

Chapter 1

“The stupidity of past follies must be atoned for by energetic blows.”¹

— James Gillette, 3rd Maryland

Banks’s Corps from Little Washington to Culpeper Court House

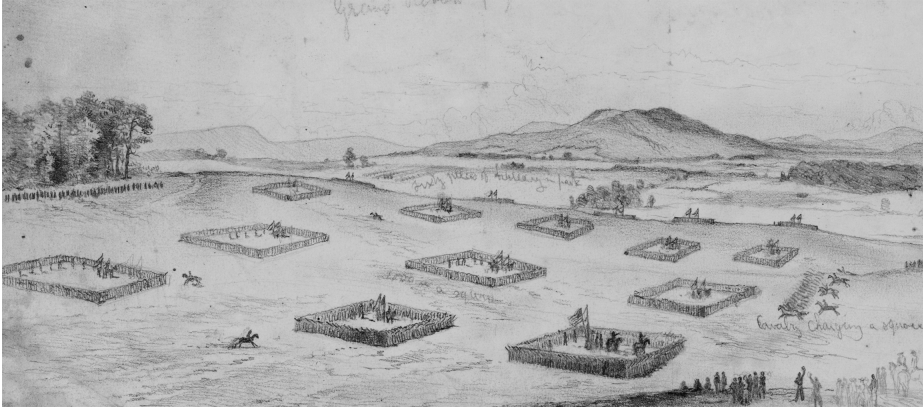
July 28–August 7, 1862

On the clear morning of July 28, 1862, near their camp outside the rolling hills near Little Washington, Virginia, Maj. Gen. Nathaniel P. Banks’s forces underwent extensive drills. Banks arrayed 5,000 infantrymen on a 60-acre field, and the troops stood in defensive squares, confronting both charging cavalry and the sweltering Virginia heat. The Yankee cavalry failed to disperse the infantrymen, twice charging furiously and not breaking off until nearly on their comrades’ bayonets.

Alonzo Quint, chaplain of the 2nd Massachusetts, described these Napoleonic-era anachronisms as “sham fights” that occurred after Banks reviewed and drilled all the units in his camp: 12 infantry regiments and 50 artillery pieces. A Pennsylvanian described the men as being “in good trim and all alacrity to obey the commands,” which Banks issued in his “clear, deep tone of voice.”²

1 James Gillette to Mother, August 7, 1862, James Gillette Papers, LC.

2 Alonzo H. Quint, *The Record of the Second Massachusetts Infantry, 1861-1865* (Boston, 1867), 101-102; *The Warren [PA] Ledger*, August 13, 1862; Julian Wisner Hinkley, Diary, July 28, 1862, Julian Wisner Hinkley Papers, WHS; John O. Foering, Diary, July 28, 1862, HSP; William A. Armor to brother, July 29, 1862, William A. Armor Papers, PSA. Different accounts place the



“Grand Review of N. P. Banks’ Corps at Little Washington, Va,” on July 28th, 1862,
Edwin Forbes. *Library of Congress*

Banks was proud that he had personally directed the entire command and told his wife he felt as if he had been doing it all his life. This was not so. Despite his lofty rank, Banks lacked military experience. He was a “political general,” a former Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives and Governor of Massachusetts who gained his major general’s commission via his political connections. Before properly learning the mechanics of his new trade, he had seniority over most other major generals. Banks’s military service began in Baltimore, where he successfully quelled secessionist rumblings. He was then given command of the Department of the Shenandoah, furtively dispatching the 3rd Wisconsin to Frederick, Maryland, to arrest a cabal of secessionist state delegates.³

The following spring, Banks followed Stonewall Jackson south, up the Shenandoah Valley, and established a garrison down the valley at Strasburg, Virginia. In late May, Jackson threatened Banks’s lines of communication, precipitating the latter’s unnecessarily tardy withdrawal to Winchester. Banks and Brig. Gen. Alpheus S. Williams, commanding the sole division present, entered

number of regiments present at 11 and 14-15, the number of men at 5,000-8,000, and 48-75 artillery pieces. Subtracting Crawford’s brigade and the Ohio portion of Geary’s brigade, which had not yet arrived, leaves no more than 12 regiments. Though Banks wrote to his wife (July 29, 1862, Banks Papers, LC) of 10,000 men present, he had less than 7,000 at Cedar Mountain after those eight regiments had rejoined the command.

3 Banks to wife, July 29, 1862, LC; Ezra J. Warner, *Generals in Blue: Lives of the Union Commanders* (Baton Rouge, 1992), 18; Fred Harvey Harrington, *Fighting Politician: Major General N. P. Banks* (Philadelphia, 1948), 57-60.

Winchester that evening. Units that had fought rearguard actions on the retreat showed up later. The 27th Indiana and 28th New York finally arrived at 11:00 p.m., and the 2nd Massachusetts dragged in at 2:00 a.m. Williams's brigade commanders, Cols. George H. Gordon and Dudley Donnelly, stayed on the field all night, preparing for possible Rebel attacks.⁴

When Jackson, who outnumbered Banks three to one, arrived at dawn, he turned Banks's flank and pursued the Northerners through the streets of Winchester while citizens fired at the Yankees from windows. After a grueling, day-long march from Strasburg and a demoralizing drubbing at Winchester, Banks's troops now trudged another 35 miles to safety on the Potomac's north shore at Williamsport, Maryland. Though many of his soldiers still firmly trusted Banks, this latest experience soured others. Captain Richard Cary, a company commander in the 2nd Massachusetts, wrote disgustingly in late June that, "Being under Banks is very much like being in company with a drunken man who flourishes a revolver. You may be shot at any moment & then not have the satisfaction of knowing it was intentional but owing merely to your excited friend not knowing what he was about."⁵

Banks soon returned to Virginia, and when Maj. Gen. John Pope's Army of Virginia was created on June 26, Banks's reorganized, two-division command became its II Corps. Banks made widespread changes in corps leadership during this time. After the Winchester defeat, Brig. Gen. Samuel Wylie Crawford supplanted Col. Donnelly in command of Williams's 1st Brigade. Donnelly reassumed command of the 28th New York. The brigade's soldiers, who invariably thought well of Donnelly, resented this change. Two brigades, which constituted two-thirds of Brig. Gen. Christopher C. Augur's 2nd Division, joined the command near Amissville on July 10. Brigadier Generals Henry Prince and George S. Greene assumed command of these brigades, neither of which had seen serious action. Augur also had recently joined his command, which reached Little Washington on July 19, two days after the rest of Banks's corps. On August 1, a final brigade, under Brig. Gen. Erastus Tyler, was placed in Augur's division. Brigadier General John W. Geary assumed command of the brigade, and Tyler left

4 Harrington, *Fighting Politician*, 67-70; George H. Gordon, *Brook Farm to Cedar Mountain: In the War of the Great Rebellion, 1861-1862* (Boston, 1883), 207; Edwin E. Bryant, *History of the Third Regiment of Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry, 1861-1865* (Madison, 1891), 62.

