On the March: with Sherman Through Georgia and the Carolinas

Elsie G. Holzwarth
Chicago Literary Club
April 27, 2015

When one steps out the front door of the Plaza Hotel in New York City, one faces Grand Army Plaza at the south end of Central Park on Fifth Avenue and 59th Street. There stands one of the greatest equestrian statues by sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens. Victory, a beautiful robed woman, leads a muscular horse on top of which sits a resolute General William Tecumseh Sherman. The horse is trampling a branch of long-needled pine, perhaps a symbol of the Southern pines through which Sherman marched during the Civil War, devastating Georgia and South and North Carolina. But where the Confederates failed, the pigeons of New York City succeeded. With their claws and their droppings they have vanquished the gold-gilded Sherman. From the front door of the Plaza Hotel one can now see him shrouded in scaffolding as attempts are being made to rehabilitate and restore his sheen.

* * *

In the spring of 1864, the Civil War had been raging for three years. There had been many casualties, but little good news, for the North since the victories at Gettysburg and Vicksburg in July 1863. And the citizenry was war-weary. Two large Confederate armies remained: General Robert E. Lee's army in Virginia and General Joseph E. Johnston's army in Georgia. Sherman and Ulysses S. Grant, the victors at Vicksburg, were now in Nashville, and they had a plan. "Sherman would always remember the overriding concept: 'He was to go for Lee, and I was to go for Joe Johnston.' " [1] They were determined to prevent Lee and Johnston from coming to the aid of each other, and from ever combining their armies.

Grant has been described as "stolid and unemotional and relentless" and Sherman as "quick, nervous and volatile." [2] Years before, Grant had been forced to resign from the army for heavy drinking and, earlier in the Civil War, Sherman had a nervous collapse. "Grant stood by me when I was crazy and I stood by him when he was drunk and now we stand by each other always," Sherman reportedly said. [3] Now they were both to engage in total war. In early May, Grant invaded Virginia. There, until the following April, he would be entrenched at Petersburg, south of the Confederate capital at Richmond, bogged down in a war of attrition against Lee.

At the same time, Sherman began an almost year-long 1,000 mile trail of destruction, heading first for Atlanta with an army of nearly 100,000. Johnston had far fewer and went on the defensive. North of Atlanta, Sherman's battles with Johnston consisted primarily of flanking movements, attacking the sides and attempting to surround his army, with Johnston orchestrating repeated retreats. Finally, at the beginning of July, Sherman encircled Atlanta and destroyed its railroads. Confederate president Jefferson Davis then replaced Johnston with General John Bell Hood. But we shall hear from Johnston again.

On July 22, the Battle of Atlanta took place east of Atlanta. There fell one of Sherman's favorite generals, James B. McPherson, who had gone to investigate gun shots right after a meeting with Sherman. He wrote, "Meantime the sounds of the battle rose more and more furious . . . Within an hour an ambulance came in (attended by [McPherson's staff including] Colonel Strong). . ." [4] This Colonel Strong was William

Emerson Strong. He enlisted when the war began in April, 1861; he joined the Chicago Literary Club in 1877. Strong's papers are in the collections of the Chicago History Museum Research Center and the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield, Illinois.

The Siege of Atlanta began. Sherman's cannons bombarded it for more than a month. At the end of August, the army won the two-day Battle of Jonesboro, about twenty miles south of the city. The next day, Hood evacuated his army from Atlanta and ordered the burning of anything that might be useful to Sherman. It is this conflagration that is featured in Margaret Mitchell's 1936 novel *Gone With the Wind*, and that prompted the burning of part of the studio back-lot for the movie.

On September 2, Sherman entered Atlanta and, within a week, ordered the evacuation of the civilian population. To the complaints of the Mayor and City Council he replied, "War is cruelty. . . You might as well appeal against the thunder-storm as against these terrible hardships of war. They are inevitable, and the only way the people of Atlanta can hope once more to live in peace and quiet at home, is to stop the war, which can only be done by admitting that it began in error and is perpetuated in pride. . . We don't want your negroes, or your horses, or your houses, or your lands, or any thing you have, but we do want and will have just obedience to the laws of the United States. That we will have, and, if it involves the destruction of your improvements, we cannot help it." [5] Margaret Mitchell's grandparents lived in Atlanta and they refused to leave.

