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West Virginia Campaign.

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**TERRANCE L. SMITH**

**AMERICAN CIVIL WAR:  
WEST VIRGINIA:  
STATEHOOD THROUGH MILITARY FORCE.  
*A Narrative.*<sup>1</sup>**

The election of Abraham Lincoln on November 6, 1860<sup>2</sup> triggered southern secession as the only way in which to preserve the southern agricultural economy, and the southern way of life. South Carolina called a convention and by a vote of 169-0 enacted, on December 20, 1860, an "ordinance" dissolving "the union now subsisting between South Carolina and other States".<sup>100</sup> Other lower southern states followed South Carolina's lead in quick succession: Mississippi on January 9<sup>th</sup>, 1861 by a vote of 84 to 15; Florida on January 10<sup>th</sup> by a vote of 62 to 7; Alabama on January 11<sup>th</sup> by a vote of 61 to 39; Georgia on January 19<sup>th</sup> by a vote of 208 to 89; Louisiana on January 26<sup>th</sup> by a vote of 113 to 17 and Texas on February 1<sup>st</sup> by a vote of 166 to 7. Texas was the only State to submit its secession ordinances to the voters for ratification who, in turn, endorsed secession by a margin of three to one.<sup>101</sup>

The southern States were not the only ones advocating secession. In January 1861 Mayor Fernando Wood of New York City, in a message to the city's aldermen,

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<sup>1</sup> All references above number 100 refer to reference citations found in the end notes.

<sup>2</sup> Abraham Lincoln's won the 1860 Presidential election by winning only in the free states. The elections results: Bell, 588,879; Breckinridge, 849,781; Douglas, 1,376,957; Lincoln, 1,866,452. The combined votes of Lincoln's opponents outnumbered his own by almost a million, he would be a minority President.

recommend secession in order to establish New York City as a "free city". The proposal failed. Voters in Arkansas, Kentucky,<sup>3</sup> Missouri and Virginia elected a majority of pro-union representatives to their conventions. Both Missouri and Arkansas conventions rejected secession in March as did Virginia by a two-to-one margin in April.<sup>4</sup> Voters in North Carolina and Tennessee voted against holding a convention even to debate secession.

Without actually seceding, the upper southern states put pressure on the North requesting northern patience for the lower southern states until such time as the problem could be worked out. Additionally the upper States wanted forbearance from any attempt to coerce, through force of arms, those states that had seceded back into the Union. They advised that any attempt at invasion of the lower southern States would be resisted, not only by the lower southern States, but by all southern States.<sup>102</sup> To prove the point, the Virginia legislature remained in session to watch developments after initially voting down secession.

A convention of the lower seven states held in February at Montgomery, Alabama formed a Constitution in only six days of debate, and thereafter turned itself into a

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<sup>3</sup> As in Missouri, that part of Kentucky which was occupied by Confederate troops passed an act of secession and their representatives were admitted to the Confederate Congress; See Chapter 3

<sup>4</sup> On October 31, 1961, in Missouri after the earlier convention rejected the ordinance and condemned the very idea of secession, secessionist members, under the protection of Confederate troops met in Neosho, Missouri and adopted a resolution of secession. The Confederate Congress seated Missouri's representatives and thereafter considered her part of the Confederate States.

provisional Congress. Jefferson Davis did not attend the Montgomery convention as he was content to leave the formation of a new government to others. He believed his highest talent was the military and he held the position he wanted, commander of the Mississippi army. However this was not to be, for those at Montgomery elected him President on February 10. Davis received news of his election by telegram<sup>5</sup> and left his home the next day for Montgomery, arriving there on February 17<sup>th</sup>. Davis was well qualified for his position as Commander in Chief of the Confederate Army. He was a West Pointer, a Mexican War hero, Secretary of War and more recently, Chairman of the Senate's Military Affairs Committee.

On March 11<sup>th</sup>, a permanent constitution was adopted. Much of its content followed its predecessor, with some notable exceptions. It provided that the President should be elected for a single term of six years, provided for line-item veto, and abolished the African slave trade.<sup>103</sup>

As one southern state after another passed secession laws, and even after the Montgomery convention, out-going U.S. President James Buchanan made no attempt to forestall the secession movement, nor the subsequent general seizure of U.S. military

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<sup>5</sup>

Sir:

We are directed to inform you that you are this day unanimously elected President of the Provisional Government of the Confederate States of America, and to request you to come to Montgomery immediately. We send also a special messenger. Do not wait for him.

R. Toombs,  
R. Barnwell Rhett . . .

## West Virginia Campaign.

installations throughout the South by seceding state militia. Four Regular Army officers, each acting on his own volition, saved four key points on the southern seacoasts: Fort Pickens, Pensacola, Florida; Fort Taylor, Key West, Florida; Fort Jefferson, Dry Tortugas, Florida and Fort Sumter, Charleston, South Carolina.<sup>104</sup>



United States 1860.

Fort Sumter stood on a man-made island four miles from downtown Charleston at the entrance to Charleston bay. The fort was new and was still under construction when South Carolina voted for secession. With its 146 big guns, it could stop any ship from entering or leaving the harbor, although only two of the big guns were in place when they

were ultimately needed. The Fort had become a commanding symbol of national sovereignty in the very cradle of secession, a symbol that the Confederate government could not tolerate if it wished its own sovereignty to be recognized by the world. South Carolina tried to negotiate for the fort and arsenal. President Buchanan, not wanting a war to start on his watch, refused to withdraw the garrison, but promised South Carolina that he would not provide reinforcements that the Fort's commander, Major Robert Anderson, had requested. In return, South Carolina pledged not to attack the Fort while negotiations for transfer were in progress. South Carolina was advised by the Buchanan administration that the fort would be given up, but that time was needed to work out the terms. Most Republicans and many Democrats were outraged by reports that the fort was about to be given over to the Confederates. Newspapers picked up the call demanding that Fort Sumter be reinforced "at all Hazards!"<sup>105</sup> The northern press hardened Lincoln's resolve, for he perceived the fort to be a tool he could use in uniting the north. On April 6, Lincoln sent a messenger to Charleston to inform Governor Pickens that "an attempt will be made to supply Fort Sumter with provisions only; and that if such attempt be not resisted, no effort to throw in men, arms or ammunition will be made without further notice, or in case of an attack upon the Fort."<sup>106</sup> Governor Pickens forwarded the communication to the Confederate authorities at Montgomery.

The press was on Davis to likewise do something, lest there be voluntary reconstruction. Lincoln's message placed Davis in the position of firing the first shot of

the war, and in the eyes of the North, a shot to keep food from hungry men. Davis assembled his cabinet and placed the message before them. On April 9<sup>th</sup> Davis gave the order to General P.G.T. Beauregard, who was commanding the defenses at Charleston harbor to reduce the fort before the relief fleet arrives.<sup>107</sup>

On April 12<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 a.m. Edmund Ruffin, a sixty-seven year old farm-paper editor and old-line secessionist pulled a lanyard and the first shot of the war burst over Fort Sumter. The Confederates spent thirty-three hours and four thousand shot and shells which destroyed part of the fort and set the interior on fire. Anderson was able to man only a few of Sumter's mounted guns, and had fired a thousand rounds in reply; most without much effect. The Union's exhausted garrison surrendered on April 14<sup>th</sup> with the Union flag being replaced over Fort Sumter by the "Stars and Bars" of the newly adopted flag of the Confederate government.<sup>6</sup> Anderson and his garrison of seven officers and seventy-six enlisted men marched out of the fort with the honors of war, and were sent north.<sup>108</sup> Four bloody years were to pass before the U.S. flag flew again over Fort Sumter: raised on the anniversary of its surrender by the same Robert Anderson (then General) who hauled it down.