5 James G. Hollandsworth, Jr., *Pretense of Glory: The Life of General Nathaniel P. Banks* (Baton Rouge, 1998), 67; Richard Cary to wife, June 25, 1862, Richard Cary Letters, MHS.

the corps. Geary's former command, the 28th Pennsylvania, joined four veteran Ohio regiments that had fought Jackson at Kernstown and Port Republic.⁶

In late June and early July, Banks's troops devastated the ubiquitous cherries and blackberries growing in the region. On the march to Amissville on July 7, each man in the company marching ahead of the 10th Maine slung a cherry tree bough over his shoulder, reminding Lt. John Gould of the moving forest fulfilling the witches' prophecy to Macbeth. Tragic allusions aside, it was a relaxing time for Banks's corps. Gould and his comrades enjoyed a "picnic life" in the forest near Amissville. All were cheerful and rations plentiful. "The woods ring continually with a thousand laughing voices, or echo the tunes of the bands." Colonel George Cobham, who could hear the dozen regimental bands playing within earshot, thought the evenings "very pleasant." A staff clerk's mistake, however, briefly halted this relaxing time, resulting in the corps marching toward Warrenton rather than its correct destination of Little Washington, north of the Rappahannock. The corps found a "cheerless and devastated country." In but six weeks hence, they would be here again.⁷

After reaching Little Washington, Williams's division began complaining about its placement. Captain Richard Cary griped, "We have got a beastly camp ground on the side of a steep hill & just where the line of battle is intended to be in case of a fight. . . . Neither Crawford nor Gordon wanted to camp here." One of Banks's aides quashed these protests, and the division remained there until July 25, when it moved to a spot closer to the 60-acre drill field. Except for the oppressive heat, Cary was mostly satisfied with the new camp. He wished he had a, "Scientific interest in bugs of which I have always on hand—or rather all over me—in my tent a very large & choice assortment including every variety."⁸

At its new camp, the soldiers affected more than the population of cherries. General Gordon sympathized: "Our camps generally were established in the neighborhood of quiet farms, which we occupied and overran, until we became a great unnatural plague to the people. We filled their woods with our tents, we killed

6 Hinkley Diary, July 17, 1862, WHS; Gordon, *Brook Farm*, 272; Gould, *10th Maine*, 156; Chandler Gillam to wife, June 27, 1862, Chandler B. Gillam Papers, LC; Warner, *Generals in Blue*, 515.

7 Gould, *10th Maine*, 155-157. George A. Cobham, Jr., to sister, July 14, 1862, WCHS, transcript copy at GNMP; Richard Eddy, *History of the Sixtieth Regiment New York State Volunteers, From the Commencement of its Organization in July, 1862, to its Public Reception at Ogdensburg as a Veteran Command, January 7th, 1864* (Philadelphia, 1864), 135.

8 Quint, *2nd Massachusetts*, 102; Cary to wife, July 16/18, 26, 1862, MHS.

Maj. Gen. John Pope, Army of Virginia

Library of Congress



their sheep and calves, and substituted, for the ‘drowsy tinkling of their lowing herds,’ the beating drum, the ear-piercing fife, and all the loud alarum of war.” According to its regimental history, darkness brought, “in some way,” a variety of livestock and vegetables into the 60th New York’s camp. Lieutenant James J. Gillette, commissary officer for Prince’s brigade, heartily disdained his fellow soldiers’ behavior:

Stragglers have been known to rob the farm houses and even small cottages. The homes of the poor of every ounce of food or forage contained in them. Families have been left without the means of preparing a meal of victuals. . . .The anxieties, privations and discomforts of those removed from the scene of wars conflicts, away from the path of armies know nothing of the suffering or inconveniences compared with the horrors undergone by the people of Virginia. . . .The lawless acts of many of our soldiery are worthy of worse than death. The villains urge as authority: Gen Pope’s order.⁹

* * *

Major General John Pope graduated from West Point in 1842 and was twice brevetted in the Mexican War. He achieved success in the Western Theater in the early days of the Civil War, capturing New Madrid, Missouri, and Island Number 10 on the Mississippi River. Lincoln brought him east during the Army of the Potomac’s glacially slow march up the York-James peninsula, southeast of Richmond. Pope’s mission was to coordinate and focus the scattered and hitherto ineffective forces operating in and around the Shenandoah Valley. Their common opponent, Stonewall Jackson, had temporarily quit the Valley to support Robert E.

⁹ Gordon, *Brook Farm*, 266; Eddy, *Sixtieth New York*, 132; Gillette to Mother, July 31, 1862, LC.