* * *

Up until this time, Abraham Lincoln was convinced he would lose his bid for reelection. The Republican Party was split. The National Union Republicans supported Lincoln; the Radical Republicans clamored for immediate emancipation of all slaves and harsh punishment for the Confederacy. Lincoln's opponent was General George B. McClellan whom Lincoln had once removed from his command. The Democratic Party was also split. The War Democrats were "hawks" and wanted the country united; the Peace Democrats were for a negotiated peace, at any price. The capture of Atlanta gave Lincoln a much needed campaign boost. At last, there was good news for the North.

A soldier wrote home, "I want to see old Uncle Abe elected again. He is the only man that can settle this war up and do it as it should be settled. If McClellan gets the reins he will have peace sooner than Abe, by letting them have their slaves. Then we can fight them again in about ten years. But let Old Abe settle it, and it is always settled, is my opinion of the matter." [6]

In New York City, Maria Lydig Daly, an ardent War Democrat, took to her diary, criticizing Mary Lincoln's spending habits. "It is humiliating to all American women who have to economize and struggle and part with their husbands, sons, and brothers in these sad times, to see this creature sitting in the highest place as a specimen of American womanhood, and 'Uncle Ape,' as he should be called, the specimen of man. People seem to think boorishness and ignorance [are] evidence of honesty and sincerity… Lincoln is a *clever* hypocrite under the mask of honest boorishness; else he would not stay in a position for which he is so eminently disqualified." [7] Mrs. Daly was the

President of the Women's Patriotic League for Diminishing the Use of Imported Luxuries, a sort of "Buy American" organization.

* * *

Meanwhile, Sherman sent part of his army under General G. H. Thomas from Georgia back to Nashville to defend Tennessee. He transferred to Thomas his own chief of staff, General Joseph Dana Webster, who, in 1875, would become a member of the Chicago Literary Club. The remainder of Sherman's army spent its time and energy engaging in battles around Atlanta with the remnants of Hood's army at the same places they had already fought months earlier.

Sherman began to hear stories from escaped Union prisoners of the atrocious conditions at Camp Sumter, named for the fort the Confederates fired upon to start the war, also known as Andersonville, for the town where it stood southwest of Atlanta. It was a "filthy quagmire" where 13,000 prisoners died of dysentery, scurvy, gangrene, starvation and violence by guards.[8] Its commander, Swiss-born Henry Wirz, was the only person executed for war crimes after the war. Unfortunately, the troops Sherman dispatched to rescue the prisoners were themselves caught and imprisoned there.

Hood's army fled to Alabama. What was Sherman to do now? Despite Grant's misgivings, he agreed that, instead of chasing Hood, Sherman would march to the sea to "make all Georgia howl", and then on to Richmond. [9] On November 12, the railroad and the telegraph system were wrecked and, two days later, Atlanta was set

ablaze for the second time. (Margaret Mitchell's grandparents' house escaped both fires.) The march commenced November 15. The army was divided into two wings, to march separately to Savannah; each wing was divided into two army corps.

The right wing, taking the more southerly route, was led by General O. O. Howard. His chief of staff was our fellow member, William Emerson Strong, who wrote in his *Reminiscences of the War*, "[The right wing] began its march at an early hour, the head of the column being in motion by daylight or before. General Howard and staff passed out of camp a little later and at sunrise had reached a high commanding point half or three fourths of a mile outside the City limits. We checked our horses – faced them to the rear and for a few minutes gazed silently at the city for which our Army had struggled so long and so valiantly. Portions of it were wrapped in flames – smouldering ruins here and there caught the eye and great clouds of smoke floated off to the south west before the fresh morning breeze. Within sight and within cannon shot was the forest where the gallant and loved McPherson laid down his life at the head of his army and beyond to the north, and north-west lay the country over which we had marched so many miles, and fought so many battles, and where so many of our comrades had died and were still buried." [10]

Sherman, with the left wing, taking the more northerly route, wrote, "Away off in the distance … was the rear of Howard's column, the gun-barrels glistening in the sun, the white-topped wagons stretching way to the south; and right before us the Fourteenth Corps, marching steadily and rapidly, with a cheery look and swinging pace,

that made light of the thousand miles that lay between us and Richmond. . . Even the common soldiers caught the inspiration, and many a group called out to me as I worked my way past them, 'Uncle Billy, I guess Grant is waiting for us at Richmond!' Indeed, the general sentiment was that … there we should end the war, but how and when they seemed to care not; nor did they measure the distance, or count the cost in life, or bother their brains about the great rivers to be crossed and the food required for man and beast, that had to be gathered by the way." [11] The Fourteenth Corps mentioned by Sherman was headed by General Jefferson C. Davis, not to be confused with the Confederate president. His chief of staff was Alexander C. McClurg who joined the Chicago Literary Club in 1874, its inaugural year, and was its president in the 1886-87 season.