The news of the attack on Fort Sumter and its ultimata surrender galvanized the North. The North had a standing army that numbered only 16,367 officers and men.

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<sup>6</sup> The Confederate Congress adopted a flag consisting of a red field with a white stripe in the middle third and a blue jack with a circle of white stars going two-thirds of the way down the flag.



Most of these were scattered in tiny forts west of the Mississippi or in seacoast forts. Many in this army were southerners, and when apprised of events at Fort Sumter, resigned or left their posts to join the new southern Army. The 313 U.S. Regular Army officers who resigned and went south were wisely used as leaders of the officer corps. By mid April the Confederacy had 35,000 men under arms.<sup>109</sup>

The North realized that it needed to quickly raise an army. A day after the surrender of Fort Sumter, Lincoln issued a proclamation calling for 75,000 militia to serve against "combinations too powerful to be suppressed by the ordinary course of judicial proceeding." This proclamation was not an act of war against the Confederacy, for only Congress could declare war and Congress was not in session at the time of Lincoln's proclamation. Lincoln set the term of service for only ninety days because Federal law limited how long troops could serve without Congressional action. Lincoln then called an emergency session of Congress for July 1<sup>st</sup>.

With the proclamation came the militia draft which apportioned the number of troops to be forwarded by each state not in rebellion. To offset Lincoln's call for troops, the Confederate government a day later voted conscription, affecting all white males eighteen to thirty-five years old, who were to serve for three years unless exempted.<sup>110</sup>

The four upper southern States of Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee and Arkansas answered President Lincoln's call for 75,000 troops, not with men, but with secession. Virginia, with its legislature still in session moved quickly to adopt an

ordinance of secession. On April 17<sup>th</sup>, ex-Governor Henry Wise advised the convention that the Virginia militia was at that moment seizing the federal armory at Harper's Ferry and preparing to seize the Gosport Naval Yard. "At such a time could any true Virginian hesitate;" and few did, passing an ordinance of secession by a vote of 103 to 46. On April 18<sup>th</sup>, one day after passing the ordinance, several companies of militia closed in on the Harper's Ferry armory which was defended by only 47 army regulars. To prevent capture of the valuable rifle machinery, the soldiers set fire to the works and fled. The Virginians moved in quickly and saved most of the machinery, where it soon began turning out guns for the South.

On April 27<sup>th</sup> the Virginia convention invited the Confederate government to make Richmond its permanent capital. The government eager to cement Virginia's allegiance accepted the invitation on May 21<sup>st</sup>.<sup>111</sup>

No sooner had Virginia passed the Ordinance of Secession, than Governor Letcher addressed a letter to Andrew Sweeny, Mayor of Wheeling, informing him of the legislature's action, and ordering him to seize at once the Custom-house of that city, the Post-office, and all public buildings, in the name of the sovereign State of Virginia. The mayor promptly replied: "I have seized upon the Custom-house, the Post-office, and all public buildings and documents, in the name of Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, whose property they are." In this reply, Andrew Sweeny represented the attitudes of the entire northwestern portion of the state, because of a rift that had

developed between the eastern and western portions of Virginia. The low-lying lands of the eastern part of the State invited slavery, while in the mountainous tracts of the western portion slaves and slave owners were rare and in most cases absolutely excluded.<sup>112</sup>

The thirty-five counties that made up western Virginia lay west of the Shenandoah Valley and north of the Kanawha River, and contained a quarter of Virginia's white population in 1860. The region's culture and economy were oriented to nearby Ohio and Pennsylvania rather than to eastern Virginia. The largest city, Wheeling, was only sixty miles from Pittsburgh but 330 miles from Richmond. Additionally the westerners for decades were under-represented in a legislature which was dominated by slave holders. These westerners had fostered grievances against the easterners who governed the state, and gave little services to the western part of the State. Western Virginia, by its physical location and citizen attitude, became allied to Ohio and Pennsylvania when the issue of secession came to a vote.

In early May the Confederates at Harper's Ferry cut the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, the main avenue of transportation to the east. Western Virginia's unionists pleaded with Washington for troops and for support to save western Virginia for the Union. Preoccupied with the defense of the capital, Washington could offer little support. Governor Morton of Indiana and Governor William Dennison of Ohio were ready, willing and able to come to western Virginia's aid, and offered the needed help.

Like many other states, Indiana and Ohio raised more regiments than called for in Lincoln's April 15 proclamation. For example, Lincoln had called on Indiana for six regiments; the governor offered twelve. Dennison like Morton had anticipated the need for more troops than the thirteen regiments which had been ordered by the war department. He had organized nine other regiments, numbering them consecutively with those mustered into the national service, and had put them in camps near the Ohio River, where they could occupy Wheeling if necessary.<sup>113</sup>

On May 11<sup>th</sup>, the War Department created the Department of the Ohio that including all of Indiana, Ohio, the western portions of Pennsylvania and western Virginia. The Army for the Department had to be created from undisciplined volunteer forces that were organized in each state. The officer ranks for this army were made up of political appointees and elected officers, usually without military experience. The lack of experienced officers was primarily caused when 785 professional U.S. Army officers that remained loyal to the U.S. after Fort Sumter, stayed in the regular army and in their units during the early months of the war. This action deprived the mobilizing Union armies of the men best qualified to lead, command, and train a new enlarging army. Exacerbating this was the fact that an officer holding a regular commission was required to resign his commission so that he might accept a higher commission in the state volunteers. Most regulars refused to give up their commission, as there was considerable doubt that they would be able to regain regular status or their commission after the war.<sup>114</sup> Because of

these problems very few left the regular army to help train the new recruits coming into federal service. The governors of each state had to convince military men who had left the army before the war to come forward and take command. Ohio was particularly fortunate to have the assistance of George B. McClellan, William S. Rosecrans, and Jacob D. Cox, in civilian life. McClellan, who had been invited by Governor Dennison, to abandon the presidency of the Ohio and Mississippi Railroad for a brigadier generalship, was put at the head of all the Ohio regiments. McClellan's career as a military engineer in Mexico had brought him great distinction. Both McClellan and Rosecrans had graduated near the top of their West Point classes and had gone on to successful careers in the army. Cox was an Oberlin graduate, an outstanding lawyer, a founder of the Republican Party in Ohio, and a brigadier-general of the Ohio Militia. These three men organized the regiments raised by Ohio.

One of the first and primary objects of the Army of the Ohio was to guard the Ohio River, but as the policy of the federal government became more aggressive and determined against the Confederacy, the purpose of the army was changed to a bolder purpose: to keep western Virginia in the Union. It was some time, however, before this bolder purpose could be put into action by sending Union troops into western Virginia. For this reason, the people of western Virginia took measures to help themselves by organizing regiments at Wheeling and Parkersburg for their own protection. The formation of these pro-union regiments became necessary because the agents and spies of

Governor Letcher who were sent into western Virginia had begun a reign of terror.

Union men were beaten, their families were treated with violence, and their property was destroyed.

