THE CIVIL WAR IN WESTERN VIRGINIA:
THE DECISIVE CAMPAIGNS OF 1861

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the
Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

ROBERT BLAIR BOEHM, B. A., M. A.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1957

Approved by:

Henry H. Shinne
Adviser
Department of History
In the summer and fall of 1861, a series of short campaigns was conducted in western Virginia which, by comparison with later events of the War Between the States, seems of slight importance. A study of this military activity, however, discloses several important results. The creation of the State of West Virginia, the control of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, the career of General George B. McClellan, were all decisively affected. In addition, a potentially vital salt supply was located in western Virginia. The South had difficulty in finding enough salt for her needs throughout the War, so the deposits in the Kanawha and New River regions were of considerable importance. Finally, the region contained a fair-sized population from which troops could be drawn by whichever side gained and kept control of the area. It is the purpose of this paper to show the course and outcome of these campaigns and evaluate their relation to the above-mentioned items.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preface</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Northwestern Virginia: Geography, People, Politics</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Preparations for War and First Advances</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The Battle of Philippi and the Results</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. From Philippi to Rich Mountain</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Rich Mountain</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Garnett's Retreat</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Affairs after Rich Mountain</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Southern Attempts to Regain the Northwestern Territory</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. The Importance of the Kanawha Valley</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Early Operations in the Kanawha Valley</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. The Battle of Cross Lanes</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. The Battle of Carnifex Ferry</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. General Lee's Activities in the Kanawha Region</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Cotton Mountain</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illustration Description</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region of Campaigns in Western Virginia, 1861</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Battle of Philippi, June 3, 1861</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rich Mountain - Laurel Hill Line</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Battle of Rich Mountain, July 11, 1861</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garnett's Retreat</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheat Mountain Region</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gauley Bridge Region</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situation in Latter Half of September, 1861</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carnifex Ferry</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gauley Bridge - Cotton Mountain</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I
NORTHEASTERN VIRGINIA: GEOGRAPHY,
ATTITUDE OF ITS PEOPLE, POLITICS.

Geographically the region of northwestern Virginia for which
the Federal and Confederate forces struggled in mid-1861 was quite
hilly, even mountainous. It was rather sparsely populated. The total
population of the area which comprises the present state of West
Virginia was only 376,688 in 1860. The area of northwestern Virginia
had approximately 177,000 persons in that same year. Most of the re­
region in which the operations covered by this section took place is a
part of the Ohio River watershed, and lines of communication established
by 1861 tended to tie the region to the North rather than the South.
The Appalachian Mountain Range was a barrier to extensive transporta­
tion developments between Virginia proper and the region of north­
western Virginia. Indeed, in 1861 there were only two principal roads
across the mountains. One was the old Northwestern Turnpike extending
from Winchester, Virginia, on a general westward course to Parkersburg
on the Ohio River. At the time of the Civil War this road was not in
good repair, a result of the heavy floods of 1852 and 1853 and the fact
that the completion of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad had diverted
much traffic from it. The second route, and the more important one,
was the Staunton-Parkersburg Turnpike. This road ran westward and
northward from Staunton, crossed the Allegheny and Cheat Mountain
ranges, and passed through Beverly and over Rich Mountain. From that

1James M. Callahan, Semi-Centennial History of West Virginia
2Tbid., 228.
3Tbid., 109.
point it ran through hilly country to Parkersburg, passing through the towns of Buckhannon and Weston. It was partly macadamized and had bridges over the larger streams. In 1861, like the Northwestern Turnpike, it was in bad repair in places because of heavy flooding in the preceding years.\(^1\) There was a connecting road of some importance between the towns of Beverly, on the Staunton-Parkersburg Road, and Fairmont. This highway passed through Philippi and Belington and crossed Laurel Hill, the northward extension of Rich Mountain. It crossed the old Northwestern pike at the village of Pruntytown, near Grafton. A few lesser roads connected the northwestern Virginia region with western Maryland and also the valley of the South Branch of the Potomac, but they were little used.

In addition to the roads there was a railroad connection between the northwestern area and the east. This was the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, which had been opened from Baltimore to Wheeling in 1853. In 1857 a branch from Grafton to Parkersburg had been completed. This railroad greatly facilitated traffic between the Ohio Valley and the Atlantic coast and did much to bring new settlers and trade to northwestern Virginia.\(^5\) Since its two terminals were tied economically to the North, the railroad was not a factor in creating a stronger allegiance on the part of the people of the northwestern territory to the state of Virginia.

The people of the area were separated from the eastern part of Virginia by more than geographical factors. Most of the population

\(^1\) Ibid., 106.
\(^5\) Ibid., 125.
in 1861 was of English, German or Scots-Irish background and made a frugal living on small farms. Slavery was practically non-existent in the northwestern region and was not regarded favorably by the residents. Furthermore, there had been friction for years between the western counties and eastern Virginia in regard to representation in the Virginia legislature. The western peoples considered their region as being under-represented. Also they desired appropriations for turnpikes, canals and railroads which the people of the eastern regions generally opposed. Some of the injustices being decried by the westerners were corrected in the Virginia constitution of 1851, but the bad feeling persisted. The situation of western Virginia may be summed up in the words of Daniel Webster in 1851, when he said,

...and ye men of Western Virginia...what benefit do you propose to yourselves by disunion? If you secede what do you secede from and what do you secede to? Do you look for the current of the Ohio to change and bring you and your commerce to the waters of Eastern rivers? What man can suppose that you would remain a part and parcel of Virginia a month after Virginia had ceased to be a part and parcel of the United States?

The attitude of the citizens of northwestern Virginia was varied, however. Many were opposed to secession. In 1859 the people of the region voted strongly for John Letcher for governor because he was supposed to be conservative, loved the Union, and was allegedly hostile to Negro slavery. In the election of 1860, less than two thousand in the northwestern region voted for Lincoln, but few doubted the legality

---

6 Ibid., 223.
7 Quoted in Callahan, History of W. Va., 140.
of his election and most of them were willing to abide by the consequences of the election.\textsuperscript{9} When discussions of secession began in the eastern part of the state the inhabitants of the northwest expressed their disapproval of the idea in a number of mass meetings. One of the first of these was in Preston County on November 12, 1860. Several such meetings resulted in the adoption of anti-secession resolutions which called for support of the United States government.\textsuperscript{10}

On the other hand there were a considerable number of people whose sentiments lay with the South. They could be found in every part of northwestern Virginia, but they were usually outnumbered by Northern supporters.\textsuperscript{11} One native of Virginia wrote to the Secretary of War of the Confederate States, L. P. Walker, to the effect that the people of the western part of the state were generally for the South. However, he felt that these Southern sympathizers did not believe the South could win the war and certainly could not hold western Virginia. He also stated that the region would furnish many troops to the South, but only if it could be controlled by a strong Confederate force, at least 10,000 men. Otherwise, he said, the North would get the troops.\textsuperscript{12}

The newspapers of the northwestern region reflected pro-Union sentiment for the most part. The editors of the Clarksburg Guard,

\textsuperscript{9}Charles A. Ambler, \textit{Makers of West Virginia} (Huntington, W. Va.: 1942), 9. Cited hereafter as Ambler, \textit{Makers of W.Va.}
\textsuperscript{10}Ambler, \textit{West Virginia}, 307-308.
\textsuperscript{11}James C. McGregor, \textit{The Disruption of Virginia} (New York: 1922), 81. Cited hereafter as McGregor, \textit{Disruption}.
\textsuperscript{12}United States War Department, \textit{War of the Rebellion: Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies} (Published by the War Department: 1899), Series I, Li, Part 2, 142-143. Cited hereafter as \textit{O.R.}
Morgantown Star, Wheeling Intelligencer, and Grafton Western Virginian wrote to the effect that the western region ought to remain at least neutral and at best pro-Union. If all else failed, they seemed to favor splitting the state and making a new Western Virginia which would remain in the Union.\(^{13}\) More will be said later concerning this sentiment for a new state.

In some parts of northwestern Virginia direct action was taken by citizens for their own protection. In Philippi, the county seat of Barbour County, the president of the local bank, together with Samuel Woods, a pro-Southerner, and Lewis Wilson, a strong Unionist, removed the funds and securities from the bank and buried them under the smokehouse on Mr. Wilson's property. This move was due to their fear of invasion by both Northern and Southern forces. Each man kept a list of the items so hidden. After Philippi fell to the Federal troops the bank vault was blown open, but nothing was found. Some time after the War ended the funds were dug up, checked, and returned to the bank.\(^{14}\) Such cooperation on the part of Union and Southern sympathizers was rare. Most citizens who took an active part in preparations for the impending war did so by joining one of the units which were being formed to aid either the North or the South in the northwestern area.\(^{15}\)

Soldiers of both armies took notice of the attitude of the citizens of northwestern Virginia. G. W. H. Kemper, of the Seventh Indiana, entered the region on June 1, traveling with his regiment on

\(^{13}\)McGregor, Disruption, 75 ff.
\(^{15}\)Dayton, Samuel Woods, 3.
the Baltimore and Ohio railroad to Grafton. He noted that at Moundsville and Cameron the troops were bountifully supplied with provisions by the ladies and citizens. As his train passed farm houses the Union troops were cheered and waved at. "We were agreeably surprised," he noted, "at the evidence we saw and heard of the loyalty of the inhabitants."16

One Confederate soldier, who recorded his views in diary form, noted as he traveled north down the Tygart River valley that sentiment, while divided, was slightly more pro-Southern than pro-Northern. But he added that the pro-Southerners were not very hopeful of success in the western Virginia area.17 When he reached the village of Philippi he found intense Southern feelings manifested in a flag presentation to two local companies of Confederate troops and in pro-Southern speeches by local citizens.18 However, by the time he reached Grafton, only about fifteen miles away, he found a definite pro-Union sentiment prevailed. He noted a demonstration in front of the Confederate soldiers by twelve to fifteen young girls with United States flags.19

The governor of Virginia, John Letcher, also discovered Union sentiment in northwestern Virginia early in the conflict. He had written to the mayor of Wheeling on April 17, the day Virginia passed her ordinance of secession, ordering him to seize the post office, customs

18Ibid., 7.
19Ibid., 11.
house, and all government property in the city and hold them in the name of the state of Virginia. The mayor replied that he had seized them already, but in the name of Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, whose property they were.  

Whether the citizens of the northwestern region were pro-Northern or pro-Southern they were apathetic toward joining the military forces of either side early in the war. This was partly the result, no doubt, of the fear that many people must have had of joining one side or the other, then finding their home towns occupied for some time by the opposite side. Enlistments in the Federal forces had been estimated at from 28,000 to 36,000. It is important to note that most of the regular volunteer regiments raised by the North in northwestern Virginia were organized after the battles of Rich Mountain in the summer of 1861 and Sharpsburg in 1862.  

On the political scene in early 1861, the opposition of the westerners to secession was quickly revealed. In January, Governor Letcher called a special session of the state legislature to determine what course Virginia should take. This session called for a special statewide election to choose delegates to a convention which was to determine Virginia's policy. The convention began its meetings on February 14, 1861, and remained in continuous session until May 1. There were 27 delegates from the region which now constitutes West Virginia.

21McGregor, Disruption, 244 ff.
22Ambler, West Virginia, 343.
23Ibid.
The western delegates were mostly opposed to the idea of withdrawal from the Union, and joined in the vote disapproving secession, 88 to 45, on April 4. Following the firing on Fort Sumter and Lincoln's call for troops, the convention on April 17 voted 88 to 55 for secession, after a dramatic speech by Henry Wise calling for the immediate withdrawal of Virginia. In the past Wise had often been in sympathy with the western conservatives, but he deviated sharply from their viewpoint concerning departure from the Union. Of the 47 western delegates, 32 voted against the ordinance, 11 for it, and four did not vote. A referendum on the ordinance was to be held on May 23, the date for the regular election of members to the general assembly. Most of the 32 delegates from the northwest who had voted against the ordinance remained in Richmond for a time, hoping for a more favorable turn of events. When it did not come, they went home. Upon their arrival in their home towns they were greeted with enthusiasm, and they found that a "new state" movement was already under way. For the most part, the returning delegates were not so enthusiastic but were filled with uncertainty and misgivings over their role at Richmond and the future of northwestern Virginia.

On April 22, a convention was held at Clarksburg, where it was decided to issue a call for a meeting of delegates from all the counties of northwestern Virginia. This meeting was to be held at Wheeling on May 13. Wheeling was chosen because it was the only town

---

24 Ambler, Makers of W. Va., 10
25 Ibid.
26 Ambler, West Virginia, 322.
27 Ibid.
where there was an assured Union majority. The one newspaper in the entire northwestern region which had constantly supported anti-slavery views and which was calling for a division of the state was located at Wheeling. It was the Wheeling Intelligencer, edited by Archibald Campbell, who filled its pages with anti-slavery editorials copied from other papers. About one-third of Wheeling's population was foreign-born and altogether out of sympathy with the South. Furthermore the city was recognized by many in the North as being the center of the "new state" movement and thus seemed the logical place for the convention which was expected by many to create such a new state.

Before the Clarksburg meeting adjourned, an address was made condemning the secession of Virginia. Copies of the address were then printed in the Clarksburg Western Virginia Guard and sent to many parts of the northwestern area.

This meeting at Clarksburg was not the first one held in northwestern Virginia to discuss the problem of secession. Meetings had been held in Barbour County in January and February and a mass meeting at the county seat, Philippi, on March 7. That meeting went as far in its endorsement of secession as any meeting held in the South. Philippi was the home of the radically pro-Southern newspaper, The Jeffersonian, published by Thompson Surgeon. Later in Philippi, after Virginia had seceded, all papers and pamphlets known to be pro-

---

28 McGregor, Disruption, 187.
29 Ibid., 188.
30 Ambler, West Virginia, 323-324.
31 Maxwell, Barbour County, 240.
32 Ibid., 241.
Union were held by the postmaster, who turned them over to a group of secessionists to be publicly burned.33

The First Wheeling Convention, as it was later called, met at Washington Hall in Wheeling on May 13. Four hundred thirty-six delegates attended from 27 counties, all now a part of West Virginia except Frederick County. The meeting was of nation-wide interest. Correspondents from several important northern newspapers were present, including the New York Times, Cincinnati Commercial, Pittsburgh Dispatch and Chicago Press and Tribune.34

The delegates were divided on the particular course of action that western Virginia should follow, although most were in agreement in their opposition to secession. After three days of debate it was determined to issue a call for a second convention to which delegates would be chosen by all the "loyal" counties. The election of these delegates was to take place on June 4 if the ordinance of secession should be approved on May 23.35 If it should not, there would be no need for further meetings. In the period between the two conventions a "Central Committee" composed of nine men was to function as a sort of interim government of the western region. John C. Carlile was the chairman. The First Wheeling Convention then adjourned after singing the "Star Spangled Banner."36 If a second convention was found to be necessary, it was to meet in Wheeling on June 11.37

33Ibid., 242.
34Ambler, West Virginia, 327-328.
35Ibid.
36Callahan, History of W. Va., 143.
37Ambler, West Virginia, 328.
Feelings in the North varied regarding the actions of the people of northwestern Virginia. Many editors expressed the opinion that the only reason western Virginians talked of loyalty and a new state was out of fear of the consequences if they remained with Virginia and attempted to secede. Some editors felt the creation of the proposed new state would be unconstitutional. The editor of the New York World expressed this idea on May 14. The editors of the Buffalo Express and the New York Herald both supported the idea of the foundation of a new western Virginia state.

The Central Committee, acting on the suggestion of Francis Pierpont, one of the leaders in the "new state" movement, sent John Carlile to Washington to see President Lincoln and request aid for the northwestern region. He reached the capital on May 24 and had an interview with Lincoln and his cabinet. He made the request that Northern troops be sent into the northwestern region at once.

The referendum on secession was held on May 23. In parts of northwestern Virginia the pro-Union people were prevented from voting by the presence of strong Southern forces. On the whole, however, the people of the region voted strongly against secession. The majority of the citizens of Virginia voted for secession, so the Central Committee at Wheeling could expect to see the Second Wheeling Convention

38 McGregor, Disruption, 201.
39 Ibid., 201 ff.
40 Ibid.
42 Maxwell, Barbour County, 117.
come into being. With the victory of the Union troops at Philippi on June 3 as an added spur to action, the election of delegates went forward on June 4. Almost 100 delegates assembled at Wheeling on the 11th. Many of them had been chosen in an irregular fashion, some were self-appointed, and some could not have been selected at all if the Federal military forces had not advanced into the center of the region.  

The first formal action of the Second Wheeling Convention was the adoption of a resolution, drawn up by Carlile, thanking the Union authorities for the prompt manner in which they had responded to the call for protection made by the Central Committee. A resolution thanking General George McClellan for having rescued northwestern Virginia from the ravages of the Confederate forces was also adopted. The Convention then proceeded to create a so-called "loyal" government of the State of Virginia and elected Francis Pierpont as its first governor.  

Before adjourning on June 25 the Convention sent a formal request for aid by the Federal government, and President Lincoln replied through his Secretary of War, Simon Cameron. Relief was promised to the new state even though it was not yet officially recognized by either the President or Congress.  

The first legislature of the new government of Virginia met at Wheeling on July 1 and proceeded to complete the organization of the new government. The Second Wheeling Convention reassembled on August 6

---

43 Ambler, West Virginia, 329.
44 Ibid.
45 Ibid.
46 Ibid., Pierpont, 102-103.
47 Callahan, History of West Virginia, 144.
and, after considerable debate, passed an ordinance providing for the formation of a new state. On October 24 the people living within the limits of the proposed State of West Virginia ratified the ordinance by a vote of 18,408 to 781 and, at the same time, elected delegates to a constitutional convention to meet at Wheeling in November. In due time the legislature of the new government of Virginia consented to the erection of a new state out of the territory of Virginia (May, 1862). A constitution was drawn up and ratified by the people in April, 1862, and after some changes required by the Federal Congress in early 1863, the new State of West Virginia was proclaimed by President Lincoln on June 20, 1863, as the 35th state of the Union.

This dismemberment of Virginia would not have been possible without the successful conclusion of McClellan's campaign to drive the Confederate forces out of western Virginia. Furthermore, the results of the battle of first Manassas seemed to indicate to the Federal government officials that the War was likely to be a long one. Thus Virginia was not likely to be restored immediately to the Union, but the western half could be—as a new state.

48 Ibid., 150-151.
49 Ambler, West Virginia, 335.
50 Ibid.
CHAPTER 2

PREPARATIONS FOR WAR AND FIRST ADVANCES

Most of the Federal troops involved in the early fighting in western Virginia came from Ohio and Indiana. Preparations for the possibility of war had begun in Ohio as early as 1857 and 1858. In those years Governor Salmon P. Chase had been active in building and training the militia, apparently foreseeing the coming conflict. Immediately after the surrender of Fort Sumter, Chase's successor, Governor William Dennison, began to prepare for the defense of Ohio's southern border.

He had received news on April 19 that a Cleveland battery of six pieces (six-pounders) was ready for immediate service. This battery, commanded by Colonel James Barnett, had been drilling for some time before the attack on Sumter. On the 20th, the governor ordered the unit to report at once to Columbus, where horses were to be hired and the battery readied for immediate action. At the governor's request a Columbus foundry was opened on Sunday and 200 solid shot were cast. On the 21st the battery arrived by special train, then went immediately southeastward to Marietta. Within 48 hours after the issue of the order, it was on the border ready to defend the town from possible attack from the Parkersburg vicinity.

This was the only instance of such rapid action. The rest of the Ohio troops were assembled much more slowly. However, Governor

1Henry B. Carrington, Ohio Militia and the West Virginia Campaign, 1861 (Boston: 1904), 5. Cited hereafter as Carrington, Ohio Militia.
2Whitelaw Reid, Ohio In the War (Columbus: 1893), I, 46. Cited hereafter as Reid, Ohio In the War.
3Carrington, Ohio Militia, 9.
4Reid, Ohio In the War, I, 47.
Dennison made every effort to secure capable commanders. One of his first commissions went to Jacob D. Cox, who as brigadier general did much to assemble Ohio troops and prepare them for the coming conflict.

Cox was born in Montreal, Canada, in 1828, but had spent his boyhood in New York City. He had studied law for a time and had been in the banking and brokerage business. He graduated from Oberlin in 1851, having been persuaded to attend the college by Charles G. Finney, his father-in-law. Between 1851 and the coming of the War he served as superintendent of schools at Warren, Ohio, and practiced law.

Cox had something to do with organizing the Fusion Party in Ohio and the succeeding Ohio Republican Party. When the War broke out he was serving in the Ohio State Senate. Since he held a commission as general of Ohio militia he was a logical choice as one of the state's wartime leaders. He served through the conflict, first in the Kanawha region, later at South Mountain and Sharpsburg in the east and Nashville and Atlanta in the west. At the end of the struggle he held the rank of major-general. He was elected governor of Ohio after the War, and later served as secretary of the interior under President Grant. He rounded out his career as a United States Congressman, and was for a time president of the University of Cincinnati. He died in 1900.5

Cox's commission was dated April 23, 1861, but he was actually at work before that date. On the 23rd, Cox was sent to the Columbus railroad station to meet George B. McClellan, who was to have an interview with Governor Dennison. McClellan was on his way to Pennsylvania.

to see about the possibility of receiving the command of the Pennsyl-
vania forces. Dennison knew of McClellan's work as an officer of the Ohio and Mississippi Railroad and knew also that he had a good military reputation prior to his resignation from the army. He may also have been familiar with his published reports on the Crimean War. These reports had added much to McClellan's reputation.

Cox, who was present at the interview, stated that the governor spoke plainly of the great lack of military equipment and of trained staff officers in Ohio. McClellan replied that he had confidence that in a few weeks' time he could put the Ohio troops into reasonable form for taking the field. The governor then offered him the command of the Ohio forces and he accepted, becoming, on April 23, a major general of Ohio state troops.

The new general at once commenced the job of preparing Ohio's troops for combat. It was planned to put 10,000 men in the field and most of his time was spent in getting this force organized. He did find time, however, to draw up a report to General Winfield Scott, commander of the U. S. forces, telling him of the situation in Ohio. He stated that there were four full regiments at Cincinnati ready to be mustered into the service, and a large number of men en route. "This state will supply 50,000 if desired," he wrote. There was a great

6William S. Myers, General George Brinton McClellan (New York: 1934), 158. Cited hereafter as Myers, McClellan.
8Ibid.
9Myers, McClellan, 160.
lack of almost all vital war material, according to his report. The state possessed but 120 tents, about 2,000 muskets and some old flintlocks. There were 900 rifles and a supply of bayonets. Ten thousand percussion muskets had been ordered from the Watervliet armory in New York. According to the general, there were 19 six-pounder guns at Cincinnati, six guns at Marietta (the Cleveland Artillery) and six "indifferent" guns at Columbus. McClellan requested Scott to have the state supplied with at least 10,000 stand of arms and 5,000,000 cartridges, as he wanted to perfect his men in target practice. He had a great many other requests to make, both for equipment and troops, including regulars. It should have been apparent to him that most of the other state military establishments had similar demands and that the government could not hope to comply with them all.

Three days after assuming command of the Ohio troops, McClellan was engaged in drawing up grand plans which involved a much larger area than the state of Ohio. He had never been noted for keeping his views to himself, and he had not changed, for on April 27 he wrote at length to Scott outlining the first of what proved to be a series of plans for general operations in the west. He enumerated the points which should be occupied from Cairo, Illinois, to Gallipolis, Ohio. He even noted the number of troops to be located at each point. He set forth two possible plans of offensive operations. The most far-reaching included an advance to Nashville, Tennessee, and he even wrote

\[\text{11 Ibid.}\]
\[\text{12 Ibid., 333-334.}\]
of moves on Pensacola, Mobile and New Orleans. All this was from a man whose previous rank in the United States Army had been that of captain.

Scott sent McClellan's communication on to President Lincoln with a note that literally tore the general's scheme to shreds. He pointed out that the operation McClellan was suggesting, which included an offensive against Richmond from the Ohio Valley, was apparently to be made with three-month volunteers, whose enlistments would run out before the campaign could be barely commenced. Scott called the plan a "piece-meal" operation which could not compare with his own proposed plan of envelopment by occupation of the Mississippi Valley and blockade of the Southern Coast—the "Anaconda" plan. In short, General Scott did not consider McClellan's scheme to be very practical.

In order to prepare the incoming volunteers and to have the troops close to Cincinnati, where fear of a Confederate invasion was great, General McClellan established a camp on the Little Miami River, about 13 miles from Cincinnati. The camp was named in honor of Governor Dennison and many of the troops which took part in the subsequent fighting in western Virginia received their first taste of soldiering at this post.

On May 3, General Scott notified the Ohio commander of the proposed grand scheme of operation and hinted that there might be an important position for him in the operation. However, he cautioned that it would be some time before the offensive movements could begin,

13 Ibid., 338.
14 Ibid., 339.
certainly not before a large number of three-year men could be enlisted.\footnote{Ibid., 369-370.} It is not known what McClellan's feelings may have been regarding this plan, nor about the fact that his own plan had obviously been rejected. Certainly his ardour for writing lengthy letters to Scott had not diminished. On May 9, he wrote at length requesting that good staff officers be supplied him. He flattered both General Scott and himself in the following statement: "Next to maintaining the honor of my country, general, the first aim of my life is to justify the good opinion you have expressed concerning me, and to prove that the great soldier of our country cannot only command armies himself, but teach others to do so. I do not expect your mantle to fall on my shoulders, for no man is worthy to wear it; but I hope it may be said hereafter that I was no unworthy disciple of your school."\footnote{Ibid., 373.}

On May 3, 1861, the general was placed in command of the newly created Department of the Ohio, still in the capacity of major general of the Ohio volunteers. The department consisted at first of the states of Ohio, Indiana and Illinois. A few days later, a part of western Pennsylvania and western Virginia, north of the Great Kanawha and west of the Greenbrier rivers, was added to the department.\footnote{Myers, McClellan, 165.} On May 14, he was notified by telegram that he was appointed major general in the regular army.\footnote{Ibid.}
Shortly after receiving his new commission, McClellan was planning again. This time he urged the occupation of Cumberland, Maryland, among other places, and was rather sharply informed that Cumberland was outside his province. He was also reprimanded by General Scott for some of his other demands. Still Scott, in a friendly manner, asked for General McClellan's views and advice on the proposed offensive down the Mississippi River. Scott's reprimand seems to have been lost on McClellan, for a short time later, May 28, he virtually ordered General Robert Patterson, who was not under his command, to occupy Cumberland at once. Apparently the high command was weary of the attempt to restrain the general's enthusiasm for such widespread planning, for there is no record of further rebukes on the subject. This persistence of McClellan in urging his own plans over all objections was to remain throughout his military career.

Something should be said of the preparations of Indiana for the War, since a part of the force which General McClellan took into northwestern Virginia consisted of Indiana regiments. That state's quota, under Lincoln's call for 75,000 volunteers, was 6,000 troops. Governor Morton had issued a call at once and in less than a week the 6,000 had been raised and organized into companies. A central rendezvous had been established near Indianapolis and given the name of Camp Morton. Indiana had the usual problems of lack of equipment and supplies. For a time the volunteers were uniformed in grayish-colored

19O.R., LI, Part II, 386-387.
20Ibid., 390.
21Kemper, Seventh Indiana, 3-4.
uniforms, not dissimilar to the official Confederate uniforms, except for the hats, which had very high crowns.\textsuperscript{22}

On May 24 the five regiments present at Camp Morton were reviewed by General McClellan, together with the governors of Ohio, Indiana and Illinois.\textsuperscript{23} Within a short time the Indiana troops were on their way to Ohio and northwestern Virginia.

While Ohio and Indiana were preparing their contingents of troops and McClellan was drawing up grand plans, the people of northwestern Virginia were not idle. The sentiment of the majority of the population west of the Alleghenies was pro-Northern, but there were areas of rather intense Southern feeling also. The result was that many small communities sent troops to both sides. In the Panhandle of northwestern Virginia and along the Ohio River, Union companies were quickly organized in late April and early May. There was some delay and disappointment in securing arms for these troops, however. Many of the early troops did not receive government arms for some time, but were supplied instead from northern states as remote as Massachusetts. On May 7, a shipment of 2,000 arms was made from the Watervliet Arsenal in New York to a point in the Panhandle north of Wheeling.\textsuperscript{24}

Late in April several of the more ardent pro-Southerners of the northwestern area, seeing that the general feelings tended toward separation from Virginia and support of the North, began to write to Governor Letcher urging him to do whatever he could to hold the region

\textsuperscript{22}Ibid., 6.
\textsuperscript{23}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{24}Maxwell, Barbour County, 129.
for the South. A letter dated April 22 was sent by several Clarksburg
men in which they spoke of the exposed position of their section and of
the danger of Northern attempts to use the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad
for troop transportation. They stated that they were almost without
arms and asked that some be sent and that the governor authorize the
military of the Clarksburg region to do what they could to block pos­
sible Northern troop movements. On the 23rd, a major general of the
Third Division, Virginia Militia, T. S. Haymond, wrote the governor
from Fairmont. He, too, called for arms and for authorization to call
out 1,000 men to be posted near Wheeling and along the railroad. As
it subsequently developed, it would have been difficult to have found
1,000 men with Confederate sympathies in the Fairmont region.