* * *

On the march were 62,000 men: 55,000 on foot, 5,000 cavalry, and 2,000 riding horses pulling caissons of ammunition and 65 guns, or driving 2,500 wagons and 600 ambulances. Each soldier carried 40 rounds of ammunition and in the wagons were enough cartridges to make up 200 rounds per person. Each soldier also carried twenty-days' rations of salt pork, hardtack (a dry biscuit made of flour and water), coffee, salt and sugar. Five-days' rations of oats and corn were taken along for the livestock.

Sherman issued his Orders. "All surplus servants, non-combatants, and refugees, should now go to the rear and none should be encouraged to encumber us on the march. At some future time we will be able to provide for the poor whites and blacks who seek to escape the bondage under which they are now suffering. . . The army will forage

liberally on the country during the march." [12] Brigade commanders were to organize official foraging parties, under an officer, to gather food to keep ten-days' provisions for the men and three days' for the livestock at all times. "Soldiers must not enter the dwellings of the inhabitants, or commit any trespass . . . [S]hould the inhabitants burn bridges, obstruct roads, or otherwise manifest local hostility, then army commanders should order and enforce a devastation more or less relentless, according to the measure of such hostility. . . In all foraging, of whatever kind, the parties engaged will refrain from abusive or threatening language . . . [13] (These admonitions, it turns out, were hardly worth the paper they were written on.) "Negroes who are able-bodied and can be of service to the several columns may be taken along; but each army commander will bear in mind that the question of supplies is a very important one, and that his first duty is to see to those who bear arms." [14] (Sherman would not allow blacks to bear arms, so here was a justification for mistreatment of the slaves the army liberated.)

* * *

Two days out of Atlanta, the right wing, including William Emerson Strong, passed through Jonesboro. Margaret Mitchell located her fictional plantation Tara, defended against Yankee invaders by Scarlett O'Hara, five miles outside Jonesboro. As a child, "Mitchell spent summers in Jonesboro and learned how her grandmother had allegedly persuaded one of Sherman's generals to post a guard at [her] farmhouse, which spared the structure but didn't prevent looting. On the road to Jonesboro [from Atlanta], Mitchell's mother pointed out the ruins of much grander plantations that she said were

destroyed by Sherman's army." [15] Mitchell was born in 1900, so these ruins were there into the 20th century. According to the authors of one book on the march, "[T]hanks to Mitchell and the movie, Sherman ranks among the great pyromaniacs in popular history." [16] In November 2014, an historical marker was installed, at the march's launching point, giving a fairly benign view of Sherman. A leader of the Sons of Confederate Veterans objected, "How they can justify saying anything other than that he's Billy the Torch, I don't know." [17]

The left wing, including Alexander C. McClurg, passed through Covington where Dolly Sumner Lunt, a widow, also known as Mrs. Thomas Burge, owned a plantation with 100 slaves. She was a native of Maine and a relative of abolitionist Sen. Charles Sumner of Massachusetts. (After giving a fiery speech, he was beaten senseless with a cane, in the Senate chambers, by Rep. Preston Brooks of South Carolina.) Lunt wrote in her diary, "I walked to the gate. There they came filing up. . . . I hastened back to my frightened servants [slaves] and told them that they had better hide, and then went back to the gate to claim protection and a guard. But like demons they rush in! My yards are full. To my smoke-house, my dairy, pantry, kitchen, and cellar, like famished wolves they come, breaking locks and whatever is in their way. The thousand pounds of meat in my smoke-house is gone in a twinkling, my flour, my meat, my lard, butter, eggs, pickles of various kinds – both in vinegar and brine – wine, jars, and jugs are all gone. My eighteen fat turkeys, my hens, chickens, and fowls, my young pigs, are shot down in my yard and hunted as if they were rebels themselves. Utterly powerless I ran out and

appealed to the guard. 'I cannot help you, Madam; it is orders.'

