sufficient cavalry could have solved both of McPherson's problems. When the Army of the Tennessee probed and encountered more resistance in Resaca than expected, McPherson retreated. Confederates in Resaca were confused, albeit grateful, when the Union army did not overwhelm their defenses that day. McPherson returned to Snake Creek Gap where Kilpatrick reported to him.

That night, McPherson lamented about his lack of cavalry in his report to Sherman:

> I had no cavalry except Phillips' mounted men to
> feel out on the flanks. If I could have had a
> division of good cavalry I could have broken the
> railroad at some point...General Kilpatrick is very
> anxious to make the attempt to cut the railroad.
> General Garrard is in Lafayette tonight; says his

horses are very much fatigued and short of forage; desires to remain there until his forage train comes down from Chattanooga.[3]

Upon McPherson's occupation of Snake Creek Gap, Sherman decided to move most of his army around this flank rather than storming the defenses at Dalton. While the long columns marched toward Snake Creek Gap, Sherman needed to portray there was still a strong Union force near Dalton. He believed the XXIII Army Corps was too small for this task, so he directed Thomas to leave the IV Army Corps, supplemented by McCook's and Stoneman's cavalry, to perform this deception. Sherman had given his cavalry a mission it could execute, but this force had elements from three different corps, creating unity of command problems.

On the morning of May 11, two of Stoneman's brigades were attacked by cavalrymen under Wheeler's command with infantrymen from Major General Thomas C. Hindman's Division. Stoneman's men, still weary from their march, fell back. Falling back to the infantry positions at Rocky Face Ridge, Stoneman panicked and burned several wagons and commissary stores unnecessarily.[4] Upon receiving support from the infantrymen of the IV Army Corps, the Union cavalry repulsed the enemy's main attack, and the enemy retreated toward Ringgold. Moving some of his men onto Tunnel Hill, General Stoneman could not understand why the Confederates had not continued their attack. The reason was simple: Wheeler had accomplished

his mission upon discovering the Union army only had cavalry and two infantry divisions to the northwest of Dalton and was on his way to report to Johnston.

.er receiving this report, Johnston pulled most of his army back to Resaca to protect his flank and had his cavalry cover the retreat. With infantry support, the cavalry enabled the Confederates to withdraw from Dalton. The IV Army Corps and the two Union cavalry divisions noticed this retreat and occupied Dalton on May 13. All of Sherman's cavalry participated in the Battle of Resaca, which began the next day. Garrard's cavalry division, finally in the area, screened a flank. As the IV Army Corps pushed south along the railroad toward Resaca, Stoneman's cavalry was on its left and McCook's division on its right. Kilpatrick led his men from Snake Creek Gap to reconnoiter the area around Resaca. Almost immediately, they ran into Confederate infantry and Kilpatrick suffered a leg wound. Kilpatrick's men dispersed the enemy, but the cavalrymen moved aside and allowed McPherson's army to pass when they learned their commander had been wounded. Colonel Eli H. Murray, Kilpatrick's 3d Brigade commander, assumed command of the division, which was subsequently ordered to picket the north bank of the Oostenaula River.

Sherman sought another opportunity to flank the enemy, even before Resaca was secure. He sent an infantry division commanded by Brigadier General Thomas W. Sweeny to

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cross the Oostenaula River at Lay's Ferry on May 14. As
Sweeny's men attempted to cross the Oostenaula at this
point, cavalrymen from Kilpatrick's division reported that
Confederates were bridging the river between Lay's Ferry
and Resaca. Because this would have isolated Sweeny's
unit, he ceased work at Lay's Ferry to take action against
the reported Confederate force. He soon determined the
report was false and his men resumed their crossing, but
had lost a day due to faulty intelligence from the cavalry.
After he crossed the Oostenaula, Sweeny was to secure a key
crossroads to allow Union forces to strike the
Confederates. Once across the river, Sweeny, with no
cavalry support, moved very cautiously and did not secure
the crossroads until after the Confederates had passed.
Had Sweeny possessed cavalry to reconnoiter forward of his
main body, he would have moved more rapidly and might have
successfully blocked the Confederate retreat.

First Mission to Destroy Railroad Lines

While at Resaca, Sherman ordered two of his cavalry
divisions to march a few miles beyond the enemy's flanks
and destroy the railroad. Neither succeeded. Stoneman's
division was to move behind the Confederate army and
destroy the railroad between Resaca and Cassville while
Garrard's division was to cross the Oostenaula River and
destroy the railroad between Rome and Kingston.

Garrard found no bridges or satisfactory ford, and, believing that to continue on to Rome would separate him too far from the infantry, returned to the main army.[5] Sherman was clearly disappointed with these results, and the next day sent a cryptic note to Garrard:

> I regret exceedingly you did not avail yourself of the chance I gave you to cut the railroad....I want you to dash in and strike the retreating masses in flank and all round. Leave your artillery at the bridge, or better still, throw it into the Oostenaula and operate rapidly against the enemy....Now, do not spare horseflesh, but strike boldly.[6]

On the morning of May 15, Stoneman's cavalrymen found that Wheeler's soldiers had withdrawn to the south bank of the Oostenaula River. At this point, Stoneman launched his raid against the railroad. Without Confederate opposition, his men crossed the Connasauga River and were easily able to penetrate the Confederate rear area. Near the town of Calhoun, the Union cavalrymen came upon the hospital tents of one of the Confederate divisions. As Stoneman's men wrecked these hospital tents, they were counterattacked by a brigade of Wheeler's men, who had infantry support. The Confederates routed the Union cavalry force, taking over 30 prisoners.

While the Geneva Convention and other agreements affording protection to the wounded in hospitals near the battlefield would not come about until later generations, the military value of hospitals full of wounded soldiers, many of whom were amputees, was certainly questionable.

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The judgement of leadership and the discipline of the men was suspect as Stoneman's cavalry attacked these hospitals, destroying medical supplies, capturing doctors, and according to some Confederate accounts, even shooting the wounded.[7] A raid on a hospital was vastly different from Sherman's intent, which was that Stoneman destroy the railroad south of Resaca!

Another critical aspect of this attack on the ospital tents occurred as Wheeler's men repulsed Stoneman's main force, causing it to fall back in confusion. In this action, General Stoneman was nearly captured by a group of Confederate cavalrymen. The 1st Kentucky Cavalry, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Silas Adams, charged the Confederate cavalry and forced them to break off the attack. After saving the day for Stoneman and even returning the hat he had lost during the fight, Colonel Adams and his men afterward appeared to be Stoneman's special favorites.[8] On a raid several weeks later, after Adams assumed command of the Independent Brigade due to Colonel Alexander Holeman's ill health, Stoneman would rely on the Kentucky regiments and later state that Adams failed him.

After this failed raid on the Confederate railroad, Stoneman made an effort to explain his problems to Sherman:

> One great difficulty I have to contend against is the utter incompetency of subordinate officers. I have to post and put in every regiment myself and send out every party.[9]

When Johnston learned that Sherman had sent forces around his flank at Lay's Ferry, he evacuated Resaca to move farther south on the railroad. The Confederates retreated from Resaca during the night of the 15th and entrenched near Cassville. As the Confederate army made this retreat, Johnston was reinforced with a body of approximately 3,700 cavalrymen, under the command of General William Jackson.[10] This force was a majority of the cavalry from Lieutenant General Leonidas Polk's Army of Mississippi, which was moving to Georgia to help Johnston defend Atlanta. Johnston posted these men on his left flank.

On May 16, Garrard's cavalry rejoined the Army of the Tennessee following their operations near Rome. Sherman provided an infantry division to capture Rome, which it accomplished on May 17. This town was important to Sherman because of the Confederate ironworks and machine shops, as well as the large stores collected there.[11] This was the first of many orders Sherman gave to his cavalry units which dealt with cutting railroads. Additionally, Sherman clearly was issuing specific orders to subordinate units in General Thomas' cavalry corps.

Poor communications from Garrard's division caused Sherman to send infantry units on ill-conceived missions. Because of a garbled verbal message delivered by a courier, Sherman had the impression that Garrard had located

Farmer's Bridge, across the Oostenaula and was operating as planned on the other side of that river. Sherman ordered Thomas to send a division to cross Farmer's Bridge and cut the railroad on the other side. Thomas complied, and the men of this division later learned from one of Garrard's staff officers that Farmer's Bridge spanned a creek flowing into the Oostenaula.[12] Garrard's cavalry crossed the Oostenaula at Lay's Ferry two days behind schedule. Four days would pass before they accomplished the mission of breaking the railroad between Calhoun and Kingston. Garrard's entire division moved to the railroad, but it was his 3d Brigade, commanded by Colonel Abram O. Miller, which accomplished the mission, cutting the telegraph wire between Calhoun and Kingston and the railroad between Kingston and Rome.[13]

Union cavalrymen reported to General Hooker, now a corps commander in the Army of the Cumberland, that the enemy had evacuated Resaca. Sherman ordered a pursuit, and Hooker's corps passed through Stoneman's cavalry as they began the march. At this time, the Union cavalry was poorly situated, and Sherman did not take aggressive steps to employ the cavalry properly. On May 17, most of Stoneman's division had not yet crossed the Coosawattee River. McCook's division waited to follow Stoneman's men. The 3d Division, under its new commander, Colonel Murray, was still at Resaca.

Cavalry in the Pursuit to Cassville

Once Stoneman's and McCook's divisions crossed the Connasauga and Coosawattee Rivers, they joined forces. Both divisions acted in cooperation with the Army of the Ohio. Arriving in Cassville, Schofield's Army of the Ohio passed the Army of the Cumberland. Continuing the pursuit to the Etowah River, the Army of the Ohio's infantry and cavalry operations drove the enemy's rear guard across the river. Union troops encamped near Cartersville and prepared to turn the enemy's position in the Allatoona Pass. On May 18, Sherman ordered Stoneman and McCook to break the railroad between Cassville and Cartersville and to destroy the mills and iron works on the Etowah River. The cavalry moved forward to accomplish this.

As the Confederate army continued its retreat southward, General Johnston set a trap for the Union forces by splitting his army near Adairsville and having one portion march toward Kingston while the remainder marched toward Cassville. Johnston hoped the Union army would make a similar split, allowing his Confederate army to mass quickly and attack the Union army piecemeal. Sherman responded to this battlefield deception exactly as Johnston hoped. As the Confederates prepared to attack on the morning of May 19, General Hood, who was to lead the attack, saw what was apparently a Union cavalry force to his right and rear. Johnston and Hood were faced with a

dilemma because this force, with unknown intent and size, posed a large potential threat on their right flank. This force was the two Union cavalry divisions under Stoneman and McCook, who were acting on Sherman's orders to cut the railroad between Cassville and Cartersville and then destroy the iron works on the Etowah River. By happening to come along when and where they did, they unknowingly saved the Union column that was marching down the Adairsville road from a devastating attack, and this was the most valuable service performed by Sherman's cavalry during the entire campaign.[14]

The Army of the Ohio, the Army of the Cumberland, and the cavalry under Stoneman and McCook closed with the Confederates at Cassville. McCook's men pushed toward the town, where they found the Confederates in heavy force. An infantry division advanced on McCook in line of battle and forced him to withdraw. In the afternoon, Stoneman, the senior cavalry officer present, ordered McCook to attack. McCook, faced with an unenviable position of attacking infantry with cavalry, performed admirably, driving the Confederates from two lines of rifle pits.

The 8th Iowa and the 2d Indiana Cavalry Regiments, units from each of McCook's two brigades, charged the Confederates and captured several prisoners. From his prisoners McCook learned he had fought elements from two different infantry divisions. McCook sustained over 30

casualties. At this point McCook informed his higher headquarters that his division was in bad need of rest, as his men had been in the saddle from 18 to 20 hours each day for over a week. In McCook's action near Cassville, the Union cavalry performed its security mission well, but during the pursuit, Sherman allowed his cavalry to become widely dispersed.

As the campaign neared the end of its first month, the continuous operation began to have an effect on the cavalry, especially the new horses. All mounted units at the front recorded serious shortages of rations for the horses, indicating considerable logistical mismanagement. The supply problems were especially appalling because Union officers did not properly report them. On May 23, Brigadier General Robert Allen, Sherman's Chief Quartermaster, wrote "Sherman expresses himself as highly pleased, and says no army in the world is better provided."[15] At the end of May, the 8th Iowa sent 200 men to the rear with disabled horses because disease, scarcity of rations, hard service, and want of forage had made severe inroads on its ranks.[16] McCook clearly described the horses of his division to General Elliott as:

> ...absolutely dying of starvation; five from one
> company dropped on picket this morning, totally
> exhausted for want of something to eat. The green
> wheat and leaves, the only food we can procure,
> neither strengthens nor nourishes them. I tell you
> their condition now so that you may not rely upon
> the division as serviceable, for it certainly is
> not.[17]

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Elliott cautioned McCook to keep two days of supply on hand. Colonel Minty of Garrard's division noted that during the third week of May, a five mile gallop rendered many of his horses unserviceable. Units from Kilpatrick's division, having greater opportunity to forage during the rear security mission it was assigned following the Battle of Resaca, did not mention problems with horses. General Stoneman sent the following message to General Schofield concerning his horses:

> You must use your cavalry sparingly, and recollect that the horses, green and new, have averaged nearly 20 miles a day for the past 23 days, and that without hay or grass; and on the average been under the saddle three-fifths of every day, or you will soon be without cavalry...consider it my duty to inform you that our horses (I find from an inspection today) are pretty nearly played out.[18]

Adding to Sherman's frustration was the superb performance by Confederate cavalry under Generals Wheeler and Jackson. The Confederate cavalry served as rear guard and perfected tactics for this mission when covering Johnston's retreat from Dalton. About every thousand yards they erected a log barricade across the railroad and made a stand behind it. To reduce these obstacles, the Union forces had to deploy a heavy line of skirmishers to suppress the men behind the barricade while another force worked its way around the flanks. Once threatened, the Confederates withdrew to the next barricade. In this manner, small cavalry forces slowed the advance of large infantry units to a few miles per day.

Because of the earlier failures of his cavalry,
Sherman was losing confidence in its ability. In a letter
to his wife on May 22, Sherman lamented about the
ineffectiveness of his cavalry when he wrote "our greatest
danger is from cavalry, in which arm of service the enemy
is superior to us in a quantity and quality, cutting our
wagons or railroads."[19]

Cavalry around New Hope Church

In late May, Sherman decided to leave the railroad
to flank the formidable position at Allatoona, which had a
mountain pass that could be strongly defended. The Army of
the Tennessee was on the right, the Army of the Cumberland
in the center, and the Army of the Ohio was on the left.
While the subordinate armies executed the flanking move,
Sherman's cavalrymen performed their traditional missions
of reconnaissance and security for the army. This time was
one of the few periods in which Sherman was employing his
cavalry almost according to his plan. Stoneman's cavalry
division covered his left, Garrard's his right, and
McCook's operated in front of the army's center, while
Kilpatrick's provided security behind the armies.[20]

The rear area security mission, given to
Kilpatrick's division, now under the acting command of
Colonel William W. Lowe, was to protect the railroad north
of the Etowah River. The division remained at Kingston to

hold Gillem's Bridge, guard all fords, and destroy all other useable bridges over the Etowah. Later, this division detached one brigade to guard the railroad and supply depot at Calhoun, while the rest of the division made Cartersville its patrol headquarters.[21]

In accordance with the reconnaissance mission, McCook's cavalrymen provided intelligence on May 24, that the entire Confederate army was moving toward the town of Dallas to counter Sherman's move. On the Confederate side, General Jackson's cavalry spotted long dust trails heading south from the Etowah River. These dust trails indicated that elements of the Union army had crossed the river, and when Jackson's men went forward to investigate, they clashed with Union cavalry west of the town of Dallas. These were Garrard's men performing a security mission.

Late on the night of May 24, Wheeler started a reconnaissance with a portion of his command to strike the Union rear area around Cassville and gather intelligence. His men did not sight any Union soldiers between the Etowah River and Cassville Station. Wheeler then sent men from the 1st Georgia and 11th Texas Cavalry Regiments, under the command of Colonel Samuel W. Davitte, to attack the enemy at Cassville Station, in order to attract the attention of any Union soldiers in the area. Wheeler and the remainder of his men then bypassed the railroad station and moved on to Cassville, approximately two miles farther north, and

discovered a large wagon train near there. In this action Wheeler completely thwarted attempts of the Union cavalry to provide security for their army. Achieving complete surprise, the Confederates cut the railroad, captured nearly 200 prisoners and 70 fully loaded wagons with mule or horse teams, and burned the remaining wagons, commissary supplies, and quartermaster stores.[22] When a large force of Kilpatrick's cavalry attempted to accomplish its rear area security mission and recover the captured wagons, it was routed and driven from the field. The force under Davitte skirmished with Union cavalry under General Stoneman until Wheeler made safe passage to the south.

