

The Picket Post

Charlottesville, Virginia

December 2023

AFTER ACTION REPORT

The Battle of Cedar Mountain

by Sandy von Thelen

On November 11, 2023 Michael Block journeyed over from the Culpeper area to talk to the Round Table about the August 9, 1862 Battle of Cedar Mountain. In the wake of George McClellan's repulse from Richmond in the Seven Days Campaign, John Pope had been appointed commander of the Army of Virginia which in late July-early August was concentrated near Little Washington, VA. The remainder of the Federal force in Lee's front had Ambrose Burnside at Fredericksburg and George McClellan languorously withdrawing from City Point. Pope had come from the Western theater where he had achieved some modest success, but quickly revealed that his communication skills were not part of that equation. "Personally Gen. Pope was of quick temper, impatient of contradiction, rude in manners and gifted with a vivid imagination."

In a misguided attempt to strengthen morale he stated, "I have come to you from the West where we have always seen the backs of our enemies." He felt Confederate successes in Virginia were due to lack of aggressive action by Federal forces. Determined to right this oversight, he proclaimed, "Let us discard such ideas (as) taking strong positions...lines of retreat (and)...bases of supplies." While offending the pride of his own army, it was his draconian orders concerning Virginian civilians that got the Confederates' attention. Pope ordered his troops "to subsist

upon the country," appropriating from the locals without reimbursement. Another order stated that any damage to Federal troops or supplies would be assessed against all civilians living within a five-mile radius. All citizens unwilling to take an oath of allegiance were to be deported beyond the lines and their property confiscated. Any civilian who violated this oath was to be executed without trial. The civil war fought in Missouri that Pope was familiar with was obviously quite a bit more bloodthirsty than the one in Virginia.

Pope's army of approximately 45,000 included about 6,500 cavalry under John Buford and George Bayard. The infantry was in three corps under the command of Franz Sigel, Irvin McDowell, and Nathaniel P. Banks. In early August Pope's command threatened Lee's left flank and outnumbered Jackson, but his troops were scattered in their disposition. Affecting both armies was the Virginian summer heat with temperatures in the 90's and rampant sickness. Lee had informed Jackson that "I want Pope to be suppressed," and even in official correspondence Lee referred to the Federal general as the "miscreant Pope."

As Pope moved South, his orders were to protect Washington, secure his line of communications, sever the Confederate rail and supply line at Gordonsville and in effect to take pressure off McClellan. Jackson, who arrived at Gordonsville on July 19th, had about 14,000 men - the Stonewall Brigade, Ewell's division, Winder's

[Continued on Page 2]

NOTICE

TWO Exciting Zoom Lectures

January 2, 2024 Burnside's Debacle at Fredericksburg

In December 1862, Maj. Gen. Ambrose Burnside faced off against Confederate forces led by Gen. Robert E. Lee in strong positions at Fredericksburg VA. In a maneuver designed to force the rebels out of their defenses, Burnside ordered a series of frontal assaults in which Union troops were slaughtered. To register, click on this link: <https://tickets.thenmusa.org/ActivityBooking.aspx>

Sponsored by the National Museum of the U.S. Army

January 19, 2024 The Naval Civil War in Theaters Near and Far

The naval side of the Civil War can best be defined as the Wide Oceans, the Offshore Blockade, Peripheral Coasts and Harbors, and Heartland Rivers. Each of these naval theaters posed unique challenges to both the U.S. and Confederate States navies. This lecture discusses the actions in each of these naval theaters and how they contributed to land campaigns through cooperative operations. To register, click on this link: https://app.aplos.com/aws/events/151_dwight_hughes

Sponsored by CWRT Congress

division, and Beverly Robertson's Laurel Brigade. His orders were to protect Gordonsville and take advantage of any opportunity to deliver a blow against Pope. Jackson could see a viable option to interpose himself between Pope's scattered divisions by moving quickly on Culpeper to defeat Pope in detail, something he had recently accomplished in his Valley Campaign. When it became clear that Ambrose Burnside would not be in play and knowing McClellan's languor, Lee reinforced Jackson with A. P. Hill's strong division on July 27.