As I stood there from my lot I saw driven, first, old Dutch, my dear old buggy horse, who has carried my beloved husband so many miles, and who would so quietly wait at the block for him to mount and dismount, and who at last drew him to his grave; then came old Mary, my brood mare, who for years had been too old and stiff for work, with her three-year-old colt, my two-year-old mule, and her last baby colt. There they go! There go my mules, my sheep, and worse than all, my boys! [her slaves]

Alas! Little did I think while trying to save my house from plunder and fire that they were forcing my boys from home at the point of the bayonet. One, Newton, jumped into bed in his cabin, and declared himself sick. Another crawled under the floor, a lame boy he was, but they pulled him out, placed him on a horse, and drove him off. Mid, poor Mid! The last I saw of him, a man had him going around the garden, looking, as I thought, for my sheep, as he was my shepherd. Jack came crying to me, the big tears coursing down his cheeks, saying they were making him go. I said: 'Stay in my room.' But a man followed in, cursing him and threatening to shoot him if he did not go; so poor Jack had to yield. James Arnold, in trying to escape from a back window, was captured and marched off. Henry, too, was taken . . .

Their cabins are rifled of every valuable . . . Poor Frank's chest was broken open, his money and tobacco taken… All of his clothes and Rachel's clothes . . . were stolen . . . Ovens, skillets, coffee-mills, of which we had three, coffee-pots – not one have I left. Sifters all gone! Seeing that the soldiers could not be restrained, the guard ordered

me to have their [the slaves'] remaining possessions brought into my house, which I did, and they all, poor things, huddled together in my room, fearing every moment that the house would be burned.

A Captain Webber from Illinois came into my house. Of him I claimed protection from the vandals who were forcing themselves into my room. He said that he knew my brother Orrington. At that name I could not restrain my feelings, but, bursting into tears, implored him to see my brother and let him know my destitution. I saw nothing before me but starvation. He promised to do this, and comforted me with the assurance that my dwelling-house would not be burned, though my out-buildings might. [Businessman Orrington Lunt, names familiar as streets in this area, was one of the founders of Northwestern University.]

As night drew its sable curtains around us, the heavens from every point were lit up with flames from burning buildings. . . My Heavenly Father alone saved me from the destructive fire. . . My room was full, nearly, with the negroes and their bedding. They were afraid to go out, for my women could not step out of the door without an insult from the Yankee soldiers. . . I could not close my eyes, but kept walking to and fro, watching the fires in the distance and dreading the approaching day which, I feared, as they had not all passed, would be but a continuation of horrors." [18] Today the Burge plantation is a 1,000-acre private hunting club.

* * *

" In compliance with General Shermans (*sic*) instructions and in order to

supply our army with provisions it was necessary that large foraging parties be detailed each day from every brigade in the command", explained William Emerson Strong. "The detail was made the night previous, each brigade commander selecting the officers, and they in turn selected the men, it being the intention to secure the services of the most reliable soldiers for this important duty. The brigade foraging detail was divided into squads of from twenty-five to thirty men each, under the command of a lieutenant or captain, and early in the morning and long before the main army was stirring these details were in motion pushing out in advance and on the flanks for miles, scouring the country and sweeping it clean of horses, cattle, chickens, turkeys, geese, provisions and forage. Frequently during the march the foraging parties from the interior corps of the two wings communicated with each other. Every road and by-path was traveled by the indomitable bummers [as the foragers were called], and not a house escaped being visited. These supplies gathered from the country and brought to camp were distributed every night under the direction of the brigade commissaries. The orders were very strict against indiscriminate pillaging, and so long as the officers kept their details in hand, the men were well behaved, but the squads necessarily were broken up during the day, and the men becoming separated from their officers undoubtedly committed acts of cruelty. Houses were burned, and the citizens robbed of money, jewelry and silver plate. Every vehicle, horse and mule found by foraging parties were seized at once and used for the purpose of bringing the supplies to camp. From early in the afternoon till dark a steady stream of foragers could be seen coming in, and among the lumber wagons, two wheeled