As a four day fight between the main armies under Generals Johnston and Sherman ensued at New Hope Church, Georgia, on May 26, 1864, McCook's cavalry again engaged the Confederates. At 4:30 in the afternoon, he attacked Wheeler's cavalry, who retreated toward Acworth with their supply trains. After breaking the Confederate cavalry line, General McCook struck their infantry. That evening, General Stoneman arrived with one brigade to assist.

Initially, General Elliott misunderstood McCook's report, believing that Stoneman had done most of the fighting. In a dispatch to Elliott, McCook made the facts of the skirmish and his animosity toward Stoneman clear:

> I have just received your note dated 7:45. It was
> my command that cut the enemy's column on Dallas
> and Acworth road, not General Stoneman's. He knew
> nothing of it until after it was over. I captured

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> 52 prisoners (2 officers), and killed and wounded a
> number, about 80. I am on the Marietta road at the
> junction of the Dallas and Acworth road, east of
> General Stoneman and in his front. I will not move
> in the morning until both men and horses are fed.
> I have had no forage for two days. The force I
> attacked was the whole of Wheeler's. Stoneman
> ought to pass to my front and relieve me.[23]

In this action General McCook sustained about 30
casualties. Among the missing was his 2d Brigade
commander, Lieutenant Colonel James W. Stewart, who had
been captured by Wheeler's men.

Union Cavalry Takes the Allatoona Pass

On May 28, McCook and Stoneman guarded the army's
far left with their cavalry, while Garrard's cavalry was on
the right, opposite Confederate cavalry, near Dallas.
Considerable artillery firing and intermittent skirmishing
continued all day and throughout the night. The Union army
held its position until after dark the next day, when
McPherson's men and Garrard's cavalry were ordered to move
through Dallas and head north toward Allatoona. Just as
some of the divisions began to move, the Confederates
initiated a night attack.

Garrard's division spent the night skirmishing and
then broke contact. His unit was in terrible shape, as the
men had gone without sleep for 72 hours, and their horses
were literally dropping from hunger, having had no forage
for five days.[24] To remove the pressure from McPherson's
army, Sherman directed Stoneman and Garrard to move toward

Allatoona Pass, thereby threatening to block Confederate escape routes. Stoneman was to secure the east end of Allatoona Pass and the bridge over Allatoona Creek, while Garrard would seize the west end.

On June 1, as the infantry moved toward the railroad, Stoneman's cavalrymen reached Allatoona in the late afternoon. Finding the town undefended and deserted, they secured control of the railroad between Acworth and the Etowah. General Garrard's cavalry moved around by the rear to the west end of the pass and also reached their objective without trouble, and Sherman finally accomplished his purpose of turning the Allatoona Pass.[25] As Sherman had hoped, the movement of his cavalry helped force the Confederates to retreat from Dallas and New Hope Church to Lost, Pine, Brush, and Kenesaw Mountains.

Sherman began to consolidate his gains and make his next move around the enemy's right flank and place his entire army in front of Allatoona Pass. Heavy rains persisted for the next several days and delayed the Union army. As the armies marched, Garrard's division occupied the south bank of the Etowah River and Stoneman's division performed a reconnaissance south along the railroad. Based on Stoneman's report, Sherman gave orders to rebuild the railroad bridge across the Etowah River, which would give him rail communications intact to the town of Acworth. McCook provided security for Schofield's flank on the

extreme left of the Grand Army, on the road between Dallas and Acworth. McCook's division remained stationary for 10 days covering the rear of the army. While on the Army's flank, McCook maintained a strong guard, frequently sending out long distance scouts, and performing reconnaissance.

At this time, the Army of the Tennessee was reinforced with an additional corps which had previously been out of the theater. This was the XVII Army Corps, commanded by Major General Francis P. Blair, Jr. With this corps was the 2d Brigade of Garrard's division, consisting of the 1st, 3d, and 4th Ohio Cavalry Regiments. While enroute to the main army, these cavalry units had fought skirmishes at Decatur, Courtland, and Moulton, Alabama.

On June 6, Schofield moved his infantry to Smyrna Camp Ground. There he received orders from Sherman to prepare to cross the Chattahoochee River at some point between the m th of Soap Creek and Roswell, while Generals Thomas, McPherson, and Stoneman would feint below. Stoneman remained with the main army to continue operations on the right in conjunction with General McPherson.

Cavalry Operations near Kenesaw Mountain

On June 9, Sherman reported that he was in front of Kenesaw Mountain. Upon learning the Confederates occupied a line which was 12 miles long, Sherman decided to make a frontal attack. He issued orders to his armies: the Army

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of the Tennessee was to move toward Marietta; the Army of the Cumberland was to march on Kenesaw and Pine Mountain; and the Army of the Ohio was to move toward Lost Mountain. In this action, Sherman used his cavalry divisions to support his armies in the traditional roles of reconnaissance and security. He stated "General Garrard's cavalry operated with General McPherson, and General Stoneman with General Schofield. General McCook looked to our rear."[26] Garrard now had three brigades, but Stoneman was still short one of his four brigades, which remained in central Kentucky fighting Morgan's Confederate raiders.

On June 10, when Sherman's army began to advance, the array from west to east was Stoneman's cavalry, the Army of the Ohio, the Army of the Cumberland, the Army of the Tennessee, and then Garrard's division. The cavalry reported the enemy was massed and fortified on Brush Mountain and Pine Mountain. Sherman did not expect enemy resistance until Kenesaw Mountain, and therefore did not initially believe these reports. On this occasion, the cavalry reports were correct, and Sherman had to divert men to fight the Confederates on these two mountains.

Allowing General Thomas time to prepare for the attack, Sherman ordered his cavalry to harass the Confederates. Sherman ordered Garrard to circle behind the Confederate army and strike the railroad. McCook moved his division up to fill the vacant flank. Garrard reported

strong enemy forces to the east of Brush Mountain on June
11 which delayed the conduct of the mission Sherman had
given him. McCook's division was involved with the
fighting at Lost Mountain on June 13. In this operation,
McCook found the north side of the mountain entirely
inaccessible. As his division advanced, the Confederates
fired artillery at the Union cavalry skirmishers, but
McCook silenced these guns with the 18th Indiana Battery.
Two of his regiments, the 4th Indiana and 1st Tennessee,
breached the barricades on the side of the mountain, but
could get no farther. That night part of Lost Mountain was
still held by Confederate infantry and McCook's division
withdrew to Acworth, where it stayed until the 16th, when
it advanced with Stoneman, covering the army's right flank.

As Garrard continued his attempts to cut the
railroad, McCook moved to the Confederate rear area behind
Lost Mountain on the morning of June 17, while Stoneman
would demonstrate to their front. The Confederate force
was much larger than McCook's, but the Union forces soon
seized Lost Mountain, driving the Confederates four miles
from their initial positions. McCook's men encamped on the
mountain, where they remained until the end of the month.
From this camp they patrolled the right side of the army,
and frequently sent small raiding parties into enemy
territory. For the rest of June, McCook was subordinate to
Stoneman, placing one division commander under another

division commander, risking effective command and control. In a letter to Grant, Sherman denounced his cavalry, saying that it was dwindling away and always unable to attempt anything due to lack of forage. He also berated both Garrard, who was over-cautious, and Stoneman, who was lazy, because they had several chances to operate behind Johnston but were easily checked by the appearance of an enemy.[27]

Sherman finally lost his patience and rebuked Garrard, who was still attempting to execute his orders to circle behind the enemy and cut the railroad. On June 19, Colonel Minty's brigade skirmished the Confederates all day and the next day he was attacked by six brigades of Wheeler's cavalry. The engagement lasted over two hours, and included two saber charges by Minty's units and three by the Confederates. The arrival of Garrard's 3d Brigade under Colonel Miller helped repulse the Confederates.

On the following day, with Sherman's rebuke in his recent memory, Garrard explained that it was Confederate forces which kept him from accomplishing his mission, not his excessive caution. He went on to say:

> I regret exceedingly that on several occasions the major general commanding has seen fit to write as if he were dissatisfied with my activity and zeal...The cavalry is a special arm of the service, and the commander of a division, situated on one of the flanks like mine, should possess the full confidence of the commanding general. Unless such is the case his sphere of usefulness is materially injured. My service with the cavalry this campaign has been very unsatisfactory, for I have been made to feel more than once that it was not equal to the occasion...Should the general commanding desire a

change in command of this division, I will most cheerfully yield it and take command of a brigade of infantry.[28]

Sherman did not take this opportunity to relieve Garrard, although this division would have coped best with a change of command. Garrard had the best brigade commanders with Colonels Minty, Long, and Miller, one of whom could have moved up to command the division. Garrard's men knew Sherman was unhappy with their leader. Captain Heber S. Thompson, of the 7th Pennsylvania Cavalry, made the following entry in his diary on the night of June 21:

> It is evident that the authorities (Sherman and McPherson) are dissatisfied with Genl. Garrard and disposed to find fault with him without occasion. Sherman yesterday wrote to General Garrard making great complaint of our inactivity and inefficiency, forsooth!...Such an absurd letter as that one would not expect from Genl. Sherman, though lately it must be confessed, our confidence in his Generalship has been greatly weakened.[29]

Garrard and Captain Thompson had valid points. Sherman had the responsibility to demonstrate confidence in Garrard or else relieve him. Sherman's practice of giving orders directly to the cavalry division commanders had removed the immediate supervisors from the pragmatic chain of command. Thomas or Elliott were no longer in a position to take action concerning Garrard's competence, because for all practical purposes, Garrard worked for Sherman.

Due to problems with horses and the need for additional infantry in the Army of the Ohio, two regiments from the 2d Brigade in Stoneman's cavalry, the 12th

Kentucky and the 16th Illinois, were transferred to Schofield's 3d Division. This transfer occurred on June 21, and these units formed the "Dismounted Cavalry Brigade" of the 3d Division. These cavalrymen fought as infantry in this assignment, often serving as the division reserve.

General Johnston believed cutting Sherman's supply line was the key to deterring his advance, and frequently requested Jefferson Davis to send Forrest against the Union railroads. Throughout the month of June, bands of Confederate guerrillas and detachments of Confederate cavalry operated north of the Etowah River and interfered with the passage of several trains, reducing Sherman's ability to stockpile supplies. On June 23, raiders from Johnston's army cut the railroad and telegraph near Dalton, far to the rear of the Union army. The following day this force of approximately 3,000 Confederate cavalrymen attacked the town of LaFayette, overwhelming the 3d Brigade of McCook's division until reinforcements arrived the next morning. Desiring a similar capability, Sherman ordered McCook's cavalry to do the same to the Confederate line of communication between the Chattahoochee River and Atlanta. This effort failed, as McCook's men were unable to cross the river.

Cavalry had a limited role in the Battle of Kenesaw Mountain on June 27. When Sherman's frontal assault on Kenesaw Mountain was driven back by Johnston's forces that

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day, it affirmed the best move was to flank the position and continue toward Atlanta. In the frontal assault the Union army lost nearly 3,000 men while the Confederates suffered less than 700 casualties and retained their position. Flanking movements required Johnston to withdraw to keep his army between Sherman and Atlanta.

McCook reported in late June that his command was subordinate to Stoneman and therefore played a secondary role after it left Lost Mountain. One of McCook's regiments, the 2d Indiana Cavalry, under Major David Briggs, joined General Stoneman's forces in Powder Springs. There they served as the reserve force while Stoneman's cavalry drove the enemy across the Chattahoochee, capturing several prisoners and suffering no casualties.

On the night of June 28, Sherman received a message from General Halleck, now the Union Army Chief of Staff, which said:

> Lieutenant General Grant directs me to say that the movements of your army may be made entirely independent of any desire to retain Johnston's forces where they are. He does not think that Lee will bring any additional troops to Richmond, on account of the difficulty of feeding them.[30]

Sherman's ability to operate independently in Georgia allowed him to make bolder movements with his armies, as well as his cavalry. The Atlanta Campaign now had equal status with Grant's campaign in Virginia, rather than being a subordinate effort to keep Confederate troops occupied in Georgia.[31]

Union Cavalry Reaches the Chattahoochee River

On June 30, Stoneman, supported by McCook, moved
toward the Chattahoochee River to capture a crossing site.
From some points along the river, Stoneman's cavalrymen
could see Atlanta in the distance. On July 1, Sherman
ordered Garrard's cavalry to relieve McPherson from his
lines in front of Kenesaw. McPherson rapidly pushed his
army to the west to threaten Turner's Ferry, on the mouth
of Nickajack Creek, on the Chattahoochee River. To
accomplish this, the Army of the Tennessee began its move
from the left to the right side of the Grand Army, and at
about 3 p.m., passed the Army of the Ohio. When the Armies
of the Tennessee and Cumberland united, Schofield massed
his troops to the rear of the Army of the Tennessee and
served as Sherman's reserve.

The Confederates reacted to McPherson's move on
July 3, and withdrew from Kenesaw Mountain to defensive
works on the Chattahoochee River. The next day Stoneman's
cavalry and the infantry division marched through Marietta
just behind Wheeler's Confederates. Sherman ordered
Stoneman to send a brigade, reinforced with two regiments
of infantry and an artillery section, to Turner's Ferry on
Nickajack Creek in order to secure a crossing.

This force successfully crossed Nickajack Creek and
became involved in a sharp skirmish. Stoneman's men fought
well and held the flank for the infantry, who advanced upon

the Confederates and pushed them at least a mile in a short amount of time. Darkness prevented further pursuit, and the men withdrew to the branch of the Nickajack which they had crossed, to have a sufficient supply of water. After the action, General Blair, commanding the infantry, made the following special mention in his report:

> During the operations of the day my right was covered by the cavalry, under Major General Stoneman, who promptly and ably cooperated with me, his skirmishers connecting with mine and assisting materially in driving the enemy.[32]

When the Confederates retreated from the Kenesaw Mountain area to their Chattahoochee River defenses, Sherman ordered Garrard's cavalry to seize the small town of Roswell in order to cover the left flank of the Army of the Tennessee. On July 7, Garrard quickly moved to Roswell and destroyed the factories and cotton mills which had been supplying uniforms for the Confederates. While some of the owners claimed neutrality due to foreign ownership, Garrard's men burned them with Sherman's approval. While Schofield's Army of the Ohio successfully crosse he river farther downstream, Garrard worried about being so far from the main army and was afraid that he would be attacked by Wheeler, whom he believed had a force three times larger than his own. Garrard postponed his crossing of the river and merely secured the northern bank of the shallow ford near the destroyed bridge at Roswell and held it until he was relieved by infantry.

On the morning of July 9, Garrard sent units from his 3d Brigade across the ford. A small force of Confederates defended from the far side. The Union cavalrymen, under the command of Colonel Miller, returned fire as they waded through the river. As they approached the shore most of the Confederates ran away, but some surrendered, expressing amazement that they had seen Union soldiers reload their repeaters underwater. The rest of Miller's brigade crossed the river and dug in on high ground near the ford. Sherman learned of Garrard's success at 10 a.m. and ordered him to hold his position until he was reinforced by a strong contingent of infantry which was marching toward Roswell.

On July 10, Sherman's Grand Army was eight miles from Atlanta and had secured three crossing sites over the Chattahoochee River. Sherman, recognizing his men had worked hard and needed rest, allowed them to go into camp. He had pre-arranged a plan to strike the Confederates in an unexpected manner once his army encamped. Sherman's permission from Halleck and Grant to act independently rather than to concentrate on preventing Johnston from reinforcing Lee, allowed the Union Cavalry to enter a new phase, that of the deep operational raid.

