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Soldier of Tennessee

BIOGRAPH
STEWART

General Alexander P. Stewart and the Civil War in the West

SAM DAVIS ELLIOTT

Louisiana State University Press *Baton Rouge*

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Manufactured in the United States of America
First printing
08 07 06 05 04 03 02 01 00 99 5 4 3 2 1

Designer: Michele Myatt Quinn
Typeface: Galliard
Typesetter: Coghill Composition
Printer and binder: Edwards Brothers, Inc.

Frontispiece: Wartime drawing of Stewart, courtesy Library of Congress

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Elliott, Sam Davis, 1956–
Soldier of Tennessee : General Alexander P. Stewart and the Civil War in the West / Sam Davis Elliott.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references (p.) and index.
ISBN 0-8071-2340-4 (cloth : alk. paper)
1. Stewart, Alexander P. (Alexander Peter), 1821–1908.
2. Generals—Confederate States of America—Biography.
3. Confederate States of America. Army of Tennessee—Biography.
4. Tennessee—History—Civil War, 1861–1865—Campaigns. 5. Georgia—History—Civil War, 1861–1865—Campaigns. 6. United States—History—Civil War, 1861–1865—Campaigns. I. Title.
E467.1.S863E45 1999
973.7′468′092—dc21 98-44178
CIP

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D/18.99/Rob Bk/3495

For Karen, Mary Claire, and Sarah Anne

William J. Hardee

Benjamin F. Cheatham

William B. Bate

Otho F. Strahl

Henry D. Clayton

Battlefield of Missionary Ridge

John B. Hood

Joseph E. Johnston

William W. Loring

Samuel G. French

Edward C. Walthall

Battlefield of New Hope Church

Battlefield of Peachtree Creek

Stewart about 1905

PREFACE

A bronze figure of a soldier stands in front of the Hamilton County Courthouse in Chattanooga, green and tarnished, the inscription reading: "A. P. Stewart, Lt. General, C.S.A., 1861–1865." Like so many other courthouse statues, it is noticed by few—an ornament ignored by most people who walk by it: nervous litigants, weary lawyers, couples just married nearby under the large trees on the well-kept lawn. Only children and tourists from out of state seem to really look. Yet the statue, and especially the man it represents, deserve much more attention than they have gotten up to now. A. P. Stewart was a leader in that noble host, the Army of Tennessee.

Stewart's service in the Civil War spanned the time from the earliest beginnings of the Army of Tennessee, in May, 1861, to its final surrender, in April, 1865. Between those dates, he participated in nearly every major battle the army fought, rising in rank from major to lieutenant general. He commanded the Army of Tennessee on its last battlefield, leading its battered remnants at Bentonville, a force numbering not much more than the division he commanded at Chickamauga. At the end of the war, he was the ranking Confederate officer from the state of Tennessee, and, at the time of his death in 1908, the ranking Confederate survivor.

As has often been the case with the Army of Tennessee and the men who served with it, Alexander Peter Stewart has in many ways been ignored by historians and biographers. He is the subject of only one biography, Marshall Wingfield's *General A. P. Stewart: His Life and Letters* (Memphis: West Tennessee Historical Society, 1954). Though invaluable to this study, Wingfield's work contains little analysis of Stewart's role in the war or his performance in the many battles in which he fought. Regardless of whether this dearth of information is attributable to Stewart's own well-known modesty during life or to the sparse treatment accorded the Army of Tennessee relative to its famous counterpart in Virginia, Stewart has received less than his due.

Yet determining Stewart's place in southern history requires more than just an investigation into his life as a soldier. Stewart was a noted educator

long before the war and resumed that role for many years after. A devout Christian, the general both practiced and preached his religion on the battlefield, in the classroom, and at home. Stewart played a significant role in the establishment and marking of the Chickamauga-Chattanooga National Military Park—the nation's oldest and largest. He spent a number of years in Chattanooga on that task, the quality of his work being exhibited in the park itself, one of the best, if not the best, Civil War parks in our country. Almost to his dying day he made significant and lasting contributions to our knowledge and understanding of the Civil War.

As would be the case with any man or woman who lived in the last century, reconstructing the life of General Stewart presents many difficulties. No source has indicated Stewart's size, so any physical description can only be derived from photographs or from depictions such as his statue, which was referred to by those who knew the general as true to life. Unlike many other high-ranking officers of the Civil War, Stewart left few papers, and they have not been gathered into a single repository for a researcher to draw upon easily. Duke University Library is the only research facility to have a collection described as the "A. P. Stewart Papers," and it consists of four brief documents, two of which are so fragmentary as to be practically useless. The Tennessee State Library and Archives, well known for its impressive collection of documents relating to Tennesseans in the Civil War, has but one of Stewart's letters.

Fortunately, materials on Stewart do exist. These include his letters in the papers of others, his reports in the *Official Records* and in scattered manuscript collections, the minutes of meetings at the institutions where he served, and articles relating to him and his troops in the *Confederate Veteran* and similar periodicals. There is also a remarkable (and somewhat disorganized) book compiled by one of his staff officers and a "sketch" of the Army of Tennessee Stewart wrote in 1886. Discernible effects of his influence survive on the quiet campus of Cumberland University and in the dignified older buildings of the University of Mississippi. And echoes of his martial spirit resound at the many points where he and his men fought: the hills around Hoover's Gap and at Perryville, the thick cedars at Murfreesboro, the country cemetery at New Hope Church, the placid fields at Shiloh, the bitter plain at Franklin, the winter-barren side of Missionary Ridge, and the Tanyard at Chickamauga.

As is true of most human beings, General Stewart was a man of great

complexity and contradiction. Humble, he was proudly conscious of his own worth. Exalted by his position in the army and as a celebrated educator, he was mindful of the physical and spiritual well-being of the lowliest soldiers and students under his charge. Opposed to slavery, he was unwilling to allow the slaves to fight to preserve the concept of constitutional liberty for which he drew his sword. A soldier known for his quiet competence and lack of political maneuvering, he showed a remarkable aptitude for advancement within an army where politics was high science, and was not above using a degree of political influence to secure advancement. Nonetheless, when he advanced, few begrudged his promotion, as he was perceived by those situated high and low as deserving of his laurels. He spent the most momentous time of his life fighting to overthrow the United States government in the South, yet ended his life working to preserve one of the war's greatest battlefields on behalf of that very government.

Born a Tennessean, Stewart spent the greater portion of his long life living and working in the Volunteer State. Raised to the highest levels of the Confederate army, he recognized, both during and after the war, that he represented Tennessee's participation in the South's failed revolution. At the dedication of the Tennessee monuments at Chickamauga in 1898, he spoke with pride of his Tennessee heritage. Stewart recognized the war in the West as a struggle for Tennessee, the heart of the Confederate heartland, and he emphasized the role of Tennessee troops in the sketch of the Army of Tennessee he wrote twenty-one years after the end of the war. Accordingly, I have titled this book *Soldier of Tennessee*, in order to acknowledge the general's pride of origin and the army in which he fought. Both the Volunteer State and the Army of Tennessee may have had more flamboyant soldiers fight under their banners, but no one more constant.

Regardless of a novice writer's enthusiasm for his subject, it would be impossible for him to complete a project such as this book without the kindness and assistance of others. While one can glimpse, in other published Civil War materials, the complexity of the work required to treat adequately a subject such as General Stewart, it is impossible to appreciate fully that complexity until the work is undertaken. I would have been unequal to the task if it weren't for the help of those listed below.

For their assistance by e-mail, mail, and phone, I would like to thank the

staffs of the Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery; the Huntington Library, San Marino, California; the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson; the Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City; the St. Charles, Missouri, City-County Library, St. Louis; the Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University; the United States Military Academy, West Point, New York; the United States Army Military History Institute, Carlisle, Pennsylvania; the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville; and the Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio. I also appreciate the efforts of the staffs of a number of other institutions who were, after inquiry, unable to locate materials on General Stewart in their collections.

For assistance at the libraries and other repositories I visited, I extend my thanks to the staffs of the Chattanooga–Hamilton County Bicentennial Library; the William R. Perkins Library Special Collections, Duke University; the Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta; the Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta; the Georgia Historical Society, Savannah; Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park; the Library of Congress; the National Archives and Records Administration; the Tennessee State Archives, Nashville; the Hoole Special Collections Library, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa; the University of Mississippi Archives and Special Collections, Oxford; the Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; and the Hargett Library, University of Georgia, Athens. Also, personal thanks for assistance of this nature to Anne Armor, archivist at my alma mater, the University of the South.

Certain individuals went above the call of professionalism in providing assistance. G. Frank Burns, archivist and historian of Cumberland University, took time out of his summer vacation to discuss General Stewart's time at Cumberland and in Lebanon and to share with me materials in the Cumberland archives. Later, he alerted me to an early photograph of Stewart and helped me secure permission to publish it.

Lynda Crist and the staff of the Papers of Jefferson Davis Project at Rice University provided, as a service of their remarkable website, an extensive list of Stewart-related documents in the project's database, some of which I would have never found without Lynda's kind assistance.

I owe a debt of gratitude to James Ogden III, historian of the Chickamauga-Chattanooga National Military Park. I learned a great deal about

Missionary Ridge through a tour given by Mr. Ogden on one of the anniversaries of the battle, and his assistance regarding materials in the park library and the location of materials outside the library was invaluable.

Many helpful pointers as to the location of newspapers and archival material were provided by Keith Bohannen, of Chattanooga, Tennessee, who went out of his way on my behalf on many occasions. Keith also read portions of my manuscript, and his suggestions substantially improved the finished product.

Other individuals were most kind in sharing materials or insights of great importance. Steven Woodworth of Texas Christian University generously gave me a copy of his essay on the Tullahoma campaign prior to its anticipated publication. R. Hugh Simmons, of Paoli, Pennsylvania, mailed me a copy of his interesting study of Stewart's Corps in its final months. Mrs. Jo Hill, president of the A. P. Stewart Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, directed me to her chapter's earliest records, and gave me permission to publish a photograph of General Stewart in old age found there. Stacy Allen, of Shiloh National Military Park, pointed to useful information in the park files. John Pat Cox and Stuart Salling, fellow Civil War enthusiasts I met on the Internet, provided copies of valuable materials. Bruce Allardice, of Des Plaines, Illinois, shed light on Stewart's rank and gave me direction as to other materials available. Lynn Bock of New Madrid, Missouri, and Frank Nickell of Southeast Missouri State University provided information about a potential primary source. Eivind Boe copyedited the final manuscript with sensitivity and skill. Blake Magner expertly translated my rough concepts into easily read maps.

Assistance of a more intangible sort came from my law partners, Charles Gearhiser, Wayne Peters, Bob Lockaby, Chuck Tallant, Terry Cavett, Lane Avery, and Wade Cannon, all of whom suffered by my time away from the practice to investigate leads and obtain information. Thanks are also due my parents-in-law, Arvid and Claire Honkanen, for their encouragement. Special thanks go to my parents, Gene and Ruth Elliott, for being patient with my enthusiasm for the Civil War while I was growing up and for their constant support during the time it took to complete this project. My mother went above and beyond the call of duty by proofreading my manuscript not once, but twice.

I have already acknowledged the assistance of Jim Ogden, but perhaps my greatest debt to him is his suggestion that I contact my fellow Chatta-

noogan, Nathaniel Cheairs Hughes, Jr., for his insights. Well known for his fine writings on the Civil War, Nat Hughes took time from his own work to patiently answer hundreds of questions, make innumerable valuable suggestions, direct me to source materials, introduce me to other historians, read my manuscript, and essentially become a mentor to a novice historian. Simply put, without Nat's guidance, this book would not have been possible.

Finally, my deepest gratitude goes to my wife, Karen, and my daughters, Mary Claire and Sarah Anne. For the past four years they have had to live not only with me, but with General Stewart as well. Their encouragement was endless, their patience boundless, and their love inspiring.

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN NOTES

APS	Alexander Peter Stewart
B&L	Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buel, *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*. 4 vols. 1884–1887. Reprint, New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1956.
C-HCBL	Chattanooga–Hamilton County Bicentennial Library, Chattanooga, Tenn.
CCNMP	Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park, Fort Oglethorpe, Ga.
CSR	Compiled Service Record
CV	*Confederate Veteran*
DU	Duke University, William R. Perkins Library, Durham, N.C.
GA	Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta, Ga.
GHS	Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Ga.
KNBP	Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park, Ga.
LC	Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
MDAH	Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Miss.
NA	National Archives, Washington, D.C.

— 1 —

Son of the Volunteer State

Rogersville, Winchester, West Point, and Cumberland

My judgment is that if my distinguished friend, Lieutenant General Stewart, who is with us today, honored by all who served under or with him, had been in command of the Army of Tennessee on that fateful day, Chickamauga would not have been a barren victory." Alexander Peter Stewart made a polite nod to the speaker, former Tennessee governor James D. Porter, who was kind to mention him in so favorable a manner, though he took it as no more than a compliment from an old friend. Porter's comment could only moderately increase his self-content, which was already such as he had rarely felt in his seventy-seven years. The work that was celebrated here on the Chickamauga battlefield was as much his as anyone's, and although his stern religion admonished him to avoid pride, it was with no small sense of satisfaction that he saw it come to fruition.

Stewart had first come to these woods and fields thirty-five years before, a major general commanding a division in a retreating army. That army, named for his native Tennessee, had turned on its enemy and fiercely assaulted it for two days, finally forcing the men in blue off this very hill in the early autumn twilight of that glorious September evening. His own division had played its part in what turned out to be the army's greatest victory, spectacularly bludgeoning its way through the blue lines on the first day, and furiously assaulting enemy breastworks on the second. It seemed at the time that the Army of Tennessee had reversed the trend of Shiloh,

Perryville, and Murfreesboro, hard-fought yet fruitless battles, and that Chattanooga, and indeed Tennessee, might be recovered for the new southern republic.

Unfortunately for the Army of Tennessee and the cause it represented, its officers had marred the aftermath of its greatest victory. Their power struggle had left the army ill-prepared for the resurgence of the blue host, the stronger of the contending parties in the contest. When that resurgence had come, the Army of Tennessee had once more been forced from the Volunteer State.

Stewart reflected on the terrible days of fighting in the mud and the rain and the heat in the Atlanta campaign, his division being slowly eroded by sickness, exhaustion, and death. Yet there had been that one great day at New Hope Church, where he and his veterans had stood squarely in the path of a massive attack bent on splitting the gray lines and sweeping into position to move unopposed into Atlanta. In the midst of a terrific thunderstorm, he had ridden back and forth on his old horse, encouraging his men as they repelled the Yankees. Later, he had heard it said that his calm presence inspired his division's stout resistance. This had filled him with pride.

It was also gratifying that his fellow officers had recognized his ability and his zeal for the cause. When that grand old patriot and Episcopalian bishop Leonidas Polk had been killed a few weeks after New Hope Church, the Confederate government had promoted Stewart to lieutenant general to command Polk's Corps. In that capacity, he had served Joe Johnston and John Bell Hood in the futile effort to save Atlanta for the Confederacy. Afterward, there had seemed to be nothing left but to return to Tennessee, where the army had been virtually annihilated on the bloody plains of Franklin and in the cold hills south of Nashville.