carts and light buggies were frequently to be found elegant carriages many of them apparently quite new and often silver mounted and richly lined, loaded with turkeys, chickens, hams, sweet potatoes, flour, corn meal and honey. Frequently the soldier[s] would be seen drawing and pushing these handsome equipages along the roads towards camp and again scrawny broken down horses and mules would be attached with possibly gold or silver mounted harness." [19] This excerpt is from a manuscript in the collection of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield, Illinois. It appears to have been handwritten by a professional calligrapher or scribe with corrections in a different hand. Could this be a draft of Strong's paper for the Literary Club, *March to the Sea,* given November 17, 1884, for the twentieth anniversary of the start of the march?

* * *

On November 23, Sherman was at Milledgeville, then the capital of Georgia. The state officials had fled and the soldiers trashed the capitol building and held a mock legislative session, repealing the act of secession. The arsenal and public buildings were ordered destroyed; houses were set on fire. News of the march was by now spreading throughout the North. On November 25, in New York City, Maria Lydig Daly went to the theater with her husband, Judge Charles Daly. Not only was he a prominent judge and active in politics, but he was a well-known Shakespeare scholar and instrumental in having a cornerstone set for a Shakespeare statue in Central Park, commemorating his 300th birthday. They saw a performance of *Julius Caesar* with Edwin Booth as Brutus, Junius Brutus Booth, Jr. as Cassius, and John Wilkes Booth as

Marc Antony. “It was a benefit for the Shakespeare Monument Fund,” wrote Mrs. Daly in her diary. “In the midst of the performance, there was a cry of fire. Fortunately we did not know the extent of the danger. The performance was interrupted, but the tumult was soon appeased. When we read the papers the next day, we read of the plot to burn the city and of the many fires which had been discovered and of the inflammable substances strewn in the different hotels and shipping. This [is the] work, it is suspected, of rebel emissaries, alas, some of those, perhaps, whose houses have been burned … in Georgia. War! How horrible are its consequences, how brutalizing its effects!” [20] she exclaimed. John Wilkes Booth’s defense of the plot to burn down the city “as just retribution for Union atrocities,” [21] caused a permanent breach between the brothers. The Shakespeare statue was erected in Central Park where it still stands. And we shall hear about Judge Daly again.

* * *

Sherman’s army marched to Millen where they arrived in early December. They planned to rescue the prisoners at Camp Lawton who had been removed from now-closed Andersonville. But they were too late; the prisoners had once again been moved. Sherman’s men burned down the camp, the depot and other buildings. Then they proceeded on the road to Savannah. They were trailed by an army of former slaves who had left their plantations. One soldier noted, “Thousands of these poor people left their humble homes, carrying their children and a few household effects, and falling behind the soldiers, trudged along, with no idea of where they were going, except that they were on

the highway from slavery to freedom. It was useless to tell them to stay at home; that they would be freed by the war wherever they might be, and that the troops could not feed them. " [22]

"Sherman's order is not to let any more go with us than we can use and feed." [23] This meant able-bodied black men who could be teamsters, cooks, servants, foragers, and pioneers. The so-called pioneers were required to clear roadways; chop down trees; cover muddy roads with tree trunks and limbs and wood planks ripped from buildings, (called corduroying) so that horses and mules, wagons, and guns would not sink in the mire; and build pontoon bridges from canvas boats tied together with wood planks on top, so rivers could be crossed. One of those rivers was Ebenezer Creek. There General Jefferson C. Davis ordered the black women, children, and old men to wait until the soldiers had crossed. Then he immediately had the pontoon bridge pulled up. In their panic, many jumped into the icy river to get across and drowned. Others remained on the river bank and were captured by Confederate cavalry who returned them to their alleged owners or killed them. Eyewitness accounts differ on whether this was a military necessity. There doesn't seem to be a record of what chief of staff Alexander C. McClurg thought. It will be forever known as the Ebenezer Creek Massacre.