CHAPTER 4

THE SECOND PHASE: JULY 10--AUGUST 3, 1864

During the second phase of the Atlanta Campaign's Union cavalry operations, General Sherman used his cavalry in an attempt to cut the lines of communication into Atlanta. His operational technique was the cavalry raid. According to a cavalry officer of the time:

> The object of the raid is to destroy the enemy's communication by burning bridges, filling up tunnels and railroad cuts with rocks and timber, cutting telegraph wires, burning ties, heating and destroying rails, burning and destroying army supplies, capturing railroad and bridge guards, and creating general consternation and havoc in rear of the enemy's lines.[1]

Rousseau's Raid to Opelika, Alabama

The first noteworthy attempt at such an endeavor was the raid by a cavalry force of approximately 2,500 men from Decatur, Alabama, under the command of General Rousseau. Drawn mainly from Kilpatrick's 3d Brigade, Sherman had retained this force in Alabama for such an operation. The objective was to interdict the Montgomery & West Point Railroad at Opelika, Alabama, approximately 100 miles southwest of Atlanta. At Opelika was the junction of two key railroads, one from Atlanta and one from Macon

which went through Columbus, Georgia. A cavalry raid to this point could cut railroad traffic to Alabama and Mississippi. Upon completion of this task, Rousseau was to join Sherman in Georgia, or, if the situation dictated, continue an additional 200 miles sou   to the Union fort at Pensacola, Florida, on the Gulf of Mexico.

General Rousseau and his command departed from Decatur, Alabama on July 10. The units under his command were the 8th Indiana, 5th Iowa, 2nd Kentucky, 9th Ohio, and 4th Tennessee, Cavalry Regiments, with one section of light cannons from Battery E, 1st Michigan Artillery. Following three days of marching, it became obvious that many horses and men were unfit for the trip, so 300 were sent back.[2]

In conjunction with Rousseau's Raid on the railroad in Alabama, Sherman planned to break the same line near Atlanta. Before moving the army across the Chattahoochee, Sherman directed Stoneman to cross the river at Campbellton and cut the Atlanta & West Point Railroad near Newnan. His larger plan was for the Army of the Tennessee to flank the Confederates at Roswell and maneuver to the east side of Atlanta. Even if the cavalry raids did not cut the railroad, they would serve as a feint to convince Johnston that he planned to attack Atlanta from the west.

Upon learning that the Union army had outflanked him at Roswell, Johnston withdrew the Confederate army from the Chattahoochee River line. With Union forces so close

to Atlanta, including cavalry which could rapidly advance deep behind the Confederate army, Johnston suggested to Jefferson Davis that the Union prisoners at Andersonville be moved to other prison camps.

Stoneman Attempts a Raid to Newnan

Stoneman's Cavalry, which had been guarding the right flank of the army, was relieved by General Blair and the XVII Corps on July 10. After a few days to prepare, Stoneman embarked on his raid toward Newnan. Stoneman met no substantial enemy along his route, and 25 miles from Campbellton found a span across the Chattahoochee known as Moore's Bridge. Stoneman's advance unit, the 11th Kentucky Cavalry, in the Independent Brigade, surprised the guard and captured the bridge. The 480-foot bridge had been prepared for demolition, but was only partially destroyed, allowing for quick repair by Stoneman's men.

In camp near Villa Rica two days later, Stoneman prepared a report for Sherman. While an earlier message indicated he had successfully secured Moore's Bridge, Stoneman now told Sherman that after his men had completed repairs and were ready to cross, he became concerned that the Confederates might cross the river upstream, recapture the bridge, and cut him off from the main army. As Stoneman finally attempted to cross the Chattahoochee, the enemy began firing at Moore's Bridge with four pieces of

artillery located in the treeline on the far side of the river. When the Confederates attempted to retake their rifle pits on the far shore, Stoneman ordered the bridge burned. While Moore's Bridge was denied to both armies, it is normally the defender who plans to destroy bridges.

Stoneman's report related that he had one brigade, commanded by Colonel James Biddle, at Campbellton. Biddle encountered a strong enemy force there, with two cannons in redoubts on a bluff on the river's far side. Stoneman said he was able to obtain food for his men and forage for his horses, but needed horseshoes, nails, and the ability to make a pause near a blacksmith shop. Stoneman also stated that his artillery needed better horses to make the long consecutive marches, and better ammunition than solid shot. Stoneman concluded his report by saying:

> I was very anxious to strike the railroad, from personal as well as other considerations, but I became convinced that to attempt it would incur risks inadequate to the results, and unless we could hold the bridge, as well as penetrate into the country, the risk of capture or dispersion, with loss of animals (as I could hear of no ford) was almost certain. It is impossible to move without every step we take being known, women as well as men acting as scouts and messengers. I have sent to the rear about 40 prisoners, one of them the commander of the picket at the bridge on this side, and 16 or 17 of them pickets and scouts in the vicinity of the bridge. I am unable to say how much force is opposite to us, but from what can be seen and I can hear, I am convinced it is no inconsiderable one.[3]

While Stoneman attempted to justify why he did not strike the railroad, the fact remained that his force had

not crossed the river, even though they had a bridge and Newnan was less than 10 miles away. After burning the bridge, Stoneman remained in the area and had his men replace horseshoes and graze their mounts, noting they had "plenty of forage for the horses, beef and blackberries and some bacon for the men, and are getting on finely."[4]

On July 16, Sherman received a telegram from Grant informing him that as many as 25,000 Confederates under Lieutenant General Jubal A. Early that threatened Washington had withdrawn from the area. Grant said that because General Lee did not need reinforcements near Petersburg, this force might move to Georgia. For this reason, Grant advised Sherman to "set about destroying the railroads as far to the east and south as possible."[5]

The main armies remained quiet in their camps on the Chattahoochee. The primary tasks were collecting supplies at Allatoona, Marietta, and Vining's Station, strengthening the railroad guards and garrisons, and improving the pier bridges and roads leading across the river. At the time, Sherman was worried about the possibility of Forrest's cavalry attacking his supply line. To ease Sherman's concern, Major General Andrew J. Smith took a combined force of 14,000 infantry, cavalry, and artillery to "follow Forrest to the death, if it cost 10,000 lives and breaks the treasury."[6] Other   ances pushed into Mississippi from the west to keep F   est

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pinned down in that state. In case Forrest did conduct raids to the rear of his army, Sherman had supplies stockpiled at all available places, especially Chattanooga and Allatoona. Sherman had two divisions of infantry and Kilpatrick's cavalry division, still commanded by Colonel Lowe, to guard his depots. The advance on Atlanta resumed on July 17, the same day that General Hood replaced General Johnston as commander of the Confederate Army of Tennessee.

When Sherman resumed his advance, cavalry divisions under Stoneman and McCook held the north bank of the Chattahoochee River to the west of Atlanta. The Army of the Cumberland marched toward Peach Tree Creek, a tributary of the Chattahoochee north of Atlanta. Garrard's cavalry was with McPherson, who was moving his army toward the Georgia Railroad near Stone Mountain. The next evening this force reached and began dismantling the railroad near Decatur, depriving Atlanta of the most direct route for reinforcements from Lee's army in Virginia.

Having followed a route through Blountsville, Ashville, and Talladega, Alabama, Rousseau's raiders reached the Montgomery & West Point Railroad near Opelika on the evening of July 17. That night and the next day they destroyed as much railroad as possible. The Union cavalrymen held the railroad for approximately 36 hours, in which time they destroyed over 20 miles of track, bridges, several buildings, and a large quantity of rolling stock

and supplies. On the afternoon of July 19, General
Rousseau and his command began marching northeast toward
Carrollton, Georgia, to join Sherman's army. The same day
Rousseau and his men began moving toward Georgia, Sherman
learned Opelika had been captured by Union forces. While
Sherman could not communicate with Rousseau, this
information indicated he had reached Opelika and that the
railroad line between Alabama and Georgia was cut.

On July 20, Hood's Confederates attacked the Union
army. As the Union force was arrayed in a semi-circle and
closing in on Atlanta, a large gap existed between the Army
of the Cumberland and the Army of the Ohio. This gap was
in low, marshy terrain created by Peach Tree Creek. Hood
attacked with two corps as the Army of the Cumberland was
crossing the creek, in order to trap the army between the
creek and the Chattahoochee River. Hood then planned to
destroy the other two Union armies in detail.

The attack began late due to confusion among the
Confederate units, but the Union soldiers were caught by
surprise. The Confederates initially breached the Federal
line, but a counterattack by one of Hooker's divisions
pushed them back. The Confederates penetrated the Union
line in other areas, but could not exploit. As the
Confederates prepared for a final assault, Hood recalled a
portion of the forces to protect the east side of Atlanta
from McPherson's army. The Army of the Tennessee was

destroying the railroad and had advanced to within cannon range of Atlanta, and for the first time, the Union army fired artillery shells into the city. The only forces between McPherson's army and Atlanta were cavalrymen belonging to Wheeler and Jackson. While Confederate cavalry performed a delaying action in this area, it was only McPherson's timidity and cautious advance which prevented him from entering Atlanta that evening. Hood's requirement to send reinforcements to the east side of Atlanta ended the Battle of Peach Tree Creek with 1,700 Union casualties and 3,000 Confederate casualties.

Garrard Raids the Railroad during the Battle of Atlanta

Acting on Grant's suggestion to destroy railroads to the east and south, Sherman gave Garrard the mission to ride eastward along the Georgia Railroad and destroy the tracks as far as he felt it was prudent. Garrard spent three days on his raid to make another break in the Georgia Railroad east of where McPherson's army straddled the line. Because McPherson had already cut the railroad, Garrard's accomplishments were of limited tactical value. Garrard's men destroyed six miles of track and burned three railroad bridges, over 2,000 bales of cotton, and a large Confederate hospital at Covington.[7] A recurring discipline problem occurred as some of his men plundered private homes, getting drunk on the liquor they stole.

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On a larger scale, the absence of Garrard's cavalry from the left flank allowed Hood to achieve a tactical surprise which gave him an initial advantage in what came to be called the Battle of Atlanta.[8] Although Garrard had left a few cavalry scouts, McPherson expressed concern to Sherman regarding his lack of cavalry caused by the mission to cut the railroad. McPherson, who would be killed in this battle, sent his final message to Sherman at 3 p.m. on July 21 warning that the Confederates were threatening his army, and not the Army of the Cumberland, when he stated:

> ...I will simply remark in closing, that I have no cavalry except as a body of observation on my flank, and that the whole rebel army, except Georgia militia, is not in front of the Army of the Cumberland.[9]

Hood planned to send two corps into fortifications on the north and east side of Atlanta, while his remaining corps marched through Atlanta and attacked from the south. Hood hoped to start the attack on the morning of July 22, but fell behind schedule, and did not attack until shortly after noon. Encountering no Union cavalry, the outermost Confederate divisions killed McPherson and almost flanked his army, but met unexpected resistance from the XVI Army Corps. Major General Patrick R. Cleburne's Corps found a gap in the Union lines and pushed northward until halted at Bald Hill. Behind the Union army, Garrard's Chicago Board of Trade Battery, not on his raid, was focal in defending McPherson's wagon train from Wheeler's cavalry.

In mid-afternoon, Hood committed Major General Benjamin F. Cheatham's Corps to the fight, but had delayed too long to gain the advantage of a coordinated assault with Cleburne's force. The Confederate attack was successful in breaking through along the Georgia Railroad, but Major General John A. Logan, temporarily commanding the Army of the Tennessee, directed a successful counterattack and reestablished the line. Union casualties were 5,400 men while Confederate casualties were over 8,000. General Hood could not afford such casualties and hope to hold Atlanta.

As the Battle of Atlanta raged, Rousseau's force, having completed its raid through Alabama, arrived in Marietta. Rousseau confirmed he had destroyed a long stretch of the railroad between Atlanta and Montgomery. While men and horses in his five regiments were fatigued after their long raid in Alabama, their recent experience had honed their skills as cavalrymen. As far as Sherman was concerned, the Rousseau Raid to Opelika was a success. Although Sherman knew repairs began as soon as the raiders departed the area, Rousseau had effectively cut the railroad and suffered only 12 killed and 30 wounded, a negligible percentage.[10]

If Sherman could mount an equally successful raid on the Macon & Western Railroad, Atlanta would be isolated and the Confederates would have to abandon the city or face

a siege. When Rousseau returned to Nashville, Colonel Thomas J. Harrison assumed command of this ad hoc Rousseau Raid "division," the majority of which had originally been in Kilpatrick's division.

About the same time Rousseau reached the Union lines, Garrard returned from his raid to Covington and Stone Mountain, having lost only two men.[11] After Garrard gave his report about the destruction of the railroad, not mentioning the plundering and drinking incidents, Sherman congratulated him on his success for the first time during the campaign.[12] In a message to Thomas on July 22, Sherman had mentioned a reluctance to use his cavalry on a raid to the south of Atlanta. The reported successes achieved by Rousseau and Garrard seemed to convince Sherman that his cavalry could cut Atlanta's final rail connection. Sherman's idea soon virtually became his obsession.

Sherman Plans a Grand Cavalry Raid

Sherman's changed intent, his ability to operate independent of Grant, and added cavalry strength from the Rousseau Raid gave new flexibility to his employment of cavalry. Divisions commanded by Stoneman, McCook, Garrard, and the remainder of Rousseau's cavalrymen were then free for a raid against the Macon & Western Railroad. Sherman planned to have his cavalry depart from both his flanks and circle around opposite sides of Atlanta. These forces

would link up on the night of July 28 in the vicinity of Lovejoy's Station, 23 miles south of Atlanta. Sherman wanted them to destroy at least five miles of the Macon & Western Railroad and telegraph line, and return to the Union army. As they did this, the Army of the Tennessee would attack the railroad six miles from Atlanta. The results were expected to be decisive.[13] Sherman mentioned his plan to Halleck for the first time on July 24.

The plan was certainly audacious, so Sherman personally met with his key cavalry commanders: Stoneman, Garrard, McCook, and Harrison. He outlined his plan and adjusted the cavalry organization. Sherman gave Stoneman control over Garrard's cavalry. McCook had command of his own force and four cavalry regiments which had accompanied Rousseau. The other regiment of Rousseau's raiding force, the 9th Ohio Cavalry, was not capable of making the entire expedition and received a flank security mission. Union reports mentioned the actions separately as the Stoneman Raid and the McCook Raid. The enti peration to move two large Union cavalry elements in con around opposite sides of Atlanta became known as coneman-McCook Raid.

Stoneman's element was to move around the east side of Atlanta toward Covington. Soon after penetrating the Confederate lines, Garrard's force of about 3,500 cavalrymen was to halt with the mission to serve as a decoy and intercept any of Wheeler's Confederate cavalry that

would come from the front lines to pursue Stoneman's men. After Garrard halted, Stoneman would take the remaining 2,000 men and conduct a feint toward Augusta and circle back through McDonough to the railroad.

McCook's force of about 3,000 men would move to the west side of Atlanta, through Fayetteville, to Lovejoy's Station. After cutting the railroad, it would continue northeast, circling Atlanta as it returned to Union lines. From his division, he had only his 1st and 2d Brigades, as his 3d Brigade, under Colonel John K. Faulkner, continued to guard supply lines in northern Georgia. The 1st Brigade was composed of the 8th Iowa Cavalry, the 4th Kentucky Mounted Infantry, and the 1st Tennessee Cavalry. A realignment of units had recently sent the 2d Michigan Cavalry to guard the railroad in Middle Tennessee, and replaced it with the 4th Kentucky Mounted Infantry. The regiment's former commander, Colonel John T. Croxton, who had commanded an infantry brigade at Chickamauga, became brigade commander.[14] The 2d Brigade, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel William H. Torrey, was composed of the 2nd Indiana, 4th Indiana, and 1st Wisconsin Cavalry Regiments. McCook also had Colonel Harrison's provisional division which contained the 8th Indiana, 5th Iowa, 2d Kentucky, and 4th Tennessee Cavalry Regiments, and one section of Battery E, 1st Michigan Light Artillery. McCook's artillery was the 18th Indiana Battery.