The old general sadly recalled the pain of leaving Tennessee for a third time in December, 1864. Those had been hard days, filled with personal sadness and growing despair for the future. Along with what few of his men remained with the colors, he had traveled across the war-torn South to North Carolina, to face the blue host in one last effort to avoid the inevitable. Even in defeat and surrender, however, there had still been the comforting thought that honor had been satisfied.

A college professor before the war, Stewart had returned to the classroom at the war's end, even as he was exploring ways to better his place in

life by business ventures. Fate had led him away from Tennessee, first to Missouri, then to Mississippi. He had been useful, as he had been taught long ago, and had at last entered into retirement. During these years of peacetime pursuits, however, the war remained in his memory as the defining event of his life. When the call had come in 1890 to serve as a commissioner for the Chickamauga battlefield park, he had gladly accepted.

Today, May 12, 1898, he spoke as the representative of the United States government, accepting for the reunited nation the monuments to the men who sought to rend it asunder over a third of a century before. Paying tribute to the great deeds of the past commemorated at the park, he gloried in the victories recently won by the now restored United States in its current struggle with Spain. Having said what he supposed the representative of the United States government should say, the old general continued, "I have thought it might be expected and desired that I should say a word for Tennessee and the South. It is a source of both pride and pleasure to me to-day that I am myself a Tennesseean, a son of the great 'Volunteer State' of the Union, every chapter of whose history is a glorious one. . . . I was born and partly brought up in the State in the days when Andrew Jackson was the greatest and foremost figure of the country."[1]

On October 2, 1821, Andrew Jackson, governor of the territory of the Floridas, was making ready to return home, ostensibly to remove his wife, Rachel, to Nashville before the winter set in, but doubtlessly to evaluate the political situation in his Tennessee power base. In Tennessee's recent gubernatorial election, William Carroll had been elected by an overwhelming majority of voters, who were frustrated by the economic depression brought about by the Panic of 1819. Although his friend Carroll had won, Jackson's candidate, Edward Ward, had lost, having been outpolled by Carroll in all but two counties of the Volunteer State.[2]

Hawkins County in upper East Tennessee was typical of the counties

1. The speeches given by Porter and Stewart are described in Bromfield Ridley, *Battles and Sketches of the Army of Tennessee* (1906; reprint, Dayton: Morningside Bookshop, 1995), 602–25.

2. Harold D. Moser, David R. Hoth, and George H. Hoemann, eds., *The Papers of Andrew Jackson*, vol. 5, *1821–1824* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1996), 110–11; Charles W. Crawford, ed., *Governors of Tennessee, Vol. 1, 1790–1835* (Memphis: Memphis State University Press, 1979), 130–32.

supporting Carroll, giving him over 84 percent of its vote. The county was populated in large part by people of Scotch-Irish descent: people of Scottish ancestry whose forebears lived in Ireland before coming to America. They were plain people, democratic and personally independent, not likely to sympathize with the large landowning interests represented by Ward. In 1821, Hawkins County had been settled for almost fifty years, but a large portion of Tennessee was still frontier, and still being settled by such simple folk. West Tennessee had been purchased from the Chickasaws only three years previously, and Memphis, on the Mississippi, was only in its second year of existence.[3]

Hawkins County's seat was Rogersville, a town of fifty or sixty houses first laid out in 1789. The town also contained a one-story hewn-log courthouse, a brick jail, a few stores, a Presbyterian and a Methodist church, a brick school named McMinn Academy, and a Masonic lodge. A branch of the state bank under the name of the Rogersville Tennessee Bank had been incorporated four years previously with a capital stock of four thousand dollars. Rogersville had its own newspaper, the *Rogersville Gazette*, a five-column paper with the motto "The Star Spangled Banner, etc."[4]

While the talk in Rogersville on October 2, 1821, no doubt concerned Jackson's politics and the prospects of Governor Carroll, it is likely there was some discussion of the birth that day of the town's newest citizen, another Tennessean of Scotch-Irish descent named Alexander Peter Stewart. Young Alexander was the fourth child of Elizabeth Decherd Stewart and William Stewart, the third to survive infancy. Elizabeth was the daughter of Pennsylvanians Michael and Elizabeth Spyker Decherd, who had moved to Abingdon, Virginia, shortly after the Revolution. There she married William, the grandson and son of Revolutionary War veterans James Stewart, Jr., and James Stewart III, both of Delaware. In 1816, William and Elizabeth had moved a few miles across the Virginia-Tennessee state line to

3. Anne H. Hopkins and William Lyons, *Tennessee Votes, 1799–1976* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Bureau of Public Administration, 1978), 15; Will T. Hale and Dixon L. Merritt, *A History of Tennessee and Tennesseans* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1913), 2:266, 400–401.

4. Weston A. Goodspeed, "Sketches of Thirty East Tennessee Counties," *Goodspeed's History of Tennessee* (1887; reprint; Nashville: Elder Booksellers, 1972), 873, 877–79.

Blountsville, where they lived for two years before moving one county west to Rogersville.

Little is known of the Stewart family's stay in Rogersville, where seven of their children were born. Later in life, Alexander Peter Stewart said the schoolhouse he attended from 1827 to 1831 was approximately sixteen by twenty feet with a rock chimney. There was a writing board made of rough lumber and benches made of split logs. Young Alexander was too small to sit on the bench to write, so he stood. The benches provided no support for the children's backs, forcing them to put their arms across one another's shoulders for mutual support. The schoolmaster, probably a Revolutionary War veteran by the name of Crawford, would require the children to recite their lessons loudly so passersby could hear and be impressed with their scholarship. The course of study and the facilities at the Rogersville school were typical of schools all over Tennessee. In fact, the audible recitals of the students would get so loud that the schools were called "loud schools."[5]

While William and Elizabeth Stewart were raising their growing family in Rogersville, Elizabeth's parents and her brothers were establishing a home in Franklin County, Tennessee, almost two hundred miles to the southwest, on the Alabama border. The Decherds migrated from Franklin County down the Tennessee River to Huntsville, Alabama, then northeast back to Tennessee and Franklin County, where they received a large grant of land. In the autumn of 1831, they were joined there by William and Elizabeth Stewart, ten-year-old Alexander, and his seven brothers and sisters.[6]

Franklin County was formed on December 3, 1807, and named for Benjamin Franklin. The eastern part of the county held a mountain to rival any in Hawkins County, a part of the Cumberland Plateau known as Sewanee Mountain. To the west, Franklin County was generally level or had

5. Marshall Wingfield, *General A. P. Stewart: His Life and Letters* (Memphis: West Tennessee Historical Society, 1954), 9–13; Marshall Wingfield, "Old Straight: A Sketch of the Life and Campaigns of Lieutenant General Alexander Peter Stewart, C.S.A.," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 3 (June 1944): 99–102; Hale and Merritt, *Tennessee and Tennesseans*, 266–68, 271–72, 300.

6. Wingfield, *Stewart*, 12–13.

gently rolling hills, and was well watered by the Elk River and its tributaries. The rich valley soil made Franklin County one of the leading cotton-producing areas in the state as early as 1810, within a decade or so of its first settlement.[7]

An 1809 act of the Tennessee General Assembly put in motion the eventual establishment of the county seat, Winchester. By the time the Stewart family arrived in 1831, the town's population numbered about six hundred. Its inhabitants lived near and worked in and around a cramped courthouse and brick jail. Commercial establishments included three hotels, a soon-to-fail branch of the state bank, various merchants, a tanyard, a blacksmith shop, a silversmith, a cabinet shop, and two saddle and harness shops. Winchester was prosperous because it was the only substantial settlement on a long stage route. Like the residents of Hawkins County, the early settlers of Winchester and Franklin County tended to be God-fearing people. Camp meetings were held at various locations in the county. A large number of the first settlers were said to be ministers of the gospel. The religious denominations represented early on included Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists, and Lutherans. A brother of Elizabeth Stewart, Benjamin Decherd, helped organize the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in Winchester, which met in private homes or in the courthouse from its foundation in 1820 until a building was erected in 1827. Benjamin Decherd also organized a Sunday school in 1828, where both white and black children were taught.[8]

In 1809, the General Assembly provided for an academy in Winchester for boys only. When young Alexander enrolled in school there, the institution, named Carrick Academy, occupied a two-year-old building. Alexander's education was financed by either or both of his uncles, Benjamin Decherd and Peter Spyker Decherd. Alexander actually lived with his Uncle Peter, from whom he derived his middle name, during a portion of his years in Winchester.[9]

7. B. C. Rauchle, "A Brief Account of the Early History of Franklin County," *Franklin County Historical Review* 2 (December 1970): 37–39.

8. Weston A. Goodspeed, *The Goodspeed Histories of Giles, Lincoln, Franklin and Moore Counties of Tennessee* (1886; reprint, Columbia, Tenn.: Woodward & Stinson Printing Co., 1972), 789, 790, 800, 803.

9. Wingfield, *Stewart*, 14–15; Edward A. Pollard, *Lee and His Lieutenants* (New York: E. B. Treat, 1867), 711. Wingfield indicates it was Peter who financed the education. Pollard, somewhat more contemporaneously, states that Stewart was "liberally" educated by Benjamin.

Although he may have spent a great deal of time on the Decherd Plantation, Alexander Stewart received solid moral and religious instruction and example from his parents. William and Elizabeth were described as "remarkable for their zeal and piety in the Methodist Church." Elizabeth was noted to be "indulgent, tender and faithful" toward her many children, and like most mothers, she prayed for her children "from infancy." In fact, she "prayed about everything." Like many of the residents of their former home in East Tennessee, the Stewarts disapproved of slavery and never owned a slave; nor did any of their children. After the family's arrival in Winchester, Elizabeth Stewart bore seven more children. Those of Alexander's brothers and sisters who survived to adulthood became teachers, clergymen, merchants, a physician, and soldiers.[10]

In time, William Stewart established himself in Winchester. He owned a general store on the square, was for many years Winchester's postmaster, and for thirty years was the treasurer of Franklin County. By 1838, either William or the Decherds had enough influence to take advantage of the secretary of war's practice of selecting at least one West Point nominee from each congressional district. They secured from Congressman Hopkins L. Turney an appointment to West Point for Alexander Peter Stewart, age sixteen.[11]

On March 6, 1838, Congressman Turney wrote Joel Poinsett, the secretary of war:

> We understand there is at present no cadet at West Point from the fifth Congressional district in Tennessee, we therefore take the Liberty of recommending Alexander P. Stewart of Winchester, Tennessee[.] [H]e is sixteen years of age a good Scholar as any of that age both in the Languages and Sciences and is in every way qualified to

10. Pollard, *Lee and His Lieutenants*, 711; Wingfield, *Stewart*, 11, 15–16, 18, 200–208. Peter Decherd offered the railroad a right-of-way through his land in 1845, and thus was given the right to name two local stations, "Decherd" and "Tulkahoma," the latter for an Indian chief captured by his grandfather. "Tulkahoma" was gradually corrupted to "Tullahoma." Wingfield, *Stewart*, 11; Mrs. Bob C. Hill, "A Brief History of Decherd, Tennessee," *Franklin County Historical Review* 3 (June 1972): 3–4.

11. Wingfield, *Stewart*, 18; Pollard, *Lee and His Lieutenants*, 711.

enter the institution above named. He is of a rispectable [*sic*] family you will be pleased to communicate with Mr. Turney on this subject.

As if to underscore the family's ability to command some political influence, Tennessee senator Felix Grundy endorsed Turney's letter.[12]

After confirming that Winchester was in Turney's district and that the district was in fact due an appointment, Poinsett wrote young Stewart on March 8, 1838, offering a conditional appointment to West Point. On March 26, Stewart replied in neat handwriting that he accepted the appointment, and promised to "endeavor in all things to comply with the Requisitions of your department and of the Academy." This reply bore the endorsement of William Stewart, authorizing his son, A. P. Stewart, to sign the articles a cadet is required to sign. It seems that young Stewart and his father encountered some resistance from Alexander's mother, who worried that her son's religious scruples would be affected by life away at school and in the army. Nonetheless, sometime in the early summer of 1838, A. P. Stewart, age sixteen years, eight months, left Winchester for West Point.[13]

Early in his first year as a cadet, Stewart wrote his oldest sister, Catherine, to console her on the death of her first husband. He described West Point as a place of "fresh mountain air and wild and romantic views and scenery up the Hudson" that would restore her spirits. Stewart wrote that he felt as if he had been away from home for a year or two already, "but my time is all filled up and passes swiftly." A review of the regulations indicates how a cadet's time was "all filled up." The day's studies lasted "not less than nine, nor not more than ten hours." In addition to military subjects, cadets studied French (as befitted a school patterned upon the French model), mathematics, drawing, rhetoric, geography, history, natural philosophy, grammar, chemistry, mineralogy and geology, and engineering.[14]

12. Thomas J. Fleming, *West Point: The Men and Times of the United States Military Academy* (New York: Morrow, 1969), 112; *U.S. Military Academy Cadet Application Papers, 1805–1866*, National Archives Microfilm Publication 688.

13. *USMA Application Papers*; APS to Catherine Jones, January 7, 1877, in Wingfield, *Stewart*, 117.

14. APS to Catherine Hawkins, September 16, 1838, in Wingfield, *Stewart*, 26–27; USMA, *Regulations Established for the Organization and Government of the Military Academy* (New York: Wiley & Putnam, 1839), 16–17.