On the 26th a letter calculated to offset Haymond's request
was sent by one George Thompson of Wheeling. He wrote that he hoped
Haymond's request for arms would not be complied with, that to do so
would only add confusion. He seemed to be in favor of keeping north­
western Virginia neutral in the struggle. He concluded with the state­
ment that the region could not be defended against a Northern invasion
if it should come.

From the village of Pruntytown, between Grafton and Clarks­
burg, a group of citizens wrote, on April 24, that they were in the
act of raising a company or battalion of volunteers to act as a home

26 Ibid., 29.
27 Ibid., 39.
guard, but had no arms. They requested that at least 200 arms, plus ammunition and a state flag, be sent.28

Letcher communicated these letters to Robert E. Lee, in command of the Virginia forces, and on April 29 he directed Major Anthony Loring, supposedly commanding volunteers at Wheeling, to accept and muster into service such companies as might offer themselves and to take command of them. He was ordered to protect the terminus of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. At the same time Major Francis M. Boykin at Weston was ordered to muster volunteers there and proceed to Grafton to cooperate with Loring and protect the railroad. Both men were ordered not to interfere with the normal peacetime operation of the railroad. In addition, Lee sent 200 old flintlock muskets to General Thomas J. Jackson at Harper’s Ferry, who was to forward them to Boykin and Loring.29 Neither Loring nor Boykin had success in their assignments. Both found the regions in which they were to recruit overwhelmingly pro-Union. However, they apparently did not report this fact to Lee, who on May 4 ordered Colonel George Porterfield to proceed to Grafton and take command of the troops supposedly raised in northwestern Virginia.

Colonel Porterfield was a veteran of the Mexican War who had served under General Zachary Taylor. He was a graduate of the Virginia Military Institute and as such had been instrumental in raising troops in Virginia for service in the Mexican War. When the Civil War began he was living on his farm in Jefferson County and immediately offered

28Ibid., 31.
29Ibid., II, 788, 790-791.
his services to his state. He served until 1862, then resigned and resumed civil life at his old home. In 1871 he became a banker at Charlestown, West Virginia, where he died in the early 1900's.\textsuperscript{30}

In his orders Porterfield was told to hold both branches of the Baltimore and Ohio and to post his troops at his own discretion. Lee informed him of the orders that had been sent to Loring and Boykin. Porterfield was to communicate with these men and direct their activities as well as call out additional volunteers. Lee optimistically told the Colonel that it was not known how many companies would offer their services, but that it was supposed that a regiment composed of infantry and artillery might be obtained for the Parkersburg region, another to be posted near Moundsville, and perhaps three regiments for reserve near Grafton. Lee mentioned the 200 flintlocks, and told Porterfield that more arms would be forwarded on his requisition. He stressed the point that there should be no interference with the peaceful operation of the railroad. Finally, two second lieutenants of the provisional army of Virginia were ordered to report to Porterfield, presumably for staff duty.\textsuperscript{31}

Porterfield set out at once for Grafton, where he found nothing was as he had been led to expect. As he wrote in later years, he neither saw nor had a line from either Loring or Boykin. Loring remained a peaceful citizen in Wheeling and Boykin had left northwestern Virginia for the East before Porterfield arrived in Grafton. He found himself "alone in a country hostile to the South, without an officer of

\textsuperscript{30}Maxwell, Barbour County, 250.
\textsuperscript{31}Ibid., 802-803.
experience to help me then or afterwards, without money or supplies of any kind, or any means of getting anything to aid in organizing a military force." On May 14 Porterfield reported that he would try to draw together what forces he could to carry out his orders, and he asked that reinforcements be sent him, with artillery if possible, from Harper's Ferry. Lee, however, felt that it might irritate rather than conciliate the population if troops from other parts of the state were sent to Grafton, although General Jackson at Harper's Ferry had also suggested it. He did order some 600 rifles sent to a Major Goff, who was recruiting at Beverly, to be sent on to Porterfield. Troops were very slowly being assembled around Grafton. A couple of companies were formed at Philippi, one at the village of Meadowville, and a cavalry unit at Fetterman. Other counties were sending forces also. Highland, Randolph and Pendleton had units marching toward Grafton by the third week in May.

A very slight skirmish occurred on May 22 near Grafton when a Confederate picket was attacked by what Porterfield called a "Union Party" from Grafton, and the first Union volunteer in the campaign, Bailey Brown, was killed. About the same time, Porterfield communicated to Richmond that his little force was half-armed and altogether

---

32 Southern Historical Society Papers (Richmond: 1888), XVI, 82 f. Cited hereafter as S.H.S.P.
33 O.R., II, 843.
34 O.R., II, 833.
36 S.H.S.P., XVI, 82 f.
undisciplined and indicated an invasion could hardly be met successfully. Lee could only reply that he would furnish more arms from Staunton, Virginia, and gave Colonel J. M. Heck, who had recently joined Porterfield and had been sent by him to Richmond to report conditions at Grafton, authority to recruit a regiment in the valley and mountain counties on the road to Grafton. 37

The last report sent by Porterfield before his retirement from Grafton was on May 25. In it he discussed the impossibility of holding Grafton against any sizable force and complained once more of the lack of arms and disciplined officers. 38 On the same day that he sent this dispatch to Richmond, Porterfield ordered Colonel William J. Willey to proceed on the next train and destroy the Baltimore and Ohio bridges as far west as possible. Willey moved with one squad to Mannington and destroyed two railroad bridges over Buffalo Creek. On May 27 Porterfield sent a unit out on the other branch of the railroad (to Wheeling), and several bridges were burned. 39 The colonel's reasons for thus seemingly disobeying his orders, not to interfere with the operation of the railroad, lay in the fact that he had heard that the Federal forces had crossed the Ohio and were proceeding against him. He determined to retire from Grafton and try to build up a force sufficient to carry on offensive operations. On May 28 he withdrew his little force of about 550 men to Philippi. 40 On the evening before

38Ibid., II, Part II, 109.
40O.R., II, 51.
he left Grafton he received an order from Governor Letcher to seize a train, proceed to Wheeling and capture the city and all arms that might be stored there. Since Porterfield had already destroyed the bridges and was faced by a superior force, he could hardly comply. 41

On the way from Grafton to Philippi, the colonel met an un­armed company of volunteers from Upshur County and at Philippi he was joined by a well-armed cavalry troop from Rockbridge. While at Philippi he found himself compelled to send home two companies for lack of arms and equipment. 42 Nevertheless by the first of June his small army included about 600 infantry and 175 cavalry. 43

Before turning again to events in Ohio, an incident might be mentioned which illustrates clearly the confused state of affairs in northwestern Virginia in these early war days. On the afternoon of May 23 residents of Clarksburg were alarmed by the appearance of a company of Confederate volunteers. At the time there was already a company of Union volunteers in town. The Court House bell sounded the alarm and the Union men turned out, but some of the prominent citizens talked the leaders of the two units into giving up their arms, which were locked in the jail for safekeeping overnight. The next day the arms were re­turned, the Confederate unit paraded, watched by civilians and the Union volunteers alike, and after handshakes all around they marched off to join Porterfield at Grafton. 44

41 S.H.S.P., XVI, 82 f.
42 O.R., II, 52.
43 Evans, Confederate Military History, II, 15.
In Ohio, McClellan was spending most of his time in Columbus with frequent visits to Camp Dennison and other camps. He showed no desire to move into the northwestern area, and on May 10 Governor Dennison wrote to him communicating the request by a committee of Parkersburg men for an immediate crossing of the Ohio and occupation of their city. Dennison endorsed the request and noted that crossings at other points would be in order also. McClellan replied that he had carefully considered the governor's letter and the request and said he had received many similar requests. He continued, "Strange as the advice may seem from a young general, I advise delay for the present." He said he feared nothing from northwestern Virginia, was continuing to make progress in organizing and wanted to have an effective force before he moved. He noted also that he was preparing a secret service at Camp Dennison, which would be the most thorough and effective possible. Presumably he wanted that in operation before he advanced.

On May 13 in response to further urging by the governor, General McClellan wrote that most of the information he was getting from the frontier indicated that the morale effect of an invasion by Union troops would not be good, at least not until the people of the region had decided for themselves what they wanted to do.

While the general was thus temporizing, Governor Dennison had enrolled nine more regiments over the original 13 of Ohio's quota. These last nine had been put in camps along the Ohio where they could easily invade western Virginia at a moment's notice.

---

45 Reid, Ohio In the War, I, 17.
46 Ibid., 43.
47 O.R., II, 46-47.
regiment, known as the First Regiment, Virginia Infantry, already
across the river at Wheeling. It was made up mostly of Wheeling men
under the command of Colonel Benjamin F. Kelley. It was poorly
equipped, but of good morale and ready for service. 48

About the 20th, news of the occupation of Grafton by the Con­
federates was received at Columbus and Governor Dennison telegraphed
the news to General Scott, who sent word to McClellan to see if he
could not do something to counteract the effect of the occupation. 49
So, on the 26th, McClellan bestirred himself and issued two sets of
orders. The Ohio regiments along the river were alerted for a crossing
which began the next day, and regiments still in the interior were or­
ered to the Ohio River. 50 At the same time Colonel Kelley's Virginia
regiment at Wheeling was ordered to move on the 27th along the line of
the Baltimore and Ohio toward Fairmont. General McClellan stated in
his orders to Kelley that his principal reason for ordering the troops
to advance was the Confederates' destruction of the railroad bridges,
"which caused me to anticipate by some two or three days, the more
carefully-prepared measures I had contemplated, with the intention of
not only securing the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, but also of driving
all armed secessionists out of West Virginia." 51 Kelley was cautioned
not to run any unnecessary risk as it was absolutely necessary that the

48 J. Rawling, History of the First Regiment, Virginia Infantry
(Philadelphia: 1887), 3. Cited hereafter as Rawling, First Virginia
Infantry.
50 Reid, Ohio In the War, I, 48-49.
51 O.R., II, 45.
Union forces should not meet with even a partial check at the outset of the campaign. After the 14th and 18th Ohio, together with Barnett's artillery, had taken possession of Parkersburg, they moved toward Grafton. At the same time McClellan issued a proclamation to the people of northwestern Virginia and an address to his own troops. He strove to stir the people and soldiers to a great passion in expelling the "armed traitors" from the region. Three days later General Thomas Morris of Indiana was ordered to Grafton with the 6th, 7th and 9th Indiana regiments.

Kelley with his regiment reached Grafton on May 30th with little or no opposition. The 14th Ohio, under Colonel Steedman, led the advance of the troops from Parkersburg and moved slowly, being fired on by Confederate soldiers or sympathizers as they repaired some of the burned railroad bridges. They reached Clarksburg on the 29th. On June 1 General Morris and his Indiana troops, with other Ohio regiments, arrived at Grafton. The general assumed command of all the troops in West Virginia, General McClellan still being in Ohio.

Thus the stage was set for the next phase of operations in northwestern Virginia. Colonel Porterfield was at Philippi with less than 800 men, while Morris held Grafton with approximately 3,000 men.

Ibid.
54 Ibid., 17.
55 Reid, Ohio In the War, II, 103.
56 Cox, Reminiscences, I, 43.
General Morris was preparing to put a plan, conceived by his subordinate, Colonel Kelley, into operation. He hoped to dislodge and possibly capture Porterfield's small force. Back in Ohio, McClellan was already looking forward to larger operations. When he reported the occupation of Grafton to General Scott, he also outlined a plan for an offensive in the valley of the Great Kanawha. He planned to direct this movement in person and expected it to be followed by a movement to Kentucky and Tennessee. The general was unable to put his vast plan into operation, since the campaign in northwestern Virginia developed beyond his expectations, but he referred to it several times before being called to Washington in the fall.

57O.R., II, 50.
CHAPTER 3

THE BATTLE OF PHILIPPI AND THE RESULTS

Colonel Porterfield's little command at Philippi consisted of only about seven companies of infantry and five of cavalry. Both officers and men were without adequate training and completely lacked discipline. Ammunition was scarce and cartridge boxes almost non-existent, the men keeping their few paper-wrapped cartridges in their pockets. The colonel attempted to hold drill for his disorganized force, but with indifferent success.\(^1\) He also tried to gain information as to road conditions and the activity of the enemy. He sent a squad of cavalry out on the road to Clarksburg on June 2. This little unit was still out when the Confederate troops at Philippi were defeated. When the squad found itself cut off from the main body it simply dissolved. Many of the men went to their homes and others straggled south to Huttonsville where they rejoined the army. The commander of the squad, a Captain Jenkins, made his way to Huttonsville only to fall into an argument with his commanding officer, Porterfield. The result was the dismissal not only of Jenkins, but the entire company, from Confederate service.\(^2\)

The Confederate commander was beset by difficulties growing out of the fact that his soldiers were too independent in their thinking and in their actions. On May 29, for instance, one of his companies held a secret meeting at which a resolution was drawn up by both

\(^1\)Price, On to Grafton, 19.
\(^2\)Maxwell, Barbour County, 258.
officers and men. It was presented to the colonel and expressed the determination on the part of the troops not to leave Philippi until properly equipped for field service.  

Porterfield apparently ignored the resolution and made his own plans.

While the Confederates were still encamped at Philippi, a committee of prominent citizens of western Virginia drew up a report which they sent to Richmond on June 1. They requested that the Richmond authorities direct Porterfield to move against the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad at the Cheat River crossing and destroy the trestle there. Before the report had reached Richmond, however, Colonel Porterfield and his ill-trained band had been driven from Philippi.

Before the actual attack by the Union troops, a state of constant alarm prevailed at Philippi and rumors circulated with distressing regularity and rapidity. On June 1, an alarm was given of an immediate attack. It proved false, but on the 2nd two young ladies from Fairmont, Misses Mollie Kerr and Mollie McLeod, arrived on horseback at the Confederate camp. They delivered word to Colonel Porterfield that an attack was to be made upon his force either that night or the following morning. How they got this information is not known, but they had had a difficult time getting it through to Porterfield. They had been stopped at Webster by some pro-Union people and closely questioned before being allowed to proceed. The two young southern sympathizers apparently made themselves unwelcome in Fairmont and they were sent South as refugees about a year later. Dayton, Samuel Woods, 9.

---

3 Price, On to Grafton, 38.
5 Price, On to Grafton, 20. The two young southern sympathizers apparently made themselves unwelcome in Fairmont and they were sent South as refugees about a year later. Dayton, Samuel Woods, 9.
report and prepared to act accordingly. Instructions were given to the troops to be ready to march at 5 P.M. Before that hour, however, new orders were issued for the soldiers to prepare supper and await further word. The officers in charge of the pickets and scouts were directed to bring their men in by midnight. At that hour, if it was not raining, the march to Beverly was to commence. Apparently Porterfield felt that rain would cause the Northern commander to call off his projected attack. Retreat, therefore, could be postponed. At midnight the scouts and pickets came in of their own accord, without reporting the fact to headquarters. It was pouring rain at the time, yet the officers in charge simply awaited further orders, although they knew that the retreat was not to begin if it was raining. Thus the Confederate camp was left unguarded after midnight with uncertainty in everyone’s mind except perhaps that of the commander, who had retired sometime before midnight.  

Meanwhile, at Grafton, Colonel Benjamin Kelley had submitted to his new superior officer, General Thomas Morris, a plan he had conceived for an attack upon the Confederates at Philippi. Morris approved the plan and strengthened the possibility of its success by

6 Price, On to Grafton, 21-22.
7 Morris was a West Pointer who was a railroad executive and an engineer before the war. He was appointed brigadier general on April 27, 1861. The enlistments of Morris’s brigade ran out in July and, soon after, he returned to Indiana to continue as chief engineer of the Indianapolis and Cincinnati Railroad. He had had several clashes with McClellan and was angry over the slowness with which his commission was renewed. Klement, "General John B. Floyd and the West Virginia Campaign of 1861," in West Virginia History Quarterly, VIII, No. 3, 320. Cited hereafter as Klement, "General Floyd", W. Va. Hist. Quarterly.
adding more troops to those originally called for in Kelley's plan. For the raw, inexperienced men involved, it was far more than just a daring plan, it seemed foolhardy. It called for a simultaneous attack by two columns, each of which had to travel widely-separated and little-known roads before converging on the enemy. Furthermore, as it turned out, the movement was made on a dark night in pouring rain. Yet it was surprisingly successful.

General Morris sent the necessary orders on June 2. Colonel Kelley was to take six companies of his own 1st Virginia Regiment, nine companies of the 9th Indiana and six companies of the 16th Ohio. He was to proceed by train to the hamlet of Thornton, which was approximately six miles east of Grafton. From that point he was to march by the most direct route to Philippi, timing himself to arrive as close to 4 A.M. as possible. If it was discovered that the Confederates had already retreated, he was authorized to pursue as far as Beverly.8

The second column was to be commanded by Colonel Ebenezer Dumont. He was to go by railroad westward five miles to Webster with eight companies of his 7th Indiana Regiment. At Webster he was to be joined by Colonel James B. Steedman with five companies of the 14th Ohio, six companies of the 6th Indiana and two guns of Barnett's Cleveland Artillery. Dumont's column was to find its own way to Philippi and was also to arrive at 4 A.M. When the two forces should be united, Kelley was to assume command.9 The two units were nearly

9Ibid., 30-31.
equal in size, with Colonel Kelley having about 1600 men and Dumont around 1400.10

An attempt at deception was made by giving out word that Kelley's troops were going eastward by rail to join General Patterson's forces near Harper's Ferry. This was evidently not a successful ruse, judging from the actions of the two young pro-southern girls who rode to Philippi.

Colonel Kelley's column marched out of Thornton around noon with Jacob Baker, a citizen of Barbour County, as guide. Once it got close to Philippi it was to swing south of the town so as to cut off the retreat of Porterfield's forces. The troops did well on their march through the rainsoaked night, arriving at Philippi only fifteen minutes after 4 A.M. As it turned out, that was fifteen minutes too late.11

Colonel Dumont's column started at 8 P.M. from Webster. The night was completely black and most of the march was made during a cold drenching rain. The road was a muddy, slippery track. Most of the men were wearing great knapsacks, some containing several quilts or blankets which grew heavier as they became water-soaked. One by one they were thrown aside. One soldier did not even trouble to unbuckle his knapsack, just cut the straps and let it fall from his back.12 Talking,

10James M. Callahan, History of West Virginia, Old and New (Chicago: 1923), 376. Cited hereafter as Callahan, History of W. Va., Old and New.  
11Maxwell, Barbour County, 254-255.  
12Andrew J. Grayson, History of the Sixth Indiana Regiment in the Three Months Campaign in Western Virginia (Madison, Ind.: 1875), 22. Cited hereafter as Grayson, Sixth Indiana.
except in an undertone, was prohibited. Several halts for rest were made. Each time, Colonel Dumont passed along the column with words of encouragement for his weary soldiers. The column arrived on the hill overlooking Philippi promptly at 4 A.M., having double-quicked the last few miles. At the head of the column was Colonel Frederick W. Lander, who was with the troops only as a volunteer, but who apparently took command of the two pieces of artillery.

There were some Southern forces out on the night of the 2nd. In addition to the one small cavalry unit mentioned previously, there was a group of approximately 50 citizens collected by a militia officer named James Dilworth. The small group stationed itself some seven miles west of Philippi on the Clarksburg road. The men were armed with scythes, pitchforks and a few old flintlocks. However, around midnight the rain so discouraged them that they dispersed to their homes. In any event the Clarksburg road was not used by either of the two columns advancing on Philippi.

It was another civilian who first discovered the actual Federal advance. A Mrs. Thomas Humphreys was awakened by the cannon rumbling past her home on the hill overlooking Philippi. She awakened her son and had him ride forth to warn the Confederates in the town. By the time he started the two field pieces were in position to fire on the town. The boy was stopped almost at once by some Union soldiers and Mrs. Humphreys, seeing this, fired a pistol at the troops to try to

13 Kemper, Seventh Indiana, 80.
14 Maxwell, Barbour County, 255.
15 Ibid.
PLATE II. MAP OF BATTLE OF PHILIPPI
JUNE 3, 1861

ROUTES:
- UNION ARTILLERY
- CONFEDERATE RETREAT
- KELLEY'S FORCE
- ROUTE KELLY WAS TO HAVE TAKEN

TO BEVERLY
TO GRAFTON
free her son. Unfortunately for the Federal plan, a pistol shot had been the signal set for the cannon to begin their fire on the Confederate camp. Thus the action was begun by Colonel Dumont's force about 15 minutes before Kelley's command had reached its position.16

Dumont's column had lost one man even before they had reached Philippi. Private Charles Degner of the 7th Indiana had fallen while crossing a creek during the march and had accidentally discharged his musket, wounding himself in the leg. He died a short time later from loss of blood.17 This, however, did not dishearten the raw Union troops.

There is disagreement among authorities as to whether or not the Southern forces were up and cooking breakfast at the time of the attack. In any event, the opening fire of the cannon caught the Confederates completely by surprise and they immediately began to retreat in disorganized groups toward the south end of the village. Officers attempted to form their companies in the streets, but unsuccessfully.18 Only some eight or ten Confederate soldiers were known to have used their muskets.19 On the other hand, most of the muskets of the Union troops could not be fired either. They had been too thoroughly soaked during the night march.20 Colonel Dumont's column came down the hill, preceded by Colonel Lander, who rode straight down the hill rather than

16 Ibid., 255-256.
17 Myers, History of W. Va., I, 465.
18 Price, On to Grafton, 39.
19 Ibid., 23.
20 Grayson, Sixth Indiana, 24. One squad tried to shoot a pig some time after the battle and finally had to run it down and catch it by hand when none of their muskets would fire.
following the road which angled down it. The Northerners smashed through a barricade at the west end of the long covered bridge over the Tygart River and rushed into the town. By the time Lander and Dumont's soldiers had crossed the bridge, Colonel Kelley, with his force came into town, but at the north end rather than the south. One contingent of his column had been dispatched to seal off the Confederates' escape route out of the southern end of town, but arrived just after the Confederate troops had passed by.\textsuperscript{21} As he rode down the main street of Philippi, Colonel Kelley was severely wounded in the chest by Private J. W. Sheffee. When Sheffee saw the colonel fall he came leaping up to his retreating comrades, yelling, "Sergeant, I have done it! I flopped that big fellow from his horse that was coming at us so savage."\textsuperscript{22}

Colonel Kelley's wound was nearly fatal, but he was the only known Union casualty. The Confederates suffered two. James C. Hanger of the Churchville Cavalry was struck in the leg by one of the six-pound round shot while he was still in the stable where his unit had been billeted. His leg was later amputated by a Federal surgeon, Doctor Robinson of the 16th Ohio, and he lived to start an artificial limb business which is still in operation.\textsuperscript{23} The other casualty was Leroy

\textsuperscript{21}Maxwell, Barbour County, 257.
\textsuperscript{22}S.H.S.P., XXXIV, 289. In several contemporary accounts of the battle it was reported that a Confederate quartermaster named Simms was the man who shot Kelley. It was also stated that he was captured and nearly killed by the Northern troops. However, Colonel Porterfield stated after the War that he had no such man enlisted as his quartermaster. Granville D. Hall, Lee's Invasion of Northwest Virginia in 1861 (Chicago: 1911), 56.
\textsuperscript{23}Maxwell, Barbour County, 256; S.H.S.P., XXXIV, 290; Mary R. Hoge, "The Battle of Philippi" in Eva M. Carnes, ed., Centennial History of the Philippi Covered Bridge, 1852-1952 (Philippi: 1952), 84.
Dangerfield, who was also wounded in the leg. His leg was amputated later at Beverly.\textsuperscript{24}

Colonel Porterfield was able to rally his force to some extent a few miles south of town and retreated in a more orderly fashion to Beverly and later to Huttonsville. Having no cavalry, the Federal forces could not pursue. Most of the Northern soldiers were exhausted after the long night march.

The victory seemed slight, judging from the casualty list. At the time it was considered quite important. Northern newspapers reported great losses by the Confederates of men and war materials.\textsuperscript{25} General Morris' official report stated that much camp equipment, provisions, arms, wagons, horses and medical supplies were captured. Porterfield wrote much later that this could not have been true, as he had practically no provisions or supplies.\textsuperscript{26} These reports, however, served greatly to cheer the Northern sympathizers in western Virginia,\textsuperscript{27} as well as throughout the North in general. At the same time the results of the battle brought discouragement in the South. It also made evident to the Confederate military authorities that a much larger and better equipped force must be put in the field if the situation in northwestern Virginia was to be improved.

\textsuperscript{24}Maxwell, Barbour County, 256.
\textsuperscript{25}See the Cleveland Plain Dealer, June 4, 1861, Vol. XVIII, Number 134, p. 2, col. 4; Cleveland Morning Leader, June 11, number 137, p. 3, col. 2.
\textsuperscript{26}S.H.S.P., XV, 87.
\textsuperscript{27}Kemper, Seventh Indiana, 10
CHAPTER 4
FROM PHILIPPI TO RICH MOUNTAIN

Colonel Porterfield had reached Huttonsville without further attacks by the Northern forces, and his command had actually increased somewhat in size. He reported to Colonel R. S. Garnett that he had at Huttonsville about 1,000 men, but they were still deficient in drill and he lacked efficient officers. Porterfield also complained that his own reputation had been injured by the character of his command. It would take, he added, at least 5,000 well-drilled men in order for him to take the field effectively.\(^1\) News of his defeat at Philippi was spreading through Virginia. From Staunton, Major M. G. Harman wrote to General Lee on June 6, that although he had received no official word from Colonel Porterfield, he was sending supplies, since he had heard from private sources of the colonel's needs in that respect. He cautioned Lee that, from all the information he had received, he was forced to conclude that Porterfield was entirely unequal to the position he was occupying and that a change of commanders should be made for "the safety of the northwest and our inexperienced soldiers..."\(^2\)

General Lee had apparently already made the same decision, for on the next day he wrote to Major Harman that Colonel Robert S. Garnett had been appointed to command the troops in northwestern Virginia.\(^3\) Garnett, who was promoted to brigadier general, was 42 at the time. He had graduated from West Point in 1841 and had seen service with the 4th

\(^1\)O.R., II, 70.
\(^2\)Ibid., 64.
\(^3\)Ibid., 910.
Artillery on the Canadian border. He served under Zachary Taylor in Mexico and was on duty in the far Northwest in 1855. He seemed to have the qualities necessary to cope with the many difficulties presented by the West Virginia situation.

In Staunton, Major Harman did not wait for the new commander, but started reinforcements toward Huttonsville on June 7. Lieutenant Colonel J. M. Heck led one company of cavalry, a four-gun battery of brass six-pounders, and three companies of infantry toward Porterfield. Heck was also authorized to call out militia as he moved westward, but he ultimately took with him only three militia companies, having sent several others home.

In Huttonsville George Porterfield unhappily received the news of his loss of command. He had very much desired to retain it and had sent a cavalry force north to Beverly in anticipation of taking the field with expected reinforcements. When Garnett arrived Porterfield was given charge of a couple of companies acting as a modest reserve and guard for supplies at Huttonsville. Feeling aggrieved, he asked for and received a court-martial. The result was a reprimand for his carelessness in not protecting his command from surprise at Philippi. However, he was commended for his coolness and personal bravery once the action had started. No punishment was involved, but Porterfield never again held independent command and retired from the Confederate Army in 1862.