Additionally, a plan was developed to coerce western Virginia into the Confederacy by keeping it occupied with Confederate troops. General Robert E. Lee intended to establish a military post at Wheeling, across the river and only four miles from the Union camps at Bellaire. Another camp would be set up at Parkersburg, three more at Grafton and one at Harper's Ferry. To support this plan, Lee ordered Colonel George A. Porterfield and his 750 troops to first secure the rail center at Grafton.<sup>115</sup> This southern Virginia militia unit took and occupied the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad line at Grafton and burned bridges west of there over the Monongahela River, where the two western branches of the railroad unite, viz., the line from Wheeling and that from Parkersburg.

Two days before the Confederates burned the bridges, an inquiry from Winfield Scott, General in Chief of the United States Army, went to McClellan as to whether the enemy's force at Grafton could be subdued and if so he was urged him to "act promptly."

On May 22<sup>d</sup> Governor Morton received the official requisition from the United States War Department for Indiana's quota of three home-service regiments and one new regiment. Two days later Major General George B. McClellan of Ohio with his staff, accompanied by Governor Dennison of Ohio, Governor Yates of Illinois, and Governor



26th to link up with the 1st Virginia commanded by Colonel Benjamin Franklin Kelley.<sup>7</sup>

At the same time the First Indiana Brigade under Brigadier General Thomas A. Morris was sent forward by rail from Indianapolis. Morris, a West Point graduate, had a successful career as an engineer and railroad president before the War. He became the first commissioned brigadier-general from Indiana.<sup>8</sup> The Indiana Brigade which Morris commanded included the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Indiana regiments, and later joined by the 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Indianan regiments.

On May 27<sup>th</sup> Kelley was instructed by McClellan to take the train from Wheeling to Grafton, drive off the Confederates that occupied that town, and protect the railroad, rebuild the bridges and then advance on Harper's Ferry. His movements were hastened by the rapidity with which the forces of Governor Letcher were destroying bridges that would be necessary for McClellan's line of communication. Hence, the point of approach for the first land battle in the great Civil War was Grafton, sixty miles south of Wheeling. Toward this point, Kelley moved with the 1<sup>st</sup> Virginia, followed immediately by the 16<sup>th</sup> Ohio. Another column, consisting of the 14<sup>th</sup> Ohio, crossed the Ohio River at Marietta,

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<sup>7</sup> The regiment was formed at Wheeling, Virginia to counter the southern Virginia militia that was being sent into Western Virginia.

<sup>8</sup> Morris graduated fourth in a class of thirty-six from West Point in 1836, but remained in the Army for only two years. When the war came, he was appointed brigadier general, Indiana Volunteers, on April 27, 1861. With the expiration of his brigade's term of service, Morris was mustered out on July 27, 1861. Probably due to McClellan's animosity, he did not receive a reappointment in the National volunteers until the fall of 1862. At that time he elected to remain in private life.



and moved on Parkersburg.

The officer commanding the Confederate detachment at Grafton, having heard of the Union advance, hastily retreated from Grafton to Philippi, fifteen miles farther south, where Colonel Porterfield was stationed with his small force of infantry and cavalry. Porterfield was a man of influence in western Virginia, and had been sent by General Lee to secure the rail center at Grafton as part of Lee's plan to stabilize western Virginia for the Confederacy. Porterfield was ordered to recruit up to five regiments of volunteers from western Virginia, but his attempts proved entirely unsuccessful. He was obliged to write a letter to Lee, asking for re-enforcements to enable him to maintain his position at Philippi. Lee was very concerned at this development, but other than ordering arms hurried to Porterfield felt that he could do little else.<sup>118</sup> With the troops from Grafton, Porterfield had less than 800 men, including 600 infantry and 173 cavalry.<sup>119</sup>

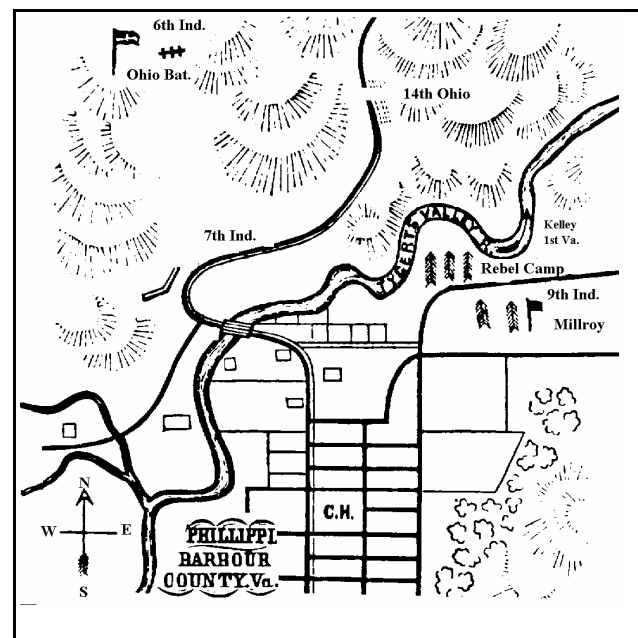
The occupation of Grafton by Federal troops had been accomplished without the firing of a single shot. General Morris reached Grafton on the 1st of June, and was instructed by McClellan to take command of all troops in western Virginia, including the soldiers that had just taken Grafton. Upon arrival, Morris discovered that Kelley had already planned an attack on Philippi. Morris approved the plan and added another column under Colonel Ebenezer Dumont of the 7th Indiana to cooperate with Kelley.

## West Virginia Campaign.

On June 2nd 3,000 Union troops received orders for a forced night march against the Confederates at Philippi. These troops moved in two separate columns of about 1,500 each. One column, under Colonel Dumont included eight companies of the 7th Indiana, the 6th Indiana and the 14<sup>th</sup> Ohio, and 2 field-guns of artillery. This column moved out at 5 o'clock via the Northwestern Virginia Railroad to Webster, twelve miles from Philippi, and then marched against the Confederate's front. Kelley, in command of his own regiment, the 9<sup>th</sup> Indiana and the 16<sup>th</sup> Ohio, moved out at 8 o'clock and marched southward to Thornton.<sup>120</sup>

Colonel Dumont placed his two cannons on a hill north of the town supported by the 6<sup>th</sup> Indiana. The Confederate garrison had not learned picket duty, and was unaware of the Union force. Dumont anxiously waited for Kelly's appearance until daylight. From his position on the hill he saw the Confederates packing up, and believing that Porterfield intended to retreat, opened

fire on them. When the Union artillery opened fire, the surprised Confederate camp was thrown into immediate and utter confusion. As the battery fired, the 7<sup>th</sup> Indiana took the



Philippi and Troop Positions

covered bridge over the Tycerts Valley River in the center of town.<sup>121</sup>

Kelley arrived just as the artillery open fire, but he was too late to get in the rear and cut off Porterfield's troops from fleeing the area. In a short fire fight that followed Kelley was shot in the breast after the confederates had been put to flight.<sup>122</sup> He was the only injury on the Union side reported in the official records.<sup>9</sup> Although a planned pincers attack on the Confederates miscarried, the Confederate troops fled twenty-five miles southward to Beverly with such haste that northern newspapers labeled the affair "The Philippi Races."