Stewart and his classmates entered a school as noted for its ability to produce engineers and teachers as for training soldiers. In fact, the academy was criticized because a number of its graduates soon resigned from the army to pursue civilian careers. Jacksonian Democrats denounced the institution as elitist, claiming the academy sought to establish "a military nobility." Subsequent events would prove this criticism to be well-founded, as the members of Stewart's class included such future generals as James Longstreet, William S. Rosecrans, Daniel Harvey Hill, John Pope, Earl Van Dorn, Abner Doubleday, Lafayette McLaws, George Sykes, Richard H. Anderson, John Newton, Mansfield Lovell, Martin Luther Smith, Seth Williams, and Gustavus Woodson Smith.[15]

There is no record of Stewart's social life at the academy, but a letter written a few months after his graduation suggests he enjoyed parties and visiting young ladies. Like many a cadet, he may have even slipped out to patronize the famous Benny Haven's tavern—if for no other reason than to get relief from the constant diet of beef served at the academy. Stewart's roommates were Rosecrans, with whom he was on "somewhat intimate terms," Pope, Longstreet, and his particular good friend, G. W. Smith. Later, Stewart would face Pope and Rosecrans on the battlefield, fight beside Longstreet at Chickamauga, and join Smith in defending Atlanta. Stewart took advantage of his sojourn in the North to visit with various relatives in Baltimore and Pennsylvania, and took a trip with his brother James to see their grandfather James Stewart at his home in Brandywine Hundred, Delaware.[16]

At the end of his first year, in June, 1839, Stewart stood nineteenth in his class. At the end of his second year, he stood tenth, ranking in the top ten in all his subjects except drawing, where he was a middling thirty-fourth. In 1841, at the end of his third year, Stewart had fallen back to nineteenth overall, again doing well in all subjects except drawing, falling to an even poorer forty-third in that troublesome subject. By the time of his graduation, in June, 1842, Stewart ranked twelfth, grading at ninth in

15. Fleming, *West Point*, 98, 112; USMA, *Official Register of the Officers and Cadets of the U.S. Military Academy, 1839.*

16. Wingfield, *Stewart*, 22, 28–29; Fleming, *West Point*, 92–93; Ridley, *Battles and Sketches*, 473; APS to Charles D. McGuffey, November 17, 1905, Chattanooga Historical Society Papers, C-HCBL.

engineering, sixth in ethics, twentieth in infantry tactics, tenth in artillery, and eighth in mineralogy and geology. Stewart also acquired seventy-eight demerits in his final year. Rosecrans ranked fifth, with only nineteen demerits, Smith eighth, Pope seventeenth, and Longstreet, arguably the most competent of his class on future battlefields, fifty-fourth out of fifty-six, with one hundred and two demerits.[17]

On July 1, 1842, Stewart was commissioned a second lieutenant in the 3rd Artillery, which included among its officers at the time a rather quarrelsome first lieutenant from North Carolina, Braxton Bragg, and Bragg's friend from Ohio, first lieutenant William T. Sherman. Given leave before reporting to duty, Stewart returned to Winchester. At the conclusion of his leave, Stewart traveled southeast through north Georgia to Augusta, a district just recently taken from the Cherokees. Stewart later described his trip as a journey across almost "impassable" roads, with poor accommodations and bad food, through territory populated "by as despicable a race of white men as it has yet been my fortune to meet with." Upon reaching Augusta, he had just enough money to purchase a ticket on the railroad to Charleston, but the clerk would not accept a four-dollar bill from North Carolina. Convincing the clerk that he was an army officer carrying important dispatches, Stewart was able to get to Charleston, where he was allowed to stay a few days at Fort Moultrie, enjoying the company of old acquaintances and being introduced to "all the belles of the place." After attending a grand party given by the regiment's officers, he traveled to his post at Fort Macon, North Carolina, going from Charleston to Wilmington by boat, and in the process getting terribly seasick.

Fort Macon was located to protect the Beaufort Inlet, and was relatively new, having only been completed in 1834. A large five-sided work covering eight acres, the fort held thirty-three cannon and could accommodate a garrison of one thousand men. In 1842, it was garrisoned by Company F, 3rd Artillery, whose quartermaster, commissary of subsistence, and post treasurer were Lieutenant Stewart. These weighty duties, performed by a

17. USMA, *Official Register, 1839*; USMA, *Official Register of the Officers and Cadets of the U.S. Military Academy, 1840*; USMA, *Official Register of the Officers and Cadets of the U.S. Military Academy, 1841*; USMA, *Official Register of the Officers and Cadets of the U.S. Military Academy, 1842*; H. R. Shepherd, "Gen. D. H. Hill: A Character Study," *CV* 25 (August 1917): 366–67.

clerk, entitled Stewart to an extra allowance of fourteen dollars a month. During most of his stay at Fort Macon, Stewart was actually the senior officer. He complained about the lack of society, as the nearest town, Beaufort, was a little wooden fishing village. There was very little military work to do except drill the men, who, as old soldiers, required very little drill. Doubtless Stewart, like the other officers of the garrison, enjoyed sailing, fishing, and dining on the abundant game and seafood.[18]

After almost a year at Fort Macon, Stewart was assigned back to West Point as an assistant professor of mathematics, his appointment dating from August 29, 1843. Stewart was one of seven professors and assistant professors of mathematics who taught algebra, geometry, trigonometry, descriptive geometry, analytical geometry, and such subjects as mensuration and fluxions. Stewart's classmates John Newton and William Rosecrans were also on the faculty as acting assistant professors of civil and military engineering.[19]

At the close of the 1844 school year, Stewart went to visit his friend Lieutenant G. W. Smith in New London, Connecticut. During this visit, he was introduced to a young woman from Warren, Ohio, named Harriet Byron Chase. Harriet was twenty-two years of age and the daughter of a Connecticut sailor lost at sea along with his son, Alphonso, near the time of Harriet's birth. Her mother was the daughter of Dr. Rufus Spaulding of Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts. Stewart and Harriet soon fell in love and planned to marry.[20]

At some point in the 1844–45 academic year, Stewart must have realized, if he had not before, that education was his calling. If he remained in the army, he eventually would be transferred back to the 3rd Artillery from West Point, and move from post to post dragging his wife and family with him. As one of his future staff officers wrote, Stewart's health may have been a concern as well. Thus when an opportunity arose for employment in education outside the army and close to home, he took it. On January

18. Grady McWhiney, *Braxton Bragg and Confederate Defeat*, vol. 1 (1969; reprint, Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1991) 33–35; Wingfield, *Stewart*, 31–37, S. G. French, *Two Wars: An Autobiography of Gen. Samuel G. French* (Nashville: Confederate Veteran, 1901), 21.

19. USMA, *Regulations*, 11–12; USMA, *Official Register of the Officers and Cadets of the U.S. Military Academy, 1844*.

20. Wingfield, *Stewart*, 29–30.

22, 1845, the trustees of Cumberland University in Lebanon, Tennessee, elected Stewart professor of mathematics. Stewart's duties at West Point ended February 25, 1845, and his resignation from the army was effective May 31, 1845. Apparently by that date, Stewart was at Cumberland working in his new job.[21]

Before the start of the new school year in September, 1845, Stewart traveled to Warren, Ohio, and married Harriet on August 27, 1845. They returned to Lebanon, a small town established around 1800 about thirty miles to the east of Nashville and about ninety miles north of Winchester. Only three years before, Cumberland University had been established there by the General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. Shortly after Professor and Mrs. Stewart's arrival, the Educational Committee of the Cumberland Presbyterian General Assembly described the school: "It has a fine, large college edifice, a president, four professors, two tutors, and seventy-six students; twenty-one of whom are ordained ministers, licentiates and candidates for the ministry."[22]

The Stewarts came to consider Lebanon home. Except for two interludes in Nashville, Stewart lived in Lebanon until May, 1861. His first son, Robert Caruthers, was born in Lebanon at the home of Stewart's fellow faculty member, Robert Looney Caruthers, on June 14, 1846. Alphonso, doubtless named for Harriet's lost brother, was born August 27, 1848, followed by Alexander Peter, Jr., on February 20, 1859, and Gustavus Woodson Smith Stewart on February 25, 1861.

As made evident by the name of their first-born son, Professor and Mrs. Stewart esteemed their relationship with Caruthers and his wife. A founder of Cumberland University, Caruthers was the first president of its board of trustees. By 1846, he had been a member of the Tennessee legislature and a state's attorney, and had served a term in Congress as a Whig. The next year, he would found Cumberland's law school, and would, by 1852, sit

21. George W. Cullum, *Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y.* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1891), 2:124; Ridley, *Battles and Sketches*, 473; Winstead P. Bone, *A History of Cumberland University, 1842–1935* (Lebanon, Tenn.: Winstead P. Bone, 1935), 68–69.

22. G. Frank Burns, *Wilson County* (Memphis: Memphis State University Press, 1983), 22, 33–34; Wingfield, *Stewart*, 38; Bone, *History of Cumberland University*, 71.

on the Tennessee Supreme Court. Caruthers would prove to be among the strongest of Stewart's connections to Cumberland University.[23]

Stewart's close relationship to Judge Caruthers would in time be put to the test, as the young family's finances were inextricably linked with those of the fledgling university. Stewart saw himself as having given up an honorable position in the army with a "competent salary" for the university job. But Cumberland's representatives, among them Caruthers, made "flattering expectations" which were "disappointed," so that a substantial portion of Stewart's small salary—about twelve hundred or thirteen hundred dollars—was in arrears by 1849. An opportunity to improve his prospects appearing, Stewart resigned his professorship on October 1, 1849, and took a similar post at the University of Nashville.

Caruthers and Cumberland's president, T. C. Anderson, soon launched a protracted campaign to bring Stewart back to Cumberland. Stewart was understandably disappointed with the financial rewards of teaching to that point, and his main concerns were the long-term financial well-being of his family, getting out of debt, and the wherewithal to build a home. Caruthers, Anderson, and possibly others offered Stewart additional financial guarantees and other commitments to induce him to return to Cumberland, but not before Stewart had investigated the possibility of going to work for a railroad. Writing to Caruthers, Stewart indicated that his sole ambition was a "*permanent* situation, where I can provide myself & my family with a comfortable home, live a useful and respected citizen, and qualify my children to become useful and respected citizens after me." Returning to Lebanon in late October, 1850, Stewart planned to erect a house of a style seen near Harriet's family home in Ohio, "handsome . . . and sufficiently roomy . . . which they build there very cheaply." The home eventually erected by the Stewart family fit that description, and is still in use today.[24]

Stewart's correspondence with a Chicago merchant during that school year suggest renewed efforts by the school's administration and supporters

23. Wingfield, *Stewart*, 39, 208, 211, 213; Joshua W. Caldwell, *Sketches of the Bench and Bar of Tennessee* (Knoxville: Ogden Brothers, 1898), 144–46.

24. APS to R. L. Caruthers, February 9, May 13, June 16, July 10, July 16, 1850, R. L. Caruthers Papers, SHC.

to improve Stewart's situation. Stewart placed an order for a "polarscope and reflector" and made a detailed inquiry as to other equipment, "such as would be suitable for illustrating lectures on astronomy, before an *intelligent* audience." Stewart was obviously happy enough with Cumberland's efforts in 1851 to turn down an offer of a position by the Virginia Military Institute, which was subsequently filled by Thomas J. Jackson. Recognizing that there were few qualified engineers in the Southwest, Stewart established Cumberland's School of Engineering in 1852. Notwithstanding these indications that the Cumberland administration was making good-faith efforts to improve matters, apparently prospects there did not proceed at the pace Stewart desired, as he resigned on August 2, 1854, once more to go to Nashville.

Stewart taught at the University of Nashville for the 1854–1855 school year, apparently in the affiliated Western Military Institute. Later in 1855, he took a job as city surveyor for Nashville. In 1856, he returned to Cumberland. About 1858, he was offered the chancellorship of Washington University in St. Louis, but eventually chose to remain at Cumberland in order to stay close to his students. The University of Mississippi also sought Stewart's services during these years. The roots that he and his family put down in Lebanon must have exerted an equally powerful influence, for in addition to these varied opportunities and positions, Stewart apparently had charge of a female school at Lebanon in the late 1850s. As a later sketch of Stewart noted, "The number and variety of these calls attest the high scholarly worth of the man, and the extent of his fame in the South."[25]

Stewart had his share of sorrow as well as happiness in these years. On October 18, 1847, his mother passed away, albeit in an atmosphere of "Christian triumph." Stewart would also lose his brother Samuel to yellow

25. Wingfield, *Stewart*, 39–40; APS to R. L. Caruthers, June 16, 1850, R. L. Caruthers Papers, SHC; APS to J. M. Wrightman, February 12, 1851, Joseph Milner Wrightman Papers, DU; Bruce Allardice, "West Points of the Confederacy: Southern Military Schools and the Confederate Army," *Civil War History* 43 (December, 1997): 310, 324–35; James I. Robertson, Jr., *Stonewall Jackson: The Man, the Soldier, the Legend* (New York: Macmillan, 1997), 103; Bone, *History of Cumberland University*, 79, 95; Burns, *Wilson County*, 100; Pollard, *Lee and His Lieutenants*, 712; Carole Prietto, Washington University archivist, to author, December 2, 1996. Wingfield and Pollard conflict somewhat on the exact dates of Stewart's various prewar jobs.

fever in New Orleans in 1853, and his brother James to the same disease the next year.[26]

Though William and Elizabeth had brought their children up in a home imbued with Christianity (indeed, William Stewart had written to his sons of the great consolation he derived from Elizabeth's faith as she faced her death), Alexander Stewart appears to have had some doubts as a younger man. As a plebe at West Point, Stewart wrote his sister Catherine:

> But we must submit to the decrees of Heaven and learn to bless the hand that afflicts us, for it is for our own benefit; at least I suppose so: and I hope the consideration of that religion you profess will in a great measure alleviate your grief. . . . You speak of my meeting you and Mr. Hawkins in Heaven; I hope I shall do so, but I don't know. This is a strange world and strange ideas sometimes fill my brain.[27]

While at Cumberland, however, Stewart experienced a conversion during an old-fashioned revival. He thereafter became "a man of the deepest piety," and later organized at Cumberland the first college chapter of the Young Men's Christian Association.[28]

Stewart's political leanings were with the Whigs, no doubt due in large part to the influence of Judge Caruthers. In the South, the Whigs were the party of urban and commercial banking interests, and the majority of the planters. The Democrats were mostly supported by the small farmers. The Whig party in the South had such strength as to almost split the vote fifty-fifty in the five presidential elections between 1836 and 1852. As the watershed election of 1860 approached, the Whigs had largely disappeared from the national scene, replaced in the North by the new Republican party. In the South, especially in border states such as Tennessee, old-line Whigs and conservative Democrats turned to the Constitutional Union party, which fielded John Bell of Tennessee as a candidate for president on the sole platform of the Constitution, the Union, and the laws. In the elec-

26. Wingfield, *Stewart*, 16–17.

27. APS to Catherine Jones, September 26, 1838, in Wingfield, *Stewart*, 26.

28. Wingfield, *Stewart*, 177; Bone, *History of Cumberland University*, 95–96. At a later point in life, Stewart "became so full of religion that he would conduct prayer meetings." Wingfield, *Stewart*, 177.

tion that followed, Bell carried only the border states of Tennessee, Kentucky, and Virginia, the states most likely to be the scenes of strife between the North and South. Abraham Lincoln's election unleashed forces in the South and in the United States as a whole that would upset the prosperous peace of Professor Stewart's life, and overturn the lives of millions of his countrymen.[29]

29. Wingfield, *Stewart*, 40; J. G. Randall and David Donald, *The Civil War and Reconstruction* (Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath, 1969), 47, 102, 104, 132–33.

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The Defense of Our Rights

Secession to New Madrid

Secessionists did not have an easy task withdrawing Tennessee from the Union. Stewart observed after the Civil War that in 1861 the people loved the Union and were loyal to the Constitution. A popular vote in February of that year rejected a secessionist convention 91,803 to 24,709.[1] Years later, Stewart explained, "The people were afraid that such a body, convened in the midst of the prevailing excitement, would act hastily, and, by the adoption of an ordinance of secession, withdraw the State from the Union without giving them an opportunity to pass upon such course."[2]

President Lincoln's call to the governors of the various states for 75,000 volunteers after the fall of Fort Sumter changed the attitude of most Tennesseans. Governor Isham G. Harris, an ardent secessionist, defiantly replied to Lincoln, "Tennessee will not furnish a single man for coercion, but fifty thousand, if necessary, for the defense of our rights or those of our Southern brethren." On May 6, the Tennessee General Assembly passed a secessionist "Declaration of Independence and Ordinance," to be ratified

1. Stanley F. Horn, *The Army of Tennessee* (1941; reprint, Wilmington, N.C.: Broadfoot Publishing, 1987), 47; Ridley, *Battles and Sketches*, 619; John Berrian Lindsley, ed., *The Military Annals of Tennessee: Confederate* (Nashville: J. M. Lindsley, 1886), 60. Stewart wrote an extensive sketch of the Army of Tennessee for this book, which is a useful overview of the army and provides valuable insight into his view after the war of certain events in it.