Lee's defense of Richmond. On June 26, the commands of Banks and Maj. Gens. John C. Fremont and Irvin McDowell were consolidated into Pope's Army of Virginia. East of Richmond, Lee's forces were fighting the "Seven Days" battles, which resulted in Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan's "change of base" from the York to the James River.¹⁰

The Army of Virginia was charged with covering Washington and relieving the pressure on McClellan's Army of the Potomac at Harrison's Landing on the James by threatening Lee's supply line on the Virginia Central Railroad near Gordonsville. Pope concentrated his army on a line from Sperryville to Fredericksburg. Major General Franz Sigel, Fremont's replacement, camped at Sperryville. Banks was southeast of Little Washington, to Sigel's east, and yet further east, McDowell's corps was strung out along the Rappahannock River from Waterloo Bridge to Fredericksburg. Pope remained in Washington and issued a flurry of orders. Pope directed his men to subsist off the land in order to "secure efficient and rapid operations," but his orders gave rise to the unrestrained foraging that Union officers struggled to constrain. General Orders Nos. 7 and 11 decreed draconian measures, such as burning houses of civilians from which Union troops were ambushed, executing oath violators, and forcing the populace to repair guerrilla damage.¹¹

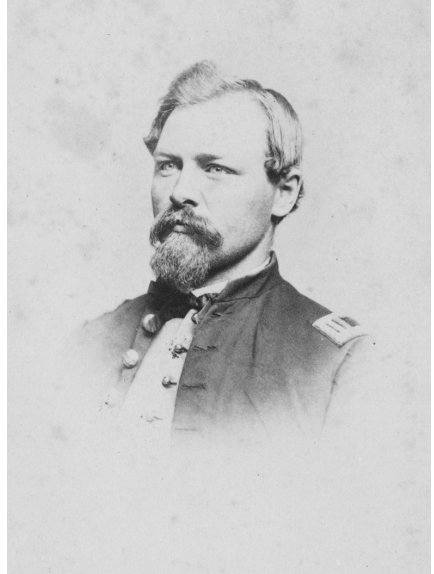
Pope's orders, sanctioned by the Lincoln administration, stirred up a storm and provided angry Virginians further cause for acrimony. Uncharacteristically eager to punish his adversary, Lee told Jackson on July 27, "I want Pope to be suppressed. The course indicated in his orders, if the newspapers report them correctly, cannot be permitted and will lead to retaliation on our part. You had better inform him the first opportunity." During a foraging expedition to gather horses, one resident uttered prayers that Jackson would come to their rescue and shoot every one of the Yankee riders. Sergeant Washington L. Hicks, the 28th New York's clerk, lamented, "Union feeling here was not in the ascendant," and "the ladies feeling secure in the liberty accorded to their sex were very bitter and sometimes insulting in their language to our troops."¹²

10 Warner, *Generals in Blue*, 376; Joseph L. Harsh, *Confederate Tide Rising: Robert E. Lee and the Making of Southern Strategy, 1861-1862* (Kent, OH, 1998), 89-97.

11 *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 128 vols. (Washington, DC, 1880-1901), Series 1, vol. 12, part 2, pages 21, 23, 50-52, hereafter cited as OR. All references are to Series 1 unless otherwise noted.

12 OR 11, Pt. 3, 359; OR 12, pt. 3, 500-1, 919; Joseph Kerns to Banks, July 14, 1862, Banks Papers, LC; Washington L. Hicks, Diary, 6, Chandler Gillam Papers, LC. The Hicks Diary,

2nd Lieutenant Julian Wisner Hinkley,
3rd Wisconsin
Wisconsin Veterans Museum (Madison, WI)



Hoping to inspire the army, Pope issued an instantly infamous circular:

I have come to you from the West, where we have always seen the backs of our enemies; from an army whose business it has been to seek the adversary and to beat him when he was found; whose policy has been attack and not defense. . . . dismiss from your minds certain phrases, which I am sorry to find so much in vogue amongst you. I hear constantly of “taking strong positions and holding them,” of “lines of retreat,” and of “bases of supply.” Let us discard such ideas. The strongest position a soldier should desire to occupy is one from which he can most easily advance against the enemy. Let us study the probable lines of retreat of our opponents, and leave our own to take care of themselves.¹³

Some of Pope’s new soldiers viewed his hortatory declarations favorably at first, while others found them patronizing.¹⁴

On the day Pope issued this order, he wrote Banks, trying to drive his point home. He began with his strategic intentions. Pope wanted his three corps in position to concentrate within 24 hours for an advance either on the railroad at Gordonsville or against the Confederate flank. He then explained that he did not intend to assume, “Strong positions . . . to defend them. . . . I shall push forward and do the attacking myself . . . the attack will hereafter always be made by us.” This letter, Pope’s bombastic orders, and Banks’s humiliating experience two months

contained in the Gillam Papers, uses page numbers more consistently than dates of entry. Its pagination restarts in June 1862, and that is the page range referenced throughout this narrative.

13 OR 12, pt. 3, 473-474.

14 Hicks Diary, 9-10, LC; William Shimp to Anna, July 28, 1862, CWDocColl, USA; Quint, *2nd Massachusetts*, 100-101.

earlier and concern for public sentiment would interact disastrously in the coming weeks.¹⁵

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From his excellent vantage point near the viewing platform, officer of the guard Lt. Julian Hinkley thought Banks's July 28 grand review presented a "splendid appearance." "[T]he immense superiority of Gordon's brigade in drill and soldierly appearance was apparent to every officer," he wrote. That brigade, to which Hinkley belonged, had a reputation for discipline and thorough drilling. This was especially true in the 2nd Massachusetts, which had been molded by its erstwhile commander, Brig. Gen. George H. Gordon.¹⁶

A West Point classmate of George McClellan, Gordon had seen heavy fighting as a dragoon in the Mounted Rifles during the Mexican War. Twice wounded, Gordon earned a brevet to first lieutenant for gallantry at Cerro Gordo. He later attended Harvard and practiced law in Massachusetts. After securing approval from Governor John Andrew and President Lincoln to handpick its officers, Gordon formed the 2nd Massachusetts Infantry after Lincoln's initial call for volunteers after Fort Sumter. He intended to craft the best volunteer regiment in the army. Well-equipped, modeled on the Regular Army, and meticulously prepared, its officers came from prominent Boston families. One of these, Capt. Richard Cary, deemed Gordon, "The best military man I have seen in the valley, he is quicker & has more decision than the others I have had an opportunity of seeing."¹⁷

Unfortunately Gordon's decisiveness came with an apparently insolent manner that caused problems up and down the chain of command. The 27th Indiana despised him. Its Midwestern farmers initially perceived an "air of contemptuous superiority" toward them from the 2nd Massachusetts. Though their angst toward the Bay Staters cooled in time, the Hoosiers still loathed Gordon, an educated and experienced officer but one, "So supremely stuck on

15 John Pope to Banks, July 14, 1862, Banks Papers, LC.

16 Hinkley Diary, July 28, 1862, WHS.

17 Warner, *Generals in Blue*, 177; Gordon, *Brook Farm*, 2-3, 9; John H. and David J. Eicher, *Civil War High Commands* (Stanford, CA, 2001), 259, 517; George W. Cullum, *Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the U. S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y. from its Establishment, in 1802, to 1890 with the Early History of the United States Military Academy, Vol. II* (Boston, 1891), 291-292; Cary to wife, July 16/18, 1862, MHS.