Both armies moved towards Culpeper Court House on August 8th. The Federals had their own issues but already the high-strung A. P. Hill and the secretive Jackson were at odds with each other. Jackson had changed the order of marching but had not informed Hill. The direct result was that Ewell was followed by Winder's Stonewall Brigade and Hill brought up the rear, but the celerity which Stonewall was known for did not happen on the 8th of August amongst the stifling heat, dust and traffic jams occasioned by the change in marching orders.

Jackson's force was to spend the night of August 8th strewn across three counties. At the head of the army in Culpeper County was the Laurel Brigade and Ewell's infantry division. Up early, it was Jubal Early's brigade that arrived by 2:00 p.m. at the base of Slaughter Mountain, soon to be called Cedar Mountain, on a converging course with Nathaniel Banks' forces under Samuel Crawford and Henry Gordon. At 2:00 p.m. the temperature was already 98°. Skirmishing was already developing between Bayard's Federal cavalry and Robertson's Laurel Brigade. Ewell then asked for Major Courtney to use his artillery to drive away the Federal cavalry. Parts of five batteries were then positioned on the open ground to the left of Cedar Run and in front of a cornfield to start harassing the Federal cavalry.

The Federal artillery positions on the Miller Station Road responded in kind, and at the hottest part of the day a two-hour artillery duel ensued.

Artillery men on both sides collapsed with heat stroke as they serviced their pieces. The Federal fire severely hindered the Confederate deployment by Early. As the remainder of Ewell's division arrived under Henry Forno and Isaac Trimble, they debouched on Early's right, anchored against the northern slope of Slaughter's Mountain. Eighteen-year-old Joseph Lattimore was able with the help of E.V. White's Comanche battalion to pull six cannon up to a commanding shelf on that mountain to significantly aid the Confederate artillery command of the battlefield.

To the left of Early, Gen. Charles Winder, fresh from his sickbed, deployed his division with Brig. Gen. William Taliaferro's brigade closest to Early and Thomas Garnett's on the far left in a wheatfield at the edge of the woods. The Stonewall Brigade, recently under Winder who had been promoted and now under Col. Charles R. Ronald, was brought up in support of the artillery. A. P. Hill's division, still in the rear, was to be in reserve on the Confederate left. In one of the few battles where the Confederates army had numerical superiority, Jackson had about 15,000 men against 9,000 Federals that Banks attacked him with. One would have thought this would have augured a stunning Confederate triumph, but that was not to be.

As the artillery duel began to wane around 5:00 p.m., Gen. Charles Winder was mortally wounded by a shell fragment while directing his troops. This dispiriting event served up more confusion on the Confederate troop deployment as command devolved onto William Taliaferro, who was totally ignorant of Jackson's battle plans. Garnett had not closed the gap between him and Taliaferro and his flank was exposed to the woods.

The Stonewall Brigade was still

a half mile away from serving in support as well. Into this blisteringly hot late afternoon, Nathaniel P. Banks of all people initiated an attack on Confederate lines. Gen. Christopher Auger sent his brigade in two overwhelming lines through the cornfield in his front, supplying a visual cover to the east of Culpeper Road. John Geary and Harry Prince swiftly moved their men against Early on the Confederate right. The Confederate artillery raked them severely and they had no cover except the cornstalks from Early's men, who were firing from a small depression and a split rail fence. Early's steady pressure and the artillery fire halted their advance. At the same time Sam Crawford attacked Winder's division through the wheatfield.

His men routed the 1st VA Battalion, hitting them on their flank. Then they rolled up the 42nd VA, eventually reaching the rear of Taliaferro and the Confederate artillery batteries in the center of the line. The 10th VA sent by Taliaferro to help Garnett's left was also sent reeling to the rear. The Stonewall Brigade, finally arriving on the field under Ronald and unaware of the break in the Confederate line, had made short work of the tiny reserve of the 3rd Wisconsin in their front. But their right flank held by the 27th VA crumbled when they discovered Crawford's men in their rear.

It was at this critical juncture that Jackson rode to the rapidly widening break in his line, losing his hat in the gallop to his scrambled men. He attempted to brandish his sword, but finding it rusted into the scabbard, he unbuckled the scabbard, and waving it over his head along with a battle flag he had grabbed from a retreating standard bearer, he implored his men to rally. No question Jackson's personal valor helped steady his reeling troops, but in reality how many men in the fog of war could have been influenced by his bravery? How many men could actually see him? 100?