The Confederate soldier that shot Kelly, a dark-completed, mustached, broad-brimmed fellow, was captured and placed in the Court House under guard. There was great excitement that night when it was reported the Kelly was dying, and a heavy guard was stationed not only at the Court House but also in the Court-yard to prevent Kelly's regiment from lynching the prisoner. No doubt, if Kelly had died that night, the prisoner would have joined him.<sup>123</sup>



With the Confederate troops being pushed back, political opposition in western Virginia to secession moved forward. On June 11<sup>th</sup> the Union Convention met at Wheeling. Forty counties were represented, and each county's delegation took the

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<sup>9</sup> The Unofficial records show that a private in Kelley's command was also wounded, and that 40 Confederate prisoners were taken, some wounded.

following oath: "We solemnly declare that we will support the Constitution of the United States, and the laws made pursuant thereof, as the supreme law of the land, any thing in the ordinance of the convention which lately met at Richmond to the contrary notwithstanding."<sup>124</sup> The first issue confronting this convention was whether western Virginia could form a separate state and join the Union. This convention wanted to create a new state to be called "Kanawha," the Indian word for "place of white stone." Immediate statehood, however, was prevented by Article IV, Section 3, of the U.S. Constitution, which requires the consent of the legislature to form a new state from the territory of an existing one. During the second day, a committee reported a Bill of Rights which repudiated all allegiance to the Confederacy. Resolutions were offered to insure that western Virginia would remain in the Union. Another resolution ordered all forces in arms against the United States to disband and return home. Further, an ordinance was passed providing for the establishment of a provisional government. In doing so, the convention declared that the Confederate legislature in Richmond was illegal, vacated all state offices, and on June 20th appointed new state officials, headed by Francis Pierpoint as Governor. Pierpoint expressed the principle, in his inaugural, that to the loyal citizens of the United States belong the government and governmental authority.<sup>125</sup> Lincoln recognized Pierpoint's administration as the de jure government of Virginia, and the Senate allowed two U.S. Senators from western Virginia to be seated on July 13<sup>th</sup>. Three congressmen from western Virginia also took their seats in the House of Representatives.

Two days after the Union Convention met at Wheeling, Governor Letcher issued a proclamation calling upon western Virginians, in the name of past friendship and historic memories, to cooperate with secession and join the southern part of the State. Governor Letcher further offered to redress the wrongs from which the western part of the state had so long suffered. This proclamation fall on death ears.<sup>126</sup>



When Lee heard about the defeat at Philippi, he relieved Porterfield and brought him before a court of inquiry. The court found him culpable, but Lee gave him only a reprimand and decided not to proceed further against him.<sup>127</sup>

General Lee had few men and fewer arms to spare for western Virginia. He ordered into service the militia in seven counties of Virginia and planned a special expedition to burn the B. & O. Railroad bridge at Cheat River. With Porterfield gone, Colonel Robert S. Garnett, Lee's adjutant general, was commissioned a brigadier-general and was hurriedly sent to the Allegheny Mountains in western Virginia. Garnett gathered a few thousand reinforcements and sent them to Beverly.<sup>128</sup> With 4,500 men "in a most miserable condition as to arms, clothing, equipment, and discipline," Garnett fortified the passes through which ran the main roads from the Shenandoah Valley to Wheeling and Parkersburg. Garnett had closely studied the situation and reported to Lee that the enemy showed no disposition to advance beyond Philippi. "Beyond that point the Federals were

not known to be in great force," reported Garnett.<sup>129</sup>

Garnett had fewer men than the Union, but he posted his troops on good ground so far as any forthcoming battle might be concerned. He was, however, completely isolated from any possible military support from Richmond. This position was some thirty miles south of Philippi at Rich Mountain, a gap in the Laurel Hill Range, where the Staunton and Weston turnpike crossed about five miles from Beverly. Garnett asked Lee for reinforcements, but before Lee received this appeal, Lee had sent one more regiment to Garnett, and on hearing more fully the situation, had directed two others to be forwarded under the command of able professional soldiers.<sup>130</sup>

At Rich Mountain, Garnett had posted Lieutenant Colonel Pegram with 3,000 men. Garnett with about 8,000 men, occupied Laurel Hill fifteen miles farther westward. The fortified position at Laurel Hill was very strong, having earthworks thrown up with heavy guns mounted. In addition, there were several miles of entrenchments running in every direction up the side of the mountain, one behind another, the rear one commanding those in front.

On June 21<sup>st</sup>, McClellan arrived at Grafton to take personal command of the campaign. Thirty-four years old, possessing great ability and an even greater ego, McClellan exhibited in western Virginia the Napoleonic complex that manifested itself in his written dispatches and proclamations, though not in the handling of troops in battle. "Soldiers!" he declaimed in an address to his troops at Grafton, "I have heard that there

was danger here. I have come to place myself at your head and to share it with you. I fear not but one thing -- that you will not find foemen worthy of your steel."<sup>131</sup>

By the end of June, McClellan had about 20,000 men. This included nine Indiana regiments, the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>.<sup>10</sup> The Indiana 11<sup>th</sup> Zouaves,<sup>11</sup> under the command of Colonel Lew Wallace was placed on detached service at Cumberland on the Potomac. Ohio had seventeen regiments, the 3<sup>d</sup> through 10<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> through 20<sup>th</sup> and the 22<sup>d</sup>. Added to this were the 1st and 2nd Virginia; Howe's United States battery; Barnett's Ohio battery; Loomis' Michigan battery; and Daum's Virginia battery. The cavalry were Burdsal's Ohio Dragoons and Barker's Illinois Calvary.

McClellan assigned five or six thousand of these men to guard the B. & O. Railroad, which had been reopened to Washington, and sent another 2,500 men under Jacob Cox to move up the Kanawha River to Charleston. With the remaining twelve thousand, McClellan planned to encircle and trap Garnett's army. To do this, McClellan planned first to defeat the Confederate forces at Rich Mountain, and then engage the main body at Laurel Mountain. To stop any transfer of troops from Laurel Mountain to Rich Mountain, McClellan ordered General Morris with four thousand men to occupy Garnett's forces at Laurel Mountain. Morris was to keep Garnett busy, but not to attack

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<sup>10</sup> The numerical designations 1st through the 5th would not be used in Indiana out of deference to the five Indiana regiments which served in the Mexican War.

<sup>11</sup> A popular name for troops colorful dressed in French North African type uniforms. This usually comprised a short jacket, a broad sash, baggy pantaloons, gaiters, and a tussled fez.

him in force, until Rich Mountain had been taken.