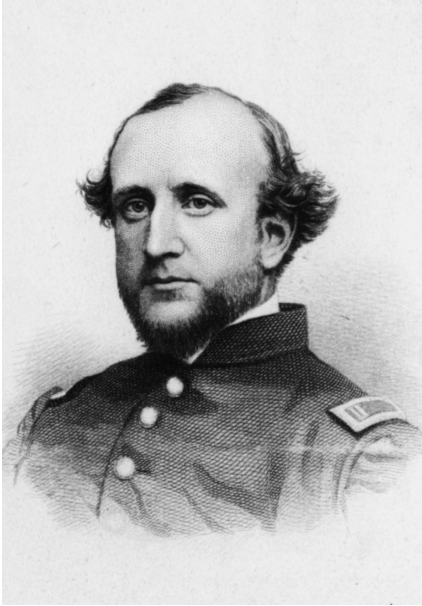
Brig. Gen. George Henry Gordon

Library of Congress

himself that he could not be respectful to superiors, considerate of subordinates, or learn anything from anybody.” Indeed, one man thought the regiment would have been better off had a “stalking pestilence” visited it. Their relations worsened when Gordon’s Winchester battle report claimed the Indianans broke without orders after being flanked. Conversely, the lumbermen and raftsmen of the 3rd Wisconsin quickly overcame an initial aversion to the 2nd Massachusetts’s transfer into the brigade in March 1862, and eventually formed a close friendship with the regiment.¹⁸

Gordon also had several run-ins with Banks. The previous year, Banks withdrew guards he had promised Gordon after the latter punished an enlisted man from another regiment by stringing him up by his thumbs. According to one officer, this episode proved Banks could not “throw off the politician,” since he removed the guards in response to his clamoring soldiers. Banks also observed that, though he was too outspoken with superiors and regularly failed to restrain contempt for his politician commander, Gordon’s personal courage and dash inspired his men. Their strained relationship came to a head on the eve of Banks’s retreat from Strasburg. When Jackson threatened the Federal line of communication with Winchester, Gordon and Banks disagreed about when to abandon the town. According to Gordon, Banks initially balked at the suggestion of leaving, citing public opinion. Gordon apparently shared details of the conversation with his 2nd Massachusetts officers, who bristled at the incident. “You can imagine how pleasant it is to stand in a rain of bullets & think not that it is to save your country or from stern military necessity,” explained a disgusted Capt. Cary, “but because the general who commands you fears that the public will not

¹⁸ Brown, *Twenty-Seventh Indiana*, 106, 165-168; Julian Wisner Hinkley, *A Narrative of Service with the Third Wisconsin Infantry* (Madison, WI, 1912), 15, 18. After the battle of Winchester, General Green superseded him, but Gordon received his star in June and returned to the brigade.



Capt. Richard Cary, 2nd Massachusetts,
Company G

U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center

understand why he retreats unless the reason is explained to them thro' the medium of a long list of dead, wounded & missing."¹⁹

With thoughts of Winchester fresh in their minds, Gordon's men drilled intensively on the 60-acre field throughout late July. Two days after Banks's grand review, Gordon led the whole brigade in some novel advanced maneuvers. The regiments conducted firing practice, but Lieutenant Hinkley's midwestern wood-

men scarcely needed to hone their shooting skills.²⁰

* * *

After the review, Banks extolled the "fine and soldierly appearance" of Brig. Gen. John White Geary's mixed Ohio/Pennsylvania brigade. Geary told his wife that "all passed off satisfactorily."²¹

Lieutenant Colonel Hector Tyndale, a former Philadelphia ceramics and glass importer, commanded the 28th Pennsylvania, Geary's former regiment. In mid-May, Tyndale led a detachment of three companies and a cavalry detail at Front Royal while Banks garrisoned Strasburg. He wired Banks that the Luray Valley appeared to be filling with Confederates, intelligence that Banks

19 Gordon, *Brook Farm*, 50-53, 192-193; Cary to wife, September 6 and 21, 1861, and June 18, 1862, MHS.

20 Hinkley Diary, July 30, August 2 and 4, 1862, WHS; Gordon, *Brook Farm*, 273; William Wallace, Diary, August 4, 1862, WHS.

21 Foering Diary, July 28, 1862, HSP; John Geary to wife, July 29, 1862, Geary Papers, HSP.

disregarded. A few days later, Jackson's men overwhelmed Tyndale's relief regiment, the 1st Maryland, before menacing Banks's supply line.²²

Tyndale drove his men hard and became acutely unpopular. William Roberts, Jr., of the 28th Pennsylvania wrote that on a sizzling day in early July, "That miserable beast . . . urged the men on until many dropped exhausted [and] if a man left the ranks for a drink of water when a halt was not ordered this wretch would make them pour it out. Every man hates him bitterly . . . on this inhuman march, 400 men only out of 1200 . . . reached camp." Robert M. Erwin thought the men had been "done out" on that march. He declined to say what was "generally thought" of Tyndale, but did not think the regiment would long "stand its present usage." Geary warned Tyndale that he would be cashiered if he ever marched his men like that again. The next day's march was slow with many long rests.²³

After Banks's review, Tyndale ordered Company K to fall in and, in full view of the rest of the regiment, dressed its men down as, "A set of worthless vagabonds . . . Skulks. [A] disgrace to the Regt. Scoundrels and Cowards." He then threatened to chain their wrists and march them before the regiment like slaves with the officers following, swordless. Such behavior naturally alienated men he would soon lead into combat, and fellow officers eventually brought charges against him for "tyrannical and capricious conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman."²⁴

* * *

The 60th New York of Greene's brigade faced troubles of its own. An outbreak of typhoid fever developed in its camp near Amissville, and while on the march toward Little Washington on July 17, a drenching rain caused a freshet on the Rappahannock River as the men reached it. They crossed the river on a log bridge and their accompanying battery forded it, but their supply trains could not cross. Left without food or cooking utensils, they were forced to forage. The Rappahannock continued to rise and eventually submerged the wagons for twelve

22 Warner, *Generals in Blue*, 517; John M. McLaughlin, *A Memoir of Hector Tyndale, Brigadier-General and Brevet Major-General, U. S. Volunteers* (Philadelphia, 1882) 11-12. Another facet of Tyndale's character was revealed on the eve of the radical abolitionist John Brown's execution in 1859. He accompanied Brown's wife to Harper's Ferry for the hanging and then escorted her and the remains to New York.