* * *

On December 17, Sherman demanded the surrender of Savannah. ". . . I am prepared to grant liberal terms to the inhabitants and garrison; but should I be forced to resort to assault, or the slower and surer process of starvation, I shall then feel justified

in resorting to the harshest measures, and shall make little effort to restrain my army – burning to avenge the national wrong which they attach to Savannah and other large cities which have been so prominent in dragging our country into civil war . . . I have the honor to be your obedient servant, W. T. Sherman, Major-General." [24] The demand was rejected but, during the night of December 20, the Confederate army slipped away. Sherman entered Savannah and telegraphed Lincoln. "I beg to present to you as a Christmas-gift the city of Savannah, with one hundred and fifty heavy guns and plenty of ammunition, also about twenty-five thousand bales of cotton." [25] Sherman remained in Savannah for about a month. The cotton was sent to New York.

Outside Savannah, widow Mary Jones, was on one of her three plantations with her daughter Mary, a friend, and five children. The two Marys recorded the depredations by the Union soldiers in their journals. "[T]hey would be damned if they would mind any . . . orders, would be damned if they did not go where they pleased, and would be damned if they did not take what they pleased." [26] "[A]ll was carried off – carriages, wagons, carts, horses and mules and servants [the slaves], with food and provisions of every kind – and, so far as they were concerned, leaving us to starvation." [27] "They have stolen even the drawers and petticoats of the women . . . and sometimes they have taken their nether garments and put them on, leaving in their stead their filthy crawling shirts." [28] "For one month our homes and all we possess on earth have been given up to lawless pillage. . . God alone has enabled us . . . calmly, without a tear, to see my house broken open . . . threatened to be burned to ashes, refused food and ordered

to be starved to death . . . a pistol and carbine presented to my breast, cursed and reviled as a rebel, a hypocrite, a devil. Every servant [a slave], on pain of having their brains blown out, is forbidden to wait upon us or furnish us food. Every trunk, bureau, box, room, closet has been opened or broken open and searched, and whatever was wanted of provisions, clothing, jewelry, knives, forks, spoons, cups, kettles, cooking utensils, towels, bags, etc., etc., from this house taken, and the whole house turned topsy-turvy." [29] "As night closes in . . . I often walk alone up and down the front piazza, to mark the light against the sky of the low lingering flame of the last burnt dwelling or outhouse. I can locate them all around on the neighboring plantations." [30]

* * *

Grant agreed that Sherman should now march north into South Carolina. In mid-February the army was near Orangeburg where, William Emerson Strong reported, "Cotton, corn, forage of all kinds, [cotton] gin houses, dwelling houses and barns, all burning. The forests, the fences, and the very soil seemed to be on fire. South Carolina has been in a blaze to-day, and no one seems to care. The enemy yesterday commenced burning the cotton on our line of march and also every thing in the shape of food for man and beast. To-day our army has been completing the work of destruction. Genl. Sherman says, 'Burn every thing clean – damn 'em!' " [31]

From 1936 through 1938 the Federal Writers' Project conducted and transcribed interviews of former slaves. They recalled the events of more than 70 years earlier. Lorenza Ezell, age 87, resided in Texas then "in a little shack almost hidden by

vines and trees." He remembered in his youth, "When Gen'ral Sherman come 'cross de Savannah River in South Carolina, some of he sojers come right 'cross us plantation. All de neighbors have brung dey cotton and stack it in de thicket on de Lipscomb place. Sherman men find it and sot it on fire. Dat cotton stack was big as a little courthouse and it took two months burnin'. My old massa run off and stay in de woods a whole week when Sherman men come through. He didn't need to worry, 'cause us took care of everythin.' " [32]

* * *

On February 17, Sherman reached Columbia. Strong noted, "As we came into the town we were greeted in a very enthusiastic manner by the colored population. We saw nothing of the better class of citizens. They were hidden in their houses, with doors and windows barred. We rode around the principal streets and visited the State House, the public buildings and railroad property, and then separated." [33] A fire was started, the cause of which is still debated. That night, Strong explained, "At 11 o'clock I returned to headquarters and reported to the General that I thought the fire would spread no further. An hour later my boy Joe came into my room greatly excited and exclaimed, 'Lor' a mighty Massa Colonel! dis ole town am burning up shuah sortin! Dis bery house am on fire!' I dressed as quickly as possible and hurried out, leaving Joe to roll up my blankets, and with instructions to save what worldly goods I was owner of. . . There were, however, a large number of stragglers and men off duty who were without doubt helping on the fire. Many of them were under the influence of liquor and crazy with

excitement. The officers and men who had been prisoners of war in Columbia and who had been subjected for months to indescribable privations and sufferings, enjoyed with the most intense pleasure the destruction of the city, and unquestionably after midnight and when the fires had got beyond control encouraged the stragglers and drunken soldiers, and urged them on to deeds of robbery and violence and very likely took part in some of the terrible scenes which were enacted while the city was burning. Buildings were fired by these men, houses were pillaged, ladies were insulted and robbed of watches and jewelry: houses were broken open, trunks rifled and silver-plates and household goods were carried away." [34]