5Evans, Confederate Military History, II, 17.
6O.R., II, 70.
7Ibid., II, 73.
8Maxwell, Barbour County, 250.
General Garnett reached Huttonsville on June 14. There he found 23 companies of infantry, in miserable condition as to arms, clothing, equipment, instruction and discipline. Twenty of these companies were organized into two regiments. The 31st Virginia was commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel William F. Jackson, and the 25th Virginia by Lieutenant-Colonel Heck. On the day after his arrival General Garnett moved northward with his two regiments, a battery and one cavalry company. Once he reached Beverly he split his little force, sending Heck's regiment with two guns and the cavalry to occupy the pass by which the Staunton-Parkersburg Road crossed Rich Mountain. The other regiment, with two guns, he took personally to occupy the pass over Laurel Hill, where the road from Beverly crossed on its way to Philippi, Grafton and Wheeling. Garnett regarded these two passes as the gates to the northwestern country and felt that if he did not occupy them he would be confined to the valley east of them and be unable to threaten the railroad. He definitely had plans for attacking the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, but when he first occupied the passes he felt his force was much too small for any successful movement against it. On June 25 he wrote to Richmond concerning the situation in western Virginia. He outlined a plan for marching on the well-guarded railroad and destroying the trestle at Cheat Bridge, as well as the Union force stationed there. With his own small force it could have been only in the nature of a raid and not an attempt to seize and hold the railroad.

9O.R., II, 236.
10Evans, Confederate Military History, II, 45.
11O.R., II, 237.
12Tbid.
Garnett spoke of his necessary line of retreat from Cheat Bridge, so he apparently envisioned it as only a raid. Lee replied that the capture of the railroad at the Cheat River would be worth an army to the South.  

On July 1 General Garnett's report indicated that he had only about 4,500 men, as he said that he could hold the passes with no less than 2,000 men and that would allow him only 2,500 for a possible movement against the railroad. He asked for 3,000 or 4,000 more if they could be spared.  

Reinforcements were on their way. Lieutenant-Colonel John Pegram with three regiments, the 20th and 37th Virginia, and the 1st Georgia, arrived at Camp Garnett on July 7. Pegram was a West Pointer who had taken part in a Utah expedition in 1857-58 and campaigned against Indians just before the War. After he was captured in western Virginia and was exchanged, he served under General Braxton Bragg in Mississippi and E. Kirby Smith in Tennessee. He was in the battles of Murfreesboro, Chickamauga, the Wilderness and fought in the Shenandoah Valley toward the end of the War. Camp Garnett was Heck's fortified post on Rich Mountain. Pegram assumed command there since he held a commission in the regular Confederate Army, while Heck's was only in the volunteer force. In addition to these regiments, the 44th Virginia under Colonel W. C. Scott was moving toward Garnett, Colonel Edward Johnson's 12th Georgia, over 1,000 strong, was preparing to move.

---

13 Ibid., 239.  
14 Ibid.  
16 O.R., II, 261.
from Staunton on July 6, and the 16th North Carolina of 1,200 men under Steven Lee was to follow.\textsuperscript{17}

On July 6, the eve of the beginning of hostilities on the Laurel Hill-Rich Mountain front, General Garnett wrote a lengthy report to Lee's acting adjutant, George Deas. In the report he made a fairly accurate estimate of his enemies' strength. He thought there were five to six thousand at Philippi, about three thousand at Clarksburg, a few hundred at Grafton, about two thousand at Weston, and two to three thousand at Cheat Bridge. Including additional forces guarding supplies and the railroad, he put the total figure at something less than 17,000.\textsuperscript{18} In spite of the size of this force, General Garnett did not believe he would be attacked in his mountain passes, for the simple reason, as he said, that the enemy "...has as much of the northwestern country as he probably wants."\textsuperscript{19} On the other hand, Garnett did not feel that his force would ever be large enough for him to take the field, except as a striking force against the railroad. He believed the major value of his command was in holding large numbers of Union troops in western Virginia which might otherwise be used against the Confederates elsewhere.\textsuperscript{20} At the same time the general did offer a plan which might further occupy the enemy. He suggested that General Wise in the Kanawha Valley move in a northerly direction toward the country east of Parkersburg so as to threaten Weston and Buckhannon. This, he said, would greatly aid his own command and would at the same

\textsuperscript{17}Ibid., 240.
\textsuperscript{18}Ibid., 241.
\textsuperscript{19}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{20}Ibid.
time keep the Kanawha Valley free by occupying the Union forces in northwestern Virginia. More will be said later concerning that region.

General Lee replied to Garnett's long report and indicated that he felt the enemy would not be content with the amount of territory it then held, but would drive Garnett's troops all the way back to Staunton if possible. Before this reply reached General Garnett, however, the Northern forces had already struck.

While making plans for possible future operations, Garnett was also busy preparing his position against the possibility of an attack. Both the position on Laurel Hill and Camp Garnett on Rich Mountain were fortified with breastworks of timber and earth and with gun emplacements. In addition he attempted to close the minor roads and paths over Laurel Hill as far north as St. George, by having trees felled across them. He did not have enough men to post pickets at these roads. However, to guard against a flank movement and an attack from the rear, he kept a small force at Leadsville, east of Laurel Hill, where a rough road headed north toward St. George.

The exact size of General Garnett's forces when hostilities against him commenced is not known. According to a return made on July 8, he had 3,081 officers and men at Laurel Hill, 877 at Rich Mountain, and 391 at Beverly, a total of 4,349. However, the official return, which breaks the figures down into infantry, cavalry, artillery and

---

21 Ibid.
22 Ibid.
23 Lang, Loyal W. Va., 35.
240 R., II, 237.
officers and men, contains so many errors of addition that it cannot be considered accurate. 25 Jedediah Hotchkiss, who served as engineer for Garnett, had his own estimate. He put the forces at 908 at Rich Mountain, 4,000 at Laurel Hill, and 409 at Beverly, a total of 5,317. 26

Certainly, Garnett had little more than Hotchkiss' estimate. Opposed to this small force was a numerically overwhelming number. Again there is no certainty as to McClellan's exact number. One estimate, based on an average of 500 men per regiment, puts the figure at 9,000 infantry. 27 Another estimate, that of General J. D. Cox, places the number at 20,000, but includes both cavalry and artillery as well as infantry, and figures the infantry regiments at an average of 700 men per regiment. 28 Whichever figures are used, it is clear that McClellan's forces far outnumbered those of Garnett. It was to be the successful use of those superior numbers that made McClellan's reputation and won for him the call to high command in the East.

However, when Robert Garnett first appeared as the commander of the Southern forces, McClellan was still in Ohio. The regiments which had taken part in the Philippi action were scattered throughout the area, and there seemed to be no immediate plans for further offensive movements. By June 19 there were Federal troops at Grafton, Philippi, Buckhannon, Parkersburg and various points along the railroad between Grafton and the Ohio River. 29 Philippi and Buckhannon became

25 Ibid., 293.
26 Evans, Confederate Military History, III, 47.
28 Cox, Reminiscences, I, 50.
29 Cleveland Morning Leader, June 19, Number 144, p. 3, col. 2.
the main points of concentration with Grafton as the principal base for
supplies.

On June 20 General McClellan left Cincinnati for Parkersburg
and two days later went on to Grafton. General Rosecrans was left at
Parkersburg to send troops and supplies forward. On the day he arrived
in Grafton, McClellan wrote to Colonel E. D. Townsend, assistant
adjutant general, telling him of reports he had received which in-
dicated the Confederates were in strong force near Beverly and Piedmont.
However he said that he doubted the "strong force" part and added that
he would, without delay, "beat them up in their quarters..." He said
also that he had a force sufficient to fight them wherever he found the
enemy.\footnote{O.R., II, 194.} The next day, the 23rd, the General sent another message to
Townsend. In this report he sketched his plan for driving the enemy
back across the Laurel Hill-Rich Mountain line and occupying Beverly.
From Beverly he said he would drive the enemy into the mountains east
of Huttonsville, but would not pursue him farther, unless circumstances
made success certain.\footnote{Tbid., 147.} Apparently McClellan was thinking of his opera-
tions in northwestern Virginia in terms of a purely local struggle and
not in terms of relationship to the forces in eastern Virginia. How-
ever, McClellan continued throughout the rest of his Civil War career
to think of his own theatre of operations as the only really important
one. He could envisage grand and rather nebulous plans covering vast
areas, but the only practical plans he worked out as a rule were for
his own command. This was a defect which became apparent as soon as
McClellan was given overall command of the Union forces following the campaign in western Virginia.\(^{32}\) If in early July he could have driven the Confederate forces eastward through the mountains toward Staunton, the entire military outlook in Virginia would have been radically changed. He would then have been in the rear of Joseph Johnston's forces around Winchester and might well have prevented Johnston's troops from taking part in the battle of First Manassas.

McClellan seldom missed an opportunity to issue a proclamation and upon his entrance into western Virginia he issued two. One stated that his purpose was to protect the inhabitants and drive out the invaders. In the proclamation to his soldiers he called upon them to protect the citizens and their property. He denounced the enemy and closed with these words, "Soldiers! I have heard that there is danger here. I have come to place myself at your head and to share it with you. I fear now but one thing—that you will not find foemen worthy of your steel. I know that I can rely upon you."\(^{33}\)

Since the enemy's force was divided, McClellan apparently decided to make his advance in two columns. One of those columns was to be under his personal command, and it was to deliver the main attack upon General Garnett's forces. Whether or not McClellan had begun to develop this plan before he entered western Virginia is not known, but the general position of his troops at the time he reached Grafton did lend itself to such an operation. Before he left Grafton to join the

---


\(^{33}\)McClellan, *Campaign in W. Va.*, 23.
southern column of his command, he made a number of troop assignments so that on June 25 the location of his forces in western Virginia was as follows: At Philippi was Brigadier-General Morris with the 6th, 7th and 9th Indiana, 14th Ohio, three companies of the 15th Ohio, four companies of the 16th Ohio, four companies of the 1st Virginia, and Colonel Barnett's Cleveland battery. The rest of the 16th Ohio was subsequently assigned to this command.

At Grafton and along the railroad, under the command of Brigadier-General Hill, were the 15th, 16th, 18th, 20th and 22nd Ohio and one battery. Other Ohio troops were subsequently added to Hill's command.

Under McClellan's personal command was the First Brigade, consisting of the 8th and 10th Indiana, 17th and 19th Ohio. The 17th Ohio was later replaced by the 13th Indiana. This brigade was commanded by Brigadier-General Rosecrans. Rosecrans graduated from West Point in 1842. He saw service in Virginia and New England, then engaged in coal mining and river navigation in the Kanawha Valley. In 1857 he was head of an oil refining company in Cincinnati. After his service under McClellan and in the Kanawha, he campaigned in eastern Tennessee. His reputation was somewhat tarnished later in the War by defeats at Murfreesboro and Chickamauga. The Second Brigade, under Brigadier-General Schleich, was made up of the 3rd, 4th, 7th and 10th Ohio. Both the 7th and 10th were on detached duty and did not participate in the main operations of the campaign. Attached to headquarters were Captains Barker's and Burdsal's companies of cavalry; Captains

Have's and Loomis' batteries; as well as a few odd companies of infantry and Co. I, 4th U. S. Artillery. The troops forming the wing under McClellan concentrated slowly around Buckhannon, while Morris' troops at Philippi dug trenches and prepared to defend themselves should Garnett move against them from Laurel Hill.

General Hill's forces spread themselves gradually farther and farther eastward, primarily to protect the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad from possible attack. Colonel Charles Whittlesey, chief engineer of the Ohio troops, spent several days in the first week of July investigating the territory between Rowlesburg and Red House, Md. As a result of his findings, troops were sent to West Union, where a blockhouse was built out of an old barn. In addition, the town of Oakland, Maryland, was occupied by Union forces. Thus McClellan was in a position to send troops south through St. George to attack Garnett's position from the rear or to cut off the retreat of any force which tried to escape toward Romney, should a frontal attack on the Laurel Hill-Rich Mountain line prove successful.

On July 2, McClellan arrived in Buckhannon where he sent a report to Townsend in which he asked him to assure General Scott that "no prospect of brilliant victory shall induce me to depart from my intention of gaining success by maneuvering rather than by fighting. I will not throw these raw men of mine into the teeth of artillery and intrenchments if it is possible to avoid it. Say to the General, too, that I am trying to follow a lesson long ago learned from him, i.e.,

not to move until I know everything is ready, and then to move with the utmost rapidity and energy." He spoke also of executing a movement like that of Gerro Gordo in the Mexican War. He had in mind a flank attack against the Confederate position on Rich Mountain. This seemingly great regard for General Scott lasted only until McClellan took command in Washington, after which he came to feel that Scott was a useless burden to him and he turned against the old officer.  

On July 6 General Morris was ordered to advance with his command to Belington, which he was to occupy, and to keep a close watch on General Garnett. He was to be constantly ready to pursue, should the Confederates retreat, and was to try to convince Garnett that the main attack would be against him. Morris was not, at that time, in the good graces of his commanding general. On July 2, while still in Philippi, he had written to McClellan asking for reinforcements, as he had heard a rumor that Garnett was going to attack him. The general replied, in a very scathing letter, that Morris could have no reinforcements, that he, McClellan, was going to handle the really difficult and dangerous part of the work, and that if his subordinate asked again for reinforcements he would be relieved of his command and returned to Indiana. Actually, McClellan himself soon came to feel that the bulk of the Confederate force was at Laurel Hill, which it was. He became convinced that General Garnett had at least 10,000 men of whom only

37 O.R., II, 199.
38 Williams, Lincoln and His Generals, 32.
39 McClellan, Campaign in W. Va., 26.
40 O.R., II, 208-209.
2,000 were at Rich Mountain. Thus, by his own estimate, Morris might well be outnumbered, yet McClellan severely criticized him for asking for additional troops. General J. D. Cox said, "If General Garnett had been as strong as McClellan believed him, he had abundant time and means to overwhelm Morris, who lay four days in easy striking distance, while the National Commander delayed attacking Pegram; and had Morris been beaten, Garnett would have been as near Clarksburg as his opponent, and there would have been a race for the railroad." 

As soon as Morris' troops had reached Belington, skirmishing began. This continued until Garnett retreated and included one engagement of sufficient proportions to be called a battle. The Union forces were all put into a line of battle, except for one regiment which was kept in reserve. On July 8, a Confederate force made a light attack upon the Federal pickets. The 14th Ohio, 9th Indiana and some artillery were involved and the Confederate force was driven back. The Northern forces suffered four killed, six wounded and one missing, while the Confederates apparently reported no casualties. This little skirmish was dignified with the name of the Battle of Laurel Hill, or Belington. Further skirmishing took place until Garnett's retreat, and a more extensive engagement might have taken place had the weather been better. Rainstorms were frequent during the time the two little

\[^{41}\] Ibid., 203-204.  
\[^{42}\] Cox, Reminiscences, I, 58.  
armies opposed each other.\textsuperscript{44} When not skirmishing, the Union soldiers occupied themselves by carving pipes and trinkets from laurel roots.\textsuperscript{45}

McClellan, meanwhile, was also advancing. When he had sent his orders on July 6 to Morris, he had indicated that he would occupy Middle Fork Bridge on the 7th, Roaring Creek Bridge on the 8th, and perhaps Beverly on the 8th also.\textsuperscript{46} He fell somewhat behind that schedule. He was thinking farther ahead than Beverly, however. On the 7th he wrote to Townsend to ask whether he should move on to Staunton or start an offensive toward Wytheville, Virginia. Townsend replied that General Scott feared an operation toward either place would result in over-extension of McClellan's lines.\textsuperscript{47}

His command had its first brush with the Confederates on the 6th. A scouting party had been sent out to Middle Fork Bridge. This force had been attacked and one was killed and four wounded. When the news of the attack was received at McClellan's camp at Buckhannon, the general sent four companies of infantry and 20 mounted men to rescue the scouting force. After going about eight miles the rescue expedition met the scouting party coming back, and both returned to camp.\textsuperscript{48}

On the 8th, part of McClellan's force moved to Middle Fork Bridge. While there a Confederate force under Major Nat Tyler, two companies strong, came west to reconnoiter the area. Before he reached the

\textsuperscript{44}Hannaford, Story of a Regt., 72.
\textsuperscript{45}Grayson, Sixth Indiana, 36.
\textsuperscript{46}O.R., II, 208-209.
\textsuperscript{47}Ibid., 201-202.
bridge, Tyler was informed by a country woman that a "large army" occupied it. He moved on until he struck the Union pickets, then retired to Camp Garnett.49

McClellan's advance was continued on July 9 to Roaring Creek, at the foot of Rich Mountain. The Confederate pickets retired after firing a few shots. The general drew his entire force up to Roaring Creek and went into camp. At last he had all his forces in position to begin the operation of driving the Confederates out of northwestern Virginia. It only remained for him to find the best way to do it.

49O.R., II, 259.
Plate III
Map of Rich Mountain-Laurel Hill Line
At Roaring Creek McClellan prepared to start his offensive movement by sending out a reconnoitering expedition. It consisted of the 4th and 9th Ohio regiments and Loomis' Cold Water, Michigan battery, all under the direction of Lieutenant Orlando Poe, McClellan's engineer officer. The reconnaissance took place on July 10, and resulted in the discovery that the Confederate works, although elementary in character, were strong enough to make a frontal attack difficult. In the course of the movement one man was killed and two wounded by Confederate picket fire. Two prisoners were taken who reported that there were approximately 8,000 or 9,000 men before McClellan, with heavy artillery and otherwise well armed. Colonel John Beatty of the 3rd Ohio commented on the little expedition and the alleged information that it produced: "What surprises me is that the General (McClellan) should know so little about the character of the country, the number of the enemy, and the extent of his fortifications." Poe had noticed in the course of his reconnaissance that a low ridge ran along the front of the Confederate lines from which it might be possible to infilade the Confederate works. On the 11th, therefore, he led eight companies of the 3rd Ohio and the entire 4th to learn whether cannon might be placed on the ridge. He was under observation from the Confederate lines while doing so, but was not fired upon. He reported to McClellan

1O.R., II, Part I, 12.
that he had found a suitable artillery position and was ordered to build a road to the area. He began the work with men from the 4th Ohio and completed it in the evening.\(^3\) Twelve pieces of artillery were prepared to move up in the morning.

In Camp Garnett Colonel Pegram was thinking of attacking McClellan, greatly underestimating his strength. When he suggested this to General Garnett, however, he was restrained. Colonel J. M. Heck felt that this underestimation on the part of Pegram caused Garnett to decide not to retreat, which he would certainly have done had he supposed the enemy opposing him to have been "even half as strong as he was."\(^4\)

In McClellan's camp on the evening of the 10th, a fortunate occurrence aided the Union forces. A rugged, uncouth mountain boy, about 18 years old, appeared in camp. His name was Hart and his father kept a tavern on the crest of Rich Mountain. The boy was pro-Union in sentiment and when taken to General Rosecrans he insisted that it was possible for troops to march around the left flank of the Confederate position to the summit of the mountain and on to his father's place on the Staunton-Parkersburg Road in Pegram's rear. The boy had often hunted through the area and was quite willing to act as a guide should the general desire it. Rosecrans was impressed by young Hart and about 10 P.M. he took him to see General McClellan. There, after much discussion, he got McClellan's reluctant consent to be

\(^3\)O.R., II, Part 1, 12.
\(^4\)Ibid., II, 256.
permitted to lead a flanking movement under Hart's guidance. He was to take his brigade, the 8th and 10th Indiana and 19th Ohio, together with the 12th Indiana and Burdsal's cavalry, on the mission. Altogether the force numbered 1,917 men. The movement was to begin at daylight on July 11. The troops were ordered to parade in silence, under arms, without knapsacks, with one day's rations in their haversacks, and full canteens. By accident the assembly was sounded in the camp of the 19th Ohio and lights put on in several tents. They were promptly ordered extinguished and the column was formed and marched out with Colonel Lander, a volunteer once again, and young Hart leading the way to the south. A rain set in about 6 A.M. while Rosecrans' force was struggling through the pathless forest. It continued till about 11 A.M., at which time the column had reached the crest of Rich Mountain. The troops were allowed to lie down and rest while Lander and General Rosecrans examined the country.6

Meanwhile Major Keifer of the 3rd Ohio, who was in charge of the pickets in front of the Union camp, was approached by an orderly from McClellan about 9 A.M. Under his belt he had a large envelope addressed to General Rosecrans. Keifer claimed later that it was an order to stop the flanking movement and retire until a better plan could be devised. In any event, the orderly was directed to overtake Rosecrans by a route to the Confederate right, whereas Rosecrans had marched to the Confederate left. Keifer tried to tell the orderly this

and was haughtily informed that he was to be allowed to pass the
pickets unmolested. Keifer warned him of the danger of going further
on the main road, but he insisted on proceeding. In a short time a
shot was heard and soon the orderly's horse came galloping back with­
out his rider. The orderly had been wounded and captured and his
dispatch gave Pegram absolute word that a flanking movement was taking
place. He had already been warned by General Garnett that a possible
attack might be made on his position, but by his right flank where a
cowpath gave the enemy an opportunity to swing round to the rear. Fur­
thermore, he had been alerted by the sounds and light in the Union camp
early in the morning. As a result he had sent a small force to the
crest of Rich Mountain. The Rockbridge Guards of the 25th Virginia,
and the Buckingham Institute Guards of the 20th Virginia had stationed
themselves near Hart's House with orders to watch for a turning move­
ment from the north. The captain in charge of the small force had de­
cided for himself that the attack was more likely to come from the
south and had sent out pickets in that direction.

When the orderly was captured, Pegram decided to reinforce
the little troops at Hart's House and accordingly sent Captain Julius
DeLagnel with one gun, a company of cavalry and two infantry companies
to the summit. This strengthened the force there to approximately
310 men.

7Keifer, Rich Mountain, 8-9.
8Evans, Confederate Military History, III, 48.
9Ibid.
10Ibid., II, 215.
About 2 or 3 P.M., Rosecrans' column, with the 10th Indiana at its head, approached the road at Hart's House and struck the Confederate pickets who opened fire. The Union force advanced, pushing the pickets back. The discovery of the Confederate troops very nearly cost young Hart his life. He had assured Rosecrans when they started out that there were no Confederate troops at the summit. When the Federal troops were fired upon, it was assumed that Hart was treacherously trying to lead them into ambush. However, he was able to convince the Union officers of his sincerity and was spared.\(^{11}\)

Rosecrans' troops pushed through dense underbrush until just before they reached the road, when they emerged into fairly open forest land. At once they were received by musketry and cannon fire. The one six-pounder which the Confederates had at the pass was commanded by Lieutenant Charles Statham who had the gun swung around to face south at the first fire of the pickets. The few companies of infantry were partly protected by a hastily constructed log breastwork on the north side of the road.\(^{12}\) The first few rounds of the six-pounder were spherical shells, well aimed. Under the artillery and musket fire the Federal troops were forced to retire. Rosecrans then got three regiments in line with skirmishers out, and in about 20 minutes the fight was renewed. Statham had moved his gun a little higher on the slope north of the road and again opened on the advancing Federals. After considerable rapid firing, the Union troops retreated. The Confederate soldiers, thinking they had won final victory, gave loud shouts.\(^{13}\)

\(^{12}\)Evans, *Confederate Military History*, III, 48.
However, the battle was far from over. General Rosecrans extended his lines with part of one or two regiments in column ready to deliver a final charge whenever the fire of the rest of the troops in line should have sufficiently weakened the enemy. Thus, the Federals advanced slowly for a time, while pouring a severe fire on the Confederate line.

The Southerners suffered greatly. The artillery horses were hard hit and those attached to the caisson bolted at the height of the fight, heading down the mountain toward Camp Garnett. That left the gun with only the small amount of ammunition left in the limber chest. Statham did move his gun once more before the battle ended, taking it near a small log stable, behind which the horses were led for protection. By this time the artillerymen were falling fast. The sergeant was shot through the body and both legs, another man had an arm splintered, another was killed instantly by a ball in the head. Toward the end of the fight Captain DeLagnel, who had already had his horse shot from under him, ran to the gun to help Lieutenant Statham and his few remaining men in serving it. He helped fire only three or four rounds when he was struck in the side and hand. It was at this time that Rosecrans, seeing signs of yielding on the part of the Confederates, ordered the final charge in which almost the entire Union force participated. The Southern force was outflanked on both sides and DeLagnel, although almost unconscious from his wounds, ordered his men to retreat by an old road to the northeast, which led down the mountain to Beverly. Lieutenant Statham was wounded just as the retreat began.

14 Ibid., 215-216.
15 Ibid., 271.
16 Ibid., 216.
DeLagnel managed to escape from the field and reached the house of a mountaineer, where he was cared for until his recovery. In the middle of August he was well enough to try to reach the Confederate lines near Monterey. At one of the picket posts of the 3rd Ohio he was stopped as he tried to pass in the guise of a farm hand. He might have succeeded if he had not been carrying cavalry boots, which aroused the soldiers' suspicions. He was taken to see the captain in charge, to whom he confessed his identity and was made a prisoner of war. Within a short time he was talking to a former comrade-in-arms of the U. S. Army, General J. J. Reynolds, a West Point classmate.

The battle at Hart's House had lasted from 2 or 3 P.M. to about 6 P.M. with DeLagnel's 310 men holding off Rosecrans' 1,917 for three or four hours. The Union forces lost 12 killed and 40 wounded, while the Confederates had about one-third of their troops killed, wounded or captured.

Down in Camp Garnett, Pegram had been suffering the torture of indecision. He feared both a flank and a frontal attack. Some slight firing had taken place at the camp, when Major Keifer of the 3rd Ohio had ridden toward it with a small force. The Federals had been turned back by the fire of one cannon.

When the firing at Hart's House began, Pegram prepared a relief column to go to DeLagnel's aid. Six companies of infantry and

---

17 Ibid., 271.  
18 Evans, *Confederate Military History*, IV, 835.  
20 Evans, *Confederate Military History*, III, 49.  
another of his four guns were started up the mountain, Pegram with them. On the way the runaway caisson of DeLagnel's force came down the road, striking and overturning the gun on the way up. Before the infantry reached Hart's House it was discovered that the troops there had been forced to retreat. At this point Pegram, after hasty consultation with his officers, decided it would be suicide to attack the Union force and ordered Major Nat Tyler to lead the five companies of the 20th Virginia and the one of the 25th Virginia either to join General Garnett at Laurel Hill, or to Join Colonel William Scott with his 44th Virginia, near Beverly. It was about 6:30 P.M. when this decision was reached, and Pegram turned about to go back down to Camp Garnett. He kept to the woods for fear the Federal troops were on the road. As a result he soon lost his way and did not reach camp, about two miles away by the road, until nearly midnight. He had been injured by a fall from his horse while going down and was exhausted from the day's activity.22

While the action on Rich Mountain was taking place, McClellan had drawn up his remaining troops, ready to assault Camp Garnett, when Rosecrans delivered his attack. Between 2 and 3 P.M. shots were heard in the rear of the fortifications, then volleys of musketry and artillery. The Union troops immediately prepared to attack. General McClellan and his staff galloped up and the troops watched expectantly. He halted a short distance from Colonel Beatty of the 3rd Ohio and sat on his horse listening to the sounds of battle. Beatty said indecision

22Evans, Confederate Military History, IV, 835.
was "stamped on every line of his countenance," while the battle seemed to grow fiercer in the enemy's rear. The firing finally did die out without any order to advance being given and the soldiers became disheartened with the belief that Rosecrans' force had been destroyed. This belief lasted through the night.  

Back in Camp Garnett about 11 P.M., Colonel Heck, not having heard anything from Pegram, called together the other officers. After a hurried council of war, it was decided to hold their position. When Pegram arrived at midnight he ordered Heck to take the command and withdraw under the guidance of Jed Hotchkiss over the mountain to Beverly. Pegram felt himself too exhausted to make the trip. The march was taken up about 1 A.M. with Captain R. D. Lilley's company from Augusta County in the advance. The troops first filed northward from the extreme right of the works, then northeastward, and finally eastward across the mountain. The night was a very bad one. Rain poured down in torrents and the forest through which the troops passed was in places swampy, in others rocky and everywhere the trip was obstructed by fallen trees and dense thickets. At one point, shortly after leaving camp, a low whistle was heard on the right. Most of the line halted while Hotchkiss replied with another whistle, and then gave the order to press on. Hotchkiss learned later from a prisoner that he had passed a Union regiment which might have fired upon him if he had not replied to the whistle. About daylight the crest of the mountain was reached and it was discovered that only about 70 or 80 men had

---

23 Beatty, Memoirs, 27.
24 Ibid., 28.
PLATE XI
MAP OF
BATTLE OF RICH MOUNTAIN
JULY 11, 1861
RETREAT OF CONFEDERATE FORCES
JULY 11 AND 12, 1861
ROSECRANS' ROUTE
HOTCHKISS' RETREAT
RETREAT OF FORCES AT
HART'S HOUSE AND MAJOR
TYLER'S PARTY

TO GREAT MOUNTAIN
AND MONTEREY
followed them. The rest of the column had started out after Hotchkiss in single file, but after they had begun to move Pegram decided he would try to go with them. Word was started to halt the column until he could reach the front, but it got only as far as the rear of Lilley's company, where contact was broken. Thus most of Pegram's men were scattered out along the western slope of Rich Mountain, while Hotchkiss and a small part of it were on the crest. After a short conference, the Hotchkiss party decided to continue. They went down the old Merritt Road along which part of DeLagnel's force and Nat Tyler's troops had retreated, and reached Beverly about 11 A.M. After resting, Hotchkiss' men collected some of the supplies stored in Beverly and continued their retreat to Huttonsville, which they reached about 3 P.M.  