2. Lindsley, ed., *Military Annals*, 60.

or rejected by an election on June 8. Also on May 6, the General Assembly passed an act creating the Provisional Army of Tennessee, with an authorized strength of 55,000 men. On May 7, the General Assembly ratified a military alliance with the Confederacy. By June, Tennessee was so far into the Confederate orbit that it was almost impossible for the voters to reject secession. This spawned a popular saying in the state at the time that "Tennessee never seceded; Isham G. Harris seceded and carried Tennessee along with him."[3]

In a broader sense, Harris was merely a vehicle to play out Tennessee's "inescapable dilemma," a phenomenon common to the other states of the Upper South. The voters were forced to choose either the Union without the South or the South without the Union. The vote on June 8 was 104,913 to 47,238 in favor of secession.[4] Whether Harris was the cause or just a vehicle, Tennessee had cast its lot with the Confederacy.

Stewart stated thirty years later that he was "deeply grieved" when South Carolina seceded from the Union. Assuming that his later writings reflect his thinking in 1861, we can conclude that Stewart felt the crisis of 1860–61 was purely a constitutional issue. He deemed the South to be on the side of right, since the 1857 *Dred Scott* decision of the United States Supreme Court recognized slaves as property protected by the Constitution throughout the Union. Notwithstanding his personal opposition to slavery, Stewart was of the opinion that northern states had acted unconstitutionally in refusing to enforce the fugitive slave laws. To Stewart and other southerners, Abraham Lincoln's election foreshadowed the overthrow of the South's "constitutional rights and guarantees, and the ultimate destruction of her entire social and industrial organization."[5]

Stewart thought secession unwise but well within the constitutional rights of the southern people. Twenty-five years later, he posed the question, "If [the South's] people thought it in every way better for them to separate from the Union and form a Confederacy of their own, on what *just* ground could they be prevented from doing so? and whence did the Government of the Union derive authority to coerce them?"[6]

3. Ibid.; Randall and Donald, *Civil War and Reconstruction*, 186; Thomas L. Connelly, *Army of the Heartland* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967), 26; Nathaniel C. Hughes, Jr., and Roy P. Stonsifer, Jr., *The Life and Wars of Gideon J. Pillow* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 162; Horn, *Army of Tennessee*, 47. A more moderate view of Harris' role in the secession crisis may be found in Stanley F. Horn, "Isham G. Harris in the Pre-War Years," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 19 (September 1960): 195–207.

4. Randall and Donald, *Civil War and Reconstruction*, 186.

5. Lindsley, ed., *Military Annals*, 59; Ridley, *Battles and Sketches*, 620; Wingfield, *Stewart*, 40.

Stewart's actions in 1861 were consistent with his description of mainstream thought in the state. He voted against the secession convention in February. He seems to have had hope for the "Peace Convention" held in Washington that month at the behest of moderates of both sides. After Fort Sumter, however, Stewart tendered his services to Governor Harris and was employed by the state military board, making army contracts and organizing training camps. Among his first tasks, Stewart secured property in his native Franklin County as a camp for newly recruited troops. On May 17, 1861, he was appointed major of the Tennessee Provisional Army's artillery corps, ranked by Colonel John P. McCown and Lieutenant Colonel Milton A. Haynes, who were senior in part because of their having graduated from West Point before Stewart. Offered the command of the Provisional Army's 7th Regiment, Stewart declined because he felt himself most useful at the time in the artillery.[7]

Organizing the state's artillery started slowly. On May 9, the Provisional Army's commanding officer, Major General Gideon J. Pillow, complained that although five thousand men were then under arms, he was without any artillery. Major Stewart went to Randolph, in Shelby County north of Memphis, to instruct the new recruits in artillery drill and the management of guns. Batteries were also placed on the Mississippi River there. Stewart was given responsibility for the state's heavy artillery battalion, which, unlike the field artillery units, had a number of large-caliber guns for river defense. Later in the summer, the battalion moved fifteen miles north of Randolph to Fort Pillow.[8]

6. Lindsley, ed., *Military Annals*, 60.

7. Wingfield, *Stewart*, 42; Ridley, *Battles and Sketches*, 473, 619–20; Dillard Jacobs, "Outfitting the Provisional Army of Tennessee: A Report on New Source Materials," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 40 (fall 1981): 257, 269; APS to Andrew Johnson, July 10, 1865, APS Pardon Application File, RG 74, NA; Pollard, *Lee and His Lieutenants*, 712; Larry J. Daniel, *Cannoneers in Gray: The Field Artillery of the Army of Tennessee, 1861–1865* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama, 1984), 5.

8. Daniel, *Cannoneers*, 3–4; Ridley, *Battles and Sketches*, 474; TCWCC, *Tennesseans in the Civil War* (Nashville, 1964), 1:123.

Confederate forces under Pillow occupied New Madrid, Missouri, on July 28, 1861. Pillow envisioned the town as a base for possible offensive operations in southeast Missouri, whereas newly appointed Major General Leonidas Polk and Brigadier General William J. Hardee, the latter the Confederate commander of northern Arkansas, saw the defensive possibilities of the town. Pillow's troops found New Madrid a "neat little town," with wide and level streets, white houses, and hospitable residents sympathetic to the South.[9] Both New Madrid and nearby Island No. 10 were important links in the Confederate defense of the Mississippi.

On August 15, Stewart and his Provisional Army battalion were mustered into Confederate service and two days later received orders from Polk to relieve McCown at Island No. 10. Pillow disagreed with the assignment, but Polk replied to the effect that it had not been a request, but an order. A report from Island No. 10 on August 20 noted Stewart's presence there.[10]

Stewart's resumed military career to this point reflected an emphasis on Mississippi River defense as conceived by Harris and Pillow at the Provisional Army's inception. Throughout the summer of 1861, the bulk of Confederate forces in the state occupied various forts along the Mississippi. The resulting neglect of the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers has been considered Harris' worst move as the commander of the state's Provisional Army. Part of this neglect, however, stemmed from Harris' confidence that Kentucky would stay neutral in the coming fight. As long as no Federal troops could enter Kentucky, Tennessee's northern border would need no defense. This theory collapsed when Stewart and other Confederates under Major General Leonidas Polk occupied Columbus, Kentucky, on September 4.[11]

Columbus was considered a prime location for the heavy batteries

9. Hughes and Stonsifer, *Pillow*, 174–81; J. G. Law, "Diary of the Rev. J. G. Law," *Southern Historical Society Papers* 10 (December 1882): 568–69.

10. TCWCC, *Tennesseans*, 1:123.

11. Connelly, *Army of the Heartland*, 39–40; Ridley, *Battles and Sketches*, 623; Larry Daniel, "The Quinby and Robinson Cannon Foundry at Memphis," *West Tennessee Historical Society Papers* 27 (1973): 18, 28; William M. Polk, *Leonidas Polk, Bishop and General* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1893, 1915), 1:70–71. For Polk's background, see Ezra Warner, *Generals in Gray* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1959), 242–43; Joseph H. Parks, *General Leonidas Polk, C.S.A.: Fighting Bishop* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1962), 21, 36–37, 71, 135–52.

needed to stop the Federal gunboats then being constructed at St. Louis. While the possession of Columbus was consistent with the Confederate preoccupation with the defense of the Mississippi, its occupation ironically negated Kentucky neutrality, the one factor that made the almost complete emphasis on the Mississippi valid. When he occupied Columbus, Polk failed to occupy Paducah, located at the confluence of the Tennessee and the Ohio. Union brigadier general Ulysses S. Grant moved in, and almost immediately the Confederate position at Columbus was subject to a flanking movement up the Tennessee. The situation was made worse by the Confederate navy's inability to construct ironclad gunboats to counter those the Federals were building.[12]

On September 10, 1861, General Albert Sidney Johnston assumed command of the Confederate West from Tennessee to Kansas. Like Polk, Johnston was an old friend of Confederate president Jefferson Davis' and had known him even before both had entered West Point. Johnston was acclaimed by all as one of the South's great soldiers, Davis being of the opinion that Johnston was his one sure hope of having a good general. When Johnston came to Columbus early in October, 1861, Stewart and McCown called on him at Polk's headquarters. Johnston told the two Tennesseans that he had recommended both for promotion to brigadier general. In fact, Johnston requested Stewart's appointment as a brigadier general to command the defenses at Columbus. While McCown's promotion came through on October 12, Johnston's request regarding Stewart was initially denied by the War Department. Instead, it appointed Colonel Lloyd Tilghman of Kentucky, "whose record shows longer and better service, and who is, besides, as a Kentuckian, especially appropriate to the command at Columbus."[13] Tilghman's "longer and better service" could only have been a reference to his experience in the Mexican War, which Stewart missed.

Accepting this response as a rebuke, Johnston wrote to Simon Bolivar

12. Steven E. Woodworth, *Jefferson Davis and His Generals* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1990), 36–39; Robert V. Boyle, "Defeat Through Default: Confederate Naval Strategy for the Upper Mississippi River and Its Tributaries, 1861–1862," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 27 (spring 1968): 62–71; F. Gilmer to W. W. Mackall, December 9, 1861, Letters Sent, Chief of Engineers, Western Department, 1861–1862, RG 109, NA.

13. Woodworth, *Jefferson Davis and His Generals*, 51; Connelly, *Army of the Heartland*, 59–62; APS to Marcus J. Wright, October 30, 1880, Marcus J. Wright Papers, SHC; Warner, *Generals in Gray*, 199; *OR* 4:1, 453. All *OR* citations, unless otherwise noted, are to Series 1.

Buckner about Kentucky and other matters on October 19. Johnston stated that his nomination of Stewart and McCown as brigadier generals was not meant as a slight to Tilghman, but was made because he thought Tilghman would be appointed as a result of an earlier recommendation. He noted that the appointment of at least three competent brigadier generals was needed. Interestingly, on that same day, Polk reported sending "Major Stewart and four artillery officers" for a few days to drill the artillery troops at Dover on the Cumberland.[14]

On November 7, 1861, the aggressive Ulysses S. Grant landed a force above Belmont, Missouri, across the Mississippi from Columbus. Eschewing their fortifications, the Confederates met Grant in the open and were slowly pushed back in obstinate fighting. The Federals overran the camp of the regiment originally stationed at Belmont. Grant then formed a line at right angles to the river, intending to move up the riverbank and capture the disorganized and panicked Confederates. At this juncture, the Federals exposed themselves to fire from the Lady Polk, a huge cannon positioned on the bluff above Columbus, which shot large, conical shells similar in shape to a minié ball. At Stewart's command, the Lady Polk opened fire on the Federals, the first shot striking in front of their line, "throwing up a great cloud of dirt, and ricocheting over the heads of the men." Continued shelling from the heavy guns under Stewart's command slowed the Federal advance. A field battery on the lower end of Columbus added its fire. Timely Confederate reinforcements dispatched by Polk then restored the situation, and the Federals were driven back to their boats.[15]

With understandable hyperbole, Stewart wrote after the war that the battle "was really won by the 'big gun.'" In his report of the Battle of Belmont, Polk stated that the joint fire of Stewart's cannon and the field battery "was so terrific as to dislodge the enemy, silence his battery, and cause him to take up his line of march for his boats." Both Stewart and Captain Melancthon Smith of the field battery were praised "for the skill and judgment manifested in the service of the guns under their command, to the joint fire from which I feel not a little indebted for turning the fortunes of the day."[16]

14. William Preston Johnston, *The Life of Albert Sidney Johnston* (New York: D. Appleton, 1878), 415; *OR* 4:463, 468–70. Dover, of course, was the location of Fort Donelson.

15. Shelby Foote, *The Civil War* (New York: Random House, 1958), 1:149–52; Lindsley, ed., *Military Annals*, 66; Ridley, *Battles and Sketches*, 25–26; William D. Pickett, "The Bursting of the Lady Polk," *CV* 12 (June 1904): 277; Nathaniel C. Hughes, Jr., *The Battle of Belmont* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 140.

A day or two after the battle, the Lady Polk's crew requested permission to fire a load left in the gun at the close of the battle. Stewart denied the request, feeling it would be better to draw the load out, and Stewart left for his tent outside the fort. Polk then came by on a tour of inspection. The crew made the same request of Polk, who agreed, asking that it be fired up the river so he could see its range. As Stewart was entering his tent, he heard a loud explosion. Looking toward the bluff, he could see a dense column of black smoke rising from the gun position, and correctly surmised that the gun had exploded. The explosion killed eleven, and injured three others, including Polk, who was incapacitated for some time afterward.[17]

Having not heard anything further about his expected promotion to brigadier general, Stewart, at Polk's suggestion, wrote Secretary of War Judah P. Benjamin on November 3 to inquire as to its status. Apparently, Johnston succeeded in explaining the need for another brigadier in addition to Tilghman and McCown, because on November 16, Stewart received a letter from Benjamin dated November 7 informing him that the commission had come through. The only problem had been that Johnston's recommendation had spelled the Tennessean's name as "Stuart," and President Davis simply was not aware of any officer of that name who he felt deserved such a promotion, until Stewart's own letter cleared up his identity. Stewart's commission dated from November 8, 1861. In gratitude, Stewart wrote Polk acknowledging Polk's assistance, and to inquire as to his new duties.[18]

On November 16, General Stewart received orders to report to Albert Sidney Johnston at Bowling Green, Kentucky. Stewart returned to Columbus and assumed command of a "brigade" consisting of the 5th Tennessee Infantry, two infantry battalions, two field artillery units, and the heavy artillery. Stewart's brigade was independent of any divisional organization,

16. Ridley, *Battles and Sketches*, 26; *OR* 3:308–309; Polk Belmont Report, November 10, 1861, Leonidas Polk Papers, LC.

17. Ridley, *Battles and Sketches*, 26–27.

18. APS to Marcus J. Wright, October 30, 1880, Wright Papers; APS to Leonidas Polk, November 16, 1861, APS/CSR, M-331, RG 109, NA; see also *OR* 4:533.

probably because it was the actual garrison of the works at Columbus. Later, Polk gave Stewart the formal title of chief of heavy artillery, a recognition of Stewart's *de facto* role since before Belmont.[19]

Soon after Albert Sidney Johnston had assumed command, he realized the great length of the line he was called on to defend and the dearth of resources available for the job. Because Davis could give him no troops, Johnston spent the winter building the impression that his army was much stronger than it actually was. He advanced his troops as far forward into Kentucky as possible, made numerous raids, and did what he could to create an illusion of great numbers. Johnston's deception worked to the end of January, 1862, when, ironically, the little help Richmond was able to send him brought it all crashing down.[20]

P. G. T. Beauregard had served in Virginia since his successful reduction of Fort Sumter in April, 1861. Beauregard went west as Johnston's second-in-command, where his name and presence would be a morale booster. Beauregard also had an enhanced reputation among the Federals, who heard false reports that he was bringing fifteen regiments from Virginia to reinforce Johnston. Already in the stages of planning an advance down the Tennessee, Ulysses S. Grant was authorized to do so before the phantom Rebel reinforcements arrived. Within two days of Beauregard's arrival at Bowling Green on February 4, Grant was at Fort Henry with 15,000 men and four ironclad gunboats. The loss of Fort Henry, and the subsequent fall of Fort Donelson, split Johnston's line in two.[21]

Empowered by Johnston to direct affairs in West Tennessee, Beauregard met with Polk in mid-February and informed him that a new defensive line would stretch from Corinth, Mississippi, south of the Tennessee River, northwest to Jackson and Humboldt, Tennessee, on to New Madrid and Island No. 10. Beauregard felt Columbus required too many men to garrison, since New Madrid and Island No. 10 could be held by fewer troops. Over Polk's objections, Beauregard ordered the evacuation of Columbus.[22]

19. *OR* 4:559, 7:727, 854, 906; APS to Leonidas Polk, December 21, 1861, APS/CSR; APS to Leonidas Polk, January 16, 1862, A. P. Stewart Papers, DU.