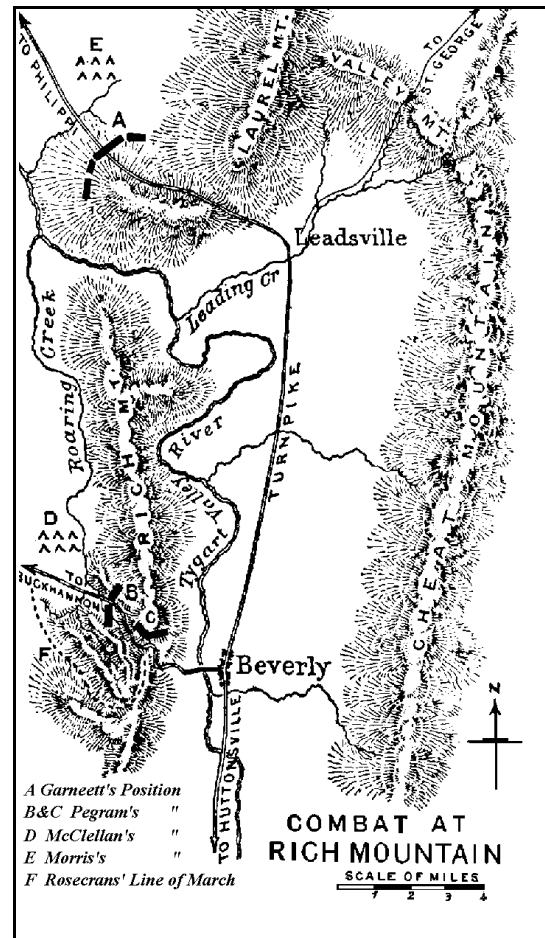
McClellan, with the main body of his army, (three brigades) marched to the rear and western slope of Rich Mountain. Rather than assault the Confederate trenches head-on, McClellan accepted a plan developed by Colonel William S. Rosecrans for a flanking attack by one brigade, while the other two brigades attacked the front. Accordingly, he divided his force into two columns, giving one column to Colonel Rosecrans who was sent to the rear of Rich Mountain, while McClellan remained in front of Rich Mountain ready for a simultaneous attack. Guided by a young man named Hart whose father lived on the top of Rich Mountain, Rosecrans's Indiana and Ohio regiments began their mountain climb. The paths were so difficult that cannons could not go with the troops. After a ten hour exacting march through rain and storm, Rosecrans reached the road at the Hart farm, and sent a courier back to McClellan to give the signal to attack. The messenger lost his way, and fell into enemy hands giving them full information of the planned attack.



Pegram had previously sent 350 men and one cannon to guard the Hart road. As Rosecrans' troops came out upon the road, they were warmly received by these 350 men with both rifle and cannon fire. Skirmishing combat went on for two or three hours, when Rosecrans' line charged and broke the Confederate line. Reinforcements were sent by Pegram with another cannon, but a runaway team of horses from a caisson on the hill-top ran into the gun coming up the hill and sent both crashing down the mountain side. Rosecrans, seeing the arriving Confederates troops, decided to stop the fight for the night and to resume his attack the next morning.

McClellan, hearing the sound of battle, overestimated Pegram's forces, and fearing that Rosecrans was losing, determined not to launch

the simultaneous attack. Instead, McClellan moved rapidly to Beverly and took the town on July 12th.<sup>132</sup> The failure to attack in accordance with the plan was never explained by



Rich Mountain

McClellan.<sup>12</sup>

The next day Rosecrans found that the Confederates were gone from Rich Mountain and that they have abandoned their reinforced camp, leaving two spiked cannons, the sick and the wounded. All totalled, Rosecrans attack killed, wounded, or captured 170 of the 1,300 Confederates at a cost of 12 killed and 49 wounded.

Meanwhile, Morris at Laurel Hill moved to within a few miles of Garnett's fortifications. His camp was located on farm land 200 yards west of the six-house village of Belington. On a Hill northwest of Belington, the Confederates and Morris' Indiana Brigade fought a continuous skirmish with both rifle and cannon fire for several days. First one side would come out of their lines and make a demonstration, then fall back, then the other side would advance its skirmishers, or make a flanking movement.<sup>133</sup> This went on for four days. Morris' official report recounts that the enemy advanced once to within  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile of his main camp, but were pushed back by cannon fire.

On July 11<sup>th</sup>, Garnett at Laurel Hill, having been warned by messenger that Rich Mountain had been evacuated, quickly left his entrenchments and preceded southward hoping to reach Beverly before McClellan. In route they met the runaways of Pegram's army, and learned that Beverly was already in the possession of the Union forces. With

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<sup>12</sup> Jacob D. Cox, a Major-General, U.S.V., writing later as a historian of the West Virginia campaign, pointed out that McClellan in West Virginia "showed the same characteristics which became well known later. There was the same overestimate of the enemy, the same tendency to interpret unfavorably the sights and sounds in front, the same hesitancy to throw in his whole force when he knew that his subordinate was engaged."

retreat to the southwest cut off by McClellan, there was only one way of escape; follow the course of the Cheat River northeast until an outlet into the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia could be found.<sup>134</sup>

The 6th Indiana, the 6th Ohio and the remainder of the brigade took possession of Garnett's camp, while Morris with the 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Indiana, the 14<sup>th</sup> Ohio, and one section of artillery, started a swift pursuit of the retreating Garnett. Morris marched to Leadsville, where he halted for further orders from McClellan.

At daybreak on the 13<sup>th</sup>, Morris ordered Captain H. W. Benham<sup>13</sup> of the Regular Army to lead the advance. As Benham gained on the rear of the Confederates, they began to throw away articles of weight or of little value. When pressed closer, the Confederates left tents, trunks, knapsacks, clothing and blankets. The van and rear guard frequently exchanged shots and continued a skirmishing pursuit for over two hours. The rain soon began to fall in torrents, turning the roads into a quagmire. The Cheat River at this point is very twisted, and the road through the mountain pass crosses it every few miles. At noon, at a bend of the Cheat River, Garnett attempted to make a stand at Carricks Ford, as the road was blockaded by a stalled team caught in the mud.<sup>14</sup> Garnett's

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<sup>13</sup> Capt. Henry Washington Benham was first in the 1837 class at West Point, and a member of General Morris's staff as an engineer. He was later to become a General.

<sup>14</sup> Of great consequence to both sides, heavy rains fell, the narrow roads were almost impassable for wagons and artillery, and the creeks were out of their banks. Captain Benham officially reported the conditions to his superiors: "[F]or nearly the whole time the rain was pouring in torrents and the clayey [sic] roads almost impassable in many places."

men had taken position on the right of the ford, across the river upon an almost precipitous bank from fifty feet at their right to eighty feet in height at their left. Additionally, Garnett positioned a cannon on the top of the bluff which completely commanded the valley, ford and road. When the Union skirmishers advanced on a brisk run along the low level bank of the river, the Confederates jumped to their feet, gave one big cheer for Jeff Davis, followed by a fearful yell, and opened a heavy fire with rifle and artillery. The 14th Ohio halted and stood their ground, giving several full volleys in return. The Union Artillery took a position farther back in a meadow and opened fire on the Confederates.<sup>135</sup>

The fighting in front of the column caused Captain Benham to order the 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Indiana regiments to cross the river, and obliquely climb up the bluff in an attempt to turn the Confederate left. A difficult ascent was begun, so steep that the men had to cling to bushes just to move up. Benham, seeing the difficulty, ordered the men back to the river, and marched them down to the ford, close to the bluff, but under fire of friend and foe. As the Indiana regiments marched downstream, the Confederates fled in great confusion, leaving on the field one cannon,<sup>15</sup> twelve or thirteen dead and many wounded. The regiments captured about forty loaded wagons with their teams of horses which were caught in the mud.