On the morning of July 12, Rosecrans advanced down the road toward Camp Garnett, which he reached about 6 A.M. The camp was abandoned except for several sick and wounded soldiers. McClellan was notified, and his troops advanced to the fortifications. Ten officers and 59 enlisted men were taken prisoner there, beside 21 captured by Rosecrans at Hart's House. All four of Pegram's guns were captured. The Union troops advanced across Rich Mountain to Beverly, which they reached late in the day of the 12th.

There was another aspect to the Rich Mountain affair which must be mentioned. The 44th Virginia was to a certain extent involved in the action. That regiment, under Colonel Scott, had left Staunton

---

26 Ibid., II, 216.
on July 4 and had marched over the mountains toward Beverly. As they advanced messengers kept arriving from General Garnett urging Scott to hasten his march to Laurel Hill. On the night of July 10 the 44th reached Beverly, where it spent the night. Scott reported by courier to Garnett and was ordered to remain in camp that night and to proceed cautiously to Laurel Hill the following morning. Early the next morning the regiment started, urged on by still another messenger from the general. The messenger then went south to meet Colonel Edward Johnson and his regiment and the 44th hastened north. An advance guard of some 14 men was sent out. This was the first such military experience for any of the men in the regiment. No more than three or four miles had been covered, however, when a courier from Colonel Pegram overtook Scott. He brought word that Pegram thought the enemy was working his way around the right flank of Camp Garnett. Therefore, Pegram asked Scott to put his regiment in a position about one and a half miles west of Beverly on the Staunton-Parkersburg Pike, where a road entered from the north. Pegram also asked that Scott take with him two pieces of artillery stationed at Leadsville Church. Finally, Pegram told Scott that he would inform General Garnett so that he would not expect the 44th at Laurel Hill.

27 Richmond Enquirer, July 30, 1861, Vol. LVIII, No. 22, p. 3, col. 1. Report from several officers of the 44th Virginia concerning the operations of that regiment before, during, and after the battle of Rich Mountain.
29 Ibid.
30 O.R., II, 275.
Scott at once sent Captain Shelton with a sergeant to Leadsville Church for the guns and for a troop of Cavalry stationed there. He then distributed extra cartridges to his men, counter-marched to Beverly, moved out toward Rich Mountain, and took the position suggested to him by Pegram. While there, Captain Shelton returned with the news that the two artillery pieces had already been taken to Laurel Hill and the commander of the cavalry troop refused to come on the grounds that the order had not been delivered in writing.

Shortly thereafter a message arrived from Garnett which gave approval to Pegram's request and ordered Scott to defend himself to the last if he should be attacked. He was also ordered to inform Garnett of any enemy movement of which he had exact information.\textsuperscript{31}

Just before he received these orders from Garnett, Scott heard scattered firing on the mountain, which soon grew in intensity. Scott assumed that it was at Pegram's Camp and was either a frontal attack or a feint to cover the movement around the right, about which Pegram had warned him.\textsuperscript{32} He grew impatient when he neither saw anything of the enemy nor had word from Pegram, so he sent a civilian volunteer, John Hughes, to try to reach Colonel Pegram and find out what he wanted Scott to do. Hughes dashed up the road but never returned. Presently Lieutenant A. Cochrane of the Churchville Cavalry came down the road with a few men and told Scott of the flanking movement by Rosecrans, and the fighting at Hart's House. He also said that Scott was wanted

\textsuperscript{31}Ibid., 276.

\textsuperscript{32}Ibid., 276-277.
at the fight, so he ordered the 44th forward with Lieutenant Cochrane and his men as guides.\textsuperscript{33}

Just before reaching the summit, the firing ceased and cheers and shouts were heard. Scott halted his troops and after a brief reconnaissance with Cochrane it was decided to retire to Beverly.\textsuperscript{34} At Beverly, Scott gathered many of the stores and retired toward Huttonsville, convoying a wagon train over a mile in length. While on the way an order was received from General Garnett to the effect that Scott was to retire beyond Huttonsville and try to prevent McClellan's further advance.\textsuperscript{35} At Huttonsville, Scott was joined by Major Tyler with his companies of the 20th and 25th Virginia regiments and together they continued their retreat.\textsuperscript{36}

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., 278
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., 281
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., 283
CHAPTER 6
GARNETT'S RETREAT

While the action at Rich Mountain was taking place, General Garnett was still holding Laurel Hill, where light skirmishing was going on. The General knew that Pegram was being threatened with a flank attack and was of the opinion, like Pegram, that it would come from the right. However, Garnett let Pegram conduct his own defense and did not attempt to interfere. It is not probable that the firing on Rich Mountain could be heard at Garnett's position, since there is no mention of it in either Confederate or Union reports. Federal artillery began to shell his position during the day and he prepared to receive an attack which did not come. In the evening his troops had their supper while still under artillery fire. Garnett, himself, was just commencing to eat, when a shell burst near his tent, throwing dirt in his coffee. He calmly emptied his cup, his servant refilled it, and he continued his meal. \(^1\)

Sometime after dark, but before midnight, Garnett received the news that the Union forces occupied the crest of Rich Mountain, and Pegram was cut off. It is probable that the word was carried by one of the cavalrmen with Scott since the latter had been ordered to inform Garnett of everything of importance at Rich Mountain. There seems to be no report existing, however, which tells who did bring the news or exactly at what time. A Union soldier in Morris' command wrote that the Indiana pickets before the Confederate fortifications could distinctly hear the sounds of wagons in motion, the swearing of

\(^{1}\text{Freeman, Lee's Lieutenants, I, 32-33.}\)
teamsters and shouts of excited voices within the Confederate Camp during the "wet and dreary" night of July 11. The Union troops did not know, however, whether this indicated reinforcements, preparations for an attack, or a precipitate retreat.\(^2\)

Garnett was, of course, in retreat. His force took the road southward sometime around midnight,\(^3\) passed through Leadsville and got to within about three miles of Beverly. Then trees were discovered felled across the road, obstructing it. Whether they had been toppled by the storm or by design was not known. However, about the same time it was learned that Scott had retreated and the way to Beverly had been opened to the Federals.\(^4\) So, without sending scouts to Beverly for confirmation, Garnett assumed that the enemy held the town and that his retreat southward was cut off. He turned his force about and began to retreat northward, passing again through Leadsville, up Leading Creek, across Cheat Mountain, and down one of the branches of the Cheat River. It was his intention to pass around the northern end of the mountains east of Laurel Hill, then turn south and rejoin the rest of his command at Monterey or McDowell, or wherever it might be found. It was rather a desperate plan, since Garnett knew little of the roads which were very bad as a result of the rainy weather. In addition, his forces would have to pass about fifteen miles south of the Baltimore and Ohio railroad, which the Federals might use to concentrate troops to cut off his retreat. Indeed, Garnett did not know, when he began

\(^2\)Hannaford, \textit{Story of a Regt.}, 74.
\(^3\)Evans, \textit{Confederate Military History}, III, 54.
\(^4\)Richmond \textit{Enquirer}, July 30, Vol. LVI, No. 27, p. 4, Col. 1.
his northeasterly retreat, but that Union forces might already be sta­tioned across his path.

There was, judging from contemporary maps, another possibili­ty of retreat. A road led directly eastward across the mountain ridges to the valley of the south branch of the Potomac. Whether Garnett knew of this road and, if he did, why he did not attempt to use it is difficult to answer. Actually he could have continued his march southward, through Beverly, because that town was not occupied by Union troops at the time he approached it. McClellan’s forces did not enter it until late in the morning of July 12. About 7 A.M. on that same day a sergeant of Morris’ command came rushing into headquarters shout­ing, "They are gone, they are all gone. We can see no one in their camp." Captain Benham, Morris’ engineer officer, rode at once into the Confederate works and saw signs that the Southern troops had left in great haste. Pursuit was slowly organized. The 6th Indiana was not ordered to occupy the Confederate camp until nearly 2 P.M. Even then the regiment was slow to carry out the order, since many of the men had wandered away from camp. Some curious Union soldiers were already in the Confederate fortifications hunting relics and souvenirs.

Late in the afternoon a part of Morris’ command moved across Laurel Hill and by 11 P.M. had halted a mile or so northeast of Leads­ville. Captain Benham was in command of this pursuing force by order of General Morris. Benham was a West Pointer who spent the years 1837

5See the map in Evans, Confederate Military History, II, 76.
7Grayson, Sixth Indiana, 37.
8Hannafor, Story of a Regt., 74.
to 1847 as a coastal engineer. He saw service in the Mexican War. In May 1861 he became chief engineer of the department of the Ohio. He commanded a brigade in the Kanawha campaign under Rosecrans, with whom he quarreled. He was transferred to the east, serving with the Army of the Potomac, and became known as something of an expert in the construction of pontoon bridges. Neither the general nor Benham seemed eager to push the pursuit rapidly on the night of the 12th. Colonel Milroy of the 9th Indiana urged immediate action, but he was restrained. This failure to follow Garnett at once was probably the result of two factors. The first was the condition of the men. They were tired and somewhat disorganized and ill-equipped for what might be a long and hazardous march. The second was the fact that the orders which Morris had received from McClellan did not arrive until 10 P.M. and only directed him to pursue Garnett "with the earliest light ...." At 3 A.M. on the 13th, the pursuit was started again with Captain Benham still in command of the advance guard.

Meanwhile the advance guard of General Garnett's force reached Kaler's Ford on Shaver's Fork of the Cheat River where it bivouacked on the night of the 12th. The rest of the command was spread out over two miles, the rear being on the little stream called Pleasant Run. The night was unpleasant, being quite rainy. The

10Benham, West Virginia Campaign, 681.
11Ibid., 682.
12O.R., II, 785.
streams which Garnett had yet to cross were becoming more and more swollen, and the roads were heavy with sticky mud.\textsuperscript{13}

On the morning of the 13th, the command was put in motion at about 8 A.M. Two infantry regiments, an infantry battalion, and a squadron of cavalry and a section of artillery formed the advance group. The baggage train followed while Colonel Ramsey's 1st Georgia and the 23rd Virginia, with Lieutenant Lanier's section of artillery and a small cavalry force, formed the rear guard. Before the wagon train had crossed the first ford, about a half mile south of Kaler's, the cavalry scouts reported Union forces close on the rear. Several companies of the 1st Georgia, under Major Harvey Thompson, were detailed to take position to protect the train, as it crossed the ford. Some Union forces came in sight but paused while additional troops came up, then crossed the ford together with Barnett's battery of artillery. The Confederate train and its guard had retired to Kaler's. The 1st Georgia was to fall back also when pressed by the enemy, and part of the regiment did so.\textsuperscript{14} About 450 men under the major were cut off, however, and slipped away into the woods. They wandered through the mountains for three days and nights before meeting a friendly mountaineer who gave them a couple of fat beeves and set them on a road by which they might retire. They did not rejoin the main force until they reached McDowell, at the end of the long retreat.\textsuperscript{15}

The part of the 1st Georgia which had successfully pulled back retired behind the 23rd Virginia which had taken position at the

\textsuperscript{13}Cleveland Morning Leader, July 18, No. 168, p. 2, Col. 2.
\textsuperscript{14}O.R., II, 785.
\textsuperscript{15}I. Hermann, Memoirs of a Veteran (Atlanta: 1911), 20-21.
PLATE IV
MAP OF GARNETT'S RETREAT
JULY 12 AND 13, 1861
—- GARNETT'S ROUTE
next ford. By this leap frog method Garnett's forces slowly retreated. The general's adjutant, Captain Corley, selected the positions for the defense, at each ford. At Corrick's Ford some of the wagons stalled in the river, which was quite swollen, so Corley ordered the 23rd and three pieces of artillery to occupy some high ground on the east side of the ford and hold back the enemy until the wagons got away.\textsuperscript{16} Captain Benham brought up the 14th Ohio and Barnett's artillery and a brisk fight ensued.\textsuperscript{17} When about three full Union regiments were engaged, the Confederates retired to the next ford where Garnett was waiting. The General ordered Colonel Taliaferro to move his regiment about 150 yards back from the ford and around a turn in the road. He also ordered Taliaferro to detail 10 men to be used as sharpshooters at the ford. The colonel sent an entire company, but Garnett selected just 10 men and sent the rest back as there was not enough cover for the whole company.\textsuperscript{18} When the Union troops reached the ford, they found only Garnett and an aide, young Sam Gaines, in sight. Therefore their entire fire was directed upon those two. The hidden Confederate sharpshooters returned the fire. Just as the General and Gaines turned their horses to ride back from the ford, Garnett was struck in the back and fell from his horse. Gaines dismounted and tried to lift the general to his own saddle, but was forced to remount quickly and gallop off when the Federals hurried into the stream.\textsuperscript{19} Garnett's body was left to the advancing Union troops.

\textsuperscript{16}O.R., II, 206.
\textsuperscript{17}Ibid., 222.
\textsuperscript{18}Ibid., 287.
\textsuperscript{19}Freeman, \textit{Lee's Lieutenants}, I, 35.
When McClellan was notified of Garnett's death he ordered the body to be sent northward by way of Rowlesburg. A funeral procession was formed, consisting of a major, two mounted soldiers and two newspaper correspondents, Whitelaw Reid and Florus B. Plimpton of the Cincinnati Commercial. The trip was a hard one, over a trail overgrown with underbrush and obstructed by fallen trees. At one point, the wagon bearing the body nearly tumbled over a steep hill. When the little party got within four miles of Rowlesburg it was fired upon by Union pickets who mistook it in the dark for a Confederate raiding party. Eventually, the body, and personal effects, were returned to members of the Garnett family for burial in the south.

Taliaferro received news of Garnett's death from the lieutenant who had been in charge of the sharpshooters. He retreated with his regiment to Parson's Ford, the last one on the Cheat River, where he rejoined the main command. The Confederate force remained at Parson's Ford for some time, but the Federals did not approach it. After resting, the Confederates, commanded now by Colonel Ramsey of the 1st Georgia, continued their retreat up Horseshoe Run to Red House, Maryland, where they turned east and after seven days of marching reached Monterey.

The forces under Benham and Morris were too exhausted by their rapid marching and fighting in almost incessant rain for over 27 miles to continue the pursuit to Parson's Ford. However, Captain Benham reported the capture of about 40 loaded wagons with much camp

equipage, clothing and papers. Also captured were two stands of colors
and one rifled cannon, taken probably at Corrick's Ford. He reported,
also, the death of Brigadier General Garnett and the capture of about
fifty men. His own losses he reported at two killed and six wounded.22
The Confederates probably lost between thirty and forty in killed and
wounded, as suggested by Benham's report, although incomplete Confed­
erate reports make an accurate estimate impossible.

While the retreat of Garnett's forces was taking place, there
was action along the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad to cut off the Con­
federates. Some of the troops under the command of General Charles W.
Hill were already stationed close to Garnett's line of retreat. Col­
nel James Irvine, commanding the 16th Ohio, had occupied West Union on
the night of the 11th, before any word of the action on the Rich Moun­
tain-Laurel Hill line had been received. Irvine thought that he was
on the only road from St. George to Red House and that any Confederate
troops which might come north toward Red House would have to pass
through his position. He was joined on the 12th by Colonel Duprey of
the 8th Ohio with six companies, giving him a total of 13 companies in
all, with one gun.23 Actually, this force was not on the route of
Garnett's retreat. There was a road running farther east between St.
George and Red House, the Horseshoe Run Road, which Irvine did not know
about. Colonel G. W. Andrews of the 15th Ohio first heard of the road
when he had the sheriff of Preston County draw up a map of the region
for him. The sheriff indicated the Horseshoe Run Road and told Andrews

22Ibid., 222-223.
23Ibid., 229.
that if any Confederate forces should retreat north they would probably use that road rather than go through West Union. Andrews at once ordered out mounted scouts who discovered that the Confederate forces had already passed along the road about 6 P.M. July 13.  

Colonel Irvine was notified, since his troops were closest, and he started pursuit at once. However, the first opportunity to stop Garnett had been lost by poor reconnaissance on the part of the Northern troops. They could easily have occupied the Horseshoe Run Road much earlier if they had only known of its existence.

Word of Garnett's retreat was slow in reaching General Hill. McClellan dispatched an order to him from Beverly on July 12, but it was not until the next morning that the order was telegraphed to Hill. The telegraph line McClellan had had strung stopped at his former camp at Roaring Run. Thus it was 11 A.M. of the 13th before Hill received the order at Grafton telling him to take the field to stop Garnett's retreat. As soon as he received the order, General Hill began to try to get a force together large enough to hold Garnett. He sent trains west from Grafton along both lines of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad to gather up troops and supplies and started east himself on the first train for Oakland. He took with him all the troops he could get ready at Grafton, four companies of infantry. It was about 10 P.M. when Hill and his troops reached Oakland. A second train came into the town soon after with a few more infantry, three guns without horses and 25

---

24 Ibid., 234.
25 Charles W. Hill, Comments on Major-General McClellan's Account of his West Virginia Campaign (Toledo: 1864), 2. Cited hereafter as Hill, Comments.
Other troops were gradually being picked up and brought eastward, but none reached Oakland before Hill left at about 9 A.M. of the 14th. Since the railroad was single-tracked and there was no efficient centralized dispatching, train movements were necessarily slow. Experience in swift troop movement by rail was lacking so early in the War. McClellan blamed Hill for his failure to catch Garnett, but it was the lateness of his own order in reaching Hill and the lack of experience of both officers and railroad men in moving the troops that caused Hill to fail.

Three of Hill's four infantry companies started out as soon as they detrained and moved as far as Chisholm's Mills by 4 A.M. of the 14th. While the troops rested two officers rode to West Union, which they reached about 6 A.M., just a short time before news came that the Confederates had already passed Red House. When Colonel Irvine started his troops in pursuit of Garnett the two officers rode to Oakland to notify General Hill of the developments and the general set out at once for Chisholm's Mills and Red House. He left orders for any other troops which might arrive to follow his route. Hill overtook Irvine and his troops, about 1,300 in number, some six miles east of Red House, where it was decided to discontinue the pursuit. The reasons Hill gave for this decision were that it was thought the Confederates had about 3,000 troops, and that his own troops were fatigued, without food or sleep for some time, and with no prospect of getting either if the pursuit should be continued. Furthermore, it was calculated that

26 O.R., II, 225.
27 Ibid.
the Confederates were at least eight miles ahead and moving as fast as the Union troops.\textsuperscript{28}

General Hill and his troops marched back to Red House, meeting a few infantry with one gun on the way. Part of the force remained at Red House and part went on to Oakland, since there were not sufficient provisions at Red House for all of the troops. Hill also returned to Oakland, where more troops were finally beginning to arrive, and sometime in the night another telegram arrived from McClellan, ordering Hill to continue the pursuit.\textsuperscript{29}

The Confederate troops were resting in Greenland, so Hill started an expedition toward that point. The movement was made in three separate columns, converging on Greenland. One of the columns was to make use of the railroad a short distance east of Oakland. It was late on the 15th when the movement began, with General Hill going with the main column. Before the Federal troops got close to Greenland the Confederate forces, having been refreshed by a good night's rest, had left and retreated to Petersburg. Hill pushed his forces forward, however, and was within 14 miles of Petersburg on the night of the 16th. The Confederates continued their retreat the next day, but Hill had received word from McClellan to halt the pursuit so he slowly returned with his troops back through Greenland toward the railroad.\textsuperscript{30}

One other possibility to cut off the Confederates had occurred to McClellan. He had requested Colonel Biddle at Cumberland,
Maryland, to move to the southwest and get across the Confederate line of retreat. Biddle was unable to do so, however, because a railway bridge west of Cumberland had been destroyed and the distance was too great for a successful movement by foot.  

So the main part of General Garnett's forces which had been at Laurel Hill was able to escape. The first tactical attempt to use a railroad in the Civil War had also failed. But the Confederate force had lost its leader, most of its baggage and one gun, and its morale was at a very low ebb. McClellan was not satisfied, however, and as will be noted later, severely criticized both Generals Hill and Morris.

---

31 McClellan, *Campaign in W. Va.*, 33.
CHAPTER 7

AFFAIRS AFTER RICH MOUNTAIN

When Jed Hotchkiss had led the troops across Rich Mountain to Beverly he had been surprised to discover that Colonel Pegram, with the bulk of the soldiers from Camp Garnett, was not with him. Pegram was also surprised, when he reached the head of the column, to discover that Hotchkiss, with his superb sense of direction, was gone. Nevertheless he continued his retreat through the rainy night and reached the summit of the mountain after sunrise. The officers with him, who were familiar with the country, urged him to hurry on to Beverly. Pegram, however, saw some troops in the valley to the east and concluded they must be Rosecrans' troops occupying the town.¹

Actually, the soldiers he saw were either Nat Tyler's or Hotchkiss', since Rosecrans' forces were moving westward to seize Camp Garnett and did not enter Beverly till the middle of the day.² Instead of trying to move south of Beverly and getting on the Huttonsville pike, Pegram led his troops in a northerly direction toward Laurel Hill, apparently intending to join Garnett. Late in the afternoon he headed toward the road leading from Beverly to Laurel Hill, and after wading through swamps and fording the Tygart River his weary column neared the road. It was nearly dark when shots were fired at his advancing men and Pegram immediately gave the order to retreat. His troops recrossed the river and were drawn up in line of battle. The rumor spread that the Union forces occupied Leadsville Church with 3,000 men, not far.

¹Evans, Confederate Military History, III, 53.
²Ibid.

85
from the spot where the Confederates had approached the road. Pegram led the troops back to the eastern base of Rich Mountain, where about midnight he held a conference with his officers. He told them that he intended to surrender since he was sure they were surrounded. Most of the officers seemed inclined to agree, but Colonel Heck and Captain J. B. Moorman were against the idea. Moorman had already retreated once, after the Philippi fight, across Cheat Mountain by the Seneca Road which led to the south branch of the Potomac. That was the little used path by which Garnett might have escaped. Moorman was quite sure that he could lead the troops to this road and that they could escape that way. Colonel Heck felt that it would be better to attempt escape than to surrender, but Pegram refused to consider the plan and sent a messenger to Beverly, some seven or eight miles away, with a note to McClellan. He told the Union general of the bad condition of his men and informed him that he wished to surrender. About 8 A.M. of the 13th, two of McClellan's staff officers returned with his reply. He said he would receive the Confederate troops with the kindness due to prisoners of war but did not have the power to relieve either the Colonel, or his troops, from any liability incurred by their taking arms against the United States. Pegram agreed to surrender his command and had his troops form for the march to Beverly. He discovered then that Captain Moorman with about 40 men had left to try to escape by the Seneca Road. They succeeded, in time, in reaching Monterey and it may be assumed that all of Pegram's command could have done the same had

3 Ibid.
4 O.R., II, 258-259.
5 Ibid.
they made the attempt. Pegram, however, marched his force to Beverly, where he surrendered 30 officers and 525 men.\(^6\)

The units of the Confederate force which had succeeded in escaping southward were still in retreat. Jed Hotchkiss led his small band to the foot of Cheat Mountain where they spent the night, ready to fight if necessary. On the morning of the 13th they proceeded to the top of Cheat Mountain where, at a place called White's they found the Churchville and Bath cavalry companies and parts of many other companies. It was agreed that the troops should remain there and try to hold back the enemy while Hotchkiss was to go alone to see Governor Letcher of Virginia. The governor had travelled to northwestern Virginia to see at first hand the situation in that area. He no longer had full authority over the Virginia troops there, but in that early period of the War there was confusion and disagreement as to the status of state troops when they were serving within the borders of their own state.\(^7\) In any event, Hotchkiss and the officers present knew the governor was near and so hoped to turn to him as the closest authority who might direct them. Hotchkiss was to find the governor and get his

\(^6\)Tbid., 266.

\(^7\)Hotchkiss was still serving as a civilian volunteer. He was a Virginian by choice, having been born in New York state in 1828. He was a teacher and amateur engineer and map-maker. After his service in northwestern Virginia, Hotchkiss became adjutant of a militia regiment which was attached to General Stonewall Jackson's command in the Shenandoah Valley. Jackson quickly recognized Hotchkiss' value as a topographical engineer and employed him as such. He rose to the rank of major and after the death of Jackson continued to be of great aid to Generals Early, Gordon, Lee and others. The countless maps which he produced during the War are, in many instances, the only accurate ones in existence of certain battles and Civil War localities.
consent for the troops to stay at the summit of Cheat Mountain. He found Governor Letcher at Yaeger's Tavern near the crossing of the Greenbrier River. With him were portions of Pegram's forces, Colonel Edward Johnson's 12th Georgia and Colonel Scott with his regiment.® Scott and his men had retreated from Beverly as noted before. At Cheat Mountain they had joined the 12th Georgia and both regiments had continued to retreat to the valley of the Greenbrier. The men were extremely nervous. A chance discharge of a rifle brought confused firing from both regiments. The result was the wounding of several Confederate soldiers.⁹ At the Greenbrier River the two regiments met Governor Letcher and were halted in their retreat. The governor listened to Hotchkiss' request and at first consented to it. He soon changed his mind and ordered all the troops to retire from Cheat Mountain and join him. On the 14th the entire force retreated to Monterey.¹⁰

General McClellan, with his troops, occupied Beverly and at once began to send out a series of reports concerning his recent operations. He said that he had driven 10,000 men out of western Virginia with a loss to his own troops of but 11 killed and 35 wounded.¹¹ In a later report he wrote that the important results of the campaign were, "the complete rout and annihilation of the rebel forces; the capture of one and the death of the other of the leaders; that this portion of Western Virginia is entirely freed from their presence, and that there is now not one single organized band of the rebels on this side of the

---

®Ibld., 263.
⁹McIlwaine, Memoirs, 190.
¹⁰R., II, 263.
¹¹Ibld., 204.
mountain north of the Kanawha Valley.\textsuperscript{12} Shortly after this he issued his congratulatory address to his soldiers which is here reproduced in full as an excellent example of McClellan's style:

Soldiers of the Army of the West!
I am more than satisfied with you. Your have annihilated two armies, commanded by educated and experienced officers, intrenched in mountain fastnesses fortified at their leisure. You have taken five guns, twelve colors, fifteen hundred stand of arms, one thousand prisoners, including more than forty officers—one of the two commanders of the rebels is a prisoner, the other lost his life on the field of battle. You have killed more than two hundred and fifty of the enemy, who has lost all his baggage and camp equipage. All this has been accomplished with the loss of twenty brave men killed and sixty wounded on your part.

You have proved that Union men, fighting for the preservation of our Government, are more than a match for our misguided and erring brethren; more than this, you have shown mercy to the vanquished. You have made long and arduous marches, often with insufficient food, frequently exposed to the inclemency of the weather. I have not hesitated to demand this of you, feeling that I could rely on your endurance, patriotism, and courage.

In the future I may have still greater demands to make upon you, still greater sacrifices for you to offer. It shall be my care to provide for you to the extent of my ability; but I know now that by your valour and endurance you will accomplish all that is asked.

Soldiers! I have confidence in you, and I trust you have learned to confide in me. Remember that discipline and subordination are qualities of equal value with courage.

I am proud to say that you have gained the highest reward that American troops can receive—the thanks of Congress and the applause of your fellow-citizens.

Geo. B. McClellan,
Major-General, U.S. Army, Commanding.\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 208.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 236.
On July 13 McClellan moved to Huttonsville, then pushed on to the summit of Cheat Mountain. There he intrenched and prepared to hold the pass. He left the 3rd Ohio, 14th and 15th Indiana, Loomis' battery and Burdsall's cavalry under General Schleich on the mountain and returned to Beverly with the 4th and 9th Ohio, Howe's battery and Barker's Illinois cavalry company.\textsuperscript{14}

McClellan has been criticized for not pushing his advance further and occupying Staunton, but it must be remembered that when he wrote earlier of doing this General Scott had cautioned him not to outrun his communications. He did have in mind a possible movement in that direction, as will be shown later. Perhaps the main reason why he was not overly anxious to proceed eastward was the fact that he was still more interested in his plans for moving to the Kanawha Valley. It is also possible that McClellan feared moving into the eastern zone of the war because he felt that he might then fall under the command of General McDowell and he did not wish to give up his independent command.