23 William Roberts, Jr., to father, July 8, 1862, William Roberts, Jr., Papers, HSP; transcript, Robert M. Erwin to father and mother, July 14, 1862, USA.

24 "28th Pennsylvania Volunteer Papers, 1861-1863," HSP.

hours. At midday on July 20, teamsters recovered waterlogged and muddy papers, blankets, and uniforms.²⁵

On July 21, the 60th New York hailed the return of four detached companies that had been guarding the B&O Railroad. The regiment had spent the first year of war on railroad duty and was just entering active field service. The returning detachment, under Maj. Edward James, performed well en route. On July 17, discovering that they missed the crossing of the swollen Rappahannock, James continued upstream to Waterloo Bridge, which had been washed away after the river rose 18 feet over its banks. With Banks nearby and 200 wagons filled with stores for his and Sigel's corps engulfed by the river, James's men worked to save many wagons and dray animals. Banks thanked them for averting famine in the corps.²⁶

After the detachment's return, disease proliferated in the 60th. On July 22nd, 64 troops were being treated—and deaths occurred almost daily. By August 4, the sick numbered 311. The next morning, Greene ordered the regiment to move to Fauquier White Sulphur Springs, south of Warrenton on the Rappahannock. At sunset, with General Greene, his staff, and representatives of other units present, the 60th buried two of its lieutenants. That evening, two more died. “[T]he drum and fife constantly sounding the death march,” wrote General Gordon, “made the evenings feel sad and solemn.” If the corps was not meeting Pope's order to live off the land, “We were doing the next best thing—we were dying on it.” Lieutenant James Gillette simply observed: “the bands were ever playing the dirge.”

Because of its waters' supposed medicinal qualities, the Sulphur Springs resort was a popular and well-known destination. The 60th New York, residing in its brick buildings and cottages and using its pavilions for a hospital, would recuperate there and miss the coming battle. But Colonel Goodrich and his men would soon return to action.²⁷

* * *

Portions of Banks's command were absent during the concentration at Little Washington. As part of his effort to disrupt Lee's connection with the Shenandoah

²⁵ Eddy, *Sixtieth New York*, 132, 135.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 139, 141-142.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 143-151, 156; Gordon, *Brook Farm*, 277; Gillette to Mother, August 7, 1862, LC.

Valley via the Virginia Central Railroad, Pope ordered Banks's cavalry, under Brig. Gen. John Porter Hatch, and "sufficient infantry" south to occupy the "trim little village" of Culpeper. On July 14, Pope directed Hatch to proceed south from Culpeper, occupy Gordonsville, and destroy the tracks for 10–15 miles east toward Richmond. That same day, Banks sent Colonel Donnelly and the 28th New York, along with the 46th Pennsylvania of Crawford's brigade, forward with two days' rations. They marched at sunset, passed through Warrenton, and forded the Rappahannock at Sulphur Springs. By the morning of July 16, they were encamped near a Confederate cemetery, one mile south of Culpeper.²⁸

Donnelly's detachment broke camp early on July 17 and followed Hatch's cavalry through a heavy downpour. The cavalry and artillery had badly churned the muddy roads and it was a sluggish, tiring march. The expedition continued through James City to Robertson's River, where the cavalry could not ford the swollen stream. The field on which they camped was ankle-deep in water, and Donnelly's men spent the night and the next day there.²⁹

On July 19, the column waded the river near Madison. Rumors spread that two brigades under Confederate Maj. Gen. Richard Ewell were nearby. Constantly on the alert for suspected threats, Donnelly's detachment changed direction and withdrew over "mountainous and unfrequented roads" to Turkey Hole Mountain, up a "precipitous mountain path," and through brambles "in the bottom of some deep and dark ravine."³⁰

After reaching Turkey Hole Mountain, Donnelly's rations ran out. Soldiers collected chickens and vegetables from nearby residences, and a makeshift charge by some cavalrymen killed eight to ten enemy geese. The quixotic dash amused the infantrymen, many of whom habitually accused the cavalry of having a reputation for "charging rearward." Leaving Turkey Hole Mountain, the column passed through Woodville before reaching Culpeper on July 21.³¹

28 Pope to Banks, July 14, 1862, Banks Papers, LC; George Townsend, *Campaigns of a Non-Combatant and His Romaunt Abroad During the War* (New York, 1866), 239; Hicks Diary, 6, LC.

29 Hicks Diary, 7, LC.

30 Charles Boyce, "A History of the 28th Regiment, New York State Volunteers," Charles H. Boyce Papers, LC, 107, 110; Chandler Gillam to Sarah Gillam, July 23, 1862, LC. The Boyce manuscript appears to be a copy, largely verbatim, of the Washington Hicks Diary. Boyce added details in a few instances; otherwise, Hicks is referenced.