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Prior to the raid, Sherman consented to a change in the plan. Stoneman submitted the following written request to Sherman on July 26:

> In case we succeed in carrying out your wishes will it meet your approbation, should I see a good opening, if I should with a portion of the command make dash on Macon and by a vigorous stroke release the prisoners now at that point and afterward go on to Americus and release those there. I would like to try it, and am willing to run any risks, and I can vouch for my little command. Now is the time to do it before the rebel army falls back and covers that country, and I have every inducement to try it. If we accomplish the desired object it will compensate for the loss as prisoners of us all, and I should feel very compensated for almost any sacrifice.[15]

Having heard the horrors of Andersonville from a few bedraggled prisoners who had escaped, Sherman was sympathetic to the idea. Sherman's approval clearly stated that Stoneman was to break the railroad first. Sherman stated that he saw many difficulties, but consented to the effort. After cutting the railroad, Stoneman had permission to move his division toward Macon, 60 miles farther south, and release 1,500 Union officer captives being held at Camp Oglethorpe, then continue another 55 miles and do the same for more than 30,000 enlisted men imprisoned at Andersonville. Sherman further reminded Stoneman that if he could bring back any or all of the prisoners of war, it would be "an achievement that will entitle you and the men of your command to the love and admiration of the whole country."[16] Sherman described the plan to rescue prisoners to Halleck on July 26, and

concluded with the statement, "This is probably more than he can accomplish, but it is worthy of a determined effort."[17]

In his report written on September 15, after the campaign drew to a close, Sherman mentioned the additional mission in his report to Halleck:

> At the very moment almost of starting General Stoneman addressed me a note asking permission, after fulfilling his orders and breaking the road, to be allowed with his command proper to proceed to Macon and Andersonville and release our prisoners of war confined at those points. There was something most captivating in the idea, and the execution was within the bounds of probability of success. I consented that after the defeat of Wheeler's cavalry, which was embraced in his orders, and breaking the road he might attempt it with his cavalry proper, sending that of General Garrard back to its proper flank of the army.[18]

Stoneman returned to his headquarters and met with his brigade and regimental commanders. He outlined the plan to rendezvous with McCook's force at Lovejoy's Station and cut the railroad. Stoneman informed them that once the railroad was cut, he had discretionary orders permitting him, if he thought it proper and expedient, to march on to Macon and Andersonville. He did not explain his plan for the thousands of sick and helpless soldiers, but intimated that he might head for the Gulf Coast.[19] Colonel Thomas H. Butler, of the 5th Indiana Cavalry, recalled:

> I very well remember I remarked to Colonel Biddle that he had better write to his wife that he was going on a raid and she would not hear from him for some time and in all probability he would serve the rest of his term of service in some rebel prison pen. The Colonel wished to know why I talked so.

I said to him in these words: "I have no confidence in General Stoneman's ability to command a raiding party." I will state here that this was the opinion of almost every officer in his command.[20]

The terrain through which the Stoneman-McCook Raid was to be conducted was not good for cavalry operations. Cavalry commanders had repeatedly noted the rough terrain which had hindered their movement. South of Atlanta, the roads were twisting, narrow lanes, which restricted any cavalry advance to a march in a strung out column four (sometimes only two) abreast.[21] Such terrain gave the defending force a clear advantage over a cavalry column.

The raid began according to schedule. McCook's force moved to the Chattahoochee River and crossed on pontoons. The 9th Ohio Cavalry accompanied McCook's command to the pontoon bridge and remained there for two days to receive any detachments sent to the rear.[22] Enabling McCook's men to cross the river undetected, the 1st Wisconsin Cavalry provided a diversion in which the Confederates pushed it back across the river.[23]

Garrard's force halted at Flat Rock, 10 miles from Union lines. The 1st Brigade, commanded by Colonel Minty, consisted of the 4th Michigan, the 7th Pennsylvania, and the 4th United States Cavalry Regiments. The 3d Brigade, commanded by Colonel Miller, consisted of the 17th Indiana, 72d Indiana, 98th Illinois, and 123d Illinois Mounted Infantry. Garrard's artillery was the Chicago Board of

Trade Battery. The 2d Brigade, under Colonel Long and composed of the 1st, 3rd, and 4th Ohio Cavalry Regiments, stayed behind with the Army of the Tennessee.

Sherman's infantry thrust was made by the Army of the Tennessee, now commanded by Major General Oliver O. Howard. Initially still arrayed where it had fought the Battle of Atlanta, Howard started his move behind the Army of the Ohio and the Army of the Cumberland, toward the west side of Atlanta, on the same day the cavalry raid began. On July 28, Howard's army was on the far right, and had the 2d Brigade from Garrard's division for cavalry protection. Several Union cavalry units also remained with the main army in a dismounted role. The 12th Kentucky and 16th Illinois Cavalry Regiments retained the designation of Dismounted Cavalry Brigade for the 3d Division of Schofield's Army of the Ohio. Part of Stoneman's 1st Brigade, which arrived just prior to the raid, provided security on the left flank while the remainder was dismounted and occupied trenches. A captain from this brigade, commanded by Colonel Israel Garrard, noted that:

> Scarcely a position gained was not gained first by Colonel Garrard's cavalry, and in many instances we fought the enemy in front, until the infantry came up and intrenched themselves in our rear. Then they would send a brigade to relieve us and we would be placed further out on flank.[24]

In Hood's counter to the movement of the Army of the Tennessee toward the west side of Atlanta, Confederate corps under Lieutenant Generals Alexander P. Stewart and

Stephen D. Lee attacked Howard's units in what became known as the Battle of Ezra Church. Losing 632 men killed, wounded, and missing, the Army of the Tennessee repulsed this attack, inflicting almost 3,000 casualties on the Confederate army.[25] While the casualty imbalance was very helpful to the Union army, the Confederate force at Ezra Church blocked any chance of Sherman's infantry from reaching the key railroad line to Atlanta. Sherman had to hope that his grand cavalry raid would cut the railroad, thereby forcing Hood to evacuate Atlanta.

When the Army of the Tennessee began to move, General Hood almost immediately learned Union troops were withdrawing from the area where they had fought the Battle of Atlanta. Hood believed that because he had halted Sherman's move toward the Macon & Western Railroad from the east, he would try to approach it from the west. Wheeler sent reports to Hood which informed him of the Stoneman-McCook Raid. Hood initially believed this was a diversion and advised Wheeler to detach a small force to engage the Union cavalry. When he learned the magnitude of the raid, he gave Wheeler wider latitude. Hood's main concern was with the Union infantry moving to the west side of Atlanta.

On July 28, Wheeler took two divisions of cavalry from the lines in pursuit and came into contact with Garrard's force shortly after beginning the chase. Wheeler recognized this blocking force for what it was and bypassed

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Garrard, leaving one brigade to maintain contact. Garrard fought this force until the next day, when he returned to the Union lines, hearing nothing further from Stoneman.

McCook's Force is Scattered

General McCook's force cut the Atlanta & West Point Railroad at Palmetto early in the morning on July 28. On the way to Lovejoy's Station his men captured more than 500 wagons and over 800 mules. McCook's men destroyed three miles of the Macon & Western Railroad and five miles of telegraph line near Lovejoy's Station. In accordance with the plan, McCook was at the rendezvous point waiting for Stoneman's command on the morning of July 29.

As McCook waited for Stoneman, the Confederates responded. Wheeler noted there were three forces of Union cavalry operating to the rear of the Confederate lines. McCook's force, which was marching around the left of the Confederate lines in Atlanta, was opposed by Jackson's cavalry. Wheeler determined that Jackson would need reinforcements to handle McCook's force. Faced with splitting his already numerically inferior force three ways, Wheeler remained undaunted.[26] Wheeler sent Brigadier General Alfred Iverson, Jr. with three brigades to pursue Stoneman, directed Colonel George G. Dibrell's Brigade to stay near Flat Rock to monitor Garrard, and personally moved toward Jonesborough with the remaining three brigades

to help Jackson repulse McCook. To assist in defeating
McCook, Wheeler had Brigadier General Philip D. Roddey's
brigade of 600 men, halted on the railroad trip to Atlanta
by the break which McCook's men had made at Palmetto.

McCook continued to wait near Lovejoy's Station for
Stoneman. A cavalryman in the 1st Brigade later recalled
that Croxton and Lieutenant Colonel James P. Brownlow,
commander of the 1st Tennessee Cavalry, "were chafing like
caged tigers" and believed that waiting was fatal.[27] When
McCook learned that Wheeler was approaching from the
northeast, he abandoned the plan to move in that direction.
When no other Union cavalry had appeared for the planned
rendezvous by early afternoon, McCook led his command
westward toward Newnan to cross the Chattahoochee and
return to Union lines near Marietta. His movement was
slowed by the captured mules and wagons, which obstructed
the main road for five miles, and in less than an hour the
front of his column was attacked by Jackson's cavalry. The
Union cavalrymen repulsed this attack and continued their
move toward Newnan, when the rear of their column was
attacked by Wheeler's cavalry. Confederate forces were in
front of and behind McCook's column.

The men from McCook's division fought all night and
into the next day. His men killed the mules and burned or
abandoned the wagons, finding them to be an encumbrance.
Still, McCook was surrounded that afternoon by Wheeler's

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and Jackson's cavalry with Roddey's stranded brigade to the
southwest of Newnan, one mile from Brown's Mill. The men
in McCook's command knew they were in a bad situation.
Several years later, one of McCook's cavalrymen recalled:

> By this time we were demoralized. We had all
> lost confidence in McCook. I don't believe there
> was a man in the brigade that would have paid any
> attention to him after we passed Newman [sic]. But
> curses, bitter and deep, were heaped on him on all
> sides.[28]

McCook's cavalry almost broke through, scattering a
cavalry brigade from Texas and capturing the commander,
Brigadier General Lawrence S. Ross. As McCook's men began
to escape, more Confederates arrived, drove them back, and
rescued the prisoners. McCook fought until many of his
units were nearly out of ammunition before he gave an
"every man for himself" order.[29] Many of them managed to
make the five mile dash to the Chattahoochee and escape
across the river. Of the 3,000 effective cavalrymen
initially in McCook's force, the losses were close to 1,000
soldiers, most of whom were captured. Sherman praised
McCook, giving him much credit for saving his command.

Stoneman Deviates from the Plan

General Stoneman was excited about his secondary
mission, that of releasing Union prisoners at Camp
Oglethorpe and Andersonville, and he did not intend to meet
McCook at Lovejoy's Station. He was concerned about
restoring his reputation, having repeatedly failed in

Sherman's army, most recently with the aborted raid on the Atlanta & West Point Railroad which progressed no farther than Moore's Bridge. An Oglethorpe and Andersonville rescue mission would be the most spectacular cavalry foray of the war and would make him a hero in the North.[30] It was obvious that Stoneman had decided on his own to reverse Sherman's priorities and to make the freeing of prisoners at Macon and Andersonville his primary objective.[31]

Stoneman's cavalry was organized into three brigades for this mission. A brigade commanded by Colonel Biddle consisted of the 5th and 6th Indiana Cavalry Regiments and was referred to as "The Indiana Brigade." Another brigade, under the command of Colonel Horace Capron, consisted of the 14th Illinois Cavalry, the 8th Michigan Cavalry, and McLaughlin's Ohio Squadron. In the reports, the brigade was called "Capron's Brigade." The final brigade, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Adams, consisted of the 1st and 11th Kentucky Cavalry Regiments and was known as "The Kentucky Brigade." Stoneman's artillery was the 24th Indiana Battery.

Rather than moving south toward McDonough, Stoneman moved east toward Covington, where his men rested briefly the morning of July 28. Men of the 1st Kentucky were among the first to arrive in Covington, stole some whiskey, and "a number got drunk and noisy, and the ranks got into confusion, which caused the officers much trouble."[32]

Initially, Stoneman sent the Kentucky Brigade along the east bank of the Ocmulgee River. This force moved directly toward Macon, while Biddle's and Capron's men moved toward the Macon and Milledgeville road, with instructions for all three brigades would converge on Macon the next morning.[33]

As Wheeler fought McCook, Stoneman was pursued by Iverson's 1,300-man force, a brigade of Georgia regiments which had many soldiers who were familiar with the territory. Because a strike on Macon seemed so unlikely, Wheeler initially ordered Iverson to go to McDonough, where he believed Stoneman would attempt to cut the railroad. That night, Stoneman's main body was in Monticello. Although he later claimed otherwise, Wheeler did not suspect Stoneman's actual objective was Macon, so as 28 July ended, the Confederate cavalry pursuing Stoneman was far to his rear and marching away from him.[34]

On July 29, General Stoneman sent a company under Major Francis M. Davidson to Gordon to strike the Macon & Western Railroad where it formed a junction with a rail spur to Milledgeville. Davidson's small detachment inflicted considerable damage. Early on July 29, Stoneman directed his command to proceed southward from Monticello. At this point he clearly violated his orders.[35] In addition to Stoneman moving counter to his orders to destroy the railroad before the prisoner rescue attempt, his men lost time in their advance on Macon as they foraged

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and plundered farms and homes along the route. On the July 30, Stoneman sent another force from Capron's Brigade to attack the railroad near Griswoldville. This element wrecked several miles of the railroad to Savannah. The remainder of Stoneman's men searched for a site to cross the Ocmulgee River, the last major obstacle between his force and Macon. After finding bridges destroyed or nonexistent at three different sites where he believed he could cross, Stoneman moved toward the bridges on the outskirts of Macon itself. General Stoneman and his force reached Macon that afternoon and found the bridges across the Ocmulgee River guarded by a Confederate force of approximately 2,500 men under Major General Howell Cobb. The defenders were two regiments of militia on the way to Atlanta, citizens, local companies, and convalescents. With General Cobb was the former commander of the Confederate Army of Tennessee, General Joseph E. Johnston. Although not there in an official capacity, Johnston served as an "advisor." A commander of Johnston's experience had a calming effect on General Cobb, and was able to inform him of the weaknesses of the Union cavalry and the idiosyncrasies of its commander, General Stoneman. While Stoneman did not know it, the Confederates had moved the Union prisoners from Camp Oglethorpe when the Union army approached Atlanta, but Macon was still a valuable target with an arsenal, a cannon foundry, several warehouses, and

three railroads.[36] The city was protected by entrenchments and Fort Hawkins, an old frontier fort. Stoneman's two howitzers, positioned east of Macon, did little damage to the entrenchments, and then fired a few volleys into the city. Stoneman could not synchronize the attack of the Indiana Brigade near Fort Hawkins with the Kentucky Brigade a mile to the north. By evening, the Confederates had killed 18 Union cavalrymen. Stoneman, unable to reach the river, ordered a withdrawal.

The Battle of Sunshine Church

Stoneman decided to bypass the city by turning southward and searching for a crossing farther down the river. His moves the next few hours seemed erratic and aimless.[37] Upon receiving a report that a Confederate cavalry force was in that direction, he turned east. If Stoneman still entertained ideas of going to Andersonville, or even leaving the theater and seeking safety from the Confederates and Sherman's wrath in Pensacola, he abandoned those thoughts when he turned north a final time. These countermarches caused confusion within his ranks, and the brigade he wanted to have in the lead was now to the rear.

Stoneman's force reached Clinton, 12 miles north of Macon, and freed approximately 30 of his men who had been separated from the main column, captured by the Confederates, and put in the Clinton jail. One of the

roads in Clinton went to Milledgeville, where it joined a road leading to Union lines. Earlier in the day, Stoneman indicated he would take that road. At the intersection, Stoneman decided the enemy would expect him to travel that way, and if he continued to Hillsborough, eight miles away, he would have the choice of three roads at daylight. The road to Hillsborough was the same route he had used to approach Macon, and while he was familiar with the terrain, this decision meant that Stoneman would collide with any Confederate force which was pursuing him. Stoneman took this route, ignoring protests from his subordinates.

After sunset, small elements of Confederate cavalry skirmished with Stoneman's forces in many places and disappeared into the darkness. Stoneman ordered a halt as Confederate skirmishers increased their random attacks on his force. At daybreak on August 31, Stoneman's lead brigade, under the command of Colonel Capron, began pushing the Confederates from their positions. These Confederates were part of Iverson's force, and had the mission to delay Stoneman's men. During this delay, the remainder of the Georgia cavalry brigades constructed a formidable obstacle on terrain carefully selected by Iverson, who was from Clinton and had grown up exploring this area on horseback. The Confederates retreated about a mile, at which point Stoneman found them drawn up in line of battle behind a barricade, near a small chapel known as Sunshine Church.

Iverson had chosen the Sunshine Church area because he knew of several trails that circled behind the nearby ridges and rejoined the main road a few miles to the south.

As Stoneman's men approached the Confederate line, the Confederates began firing at them with two pieces of artillery. Stoneman did not seem to consider what another cavalryman later said about a cavalry raid:

> As a raiding expedition must carry all of their ammunition from the start, they have no resources from which to draw, should their ammunition become exhausted. Therefore, they usually endeavored to avoid all large bodies of the enemy, excepting those in their immediate front who are endeavoring to repel the expedition from striking some point on a railroad or depot of supply.[38]

Instead, he formed his men in line of battle, with Capron's Brigade on the right, the Kentucky Brigade on the left, and the Indiana Brigade in reserve. Stoneman advanced on the Confederate line. His major concern was an imagined large cavalry force to his south pursuing him from Macon, and that he would be caught between two Confederate forces.