At Richmond, as soon as the news of the disaster at Rich Mountain and of Garnett's retreat was received, General Lee ordered General Henry R. Jackson (not to be confused with Stonewall Jackson) to take command of the troops at Monterey and oppose the advance of the Union forces.\textsuperscript{15} Jackson was to hold the passes of the Cheat Mountain and the Allegheny Mountain and prevent McClellan from going through Huntersville to Millborough and thus reaching the railroad which terminated there. This was the Virginia Central railway, by

\textsuperscript{14}McClellan, \textit{Campaign in W. Va.}, 31.
\textsuperscript{15}O.R., II, 245.
which supplies were sent to the Kanawha Valley. So serious did Lee believe the situation to be that he planned on going westward himself to see what might be done to recover the lost ground and protect the railroad. Circumstances prevented this until after the departure of General McClellan for Washington, so the two men did not oppose each other in this campaign.

General Jackson soon reported to Lee that Colonels Edward Johnson and William Scott had felt themselves too weak to try to hold Cheat Pass or even the crossing of the Greenbrier River and had consequently fallen back to Monterey. There Jackson had taken charge and was making preparations to return to Cheat Mountain. Before he could begin to plan his move, he received news of Garnett's defeat and death. On July 17 he read a communication from Colonel J. N. Ramsey who had taken command of Garnett's troops. Ramsey wrote that his force was marching to Harrisonburg and that the soldiers were in such an unfortunate state that they would not be fit for service for a month. Jackson replied immediately, ordering Ramsey to bring his troops at once to Monterey and expressing some disapproval of Ramsey's actions. The general reported at the same time to Richmond, stating that when Garnett's troops reached Monterey, he would have, together with the force already there and an Arkansas regiment on its way from Staunton,

16 Ibid., 254.
17 Ibid.
18 Ibid., 248.
19 Ibid., 253.
20 Ibid.
about 7,000 men and would be able to advance and hold the mountain
passes against the threatened Union advance.21

While he was still at Monterey, Jackson received a communi-
cation from General McClellan offering to send to his lines all captured
Confederate soldiers on parole. Only those officers, such as Pegram,
who had formerly been in the U. S. Army, were to be excepted from this
offer. McClellan also stated that Garnett's body was at Grafton, pre-
served in ice, and he was awaiting instructions from his relatives as
to what should be done with it.22 The communication was carried by a
Lieutenant R. G. Tipford of the 44th Virginia who was to be returned to
McClellan with Jackson's reply, as Tipford had not yet been given his
final parole. Jackson replied at once to McClellan, accepting his of-
fer to transport the prisoners and informing the Union commander that
one Dr. Garnett, a relative of the late general, would accompany the
messenger and make arrangements for the removal of his body. The man
who brought McClellan's message, Tipford, was not permitted to return
as he had misrepresented himself as being a lieutenant. He was actual-
ly only a private and was placed under arrest by General Jackson.23
What became of this matter is not known.

Soon after July 19, troops were moved forward to occupy the
crest of Allegheny Mountain. Jackson wrote to the Richmond authorities
that he would try to occupy more advanced posts as soon as possible and

21Ibid., 249.
22Ibid., 250-251.
23Ibid., 252.
begin an advance toward Huttonsville when he felt his force was strong enough.\textsuperscript{24}

McClellan, on the other hand, was turning his attention to another theatre of operations. He wrote to Townsend indicating that he might move through Weston to Gauley Bridge in order to help General Cox drive the Confederates out of the Kanawha Valley, unless Cox should do this soon himself.\textsuperscript{25} Apparently Cox showed sufficient activity to satisfy McClellan, for two days later he sent another message, this time to Scott, in which he wrote that he could easily move on Staunton if Scott so desired.\textsuperscript{26}

On July 21 General Scott telegraphed to McClellan, telling him that McDowell had been defeated at Manassas. He indicated that the general should move down to the Shenandoah Valley with such troops as could be spared and "make head against the enemy in that quarter."\textsuperscript{27} To this McClellan replied at once that his three months volunteers were homesick and discontented and were determined to go home at once. Thus he would have to fight the enemy at Monterey without sufficient men to accomplish anything. He proposed instead a complicated move to join General Patterson near Jamesburg, Virginia. This, he wrote, although not so brilliant a plan as a movement to Staunton, appeared to be the sounder and safer one. He concluded by stating that he would suspend his contemplated movement on the Kanawha until he heard further from

\textsuperscript{24}\textit{Ibid.}, 984-985.
\textsuperscript{25}\textit{Ibid.}, 210-211.
\textsuperscript{26}\textit{Ibid.}, 243.
\textsuperscript{27}\textit{Ibid.}, 249.
Scott.\textsuperscript{28} Probably even before this last dispatch from McClellan reached General Scott, the following order was sent to the former:

"Circumstances make your presence here necessary. Charge Rosecrans or some other general with your present department and come hither without delay."\textsuperscript{29} The general obeyed the call immediately, leaving Beverly for Washington on July 23 with Rosecrans being left in command. Rosecrans did not take part actively in the operations that developed in the Cheat Mountain area as his attention was drawn to the Kanawha Valley region where he, like McClellan before him, began to plan extensive operations.\textsuperscript{30} General J. J. Reynolds was in command of the troops occupying Cheat Mountain and other advanced posts.

\textsuperscript{28}Ibid., 752.  
\textsuperscript{29}Ibid., 753.  
\textsuperscript{30}Ibid., V, 552.
CHAPTER 8
SOUTHERN ATTEMPTS TO REGAIN THE NORTHWESTERN TERRITORY

When the news of the disasters in the northwestern region first reached Richmond, General Lee began to issue orders to try to prevent McClellan's troops from pushing on Staunton or one of the other towns of the Shenandoah area. He first urged that a defensive position be taken at Cheat Mountain. However, the demoralized Confederate forces had already left that area and had retreated to Monterey before Lee's order arrived. Reinforcements, which were already on the way to the northwest, were hurried forward and General William W. Loring was placed in temporary command. His orders were to hold his position in the mountains and reform the broken army of Garnett. General Loring was from North Carolina and was 43 at this time. He had been appointed brigadier general in May and later was promoted to the rank of major-general. He served under Stonewall Jackson in the winter of 1861-62 and served later in the deep South. After the War, as a soldier of fortune, he commanded the Khedive's troops in Egypt in 1875-76. He died in New York City in 1886. Lee himself was considering going to the northwest to see what might be done but was restrained by President Davis, because of the impending conflict in northern Virginia.

2Ibid., 986.
3Marcus Wright, General Officers of the Confederate Army (New York: 1911), 49. Cited hereafter as Wright, General Officers.
5Wright, General Officers, 49.
6Freeman, R. E. Lee, I, 535.
Immediately after the successful conclusion of the battle of Manassas, General Lee prepared to journey west. He took little time in preparation and on July 28 he left Richmond with his aides, Colonel John A. Washington and Colonel Walter H. Taylor. Colonel Washington, who was soon to lose his life in northwestern Virginia, was a long-time friend of Lee. Colonel Taylor served with Lee through the War as his right hand man on his personal staff. When Lee rode westward he had no instructions as to what he should do. He apparently did not intend to take the command from Loring but only to co-ordinate his activities and those of other Confederate units in western Virginia.\(^7\)

He reached Monterey on July 29 and found General Henry Jackson there with a motley assortment of troops, including some of Garnett's demoralized soldiers as well as several regiments which had arrived after the Confederate retreat from the Rich Mountain-Laurel Hill line. All of the troops were dispirited as a result of the recent defeats and the almost incessant rain which had been falling for days.\(^8\) General Jackson who had been doing all he could to get the troops into condition to withstand any new Union advance, was a former judge, poet, art lover, and ex-minister to Austria. He had served in the Mexican War and held a brigadier general's commission as commander of Georgia troops which had been sent to Virginia.\(^9\) General Lee studied the situation and began to see that the Union position on Cheat Mountain was the key to the situation. He began to plan an offensive to drive away

\(^7\)Ibid., 541.
\(^8\)Ibid., 544.
\(^9\)Ibid.
or capture the Federal forces there. On August 3 Lee journeyed south-west to the little village of Huntersville where General Loring had assembled several regiments to protect one of the routes to the Virginia Central Railroad. From Huntersville a road led to Huttonsville in the Tygart's River Valley and in the rear of the Northern position on Cheat Mountain.

Loring was not pleased to see Lee. He apparently felt that the appearance of the latter implied a lack of confidence in his judgment and abilities. Thus he was inclined to keep his council to himself and to move slowly in developing offensive plans. At the time Lee arrived there seemed to be a fine opportunity for Loring's forces to get behind the Union army at Cheat Mountain if they moved rapidly, for there was no major Federal force between Huntersville and Huttonsville at the time. General Rosecrans was not concerned at the moment about a Confederate advance. He was maturing his own plans for an advance to the Kanawha region. Tactfully, Lee urged Loring to advance, but Loring preferred to wait until he had built up supplies and gathered wagons.

While he was waiting for Loring to get ready, General Lee rode down to Valley Mountain at the head of the Tygart's Valley. There he discovered that the Federal army was correcting its mistake in leaving a route to their rear open and was fortifying the road to Huttonsville. Since the main road to the Federal rear was being closed, Lee began to search for some other route for Loring's troops, if they

---

10 R.R., V, 552, 562.
11 Freeman, R. E. Lee, I, 551 f.
should ever get ready to advance. He was not content to let the scouts do this work but went out personally, with his two aides, following little trails to find the desired path. While Lee was searching, the weather continued to make offensive operations less and less possible. By August 10 it had been raining for 20 days in succession and the roads were disappearing in seas of mud.\(^\text{12}\) In addition, the army was heavily hit by sickness, particularly measles, which had been the bane of both Confederate and Union forces since the start of the fighting in northwestern Virginia.

By August 12, Loring had finally moved his main force from Huntersville to Valley Mountain, but no action was immediately forthcoming. The weather was too bad and the difficulties of getting at the Union troops with any chance of surprise seemed too great. General Lee continued to push the search for a route to the rear of the enemy's position on Cheat Mountain, while at the same time he used all his diplomatic power to cause Loring to accept his subordinate role with good grace. By early September, he was having success with both aims.\(^\text{13}\)

Colonel Albert Rust of the 3rd Arkansas regiment, along with a civilian engineer, had discovered a path to the top of Cheat Mountain and behind the main Federal position there. It led from General Henry Jackson's position at Greenbrier River through rough wooded country but it was practical for an infantry attack.\(^\text{14}\) Lee began at once to work out a rather complicated plan of attack. If the assault on Cheat Mountain

\(^{12}\text{Ibid., 555.}\)
\(^{13}\text{Ibid., 560.}\)
\(^{14}\text{Ibid., 560-561.}\)
was to be successful, then the rest of the Union forces under General Reynold's command would have to be held in the Tygart Valley by a diversionary attack by Loring's troops. By September 8, the plan had been developed. Colonel Rust was to lead some 2,000 men to attack the Federal post on Cheat Mountain. Simultaneously, General S. R. Anderson, of Loring's army, was to take his brigade along mountain paths to a position somewhat west of the Federal position on Cheat Mountain where he was to prevent both the retreat of the Union forces from Cheat and the reinforcing of those forces from the Tygart Valley. General Jackson was to move directly against the Cheat Mountain post when Rust's attack began. The main part of Loring's army was to advance northward down the Tygart Valley toward the Federal troops which were posted around Elkwater.\(^15\)

The plan worked very well up to a point. Anderson's brigade started off on September 10, since it had the longest and most difficult route to traverse. The next day the rest of the units started forward. A few minor skirmishes occurred between Federal outposts and the advancing soldiers of Loring's force, but by the morning of September 12 all the units seemed to be in place. The signal for a general assault was to have been a volley from Rust's force on the crest of Cheat Mountain, but it never came. By noon, Lee decided to give up any further attempt to advance. His troops remained in position, however, while scouts were sent out to see if it was possible to make a swing to the west and outflank the Union troops around Elkwater. In the course of one of these scouting expeditions on September 13, Colonel Washington

\(^{15}\)O.R., LI, Part II, 282-283.
Eventually, Lee discovered what had happened to Rust's troops that had caused them to retire without delivering any attack at all on the Cheat Mountain post. The colonel had advanced with little opposition to the point from which he was to make his assault. Several prisoners were taken who told Rust that the Union forces on Cheat Mountain numbered some 4,000 men or more. Further reconnaissance convinced him that it would be impossible to deliver a successful attack upon what he considered to be a heavily fortified position, manned by a force that outnumbered his own more than two to one. So he retreated. Actually, the Federal force on the summit of Cheat Mountain numbered only 300 at the time of Rust's advance, so that a successful attack might well have been made. Had this been done, Lee's whole plan would have had a good chance of success, for the Union troops were considerably scattered and confused as to what forces were advancing against them and where the chief attack was going to be delivered.

The failure of Rust to accomplish anything and the lack of any other good prospect of a successful assault on the enemy caused Lee to order a retirement of Loring's army to Valley Mountain. The losses in the abortive campaign were slight on both sides. General Reynolds reported the Confederate losses at about 120 and those of his

16Freeman, R. E. Lee, I, 564-569.
18Ibid., 185.
19Ibid., 184-186.
20Ibid., 192-193.
own command at around 70.\textsuperscript{21} Perhaps the greatest loss, from the Confederate standpoint, was that Colonel Washington, Lee's promising staff officer.

There was considerable disappointment among the soldiers of the Confederate army over the outcome of the campaign. They had suffered great hardships as a result of the bad weather and difficult terrain and had achieved nothing.\textsuperscript{22} The newspapers of the South also contained expressions of regret that nothing had been accomplished and Lee was at least mildly criticized for his failure.\textsuperscript{23} Lee himself put most of the blame for the lack of success on the weather.\textsuperscript{24} Whatever the cause for failure had been, Lee had decided that nothing further could be accomplished in that theatre, so on September 20 he left to journey to the Kanawha region to try to coordinate the efforts of Generals Floyd and Wise in clearing the Kanawha Valley of Federal forces.\textsuperscript{25}

Nothing was done by the South throughout the balance of the year to try to regain the territory lost to McClellan. Instead, Jackson's troops fortified their position and prepared to defend against any Union advance toward Staunton. On October 3 a Federal force of some 5,000, under General Reynolds, advanced against that position in what the general described as an "armed reconnaissance."\textsuperscript{26} A slight battle developed which resulted in a Union withdrawal after

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., 186.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 572, 576-577.
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid., 574.
\textsuperscript{24} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., 572, 576-577.
\textsuperscript{26} O.R., V, 220.
having tested the Confederate fortifications. The losses were not heavy, the Northern troops having a total of eight killed and 32 wounded.\textsuperscript{27} The Confederates lost only six killed and 46 wounded and missing.\textsuperscript{28} The situation in northwestern Virginia was not in the least changed by this little engagement. The principal scene of action shifted from this region to the Kanawha Valley, where the Union generals, Cox and Rosecrans, were attempting to drive out or destroy the Confederate forces under Generals Wise and Floyd.

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 221.
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., 229.
CHAPTER 9

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE KANAWHA VALLEY

Both before and during his campaign in northwestern Virginia, McClellan spoke frequently of the Kanawha Valley which seemed to him to offer excellent opportunities as an invasion route into the heart of Virginia. While he was conducting his campaign which resulted in the victory at Rich Mountain, a less extensive movement was being carried out, at his orders, in the Kanawha Valley by General Jacob D. Cox. After McClellan's departure for Washington, both Cox and General William S. Rosecrans took part in further action in the Kanawha-Gauley-New River region. That this area was strategically important can readily be seen, but General McClellan greatly overvalued it as an invasion route to the center of Virginia, the Virginia Central and Tennessee Railroads.

The Kanawha region had but few roads in 1861 and they could easily be held in many places by relatively small bodies of men. The task of any Union force in invading the area could have been very difficult. That it was not was due mainly to a lack of unity in the Confederate command in the region and to problems of supply which plagued the Southern forces.

The principal road in the territory was the James River and Kanawha turnpike which entered the Kanawha region along the very narrow New River Valley. The Great Kanawha River is formed by the junction of the New and Gauley Rivers and at this point the turnpike crossed the Gauley River and joined a road which ran up the Gauley River to Cross Lanes, Carnifex Ferry and Summersville. From Summersville
the road connected with Sutton and Weston. A short distance down the Kanawha from Gauley Bridge was a road running southeast to Fayette Courthouse.

The Great Kanawha was navigable for light steamboats to a point about thirty miles below Gauley Bridge.\(^1\) Above the junction of the Gauley and New Rivers it was twenty to forty miles before either wagons or infantry might ford the stream.\(^2\)

To the south and southwest the country was but sparsely settled, with few roads which could be of much use for military movements. The only part of the region which had extensive settlements was the Valley of the Great Kanawha itself. Charleston was the principal town, but below that point there were several small villages, and good roads could be found on both sides of the valley.

General Cox considered Gauley Bridge to be the key to the Kanawha region.\(^3\) Here a reasonably strong defensive position could be constructed not too far from the river transportation needed to supply the defending force. At the same time communication could be maintained, albeit with difficulty, with the Union forces in the Tygart Valley region. Furthermore, the possibilities of the Confederates launching a successful flanking attack were remote. There were few feasible routes and the problem of transporting supplies was great. There were nearly one hundred miles separating Gauley Bridge from the passes leading into eastern Virginia. Few people lived in this mountainous region and it was therefore impossible for troops passing

\(^1\text{Cox, Reminiscences, I, 80.}\)
\(^2\text{Ibid., 81.}\)
\(^3\text{Ibid.}\)
through it to live off the land. General Cox calculated that wagon trains could carry no more than the food for the mule teams on the double trip, going and returning from Gauley Bridge to the narrows of New River, where the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad crossed the stream. This meant that it would be difficult for Confederate forces to attack Gauley Bridge, once Union forces had seized and fortified it. It meant, also, that McClellan's vast plans for invasion of eastern Virginia by the James River and Kanawha turnpike were visionary and impractical.

It was important to the success of the North in western Virginia that the Kanawha Valley be cleared of Confederate troops and securely held, but it should never have been considered as a base for operations toward the east.

From the Southern viewpoint, the Kanawha-Gauley-New River region was important for several reasons. First, there were recruits to be gained. It was felt by General Henry A. Wise and others that most of the inhabitants of the region would be loyal to the South, if they were protected from invasion from the North. A good part of Wise's force, which first fought in the Kanawha Valley, was made up of recruits from that territory. Actually the sentiment of the natives was probably equally divided, just as it was in northwest Virginia. The invading Union troops found many friends in the same region in which Wise was recruiting at the opening of the War.

A second reason for holding the Kanawha was strategical. It offered a direct invasion route to the Ohio River Valley, while at the

\[Tbid., \text{81-82.}\]
same time Confederate troops could pose a constant threat to the right flank of any Union force which tried to advance along the line of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. A road ran from Charleston up Elk River to Sutton, while another, mentioned before, ran from Gauley Bridge through Summersville to Sutton. From Sutton the route went through Weston to Clarksburg and other points on the Baltimore and Ohio. A movement north along either of these routes would not be easy, but it was a possibility and therefore a threat.

Still a third factor was the need to protect the railroads to the east which served to connect Virginia with Tennessee and western North Carolina. The farther away from those lines the Federals could be kept the safer they were.

Salt was another important reason for holding the region. One of the outstanding salt springs in the entire Confederacy was on the Kanawha River about three miles above Charleston. Just before the War the works established there were producing 2,500,000 bushels of salt per year.\(^5\) It was held by some that this source alone was sufficient to supply the needs of the entire Confederacy.\(^6\) In addition, there were important deposits in the New River vicinity. If the Northern forces could advance as far as Gauley Bridge, they would not only control the Charleston salt supply, but would be within raiding distance of the New River salt deposits.

Finally, there was the matter of morale. Should the Confederate forces be pushed out of the Kanawha Valley, it would discourage

\(^6\)Ibid., 190.
not only Southern sympathizers of western Virginia, but of those regions just to the east of the mountains. The residents of the upper Shenandoah Valley and Blue Ridge mountain regions might well feel that invasion of their home territory would follow soon.

Thus the Kanawha Valley area was important to both sides, yet it offered many difficulties to either side which attempted to invade and hold it. The ultimate success of the Union troops, together with McClellan's victories in northwestern Virginia, gave all of western Virginia to the North. Their retention of this region served as a thorn in the side of the Confederates in Virginia during the rest of the War.
CHAPTER 10
EARLY OPERATIONS IN THE KANAWHA VALLEY

It is necessary to go back in time to April, 1861, properly to view the situation in the Kanawha. The South was first in occupying the Kanawha Valley. The governor of Virginia received a call midway in April for small arms and cannon to make possible a mass uprising of the people of the Kanawha area in defense of their homes. A certain J. S. Newman wrote to Governor Letcher, stating that only three companies in the valley were armed, but that every county in the region was ready to send one or more companies, "to defend the state or to fight wherever you may command them to go to fight for the cause of Virginia and the South."1 The day after he received this letter, the governor had another from Robert T. Harvey, warning of the danger of early invasion of the Kanawha sections by Ohioans. Harvey asked that one or more volunteer companies be dispatched to Point Pleasant, at the mouth of the Kanawha River, and one or more to Buffalo. Buffalo was located about twenty-two miles up the Kanawha River, but only some twelve miles from the Ohio River which nearly parallels the Kanawha for several miles below Point Pleasant. The writer closed with the assurance that the people of the Kanawha area were heart and soul with the South.2

About the time these letters arrived in Richmond, Henry A. Wise, a former governor of Virginia, tendered his services to the state and journeyed toward the state capital to see what military post he

1O.R., II, Part II, 23.
2Ibid., 25.

109
could get. Wise had been a champion of the rights of the people of western Virginia in the years before the War and was soon to be one of the leaders in the Kanawha Valley. In the subsequent fighting in that region, Wise, as a brigadier general, displayed a stubbornness in his desire to retain independent command, and a marked lack of ability to cooperate with another former governor of Virginia, John B. Floyd, in defense of the valley. He was ultimately removed from command in western Virginia and reassigned to the Norfolk region. He served through the remainder of the War as a brigade commander in the army of Northern Virginia and was present at the surrender at Appomattox. That he never rose higher in the service was probably because of the qualities first observed in the Kanawha campaign, which were lack of cooperation and a propensity to disregard orders from superior officers rather than to obey immediately and unquestioningly.

On June 6 Wise received an order from Samuel Cooper, adjutant general of the Virginia troops, notifying him of his appointment as brigadier general of the provisional forces of the state (which was confirmed on August 28, 1861). Cooper ordered the new general to proceed at once to the valley of the Kanawha where he was to rally the people of that area and adjoining counties to resist invasion. General Wise was granted wide discretionary powers as to his actions in the valley. He was to supply his force largely from the countryside and defend the valley at whatever points he deemed suitable. At the same time, Wise was ordered to cooperate with General Floyd in defense of

---

3 Ibid., 32.
4 Wright, General Officers, 51.
the Tennessee and Virginia Railroad. If, at any time, General Wise's force should be united with that of Floyd, the latter was to be in command of the whole force by virtue of his commission having been issued before Wise's.5

General Floyd was a former lawyer who had also been governor of Virginia. He had more knowledge of military affairs than Wise, having held the post of United States Secretary of War under Buchanan. On May 23, 1861, he was appointed brigadier general in the Confederate army.6 His career in the service was marred by frequent quarrels and jealous bickering as well as indecision in times of action. He was the commander of ill-fated Fort Donelson which, in February of 1862, was captured by General U. S. Grant while Floyd fled, leaving his troops to their fate. Nevertheless, he was appointed major general of the Virginia State Line in May, 1862,7 and was serving in southwest Virginia at the time of his death in August, 1863.8

Even before he had received his appointment as brigadier general, Floyd had been at work raising a brigade of "mountain riflemen" from the region around Wytheville, Virginia. This was at the special request of Jefferson Davis.9 He remained at Wytheville recruiting and equipping troops and began sending them toward the Kanawha region in July.

5O.R., II, 908-909.
6Wright, General Officers, 50.
7Ibid.
8Freeman, R. E. Lee, I, 602.
9O.R., II, 838.
Meanwhile, General Wise had left for the Kanawha region where he began to raise such forces as he could. He found at Charleston a small force under Colonel C. Q. Tompkins. During the month of June he succeeded in raising a "legion" of around 2,850 men, while increasing Tompkins command from 600 to about 1,800. Thus Wise had a force on paper of over 4,500 of all arms. However, it was an unreliable force, made up of men who felt they were bound to fight only in the valley of the Kanawha. The command was ill-supplied and suffered also from the usual attacks of measles and typhoid fever.

In early July, Wise began to advance down the Kanawha Valley although he received word from General Lee of Garnett's suggestion that he move out of the Kanawha northward toward Weston. Garnett hoped thus to catch McClellan between the two Confederate forces and crush him. As later events were to show, Wise was not inclined to relinquish his independent command so he probably did not relish the idea. In any event, by the time he replied to the suggestion he was already in contact with the Union forces advancing up the Kanawha. He estimated the Northern forces at 6,000 against which he stated he could oppose but 3,500. Thus, in General Wise's view he could not reinforce Garnett, and instead he suggested that troops be sent from the northwest to increase his own command. He felt that at least 7,000 men would be necessary to hold the Kanawha. He noted that one slight skirmish had occurred already on July 16 at Ripley where 120 Confederates under the command of Wise's aide, Colonel Clarkson, had defeated 200 Union troops.

---

10 Ibid., V, 151.
11 Ibid., 152.
12 Ibid., II, 243.
"All we want," he wrote, "is your fostering attention. Give us arms and ammunition speedily and I will drive them into the Ohio River and across and then turn on Master McClellan, with the co-operation of Generals Garnett and Floyd."  

While Wise was penning these words, the first major action in the Kanawha Valley was taking place with troops under General Jacob Cox attacking Confederate soldiers at Scarey Creek.  

On April 29 General Cox had been ordered to Camp Dennison with the 11th Ohio and half of the 3rd. When he arrived the camp consisted only of some wheat and corn fields, and it was Cox's task to see to the construction of a permanent post. Other regiments began to arrive before much work had been done and they took part in the building of cabins and the fencing of a large part of the camp. The experiences of one of these regiments is illustrative of the problems and experiences of most of the regiments which made up Ohio's first contribution to the War. The 7th Ohio was formed of companies from Cleveland, Oberlin, Painesville, Huron, Franklin Mills, Ravenna, Warren and Youngstown. All of the men were enlisted for three months only and almost all of them lacked uniforms, arms or equipment of any sort. On May 5 the regiment "packed carpet sacks" and marched from Camp Taylor in Cleveland to the railroad station where they entrained for Camp

---

13 Ibid., 290-291.  
14 Cox, Reminiscences, I, 21.  
Dennison, which they reached at noon on May 6. After about two and a half weeks at the camp the regiment was reenlisted as three year men and officers were sent forth to find recruits to take the place of those who had failed to reenlist. By the middle of June the men of the 7th had been uniformed, issued converted flintlocks, and were hard at work drilling.

As the regiments assembled at Camp Dennison they were organized into brigades and drill was increased from the manual of arms to close-order drill involving companies, regiments and brigades.

General Cox stated that the first fortnight in camp was the hardest for the troops. The ploughed fields became heavy with mud and remained so for weeks. The problem of cooking for large numbers was only slowly being solved while many an unpalatable meal was turned out. Measles broke out and reached epidemic stages. In short, the "glory" of military life proved to be lost in misery and drudgery.

Cox remained at Camp Dennison for six weeks while, one by one, his regiments were ordered away to western Virginia. On July 3, he received orders to go to the Kanawha Valley but he had with him at that time only one of the four regiments in the brigade assigned him. As has been mentioned previously, McClellan was greatly interested in the possibilities of invading Virginia through the Kanawha Valley. In

17 Wilson, 7th Ohio, 36.
18 Ibid., 37.
19 Cox, Reminiscences, I, 30-31.
20 Ibid., 37.
preparation for such an operation he felt that the Confederate forces occupying that area must be cleared out. Accordingly, he sent orders to Cox to assume command of the 1st and 2nd Kentucky regiments and the 12th Ohio, to call upon Governor Dennison to supply a company of cavalry and 6 guns, and move to Gallipolis, Ohio. There he was to meet and take command of the 21st Ohio, cross the river and occupy Point Pleasant at the mouth of the Kanawha. Next Cox was to intrench his forces at several points and remain on the defensive. McClellan wanted General Cox to hold the Confederates at Charleston until his own forces could advance southward through Beverly and cut off their retreat. He wrote, "Should you receive certain intelligence that I am hard pressed, seek to relieve me by a rapid advance on Charleston, but place no credit in rumors, for," he confidently stated, "I shall be successful." Finally, Cox was ordered to repress any local outbreaks of rebellion which might occur in the Kanawha area.