20. Woodworth, *Jefferson Davis and His Generals*, 54–56, 72, 75–79; Peter Franklin Walker, "Building a Tennessee Army: Autumn, 1861," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 16 (June 1957): 99–116.

21. Warner, *Generals in Gray*, 22–23; Woodworth, *Jefferson Davis and His Generals*, 75–79.

Island No. 10 was the key to the New Madrid area's utility as a defensive point on the river. The position commanded an unobstructed view up the river from a point just south of the Tennessee state line for several miles, along a stretch of the river known as the Seven Mile Reach. Island No. 10 lay at the bottom of the first curve of an inverted S. Down the river, but to the northeast of Island No. 10, on the curve of the inverted S projecting north, lay the town of New Madrid. Prior to the evacuation of Columbus, New Madrid was protected by Fort Thompson, a small fort with several cannon, and two regiments of Arkansas troops commanded by Colonel Edward W. Gantt.[23]

The Federals recognized that New Madrid was the weak point of this defensive system. Its possession would enable them to cut off Island No. 10 from supplies and reinforcements sent from downstream, the only practical way to resupply the island. On February 18, 1862, Stewart's former roommate, Brigadier General John Pope, received orders to organize an expedition against New Madrid and Island No. 10. The new Federal commander characterized most of his 18,000 troops as "entirely raw." By February 28, they were able to set out on a swampy approach to New Madrid.[24]

Probably recognizing the same weaknesses at New Madrid as Pope and his superior Major General Henry Halleck had, Beauregard intended to hold the New Madrid area "only long enough to permit the completion of the stronger and more important works" farther south at Fort Pillow. On February 27, Stewart's fellow Tennessean John P. McCown was ordered to New Madrid from Columbus with his division of five regiments and attached artillery. Beauregard instructed McCown to hold the defenses to the "very last extremity," in order to give Fort Pillow a chance for completion. Beauregard ordered McCown to sink transports to block the nar-

22. Connelly, *Army of the Heartland*, 131–32; Horn, *Army of Tennessee*, 109–10.

23. Horn, *Army of Tennessee*, 110–11; Larry J. Daniel and Lynn M. Bock, *Island No. 10: Struggle for the Mississippi Valley* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1996), 4–7, 10; Henry Walke, "The Western Flotilla at Fort Donelson, Island Number 10, Fort Pillow and Memphis," *B&L* 1:437 (map); *OR* 8:162–63.

24. *OR* 8:79, 80, 84; Daniel and Bock, *Island No. 10*, 18–19, 38–41, 61.

rower Missouri shore channel, and to place a fire-raft in the middle of the Tennessee channel to prevent the passage of Federal gunboats by night. Finally, with the exception noted below, McCown would have to conduct his defense without any further reinforcement.[25]

By the time General Pope and his army appeared in force before New Madrid, McCown had received a final reinforcement: two regiments from Fort Pillow—the 40th Tennessee, commanded by Colonel L. M. Walker, and the uniquely named 1st Alabama, Tennessee, and Mississippi Regiment, commanded by Colonel Alpheus Baker—six gunboats of the Confederate States Navy, and, arriving by steamer from Columbus on March 1, Stewart and his brigade. McCown placed Stewart in immediate command of the forces at New Madrid. Colonel Gantt remained in command of the existing work, Fort Thompson, with two regiments and two companies of artillery. A work north of the town on Bayou St. John, Fort Bankhead, was just under way when Stewart arrived. It was garrisoned by three infantry regiments (including Stewart's 5th Tennessee), had one field battery of six pieces, and was commanded by Walker. Stewart later estimated that there were fewer than 3,000 troops available for duty at New Madrid.[26]

North to south, the Confederate defenses consisted first of Fort Bankhead, which Stewart described as a strong parapet ditch in an irregular line, beyond which was "a sort of abatis of brush and felled trees." It extended from the bayou above the town three or four hundred yards to the river. From there, lines of entrenchments extended below the town to Fort Thompson, described by both Stewart and Pope as a "bastioned" work mounting several cannon. While it appears there were substantial works around New Madrid, C. W. Read, an officer on the supporting gunboats, described the place as "poorly fortified." Pope felt that the works could have been carried from the start, but that his troops would have incurred

25. *OR* 8:438; Alfred Roman, *The Military Operations of General Beauregard* (New York: Harper, 1884), 1:256–57. The inconsistencies of Beauregard's after-the-fact explanation are explored in Daniel and Bock, *Island No. 10*, 22–24. McCown was a native of Sevierville, Tennessee, who had reached the rank of captain in the 4th U.S. Artillery after being commended for service in the Mexican War. He had been Stewart's superior in the artillery corps of the Tennessee Provisional Army and ranked Stewart as a brigadier general in the Confederate service, his commission dating from October 12, 1861. Warner, *Generals in Gray*, 199.

26. *OR* 8:127, 162–63, 169–70, 184–85, 438; Daniel and Bock, *Island No. 10*, 25–26.

heavy losses and could not have held the works once captured because of exposure to gunboat fire.[27]

Stewart's first encounter with the Federals occurred on March 2. Colonel Thomas Jordan, Beauregard's aide, was present on behalf of his chief. Accompanied by other officers, Stewart and Jordan rode out of town, but encountered advance cavalry units from Pope's army. The Rebel officers wheeled about and rode hurriedly back to Confederate lines. Later that afternoon, Stewart met Colonel Baker, who "liked [Stewart] very well." Baker found that Stewart was "quite unexcited and self-possessed." Stewart gamely remarked to Baker: "I wonder what the bloody rascals intend. I don't believe they will come up tonight." Baker was of the impression that Stewart was about thirty-five years old, and observed he had "fine, light colored hair." Noting Stewart was "fair and freckled," Baker correctly guessed Stewart's Scottish ancestry.[28]

On March 3, the Federal infantry appeared in force and established their camp within sight of the town, skirmishing with the Confederate pickets all day. McCown wrote Polk that his position at New Madrid was "critical in the extreme," but that his command was in fine spirits. The Yankee troops were engaged by the Confederate gunboats. Baker, watching from the pilothouse of the *Vicksburg*, was heartened by the sound of their guns. Baker observed Stewart "walking quickly about looking at this and that with great sang froid & I thought exhibiting the coolness and self-possession which is one of the characteristics at least of a good commander."[29]

Pope observed that the Confederates defending New Madrid would not send a significant force of infantry outside their works. There was good reason for Stewart's lack of aggressiveness—lack of numbers. As early as March 3, McCown determined that the Confederate force was too small to risk in the open field. Reports from local citizens considered to be reliable inflated Pope's numbers to 50,000 men, which Stewart discounted to a

27. *OR* 8:81, 163; C. W. Read, "Reminiscences of the Confederate States Navy," *Southern Historical Society Papers* 1 (May 1876): 337.

28. Daniel and Bock, *Island No. 10*, 46; Alpheus Baker Diary, March 2, 1862, Alabama Department of Archives and History. Baker's entry provides the only contemporary physical description of Stewart. Photographs and his lifelike statue in Chattanooga suggest he was approximately five feet seven inches in height and weighed about 150 pounds.

29. *OR* 8:81–82, 127, 162; J. P. McCown to Leonidas Polk, March 3, 1862, Leonidas Polk Papers, Dupont Library, University of the South; Baker Diary, March 3, 1862.

much less exaggerated 25,000. Still, as Stewart's much smaller force of 3,000 was further reduced by sickness, manning over three miles of works against an aggressively skirmishing enemy with superior numbers was all that was possible.[30]

Just over a week after his initial approach to New Madrid, Pope received four heavy guns from the Federal base at Cairo, Illinois. About midnight on March 12, a strong Federal force was thrown forward to screen the construction of an emplacement about three-quarters of a mile from Fort Thompson, the work below the town. Colonel Gantt increased the strength of his pickets and sent an officer to report the movement to Stewart. Anticipating an approach to the fort from the south, Gantt ordered the commander of the fort's artillery, Captain R. A. Stewart, to redirect some of the fort's guns in that direction. By 3 A.M. on March 13, the Federals completed two small redoubts to emplace their heavy guns and rifle pits sufficient for two regiments of infantry.[31]

At dawn, the new Federal battery commenced firing on both Fort Thompson and the gunboats, which promptly returned the fire. For some time, the contest was chiefly between the Federal guns and the gunboats. Pope suffered from an ammunition shortage and wanted to concentrate on disabling the gunboats. On the Confederate side, Gantt's men at the fort were hampered by a combination of early-morning fog and smoke. Pope's guns registered some hits on those boats that approached too close to the fort. When the Rebels were able to return fire, they dispersed a force of Federal infantry massed a half mile away. Overall, very little damage was done, although both sides later recorded minor casualties through the course of a day's cannonading.[32]

More importantly, Pope spent the day extending and advancing his trenches, intending to place his batteries on the river below Fort Thompson during the next night. About midday on March 13, McCown first broached the subject of evacuation with Stewart. In response to an inquiry by McCown as to the practicability of removing the guns at Fort Thompson, Stewart indicated he thought it possible, but would need to take another look. When he returned to the upper fort at nightfall, Stewart was advised McCown was aboard Commodore George N. Hollins' flagship, the *McRae*. Being delayed, Stewart boarded the *McRae* in the midst of a conference between McCown, Hollins, and several of Hollins' officers. Without hearing the opinions of the others, Stewart was asked about evacuation. He replied that if the Confederates were reinforced within a short time in sufficient strength to enable them to take to the field (in other words, outside the works), they would be able to hold out longer. McCown then indicated that further aid would not arrive for a minimum of ten days. Stewart stated that he did not think the forts could hold out that long, as there were insufficient artillerymen to provide reliefs for the guns. Further, the infantry was also fatigued, from frequent alarms and constant labor on the entrenchments.

Commodore Hollins expressed the view that if an evacuation was to take place, it should be done at once. If Pope was able to complete his work downriver from Fort Thompson, getting transports to the fort, which had been a difficult enough process during the exchange of fire on March 13, would be impossible. After this exchange, McCown, Hollins, and Stewart all agreed upon the need to evacuate New Madrid that night.[33]

McCown assigned to Stewart the task of evacuating Fort Thompson. The gunboats *General Polk* and *Livingston* were to remove the garrison and property downriver to Tiptonville, Tennessee. The gunboats' commander, Lieutenant Jonathan H. Carter, told Stewart they would be sufficient for that purpose. When Stewart reached the fort, he advised Colonel Gantt and his officers of the evacuation. Finding that Gantt deployed no pickets, Stewart ordered Colonel Jabez M. Smith of the 11th Arkansas to take seven companies and advance them as pickets as close to the Federal lines as possible without bringing on a fight. Stewart then ordered the removal of the fort's ammunition and guns. While most of the garrison and the sailors loaded the ammunition, work began on removing the big guns at the fort. After the Rebels moved two of the twenty-four-pounders down to the river, an enormous thunderstorm broke, pummeling the fort with rain for the rest of the night. The resulting mud made it impossible to remove the other heavy guns.[34]

30. *OR* 8:81, 162–63; Lindsley, ed., *Military Annals*, 196; J. McCown to Leonidas Polk, March 3, 1862, Polk Papers, University of the South.
31. *OR* 8:82, 163, 166.
32. Ibid., 82, 166–67.

33. Ibid., 82, 127, 163–64, 184–85.
34. Ibid., 128, 164, 167–68.

Stewart found that a combination of the rain, his mere two weeks' familiarity with Gantt and his command, and Lieutenant Carter's nervousness about the safety of his boats made his task extremely difficult. The men became sullen and indisposed to work. Guns were spiked without Stewart's order. At Carter's instance, Gantt embarked his regiment on the boats without Stewart's permission. Once it became apparent the heavier guns could not be removed, Gantt was ordered out with some men to cut up the gun carriages. Colonel Smith and his men were called in and an artillery officer sent to ensure the demolition of the gun carriages. Gantt went into the camp to make sure no stragglers were left, but apparently missed thirteen men from Smith's pickets, who Gantt surmised had taken shelter from the storm and fallen asleep. Once Gantt assured Stewart that all troops were on the boats, Stewart embarked, and between three and four o'clock the morning of March 14, the boats transported his wet but relatively steady men to Tiptonville. At seven o'clock that evening, Stewart was ordered to report to McCown at Island No. 10. McCown placed Gantt and his two Fort Thompson regiments to prevent a Federal crossing to the Tennessee side of the river.[35]

Stewart's report is his only writing on the subject of the defense and evacuation of New Madrid. This may not be surprising, since the defense of New Madrid was generally considered to be a very sorry effort. As the overall commander on the scene, McCown bore particular blame. Beauregard described it as "the poorest defense made by any fortified post during the whole course of the war." Major General Braxton Bragg wrote that the post was "disgracefully abandoned" and wrongly ascribed the evacuation, at least in part, to whiskey. Drunkenness was not McCown's problem, but misinterpretation of Beauregard's instructions appears to have been, at least in part. While Beauregard wanted New Madrid held long enough to allow the completion of the defenses at Fort Pillow, McCown wrote that his "principal object" in holding the town "was to possess a landing for reinforcements to fight the enemy, should I receive them."[36]

Gantt, too, seems to have suffered from New Madrid fallout. Naval officer Read termed him an "Arkansas demagogue" who "took the 'shell

35. Ibid., 128, 129, 164–65, 168.

36. Horn, *Army of Tennessee*, 144; Daniel and Bock, *Island No. 10*, 66; *OR* 8:128; Braxton Bragg to wife, March 29, 1862, Braxton Bragg Papers, LC.

fever' quicker than any man I ever saw."[37] The *Official Records* contain a curious letter from Gantt to General Polk in August, 1862, protesting what was obviously a charge of drunkenness during the evacuation on March 13–14. The letter reads as if Stewart made the charge, although Stewart did not mention that Gantt was intoxicated in his report of the evacuation. Stewart was apparently perturbed, however, by Gantt's loading his regiment at the behest of the frantic Lieutenant Carter without leave. Gantt was later nominated for promotion as a brigadier general, but was never confirmed in that rank. Doubtless this rebuff played a large part in Gantt's switching sides in late 1863.[38]

There is no indication that Stewart's reputation suffered from his involvement at New Madrid. He was pressed, nevertheless, by Beauregard for a report on the evacuation, which he had to defer until after the Battle of Shiloh. While he was not in command, the record is clear that Stewart supported the decision to evacuate the post. It should be considered that, as a subordinate officer, he may not have been made privy to Beauregard's instructions to McCown.