31 Boyce, "28th Regiment," 108.

Pope was not pleased. He expected Hatch to be in Charlottesville, and had earlier directed Banks to spur his cavalry chief along. Hatch might push on to the James River, twenty miles south of Charlottesville, the commanding general added, to destroy a canal. Pope was unaware that Hatch had brought an infantry escort for his cavalry raid and that they were still encamped at Culpeper. On July 18, Banks forwarded to Pope a dispatch Hatch had sent the day before, which betrayed the makeup of his expedition. The confounded Pope immediately directed Banks to recall the infantry and its trains. "I fear the whole object of the expedition is frustrated by the terrible delay occasioned by this strange misapprehension," he seethed, which could "possibly lead to serious consequences." Moreover, Hatch's circuitous march failed to occupy Gordonsville, let alone Charlottesville. Worse still, Lee ordered Stonewall Jackson, with his former division and another under Ewell, to Louisa Court House and on to Gordonsville "if practicable." Jackson accomplished the first leg of this assignment on the rails that Hatch had been ordered to destroy. Ewell's division arrived in Gordonsville on July 15. Hatch blamed the delay in carrying out his mission on poor roads.³²

On July 20, Pope explicitly instructed Hatch to proceed to Charlottesville and destroy the rail lines from there to both Gordonsville and Lynchburg, an effort Hatch abandoned shortly after starting. As a result, Pope replaced Hatch with Brig. Gen. John Buford, an assistant inspector general. Buford, who would gain fame at Gettysburg 11 months hence, found a dilapidated command with no records beyond inaccurate morning reports and troopers who misunderstood their duties as cavalrymen. Pope pressed his mounted arm to harass the enemy energetically, but cavalry detachments were scattered across the map and Buford could not make sense of his units' positions easily or quickly. He recalled detachments and requested infantry support from Sigel's I Corps, in front of which the II Corps cavalry operated. By August 7, Buford's cavalry picketed the Rapidan between Barnett's Ford and the Blue Ridge, still screening Sigel's corps. Brigadier General George Bayard's four cavalry regiments from McDowell's corps, sent by Pope to Culpeper to support Hatch on July 16, remained in front of Culpeper. While

32 OR 12, pt. 3, 476, 481, 484, 915; OR 12, pt. 2, 24; John S. Clark, Report to Banks, August 3, 1862, Banks Papers, LC; McHenry Howard, *Recollections of a Maryland Confederate Soldier and Staff Officer Under Johnston, Jackson and Lee* (Baltimore, 1914), 161; Jubal Anderson Early, *Autobiographical Sketch and Narrative of the War Between the States* (Philadelphia, 1912), 92. With an eye to retreat routes, Col. John S. Clark of Banks's staff reported on August 3 that the roads south of the Rapidan in Orange, Louisa, and Spotsylvania counties could be considered generally good, but those north of the Rapidan, in Culpeper County, were "bad very bad" and undependable.

occupying a position along the Rapidan between Raccoon Ford to the east and linked with Buford at Barnett's Ford to the west, Bayard's men screened, and occasionally cooperated with, Banks's infantry.³³

When Colonel Donnelly's two-regiment demi-brigade returned to Culpeper on July 21, it found abundant provisions. Though supply wagons from Warrenton proved insufficient, local residents begrudgingly met the balance of their needs with plentiful potatoes, honey, ham, butter, and milk. Many soldiers bought supplies with Confederate money, which the residents preferred. For the Yankees, this was the same as appropriating them. The regiments also had the good fortune to camp next to a large cornfield, which the men liberally plundered. The owner's complaints to Donnelly precipitated a heated discussion and a Northern victory. If the plaintiff was a Union man, the colonel said, he, "Ought to be willing to give a few ears of corn to half-starved soldiers, fighting to preserve the Union; and if, as I suspect, you are a rebel, you deserve to lose your entire crop."³⁴

This compulsory largesse elicited no warmth, and the locals openly disdained the soldiers. One scowling woman on a veranda jeered "Scum!" through clenched teeth at a passing regiment. Others turned their backs to soldiers and detoured off sidewalks to avoid walking under the United States flag. When Confederate prisoners arrived in town after a few days, the townspeople effusively attended to their needs. A sergeant in Capt. Joseph M. Knap's Battery E, Pennsylvania Light Artillery, observed that women and their slaves brought whatever "delicacies" the Rebels needed at all hours of the day, but would claim that nothing was available when Northerners asked.³⁵

The Federal concentration near Culpeper, meanwhile, continued to develop. The two-regiment balance of Crawford's brigade left Little Washington before dawn on July 22, their mountainside camp aflame behind them. They joined Donnelly's detachment two days later. Crawford assumed command, deploying heavy pickets to thwart Confederate cavalry raids and posting Capt. Jacob

33 OR 12, pt. 2, 24 and pt. 3, 490-491; John Pope to Banks, July 14, 1862, Special Order No. 31, August 2, 1862, and John Buford, Report, August 4, 1862, Banks Papers, LC.

34 Gould, *10th Maine*, 161; Chandler Gillam to Parents, July 25, 1862, and C. Gillam to S. Gillam, July 28, 1862, LC; Charles W. Boyce, *A Brief History of the Twenty-eighth Regiment New York State Volunteers* (Buffalo, NY, 1896), 34.

35 Boyce, *Twenty-eighth New York*, 34; Townsend, *Campaigns of a Non-Combatant*, 242; David Nichol to family, August 7, 1862, David Nichol Letters, USA.



Maj. Gen. Nathaniel Prentiss Banks and staff. Col. John S. Clark is on Banks's left.

National Archives Records Administration

Roemer's Battery L, 2nd New York Light Artillery, east of town, covering the roads from Orange.³⁶

On August 1, Roemer's artillerymen marked former President Martin Van Buren's death by firing once a minute until they recognized all 26 states that were part of the Union during Van Buren's term. The troops could clearly observe the townspeople flying into hysterics after the first shot, thinking they were being shelled. This amusement alone was worth the onerous guard duty.³⁷

* * *

The situation at Culpeper tried Pope's patience. In addition to Hatch's inactivity, Banks communicated little about what was occurring in his front. On July 23, Pope exhorted Banks to pay attention to developments there and report them to headquarters daily. That same day, he confided to Irvin McDowell that he felt Banks knew nothing about military affairs. Not satisfied with Banks's July 24

³⁶ Gould, *10th Maine*, 159; Hicks Diary, 9, LC; Jacob Roemer, *Reminiscences of the War of the Rebellion, 1861-1865* (Flushing, NY, 1897), 35.