General Cox left for the Kanawha on July 7, taking with him several companies of the 11th Ohio. This regiment had not been assigned to him by McClellan but Cox felt he would need it because the Kentucky regiments were not fully equipped and ready for combat. At Gallipolis he found a cavalry company of about 60 men armed with Sharps carbines, pistols and sabres. Unfortunately they had neither uniforms nor horse equipage and the caps of the self-primers on the carbines

21 O.R., II, 195.
22 Ibid., 197.
23 Ibid.
24 Ibid.
were found to be unreliable.\(^{26}\) As a result, the little company could not be used for several days until these problems had been taken care of. The other regiments began to arrive and were sent across the Ohio. The 12th and 21st led the advance up the Kanawha, with Thirteen-Mile Creek their first objective. At that point roads from the little villages of Ripley and Letart joined the Kanawha road. The 1st Kentucky was taken by steamer to Guyandotte, to protect the region about that town. It was to move later along the road to Red House on the Kanawha.\(^{27}\) The 2nd Kentucky was sent to Ripley where it was to march on a road parallel to the Kanawha to Sissonville, keeping in communication with Cox across the country.\(^{28}\) The 11th Ohio remained at Point Pleasant as a reserve for about four days, then also moved up the Kanawha.\(^{29}\)

As the Union troops prepared to advance toward Charleston they already had some knowledge of the size of their enemy's force. Quite a few natives of the region seemed glad to supply information about Wise's army. One such informant was a man who gave the appearance of a wealthy Englishman. He had taken a room in the hotel in Charleston in which General Wise was staying, met the general and soon seemed to enjoy his confidence. As Cox was starting his advance, this man arrived with fairly accurate information on the size of Wise's force. Even the names of some of the Confederate companies were

\(^{26}\text{Ibid.}, 417.\)
\(^{27}\text{Ibid.}\)
\(^{28}\text{Ibid.}\)
supplied, such as the Richmond Blues, New River Tigers, Kanawha Rifles, and Shaw's Sharpshooters.\(^3\)

Evidently no accurate information of the disposition of the Confederate forces was supplied, for the Union advance up the valley was made slowly. Scouts were constantly kept well ahead of the marching columns which were moving up both sides of the Kanawha River. In addition, each column kept skirmishers out immediately to the front and on the flank. The baggage as well as a reserve regiment was carried by steamers.\(^3\)

By July 16 General Cox was at the mouth of Pocotaligo Creek on the north bank of the Kanawha, while his force on the south bank was nearing Scarey Creek. He was concentrating his troops. Both the 1st and 2nd Kentucky regiments were on the march from their detached positions to join him. Some light skirmishing with the enemy had been carried on all during the advance but the casualties had been slight.\(^3\)

On July 16 General Cox decided to attack the Confederate position at Scarey Creek. Accordingly he sent the 12th Ohio and two companies of the 21st, with a section of artillery.\(^3\) This little force was ferried to the south side of the river and advanced to Scarey Creek on July 17, and there, about 3 P.M., the battle commenced. The troops of both sides were inexperienced and no doubt nervous, since this was the first engagement for most of them. The Confederates were

\(^{30}\)Whittlesey, War Memoranda, 17.
\(^{31}\)O.R., LI, Part I, 419.
\(^{32}\)Ibid., 420-421.
\(^{33}\)Whittlesey, War Memoranda, 18.
outnumbered by some 400 men, but had the advantage of position in that the little stream in front of their line was not fordable close to the Kanawha River. There was a bridge across Scarey Creek, but it was defended by Confederate artillery as well as infantry. For about a half-hour the two forces fired steadily without great effect, except for the disabling of one Confederate gun. Then the Southern forces were seized by a sudden panic and began to flee. Their commanding officer, Colonel Patton, rallied them and they returned to action. The Union troops seemed unable to launch a successful attack across the narrow bridge, so a flanking movement was tried. Three companies were sent scrambling up the wooded slopes of Scarey Creek until they found a place to ford the stream near the range of hills which marked the edge of the Kanawha Valley. Before they could come back down the creek and fall on the Confederate flank, the main Union force had begun to retreat. Their supply of ammunition was nearly exhausted; even the field pieces had only three rounds left. The flanking party retraced its route and joined in the retreat. The Confederates made no pursuit, being somewhat demoralized by their victory and thankful to have come out of it as well as they did. The entire action had lasted no more than two and a half hours and casualties were slight. Probably many of the soldiers had aimed too high, as was often the case early in the War. This was definitely the case with the Confederate artillery which, it

34O.R., II, 291.
35Ibid., 292.
36Ibid.
was observed, had done much execution of tree tops, but very little to
the Union infantry or artillery.\textsuperscript{38}

The Confederate forces had reason to rejoice over more than
the repulse of their foe. They had captured three colonels and a
lieutenant-colonel, as well as a couple of captains. The field offi-
cers had fallen into Southern hands when they had gone forth on the
north side of the Kanawha to observe the battle. This was done without
the knowledge of the commanding general and probably on the suggestion
of Colonel DeVilliers, the rather peculiar officer in command of the
11th Ohio. DeVilliers was to have a long history of instability in the
service. The officers were not content to stay on the north bank but
found a small boat and crossed the Kanawha to see the battle more
closely. By mistake they landed behind the Confederate position and
were captured. DeVilliers escaped from a Richmond prison late in 1861
and rejoined his command at Gauley Bridge, but his later career fol-
lowed the pattern set by his actions at Scarey Creek.\textsuperscript{39}

The Union force retreating from the battle recrossed the
Kanawha and joined Cox who proceeded to entrench at Pocotaligo.
General Wise sent a small force down to scout Cox's position but found
it too strong to attack, so the situation seemed much as it had been
before the action at Scarey Creek. General McClellan was greatly an-
gered by the outcome of the battle. He said, in a report to the adju-
tant general, that Cox had fought something between a victory and de-
feat but was "checked on the Kanawha."\textsuperscript{40} He intimated that Cox was

\textsuperscript{38}Ibid., 18.
\textsuperscript{39}Horton, 11th Ohio, 29-30.
\textsuperscript{40}O.R., II, 288.
lacking in military ability and that he had failed to win the battle because he had not followed McClellan's instructions.\textsuperscript{41} To just what instructions he had reference is difficult to determine. Actually, the Northern troops would probably have won the battle had they had sufficient ammunition. In any event, the "check" was but a short one, for at the end of a week Cox was on the move again in an attempt to take Charleston, and this time he was successful. McClellan had written to Washington and wired Cox that he would do what Cox seemingly could not do by moving personally into the Kanawha region behind Wise's forces. Before he could carry out such plans, McClellan was called to Washington and, even if he had been able to go ahead with his scheme, General Cox would have already accomplished his mission of taking Charleston and moving on to Gauley Bridge.

General Wise had prepared a defensive position at Tyler Mountain, a short distance down-river from Charleston and, on July 24, Cox advanced to attack this position. He had delayed this movement for several days while waiting for additional wagons to be sent him. His troops moved by a round-about route through the hills to outflank the Confederate position. The march was a tiring one for the troops over rugged hills by narrow dirt roads. Tired or not, the troops reached the Confederate position at suppertime and quickly drove in the pickets. According to Cox, the Southerners decamped in a "panic", leaving their suppers in preparation over the fires.\textsuperscript{42} This tale of enemy troops

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{41}\textit{Ibid.}
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{42}\textsuperscript{42} R. U. Johnson and C. C. Buel, editors, \textit{Battles and Leaders of the Civil War} (New York: 1887-8), I, 139. Cited hereafter as Johnson, \textit{Battles and Leaders.}
\end{flushright}
fleeing their meals was an often repeated story during the Civil War and was usually only embellishment.

In any event, the Confederate position at Tyler Mountain was now in Federal hands. In addition, a steamboat was caught below the Union forces, fired on by cannon, and run ashore and burned by its Confederate crew.\(^3\)

The way to Charleston was now opened and after a night's bivouac on the mountain side the Northern forces advanced toward the city. The Southern troops retreated on both sides of the river and did not attempt to defend Charleston. There was a brief delay at the Elk River because the suspension bridge had been burned and Cox's forces had to find boats to make the crossing. Thus it was noon on July 25 before the town was occupied.\(^4\)

General Cox had no intention of stopping at Charleston, as the key to the Kanawha Valley was farther upstream at Gauley Bridge. He did detach the 1st Kentucky regiment for guard duty at Ripley, where he intended establishing a supply depot.\(^5\) With the remainder of his command, he pushed rapidly up the Valley. General Wise made no resistance, except for felling trees across the road and burning the few little bridges. He did not stop at Gauley Bridge, but burned the important bridge there and continued his retreat to White Sulphur Springs.\(^6\)

\(^3\)Ibid.
\(^5\)Johnson, Battles and Leaders, I, 140.
\(^6\)Ibid.
When Cox was some 40 miles above Charleston, he received orders from General Rosecrans, who had succeeded McClellan in command in western Virginia. Rosecrans indicated that Cox should remain on the defensive at Charleston until he could bring a force southward to help him clear the Kanawha region. General Cox felt he was too near his goal to turn back, so he pushed on and reached Gauley Bridge on July 29. He had another reason for desiring to move promptly. The three months enlistments of the 21st Ohio were about to expire and he wanted to gain the Gauley Bridge position before he had to send those troops back to Ohio. The 21st contained nearly one-fourth of his total force.

It was while he was advancing toward Gauley Bridge that Cox had trouble with some of his officers. He related, after the War, that three of his officers came to him and stated that they would advance no further. They seemed to feel that their commander had no more military experience than they had, therefore their judgment should be given as much consideration as his. Cox met this little revolt with firmness, pointing out to the officers that their conduct bordered on mutiny. They retired in some confusion and, so Cox says, at least one of them later apologized for his actions and became in time a capable and courageous officer.

The general had trouble with another set of malcontents. In this instance they were newspapermen who had joined his command uninvited. They seemed to expect to be given military rank and placed on

---

47 Ibid.
48 Ibid.
49 Ibid., 140-141.
the general's staff. Cox informed them that they might accompany his troops but that he had no authority to grant them commissions. The reporters became quite angry and left the camp with the threat that they would "write him down!" They did indeed send reports to their papers which were most unflattering to Cox and his troops. Whether or not the general's military reputation was damaged through this is hard to say, but he was fortunate in being free from the troubles that many irresponsible newsmen of that time were inflicting on other commanders.

General Wise, on August 1, penned a report of the Kanawha campaign to General Lee. He wrote of being threatened by Union troops at Weston and Summersville as well as by Cox's army. The reason for his retirement without a battle between Tyler Mountain and Gauley Bridge he assigned to the wretched condition of his own force. Also, he claimed to have lost from 300 to 500 men by desertion. He asked to be allowed to reorganize his whole force and incorporate the state volunteers into his "Legion". Wise seemed to feel that the Union troops would move next on the Southwestern railroad and he indicated that a larger force than his own would be necessary to stop them. He briefly mentioned that he was in a position to cooperate with Generals Floyd and Loring. Loring was then on the Greenbrier in command of the remnants of Garnett's army. In conclusion he summed up the situation in the Kanawha Valley. He felt that the whole region was disaffected and traitorous. "The militia are nothing for warlike uses here. They are

---

50 Ibid., 141-142.
worthless who are true and there is no telling who is true. You cannot persuade these people that Virginia can or will ever reconquer the northwest and they are submitting, subdued, and debased."

Thus the first campaign in the Kanawha had ended in victory for Cox and his Union forces and defeat and discouragement for Wise and his foot-sore soldiers. It remained to be seen whether the addition of Floyd with fresh troops could help the Southern cause in the Kanawha Valley.

\[\text{\textsuperscript{51}O.R., II, 1011-1012.}\]
PLATE VII
MAP OF GAULEY BRIDGE

GAULEY RIVER

GAULEY BRIDGE

COTTON MOUNTAIN

MONTGOMERY FERRY

NEW RIVER

FAYETTEVILLE (FRAYTETE C.M.)

NICHOLAS GAP

CROSS LANDS

DAWDOOD CAP

TOWNSEND'S FERRY

TO CHARLESTON

TANAWHA RIVER
CHAPTER 11

THE BATTLE OF CROSS LANES

While Wise was retreating toward White Sulphur Springs, General John B. Floyd was moving westward and preparing to stop whatever advance the Union forces might make from the Kanawha region. He had but imperfect knowledge of what had been happening in that area, but was convinced that Wise had been badly beaten and demoralized. In one of his dispatches to President Jefferson Davis he spoke of Wise's retreat as a "flight in the face of the enemy." He felt that the effect of this on the people of the Kanawha Valley must have been very adverse, and requested repeatedly that his own force be properly armed and equipped so that he might do something to relieve the situation. He seemed to have considerable trouble in getting arms in good condition and ammunition which would fit his weapons. It was Floyd's intention to draw Wise's force to him as soon as possible and with this united army try to regain the lost territory. Unfortunately for the Confederate cause, cooperation between Floyd and Wise proved to be at a minimum in spite of the coordinating activities of General Robert E. Lee, who had been sent westward to try to retrieve the losses suffered by Garnett as well as direct the operations in the Kanawha Valley. Lee remained in this northwest, most of the time at Valley Mountain, but both Floyd and Wise were in constant communication with him. Floyd did most of the planning for the ensuing campaign, but General Lee seemed to approve of his decisions for the most part and contented himself

1 O.R., II, Part II, 213.
2 Ibid., 210.

126
with trying to smooth relations between the two ex-governors. In this he had but little success.

While the Southern forces were making their first preparations for renewing the fight in the Kanawha region, General Cox was energetically reconnoitering the country for a distance of nearly 40 miles to his front and on each flank. He had two regiments with him at Gauley Bridge, an advance guard of eight companies "vigorously skirmishing" toward Sewell Mountain, and a regiment distributed along the Kanawha River to protect steamboat operations. In addition, there were some western Virginia recruits organizing at Point Pleasant. He was building a supply depot at Gauley Bridge and was "determined to stand siege, if necessary."  

In addition to Cox's force, another Federal regiment was moving into the Kanawha area. This was the 7th Ohio which had moved into northwestern Virginia at Bellaire on June 27. It had gone on to Clarksburg immediately, then marched to Weston on June 30. In July it was ordered to move into a position which would enable it to protect communications between the troops in the Kanawha Valley and the Union forces in northwest Virginia. This movement was made slowly and it was August 15 before the troops took up a position at Cross Lanes near Summersville. A few days later, because of rumor that a Confederate advance on Charleston was about to begin, the regiment moved 16 miles down the Gauley River toward General Cox's position at Gauley

3Johnson, Battles and Leaders, I, 143.
4Ibid.
5Wilson, 7th Ohio, 38-40.
6Wilder, Company C, 7th Ohio, 12.
Bridge. Cox decided almost immediately that the rumor was false and ordered the 7th, which was under the command of Colonel E. B. Tyler, to return to its position at Cross Lanes. Tyler was told to hold his position and act "vigourously and fearlessly." On August 25, Colonel Tyler reported to General Cox that a large force had crossed the Gauley River and was within two miles of his encampment at Cross Lanes. This was General Floyd's little army, making its first major offensive movement. Both Floyd and Wise had advanced westward, Wise to Dogwood Gap, Floyd to Summersville. The two little armies were not united, as Floyd had wished. Quite the opposite, the two generals began a constant bickering which was undoubtedly a factor in the ultimate defeat of the Confederate forces in the Kanawha Valley region.

While Floyd advanced toward the Gauley River without meeting any Union force, Wise skirmished continuously with the far-flung troops of General Cox in the New River area. On August 6, Lieutenant Colonel Croghan of Wise's cavalry had two skirmishes on the turnpike near Hawk's Nest. A few men were lost on each side with no decisive results. On August 25, another of Wise's cavalry units, under Colonel Jenkins, was ambushed and defeated near Hawk's Nest. Thus General Wise was being kept active at the moment when Floyd decided to strike his first blow. The latter had determined to thrust his little army

70.R., II, Part 1, 454.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid., 457.
10 Ibid., 1457.
11 Ibid.
in between the Union forces of General Cox at Gauley Bridge and those of General Rosecrans to the north. He thought, by thus cutting communications between the two, he would force Cox to retreat from Gauley Bridge down the Kanawha Valley. Floyd even had some vague idea of launching an attack on Cox, if the latter did not retreat, or else moving north to assault the flank units of General Rosecrans' army.

He realized he would need additional forces for any such action, so he continually bombarded General Wise with orders to detach part of his troops and send them to the Gauley River area to aid him. However, Wise sent excuses and arguments in return and kept his troops tenaciously under his command, all the while asking General Lee, Jefferson Davis, and anyone else who might listen, for independent command somewhere far away from Floyd.

General Floyd did not wait for reinforcements, but crossed the Gauley River and prepared to fall on the only Union troops in the vicinity, Colonel Tyler's 7th Ohio, at the tiny community of Cross Lanes. The 7th was not prepared for an attack, even though the commanding officer knew Confederate troops were very near. Floyd launched his attack about sunrise on August 26. The Ohio troops were roasting corn and frying meat for breakfast when their pickets gave the alarm. The little battle was fought in a piecemeal fashion; no one Union

---

13 O.R., V, 802.
14 Ibid., II, Part II, 256.
15 Wilder, Company C, 7th Ohio, 13.
officer seemed to have control over more than a few companies.\textsuperscript{16} Companies A, C, and K, bore the brunt of the fighting, putting up a stubborn but futile resistance.\textsuperscript{17} Finally, the regiment seemed to dissolve and every man took his own course. Even the commander, Colonel Tyler, fled with a small body of fugitives. He had completely lost control of the situation, having no knowledge of where most of his men were or just what was happening.\textsuperscript{18} It should be said, in extenuation of the colonel, that the region was heavily wooded, making it difficult to see more than a small part of the action from any one spot. The colonel managed to find the regiment's wagon train and retreated with it toward Gauley Bridge. He was joined by one company and about 50 men from several of the other companies.\textsuperscript{19}

About half of the regiment retreated in quite another direction. Major John Casement, who was to have a creditable career in the rest of the War and live to become the leader of construction crews of the Union Pacific Railroad, managed to lead nearly 400 men by mountain paths and little used roads to Charleston, about 80 miles away from the scene of the battle. He had gone by way of the Big Sandy and Elk Rivers, and seems to have kept the troops in good condition in spite of the stunning defeat and hard march.\textsuperscript{20}

General Floyd reported that between 45 and 50 of the Union troops were killed or wounded and over 100 were taken prisoner.

\textsuperscript{16} Wilson, \textit{7th Ohio}, 75.
\textsuperscript{17} Wilder, \textit{Company C, 7th Ohio}, 13.
\textsuperscript{18} Wilson, \textit{7th Ohio}, 75 f.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{20} \textit{O.R.}, II, Part I, 462.
including a couple of officers. He praised his own troops for having attacked with spirit and carried the day, and stated that the results of the battle would enable him to hold the Gauley River section and cut off "all communication" between Cox and the forces to the north. Actually he had not greatly hindered such communication, since most messages or orders between Rosecrans and Cox had been going by a different route anyway.

When General Cox heard of the defeat and scattering of the 7th Ohio, which he did on the same day as the battle, he wrote at once to Rosecrans. Contrary to Floyd's expectations, Cox apparently did not consider retreat. He said that he had no fears that the Union troops could hold Gauley Bridge. He had 18 days supplies, except for forage for the horses, and he reported his men as confident, alert and even cheerful. He did warn Rosecrans that the Confederates might move next toward Sutton, in just such a flank attack as Floyd was actually considering. He closed his report on the Cross Lanes affair with the comment that he did not believe the mortality in the 7th Ohio would be as great as it might seem. A large part of the 7th was still unheard from when he wrote this first dispatch, but he thought many men would regain Union lines safely. He was quite right, as the appearance of Casement and his 400 refugees at Charleston soon showed.

21 Ibid., V, 809.
22 Ibid., II, Part II, 256-257.
23 Ibid., Part I, 453.
24 Ibid., 459.
25 Ibid., 458.
For his part, Rosecrans prepared for a counter-movement upon receiving word of the battle. He considerably over-estimated Floyd's force at from 5,000 to 10,000, and as a result he began to build a bigger force than might seem necessary to deal with Floyd. On August 28, Rosecrans wrote to Cox, telling him that all available force was being rushed to Sutton and that by the next day there would be 55 companies (perhaps 5,000 men) at Sutton. He expected to move at once to attack Floyd and crush him. The Southern general was not expecting an immediate attack. On the same day that Rosecrans was telling Cox of his preparations to crush Floyd, that officer wrote to President Davis that the enemy could not drive him away, "even were they disposed to try it, which I think will hardly be the case." As a matter of fact, General Floyd was planning to move toward the Kanawha River to force Cox back just as soon as he could somewhat enlarge his force.

While he was awaiting these reinforcements and planning future operations, both the Union troops under Cox's command and parts of several Confederate forces began to see action. South of the New and Kanawha Rivers two Confederate units were assembling in late August. One of these was under the command of General Augustus A. Chapman, while the second was commanded by General Alfred Beckley. Neither of these forces was large. Chapman had about 1,500 men and Beckley around 2,000. Furthermore, they were mostly militiamen or volunteers from

---

26 Ibid., V, 119.
27 Ibid.
28 Ibid., II, Part II, 257-258.
29 Ibid., 261.
30 Ibid., 266.
the Kanawha region and were not well-trained or disciplined. Neither
general had any artillery and probably but small cavalry forces. Yet
they were quite active in the region south of the Kanawha and, by
reason of numerous raids and threats, they forced General Cox to employ
a large part of his command in guarding the city of Charleston and the
supply route from that city up the Kanawha River to Gauley Bridge.
General Chapman's force even posed something of a threat to Cox's main
force, when, early in September, it occupied a part of Cotton Hill, the
mountain directly across the New River from Gauley Bridge. General
Chapman was in continual communication with General Floyd, as the
senior Confederate officer in the Kanawha area. He requested at least
two pieces of artillery, hoping that with them he might be able to
advance on Charleston, with the support of General Beckley's troops.
Floyd promised to send two cannon as soon as possible, but his own
clash with the Federals at Carnifex Ferry apparently prevented this.
General Cox attempted to discourage the activity of the Confederate
militia south of his position by sending an expedition composed of one
half of the 1st Kentucky regiment under Lieutenant Colonel D. A. Enyart
to break up an encampment of Southern troops at Boone Court House, 40
miles southward from Gauley Bridge. Enyart was successful in routing
the Confederates, "who left 25 dead upon the field," in the little en-
gagement which took place on September 3. A part of the village was
burned and undoubtedly the affair served to discourage the Southern

31 Evans, Confederate Military History, II, 36-37.
32 O.R., LI, Part II, 266.
33 Johnson, Battles and Leaders, I, 145.
sympathizers in the region. General Chapman withdrew from his position on Cotton Hill on the same day as the action at Boone Court House. His withdrawal was dictated partly by a repulse suffered by General Wise on the north side of the New River. Wise had been active in the latter part of August and early September, although he seems to have lacked any real plan for a strong offensive. He spent much time complaining to General Lee that Floyd was trying to take all of his troops and leave him with nothing to command. He also seemed to feel that his former political rival was going to commit some blunder which would not only cost him his own force, but leave Wise exposed to attack from several directions. On several occasions Wise asked to be given a command completely independent of General Floyd's, possibly in cooperation with Chapman, in an offensive south of the Kanawha. Partly as the opening move in such an operation, and partly to occupy his little army so that he might have a good reason for not sending it to unite with Floyd if called upon to do so, General Wise advanced on September 2 against an outpost of Cox's army at Hawk's Nest on the New River. He launched an attack with some 600 infantry and three guns directly against the front of this position, while sending a flanking party of about 300 to strike the left flank of the Union force. The frontal attack won an initial success, but found the enemy too strongly supported to push any farther toward Gauley Bridge. The anticipated flank attack never materialized, as the commanding officer, Colonel Anderson, lost his way in the hills. Wise, therefore, gave up the assault and retired a short distance, taking a position to cover Miller's Ferry, which he

\[\text{ibid.}, 144.\]
used for communication with General Chapman. He also held Liken’s Mill, which he needed to grind flour for his troops.\footnote{Evans, Confederate Military History, II, 36.}

In reporting this action to Lee, Wise again requested that the forces in the Kanawha Valley be divided between Floyd and himself, and "then let us part in peace. I feel, if we remain together, we will unite in more wars than one."\footnote{O.R., V, 127.}

While Chapman was threatening his right flank and Wise was testing his forward outposts, General Cox was trying to discover just what Floyd was doing or might do on his left flank. He reported to Rosecrans on September 1 that a scouting party he sent out under Major Hines of the 12th Ohio had determined that Floyd had no more than 2,500 and only about half of that number at Cross Lanes. The rest were reported to be scattered in detachments at Summersville, Carnifex Ferry, Peters Creek, and on a path leading to Elk River.\footnote{Tbid., II, Part I, 465.} By September 8, Cox received word from Rosecrans that the latter was on the move to strike Floyd. The commanding general wanted Cox to draw Wise as close to him as possible and prevent him from joining Floyd. General Cox agreed to try.\footnote{Tbid., 474.}

Floyd had received hints of a concentration of troops against him and estimated the size of such a force at 7,000 to 8,000 men.\footnote{Tbid., Park II, 268.} Still he was planning an offensive of his own and wrote to General Lee on September 4 that the only thing which had prevented him from being
in the Kanawha Valley, 20 miles below Cox, was a shortage of flour.\textsuperscript{40} As late as September 9, just before the battle of Carnifex Ferry, he was dreaming of such an advance. He mentioned it in a note to one of his cavalry officers.\textsuperscript{41} At the same time he wrote to Lee, telling him that it was rumored that the enemy was advancing on him with a strong force, while his own army was only at half strength due to sickness, principally measles.\textsuperscript{42} He mentioned a move into the Kanawha Valley and said that it was quite within the realm of possibility to reach and cross the Ohio River and lay waste the right bank. This, he felt, would force a withdrawal of the enemy from western Virginia, or at least jeopardize their supply lines. He concluded, "a few regiments now would prove sufficient for this purpose."\textsuperscript{43} In spite of this grandiose planning, Floyd found it necessary to draw his forces together and prepare for defensive warfare. Thus by September 11 or 12 a couple of Rosecrans' cavalrymen found it possible to ride past Cross Lanes and make contact with Cox. They discovered him preparing to push forward at Wise and drive him back and away from Floyd.\textsuperscript{44} While he was making preparations for this movement, Rosecrans had already met Floyd in the first major battle in the Kanawha region.

\textsuperscript{40}\textit{Tbid.}, 271.
\textsuperscript{41}\textit{Tbid.}, Part I, 286.
\textsuperscript{42}\textit{Tbid.}
\textsuperscript{43}\textit{Tbid.}, 287.
\textsuperscript{44}\textit{Tbid.}, 278.
CHAPTER 12

THE BATTLE OF CARNIFEX FERRY

The rumors which General Floyd had been receiving, of a large force advancing against him, were well founded. Rosecrans was moving toward Summerville with several regiments, prepared to seek out and crush whatever Confederate force he might find and ultimately to unite with General Cox and push the Southern forces out of the Kanawha region entirely. General Lee, who was at Valley Mountain, Virginia, at the time, trying to retrieve the situation in northwestern Virginia, wrote to Floyd on September 8. He warned him that at least five Union regiments were said to be advancing against him and advised him to withdraw across the Gauley River if he did not feel sufficiently strong to oppose such a force.\(^1\) Floyd chose not to take this advice but continued to fortify the ground just north of Carnifex Ferry,\(^2\) a position which had certain natural strength. However, should the Confederate army have been defeated in this position it would certainly have suffered disastrous losses, as the only means of crossing the river was by two small ferry boats. The stream was not fordable at that point. Thus Floyd was taking a grave risk which General Lee, and even General Wise, were quick to perceive,\(^3\) but apparently Floyd was not.