Just as the engagement closed, General Morris came up with the 6th Indiana

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<sup>15</sup> Spiked by Lieut Washington who had proposed the cheer for Jeff Davis, and led in the yell.

followed closely by the remainder of the brigade. The 7<sup>th</sup> Indiana was ordered to lead the brigade in pursuit of Garnett and began conducting a running skirmish with the rear guard of the Confederates to the next ford, a half mile distance. Garnett's men reformed on a hill in some woods that commanded the valley over which the Indiana regiments followed; but again as the Union troops approached, the Confederates retreated. To hasten their retreat, the Confederates discarded almost every item of equipment. The 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Indiana rushed after them with such excitement that few stopped to secure trophies, not even blankets or coats, which they disparately needed by the Indiana troops.<sup>136</sup>

Further down the river Garnett, having placed sharpshooters behind some driftwood near the bank in an attempt to slow the pursuit of the Indiana troops, was shot to death while rallying his men.<sup>16</sup> One brave Georgian private stood near Garnett when others fled, and like a true hero died by the side of his commander. When General Garnett fell, the remainder of the Confederate force fled in confusion. Captain Benham and Major Gordon, both of whom had known Garnett in the regular Army, stopped and cared for the remains of their old companion.<sup>137</sup>

Pegram and his men, having become lost in an attempt to join Garnett, and being unable to find food for his men, called a council of war. By advice of his officers, Pegram sent an offer of surrender to McClellan, and brought in 30 officers and 525

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<sup>16</sup> Garnett was the first Civil War general killed in action.

men.<sup>138</sup>

The federal success was complete. Only a small portion of the enemy escaped, and all of their material and equipment fell into Union hands. The immediate result of this battle was the evacuation of Harper's Ferry by the Confederate army, and the abandonment by the Confederates of western Virginia, or at least that is what the North had hoped.

Northern newspapers hailed the fight at Rich Mountain and Laurel Hill a stunning success. McClellan did not hesitate to take the credit. On July 16th he issued another proclamation summing up the results of his campaign which read well in the press that began to call him "The Young Napoleon": "Soldiers of the Army of the West! . . . You have annihilated two armies, commanded by educated and experienced soldiers, entrenched in mountain fortress fortified at their leisure. . . . You have taken five guns, twelve colors, fifteen hundred stand of arms, thousand of prisoners . . . . Soldiers! I have confidence in you, and I trust you have learned to confide in me." The country was eager for good news, and took McClellan's proclamation as true, placing McClellan as the Country's first war hero.<sup>139</sup>



In the meantime, General Henry A. Wise, ex-governor of Virginia, was near the southwestern border of the state, gathering together another Confederate army. He had

just been appointed a brigadier-general and given two orders. First, he was to clear western Virginia of all federal troops and second, he was to take and occupy Wheeling, so as to disband the Union legislature. In order to accomplish this in the face of McClellan's rapidly growing army, he demanded of Richmond an adequate force, and was told that he must raise it himself. With a meager core of an army, he advanced to Louisburg, about fifty miles south of Cheat Mountain, and from this point moved in a northwesterly direction down the Kanawha Valley, gradually increasing his force until it numbered approximately 4,000 men, including much cavalry and three battalions of artillery.

Wise was poorly supplied with ammunition, his recruits were untrained and undisciplined, and he was a long distance removed from his base of supplies. Further, any supplies that would be sent to him had to pass through a portion of the state which was bitterly hostile to the Confederacy.<sup>140</sup>

On July 2d while McClellan was planning his attack on Rich Mountain he heard news of Wise's army, and ordered a brigade to the Kanowha Valley to hold the lower part of the valley until he could come and do battle. McClellan assigned this defensive task to Colonel Jacob Cox and gave him two light Ohio regiments and two Kentucky regiments.<sup>141</sup>

With about 3,000 men, Cox moved through the valley and set up a camp twelve miles from Wise's principal camp at Tyler Mountain. On July 24th Wise, hearing of

Garnett's defeat at Rich Mountain, concluded that he must fall back, abandon Charleston, and retreat toward Gauley Bridge some 40 miles southeast of Charleston. On July 25<sup>th</sup>, Cox's brigade took and occupied Charleston. By the 29<sup>th</sup> they had pushed Wise past Gauley Bridge to White Sulphur Springs.<sup>142</sup>

The Confederate administration seeing their troops being pushed further south, and not wanting to lose all of western Virginia to the Federal government managed to get 20,000 troops into the trans-Allegheny region, outnumbering for the first time the Federal troops in the area. However, the Confederate soldiers were untrained. Many were armed with unreliable old smooth-bore muskets or even squirrel rifles and shotguns, and one-third of them were on the sick list mostly with measles and mumps which struck down farm boys who had never before been exposed to these childhood diseases. Sick or well, five thousand of the Confederate troops served in two independent commands headed by John B. Floyd also a former governors of Virginia who was an eager secessionists and now thirsted after military glory. Floyd's brigade was sent to reinforce Wise after Wise's retreat. Floyd started from Whiteville with over 3,000 men, which force dwindled down on the march to less than half that number. Floyd appointed as his chief of staff the editor of the Lynchburg Republican, for his first aide-de-camp, a sub-editor, intending to have his conquests duly set forth in print. Floyd bragged that he would, in a single fortnight, drive the Union forces across the Ohio.<sup>143</sup>

On August 6th at White Sulphur Springs, the two ex-governors met for their first



council of War. Each came in with the memory of ancient political differences, each with a determination to yield nothing to the other. Floyd was the senior and was intent on asserting his authority over his rival. Wise was resolved, at any cost, to retain the independence of his command.<sup>144</sup> Thus Wise and Floyd spent more time feuding than planning an attack against Union forces. Wise appealed to General Lee to separate his command from Floyd's, but Lee rejected Wise's appeal and directed Floyd to assume command over all the troops in that part of Virginia.<sup>145</sup>

Floyd took command and placed his forces near Carnifex Ferry, twenty miles from Cox's forces on the Gauley River where a road from Lewisburg meets one going up the Gauley to Summersville. Floyd left Wise at a point farther southward to guard against a rear attack from the Union force at Hawk's Nest. Floyd had expected to find Cox's division across the Gauley, but Cox had retreated leaving only one regiment, and unfortunately for Floyd, had sunk all the ferryboats.<sup>146</sup> Floyd raised two flat-boats, pushed his men across the Gauley River and attacked a Union regiment commanded by Colonel E. B. Tyler of the 7th Ohio, routing it, and in so doing killed 15 and captured over 100. The remainder of Tyler's regiment made its way to Charleston.<sup>147</sup>

After the skirmish, Floyd discovered that he was in a awkward position with his infantry on one side of the river and his artillery on the other; so he hurried off on horseback to find an engineer to build boats and a bridge. Floyd entrenched his position at Carnifex Ferry and built a foot-bridge to connect it with the eastern side of the

gorge.<sup>148</sup>

General William S. Rosecrans was given command of the Department of western Virginia after McClellan was summoned to Washington. Rosecrans had established a chain of posts, with a regiment or two at each, on a line upon which he afterward marched<sup>149</sup>. In late August, Rosecrans gathered up this scattered army and advanced southward over Kreitz and Powell Mountains by way of Bulltown and Sutton to Summersville. He drove back the Confederate's advanced posts and pushed on with a forced march, to Gauley River near Carnifex Ferry.