It is difficult to criticize the defense of New Madrid. Outnumbered six to one, the Confederates did not have the mobile force necessary to stop Pope's approach trenches. Once Pope erected a battery on the river below Fort Thompson, his guns would have been able to smash the largely unarmored Confederate gunboats, the one significant Rebel advantage. Without waterborne communications, the New Madrid garrison would inevitably have been exhausted to the point of surrender, just as the garrison of Island No. 10 was three weeks later. Significantly, McCown, Hollins, Gantt, and Stewart all expressed in their official reports the necessity of evacuation on the night of March 13–14. No doubt in sympathy for McCown, and perhaps in hopes of dissipating any lingering doubts over his own participation in the affair, Stewart later passed along to Beauregard McCown's request for a court of inquiry, a request that was denied as "impractical."[39]

37. Read, "Reminiscences," 337.

38. *OR* 8:168–69, 164; Marcus J. Wright, *Arkansas in the War, 1861–1865* (Batesville, Ark.: Independence County Historical Society, 1963), 67; Bruce S. Allardice, *More Generals in Gray* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1995), 97–98.

39. *OR* 8:127, 162, 163, 167, 184–85; APS to Thomas Jordan, April 3, 1862, APS to P. G. T. Beauregard, April 22, 1862, with endorsement, APS/CSR.

As to Stewart's performance at New Madrid, McCown apparently made most of the significant decisions on defense. Additionally, there seems to be no question that there were insufficient troops for an effective defense against Pope's numbers. But the evacuation of Fort Thompson, which was Stewart's primary responsibility, does not appear to have been a model of efficiency. While Stewart reported that only a small amount of ammunition had been left and the heavy guns had been disabled, Pope reported the capture of a great quantity of ammunition. The Federals were able to get the heavy guns back in operation relatively quickly, and found signs of a "disgraceful panic."[40]

Although Stewart was unable to reinforce his men, keep them dry, or equip them more fully, it *was* in his power to inspire them by example. According to Alpheus Baker's observations, Stewart demonstrated coolness and self-possession to his command. These qualities, which never left him during the war, were stretched to the limit during the evacuation. In light of the hasty decision to withdraw and the need for stealth in the face of the enemy, Stewart performed adequately in the evacuation. The Tennessean's lack of experience at this stage of the war, his unfamiliarity with Gantt and his men, and the adverse weather conditions that plagued the evacuation support this conclusion. Stewart was able to recognize the need to abandon New Madrid, and later forthrightly acknowledged the fact, although he doubtless was aware of the contrary opinions of the Confederate high command.

After the evacuation of New Madrid, Stewart and the 5th Tennessee of his brigade moved downriver to Fort Pillow, Tennessee. The unsuccessful defense of the Mississippi irritated Major General Braxton Bragg, who had moved with troops of his Gulf Coast command to Corinth, Mississippi, to join with Johnston. Authorized to put his own generals at Fort Pillow and Island No. 10, Bragg replaced Stewart with Brigadier General John Villipigue. Released from Fort Pillow, Stewart and some of his regiments moved south to join the Confederate troops concentrating at Corinth, a few miles across the Tennessee-Mississippi line from a Methodist meeting-house known as Shiloh Church.[41]

40. *OR* 8:83, 165.

41. *OR* 10(1):129, 352, also in Daniel Ruggles Papers, MDAH; APS to Thomas Jordan, March 25, 1862, APS/CSR; B. Bragg to wife, March 29, 1862, Bragg Papers; Special Orders No. 468, March 28, 1862, No. 475, March 29, 1862, Polk's Corps, Army of the Mississippi, Special Orders, 1862, RG 109, NA.

— 3 —

No Army Did Better Work

Shiloh

However history may view Albert Sidney Johnston, Alexander P. Stewart believed him a "great commander" whose life and character the schoolchildren of the South would study as a "new classic," in place of the ancient classics.[1] Stewart's admiration for Johnston may indeed have been heightened by Johnston's having been the moving force behind his promotion to brigadier general. Yet there is also every indication that the admiration grew out of a considered and objective opinion. Stewart's postwar writings make it clear that he, having endured the Army of Tennessee's bitter years of defeat, saw the near victory of Shiloh as the army's one chance to truly destroy a Federal army and change the course of the war in the West. Stewart believed that the destruction of the Yankees on April 6, 1862, would have been accomplished had Johnston survived:

> The field had been completely swept, and the foe driven back to the river under shelter of the fire from his gunboats. It needed only the inspiring presence and skillful hand of the master-spirit that had raised and guided the storm of battle to press the enemy to a surrender, and thus put the finishing stroke to one of the most brilliant victories of which the annals of war contain a record. But alas! that mas-

1. Lindsley, ed., *Military Annals*, 64; Ridley, *Battles and Sketches*, 622.

ter-spirit was no more of earth. In the very moment of victory, the battle, and with it seemingly the Confederate cause, was lost.[2]

In the six weeks after the fall of Fort Donelson, Johnston, once acknowledged first among Confederate soldiers, was considered by some to be among the most incompetent. The Tennessee delegation in the Confederate Congress called on Davis for Johnston's removal, citing a lack of confidence in his military skill. In his history of the Army of Tennessee, Stewart acknowledged the public indignation heaped upon Johnston and even the army's loss of confidence in its commander. No doubt like other knowledgeable officers, Stewart must have recognized the almost insurmountable problems Johnston faced in the late winter of 1862.[3]

Popularity aside, something had to be done to remedy the situation. The obvious move was to unite the various weak detachments under Johnston's command and defeat the Unionists in detail. Corinth, Mississippi, was chosen as a concentration point, as it lay on the east-west line of the Memphis and Charleston Railroad, termed by one Confederate officer "the vertebrae of the Confederacy." It also lay on the line of the north-south Mobile and Ohio Railroad, the route south from Columbus for Leonidas Polk's forces. Finally, Corinth was within twenty or so miles of the Tennessee River, after Fort Henry an easy steamboat trip for Grant and his own Army of the Tennessee.[4]

William T. Sherman had attempted a raid on the Memphis and Charleston Railroad from the river in mid-March, 1862, but was impeded by the weather. He had set up camp at Pittsburg Landing, Tennessee, on the river

2. Lindsley, ed., *Military Annals*, 74. See APS to M. S. O'Donnell, March 24, 1892, Alexander P. Stewart Letter, Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio. Stewart's opinion was shared by many other southerners. See Horn, *Army of Tennessee*, 122. Modern analysis suggests otherwise. See Larry J. Daniel, *Shiloh: The Battle That Changed the Civil War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997), 316–17.

3. Connelly, *Army of the Heartland*, 138; Lindsley, ed., *Military Annals*, 71–72; Daniel, *Shiloh*, 49–50; William J. Hardee to Felicia L. Shover, April 3, 1862, William J. Hardee Papers, LC (deploring "abominable slander" against Johnston).

4. Horn, *Army of Tennessee*, 107, 108; Daniel, *Shiloh*, 68. There was some debate between the adherents of Johnston and the adherents of Beauregard as to who chose Corinth as a place to concentrate. See Woodworth, *Jefferson Davis and His Generals*, 95; Connelly, *Army of the Heartland*, 138–39. Stewart chose to side with Johnston. Lindsley, ed., *Military Annals*, 70, 73.

twenty-two miles from Corinth, and recommended to General Halleck that the Federals concentrate their forces there. Grant had moved the remainder of his six divisions to the area. The Federal Army of the Tennessee around Pittsburg Landing totaled about 42,000 men, pending the arrival of Major General Don Carlos Buell's 35,000-man Army of the Ohio from Nashville.[5]

Pittsburg Landing was on the western side of the Tennessee River, where the banks were essentially steep bluffs. Federal troops located there found the site dirty and primitive. By the first of April, five of Grant's six divisions were spread out in unfortified camps between Owl Creek on the north and Lick Creek on the south. The headquarters of Sherman's division was near Shiloh Church, a small hewn-log building about two and one-half miles south of the landing on the main Corinth road. The name *Shiloh* was ironically from an ancient Hebrew word meaning "place of peace."[6]

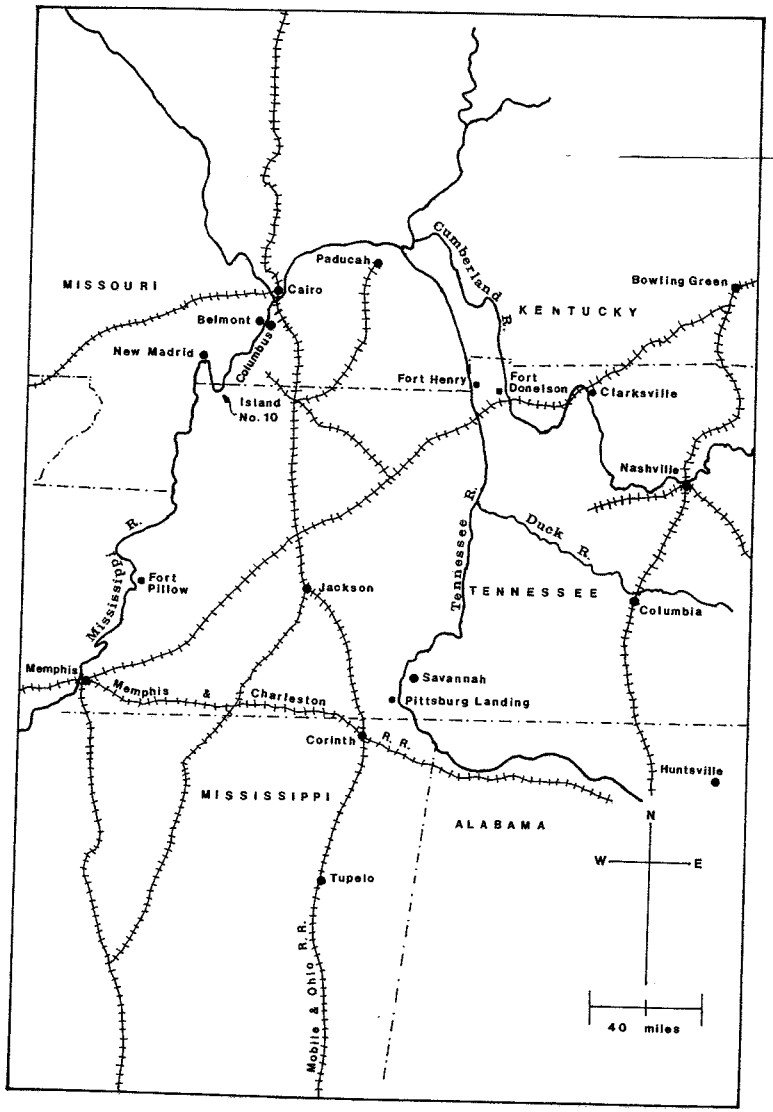
As part of the reorganization of the troops massing at Corinth, Stewart commanded a brigade built in part around the troops he had evacuated from Island No. 10. Lieutenant Colonel C. D. Venable's 5th Tennessee Regiment went with Stewart to Fort Pillow. This regiment was part of Stewart's Columbus brigade and had garrisoned the upper fort at New Madrid. Colonel Rufus P. Neely's 4th Tennessee was evacuated from Island No. 10, going to Corinth by way of Memphis.[7]

Joining Stewart at Corinth were Colonel James C. Tappan's 13th Arkansas, veterans of Belmont, and Colonel Alexander W. Campbell's 33rd Tennessee. Attached to the brigade was Captain Thomas J. Stanford's battery from Yalobusha County, Mississippi. Like the four infantry regiments of the brigade, the battery had been part of the Columbus garrison. The battery was equipped with two 12-pounder howitzers, three 6-pounders, and one 3-inch rifle. Stewart's new brigade was placed in a division under

5. Horn, *Army of Tennessee*, 117–18; James Lee McDonough, *Shiloh: In Hell Before Night* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1977), 96; Woodworth, *Jefferson Davis and His Generals*, 96.

6. David R. Logsdon, ed., *Eyewitnesses at the Battle of Shiloh* (Nashville: Kettle Mills Press, 1994), 2; McDonough, *Shiloh*, 4.

7. TCWCC, *Tennesseans*, 1:183, 184; Lindsley, ed., *Military Annals*, 183–84; Special Orders No. 468, March 28, 1862, No. 475, March 29, 1862, Polk's Corps, Army of the Mississippi, Special Orders, 1862, RG 109, NA.



The Mississippi Valley theater, 1861–62
Map by Blake Magner

the command of Brigadier General Charles Clark, a Mississippi planter with experience in the Mexican War. From the start, Clark impressed Stewart as a "vigilant, prudent, capable commander."[8]

Johnston, with the encouragement of Beauregard, divided his army into four corps of unequal size. The First Corps was led by Polk, most of its 9,024 troops from the old Columbus command. The Second Corps was commanded by Major General Braxton Bragg, who commanded the force he had brought from the Gulf coast to Corinth. At 14,868 strong, Bragg's corps was the largest in the army. The Third Corps, the army's smallest at 4,545, was commanded by Major General William J. Hardee. The Fourth Corps, with 6,290 men, was commanded by Brigadier General John C. Breckinridge, former vice president of the United States and Abraham Lincoln's southern Democratic opponent in the election of 1860.[9]

General Bragg was appalled at the army's lack of experience and discipline, terming the troops from the other commands gathering at Corinth a "mob." Stewart was fortunate in that at least two of his regiments had seen some action in the war. On the down side, the men of Stanford's Battery, because of a scarcity of ammunition for practice, had never heard their own guns. General Polk noted that many of his troops had never been under fire before, which was really true of most of the army. After the war, Stewart wrote: "I first joined that army a few days before the battle of Shiloh. It was then mostly without discipline." He further noted that "few of [the army's] rank and file had been in battle before. By far the greater portion of them were raw levies, wholly undisciplined, and very poorly armed."[10]

The purpose of the Confederate concentration at Corinth was simple. As soon as the army's reorganization was accomplished and arrangements made, Grant would be attacked at Pittsburg Landing before Buell could effect a junction with him. Then the Confederate host would cross the river

8. Stewart Sifakis, *Compendium of the Confederate Armies: Florida and Arkansas* (New York: Facts on File, 1992), 93; TCWCC, *Tennesseans,* 1:244; *OR* 4:854; Dunbar Rowland, *Official and Statistical Register of the State of Mississippi* (Nashville: Brandon Printing, 1908), 876; Warner, *Generals in Gray*, 51; APS to William H. McCardle, April 30, 1878, William H. McCardle Papers, MDAH.

9. *OR* 4:854; McDonough, *Shiloh*, 70–72.