* * *

Two days later Sherman left Columbia, headed for North Carolina. By mid-March the army was at Fayetteville where it destroyed the arsenal. Confederate President Jefferson Davis restored General Joseph E. Johnston to his command with the goal, as Strong recorded it, to "[w]hip Sherman, reinforce Lee at Richmond, and wipe out Grant, and the work [would be] accomplished and the independence of the Southern Confederacy . . . forever established." [35] Sherman had about 57,000 men; Johnston about 35,000.

On March 19, Johnston attacked at Bentonville. Alexander C. McClurg described the details of the battle in his article "The Last Chance of the Confederacy" published in the September 1882 issue of *Atlantic Monthly* magazine. In May he had presented a paper at the Literary Club called "A Decisive Battle and Its Untold Story."

Perhaps they are the same. In his article, McClurg described the march through the Carolinas. "Six weeks before, General Sherman's army had started from Savannah; and it had ever since been toiling through mud and rain across the States of South and North Carolina. The inhospitable rains of the South had poured down incessantly, and unfriendly mud had met us in every road. Layer after layer of corduroy had disappeared in the ooze, as each hundred of our heavy wagons passed over them. The streams, faithful to their States, had risen into torrents, and swept away our pontoon bridges. Supplies were few, and shoes and hats and coats had been worn out and lost. The pride and pomp and circumstance of glorious war had disappeared, and the whole command was ragged and tattered. Here a Confederate coat and there a Confederate hat did duty on a Federal back and head, while many a valiant Union warrior went hatless and shoeless. But a hardier and knottier lot of men never carried a musket or helped a wagon out of the mire. [36]

* * *

This tattered, but hardy, army defeated Johnston in the Battle of Bentonville. Having lost the last chance of the Confederacy, he retreated westward in North Carolina. Sherman now marched toward Raleigh, eyeing a reunion with Grant in Virginia. On April 2, Lee broke out of the almost year-long stalemate against Grant and headed west, hoping to link up with Johnston. Union troops entered Richmond; others blocked Lee. He surrendered to Grant on April 9, at a table now part of a current exhibit at the Chicago History Museum.

On April 14, Johnston asked Sherman for a ceasefire. That afternoon Abraham Lincoln walked to the War Department to inquire if there was any news from Sherman. There was none. Lincoln was going to a play with his wife that evening, but he was importuned by numerous people, including former Congressman George Ashmun. Lincoln was late; he would see him at the White House in the morning. He wrote a note, "Allow Mr. Ashmun & friend to come in at 9:00 A.M. tomorrow. A. Lincoln, April 14, 1865." [37] Then he stepped into the carriage for the theatre. Mr. Ashmun's friend was Judge Charles Daly whose wife had so virulently criticized the Lincolns before the election.

Sherman and Johnston met on April 17. "As soon as we were alone together," recounted Sherman, "I showed him the dispatch announcing Mr. Lincoln's assassination, and watched him closely. The perspiration came out in large drops on his forehead, and he did not attempt to conceal his distress. He denounced the act as a disgrace to the age, and hoped I did not charge it to the Confederate Government." [38] Their initial terms of surrender were rejected by President Andrew Johnson. The final document was signed April 26.