Floyd, having heard of Rosecrans' move, asked Wise for troops as it appeared that Rosecrans was certain to attack. Wise would send only one regiment of state troops and none of his own "Legion", with the announcement that he would exercise his military discretion and would not send more troops.<sup>150</sup>

Before Floyd could answer with a new order to Wise, Rosecrans' forces arrived and attacked him on September 10. Floyd's position was on good ground for a defensive battle, protected in the rear both by the river and the mountain ridge, and in the front by two lines of entrenchments that had one avenue of approach which was commanded by two powerful batteries. Rosecrans' troops lead by General Benham's brigade made an attempt to outflank Floyd on the left, and succeeded in driving the Confederates out of their breastworks and into the center of their camp. It was too late in the day to bring up a supporting force, and Benham had to withdraw. While Benham was attacking the

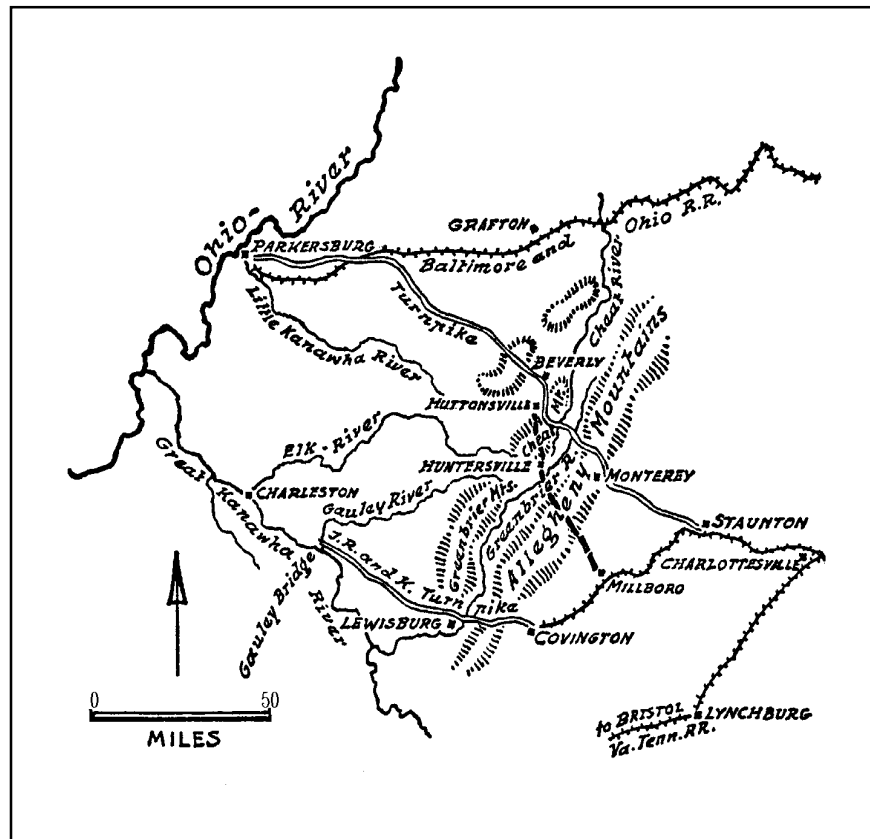
flank, two unsuccessful attempts by Colonels Scammon and McCook's brigades were made in front to take the enemy's batteries.<sup>151</sup> Thus by the close of day the Confederates held their camp.

During the night Floyd determined he could not withstand another attack and ordered a retreat. After his men crossed the river he distorted the new bridge and flat boats so as to prevent all pursuit by Rosecrans' forces. The retreat continued to Sewell Mountain, a distance of over twenty miles. Wise preceded him and halted at Sewell Creek in Fayette County where he found a strong position, and was ordered to hold himself there in readiness to cover the rear of Floyd's retreat.<sup>152</sup> The next day Floyd's column contained the retreat toward Lewisburg in the vicinity of Meadow Bluff. When Floyd reached Meadow Bluff he ordered Wise to join him. Wise refused to fall back as ordered, leaving him with less than 2,200 men out front with no immediate way for Floyd to assist him in case of attack. The road between Floyd and Wise was only twelve miles long, but it was steep and difficult, crossing many small streams that might at any time be rendered impassable by rain.<sup>153</sup>



Robert E. Lee had been in western Virginia since the end of July but not in command. Lee had been sent only as President Davis' confidential military adviser. He was to co-ordinate rather than to direct operations in person. On August 31<sup>st</sup> he was confirmed as a full General in the regular army of the Confederate States, and was thereby authorized to

conduct operations under his own command.<sup>154</sup> Lee took overall command of Confederate forces in the Cheat Mountain area of western Virginia, and was determined to push the Union forces out of the state.



This area of western Virginia is divided, from east to west, into four principal chains of mountains, the Alleghenies, Greenbrier Mountain, Cheat Mountain, and Rich Mountain. The distance from the crest of the Alleghenies to the top of Cheat Mountain is fifteen miles. One road traversed this area, the Parkersburg-Staunton Turnpike. The

strongest of the passes through which this road ran was that on Cheat Mountain, where there was a long crossing at an elevation in excess of 3,500 feet, easily swept by artillery from the summit.<sup>155</sup> The Union held Cheat Mountain, and had troops guarding the pass next to the turnpike. In late July, by order of General George B. McClellan, Union forces constructed an earth and log fortification near the summit as a means of controlling the turnpike. The camp was built on the farm of an elderly mountaineer named White (hence the name "White Top" for this area). Several acres of forest on each side of the turnpike were cleared. Spruce trees along the fort perimeter were felled, trimmed, and placed to present a mass of sharp points towards the enemy. Inside this felled tree line they built large earthen breastworks. The walls of the breastworks were fourteen feet high, eight feet in width at the base, narrowing to four feet in width at the top. The area enclosed a pit and parapet fortification with a blockhouse on the hillside northeast of the point where the turnpike crossed the gap at the summit.

Lee went personally to Huntersville, where 10,000 wet, sick, and hungry Confederate soldiers awaited him. By September 8th he had worked out a plan to take the fort at Cheat Mountain, and in doing so he reasoned there would be no insurmountable barrier to take the B.& O. Railroad line at Grafton, and hence cut the Union's main railway line linking Washington with Ohio and the West. He thought that if the Confederates could first take the fort, then advance down the Kanawha valley some eighty-five miles from Gauley Bridge, they would reach the Ohio River and would

accordingly free the greater part of western Virginia from the Union.<sup>156</sup>

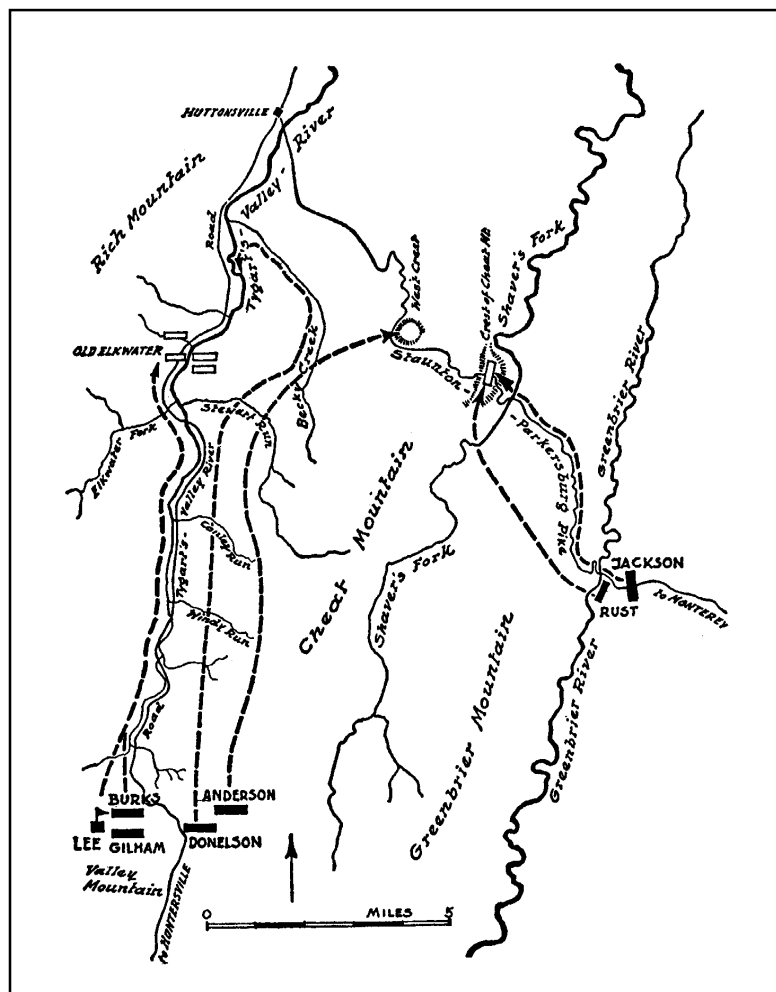
Lee's plan to take the Union's stronghold on Cheat Mountain was very elaborate and complex, for it involved five columns, each operating independently to attack from different directions, in a specified order on a given signal. Colonel Albert Rust of the 3d Arkansas was secretly to take a