10. McWhiney, *Bragg*, 216; B. Bragg to wife, March 29, 1862, Bragg Papers, LC; *OR* 10(1):411; McDonough, *Shiloh*, 17; Lindsley, ed., *Military Annals*, 96, 73.

and defeat Buell, and thereby recover from the effects of the winter's disasters. In his history of the army, Stewart portrayed the planned attack as the "opportunity [Johnston] had been waiting for." With the attack, Johnston "hoped by a decisive blow to silence clamor and censure, and regain all that had been lost."[11]

Stewart's Brigade marched out of its camp near Corinth at around dusk on the evening of April 3, moving nine miles and halting at 12:30 A.M. on April 4. At daylight, the march resumed, but soon halted to allow Hardee's Corps to pass. Stewart camped that night a half mile from Mickey's Crossroads, in an "incessant" rain. On April 5, the whole of Polk's Corps was formed on the road at 3 A.M. in a column of brigades, Stewart's Brigade in front. The darkness and rain delayed the march until dawn. The column then resumed its march on to Mickey's, where again there was a delay until Bragg's Corps cleared the road.[12]

Beauregard's impossibly complex marching orders hindered progress, along with the rawness of the troops and the difficult terrain between Corinth and Pittsburg Landing. Ravines, swamps, and creeks were swollen by the rain. Lieutenant Edwin H. Rennolds of the 5th Tennessee observed that the roads were muddy from the rain and the wagon traffic, that the country was rough and wooded, and that the men were unused to marching. The inexperience of the officers made things even worse. Stewart attributed the delay to the rain and bad roads, and the "misunderstandings unavoidable in a newly organized and undisciplined army."[13]

While Stewart was halted in an open woods on the afternoon of April 5, he saw Johnston riding through the trees with General Breckinridge, and noted Johnston's calm bearing, even in light of the delay of the attack planned for that morning. Later that afternoon, Johnston's demeanor changed when he was informed that Bragg was missing an entire division of his corps. In exasperation, he exclaimed, "This is perfectly puerile!" Disregarding the snarls in the march and the fears of Beauregard and Bragg that surprise had been lost, Johnston ordered at 5:00 P.M. that the attack

11. Horn, *Army of Tennessee*, 119; Logsdon, *Shiloh*, 2–3; Lindsley, ed., *Military Annals*, 73.

12. *OR* 10(1):406, 414, 427.

13. Connelly, *Army of the Heartland*, 135; Logsdon, *Shiloh*, 3; Lindsley, ed., *Military Annals*, 72.

commence the next morning, stating to one of his staff officers, "I would fight them if they were a million."[14]

Sunday, April 6, 1862, dawned cloudless. About 5 A.M., Hardee's skirmishers ran into a reconnaissance party from Benjamin M. Prentiss' Federal division. Only a few of the Federal unit commanders suspected that 40,000 Rebels were on their doorstep, and almost none of the Federal army was disposed to receive the attack. From Hardee's initial contact, a terrific battle developed, which soon involved Bragg's second line. At about 7 A.M., Stewart moved his brigade forward in line of battle, stopping briefly to deposit baggage. Stewart's Brigade was the lead element of Polk's Corps, and was arrayed, left to right, as follows: 5th Tennessee, 33rd Tennessee, 13th Arkansas, and 4th Tennessee, with Stanford and his guns following the two center regiments. As the brigade moved into the Fraley field on the southwest corner of the battleground, a Federal battery fired a shot that severed the flagstaff of the 5th Tennessee and killed one man.[15]

From the "two cabins" area just west of the Fraley field, Albert Sidney Johnston approached unattended. He requested of Polk a brigade to go to the support of Bragg. As Stewart was in the lead, his brigade was detached to go with Johnston. Both Polk and Stewart were impressed with Johnston's demeanor. Directing the brigade to the right, Johnston accompanied Stewart from the north side of the Seay field approximately three-quarters of a mile northeast toward some open woods in front of the abandoned camps of Colonel Everett Peabody's Federal brigade. When Johnston departed, Stewart waited a few minutes for orders and then moved the brigade through the camp and beyond, where a staff officer appeared and directed Stewart to the left and then forward.[16]

It was at this juncture that the cohesion of the brigade began to dissolve. As the 13th Arkansas moved through the camp, the 4th Louisiana of Colonel Randall L. Gibson's brigade fired on a Federal officer who had somehow gotten between the advancing Confederate units. The 4th's fire hit the

14. Ridley, *Battles and Sketches*, 622; Woodworth, *Jefferson Davis and His Generals*, 97; McWhiney, *Bragg*, 226; McDonough, *Shiloh*, 81.

15. Lindsley, ed., *Military Annals*, 73; David W. Reed, *The Battle of Shiloh and the Organizations Engaged*, rev. ed. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1913), 81; *OR* 10(1):427, 433.

16. Ridley, *Battles and Sketches*, 623; Reed, *Battle of Shiloh*, 81; *OR* 10(1):407, 427.

officer, but also hit several members of the 13th. Not realizing it was friendly fire, the 13th fired back, then withdrew and re-formed before advancing again. The 33rd Tennessee likewise fired on other friendly troops. Stewart got his troops under control and moved the 5th Tennessee, 33rd Tennessee, and the 13th Arkansas through the camp, which was that of the 4th Illinois Cavalry, north across a small stream. Leaving the three regiments in order to bring forward the 4th Tennessee, Stewart passed through the left of Stanford's Battery, which was engaged with a Federal battery to the right and front. Due to the lack of roads and the thick undergrowth, Stanford found it difficult to keep up with the brigade and soon became detached altogether.[17]

About 10:00 A.M., Stewart returned to the area where he had left his three left regiments and found they had moved forward up the hill. During the course of the day, these regiments received orders from Hardee, Bragg, Polk, and Brigadier General Daniel Ruggles, illustrating the command confusion brought about by the lack of training and experience and the unwieldy successive alignment of the Rebel corps. Stewart therefore began the fight with only the 4th Tennessee. The 4th was thrown into some disorder by contact with troops of the first line of battle, but re-formed under a heavy fire from Battery D of the 1st Illinois Light Artillery. Then, a staff officer from Bragg told Stewart that Bragg wanted the Federal battery taken. Stewart rode up to Lieutenant Colonel Otho French Strahl and asked if the 4th would take the battery, and received the answer, "We will try."

As the battery was located in the northwest corner of the Review field, Strahl moved forward by the left in order to avoid the open, the regiment following a flag bearing the defiant words "Home Rule." Although this move provided the cover of a small thicket of timber, and the 4th moved at the double-quick, the battery defended itself with canister until the Rebels got within thirty paces of its position and fired a volley. Strahl ordered his men to lie down and reload. Once reloaded, the 4th rushed forward and captured a gun. The victory was costly. The 4th Tennessee lost 31 killed and 160 wounded.[18]

17. Reed, *Battle of Shiloh*, 81; *OR* 10(1):427, 430, 436; Wiley Sword, *Shiloh: Bloody April* (1974; reprint, Dayton: Morningside, 1988), 201.

18. Reed, *Battle of Shiloh*, 81–82; *OR* 10(1):427, 432; A. J. Meadows, "The Fourth Tennessee Infantry," *CV* 14 (July, 1906): 312; Lindsley, ed., *Military Annals*, 193; Sword, *Shiloh: Bloody April*, 312–13.

At a point past 11 A.M., Stewart formed an impromptu command of the 4th Tennessee of his brigade and the 12th Tennessee of Russell's Brigade. His assumption of command of the 12th Tennessee may have been a manifestation of the Confederate tendency that day to create *de facto* commands as the situation required, or may have come about with Stewart's having succeeded to the command of the division, General Clark having been wounded. The two regiments were still under enemy fire, and eventually the 12th Tennessee was compelled to retire to replenish its ammunition. Then, Brigadier General Thomas C. Hindman, commanding two brigades of Hardee's Corps, suggested to Stewart that they join forces to attack the Federals on the east side of the Duncan field, the area that came to be known as the Hornets' Nest. Before the advance started, Hindman was wounded when a cannonball hit his horse, which fell with Hindman underneath. Stewart was directed, likely by Bragg, to assume command. Forming the 4th Tennessee on the left of Hindman's troops, the entire command advanced through the woods into the Duncan field, where they were joined by portions of Brigadier General Patrick R. Cleburne's and Brigadier General Sterling Alexander Martin Wood's brigades. The Confederate line extended somewhat to the left, enabling it to flank the 7th and 58th Illinois out of some cabins in the Duncan field. Stewart's attack failed, his thin lines raked by Federal artillery and small arms fire. However, Stewart's troops stayed engaged until Hindman's troops exhausted their ammunition. By noon, Stewart and the 4th Tennessee were back near the point where the Illinois battery had been captured. Rejoined by the 12th Tennessee, the 4th took position to support Captain Smith P. Bankhead's battery, and repulsed a Federal attack "under an unusually hot fire."[19]

After the Federals were repulsed, the two regiments withdrew across the road. Stewart sent the 4th Tennessee to the rear because its weapons were fouled and its ammunition nearly exhausted. With Polk's help, Stewart then organized a command consisting of Walker's 2nd Tennessee from

19. Reed, *Battle of Shiloh*, 82; *OR* 10(1):415, 428; McDonough, *Shiloh*, 145; Stacy D. Allen, "Shiloh: The Campaign and First Day's Battle," *Blue & Gray Magazine* 14 (winter 1997): 49. Historian Larry J. Daniel places Hindman's wounding before the charge on the Illinois battery. Daniel, *Shiloh*, 179–80. The account used here is chiefly Stewart's, which Reed appears to have accepted.

Bushrod Johnson's brigade (not to be confused with the 2nd Tennessee of Cleburne's Brigade), part of the 11th Louisiana of Russell's Brigade, and another unidentified regiment of Cleburne's. A second assault was then made in the Duncan field area, which gained some success after Bankhead's Battery came forward and opened fire on the Federals near some houses on the side of the Purdy Road.

Afterward, again at Polk's direction, Stewart formed a command of Walker's 2nd Tennessee and his own 5th and 33rd Tennessee regiments, and moved to the left to assist some Louisiana regiments in completing the encirclement of Prentiss in the Hornets' Nest. Once Stewart's men and other Confederates got into Prentiss' rear, they began to pour a terrible fire into the Federal lines. Prentiss soon surrendered, and Stewart moved his troops along the Purdy Road to the area of the Hornets' Nest. A veteran of the 33rd Tennessee recalled the jubilation that accompanied Prentiss' surrender. Prentiss remarked: "Yell, Boys, you have a right to shout for you have captured the bravest brigade in the U.S. Army."[20]

Prentiss' stand, which detained Stewart's various commands and the bulk of the Confederate army for about six hours, probably saved Grant. Nonetheless, there was still an hour of daylight left to try to complete a victory. Troops on the Confederate right could observe from the river bluff the Federal gunboats and thousands of demoralized and skulking Yankees at Pittsburg Landing. Stewart, now on the Confederate right under Breckinridge's command, took position to "aid in the pursuit of the enemy." At this juncture, the gunboats began a "tremendous cannonade of shot and shell over the bank in the direction from where [the Confederate] forces were approaching." But since the river was over a hundred feet below the area of approach, the shells did not affect Stewart's advance.[21]

Events elsewhere on the field intervened to call off the pursuit. At about the time of Stewart's collection of a command for a second assault in the Duncan Field, Johnston was on the right directing attacks on the right flank in the area of the Peach Orchard. Wounded in the leg, Johnston bled to death before he could receive medical attention. Many Confederates, including Stewart, later held the view that Johnston's death led to a relaxation of efforts to complete the destruction of Grant's army. It appears that such was not the case, since Johnston did not appear any more inclined to flank the Hornets' Nest and press for Pittsburg Landing than Bragg.

20. Reed, *Battle of Shiloh*, 82; *OR* 10(1):428; Logsdon, *Shiloh*, 46; Joseph E. Riley, "The Military Service of Joseph E. Riley in C.S.A." (hereinafter referred to as "Riley Diary"), typescript in 33rd Tennessee File, CCNMP.

21. *OR* 10(1):410, 428; Logsdon, *Shiloh*, 54–55; Sword, *Shiloh: Bloody April*, 344–45.

Upon Johnston's death, Beauregard assumed command. He continued to press the attack, but grew concerned over the condition of his army. Its men had been on the road several days before the battle, had fought long and hard all day, and were disorganized by battle, desertions, and forays for food and plundering. Moreover, Stewart was not the only brigade commander on the Confederate side whose command had disintegrated. Those of Bushrod Johnson, James Patton Anderson, Cleburne, and others were in the same shape. The gunboat fire, which caused a terrific racket, was the last straw. Stewart wrote that his pursuit was "checked by the fire of the gunboat." Beauregard called off the attack, and ordered his troops to fall back to the line of the captured Federal camps. In response to a protest by Tennessee governor Isham G. Harris, who was a volunteer aide at army headquarters and who had been with Johnston at the time of his death, Beauregard insisted that his exhausted men needed rest and food, and could finish Grant the next day. Few modern historians fault this decision, and one even suggested that the mistake was not in calling off the attack, but in not retreating to Corinth.[22]

Beauregard expected to finish off the Federals the next morning, anticipating, based upon false reports, that Buell was too far away to reinforce Grant. Unfortunately for the Rebels, Beauregard's intelligence was faulty, as Grant was joined in the course of the night by Buell and the division of Brigadier General Lewis Wallace. When the confident Confederates awoke the next morning, the Federals were on the move. Stewart started the day in command of several regiments rallied by Beauregard and placed on a hill in front of one of the captured Federal camps, near Beauregard's own

22. Lindsley, ed., *Military Annals*, 74; APS to M. S. O'Donnell, March 24, 1892, Stewart Letter, Western Reserve; Connelly, *Army of the Heartland*, 167–71; Horn, *Army of Tennessee*, 136–37; *OR* 10(1):428; Logsdon, *Shiloh*, 56; Sword, *Shiloh: Bloody April*, 365–66. It is interesting to note that Johnston came as close to beating Grant as anyone in the war, including Robert E. Lee. At Shiloh and in the Wilderness, Lee's great offensive stroke against Grant, an argument can be made that Grant was saved on both occasions by the fall of a Confederate general—in the case of the Wilderness, James Longstreet's accidental wounding by his own men.

headquarters at Shiloh Church. As the Federal attack developed, Beauregard sent Stewart along with the 2nd Tennessee of Cleburne's Brigade and the 13th Arkansas to the right center to support Breckinridge, who was in command of that sector. Stewart attacked and drove the Federals out of an open field they were crossing and into some woods. Stewart then sent to the rear for artillery, and Captain Bankhead once more appeared with two pieces to hold off the Federals while Stewart sent his infantry to the rear to replenish their ammunition. This effort was unsuccessful for some time, until Stewart intercepted a passing ammunition wagon in one of the captured Federal camps and obtained a partial resupply. Then, the Federals opened up a heavy artillery fire upon the two regiments, causing Stewart to withdraw them into a nearby ravine for cover. Once under cover, it was difficult to get the exhausted and not fully resupplied troops back into action. Stewart eventually got the two regiments back into line at the same point they had previously occupied, where they withstood the Federals until their ammunition was once more exhausted.