Using Iverson's back roads, a mounted force of Confederates circled around Stoneman's position. In a well-synchronized action, the dismounted Confederate force behind the barricade counterattacked at the same time the mounted force made its presence known to the rear of the Union cavalry. Stoneman believed the force to his rear was the cavalry from Macon. His men initially repulsed both elements, but then the Kentucky Brigade faltered. Colonel Butler of the 5th Indiana Cavalry went to persuade General

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Stoneman to leave the location. "On reporting to the General I found him very much excited, walking to and fro and swinging his arm violently."[39] During their conversation, Stoneman twice told Butler that he intended to fight it out right there. The lines moved back and forth, but each time the Confederates retreated, new troops joined them. By noon Stoneman was almost surrounded.

Shortly after 1 p.m., as Stoneman's cavalrymen again moved forward, the Confederates charged the Union lines and isolated Capron's Brigade. Nearly surrounded, Capron fell back to his horses. The Confederates followed so closely that many of Capron's men were unable to mount their horses. As Confederates began capturing and mounting the horses, confusion ensued. Some of Capron's men were captured, and the remainder retreated to the northeast.

Late that afternoon, Stoneman planned to cut his way through the lines. As he met his leaders, Confederates opened fire with artillery from both flanks, followed by a general charge. Colonel Adams succeeded in getting through the lines with the greater part of his brigade, although many of those who made their escape did so without their arms or horses. Adams led his brigade to the northeast in the same direction that Colonel Capron's men retreated.

Stoneman and the remaining cavalrymen made a stand as the brigades escaped. His force included his escort and some of his staff, the 5th Indiana Cavalry from Biddle's

brigade, an assortment of soldiers from other units, and his battery, unwilling to give up their guns. Colonel Butler attempted to convince Stoneman to leave, telling him if he positioned himself in the center of the regiment, they could all safely withdraw. Butler later recalled:

> And, to make my language as strong as possible, I said to him that I would rather sacrifice the regiment in an effort to escape than to have them made prisoners and die in those prison pens, and that our friends at home would honor me for it. His reply was, "they would condemn me for it."[40]

Stoneman made his stand for a couple of hours on a hill to the right of the road. Lieutenant Colonel Robert W. Smith, a member of Stoneman's staff who escaped with the Kentucky Brigade, stated "we could still hear cannonading when we were out some two or three miles from the battlefield."[41] Stoneman was completely encircled by the enemy, and his men soon exhausted their ammunition. Stoneman surrendered the remainder of his force, about 500 men, the same number of horses, and two artillery pieces to a Confederate force smaller than his own had been at the beginning of the battle. According to Colonel Butler, the surrender was made "to save General Stoneman from a military disgrace."[42] The men with Stoneman and stragglers rounded up in the nearby hills brought the number of prisoners to over 700. The next afternoon a "haggard and dejected" Stoneman finally crossed the river into Macon, accompanied by several captured officers. His men were soon locked in boxcars for their trip to Andersonville.[43]

The brigades that escaped Stoneman's fate began to make their way back to Union lines. Compared to the five mile run McCook's men had, Stoneman's scattered units and individuals had to swing to the north and cover almost 100 miles to reach friendly lines. On August 1, elements from the 8th Michigan Cavalry and the 6th Indiana Cavalry joined the Kentucky Brigade. The detachment that destroyed the railroad at Gordon, led by Major Francis M. Davidson, joined Capron's Brigade. The two brigades joined forces that evening and in spite of their earlier defeat, resumed offensive action against the Confederates, burning supplies in the town of Madison.[44] The next day the rear guards of both brigades spent their time gathering stragglers who were constantly falling asleep in their saddles. That evening, the Kentucky Brigade was separated from Capron's Brigade. Unknown to Capron, his force was being pursued by one of General Iverson's units, a brigade of Confederate Kentucky cavalry regiments commanded by Colonel William C. P. Breckinridge. When his brigade reached Jug Tavern, Colonel Capron determined he had passed all the roads from which he could be flanked. He decided to stop and allow his men to rest for two hours because they had marched 56 miles in 24 hours, and had been in their saddles almost constantly since the battle on July 31. Capron placed his freshest soldiers, the 8th Michigan Cavalry and Major Davidson's detachment, on guard while the remainder of the

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brigade slept. A large body of freed and escaped slaves had followed the command, and this group of contraband were between the guards and the main body.

Colonel Capron's unit was attacked in this resting place at King's Tanyard, five miles from Jug Tavern, just before daylight on August 3. The Confederates bypassed the guards and   the road where the former slaves were resting. The contraband became panic stricken and rushed into the camp of the sleeping Union soldiers, throwing them into confusion. A rout ensued, and in the darkness all attempts to rally the forces failed. Capron's men scattered in every direction. Some men ran into the woods, while many ran across a wooden bridge over a nearby river. The bridge collapsed, adding to the confusion. Capron was separated from his command and escaped through the woods, finally reaching the Union lines on August 7. Most Union soldiers that escaped this attack did so on foot.

The Kentucky Brigade was less than two miles from the place where Capron was attacked. When Adams heard of the attack, he hurried to the scene. Adams pursued the Confederate cavalry and overtook the rear of the column about a mile from Jug Tavern, where he inflicted some casualties and rescued a few captured Union cavalrymen. Because his brigade was in a precarious position, Adams halted the pursuit and returned to Union lines. Had Capron's Brigade returned to Union lines as the Kentucky

Brigade did, the Stoneman-McCook Raid would not have been such an immense disaster. This was not the case, and of Stoneman's three brigades, only one returned intact. An officer in the Kentucky Brigade stated there was much indignation against General Stoneman, and that the misfortune of the entire raid was attributed to him.[45]

Sherman Declares the Cavalry Raid a Failure

Sherman was initially shocked, then dismayed about the performance of his cavalry. At the conclusion of the campaign, he wrote:

> But on the whole the cavalry raid is not deemed a success, for the real purpose was to break the enemy's communications, which though done was on so limited a scale that I knew the damage would soon be repaired.[46]

The question remained concerning whether or not Sherman actually ordered Stoneman to join McCook and destroy the Macon & Western Railroad at Lovejoy's Station before he made an attempt, if feasible, to liberate the prisoners at Macon and Andersonville. In a letter to his brother written on August 7, 1864, just a few days after his return to Union lines, Lieutenant Richard E. Huffman, of the 1st Kentucky Cavalry, wrote:

> It was the intention of General Sherman, that Stoneman should cut the railroad communications between Atlanta and Macon. After this, if Stoneman was able, he had permission to go to Macon and release about 1,500 of our officers confined there. But Stoneman appeared to wish to go to Macon first, and release the officers, then do what he could to the railroad.[47]

On August 6, General Stoneman, in Prisoner of War status at Macon, was permitted to write a letter to Sherman. Stoneman blamed Adams and Capron for the debacle:

> I feel better satisfied with myself to be a prisoner of war, much as I hate it, than to be amongst those who owe their escape to considerations of self-preservation.[48]

Albert Castel, a historian who wrote about the Atlanta Campaign in 1992, concluded from his analysis of the facts surrounding the Stoneman-McCook Raid that Sherman may have unofficially allowed Stoneman to go straight for the prisons. Many of Stoneman's men believed from the beginning their objective was Macon and Andersonville.[49] Castel demonstrated that Sherman's initial reports implied an expectation for Stoneman to act as he did, and not until after the raid failed did Sherman return to the position that his authorization was conditional. The most telling of these reports was a message Sherman sent to Halleck at 8 p.m. on July 31, a few days before he learned of the disaster at Sunshine Church. Sherman stated:

> "General Garrard's cavalry is back. General Stoneman placed it at Flat Rock to cover his movement south. General Garrard reports the enemy's cavalry all round him for two days, when he charged out and went to Latimar's, where he heard that General Stoneman had passed Covington, so he got two full days' start for Macon."[50]

If Sherman had expected Stoneman to break the railroad first, he probably would have said that Stoneman had two full days' head start to destroy railroads rather than mentioning two days to move toward Macon.

While Stoneman had visions of being the liberator at Macon and Andersonville, his raid enlarged the populations of those prisons. The consolidated return from the prison at Andersonville for August 3 indicated that 1,075 prisoners were received from Macon that day, the majority undoubtedly being Union cavalrymen from the forces commanded by Stoneman and McCook. For the next week, Andersonville received an average of 124 prisoners per day from Macon, presumably reflecting the stragglers captured following the major cavalry engagements.[51]

On August 4, Grant asked Sherman to verify stories in Richmond newspapers which announced the capture of Stoneman and 500 of his men near Macon. Sherman promptly replied that many of Stoneman's men were captured, and stated "General Stoneman was sent to break railroad, after which I consented he should attempt the rescue of our prisoners at Andersonville."[52] At the campaign, Sherman's wording was different when he discussed Stoneman, noting:

> His mistake was not making the first concentration with Generals McCook and Garrard near Lovejoy's, according to his orders, which is yet unexplained. General McCook is entitled to much credit for saving his command, which was endangered by the failure of General Stoneman to reach Lovejoy's.[53]

Not even mentioning railroad cutting, Sherman indicated in letters to his wife on August 5 and 9, 1864, that Stoneman's primary mission was the liberation of prisoners; in the second letter, he stated that "I have lost Stoneman & 2,000 cavalry in attempting to rescue the

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prisoners at Macon."[54] Sherman arranged for Stoneman's

exchange in late September 1864, but instead of court

martialing or reprimanding him, gave him a new cavalry

command, and Stoneman was promoted at the end of the war to

the rank of brevet major general in the regular army--

strange treatment for an officer whose alleged disobedience

of orders resulted in the destruction of two divisions![55]

The mission, which Sherman said was "captivating,"

was unrealistic, especially considering the prisoners at

Andersonville.[56] The Confederate guards were equipped with

rifles as well as artillery, and had erected defensive

works as the Union army moved into Georgia. Had Stoneman

been able to defeat the guards, he would have liberated

30,000 unarmed men, most of whom were in poor health. He

would have needed to escort this large formation on a

forced march through 100 miles of enemy territory during

the hottest days of the summer to reach Sherman's army, or

over 200 miles to Pensacola. More likely, Stoneman's men

would have taken a few prisoners with them and abandoned

the rest to be recaptured or killed by Confederate cavalry,

militia, and citizens. The mortality rate of such a

breakout might have been higher than that actually

experienced in the harsh conditions of the prison.

After the Stoneman-McCook Raid failed, Sherman

admitted Stoneman's scheme to liberate Andersonville and

Macon was impracticable and should have been refused. Had

the destruction of the Macon & Western Railroad been the raid's only purpose, it likely would have cut Atlanta's railroad communications for a long period and Sherman would have saved his cavalry. On August 7, Sherman told Halleck why he allowed Stoneman to move on Macon and Andersonville:

> Nothing but the natural and intense desire to accomplish an end so inviting to one's feelings would have drawn me to commit a military mistake, at such a crisis, as that of dividing and risking my cavalry, so necessary to the success of my campaign."[57]

The Confederates gained one of the greatest cavalry victories of the war because of Wheeler's vigor, Iverson's enterprise, Stoneman's glory hunting and blunders, his men's lack of fighting spirit, and Sherman's chronic mishandling of mounted forces.[58] Sherman's frustration with his cavalry continued to be aggravated by the superb Confederate cavalry performance. Wheeler displayed an intelligent grasp of tactics as he countered the three Union divisions that opposed him. He split his command into three parts, leaving one unit near Flat Rock to monitor Garrard's inert division. Next, he used Iverson and the Georgia brigades, a commander and men who knew the territory, to pursue Stoneman. Finally, Wheeler personally commanded the force which attacked McCook, the greatest threat to the Confederate supply line. Explaining how he had thwarted the Union raids, Wheeler stated, "Thus ended in most ignominious defeat and destruction the most stupendous cavalry operation of the war."[59]

As rail service to Atlanta was repaired within two days, Sherman determined that as long as the superior Confederate cavalry remained to counter his cavalry operations, his infantry would have to cut the railroad. Colonel Garrard assumed command of the remaining cavalry from the Army of the Ohio and reported 1,265 casualties, most missing, from the original 2,112, or 60 percent.[60] McCook had departed with 3,105 men, and on August 8, the units which had composed his force reported a strength of 2,274, indicating a loss of 27 percent.[61] In both elements, less than half the cavalrymen were considered effective, primarily because they had returned on lame horses, on mules, or on foot. Most of the captured officers, including Stoneman, were returned in a prisoner exchange at the end of the campaign while most enlisted men remained in prison camps until the end of the war. The Army of the Cumberland's cavalry was still capable of major operations, and one of its divisions would execute the final attempt to cut Atlanta's railroads with cavalry.

CHAPTER 5

THE THIRD PHASE: AUGUST 4--SEPTEMBER 8, 1864

The final phase of cavalry operations began at the conclusion of the Stoneman-McCook Raid and continued until the end of the campaign. It included one large raid conducted by General Kilpatrick, but the third phase was primarily a return to reconnaissance and security operations, with liberal use of cavalry units as infantry.

Union Cavalry Reorganizes

Sherman quickly brought Kilpatrick's division forward and gave new assignments to the cavalry regiments which had not participated in the Stoneman-McCook Raid. Sherman posted Kilpatrick's division on the army's right, General Garrard's division was on the left, and McCook's battered division received the rear area security mission.[1] The 1st and 3d Brigades of General Garrard's division received orders to operate dismounted. Sending their horses to the rear, the men entered the trenches in front of Atlanta and performed this duty for over two weeks.[2]

McCook moved the remnants of his division into his old camp on the Chattahoochee River on August 5. The division remained in the old camp performing picket duty

for almost a week, allowing the individual stragglers from the Newnan fight to make their way back to their units. While some regiments were able to reconstitute effectively, many consisted primarily of the men and horses that had been deemed unable to participate in the raid. Of the 316 officers and men who went on the raid from the 8th Iowa Cavalry in McCook's 1st Brigade, not more than 20 returned to Union lines.[3] On August 10, McCook moved his division to Cartersville, where it stayed until the campaign ended. This move was a result of Sherman calling up Kilpatrick's relatively fresh division to work with the main army, while McCook's damaged division would provide rear area security. Shortly after McCook established his camp at Cartersville, Croxton finally returned to Union lines. Upon his arrival, he discovered he had been promoted to brigadier general on the day of the battle at Newnan.

As the magnitude of the Stoneman-McCook losses became apparent, Sherman continued to take actions to compensating for his shortage of cavalry. He telegraphed the Union army headquarters in Nashville and advised them to have all the cavalry in Kentucky and Tennessee that could possibly be spared rushed to Georgia, "as the enemy surely will be on our railroad very soon."[4]

The cavalry remnants from the Army of the Ohio fell under the command of Colonel Israel Garrard, of the 7th Ohio Cavalry. The 1st Kentucky Cavalry mustered out as

scheduled. The two regiments designated in June as the Dismounted Cavalry Brigade, 3d Division, Army of the Ohio returned to the Cavalry Division. Colonel Garrard formed two brigades, but only one, under the command of Colonel George S. Acker, 9th Michigan Cavalry, was mounted. The Dismounted Brigade was commanded by Colonel Capron.

ARMY OF THE OHIO CAVALRY DIVISION

Colonel Israel Garrard

Mounted Brigade	Dismounted Brigade
Col George Acker	Col Horace Capron
9th Illinois Mtd Inf (battalion)	14th Illinois
9th Michigan	16th Illinois
7th Ohio	5th Indiana
9th Ohio	6th Indiana
McLaughlin's Ohio Squadron	12th Kentucky
24th Indiana Artillery Battery	8th Michigan

The Mounted Brigade conducted limited scouting initially on the east side, and then the west side of Atlanta. This scouting kept General Schofield appraised of the Confederate forces which were operating near the Army of the Ohio. As of August 10, the only Rousseau Raid regiment to remain at the front was the 9th Ohio Cavalry. The others, which had participated in the Stoneman-McCook Raid, returned to the rear to obtain serviceable horses and retain possession of their former posts. The 4th Tennessee Cavalry, borrowed from General Gillem's division in eastern Tennessee for the Rousseau Raid and retained for the

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Stoneman-McCook Raid, returned to Gillem's command. The

term "Mounted Brigade" did not imply that this unit was in

excellent shape with horses. On August 11, Lieutenant T.

W. Fanning, of the 9th Ohio Cavalry, noted in his diary:

> The farrier, after a full inspection, pronounced 83
> horses of the whole regiment serviceable, yet 500
> men of the 9th Ohio Volunteer Cavalry have joined
> the XXIII Army Corps on the extreme right. The
> dismounted men, 380 in number, are to remain here
> on duty until the receipt of further orders.[5]

A portion of the Dismounted Brigade served as

infantry with the XXIII Army Corps, part of it returned to

Nashville to be remounted, and the remainder performed

guard duty.