One hundred fifty years ago, Dolly Sumner Lunt wrote in her diary, "Boys plowing in old house field. We are needing rain. Everything looks pleasant, but the state of our country is very gloomy . . . At the beginning of the struggle the minds of men, their wills, their self-control, seemed to be all taken from them in a passionate antagonism to the coming-in President, Abraham Lincoln . . . Our leaders, to whom the

people looked for wisdom, led us into this, perhaps the greatest error of the age . . . Oh, blinded men! Rivers [of blood] deep and strong have been shed, and where are we now? – a ruined, subjugated people! . . . This has been a month never to be forgotten. Two armies have surrendered. The President of the United States has been assassinated, Richmond evacuated, and Davis, President of the Confederacy, put to grief, to flight. The old flag has been raised again upon [Ft.] Sumter and an armistice accepted. . . What will be our future? is the question which now rests heavily upon the hearts of all." [39]

[1] Flood, Charles Barcelen, *Grant and Sherman: the Friendship that Won the Civil War,* (New York, NY: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2005), p. 231
[2] Catton, Bruce, *A Stillness at Appomattox,* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1957), p. 339
[3] brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/w/williamtec205676.html
[4] Sherman, William Tecumseh, *Memoirs of General W.T. Sherman,* (New York, NY: The Library of America, 1990), p. 551
[5] *Ibid.,* p.601
[6] Brobst, John F., *Well, Mary: Civil War letters of a Wisconsin volunteer,* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1960), p. 92
[7] Daly, Maria Lydig, *Diary of a Union Lady, 1861-1865,* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), p. 305.
[8] Catton, Bruce, *A Stillness at Appomattox,* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1957), p. 278
[9] Angle Paul M. and Miers, Earl Schenk, *Tragic Years, 1860-1865: A Documentary History of the American Civil War, Vol. 2,* (New York, N.Y.: Simon and Schuster, 1960), p. 924
[10] Strong, William Emerson, *Reminiscences of the War,* 1878, Collection - Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, Springfield, Illinois, p. 18
[11] Sherman, William Tecumseh, *Memoirs of General W.T. Sherman,* (New York, NY: The Library of America, 1990), p. 655-656
[12] *Ibid.,* p. 652
[13] *Ibid.,* p. 652
[14] *Ibid.,* p. 652-653
[15] Caudill, Edward and Ashdown, Paul, *Sherman's March in Myth and Memory,* (Lanham MD: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, 2008), p. 100
[16] *Ibid.,* p. 100
[17] Blinder, Alan, *150 Years Later, Wrestling with a Revised View of Sherman's March,* November 15, 2014, cnbc.com/id/102188322
[18] Lunt, Dolly Sumner, *A Woman's Wartime Journal,* (New York, NY: The Century Co., 1918), p. 22-32
[19] Strong, William Emerson, *March to the Sea,* manuscript, Collection – Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, Springfield, Illinois, p. 25-27
[20] Daly, Maria Lydig, *Diary of a Union Lady, 1861-1865,* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), p. 316-317
[21] Roberts, Sam, "As Booths Were Onstage, Confederate Plot Against City Fizzled," *The New York Times,* November 25, 2014, nytimes.com
[22] Hedley, F. Y., *Marching Through Georgia,* (Chicago, IL: Donohue, Henneberry & Co., 1890), p. 311-312
[23] Wills, Charles Wright, *Army Life of an Illinois Soldier,* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1996) p. 331
[24] Sherman, William Tecumseh, *Memoirs of General W.T. Sherman,* (New York, NY: The Library of America, 1990), p. 687
[25] *Ibid.,* p. 711
[26] Myers, Robert Manson, Ed., *Children of Pride: A True Story of Georgia and the Civil War,* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1972), p. 1232
[27] *Ibid.,* p. 1229
[28] *Ibid ,* p. 1238-1239
[29] *Ibid.,* p. 1242
[30] *Ibid,* p. 1241
[31] Strong, William Emerson, *Reminiscences of the War,* 1878, Collection - Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, Springfield, Illinois, p. 231
[32] Ezell, Lorenza, Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers' Project 1936-1938, Library of Congress Manuscript Division, memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snhome.html
[33] Strong, William Emerson, *Reminiscences of the War,* 1878, Collection - Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, Springfield, Illinois, p. 244
[34] *Ibid.,* p. 249-250
[35] *Ibid.,* p. 270

[36] McClurg, Alexander C., "The Last Chance of the Confederacy," *Atlantic Monthly*, September 1882, p. 389-390
[37] rogernorton.com/Lincoln45.html
[38] Sherman, William Tecumseh, *Memoirs of General W.T. Sherman*, (New York, NY: The Library of America, 1990), p. 837
[39] Lunt, Dolly Sumner, *A Woman's Wartime Journal*, (New York, NY: The Century Co., 1918), p. 46-48