Rosecrans' troops started their march about 4:15 on the morning of September 10 and passed through the village of Summersville about

\(^1\)O.R., LI, Part II, 218-282.
\(^2\)The spelling of the name of the ferry in most of the Civil War reports and records is Carnifex. At the present the spelling is Carnifex and the latter spelling will be used throughout this paper.
\(^3\)O.R., V, 160.
8 A.M., having been delayed by a burned bridge. The town was already evacuated but a couple of Confederate stragglers were picked up who said that Floyd was strongly entrenched in front of Carnifex Ferry. The column moved "cautiously but rapidly forward" over four miles of very bad road, through deep valley, then over more open country. The road turning off to the ferry was reached about 2. A half-hour halt was called for the column and train to close up, then the movement forward continued. After about three-quarters of a mile picket-firing began. The 1st Brigade, under General Benham, led the column with the 10th Ohio Infantry the forward regiment. Benham was the former captain who had led the pursuit of Garnett's force. An abandoned camp was soon reached which seemed to convince the general that the enemy was in full retreat. He was cautioned by Rosecrans to move slowly, however, as the latter did not believe Floyd had retreated far. Benham's advance soon uncovered the Confederate fortifications. In one of his reports, General Floyd referred to them as "temporary" breastworks, but to Benham they seemed formidable enough. His brigade was drawn out in a line of battle with the 12th Ohio moving along a mountain path to the left of the road, and the rest of the command extending to the road itself. About 3:30 the Confederates opened a "tremendous" fire on the advancing Union troops. Part of the Northern line broke, but the fleeing soldiers were stopped and led back to their positions by their

1 Ibid., 129.
2 Ibid., 130.
3 Ibid., 147.
4 Ibid., 133.
5 Ibid.
A message was sent by the brigade commander to General Rosecrans asking for help. This was sent in the form of two rifled cannon and a four-gun howitzer battery. At the same time, Rosecrans sent orders to hasten the rest of his column to the front and went in person to Benham's position. Because of the heavy forestation, little could be seen of the Confederate works.

The battle was developing in a rather piecemeal fashion. The 12th Ohio, advancing through the dense underbrush, became divided. The right half of the regiment, commanded by Colonel J. W. Lowe, was moving toward the enemy lines when the colonel was struck by a bullet or shell fragment and killed instantly. The command devolved on the senior captain, James D. Wallace, who kept the four companies skirmishing for a short time, then withdrew. The left wing of the 12th also skirmished slightly with the Confederates, then the commander, Lieutenant Colonel C. B. White, was ordered to join a column which was preparing for an assault on the extreme right of the Confederate works.

The 10th Ohio also delivered an assault. As the regiment, under Colonel William H. Lytle, advanced toward the right center of the Southern works, a battery opened fire on it with grape and canister. According to Lytle, the effect was "paralyzing". Men fell in great numbers, but a part of the command still moved forward. The colonel ordered the colors to the front, intending to storm the battery. Under

9 Ibid.
10 Ibid., 130.
11 Ibid.
12 Ibid., 138-139.
13 Ibid., 137-138.
withering volleys of grape, canister, and musket balls, a part of three companies, A, E and D, advanced to within pistol-shot of the entrenchments and for some time maintained a "most unequal contest." Both of the color-bearers were hit. The bearer of the state colors, Sergeant Fitzgibbons, had the flag staff cut in two and one of his hands shattered. He continued to wave the flag until he was struck in both legs. The bearer of the national colors, Sergeant O'Connor, was knocked down at the same time by a bullet but recovered his senses in a short time and continued to wave the colors, "in front of the enemy's lines." The colonel, himself, was wounded in the leg, and despairing of taking the enemy works, ordered his troops to take cover. A part of the regiment rallied behind two log houses in front of the Confederate battery and kept up a spirited fire for at least an hour. Colonel Lytle's horse bolted from under him when the colonel was struck. It dashed within the Confederate lines and was captured, with a part of his equipment. It had apparently been struck by the same bullet which had wounded its master, and died soon after.

The left wing of the 10th, under Major Burke, rushed through the woods on the left of the road and assailed the enemy's lines under heavy fire. The four companies involved used every round of ammunition, then withdrew. As Colonel Lytle reported, "For men the first time..."
under enemy fire, the conduct of the regiment was highly creditable." It had not achieved any success, however.

While the 1st brigade under Benham was haphazardly assaulting the enemy lines, the 2nd brigade came up to the battlefield but remained in reserve for a time. Then General Rosecrans apparently decided to use the full force of the brigade against the center of the Confederate fortifications. Captain George L. Hartsuff, Rosecrans' adjutant, delivered the order to Colonel Robert L. McCook, commander of the 2nd brigade. Hartsuff then led the column toward the battle and indicated the point at which the intrenchments were to be stormed. The 9th Ohio was in the lead, followed by the 28th and 47th. After three companies of the 9th had passed through a cornfield immediately in front of the Union force and had commenced the assault, Captain Hartsuff returned from Rosecrans with word that the assault was called off. The brigade, minus the three companies of the 9th, was placed at once in such a position as to be immediately available, but out of the enemy's line of fire. Meanwhile, companies A, B and C of the 9th Ohio had deployed and were pressing the attack on the Confederate position as though the entire brigade was supporting them. They got within

19 Ibid.
20 Captain Hartsuff was a regular army officer who was appointed brigadier general of volunteers in 1862. He was severely wounded at Sharpsburg but recovered to become a major general and commanded the 23rd Army Corps in Burnside's campaign in East Tennessee in late 1863. Cox, Reminiscences, I, 112-113.
21 McCook was the colonel of the 9th Ohio. General Cox, who was briefly associated with him, both before and after Carnifex Ferry, stated that he was a man of real courage and some ability, and his loss later in the war was a tragedy. Cox, Reminiscences, I, 110.
22 O.R., V, 141.
a couple hundred yards of the works, sheltering themselves behind trees and firing as they advanced. It was discovered that a section of the Confederate intrenchments jutted out at almost right angles to the main works. When this line was discovered the Union force was only about 50 yards away and a change of front was made to strike at the line. Before this was done, the Confederates opened fire from this wing. Almost at once the officers of the three units heard the notes of a bugle from the main Union lines ordering them to retire and this was done, breaking off the engagement.

The reason Rosecrans had halted the attack of McCook's brigade was because of information he had received from a scouting party which indicated that the best place for an attack was on the extreme right of the Confederate lines. Colonel William S. Smith of the 13th Ohio had been sent with his regiment to feel out the right flank of the Confederate army. The regiment had marched under cover to the extreme right of the enemy's works and had partly climbed, partly crawled, to the crest of a hill only 100 yards from the log breastworks of the Southern force. There the entire right half of the Confederate position was revealed and the 13th opened fire and maintained it briskly. A part of the Confederate force fell back from the breastworks toward the center of the line. However, since Smith had been ordered only to make a reconnaissance, not an attack, he ordered the regiment to cease fire and withdraw into the ravine to the rear. Colonel Smith then went in person to report to General Rosecrans.

\[23^{ibid.}, V, 142.\]
\[24^{ibid.}, 141.\]
\[25^{ibid.}, 139-140.\]
Rosecrans at once decided to form a column to storm the right side of the Confederate line. Orders were given for the 13th Ohio and four companies of the 12th, reinforced by the 28th and four companies of the 23rd, to launch the attack. Colonel Smith was to be in command of the operation. Smith formed the command and then was ordered by Rosecrans to await further orders before beginning the attack. Just at dusk the order to attack came. The Federal soldiers advanced in two ranks through the gathering darkness. They had to climb over steep and slippery rocks and push through thick underbrush and thorns, which action must have broken and disorganized the lines. After about thirty minutes of climbing Colonel Smith, together with Colonel Augustus Moor, commander of the 28th Ohio, and about 30 of the best climbers, reached the top of the hill just in front of the Confederate lines. The two colonels held a hasty consultation and, because of the darkness and the exhausted condition of their men, who had been on the move since 4 in the morning, decided against continuing the movement. In the course of the withdrawal a shot was fired by the enemy, or else a Union soldier's gun was accidentally discharged, with the result that the whole Union force opened fire. Because of the disorganized position of the troops, two Northern soldiers were killed and about 30

26 Ibid., 140.
27 Ibid., 143.
28 Colonel Moor was a German who had seen some service in the Seminole War in Florida. He was a rigid disciplinarian and his regiment was a model of accuracy in drill. Cox, Reminiscences, I, 205.
29 O.R., V, 144.
wounded. The firing was halted at once and the withdrawal continued.\textsuperscript{30} One other misfortune occurred during the movement when Colonel Moor and his second-in-command, Lieutenant Colonel Becker, were injured in a fall from a cliff and the command of the 28th devolved on the senior captain.\textsuperscript{31}

Rosecrans apparently agreed with the decision of his regimental commanders that the attack should be halted, at least until the next day. He ordered the entire Federal army to withdraw to a position near the abandoned Confederate camp which had been passed in mid-afternoon. A guard was left on the battlefield under Colonel Hugh Ewing of the 30th Ohio, to prevent a possible Confederate counter-attack.\textsuperscript{32} Ewing's force belonged to the 3rd brigade which had taken no active part in the battle but had been held in reserve.

The Union artillery had been actively engaged during most of the battle, but not apparently in direct support of any of the infantry attacks. Two rifled guns, which had been attached to the 13th Ohio, had been ordered by General Benham at the outset of the fight to take position in the road by which the Union column was advancing. Several rounds were fired from this position; then Captain Schneider, in command of the section, found what he considered a better position about 100 yards to the right of the road. A path was cut through the underbrush with the captain's sword and one hatchet. From this new position, in full view of one of the Confederate batteries, the Union guns fired

\textsuperscript{30}Ibid., 140.
\textsuperscript{31}Ibid., 144.
\textsuperscript{32}Ibid., 131.
75 rounds of solid shot and 15 shells. The shot plowed through the parapet of the enemy's battery, "spreading consternation among the enemy cannoneers."\(^{33}\) The Federal officers and men behaved with "great gallantry", delivering their fire with coolness and some accuracy, although exposed to a brisk fire from the enemy's battery as well as from his musketry.\(^{34}\)

On the Confederate side the battle had seemed to be a series of "furious attacks."\(^{35}\) Some of Floyd's troops had never been in battle before, but they were enthusiastic and very eager for the conflict.\(^{36}\) During the course of the fighting, General Floyd was slightly wounded in his right arm while observing the battle from the position of one of his batteries.\(^{37}\)

With the coming of darkness and the end of the firing, Floyd decided that he would be unable to withstand further attacks on the next day, so he ordered a withdrawal across the Gauley River.\(^{38}\) The retreat was made in fairly good order, only one caisson and some baggage being lost over a precipice on the road down to the ferry. The river was crossed on a hastily built foot bridge and in the two small ferry boats, and Floyd's troops were several miles away before the Union troops realized it.\(^{39}\) Floyd continued his retreat to Dogwood Gap

\(^{33}\) Ibid., 140.  
\(^{34}\) Ibid.  
\(^{35}\) Riddle, "Reminiscences," S.H.S.P., XI, 93.  
\(^{36}\) Ibid.  
\(^{37}\) Ibid.  
\(^{38}\) O.R., V, 147.  
\(^{39}\) Riddle, "Reminiscences," S.H.S.P., XI, 94.
where he occupied himself with writing reports of the battle and accus­
ing Wise of failure to support him. He claimed, in a report to the
Confederate Secretary of War, that, had Wise's force joined him, he
could have defeated Rosecrans and moved on to the Kanawha Valley.\(^{40}\)

General Rosecrans received word on the morning of September
11 that the Confederates had retreated. A runaway Negro brought the
news and Colonel Ewing was ordered to check the report. He moved with­
out opposition into the Confederate camp.\(^{41}\) Several sick and wounded
were captured, as well as some supplies. Floyd had destroyed his
bridge and scuttled the ferry boats and no pursuit could be made im­
mediately as the river was deep and swift.\(^{42}\)

The Union losses in the battle had reached 17 killed and 141
wounded, with the 10th Ohio suffering nearly one-third of these casual­
ties.\(^{43}\) Floyd reported his loss at only 20 wounded.\(^{44}\)

Both sides could and did claim victory, the Confederates be­
cause they had stopped the Union assault, and the Northern side because
the Southern army had retreated. Actually, the battle was not very
credible from the Union standpoint because of the lack of coordina­
tion among the various units. The commander, Rosecrans, never seemed
to have his troops well in hand, nor did he have a very clear picture
of the Confederate position or the action of his own troops. This was
partly due to the fact that General Benham had permitted most of his

\(^{40}\) U.R., V, 147.
\(^{41}\) Ibid., 131.
\(^{42}\) Ibid.
\(^{43}\) Ibid., 146.
\(^{44}\) Ibid., LI, Part II, 290.
brigade to become committed before the commanding general reached the front.

On the Confederate side, Floyd was fortunate in not being overwhelmed by the Union attack, for his army would surely have been annihilated had his lines been broken. Retreat under fire across the river would have been virtually impossible. Perhaps the decisive factor controlling the outcome of the battle was the late hour in the day at which it had been commenced.
CHAPTER 13
GENERAL LEE'S ACTIVITIES IN THE KANAWHA REGION

It was September 12 before General Cox received word of the outcome of Rosecrans' attack on Floyd. No sounds of battle had been heard by Cox's outposts which were only a few miles from Carnifex Ferry. An advance against Wise's force had already begun, but the movement was slow. General Cox was not certain just what course Rosecrans would want to take. On September 14 the commanding general wrote to Cox telling him Colonel Robert McCook was crossing the Gauley River with his brigade to open communications and, at the same time, to reconnoitre Wise's position. Rosecrans ordered Cox to have his provision and ammunition trains inspected and numbered. He was to arrange for each man to have 100 rounds of ammunition, including 40 in their cartridge boxes. The general wanted things in order so that when he advanced he might draw his supplies from the Kanawha line.

Since there were several problems to be ironed out Cox rode over to Rosecrans' camp on the morning of September 15. The two officers, for the most part, discussed problems of supply. In addition it was decided that General Cox's command should continue its advance, but cautiously. When the latter rode back to his own camp he had, he wrote later, "a sense of relief at the transfer of responsibility to other shoulders. The command of my brigade under the orders of

1O.R., LI, Part I, 478.
2Horton, 11th Ohio, 45.
3O.R., V, 599.
4Tbid.
Rosecrans seemed an easy task compared with the anxieties and the difficulties of the preceding three months.\(^6\)

The day after his visit, Cox was reinforced by the arrival of McCook's brigade and an advance was made to Alderson (Spy Rock) where a camp was established, called Camp Lookout.\(^7\) In addition to McCook's troops, General Cox had three regiments of his own brigade. While the troops were at Camp Lookout they held daily drills. An advance guard was scouting the enemy, trying to discover where they were intrenched.\(^9\) By September 18 this unit, consisting of five companies under Major Hines, had reached Big Sewell Mountain and it had been learned that Floyd and Wise were not united and that their commands seemed somewhat demoralized.\(^10\)

While at Camp Lookout, Cox had several problems. The most serious was that of supply. The difficulty of ferrying supplies across the Gauley River was being solved by the construction of a bridge of boats by Colonel Tyler's force at Gauley Bridge.\(^11\) However, there was a serious shortage of wagons and teams and a complete lack of forage in the vicinity which greatly "embarrassed" Cox in planning future operations.\(^12\) Before Cox advanced further there was a brief alarm of an enemy attack as it was reported that a strong Confederate force was

\(^6\)Ibid., 113.
\(^7\)Ibid.
\(^8\)Ibid., 114.
\(^9\)O.R., V, 602.
\(^10\)O.R., LI, Part I, 482.
\(^11\)Ibid.
\(^12\)Ibid., 483.
close by. A wagon-master in the Union army had gone out hunting for forage. He had returned greatly excited and reported that an enemy force was encamped to the rear of the Federal troops. Cox was sure the man was mistaken, but a small scouting party was sent out to check the story and returned with the information that the troops were there, just as the wagon-master had said. A second scouting party was sent forth under a Lieutenant Bontecon of the 2nd Kentucky. He had done considerable scouting work before and was regarded as quite reliable. However, when he returned at nightfall, he confirmed the report. He had even crept close to the camp and counted the tents until challenged by the guard when he ran through a thicket to escape. By his account the enemy force was about three miles away. Cox determined to attack. Accordingly, McCook's brigade moved at dawn to encircle the enemy and drive him toward Cox's brigade which was to remain at the camp. McCook's troops tramped through the forested hills until his guides told the colonel that they were almost upon the enemy. McCook went forward with a small skirmishing party and almost at once discovered what he had begun to suspect on the march—that his troops had circled through tangled forests and steep hills and were prepared to attack their own camp. The whole ridiculous affair was promptly dubbed the "Battle of Bontecon", after the hapless lieutenant, and Cox prepared to move his command in the direction of the real enemy.\textsuperscript{13}

Major Hines had reported that the Confederates had made some slight fortifications at the top of Big Sewell, but had then retreated.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{13} Cox, Reminiscences, I, 115-116.
\textsuperscript{14} O.R., LI, Part I, 484.
He apparently impressed General Cox with the possibilities of Big Sewell as a defensive position, for the latter decided to occupy the position with his entire force.\footnote{Ibid.} Rosecrans took credit for the retreat of the Southern force from Big Sewell. He had caused a rumor to be spread abroad that he intended to cross the Gauley Ferry at Hyles Ferry and advance, "if the Gauley ran blood".\footnote{Ibid.} Four or five companies were sent across and they advanced some eight or nine miles. Rosecrans was sure that it was this little ruse which had forced the Confederate withdrawal.\footnote{Ibid.}

On September 23, General Cox moved forward with his two brigades reaching Major Hines' position only to discover that it was commanded by higher ground to the east. For the safety of his command Cox either had to advance farther or withdraw toward Camp Lookout. He chose to advance for a distance of about two miles to the crest of the mountain.\footnote{Ibid.} When he reported his position to his commanding officer, Cox found that he was not pleased. Rosecrans felt that Cox had advanced too far and exposed himself to attack while the main Union force was yet too far away to give adequate support. Furthermore, Rosecrans was worried about the difficulties of transportation, as the distance from the supply base at Gauley Bridge was lengthened.\footnote{O.R., LI, Part I, 486.} On at least two occasions the commander cautioned Cox not to allow himself to be drawn into a fight.\footnote{Ibid., 486-487.}
A skirmish did occur but it did not develop into a general battle. On September 24 several rounds were fired by the artillery of both sides. Cox reported that he had dismounted one of the Confederate howitzers and killed some cannoniers.\(^{21}\) He was in no danger from the enemy, he reported to Rosecrans. Broken ridges partly protected his flanks and his position was higher than that of the enemy.\(^{22}\)

Rosecrans was pushing forward and by September 25 was near Cox's position. He had received a dispatch on that day, from General Scott in Washington, ordering him to clear as much of western Virginia as he could with the means at hand.\(^{23}\) The next day he arrived at Camp Sewell, as Cox had christened his camp. That same day it began to rain, the first day of one of the heaviest rains western Virginia had had in years. Rosecrans brought most of his troops into camp at Big Sewell and waited for the rains to cease.\(^{24}\) They did not cease, but grew more violent instead. The streams soon rose and most of the fords became impassible and the roads heavy and slippery with mud. Transportation became ever more difficult.\(^{25}\) At Charleston, far to the rear, several companies of the 7th Ohio were forced to seek higher ground. The river rose more than 50 feet and flooded most of the town. It was the "greatest flood in that section", according to residents.\(^{26}\)

\(^{21}\) Ibid., 487.
\(^{22}\) Ibid.
\(^{23}\) Ibid., V, 605.
\(^{24}\) Cox, Reminiscences, I, 119.
\(^{25}\) Ibid., 120.
\(^{26}\) Wilson, 7th Ohio, 102.
On the 5th of October the condition of the Kanawha region was so bad that Rosecrans decided to withdraw to Gauley Bridge. First the sick and spare baggage were sent back to Camp Lookout. Then at 10 on the evening of October 5 the tents were struck and by 11 P.M. the trains were on their way. The column of troops began to move out shortly after. The night was clear and the stars were out, but the roads were still a sea of mud and the column moved very slowly. The wagon train bogged down in the mud and the infantry was forced to halt and wait for the train to move slowly on. By the time daylight came the rearguard was but three or four miles from their former position on Big Sewell. However, there was no pursuit save for a small body of Confederate cavalry. By the end of the day the last of the Union force was back at Camp Lookout. Within a few days all of Rosecrans' and Cox's troops were disposed within a few miles of Gauley Bridge.

When Cox and Rosecrans were first beginning their advance right after the Carnifex Ferry affair, Wise and Floyd were in retreat, but looking for a place to make a stand. Two days after his battle with Rosecrans, Floyd wrote to Wise asking him to meet with him to decide how best to stop the Union advance which General Floyd felt certain was about to start. Wise did join him and a fairly friendly conference was held in spite of the obvious dislike the two former governors had for each other. It was decided that both Confederate forces must retire to the top of Big Sewell mountain at once. This

28 O.R., V, 850.
29 Ibid.
was about 20 miles distant, so the retreat was not made until the next day, September 13. The camp which Wise labeled "Camp Defiance" was located near the present post office of Maywood, within a mile of the boundary between Fayette and Greenbrier counties.

Once in camp, General Floyd took the opportunity to write to President Davis concerning his relations with Wise. He complained that the latter was insubordinate and useless as an officer and should be replaced. Actually, he wrote, Wise should have been arrested and court-martialed. He asked that Wise and his disaffected troops be sent to General Beauregard or Magruder. His troops could be replaced with units from the command to which Wise was sent. If this were promptly done, Floyd claimed the Kanawha Valley might still be invaded and the region "rescued" before winter should set in. The general concluded with the thought that his army might reach the Ohio River and disrupt the commerce of Cincinnati and Pittsburgh, spreading consternation all through Ohio.

The day after he penned his condemnation of Wise, Floyd invited the former to a council of war. At the meeting General Wise seems to have done most of the speaking. He urged that the two forces oppose the Union advance at Camp Defiance and his superior seemed agreeable. The possibility of some sort of offensive south of the Kanawha was discussed. The entire conversation seemed reasonably

---

30 Ibid.
31 Evans, Confederate Military History, II, 39.
32 Freeman, R. E. Lee, I, 585.
33 G.R., LI, Part II, 296-297.
pleasant and free from dispute, yet, no sooner had Wise returned to his troops than an order came to him from the commanding general stating that "it has been determined to fall back to the most defensible point between Meadow Bluff and Lewisburg." Floyd's troops began to move almost at once and Wise was ordered to "hold your command in readiness to bring up the rear." This seemed to be too much for the stubborn general, who refused to move. When Floyd asked why he had failed to follow, General Wise simply wrote in reply that he had received an order to be in readiness to fall back, but had never received an order to actually do so. He also argued that he occupied the best position for halting the Federal forces by whatever road they might choose to advance.

He was not content to carry on but one argument with Floyd. He began another one on September 18. This was over five wagons which he claimed belonged to his command and which General Floyd had taken. A day or so later still another quarrel was started over some sabres which both officers felt belonged to their respective commands. In many of his communications with Floyd, General Wise seemed most insubordinate and obstinate, whatever merit there might have been in his arguments.

34 Ibid., V, 854-855.
35 Ibid., 853.
36 Ibid.
37 Ibid., 855-856.
38 Ibid., 859-860.
39 Ibid., 861.
While the two generals bickered the Union advance went on until the forces of Cox were drawn up opposite those of Wise. The little Confederate army numbered but 1,800 infantry, 350 to 400 cavalry and nine artillery pieces, yet Wise boasted that he could repulse an army of 4,000. His position actually was not secure since his only support, Floyd's troops, were 12 miles away and the road between was steep and difficult with many small streams crossing it.

Floyd was trying to build up his force at the same time that he was urging Wise to fall back and join him. On September 18 he wrote to General A. A. Chapman, commanding some militia troops south of the Kanawha. He told Chapman to put his own command, as well as that of General Beckley, another militia officer, on the march to join his own army at the earliest possible moment. Before this movement took place a unit of the militia had a slight skirmish with some Union scouts in which a few Union troops were captured by the small Confederate force.

Meanwhile, General R. E. Lee was on his way to the Kanawha region to see what he could do about stopping the quarrel between Wise and Floyd and stopping the enemy short of the railroads to the east. On September 19 he was at Frankfort on his way to join Floyd. He wrote the latter that he expected him to fortify the strongest place west of

---

\(^{40}\) Ibid.

\(^{41}\) Freeman, R. E. Lee, I, 587.

\(^{42}\) O.R., II, Part II, 302.

\(^{43}\) Evans, Confederate Military History, II, 39.

\(^{44}\) Freeman, R. E. Lee, I, 588.
Lewisburg, collect all his forces and stop any Union advance. The next day Lee arrived at Floyd's camp and was much disturbed over the fact that the two little armies were not united. He wrote at once to Wise, telling him that it was imprudent to submit their forces separately to enemy attack. Wise was called upon to do his utmost for the cause and to put his personal feelings aside for the time. The independent General Wise seemed to feel that Lee was rebuking him and, of course, he felt that any rebuke was undeserved. He hinted in a note to Lee that the latter should not believe the things which General Floyd would tell him about the situation. He still insisted that his position on Big Sewell Mountain was the best place to meet the enemy. He also wrote that Rosecrans was not going to advance on Lewisburg as many seemed to think he was. After a long and rather rambling discourse on the situation, he closed with assurances of his respect for and devotion to General Lee.

Lee decided to see first-hand just what the situation was. On September 22 he rode forward to Sewell Mountain and made a reconnaissance. He found the position to be as strong as Wise had claimed. If the Federal forces were indeed going to attack along the James River and Kanawha turnpike, then the position was superior to that of Floyd's for defense. However, there seemed to be some possibility of a flank attack around the right of the Confederate camp. If so, General Floyd

---

45 R., LI, Part II, 304.
46 Ibid., V, 868.
47 Ibid.
48 Ibid., 869.
49 Freeman, R. E. Lee, I, 589.
was in a better spot. Unfortunately the Southern forces in the Kanawha area had been lacking in cavalry from the outset and that fact made it almost impossible at this time for Lee to scout adequately the flanks and discover if such a move was in progress. Lee received but little help from either of the two quarrelsome generals in trying to determine what course to follow. The one insisted that a flanking movement was being conducted by the enemy, but could offer very little concrete information in support of the theory. 50 The other said that no such course was being followed by the Union troops, but that their entire force was being concentrated in front of his position. There were indications that Wise did not have much real information and was somewhat confused. In one of his communications to Lee, he had reported in one sentence that there were 7,000 Union troops at Nichols' Mill on the right flank of his position. Yet a few sentences farther on in the same message he stated there were none but a few stragglers at that spot. 51 With such information it is understandable that Lee contented himself for the moment with simply cautioning Floyd to guard the flanks. 52 At the same time he wrote to General Wise that he could not determine for him what he must do since he did not have enough information. 53

While Lee was trying to find the best solution for the problems of the Confederates north of the New River, Floyd discovered that there were problems to the south as well. He had discovered that

50 Ibid.
51 O.R., V, 873-74.
52 Ibid., LI, Part II, 312.
53 Ibid., V, 874.
General Beckley's command was too disorganized and disaffected to be of use anywhere but in the immediate vicinity of the residences of most of his militiamen. Accordingly he ordered Beckley to remain on the south side of the New River and oppose any enemy advance with as many men as he could retain.54

By September 24 Lee had made up his mind to go to Big Sewell and take a part of Floyd's force with him. The remainder could guard against a flank attack. Even if this unit should be attacked, General W. W. Loring was on the march to join the army in the Kanawha region with approximately 9,000 men.55 When Lee arrived at Big Sewell Mountain, he found the enemy was in plain sight about a mile and a half from Wise's troops. He began to see, also, that the Confederate troops were extremely untrained, disorganized and discontented. His temper became shorter the more he saw and on at least one occasion he spoke very sharply to a junior officer who seemed ignorant of his duties.56

On September 25 General Lee decided that the main Union force was concentrating in front of his position and, accordingly, he tried to think of a method of getting Floyd to bring the rest of his force forward without causing that sensitive general to feel that he was taking Wise's side in their perpetual quarrel. Instead of sending a direct order, he wrote an explanation as to why he felt it would be best to make a united stand on Sewell Mountain.57 General Floyd did not march immediately. Instead he sent a copy of an order for General

54Ibid., LI, Part II, 308.
55Freeman, R. E. Lee, I, 595.
56Ibid., 591.
57O.R., LI, Part II, 312.
Wise which had been delayed somewhere en route. It was from Judah P. Benjamin, the acting secretary of war, and it instructed Wise to turn over all his troops to General Floyd and report in person to the adjutant general in Richmond. Lee sent the order on to Wise who was at the front conducting a little skirmish with the Union forces. Even though it was a direct order, the latter considered ignoring it. He wrote to Lee, telling him that he was about to be engaged in a severe battle and he questioned whether he should leave his troops at such a moment. The reply came at once advising the general that he must obey the order. It was the only course a soldier could follow. Wise reluctantly gave up his command then and left for Richmond, after a "farewell address" to his troops. Thus one of the major obstacles to a successful campaign in the Kanawha region had been removed. Doubtless Lee hoped that Floyd would now follow orders without argument and endless discussion. Yet his main force had still not joined Lee and, before they could, a new barrier to an active campaign appeared. It began to rain hard. General Floyd said he had never seen such a storm in the mountains of western Virginia at that season of the year. It put an almost complete stop to all transportation. Loring's march to join Lee was slowed and for either Floyd to advance or General Lee to pull back would have been difficult. The country was inundated and the two bridges between Big Sewell Mountain and the camp at Meadow

58 Ibid., V, 148.
59 Ibid., 879.
60 Ibid.
61 Ibid., II, Part II, 317-318.
62 Ibid.
Bluff were carried away. The problem of supplying the advanced troops became acute as the one road to the rear had gullies eight to fifteen feet deep cut in it by the roaring streams.