column of about 2,000 from Greenbrier River along the western ridge of Greenbrier Mountain through heavy woods, over thickets and across ravines to a point south of the summit on Cheat Mountain.

General S. R. Anderson was to move unobserved down the western ridge of Cheat Mountain until he reached the road that led to the summit

from Tygart's Valley northwest

of the Camp. General H.R. Jackson was to move into position for a march up the Parkersburg-Staunton Turnpike, to a point two miles southeast of its crest with Cheat



Lee's Plan of Attack

Mountain. General Daniel S. Donelson and Colonel Jesse S. Burks, both of General Loring's command, were to advance down either side of the Tygart River toward the Union stronghold at Camp Elkwater. When all was ready Rust was to give a signal by opening fire, and when he did so, Jackson was to advance and attack, Anderson was to prevent reinforcements reaching the Union at Cheat Mountain, and to support Jackson's attack. As the attack was progressing, Donelson and Burks were to attack the Union Camp at Elkwater.<sup>157</sup>

On September 10th, Lee implemented his complicated plan. Traveling with Burks' troops, Lee saw his first action of the war at Conrad's Mill where a skirmish took place with a retiring Union outpost.<sup>158</sup> Both Burks and Donelson were in position by September 12th, having taken a few outposts near Camp Elkwater, but unfortunately in doing so, alerted the Union forces there and at Cheat Mountain. Anderson came into position without being detected. Jackson too was in position, having moved down the turnpike ready to attack and assist Rust and Anderson. As Rust was getting into position, he ran into a Union wagon train of the 14th Indiana only a half mile from the Summit where a skirmish took place. All waited for Rust to open fire on the morning of September 13<sup>th</sup>.

That morning nothing happened, although Rust was in position to attack as planned. Rust failed to give the signal to start the offensive because he became convinced, as a result of information obtained from captured prisoners of the 14th

Indiana, that there were between 4,000 to 5,000 Union men at Cheat Mountain, well fortified, and with knowledge of the Confederate planned attack. Rust waited through September 13<sup>th</sup> without firing a shot and withdrew. He did not know that the Union force was actually only 300 men, and their attention had been diverted to other Confederate forces in the area.

Although numerous skirmishes took place over the next two days, the attack to take Cheat Mountain had to be called off. Lee's plan was frustrated, not only by the inexcusable conduct of Rust, but also by the fatigue and sickness of his men, and by rain that had been falling steadily during the previous forty-five days. Mud slowed their movements to a crawl, and the unplanned skirmishing of Burks, Rust, Donelson and Jackson had eliminated the element of surprise. Supplies were exhausted and there was nothing for Lee to do except to call off the operation and order the troops back to their original camps. Lee issued the order to retire on September 15<sup>th</sup>.

Lee left Valley Mountain to join Floyd at Meadow Bluff accompanied only by his aide, Captain Taylor, and a small cavalry escort. When he arrived on September 21<sup>st</sup>, he discovered that the rival ambitions of the two generals, Wise and Floyd, had reached its climax. Four days later, Lee forwarded an order to Wise from J. P. Benjamin, Acting Secretary of War directing Wise to immediately turn over all his troops to Floyd and to return to Richmond.<sup>159</sup> Wise pondered mutiny, but decided against it after consulting with Lee and left for the capital.<sup>160</sup>



Lee took command of Wise's defensive position, and hoped that the Union forces under Rosecrans would move upon him and attack. He waited three days in the face of the enemy, and on the fourth, the threat of attack and the Union force had both vanished.<sup>161</sup> There was nothing Lee could do, but to pull his troops back, and end his three month campaign.

A month later Lee followed Wise taking the Virginia Central Railroad back to Richmond leaving western Virginia to his enemy.<sup>162</sup> He had accomplished none of the things he had hoped, or the public expected of him. He had not even fought a battle.<sup>163</sup>



After Lee left western Virginia, Floyd was left in command, and went into winter quarters at Cotton Hill, opposite the mouth of the Gauley, where it empties into the Kanawha River. Lee, before leaving for Richmond, had advised Floyd that he was fully satisfied the Union would not advance during the few days of open weather that remained. Contrary to Lee's thinking, in mid November, a division of Rosecrans' forces under General Benham, suddenly and unexpectedly attacked Floyd, driving his troops in great confusion thirty miles through Fayetteville. The next morning it was reported to Floyd that the Union army was advancing on Fayetteville, would most likely surround him, and cut off any retreat. This news caused Floyd to order a further retreat. On the night of the 11<sup>th</sup>, Floyd ordered the burning of about three hundred tents, several bales of

new blankets, overcoats, and a great number of mess chests, camp equipages of all kinds so as to prevent the Union from getting them. On the morning of the 14<sup>th</sup> Floyd's brigade took up their march, but when word came that Union troops were in hot pursuit, the Confederate soldiers broke off in a wild run, and only through great effort on the part of Floyd's officers was a rout prevented. The Confederates continued their retreat until word reached them that the Union forces were no longer following. Floyd finally encamped near Peterstown.



The pursuit of Floyd brought an end to the campaign in western Virginia. Floyd was transferred with his brigade to the Army of General Albert Sidney Johnston in Tennessee and put in immediate command of Fort Donelson. Wise's legion was ordered back to Richmond.

Because of the quick action by Union troops in what became known as the West Virginia campaign, a statehood referendum took place on October 24, 1861. The voters overwhelmingly endorsed a new state, but the turnout was surprisingly small. Pro-Confederate voters in more than a dozen southeastern counties boycotted the election. This referendum brought about the constitutional convention in January 1862 that established boundaries for the new state that included fifty counties. This convention also changed the name of the proposed state to "West Virginia" instead of "Kanawha" as purposed at the earlier convention. The "restored state legislature of Virginia" sanctioned

## West Virginia Campaign.

the creation of the new state of West Virginia on May 23, 1862. At that time, West Virginia had a population of about 380,000, including 15,000 who were slaves. Congress required emancipation as a condition of West Virginia's statehood in a bill passed by the Senate in July 1862 and by the House in December. West Virginians accepted this condition, and the new state came into the Union on June 20, 1863.



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