Confederate Cavalry Raids the Union Railroads

When Hood learned that his army had neutralized the

Union cavalry on the Stoneman-McCook Raid, he decided to

send a large force of his own cavalry, under General

Wheeler, into the Union rear area. Hood believed that the

best, perhaps the only, and certainly the easiest, way to

prevent the Union army from cutting his railroad to Macon

was to cut Sherman's logistical artery first.[6] Both

commanders were aware of Sherman's long and vulnerable

supply line, and Hood intended to use Wheeler's cavalry to

interdict this railroad. Additionally, Hood thought that

what little Union cavalry remained would chase Wheeler in

an attempt to save the supply line, thus eliminating the

Union cavalry as a concern around Atlanta. Hood hoped to

duplicate the cavalry action in the Vicksburg Campaign, where the opposing cavalry forces had chased each other so far away from the main armies that they were of no consequence to the battles conducted by infantry and artillery.

Hood's plan for his cavalry was very aggressive. On August 10, Wheeler departed with his three divisions, commanded by Humes, Kelly, and Martin, with six light artillery pieces for added support. Hood's instructions were for Wheeler to destroy the railroad at various points between Marietta and Chattanooga, cross the Tennessee, and break both of the rail lines from Nashville; then, after leaving 1,200 men to continue operations in Middle Tennessee, return to Atlanta, again striking the railroad as he returned.[7]

Sherman believed he could pursue these raiders without taking substantial forces from his three armies near Atlanta. Sherman also felt that limited Union forces would be able to prevent serious damage to his rail line. The lessons of the Stoneman-McCook Raid and Sherman's lack of concern about the Wheeler Raid were clear when Sherman wrote on August 21, "cavalry has not the industry to damage railroads seriously."[8]

McCook sent portions of his division in several directions in response to Wheeler's raid. On August 14, McCook reported that Confederate cavalry had captured a

Union army cattle herd, and 250 men from his 3d Brigade, under Colonel Faulkner, were in pursuit. A Confederate guerrilla leader named Ben Jordan had a force operating in the Union rear area, so McCook responded with another 250 men under Major David A. Birrs from his 2d Brigade. McCook believed Wheeler would be successful in his attempt to reach and destroy the tunnel on the rail line in North Georgia. The solution McCook proposed to Sherman was to place infantry along the railroad to detain the enemy and wait for the cavalry. McCook felt the arrival of his cavalry would force any enemy to retreat rapidly.

After reaching Cartersville, McCook was unable to immediately improve his damaged division. Many of the men did not have mounts, and many of the available horses were seriously impaired by long pursuits after Wheeler's forces. McCook complained about the constant requirements placed on his cavalry for scouting parties. McCook told General Elliott, "It is my earnest hope that the interests of the service will soon permit the consolidation of, and thus restore its usefulness to, my command."[9]

On August 15, Sherman ordered Generals Garrard and Kilpatrick to reconnoiter and determine what Confederate cavalry was left in the area. Sherman's orders instructed them to attempt to fight the enemy cavalry, and directed General Garrard to push on to the Macon & Western Railroad if possible. On that day, Colonel Garrard reported to

assist Kilpatrick with the Mounted Brigade from the Army of the Ohio. Kilpatrick and Colonel Garrard moved toward the Atlanta & West Point Railroad near Fairburn, southwest of Atlanta. This force burned the Fairburn depot and cut the railroad. Union commanders reported the Confederate cavalry encountered was slight, and had a   ed battle. Sherman sent the following message to Thomas concerning Kilpatrick: "I do believe he, with his own and General Garrard's cavalry, could ride right round Atlanta and smash the Macon road all to pieces."[10]

General Garrard's cavalry tested the strength of the enemy's cavalry on the east side of Atlanta shortly after Wheeler started his raid to the north. Discovering only a small force of cavalry in this area, General Garrard reported that Wheeler seemed to have taken his entire effective force to the north. Approximately 200 Union cavalrymen attempted to engage the small cavalry force east of Atlanta, but the enemy would not accept battle. General Garrard reported that his main body did not go near the railroad while on its reconnaissance, and to break the railroad would require three or four days. "I did not deem it advisable to attempt it."[11]

General Garrard's lack of aggressiveness in the wake of the disaster which had befallen the Stoneman-McCook Raid made Sherman finally lose his patience. In a message to General Thomas, Sherman stated:

I am willing to admit that General Garrard's excessive prudence saves his cavalry to us, but though saved, it is as useless as so many sticks. Saving himself, he sacrifices others operating in conjoint expeditions. I am so thoroughly convinced that if he can see a horseman in the distance with a spy-glass he will turn back, that I cannot again depend on his making an effort, though he knows a commander depends on him. If we cannot use that cavalry now, when can we?[12]

Sherman ordered two of Garrard's commanders, Colonels Minty and Long, to take their brigades and report to General Kilpatrick for an upcoming operation. Colonel Minty of the 1st Brigade commanded this "division,"[13] although Colonel Long stated no such command relationship existed; there were two separate brigades of Garrard's division working for General Kilpatrick.[14] Sherman moved to replace General Garrard with Colonel Long. Garrard's excessively cautious execution of the order to perform the reconnaissance to the railroad led to his supersession.[15]

On August 16, Sherman sent the following telegraph to Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton in Washington:

I need a good cavalry brigadier very much, and recommend Colonel Eli Long, 4th Ohio Cavalry, now here, and who merited promotion for good service the time I went to Knoxville. He is a junior colonel now, and the cavalry is not commanded to my satisfaction.[16]

Kilpatrick Raids the Confederate Railroad

In one respect, Wheeler's Tennessee raid was beneficial to Sherman, who seized the opportunity to launch the final significant cavalry raid south of Atlanta to cut

the rail supply arteries feeding that beleaguered city.17

Sherman had planned to use his infantry to cut the railroad, but now was willing to use his one remaining cavalry division which had not been employed extensively at the front for this raid. When it was clear Wheeler and the 4,000 Confederate cavalrymen who had so effectively blocked the Stoneman-McCook Raid were in the Union rear, Sherman decided to launch this cavalry raid. He was confident his cavalry could now properly wreck the railroad virtually unopposed, due to the absence of Wheeler's men. The main problem on earlier raids was the arrival of Confederate cavalry just as the Union cavalry dismounted to begin the task of destruction. With Wheeler gone, Union cavalry could pay more attention to destroying the railroad.

Until the battered units returned from the Stoneman-McCook Raid and began to reorganize, Kilpatrick's cavalry division had guarded Sherman's rear area, specifically the rail line. Kilpatrick, wounded at Resaca on May 13, had returned from convalescent leave on July 23. Small detachments of Confederate cavalry, plus Ben Jordan's band of Confederate guerrillas, had been disrupting the rail line by attacking isolated guard posts, wrecking track, and when possible, destroying trains. Kilpatrick's men were often unable to do more than disperse these raiders or capture small groups of them. The ability to shift to offensive operations against a rail line was a

definite and welcome change. The plan for the Kilpatrick Raid included a march completely around Atlanta, which appealed to the personality of Kilpatrick and his cavalrymen.

On August 18, Kilpatrick's 4,700 men made final preparations for their raid on the Macon & Western Railroad which would cut this vital supply line. The Kilpatrick Raid had the same purpose as the Stoneman-McCook Raid; to break and destroy the Macon & Western Railroad. In addition to his units, Kilpatrick was augmented by General Garrard's 1st and 2d Brigades, as well as Garrard's Chicago Board of Trade Battery, all ostensibly under the command of Colonel Minty. Kilpatrick placed Colonel Murray, of his 3d Brigade, in command of his own division and assumed the title of corps commander for the expedition.[18]

Just prior to the departure of his force, General Kilpatrick disseminated the following message to the men under his command:

> I am about to lead you, not on a raid, but on a deliberate and well combined attack upon the enemy's communications, in order that he may be unable to supply his army in Atlanta. Two expeditions have already failed. We are the last Cavalry hope of the army. Let each soldier remember this and resolve to accomplish this, the great object for which so much is risked, or die trying![19]

Marching unopposed the first night, Kilpatrick's men arrived on the Atlanta & West Point Railroad near Fairburn early the next morning and destroyed about a half

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mile of track. Initially that day, the only unit opposing
Kilpatrick was a brigade of about 400 men from Texas under
General Ross, which had been instrumental in the battle at
Newnan during the Stoneman-McCook Raid. This unit
successfully delayed Kilpatrick's forces by using the
traditional tactics for an outnumbered force, including
setting ambushes, creating obstacles, and harassing the
Union cavalry which was making its way toward Jonesborough.
This force caused General Kilpatrick to fall hours behind
schedule on the first full day of the raid.

The Confederates were able to keep Hood informed on
Kilpatrick's slow progress. Having just a few weeks
earlier gained a spectacular victory over Union cavalry,
Hood sent reinforcements to the area where Kilpatrick was
operating and placed guards along the Macon & Western
Railroad on a higher state of alert. Kilpatrick sent a
small column of approximately 300 men from his 1st Brigade
farther to the south to cut the railroad at Fayetteville as
a deception. This force of the 3rd Indiana Cavalry,
commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Robert Klein, successfully
lured Hood's reinforcements away from Kilpatrick's main
column, and Ross's Texas Brigade was forced to defend
Jonesborough unassisted. When the Indiana cavalrymen moved
to link up with Kilpatrick's main force, they instead met
two brigades of Confederate infantry. Not wanting to fight
such a superior force, the 3rd Indiana turned north and

made a hasty retreat.[20] In spite of the successful
diversion, some of Kilpatrick's units were forced to
dismount and fight on foot as the resistance stiffened near
Jonesborough, and the Union cavalrymen had to employ
artillery to force their way into the town.[21]

Kilpatrick's cavalrymen entered Jonesborough and
began destroying all buildings of military significance in
the town. Private Lucien Wulsin, of Company A, 4th Ohio
Cavalry Regiment, remembered that many of the soldiers in
his unit planned on "informing ourselves as to the manners
and customs of the people by an investigation of their
homes and manner of living."[22] Kilpatrick's men burned
warehouses with large quantities of stores and destroyed
about two miles of track, but also plundered homes and
found large quantities of whiskey in the process and many
got drunk to the music of the band from the 92d Illinois
Mounted Infantry which Kilpatrick had brought along.[23]
Private Wulsin recalled:

> The effect of this upon us can better be imagined
> than described - it was meat, drink, and rest; all
> fatigue was forgotten. Some of the boys jumped up,
> threw their hats in the air and danced like wild
> men, while the cheers of the other regiments in
> town were responded to till we were all hoarse with
> shouting."[24]

Because of rain, a shortage of time, and lack of
discipline among the men, the Union cavalry was not
thorough in destruction of the railroad. Approximately a
half mile of rails were taken up from the railroad bed and

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thrown in the brush to the side without the customary
bending around trees, making subsequent repair a simple
matter for the Confederates.

With Confederate reinforcements approaching
Jonesborough, Kilpatrick's force departed the town and
began moving toward Lovejoy's Station where he planned to
strike the railroad again. The Confederates discovered
this move and arrived at the station prior to Kilpatrick's
force. A large Confederate force was able to hide behind
an embankment and wait for the Union cavalrymen. As
Kilpatrick's command approached Lovejoy's Station on the
morning of August 20, they saw only a few Confederate
soldiers in the distance. Minty's 7th Pennsylvania Cavalry
dismounted and moved into the woods to chase the few
Confederate pickets, who consistently fell back toward the
embankment. One of the men in the regiment recalled:

> The wildest enthusiasm prevailed among our men and
> all along the line was heard the shout, "Forward to
> the railroad." But suddenly a brigade of rebel
> infantry rose up behind a line of breastworks in
> front of the railroad, and only fifty yards from
> us. They poured volley after volley of musketry
> into our ranks, and also opened on us with several
> pieces of artillery. Our comrades were falling
> rapidly on right and left.[25]

The force that set the ambush consisted of Confederate
cavalry reinforced by Georgia militia and elements of
Brigadier General Daniel H. Reynolds' Arkansas infantry
brigade, which had been sent by train to Jonesborough.[26] A
short time later, Kilpatrick's men were attacked from the

rear by Ross's Texas Brigade which had pursued them from Jonesborough. The well timed Confederate defense prevented destruction of the railroad at Lovejoy's Station.

With enemy on both sides, Kilpatrick decided to act aggressively and break out by massing his unit instead of ordering it to disperse and attempt escape as small units or individuals. He charged along the road to McDonough with his mounted men in front with sabers drawn, while dismounted men, ambulances, ammunition wagons, pack mules, and artillery followed as closely behind the mounted men as possible.[27] The brigade commanded by Colonel Minty played a decisive role in this saber charge. Kilpatrick's force broke out, the Confederates pursued, and fighting continued toward McDonough. Colonel Long was seriously wounded, but his soldiers successfully evacuated him as they withdrew.

Kilpatrick's cavalry continued its movement around Atlanta, eventually making a complete circle around the Confederate army. On August 22, Kilpatrick returned to Union lines, having sustained 289 casualties for a rate of six percent of the 4,676 men in his initial force.[28] One of the more significant casualties was the wounded Colonel Long, who relinquished command of his brigade to Colonel Beroth B. Eggleston of the 1st Ohio Cavalry. While Long and the men of the brigade were cheered by the promotion, Sherman was forced to retain General Garrard as the commander of the 2nd Division.

Kilpatrick exaggerated his results when he informed
Sherman he had destroyed over 13 miles of the track, which
would be enough to disable the railroad for 10 days. This
was not true, as the Confederates repaired the minimal
damage in two days, even before Kilpatrick reported to
Sherman, and trains were already moving into Atlanta.

Final Cavalry Missions of the Campaign

Sherman became convinced that his cavalry could not
or would not work hard enough to disable a railroad
properly. He telegraphed General Halleck with information
that he would have to swing across the Macon & Western
Railroad with his armies in order to be sure the line was
cut. What seemed like a good mission for cavalry, to
destroy enemy railroad arteries, proved unfeasible. As
long as the cavalry had to protect itself, it was incapable
of destroying a railroad. Sherman stated:

> After an interview with General Kilpatrick I was
> satisfied that whatever damage he had done would
> not produce the result desired, and I renewed my
> orders for the movement of the whole army.[29]

On August 24, General Garrard's 3d Brigade,
commanded by Colonel Miller, destroyed a portion of
railroad between Decatur and Stone Mountain. On August 25,
as the armies moved upon the Macon & Western Railroad at
Jonesborough, General Garrard's division covered the
withdrawal of the IV Army Corps and the XX Army Corps.
That night, his other two brigades dismounted and occupied

the vacant trenches on the left flank, so the enemy would not detect the movement of the XXIII Army Corps.[30] Kilpatrick left his dismounted men to hold bridges and cover the right flank of the Army of the Tennessee.

Still referred to as "Stoneman's Cavalry," the mounted force from the Army of the Ohio performed picket duty in late August under the command of Colonel Garrard. Dismounted members of the 9th Ohio Cavalry of the Mounted Brigade were sent to Nashville on August 26 to procure horses. Their train was derailed near Big Shanty by a force of Confederates and the Ohio cavalrymen again found themselves skirmishing some of Wheeler's men.[31]

On August 27, Colonel Garrard's men scouted the country in advance of the infantry movement toward the railroad, and held a line until relieved by the infantry. The next day Colonel Garrard's cavalrymen occupied the works of the 3d Division, XXIII Army Corps as it moved out, and the following morning scouted toward East Point. On August 30, Colonel Garrard's command covered the left flank of the marching column.

The same day, General Howard's Army of the Tennessee moved toward Jonesborough, with Kilpatrick's cavalrymen at the front of its column. This force would finally cut the railroad into Atlanta. Initially the only enemy resistance was from approximately 2,500 cavalrymen, which Kilpatrick's men countered.

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Reacting to this advance, Hood decided to attack the Union army moving toward Jonesborough, knowing that if the attack failed, he would be forced to abandon Atlanta in order to save his army. The Confederate force massed between the approaching Union force and the railroad. As the Union army continued its march, Confederate resistance stiffened, and Kilpatrick's men had to be reinforced with infantry.