It was the timely arrival of A. P. Hill's division that saved the day.

Brig. Gen. Lawrence O'Bryan Branch's regiments double-quickened to the rupture in the Confederate lines and stemmed the tide. The Federals under Crawford had almost done the unimaginable - besting Stonewall Jackson with an undersized surprise attack, but they had no follow-up punch. Col. Ronald had his Stonewall Brigade wheel right, bringing them into Crawford's rear. Crawford, pressured in his front and right flank by A. P. Hill's fresh corps and by Ronald in his rear, was about to be cut off and his men began to stream back through the wheatfield. Attempting to give his men time to withdraw, Crawford brought up his reserve. Countering three Confederate brigades, the 461 men of the 10th Maine suffered 179 casualties in less than ten minutes. With the Union right collapsing, Banks dispatched Gen. George Gordon's brigade to hold the line.

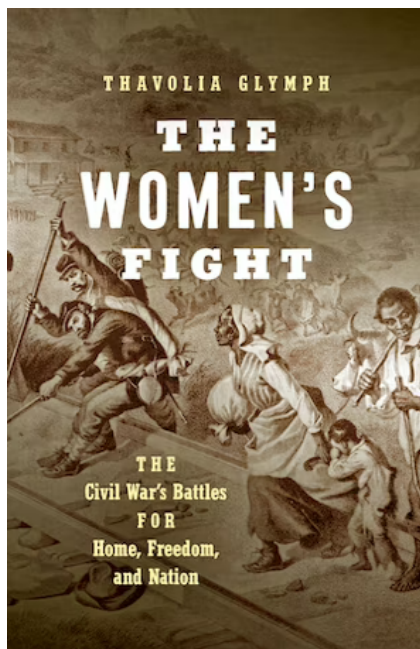
The momentum of the battle had totally shifted by that time and it was only shortly afterward that additional Confederate brigades under Dorsey Pender and James Archer worked their way around Gordon's right flank, forcing him to flee northwards. Jackson had also ordered Ewell to counter-attack. Soon attacks by Isaac Trimble and Henry Forno against Gen. George C. Greene on the Union left sent the entire Federal line in retreat. By 7:45 p.m. in a final daylight assault the 1st PA cavalry charged up the Culpeper Road, only to be decimated by the fire of several Confederate brigades.

As darkness fell, Stonewall was not finished. He carefully assembled the unbloodied brigades of Stafford, Fields and Pender along the Culpeper Road to feel out the retreating Federal forces. It wasn't until at least after 10:00 p.m. and after an unsuccessful artillery duel between Willie Pegram and several Union batteries that Jackson called off the dogs. The Federals suffered 2,353 casualties and the Confederates 1,338. It had been a

near run thing. Banks' initiative to attack the Confederates had almost paid off, but in the end Jackson got the better of him. Good battlefield leadership at critical moments and the timely arrival of A. P. Hill's division had staved off a potential Confederate defeat, eventually allowing for their superiority in numbers to force the Federals from the field.



Book Review
(Reprinted from the
Civil War Monitor)



The Women's Fight is divided into three sections. Part One compares the realities and dreams of plantation mistresses, poor white women, and enslaved Black women as they struggled to navigate the violence that disrupted economic and social systems. Several of this work's achievements lay inside this first section, as Glymph explores the meanings of poverty for white women and how enslaved women used the chaos of war to carve freedom for

[Continued on Page 4]

UPCOMING

Longstreet: The Confederate General Who Defied the South

January 9, 2024

Elizabeth R. Varon will connect James Longstreet's military career to his political career and reputation, focusing on his controversial 1867 decision to support Congressional Reconstruction and on his nearly 40 years as a Republican party operative thereafter. She will also discuss how Longstreet's friendship with U.S. Grant and the singular milieu of New Orleans influenced his decision-making.