³⁷ Roemer, *Reminiscences*, 36.

report, Pope began coaching him on July 25. He cautioned Banks about blindly trusting his commanders and suggested he send a trusted staff officer to Culpeper to manage matters. The next day, Banks dispatched Col. John S. Clark, who collected intelligence for the next few weeks, at times providing important information. Finally, Pope cautioned against “the grave consequences which result from carelessness in our front,” apparently a thinly veiled reminder of the Strasburg-Winchester debacle. Banks likely perceived it as such.³⁸

Banks was not the only officer being prodded from above. Echoing Pope’s dispatches, Banks began putting spurs to Crawford on July 26. As a result, scouting parties started to penetrate the Rapidan fords, though their incursions were usually brief. The urgency and frustration of Banks’s communications with Crawford grew until the end of July, when he pushed Crawford to conduct wider reconnaissances beyond the river. On July 29, Clark reported the, “Universal ill feeling here among the officers against Gen. Crawford so much so as seriously to impair the efficiency of the troops.” Clark said he would explain this to Banks “when I see you,” adding that Crawford felt it “not at all safe” for anything less than a brigade of infantry to cross the Rapidan.³⁹

On July 31, Clark passed intelligence, gathered from slaves, that Confederate infantry was no closer than Gordonsville and their cavalry was heavily picketing the river. More importantly, trains from Richmond had deposited a large body of infantry on July 30. The 1st New Jersey Cavalry’s commander substantiated this on the same day, reporting a skirmish with Rebel pickets northwest of Orange at Barnett’s Ford. He also reported hearing trains constantly moving at Gordonsville, which was Maj. Gen. A. P. Hill’s division arriving from Richmond to reinforce Jackson’s two divisions. Colonel Clark worried that his scouting parties were too far from the enemy to be effective. In response, Banks reiterated the need for vigilance at the front and requested that Clark communicate his desires to Crawford, who in turn responded by going forward himself.⁴⁰

Samuel W. Crawford, a native of Franklin County, Pennsylvania, graduated from the University of Pennsylvania’s medical school in 1850. He served as an army surgeon on the frontier until being assigned to a fortuitous billet at the Charleston forts in 1860. After a short stay at Fort Moultrie, Crawford moved to Fort Sumter, where he commanded a battery during the Confederate

38 OR 12, pt. 3, 499-500, 506-507.

39 OR 12, pt. 3, 510-511, 521-522; John S. Clark to Banks, July 29, 1862, Banks Papers, LC.

40 Clark to Banks, July 31, 1862; Joseph Karge to John Hatch, July 31, 1862, Banks Papers, LC.



Brig. Gen. Samuel Wylie Crawford

Library of Congress

bombardment in April 1861. As was common, Crawford received outsized recognition for being in the right place during the war's opening events. By the spring of 1862, he was a brigadier general serving under Banks in the Shenandoah Valley. He was unassigned until after Winchester, when he displaced Donnelly as commander of Williams's 1st Brigade.⁴¹

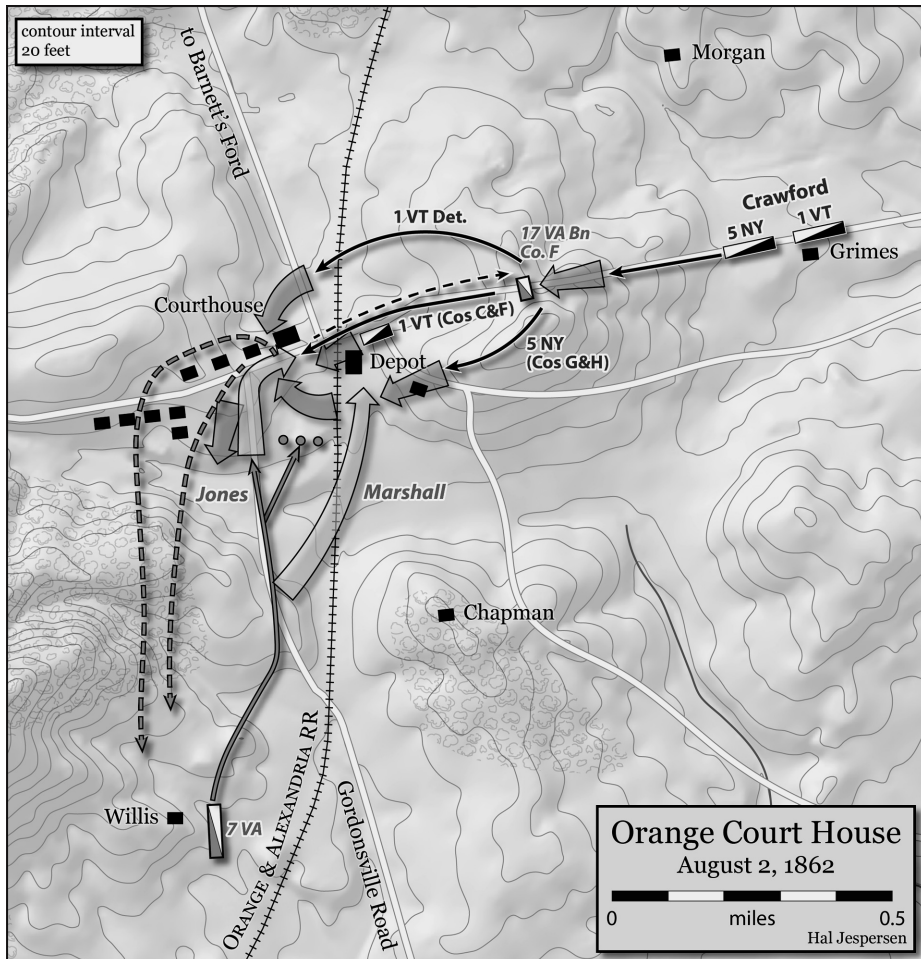
On August 1, Crawford directed Bayard to hold Barnett's Ford upriver. The next day, Crawford accompanied two of Bayard's cavalry regiments upriver from Raccoon Ford, crossed at Somerville Ford, and continued southwest to Orange. At the junction with the Fredericksburg Road, a mile northeast of Orange, Crawford advanced two companies of the 1st Vermont and a squadron from the 5th New York as skirmishers. They discovered and drove in about 50 Confederate pickets. Company F of the 17th Virginia Cavalry Battalion under Capt. Foxhall Daingerfield advanced to high ground half a mile east of town.⁴²

The Federals brushed aside Daingerfield's men, killing one and wounding another. Beneath them, the Fredericksburg Road entered Orange, becoming Main Street and continuing west toward Liberty Mills. At the eastern edge of the town, the Orange & Alexandria Railroad, oriented roughly north-south, crossed Main Street. Farther west on Main Street, a road extended north to Barnett's Ford and Madison. The courthouse stood at the northwest corner of this intersection, with the station and depot southeast of the courthouse. West of the courthouse, the Gordonsville Road began, coursing south-southwest from Main Street.⁴³

41 Warner, *Generals in Blue*, 99.

42 OR 12, pt. 2, 111-113; Samuel Crawford to Banks, August 2 and 3, 1862, Banks Papers, LC; William N. McDonald, *A History of the Laurel Brigade* (Baltimore, 1907), 78.