When the battle was joined, one of Kilpatrick's brigades was on the right flank of the Union army, guarding a bridge over the Flint River. A Confederate division attacking the main Union infantry line came under fire from Kilpatrick's soldiers near the bridge, and, instead of ignoring this small threat, changed direction and headed toward the Union cavalry. Kilpatrick's men at once fled to the other side of the river, which could be easily waded. The Confederate division followed them, moving away from the battlefield. Howard later said he could not have planned a move which would have so efficiently taken a Confederate division out of the fight.[32]

In the final railroad cutting expedition of the campaign on August 31, approximately 100 men of the 3rd Indiana Cavalry cut the Macon & Western Railroad south of Jonesborough, preventing the Confederates from evacuating their supplies. In sight of Confederate camps, this force destroyed the telegraph wires and ripped up approximately

50 yards of the track. When the Confederates detected this force and began to move toward it, the men mounted their horses and quickly returned to Union lines.[33]

During the Battle of Jonesborough, some of Colonel Garrard's cavalry guarded the Army of the Ohio supply trains while the remainder continued scouting south of Atlanta. The next morning, Colonel Garrard's Mounted Brigade discovered the Confederates had abandoned their works near Rough and Ready Station between Jonesborough and Atlanta, indicating the evacuation of the city.[34] The brigade then began picketing and scouting toward McDonough, capturing several stragglers. On September 3, Colonel Garrard moved to the McDonough and Fayetteville road, approximately three miles from Lovejoy's Station. Citizens informed Colonel Garrard that Confederate infantry from Atlanta had been moving all morning, and he noted that stragglers were still passing when his unit reached the road. In the remaining days of the campaign, the cavalry units captured many Confederate stragglers making their way south to join the main Confederate army. This was the final contribution of the Union cavalry to a campaign that clearly had great potential for the mounted arm.

CHAPTER 6

LESSONS LEARNED AND APPLICABILITY

The Union Army could have more effectively employed its cavalry during the Atlanta Campaign. Although better equipped than their Confederate counterparts, the Union cavalrymen in Sherman's Grand Army did not perform well. Analysis of their operations showed their problems stemmed from the missions assigned and their senior leadership.

Missions

Union cavalry employment in the Atlanta Campaign provides an excellent example of a branch coping with transition in military tactics. With the introduction of rifles and repeating arms, and increased use of defensive trench warfare, the Napoleonic tactics senior leaders had learned were obsolete. Cavalry's superior mobility gave it four traditional missions: security, reconnaissance, shock action, and pursuit. Increases in firepower in the latter 1800s led many tacticians to suggest that shock action was no longer a feasible role except under rare circumstances.[1]

Union cavalry adapted to these changes, serving more as mounted infantry. Railroad wrecking raids did not use cavalry in a traditional sense: cavalry used its

mobility to move to a vulnerable point on the enemy supply line, where it would dismount, destroy sections of track, remount, and then egress to friendly lines. The cavalry's problem was the thoroughness with which it could wreck railroads. During the Civil War cavalry only caused brief halts in traffic on critical enemy railroads. Grant stated that cavalry raids annoyed the enemy, but the damage was soon repaired, so they "contributed but very little to the grand result" of the war.[2] Cavalry raids were a costly amusement to both sides, prompting Brigadier General Jacob D. Cox to remark, "the game was never worth the candle."[3]

Sherman gave his cavalry several missions beyond its capability, and he is at fault for this. A commander is responsible for knowing the capabilities of his subordinate units and for assigning missions commensurate with their abilities. This was the first of the leadership failures which caused problems for the Union cavalrymen.

Leadership

While Sherman assumed risk with the missions he assigned to his cavalry, his subordinate cavalry commanders failed him. The decisive factor was Sherman's obvious distrust of the reliability of his cavalry commanders. He knew he could count on McPherson, Thomas, and Schofield, but as seen through his dispatches, he did not have an equal faith in Elliott, Stoneman, Garrard, or Kilpatrick.[4]

Throughout the campaign, Elliott was a figurehead. As the Army of the Cumberland Cavalry Corps commander, his place was on the battlefield. Elliott's absence could have been excused had he served as a "force provider," working as a master logistician. In this role, Elliott could have ensured resources were available to his widely dispersed men, but supply problems early in the campaign indicated he did not perform this function. The fact that Sherman usurped the chain of command caused a definite problem for the Union cavalry. The cavalry division commanders took orders from Sherman and not their corps or army commanders.

On the occasions when Sherman did give his cavalry units missions of which they were extremely capable, his division commanders did not properly execute. The failure of the cavalry in Sherman's army is an overlooked flaw in a campaign generally considered one of the most successful in military history.[5] Sherman did not have faith in cavalrymen in general, and in particular his cavalry leaders, especially Elliott, Stoneman, and Garrard. Evaluation of the facts surrounding the employment of cavalry in the Atlanta Campaign indicate that Sherman did not completely understand the cavalry capability. He attempted to use it as a regular infantry division which could be rapidly moved around the battlefield. While the mobility was possible, the strength of a cavalry or mounted infantry division did not equal a standard infantry

division, especially when operating behind enemy lines with no resupply. In Sherman's previous experiences, cavalry had never been a decisive force. In the best case, it removed the enemy cavalry from the Vicksburg area, and in the worst case, it had jeopardized his entire operation at Meridian. When Sherman made improper plans for his cavalry during the Atlanta Campaign, the generals who could have best clarified the cavalry capability did not understand it themselves or were timid in explaining it to Sherman.

Immediate Lessons Learned

In cases when the United States Army can learn from its mistakes, there is some redemption for the price of earlier defeats. Sometimes changes in tactics, techniques, and procedures are made immediately based on a failure of one operation. Sherman and other Union Army leaders seemed to do this. The Stoneman-McCook Raid failure marked the end of the reckless cavalry raids into enemy territory without careful consideration of objective and consequence.

After the Atlanta Campaign ended, Hood began to push toward Chattanooga and then Nashville, in hope that Sherman and the Union army would follow. For a short time Sherman did so, but then realized Hood's intent. Sherman decided to dismantle his Grand Army, and send a portion to deal with Hood while the remainder marched through the heart of the Confederacy. Emulating Grant, Sherman planned

to make this move without relying on a supply line. Two months after the Atlanta Campaign closed, Sherman made his last communication with Nashville and cut his telegraph line. Union soldiers burned Atlanta and Sherman departed on his march to the sea. Sherman deliberately picked the units which would accompany him. He selected the entire Army of the Tennessee, reorganized into two elements, the XV and XVII Army Corps, and part of the Army of the Cumberland, the XIV and the XX Army Corps. To protect his force, Sherman took only one division of cavalry. Sherman had five cavalry brigadier generals available to him: Elliott, McCook, Garrard, Kilpatrick, and Croxton. From this group of generals, Sherman chose Kilpatrick to lead his cavalry division, perhaps because he believed him to be best of the lot. Sherman did not consider Stoneman, recently returned in a prisoner exchange, or Long, still on convalescent leave. For this march to the sea, Kilpatrick was allowed to hand pick the cavalry regiments and brigades that would be in his command. Kilpatrick chose his entire brigade, with the exception of the 5th Iowa Cavalry which had an effective strength of less than 50 men. Kilpatrick also took the newly arrived 9th Pennsylvania Cavalry, the 9th Ohio, and two of the regiments from the Army of the Ohio, the 9th Michigan and McLaughlin's Ohio Squadron. After he selected the units, Kilpatrick's cavalrymen were issued horses and equipment from cavalry units which would

not accompany Sherman. During the march to the sea, Sherman used Kilpatrick's cavalry for the traditional missions of reconnaissance and security.

The remaining cavalry units in the armies commanded by Thomas and Schofield returned to Nashville. Major General James H. Wilson, a veteran cavalry division commander from the Army of the Potomac and the Army of the Shenandoah, reported to Thomas to assume command of the Cavalry Corps. McCook continued to command the 1st Division and retained Croxton as his 1st Brigade commander. Long returned from convalescent leave to command the 2d Division. Colonel Israel Garrard retained command of the Army of the Ohio cavalry and later returned to his regiment. Thomas moved Elliott out of the cavalry, giving him command of the 2d Division, IV Army Corps, and returned General Kenner Garrard to a position in which he had earlier proved his capability, placing him in command of an infantry division for operations at Nashville in late 1864.

Thomas' actions indicated that he was replacing the cavalry commanders who had not performed well during the Atlanta Campaign, placing them in positions which allowed for use of more traditional tactics under closer supervision. A different manner of handling an inept Atlanta Campaign cavalry leader was used with General Stoneman, who was sent to a secondary theater following the prisoner exchange. Stoneman commanded the District of East

Tennessee in the Department of the Cumberland, leading raids into southwestern Virginia and North Carolina in the final months of the war.

In March 1865, Wilson's Cavalry Corps made a deep raid through Selma, Alabama, and Columbus, Georgia, and in a bit of irony, was at Macon when the war ended. Arguably, the remaining Confederate army was too weak to offer determined resistance, but Forrest was still a potent threat. With the exception of one brigade, Wilson's men were veterans of the Atlanta Campaign and seemed to have applied the lessons learned from their earlier mistakes. As Wilson's corps made this long raid, he kept his three divisions in position to easily mass when required to overwhelm a resisting Confederate force. Wilson's objectives were not beyond the capability of his units.

Lessons Applicable Today

The Civil War so enthralls Americans that many of our traditions originate with that conflict in spite of the passage of time. This is especially true in the military, as the military theorist, Russell F. Weigley, argues that the Civil War tradition has become "The American Way of War."[6] The application of Civil War lessons learned to other aspects of the United States military is prevalent. Current doctrinal manuals frequently cite Civil War events to demonstrate various requirements of today's warfighting.

Examples of leadership at Gettysburg and maneuver at Vicksburg are in manuals written within the last 10 years. The fact that our military heritage is based so intimately on the Civil War makes analysis of its events applicable to today's army as opposed to being antiquarian.

Staff Ride

One reason analysis of Sherman's use of cavalry has relevance to the modern army is in the staff ride. As the United States Army places more importance on the campaign plan and operational art, as opposed to the tactical event of a single battle, the Atlanta Campaign looms as an ideal case study to follow the well-developed Chickamauga Staff Ride. As early as 1906, Command and General Staff College students did a two-week staff ride to study the Atlanta Campaign. The operations of the main armies are fairly easy to follow, and although the cavalry was employed in more remote locations, the actions of this arm must be explained and analyzed to understand the overall campaign.

Specialized Units

While the horse and saber are obsolete on today's battlefield, the mission of the cavalry remains of vital importance. Now performed by armored forces, helicopters, and air assault units, it is essential that commanders properly employ these elements. Sherman's cavalry

represented approximately 10 percent of his total force, and thus had to be carefully managed. While his tendency to give orders directly to the cavalry division commanders indicated such careful management, Sherman essentially threw his cavalry away. The repeated strikes on the railroads, which cavalry could not do well, and unrealistic missions, such as the Andersonville liberation, were beyond the capability of his force. As Wilson did later in the war, Sherman would have benefitted by massing all his cavalry and advancing the large force along a few roads in a narrow front to strike the railroad. Leaders today must carefully manage forces capable of special missions. In modern operational art, a corps normally receives an armored cavalry regiment, and a division will have one armored cavalry squadron. The commander must manage these carefully, as they are his "eyes and ears," and offer a unique capability. Today, as in 1864, units performing missions of reconnaissance and security constitute a small percentage of the main army and must be used prudently.

Sherman Deification

The final important lesson to draw from an analysis of cavalry use concerns the commander of the campaign, Major General William Tecumseh Sherman. Whether or not a soldier is conscious of the fact, he is a product of all known military history. Every operation he undertakes is

underpinned by his personal and his army's best application of history, much as all known medical history is at work in a surgeon's operation. This application of history requires icons of the profession which may be considered in situations where no clear rule applies. Officers in the United States Army are quick to name examples such as General Dwight D. Eisenhower, General George S. Patton, Jr., and General Creighton W. Abrams. In the same vein, Civil War personalities such as Grant, Lee, and Sherman provide insights to modern warfighting. Such status places these generals under scrutiny, and deservedly so. The historian and the military officer must join to perform this function. Sherman's experience with cavalry provides one of several indicators that he may not deserve a reputation as a great military tactician and strategist. Sherman missed the opportunity to crush Hood during the evacuation of Atlanta, claiming he had inadequate cavalry, although it is doubtful that Sherman was capable of making effective use of mounted forces however strong.[7]

By 1864, Sherman had improved as a commander since the early days of the war. He preferred flanking movements to head-on assaults, and his passion for raiding the rail lines was related to this preference. By choking Atlanta from its sources of supply, he could force the Confederates to vacate the city and thus accomplish his objective. Sherman looked for alternatives before he would fight with

his main army. Sherman's problem during the Atlanta Campaign was giving a mission which would have been appropriate for his main army to his reconnaissance and security element.

Sherman gave these missions because he was haunted by the threat of Forrest, and because Confederate cavalry in the campaign was ably led by Wheeler and Jackson. These leaders performed their cavalry mission better than the Union cavalry generals and frequently defeated them with smaller forces and inferior equipment. In July, Sherman informed Halleck that he was concerned about his long line of supply and "the superiority of the enemy's cavalry in numbers and audacity."[8] He was not outnumbered in cavalry, and the major difference in audacity was due to the corps and division cavalry commanders. Pulling Union cavalry into shape would have required very strong leadership, and while Sherman may not have had such leaders available, he did not appear wise in his selections.

Leaders in the modern United States Army can benefit from understanding the failures of Sherman's cavalry. Such an understanding can shed light on why a force which was better equipped than its opponent failed to achieve decisive results on the battlefield. Within the context of the way the United States Army plans to fight, knowledge of the consequences of poor leadership and inappropriate missions for specialized units is critical.