Elizabeth Varon is the Langbourne M. Williams professor of American History at the University of Virginia and a member of the executive council of UVA's John L. Nau III Center for Civil War History. Varon's book, *Armies of Deliverance: A New History of the Civil War*, won the 2020 Gilder Lehrman Lincoln Prize and was named one of the *Wall Street Journal's* best books of 2019.



Westminster Canterbury of the Blue Ridge

**250 Pantops Mountain RD
Charlottesville, VA 22911**

**Dinner 6:00 PM
Lecture 7:00 PM**

themselves. Perhaps more than any work in recent memory, Glymph thoughtfully analyzes how the Confederate project allowed poor white women access to vaunted white womanhood, even as their existence undercut the lie that Confederate soldiers fought to protect white women. Glymph reveals that poor white women often resented the Confederacy as an institution that called upon impoverished white people to sacrifice the most for their failing war effort. Glymph's study also chronicles vicious classism. Elite white women grew indignant at the poor "corn women" who demanded welfare from the Confederate state.

Further, Glymph beautifully analyzes how enslaved women "fought to destroy" enslavers' feudal society. Diving into the military records, memoirs, and interviews that documented enslaved and freedwomen's responses to a war that promised emancipation, Glymph uncovers how Black women built on their antebellum resistance to enslavement during the war years. Far from passive, apolitical bystanders, enslaved women asserted to federal officers that enslavers' mansions "ought to be burned"; protected crops that they viewed as their property; and served the United States Army as informal intelligence officers who often shielded soldiers in enemy territory. While her study also accounts for the rarely examined racism and sexual abuse that Black women suffered at the hands of white Union men, Glymph carefully investigates the legacy of Black Southern women's wartime bravery and tenacity. Subsequent generations of freed people commemorated an ideal Black womanhood. One version of "The Bonnie Blue Flag," for instance, inverted Confederate pride to celebrate "radical girls" who would be free by any means necessary.

Glymph's major triumph, however, is her passionate revelations about the Black Southern and Northern women who encountered one another in the Reconstruction South. Voluminous work exists that studies the white Northern women teachers and missionaries who headed into the war-torn South (they are not absent from Glymph's pages). Yet few historians have explored how Black Southern women fought against the paternalism that characterized their

interactions with white Northern women. These white Northern women may have been compelled by the social gospel to assist newly freed people, but they were nevertheless infested with racist assumptions about Black women's characters and abilities.

Black freedwomen also pushed back against Black northern women who attempted to condescend to them, including Sojourner Truth, whose respectability politics earned her the resentment of refugee women in Washington, D.C. Glymph writes compassionately of Harriet Jacobs, who famously escaped slavery. Perhaps less famously, she ventured into Reconstruction Virginia as a teacher who suffered racism from white Northern counterparts - and drew the suspicion of Black freed people. Unlike Truth, however, Glymph records that Harriet Jacobs ardently emphasized that both slavery and Northern apathy had combined to make Black refugees "stupid from oppression." Refugees, Jacobs argued, would benefit greatly from consistent exposure to Black excellence in the form of Black teachers and other professionals.

In the end Glymph's signal achievement in this work is her recovery of Black women's autonomy and agency. Black women created space for themselves during the war; now, they have a place in historiography that has too frequently rendered them invisible.

2024 is almost here!

PAY YOUR 2024 DUES

Dues are **\$35** per year for singles or couples **payable to CWRT**. Please bring your check to the January CWRT meeting OR mail it to:

**Sandy von Thelen
13 Canterbury RD
Charlottesville, VA 22903**

SAVE THESE DATES!

March 22 - 24, 2024

Virginia Tech's Civil War Weekend

Topic: The Information War

Location: Blacksburg VA

Register before 02/21/2024 by clicking on this link:

<https://civilwar.vt.edu/>

April 11 - 13, 2024

Shenandoah Valley Battlefield Foundation's Spring Conference

Topic: New Market, Piedmont and the Lynchburg Campaign

Location: Harrisonburg VA

Register ASAP by clicking on this link:

<https://www.shenandoahatwar.org/2024conference>

April 20, 2024

UVA's Nau Center for Civil War Studies' Signature Conference

Topic: Second Manassas

Location: Charlottesville VA

Register ASAP by clicking on this link:

<https://naucenter.as.virginia.edu/2024-signature-conference-second-manassas>