43 Steaman Ruggles, "From the Vermont Cavalry," *Montpelier [VT] Green Mountain Daily Freeman*, August 13, 1862; Frank S. Dickinson, "Fifth New York Cavalry at Culpeper," in *The*



Crawford sent Capt. John Hammond and two companies from the 5th New York left to cross the Gordonsville Road south of town. A Vermont detachment headed right to approach Orange from the north. The main column entered town and headed west on Main Street. A New Yorker remembered “a stillness like that

Maine Bugle Campaign 1, Call 3 (Rockland, ME, July 1894), 247; S. Howell Brown, U.S. Army Engineering Corps, *Map of Orange Court House, 1863*, OCHS.

of death seemed to reign all around.” Just ahead of them, the deserted street intersected the Gordonsville Road.⁴⁴

Meanwhile, Col. William E. “Grumble” Jones arrived from Gordonsville with the 7th Virginia Cavalry. Reaching the Willis property three-quarters of a mile southwest of Orange, he learned of the Federal approach. A little farther on, Jones encountered Daingerfield’s men streaming from town. Impressed by the situation’s urgency, Jones immediately deployed Capt. John H. Magruder’s company as sharpshooters and sent a detachment under Maj. Thomas Marshall (a descendant of the first chief justice of the United States Supreme Court) toward the Union left flank by way of the depot. As Crawford’s main body neared the Gordonsville Road intersection, Magruder’s men opened fire. Turning onto Main Street with sabers drawn, Jones’s force collided with the head of Crawford’s column. One of the Virginians remembered “yelling like demons” as he and his comrades attacked.⁴⁵

Jones’s charge threw Crawford’s force into disarray, driving most of it to the eastern edge of town. Fortunately for the Federals, the 1st Vermont detachment approached and fired into Jones’ left, stalling the Virginians in the narrow street. A few stalwart clutches of men broke through the jam to rejoin Jones’s vanguard. Despite the Confederates’ confusion, about a dozen Vermont troops found themselves outnumbered and surrounded.⁴⁶

As the main Federal body fell back, Captain Hall directed the 1st Vermont’s 5th squadron, Companies C and F, to do so as well. Captain William Wells, commanding Company C, was behind Hall’s Company F and instead pushed those men forward, toward the Confederates, at the point of his saber. Hall, seeing his company return to the front, ordered his troopers to ignore his last order and charge. The two companies surged forward into the teeth of the Rebel force.⁴⁷

Around this time, Captain Hammond and Companies G and H of the 5th New York crashed into the right flank of Marshall’s flanking force near the depot. A desperate close-quarters fight between the opposing flanking parties resulted in

44 Louis N. Boudrye, *Historic Records of the Fifth New York Cavalry* (Albany, NY, 1865), 37-38; “O.P.Q.,” “From the Vermont Cavalry” *Montpelier Green Mountain Daily Freeman*, August 12, 1862.

45 OR 12, pt. 2, 111-113; John Blue, *Reminiscences*, Unidentified publication, Copy at FNMP, 50; Crawford to Banks, August 3, 1862, Banks Papers, LC.

46 OR 12, pt. 2, 113; Dickinson, “Fifth New York Cavalry,” 247; “O.P.Q.,” “From the Vermont Cavalry.”

47 Ruggles, “Vermont Cavalry.”

Major Marshall's capture after a saber blow—a “terrible cut . . . clove” to his skull—knocked him unconscious. The Union flankers then charged the right and rear of Jones's column but were stalled by a counterattack. The Yankee cavalry opened the fight with their revolvers. Most of the Confederates, who relied on their sabers, consequently enjoyed a brief advantage when the Northerners had to change from emptied pistols to swords. A nasty fight with men slashing each other ensued in the congested streets of Orange. Frightened residents pulled the wounded into their houses. Jones's vanguard, which had initially driven the main Union column, now faced superior numbers and was nearly surrounded. Using alleyways, the men made what escapes they could. Many of them gathered on a hill on the Willis property, while Jones reported rallying one mile from town.⁴⁸

Though no general pursuit occurred, a few bands of Federals chased the fleeing Rebels as far as three-quarters of a mile from Orange. Captain Wells and a handful of his men followed the Confederates across a barnyard, a hill, and another lot, before several Virginians made a stand at a culvert and were captured. Wells pursued a bit too far and was nearly captured himself before retreating.

Crawford satisfied himself with securing the town, cutting telegraph wires, and dismantling some railroad track. A Vermont sergeant allegedly saw Crawford and the 1st Vermont's Colonel Tompkins on a hill at a “safe” distance from the fighting. Crawford reportedly messaged his men after the battle ended, encouraging them to “keep to work.” English correspondent George A. Townsend described this post-engagement “work” as raiding “henroosts and private pantries.” After a couple of hours, the Federals, hastened by the sound of cheers accompanying the 6th Virginia's arrival at the 7th's rallying point, withdrew. The Confederates pursued Crawford as far as the railroad bridge across the Rapidan. The Federals crossed at Raccoon Ford and headed to Culpeper. Neither Crawford's messages to Banks nor Colonel Tompkins's after-action report list Union losses. Grumble Jones, however, estimated 11 Federals killed, 30 wounded, and 12 missing. Of the approximately 200 Confederate cavalymen, Jones reported 10 wounded and 40 missing. Union commanders estimated 25 Confederates killed

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