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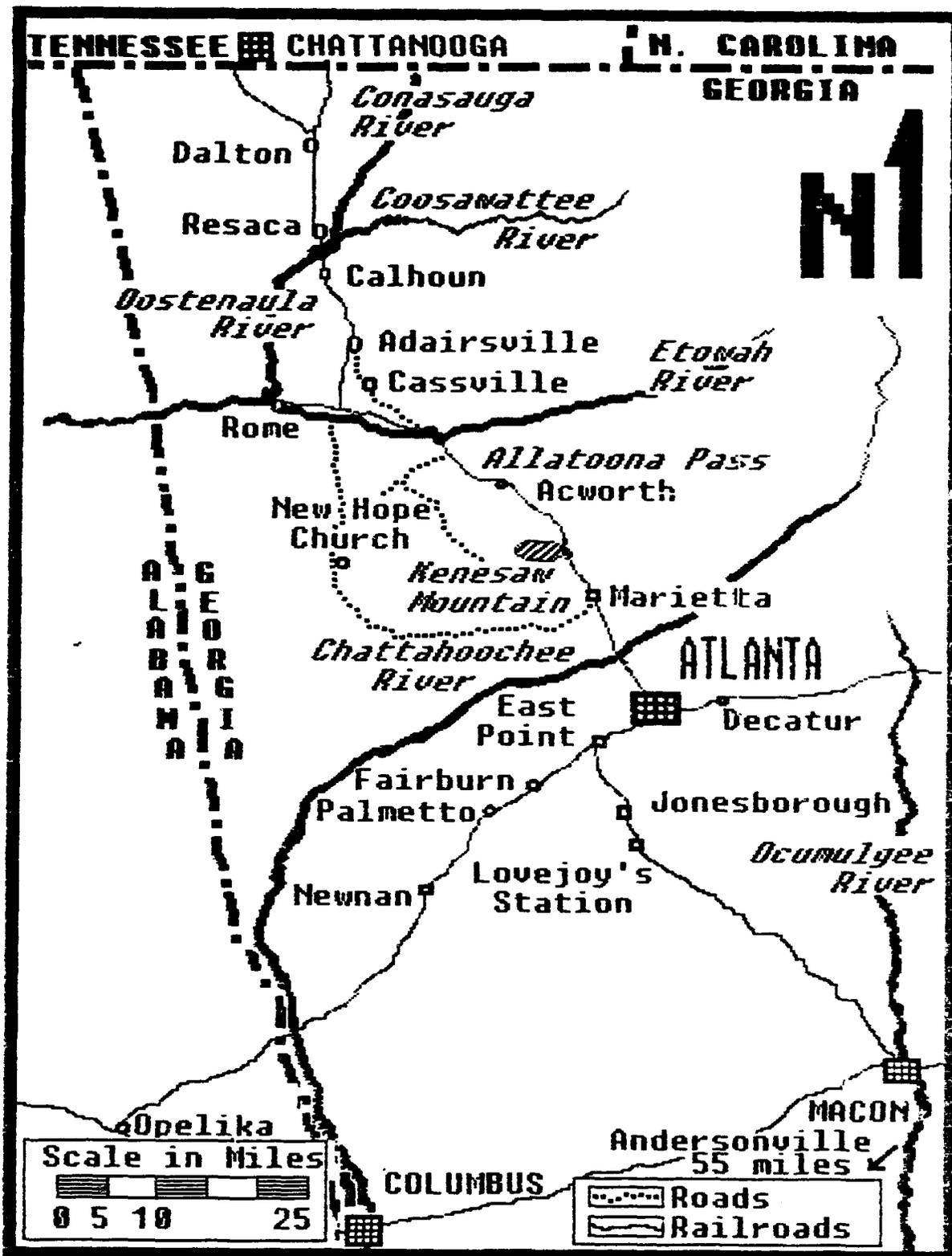
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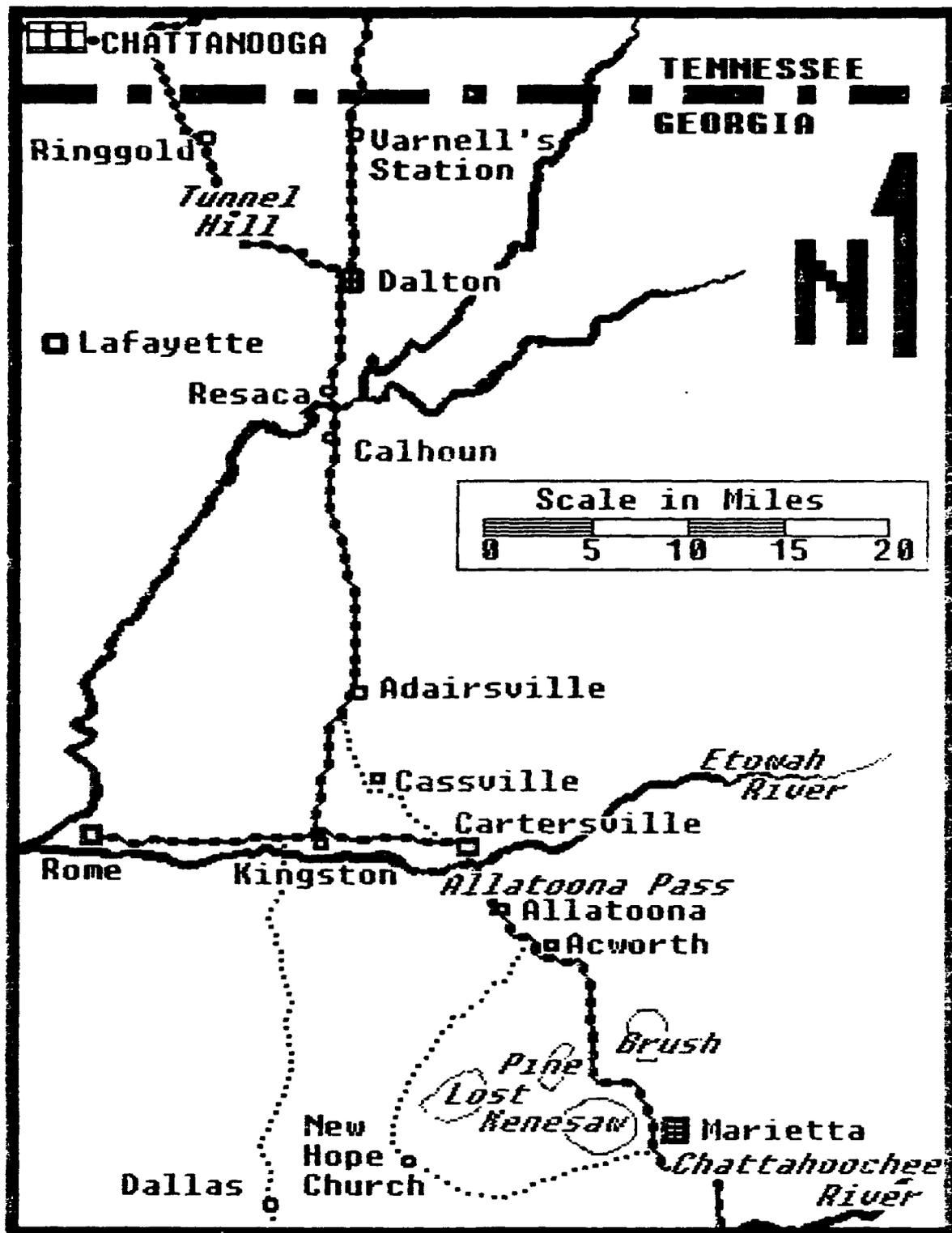[8]Ibid., 359.

Figure # 1. Atlanta Campaign Area of Operations
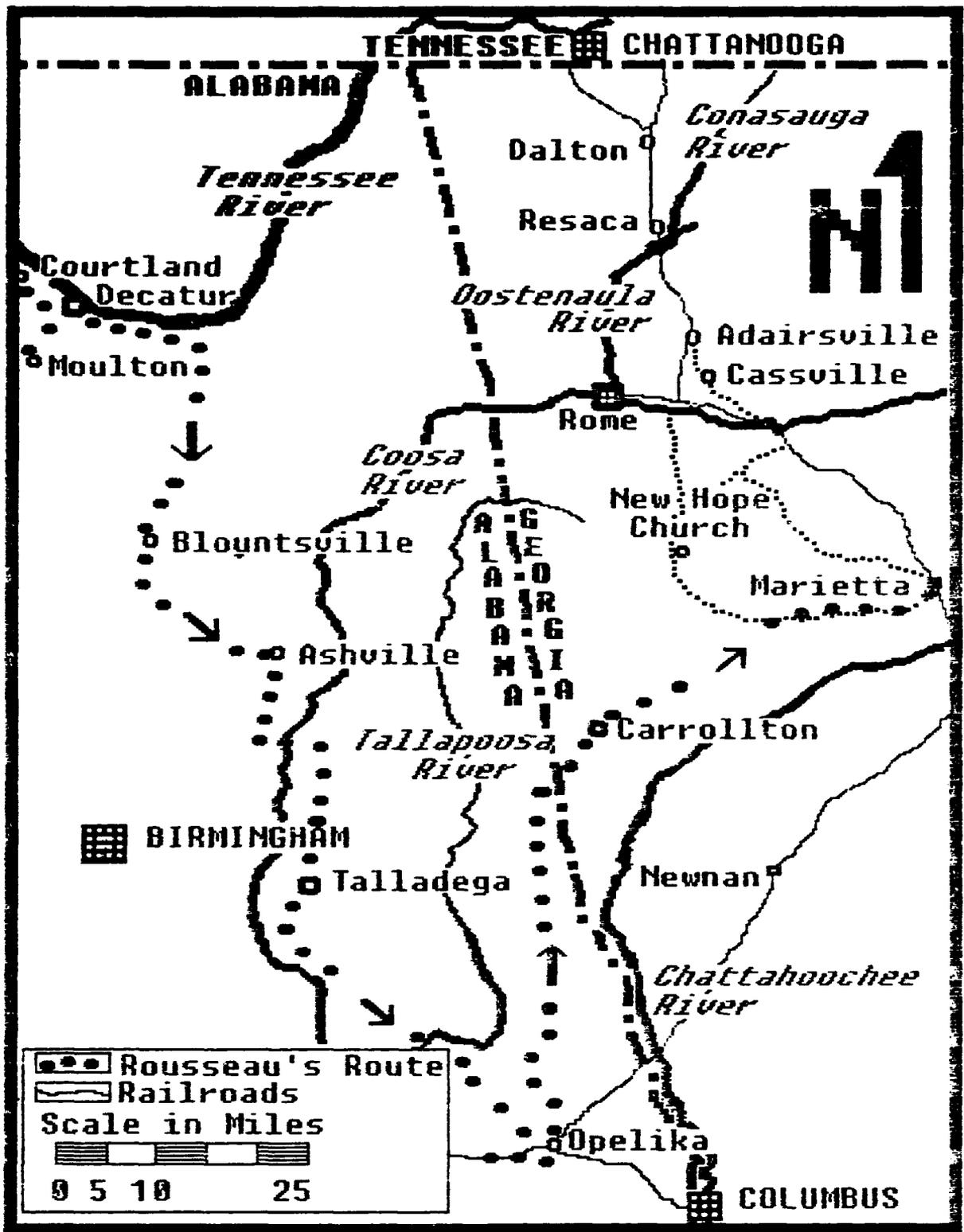
Figure # 2.   Northwest Georgia

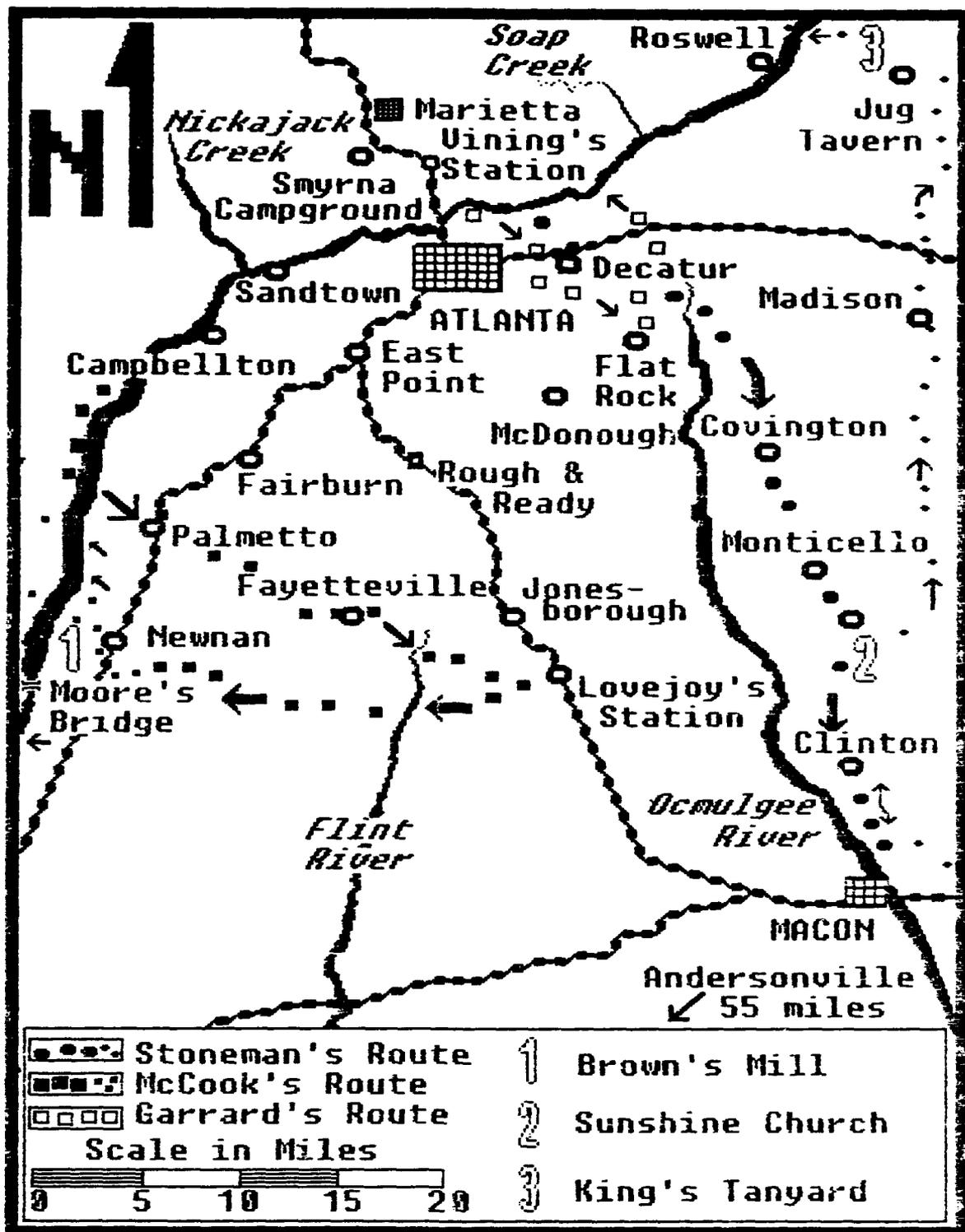Figure # 3.   Rousseau's Raid

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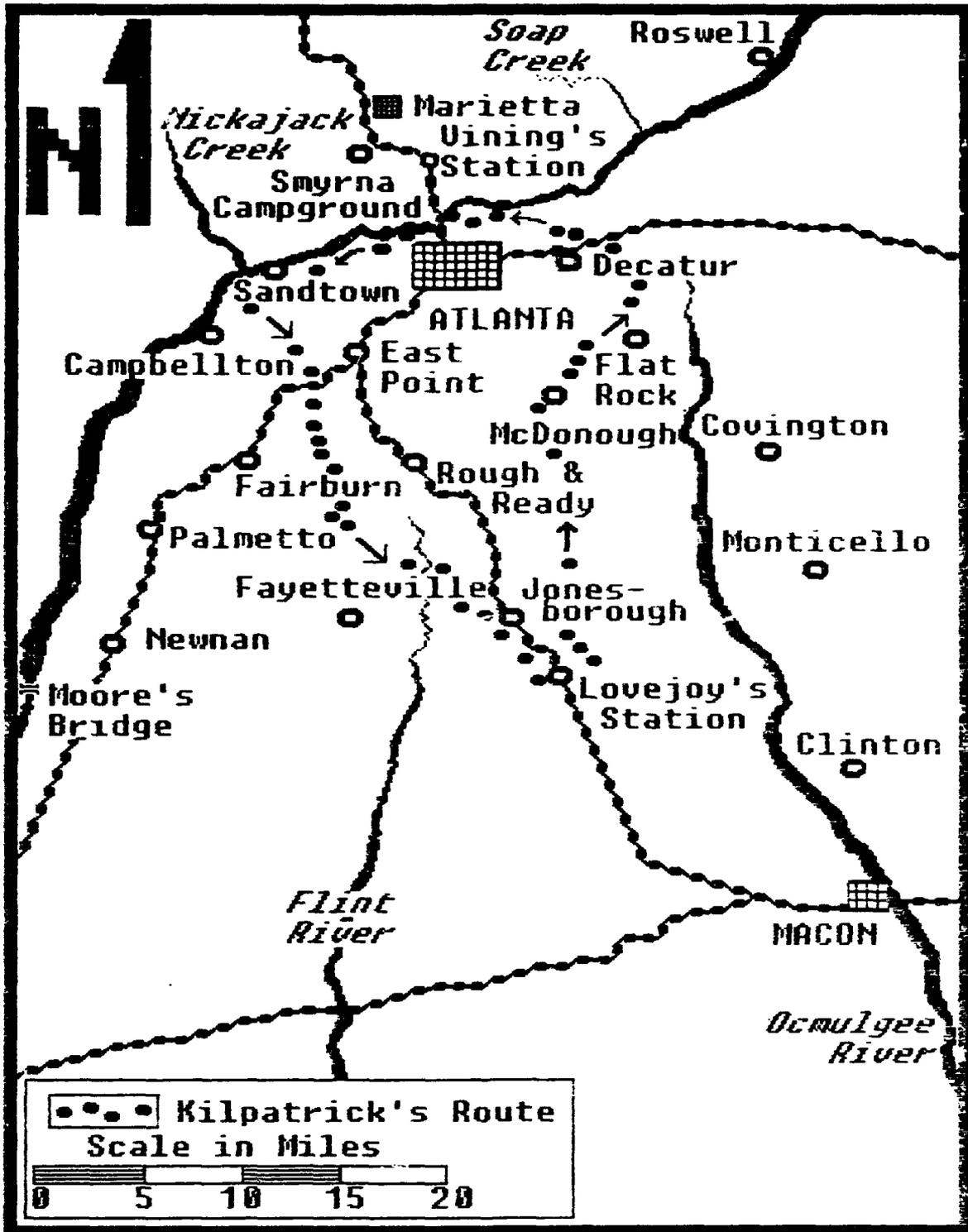Figure # 4. Stoneman-McCook Raid

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Figure # 5.   Kilpatrick's Raid

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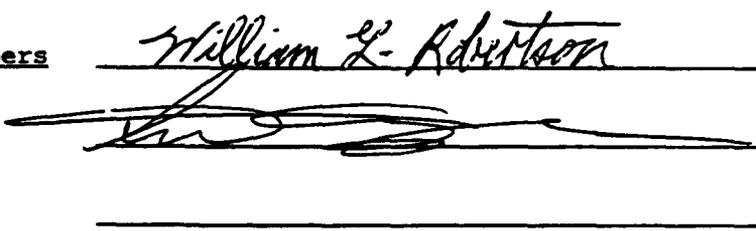
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