By September 29 the rains had abated considerably and the smaller streams had begun to subside. Even more cheering than this improvement in the weather was the arrival of the first units of General Loring's force. Three regiments and a section of artillery reached Lee late in the day of the 29th and General Anderson's brigade was expected the next day.

Even General Floyd was preparing to advance. Besides his own troops he had about 1,500 militia under General Chapman encamped about one and a half miles from his position at Meadow Bluff, and Anderson had arrived at his camp late on September 29. On the 30th the combined forces advanced to join Lee, and for the first time in the warfare of the Kanawha region the Confederates had a single force really capable of undertaking an offensive movement with some real chance of success.

However, the commanding general preferred to have the Union forces attack his own and so he waited. From time to time it was thought that activity in the enemy's camp indicated an attack was about to begin, but it never materialized. Lee was becoming concerned and felt that he must launch an offensive of his own soon, but he feared to

---

63 Ibid., 320.
64 Freeman, R. E. Lee, I, 595.
65 O.R., LI, Part II, 324.
66 Ibid., 324-325.
67 Freeman, R. E. Lee, I, 596.
do so because he had been unable to build up an adequate amount of supplies to support anything but a limited offensive. 68

Then, on the night of October 5, the Union forces under Rosecrans and Cox began their withdrawal. The Confederate pickets heard the sounds of movement in the Union camp and it was thought that the Federal troops were finally preparing to launch an attack. 69 When dawn came, it was discovered that the Northern army had left. A short pursuit was all that was possible, since the Confederates still lacked a cavalry force of any size and the infantry lacked provisions to follow the retreating Unionists very far. 70

Almost immediately Lee began to plan an offensive. His first step was to have the roads put in shape to reduce the difficulties of supplying his force. He ordered the troops of Loring and Floyd to repair the road west of Sewell Creek while General Chapman's militia were to do the same to the east. The road was to be thoroughly drained, the streams that were clogged with brush were to be opened and timber was to be laid over the soft and muddy parts of the road. 71 As soon as their part of the work was done, Chapman's militiamen were to be dismissed to their homes to tend their crops. They might be called upon again when needed, but for the time being it was felt they would be of little use in the proposed offensive. 72

69 Freeman, R. E. Lee, I, 596.
70 Ibid., 597.
71 O.R., II, Part II, 335.
72 Ibid.
Floyd's troops were to prepare as secretly as possible, and as speedily, to move to the south side of the New River. They were to advance to a point where they could cut the Federal communications on the Gauley, while Lee, with Wise's legion and Loring's troops, was to push forward to the Gauley and attack the Federal forces there.\(^7\)

Floyd's forces set forth on schedule but almost at once things began to go wrong. The weather turned cold, transportation remained difficult, and a threatened attack on Confederate forces west of Staunton caused Lee to change his mind about an offensive.\(^7\) On October 20, Loring's troops were ordered north to bolster the defenses of General Henry R. Jackson, in the Greenbrier Valley. Wise's legion was withdrawn to the camp at Meadow Bluff, and Lee prepared to leave western Virginia.\(^7\) Floyd was left to his own devices but the near approach of winter weather made it apparent that he, too, must soon seek winter quarters.

---

\(^7\)Ibid., 335-337.
\(^7\)Freeman, R. E. Lee, I, 598-599.
\(^7\)O.R., V, 908; LI, Part II, 361.
CHAPTER 14

COTTON MOUNTAIN

General Floyd had high hopes for a successful campaign when he set forth for the south side of New River. He had some 4,000 men in his little army which consisted of the 14th Georgia, the 22nd, 36th, 45th, and 51st Virginia, the 20th Mississippi, Phillips' "Legion" and some small units of cavalry. He had three batteries of artillery and a company of Louisiana sharpshooters, as well. From the camp on Sewell Mountain to the Cotton Mountain area south of New River the roads were very bad and the march of Floyd's troops was made with great difficulty. The artillery in particular found the going hard. The horses were in such a weakened condition that it was necessary to hitch 12 animals to one piece. Even then, the cannoneers had to put their shoulders to the wheels in order to move the guns and caissons through the sticky mud. Since the number of horses available was limited, it was not possible to move each piece more than a short distance at a time, then the horses had to be removed and sent to the rear to move another cannon forward. By October 16, General Floyd had reached a point about one day's march from the Red Sulpher turnpike, which commanded the part of the Kanawha Valley in which he intended to operate. It was about that same date that he received the news from General Lee that Loring's forces were leaving and the rest of the Confederate troops north of the New River were going to be pulled

1 O.R., V, 901.
3 Ibid.
4 O.R., V, 901.

167
back toward Lewisburg. This must have been a considerable blow to Floyd since he had counted on a supporting movement against the Union forces at Gauley Bridge when he advanced. Now if any further offensive action was taken in the early winter of 1861 in the Kanawha area, it would have to be by his troops alone.

In spite of the lateness of the season and the knowledge that he would be operating alone, General Floyd determined to continue his advance. His first objective was the tiny village of Fayette Court House. Before his troops arrived at that point, Union forces under Colonel McCook had crossed the river and occupied the town for a short time. McCook's orders had been to disperse any militia units found in the vicinity and scout the roads for a short distance. After satisfying himself that no regular Confederate troops were close, the colonel withdrew his forces back across New River. Rosecrans felt that a company should have been left at Miller's Ferry, the crossing point, and ordered McCook to send one of his companies back. By the time this was done, however, the troops of Floyd's command had already occupied Fayette and had established a strong force of sharpshooters at Miller's Ferry so that McCook did not attempt to send his small force across.⁵

On October 25, General Floyd wrote to the secretary of war to report the situation in the Kanawha region. Not only had Fayette been occupied, but the advance units had reached Cotton Hill and from the crest of the hill the entire Federal camp at Gauley Bridge was in view. Gauley Bridge, he wrote, was the key to the entire Kanawha area.

⁵O.R., V, 253.
The Union forces there commanded the Kanawha River as well as the roads to Clarksburg and the northwest and could strike whenever ready toward Lewisburg and the railroads. Floyd felt that his own troops were now in good position to force the Federal forces to retreat or at least to prevent their advance. If he but had the cooperation of the forces which had been left at Sewell Mountain, he stated, he would not hesitate to attack and force the Northern army back toward Charleston or Clarksburg. He closed with the plea that his army be reinforced, so that he might oppose the enemy's force, which he estimated at 13,000, with at least 10,000.⁶

Even with but 4,000 troops, General Floyd was quite active. He had put men to work as soon as he had arrived at Cotton Hill, cutting a path from the road to a point on the crest overlooking the Union camp and fortifications. It was his intention to mount cannon there with which he might disrupt the supply route of the Federals.⁷

Small units of cavalry were also used to harass the enemy and the citizens of the region who were pro-Union in feeling. One of these expeditions went forth on October 24, under Colonel Clarkson. Some 40 civilians were captured and brought back to Floyd's camp. In addition, several Federal outposts were fired upon and one steamboat, laden with supplies, was fired at from the river bank. The pilot and several others on board were struck and the ship somewhat damaged, but it could not be captured since the small cavalry force lacked any means of getting out to it.⁸

⁶Ibid., 917-918.
⁷Ibid., 924.
⁸Ibid.
While General Floyd was getting his artillery into position to shell the Union camp, he was hopeful of getting some heavier calibre guns added to his command, so that he might erect gun emplacements out of reach of the Federal artillery and still be able to reach the enemy's position. Accordingly, he wrote to the secretary of war on October 29 asking that at least two 12 pounder rifled guns and two 24 pounder rifled howitzers be furnished him at once. In his present position, he wrote, "I feel very seriously the want of heavy artillery, and am quite satisfied that if I had it, I could bring the campaign to a successful close." There were none to be furnished him, however.

On November 1, the guns he had were in position and opened fire on the Union camp. The first shells were fired while the morning mists were still in the valley and the Northern troops were taken completely by surprise. The range was long, however, and the Confederate gunners could not see what they were firing at until the mist cleared. The Union forces suffered no casualties, although considerable confusion was created in their position. General Rosecrans was as much surprised as anyone at the cannonade. He had known that Confederate forces were on the south side of New River, but had no idea that they had occupied Cotton Hill some two miles down-river from his own headquarters. For a time the commanding general had no knowledge of what was happening in the camp at Gauley Bridge, for the telegraph line which connected the camp with headquarters had gone dead. The operator

9Tbid., 927.
10Horton, 11th Ohio, 52-53.
11Cox, Reminiscences, I, 129-130.
at Gauley Bridge had fled his post almost at the first fire. Within a short time, Colonel De Villiers galloped up from the direction of Gauley Bridge. He was the officer who had been captured early in the Kanawha campaign and had later escaped from Libby Prison in Richmond and made his way back to his regiment. He reported on the situation at the Federal camp and was sent back with orders to have a new telegraph station set up in a ravine out of range of enemy fire, to get the ferry boat out of danger and to prepare the ordnance stores for removal to a safe place that night. General Cox, who was with Rosecrans, asked to be allowed to return to the camp and take charge of his troops, but his commanding officer would not let him go.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, 131-132.}

News of the attack was sent at once to the Union forces farther up the river and General Schenck, whose soldiers occupied the furthermost position, was ordered to send out scouting parties to determine if any Confederate advance was being made from Sewell Mountain.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, 132.} Rosecrans also began to plan for an offensive movement designed to trap, or at least drive away, whatever Confederate force was occupying Cotton Hill.

On November 2, General Cox got permission to join his troops at Gauley Bridge and he started at once. The only road between the command post and the ferry was swept by the fire of Confederate sharpshooters, so the general and his aide had to go through the woods. The trip was long and tiring, but the guard post above the camp was reached eventually and Cox was ferried over. There he found that some confusion...
still existed and that not all the things which De Villiers had been ordered to do had been done. The general at once took charge, pushed the work of getting the ammunition stores to a safe place, and attempted also to find a good position from which artillery might reply to the Confederate fire. With the coming of dawn on November 3, the ammunition was still in the process of being transferred and before the last wagons had rolled out of range, the Southern artillery had commenced to fire upon them. However, either solid shot was used or, if shells were fired, they failed to explode and the wagons were gotten safely away.\textsuperscript{14}

By this time, Rosecrans had discovered that it was Floyd's command which was harassing him and he had learned also that the troops which had been left at Sewell Mountain had retreated and thus he had nothing to fear from that direction. Accordingly, he began to prepare to concentrate most of his troops against Floyd.\textsuperscript{15} General Benham was ordered to take his brigade down the Kanawha and cross to the south side at the mouth of Loup Creek, about five miles below Gauley Bridge.\textsuperscript{16} Benham was to be reinforced by some 500 men from the 7th Ohio who were being carried up-river on steamers. In addition, troops from several small units scattered along the river were to be gathered up and joined to Benham's brigade.\textsuperscript{17} General Schenck was ordered, at the same time, to prepare wagon bodies as temporary boats, and get ready to cross the New River at Townsend's Ferry, about 15 miles above Gauley Bridge.

\textsuperscript{14}\textit{Ibid.}, 133-136.
\textsuperscript{15}\textit{R.R.}, V, 254.
\textsuperscript{16}\textit{Cox, Reminiscences}, I, 137.
\textsuperscript{17}\textit{Wilson, 7th Ohio}, 107-108.
General McCook was ordered to watch Miller's Ferry, in between Townsend's Ferry and Gauley Bridge, and be prepared to make a dash on the short road to Fayette if the opportunity presented itself. Cox, at Gauley Bridge, was to hold his troops in readiness to cross at Montgomery's Ferry, just below his camp, and cooperate with Benham if possible.  

On November 6, Benham's force crossed the river but did not move very far forward because a sudden rise in the rivers caused Rosecrans to suspend, temporarily, his operations. While waiting for the rivers to go down, the Union forces skirmished constantly across the streams with the Confederate sharpshooters. In addition, every time one of the Confederate cannon was fired it was immediately answered by one of the Union pieces located at Gauley Bridge. General Cox was also preparing a couple of small flatboats which he might use to throw detachments across the river to the base of Cotton Mountain when the occasion warranted. On November 10, he decided that the time was ripe to try to ferry a force across and dislodge the Southern troops opposite his position. The movement to drive Floyd away, or capture him, was about to begin.

Meanwhile, General Floyd was having troubles from a source other than his enemy, Rosecrans. On November 4 he received a note from several of his subordinate officers which read in part, "...after mature deliberation we unanimously concur in the opinion that it is impracticable and impolitic to hold Cotton Hill and the positions now..."
occupied by your immediate command longer this season. We are further of the opinion that the command, with the least practicable delay, should be removed to Newbern, Dublin, some point near the railroad, or to a more active field of operations, as you may deem best."\textsuperscript{21} Floyd chose to ignore the advice for the moment but he was worried about his position. He reported to Secretary of War Benjamin, on November 8, that his army was in a state of confusion.\textsuperscript{22} The reasons for this condition were not hard to find. During the whole time that the Confederate troops had been encamped at Cotton Mountain the weather had been cold and rainy. The soldiers had no tents and very little food, save raw beef and flour. They had practically no salt for seasoning. Furthermore, as all the troops knew, the nearest supply depot was at Dublin, Virginia, almost 100 miles away over roads which were nearly impassable. There was much sickness among the troops and very few medical supplies.\textsuperscript{23} Added to all this was the fear that the Union troops might attack at any time and the Confederate soldiers knew there were few reinforcements to be expected. Their low spirits were understandable. Floyd was not as confident of success as he seemed to be in most of his dispatches, for in several of them he discussed the matter of winter quarters. His principal hope for success seemed to be in getting the enemy to attack his army while it was in a good defensive position and then hurling back the attack as at Carnifex Ferry. Yet when the attack finally did come, Floyd did not stay to meet it.

\textsuperscript{21}O.R., LI, Part II, 368-369.  
\textsuperscript{22}Ibid., V, 943.  
the night, General Cox sent the 2nd Kentucky across the river and joined them in person on the crest at daybreak. The rest of the 1st Kentucky crossed at Montgomery's Ferry later in the day and advanced up the little road which led to Fayette. The advance was commenced early on the morning of November 11 and no serious resistance was met. When Cox discovered that he had advanced to a position which seemed to be occupied by the entire force at Floyd's command, he ordered a halt until he heard from Benham who was supposed to be advancing from the mouth of Loup Creek. ²⁵

It is difficult to say whether Floyd was being driven away from Cotton Mountain or was in the process of retiring at the moment that Cox had chosen to advance. When he first received word of the crossing of Benham's troops at Loup Creek, General Floyd seemed to believe that these troops were reinforcements from Ohio and he placed their number at 5,000. As a result, he apparently decided to withdraw about three miles to the point where the road from Loup Creek joined the road which ran along Cotton Mountain.²⁶ It was there that Cox's troops had halted, not being strong enough to attempt to drive Floyd away. The final decision would have to rest with Benham.

General Benham had been ordered to advance on November 11 but had moved with exceeding caution. It was not until 3 P.M. on the 12th that his main force reached Cotton Mountain. It had taken him over 24 hours to cover eight miles.²⁷ Apparently one of the reasons for this

²⁵Ibid.
²⁶O.R., V, 287.
²⁷Ibid., 256-257.
On the morning of November 10, General Cox sent Colonel De Villiers with 200 men of the 11th Ohio (all that were fit for duty) across New River to scale Cotton Mountain and attack the Confederate gun emplacements. At the same time, Lieutenant Colonel Enyart of the 1st Kentucky was to cross the Kanawha River, below the falls, with 200 men from his regiment. He was to cooperate with De Villiers in the attempt to clear the enemy from the heights opposite Gauley Bridge. A part of the 11th Ohio moved directly up the steep face of Cotton Hill immediately after crossing. Another portion moved up-stream a short distance and then followed a ravine to the top of the mountain. The two units joined on the crest and advanced toward a little clearing called Blake's Farm where Confederate forces in some strength were met. The Confederate guns were withdrawn at the approach of the Union troops and reinforcements were hurried up to Blake's Farm where a lively little skirmish was developing. Enyart's men from the 1st Kentucky came up shortly and the Union troops strung themselves out in a thin line across the mountain. They did not attempt to advance further, since the Confederate force seemed to be growing in size and strength, but contented themselves with holding the ground they had won. At least the Southern batteries had been forced to leave their commanding positions and Gauley Bridge was no longer in immediate danger of being shelled. When Cox reported the success to Rosecrans, the latter ordered Cox to move the rest of his available force across the river and press the Confederates the next day. It was felt that by then General Benham would be in a position to attack Floyd from the rear. During

Cox, Reminiscences, I, 140-141.
slow advance was the fact that, although Benham had been on the south side of the Kanawha for about a week, he had not made any effort to learn anything about the topography of the region into which he was to advance. When his troops did get to Cotton Mountain a slight skirmish developed and his men halted and bivouacked on their arms. Benham reported by courier to General Rosecrans, stating that his force was not strong enough to attack and asking for reinforcements. Rosecrans urged him to move forward and to cut off the enemy's retreat if at all possible. Yet on the night that Floyd began a further retreat, Benham was completely unaware of it, even though his main force was only two and a half miles from the main Confederate position. Floyd began his retreat at 9 P.M. on November 12, but not until 4:30 the next afternoon was Benham aware of it. Then, at last, he moved and the next morning his troops came up with a part of the Confederate rearguard at McCoy's Mill. A slight skirmish took place with no conclusive results except that the very promising Confederate cavalry officer, Lieutenant Colonel St. George Crogham, was killed. As General Floyd said, "His death has cast a gloom over the spirits of the entire army." Benham continued his pursuit a short distance further, then was stopped by order of General Schenck, whose troops had moved down the river on the 13th, crossed the Kanawha, and followed Benham's route. He knew that the troops were almost out of rations and that the Confederates had several hours start on the pursuing troops.

28 Ibid., 257.
29 Ibid.
30 Ibid., 287.
Consequently, he felt that further pursuit would be fruitless. So Floyd was able to continue his retreat without Union interference. The weather interfered, however. It rained continually during the six-day retreat which ended finally at Raleigh Court House. The command suffered considerably. Straggling was extensive and a number of horses and wagons were lost simply because the effort to keep them moving was too great. So far as both General Floyd and most of his soldiers were concerned, the campaigning in western Virginia was over. In early December the command moved to Dublin in Pulaski County, Virginia, and then began a rather leisurely movement to Kentucky where Floyd and his troops reported for duty to General Albert Sidney Johnston.

Events were not quite finished as far as Rosecrans was concerned. He was still highly indignant over Benham's failure to move promptly. On November 29 he reported to the high command that he found it necessary to arrest General Benham for unofficer-like conduct and neglect of duty. The accused general applied for a leave of absence on a medical certificate with permission to visit a city for medical treatment. He left almost at once for New York City. General Cox was of the opinion that McClellan later caused the court-martial proceedings to be quashed to avoid scandal.

As far as further military action was concerned, Rosecrans had no illusions. He reported that the condition of the roads was

---

31 Ibid., 253.
33 Ibid., 98.
34 O.R., V, 669.
35 Cox, Reminiscences, I, 144.
terrible. "They are the military obstacle of the remainder of the season," he wrote. He proceeded to distribute his troops to prepare for defense of western Virginia during the coming winter. Some of his regiments did not remain in the region. The 11th Ohio moved from Gauley Bridge toward Point Pleasant on December 7 where they went into winter quarters. The 7th Ohio left on December 9 for Parkersburg. Several other units were redistributed. The fighting in western Virginia in 1861, save for minor guerrilla action, was at an end.

---

36 O.R., V, 669.
37 Horton, 11th Ohio, 55.
38 Wilson, 7th Ohio, 113.
CONCLUSION

The year ended with most of present-day West Virginia in the hands of the Federal troops. General Rosecrans commanded the entire region, which was occupied by about 40,000 troops. The Kanawha district was under the command of General Cox, the Cheat Mountain area under the command of General Milroy and the so-called Railroad district under General Kelley.¹

The Confederate forces on the fringe of the occupied area were nowhere in sufficient strength to make immediate attempts to regain any of the ground they had lost.

The campaigns in western Virginia were of importance for several reasons. First, the statehood movement which resulted in the formation of the present state of West Virginia would not have been possible had the Confederate forces not been driven out. Furthermore, had the Southern forces been able to have retained control of the area, it is likely that recruiting among the citizens would have been quite extensive. As it was, when the Confederates were pushed out, hundreds of militiamen deserted the Southern cause to fight no more, or, if they did, to fight on the side of the North.²

Secondly, the outcome of the campaign in northwestern Virginia assured the North of control of the western half of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. This railroad was of particular strategic importance in view of the fact that much of the fighting in the east took place in northern Virginia and Maryland. The railroad

¹Evans, Confederate Military History, II, 47.
²Ambler, West Virginia, 343.
enabled the Union forces to concentrate more quickly in those regions than if a more round-about route had been necessary through Pennsylvania. It facilitated the transportation of supplies from the western part of the country, also.

Thirdly, the successful conclusion of the campaign prevented the Confederates from pushing the theatre of war to the Ohio Valley as was often planned by several of the Southern commanders. Had they been able to achieve this, the anti-war feeling which began to grow in the state of Ohio in the following year might well have developed in 1861. It might also have forced the Union high command to divert badly needed troops from the eastern zone to the defense of Ohio.

Fourthly, the campaign resulted in the making of several reputations and the destruction of several others. Both General Rosecrans and General Cox achieved considerable recognition for their parts in the fighting. Both went on to higher positions and further fame as a result. Both also had gained valuable experience during the several months they spent in western Virginia. The general who benefited most from the operations in western Virginia was George B. McClellan. Whether or not he learned much from them is open to question. The campaign did, perhaps, add to his confidence in himself, but that was high at the outset. It made him, when viewed in the light of Northern defeats elsewhere, the man of the hour. The newspapers of the North magnified his successes, modest though they may have been, into stupendous victories. The New York Herald of July 16 referred to him as the "Napoleon of the present war."3 The New York Times noted

3New York Herald, July 16, page 1, Col. 5
his successes and personal popularity frequently. His dispatches to his troops were occasionally printed in full in this same newspaper.

In an editorial, the Times pictured the general as a man of "super-human activity" and "Napoleonic skill". ¹

The direct result of his successful campaign, which was magnified by his own reports, was the call to Washington to assume command of the defeated army of General McDowell. Actually, from a strategical and tactical standpoint, McClellan had not demonstrated a great deal of ability in the western Virginia theatre. His over-all planning was not particularly sound. He had cherished the idea of making the Kanawha line the base of operations for an advance into Virginia, completely ignoring the fact that the difficulties of supply made such an operation a virtual impossibility. Rosecrans' and Cox's activities in that region clearly demonstrated this. Cox himself wrote later that it was not Floyd's army which chained Rosecrans to Gauley Bridge but the physical obstacles presented by the country. As for tactics, most of McClellan's battles and skirmishes were won under the direction of subordinates, as at Philippi, Rich Mountain, and in the pursuit of Garnett's forces from Laurel Hill. One achievement McClellan had demonstrated, however. He could organize troops. He had taken the raw

¹New York Times, July 16, page 4, col. 4. For other accounts of McClellan and his campaigns see the Washington Daily National Intelligencer, July 15, 24; New York Herald, July 12, 13, 15, 16, 17; Cincinnati Daily Commercial contains news and comments on affairs in western Virginia almost daily through the summer and fall of 1861. The issue for July 13 is almost wholly devoted to news of the troops in western Virginia. Many of the accounts in widely scattered Northern newspapers were based on the items printed in the Cincinnati Commercial.
recruits of Ohio and Indiana and turned them into a fairly well-disciplined, manageable army. He was even able to see that they were adequately uniformed and equipped, which was no mean task in the early days of the War. In summary then of McClellan's situation and abilities as evidenced by his western Virginia campaign, it may be seen that it brought him quickly to the top but it gave good evidence of his weaknesses, viz., grandiose planning, over-caution, a tendency to flowery magnification of his own achievements in his reports, and a predilection for finding fault with his subordinates, as might be seen in his treatment of Generals Hill, Morris and at certain times of Generals Rosecrans and Cox, whom he criticized on separate occasions.

On the Southern side, the fighting in western Virginia demonstrated the danger of employing political soldiers such as Wise and Floyd, particularly when such men were, or had been, political enemies. Both of these generals emerged from the conflict in the Kanawha region with diminished reputations and neither achieved any noteworthy success at any later time. The first Confederate commander in northwestern Virginia slipped into obscurity as a result of his defeat at Philippi. Colonel Porterfield might well have risen in the Confederate service, had he not had the misfortune to be sent into an unknown country with untried troops and then left to his fate. The most promising of the generals of the South to serve in western Virginia, other than General Lee, was Garnett, and he lost his life at a time when the defeat of his troops would most likely have lost him his reputation even if he had lived. As for Lee, the campaigns which he conducted certainly did not add to his stature. Douglas Freeman wrote that he had suffered
greatly in prestige, not only in the opinion of the fire-eaters who
wanted an offensive policy, but in the eyes of the general public as
well.5

5Freeman, R. E. Lee, I, 602.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

MEMOIRS, DIARIES, RECORDS AND REPORTS


Cope, Alexis. The Fifteenth Ohio Volunteers and Its Campaigns. Columbus, Ohio: Published by the Author, 1916.


Diary of an Ohio Volunteer. By a Musician. Cleveland, Ohio: Published by the Author, 1861.

Grayson, Andrew J. History of the Sixth Indiana Regiment in the Three Months Campaign in Western Virginia. Madison, Indiana: Courier Printing, 1875.

Hannaford, E. The Story of a Regiment: A History of the Campaign and Associations in the Field of the Sixth Regiment Ohio Volunteer Infantry. Cincinnati, Ohio: Published by the Author, 1868.


Hill, Charles W. Comments on Major-General McClellan's Account of his West Virginia Campaign. Toledo, Ohio: -----, 1864.


Kepler, William. Fourth Ohio in the War for the Union. Cleveland, Ohio: Leader Printing Company, 1885.


Monfort, E. R. From Grafton to McDowell Through Tygart's Valley. -----: -----, 1886.


_____ The Makers of West Virginia. Huntington, West Virginia: Gentry Brothers, Printers, 1942.


_____ Semi-Centennial History of West Virginia. ----: Semi-Centennial Commission of West Virginia, 1913.


Font, Frederick W. The Dark Days of the Civil War. ------: Published by F. A. Wegenfuehr, 1904.


Myers, S. *Myers' History of West Virginia.* Wheeling, West Virginia: Wheeling News Lithograph Company, -----.


NEWSPAPERS

Cincinnati Daily Commercial. Cincinnati, Ohio, 1861.
Cleveland Morning Leader. Cleveland, Ohio, 1861.
Cleveland Plain Dealer. Cleveland, Ohio, 1861.
Louisville Courier. Louisville, Kentucky, 1861.
Richmond Enquirer. Richmond, Virginia, 1861.
Richmond Examiner. Richmond, Virginia, 1861.
AUTOBIOGRAPHY

I, Robert Blair Boehm, was born in Columbus, Ohio, September 17, 1925. I received my secondary school education in the public schools of Cleveland Heights, Ohio, and my undergraduate training at Western Reserve University, which granted me the Bachelor of Arts degree in 1948. From the same university, I received the Master of Arts degree in 1950. During the school year of 1949-50, I was Assistant Professor of History at Athens College, Athens, Alabama. In the winter of 1951 I began work toward the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Ohio State University in the Department of History. In the fall of 1952 I was employed by The Defiance College, Defiance, Ohio, as Instructor in History. I am currently (1957) employed by that institution as Associate Professor of History.