Again Stewart took his troops out of the line, and when two of his staff officers failed to return with ammunition, he went looking for some himself. After an unsuccessful search, Stewart returned, and learned that the order had been given to withdraw. The Confederate Army of the Mississippi had resisted the attacks of the rejuvenated Federals for the greater part of the day, but by two o'clock it had become evident to Beauregard and his staff that the army was on the verge of dissolution. Orders went out to retreat, and the Army of the Mississippi, exhausted, disorganized, and in the face of the enemy, was nonetheless "slowly and skillfully" withdrawn. Stewart noted proudly in his report that his two regiments were the last to leave his quarter of the field.[23]

The tattered army started for Corinth in a cold rain along the soggy, nearly impassable roads used to advance to the field. In the words of a soldier of the 33rd Tennessee, the men were "all tired down and hungry." Fording the rain-swollen streams brought groans and curses from

23. Connelly, *Army of the Heartland*, 172–75; Horn, *Army of Tennessee*, 137–41; Lindsley, ed., *Military Annals*, 75; *OR* 10(1):428–29; Stacy D. Allen, "Shiloh: Grant Strikes Back," *Blue & Gray Magazine* 14 (spring 1997): 19, 27, 45–46; APS to Leonidas Polk, April 30, 1862, Leonidas Polk Papers, RG 109, NA; APS to M. S. O'Donnell, March 24, 1892, Stewart Letter, Western Reserve.

wounded men being transported in wagons, as the mule teams went belly-deep and water seeped into the wagon beds. Straggling regiments interspersed with walking wounded completed the cavalcade of misery. Fortunately for the Rebels, Grant was so badly battered that there was no meaningful pursuit.[24]

The losses of Shiloh exceeded anything ever seen in North America. A few days later, one of Stewart's men estimated the casualties on both sides to total 100,000 killed and wounded. The actual casualties were bad enough: Confederate casualties totaling 10,699, Federal casualties 13,047. Regardless of the Unionists' greater losses, the battle was a Federal victory. Grant avoided the near destruction of his army by Johnston's troops, which were concentrated for one supreme effort to achieve that purpose and to recover all that had been lost that winter. Nevertheless, the Army of the Mississippi overcame disorganization, lack of training and experience, distance, the elements, and its own unpracticed and, in some cases, inept commanders just to get to the field; that it could then drive Grant to the bluffs of the Tennessee River speaks of heroic determination and valor. While he may have been somewhat prejudiced, Stewart had a solid argument when he wrote, after the war, that "no army on either side during the entire war did better work than was performed by the Army of the Mississippi at Shiloh."[25]

Stewart wrote no evaluation of his own performance. Polk complimented him along with the other brigade commanders of the corps, and elsewhere noted that Stewart on the field was "cool and determined."[26] On April 6, Stewart's Brigade came apart almost too easily, but it must be remembered that it was newly organized, with little cohesion. Likewise, the brigades of other competent brigadiers soon dissolved. Stewart could also be subject to criticism for his participation in the frontal attacks on the left of the Hornets' Nest, but he was there under the command of superiors such as Bragg and Polk. Like many other Confederate commanders on the field,

24. Logsdon, *Shiloh*, 86; W. A. Howard to L. E. Howard, April 11, 1862, W. A. Howard Letters, SNMP.

25. Horn, *Army of Tennessee*, 143; Lindsley, ed., *Military Annals*, 75; W. A. Howard to L. E. Howard, April 10, 1862, SNMP.

26. *OR* 10(1):409, 412.

Stewart extemporized fairly well in organizing commands and carrying on the battle. On April 7, he competently led his *de facto* brigade in a day of bitter fighting against superior numbers. After his slow start at New Madrid, he vindicated Albert Sidney Johnston's confidence in promoting him to brigadier general.

The Federal commander in the West, Major General Henry W. Halleck, personally came to Pittsburg Landing to direct the advance on Corinth. Grant was promoted to the meaningless post of "second-in-command," and his Army of the Tennessee was assigned to Major General George H. Thomas. This force was combined with Buell's Army of the Ohio, Pope's Army of the Mississippi, and new reinforcements from the Midwest, to form a virtual army group of 125,000, which started a glacial advance toward Corinth. For his part, Beauregard was reinforced by Major General Earl Van Dorn's forces from west of the Mississippi, roughly 14,000 poorly armed troops.[27]

Stewart remained in command of the division until April 14, when army headquarters put Brigadier General James H. Trapier, a West Point classmate of Beauregard's, in Clark's place. Stewart obviously perceived the appointment of an officer of equal rank from outside the division over him as a slight. Although Stewart had no objection to Trapier personally, he thought that since seven of the division's nine regiments were from Tennessee, either he or another ranking Tennessean should command the division until Clark returned. Accordingly, he wrote a respectfully mild letter of protest to Polk. Since Clark recovered sufficiently to resume command on April 29, the protest went for naught.[28]

In May, Stewart spent a great deal of time on the defensive lines occupied by his brigade and, as officer of the day on May 17, the corps. Desertions were a problem, and accordingly Stewart tried to trace the routes used by deserters, and gave instructions along the line to shoot any person attempting to move out of the lines without a pass. During the next week, a Federal probe discomfited the new company officers of the 13th Arkansas, causing that regiment to be driven from its picket line. While terming

27. Horn, *Army of Tennessee*, 146–47; Connelly, *Army of the Heartland*, 175–76.

28. Warner, *Generals in Gray*, 309–10, APS to Leonidas Polk, April 23, 1862, Polk Papers, RG 109, NA; Special Order No. 24, April 28, 1862, Polk's Corps, Army of the Mississippi, Special Orders, 1862, RG 109, NA.

the conduct of the officers "reprehensible," Stewart recognized that "The company officers are generally new and inexperienced, and the same is true in all my regiments."[29]

On another occasion, three companies of the 5th Tennessee were on an advanced outpost as the Federals approached. They were almost overrun by a larger Federal force until rescued by Stewart with four companies of the 33rd Tennessee. The reinforced Tennesseans then charged and drove the Federals back.[30]

Halleck's advance soon reached the point where Corinth, a position without any natural advantages, would be invested by an overwhelming force. On the night of May 29, Beauregard quietly withdrew the army without loss to Tupelo, fifty miles to the south of Corinth. This retreat, along with the significant losses of territory in Tennessee, Mississippi, and northern Alabama, brought Beauregard intense scrutiny from Richmond. Beauregard's health, which had been affected by a throat ailment for some months, caused him to take off to a spa north of Mobile, Alabama, without leave on June 19. On June 20, President Davis removed Beauregard as commander and appointed Bragg in his place. To Bragg would fall the daunting task of regaining the initiative in the Confederate West.[31]

29. *OR* 10(2):419, 524, 542; APS to George Williamson, May 1, 1862, APS to Leonidas Polk, May 6, 1862, APS to Charles Clark, May 23, 1862, Polk Papers, RG 109, NA.

30. Lindsley, ed., *Military Annals*, 196–97.

31. St. John R. Liddell, *Liddell's Record*, ed. Nathaniel Cheairs Hughes, Jr. (1985; reprint, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997), 67; Connelly, *Army of the Heartland*, 179–82.

— 4 —

Veterans from the Volunteer State

Perryville

Braxton Bragg's ultimate failure as the commander of the Army of Tennessee obscures the virtues that even his enemies recognized. One of his officers wrote that Bragg was "firm and impartial," "full of energy," hard-working, and "excited by the purest patriotism, and one of the most honest and unselfish officers of our army." He was the best organizer and disciplinarian the army ever had. Yet the same officer did not think Bragg "was up to the charge of a large army" as a commander. Instead, "as a chief of staff, his services would have been invaluable." Stewart perceived Bragg's chief fault as essentially one of personality. After the war, he wrote that while Bragg was an "able officer . . . [h]is greatest defect was that he did not win the love and confidence of either the officers or men" of his army.[1]

In June, 1862, Bragg inherited an army at Tupelo that had known nothing but retreat and was plagued by desertion, supply problems, and bad officers. Fortunately, the Confederate Army of the Mississippi was not under a direct Federal threat at Tupelo. Federal general Halleck determined to hold the line he had conquered in north Mississippi and garrison the territory captured since February. The lone Federal offensive threat was to the east, as Don Carlos Buell and his Army of the Ohio were slowly advancing along the line of the Memphis and Charleston Railroad through north Alabama to Chattanooga.[2]

1. A. M. Manigault, *A Carolinian Goes to War*, ed. R. Lockwood Tower (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1983), 158–59; Lindsley, ed., *Military Annals*, 85. For scholarly viewpoints on these issues, see McWhiney, *Bragg*, 390–92; Horn, *Army of Tennessee*, 157; Connelly, *Army of the Heartland*, 205. For Bragg's background, see McWhiney, *Bragg*, 1–25, 33, 90–93, 98; Warner, *Generals in Gray*, 30.

Chattanooga, in the center of the corridor from Nashville to Atlanta, was a key railroad center. Not only was it a focal point of Confederate transportation and communications, it was, as events would confirm, an ideal jumping-off point for a Federal advance into Georgia. The only Confederate troops in East Tennessee were Major General Edmund Kirby Smith's Army of East Tennessee. Kirby Smith's 16,000 men faced not only Buell but an aggressive Federal force at Cumberland Gap, the point where the Tennessee, Kentucky, and Virginia state lines come together. By July 22, after only approximately a month in command, Bragg determined to transfer a substantial portion of his army to Chattanooga.[3]

In the month the Army of the Mississippi remained at Tupelo after Bragg assumed command, it was drilled, disciplined, and reorganized until it was, in Stewart's words, in "a high state of efficiency." Part of the reorganization involved Stewart and his command. At Corinth, the brigade was joined by Colonel A. H. Bradford's 31st Tennessee. The 31st had been one of six regiments McCown had removed to Fort Pillow before Island No. 10's fall on April 7. The 31st had remained at Fort Pillow until after the retreat from Shiloh. Soon after the 31st joined the brigade, elections required under the conscript law turned Bradford out of his colonelcy and substituted Colonel Egbert E. Tansil, formerly captain of Company A.[4]

A further shake-up of the brigade occurred on July 8. The 13th Arkansas left the brigade and was replaced by the 24th Tennessee, veterans of Shiloh commanded by Lieutenant Colonel H. L. W. Bratton.[5] Just over two weeks before the 24th joined Stewart, its adjutant major, William H. Mott, wrote to his wife in Tennessee urging her not to despair despite the army's having abandoned Tennessee. Demonstrating that the morale of the

2. McWhiney, *Bragg*, 261–62; James Lee McDonough, *War in Kentucky: From Shiloh to Perryville* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1994), 35–36.

3. McDonough, *War in Kentucky*, 37–38; Connelly, *Army of the Heartland*, 189; *OR* 16(2):715; McWhiney, *Bragg*, 267–68; APS to D. H. Hill, July 21, 1862, Daniel Harvey Hill Papers, SHC.

4. Lindsley, ed., *Military Annals*, 96, 460; TCWCC, *Tennesseans*, 1:240–41.

5. TCWCC, *Tennesseans*, 1:224–25.

army was improving as well, Mott wrote: "Our independence is as certain to be accomplished as the morrow is to dawn. . . . Our prospects are better of success than ever and the army of Lincolndom will fall of its own weight ere the lapse of many more; therefore bear up a while longer, and then all will be right."[6]

On the same July 8 the confident Mott and the 24th joined Stewart, the brigade was transferred to Major General Benjamin Franklin Cheatham's division of Polk's Corps. A year older than Stewart, Cheatham was from a prominent family of Tennessee politicians on his father's side, and descended from General James Robertson, a founder of Nashville, on his mother's. A veteran of the Mexican War, Cheatham was a political ally of Isham G. Harris. It is likely Stewart and Cheatham had become acquainted in Nashville before the war. Considered incompetent by Bragg, Cheatham had important political allies in addition to Harris, including Senator Gustavus A. Henry and Congressman Henry S. Foote. Unlike Bragg, Cheatham was genuinely liked by the Tennessee troops in the army, who formed a significant portion of its numbers, including all but one regiment of Cheatham's own division.[7]

Popular or not, Bragg was capable of sound strategic thinking. His decision to move four divisions of the Army of the Mississippi to Chattanooga in July put the army in a position to defend Chattanooga and operate on the Federal lines of communication in Middle Tennessee. Furthermore, Halleck's "hold the line" strategy in north Mississippi made it possible for Major General Sterling Price to face the Federals there with 16,000 men and for Van Dorn to hold Vicksburg on the Mississippi River with another 16,000. Bragg intended to combine with Kirby Smith and move into Middle Tennessee to isolate Buell while Price and Van Dorn moved toward West Tennessee.[8]

On July 21, while camped at Tupelo, Stewart wrote his West Point classmate Major General Daniel Harvey Hill, who commanded a division in the Army of Northern Virginia. Stewart expressed his gratification at

6. Charles R. Mott, Jr., ed., "War Journal of a Confederate Officer," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 5 (September 1946): 246–47.

7. *OR* 17(2):643; Christopher Losson, *Tennessee's Forgotten Warriors* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989), 1–27, 55–59; Warner, *Generals in Gray*, 47.

8. McWhiney, *Bragg*, 268–71.

the successes of Hill and others in their class, such as James Longstreet, and asked Hill to pass along his greetings to Longstreet, G. W. Smith, and any other of their classmates in the Virginia army. Interrupted, Stewart resumed his letter the next day, writing that the troops at Tupelo had been ordered to be ready to move on July 23, presumably to Chattanooga. Displaying a spirit similar to that of Major Mott of the 24th Tennessee, Stewart fervently wrote: "My earnest hope is that the day of redemption for Tenn. and the whole South is at hand—& that you & I may long live to witness the growth & prosperity of our beloved country, free, independent, & giving to all the nations such an example of Christian enlightenment as the world has not yet seen."[9]

The move from Tupelo to Chattanooga was remarkable. On July 23, the date the infantry began rolling out of Tupelo, elements of Buell's army were at Stevenson, Alabama, about twenty-five miles southwest of Chattanooga. The artillery, wagons, and cavalry traveled 432 miles by road to Chattanooga. The distance by the circuitous rail route from Tupelo, down to Mobile, back up to Atlanta and then to Chattanooga, was 776 miles. The long trip by rail was faster than Buell's overland march, which was delayed by Confederate cavalry operating in the Federal rear. When Bragg's first infantry units began rolling into Chattanooga, Buell had moved no farther.[10]

Bragg and Kirby Smith met in Chattanooga on July 31 and formulated a plan. Kirby Smith would move against Cumberland Gap while Bragg awaited his artillery and wagons. Then, the two would combine to march into Middle Tennessee, defeat Buell, recapture Nashville, and move into Kentucky. This plan soon went awry, however, primarily on account of the cumbersome Confederate command system. While Bragg ranked Kirby Smith, Kirby Smith had autonomy as a separate department commander, which he soon exercised to negate Bragg's plan to engage Buell in Middle Tennessee.[11]

By the time Bragg moved out of Chattanooga on August 28, Kirby Smith was so deep into Kentucky as to make it impractical for Bragg to en-

9. APS to D. H. Hill, July 21, 1862, Hill Papers; Warner, *Generals in Gray*, 126–37.

10. McWhiney, *Bragg*, 268–71; McDonough, *War in Kentucky*, 74–76.

11. McWhiney, *Bragg*, 272–74; Woodworth, *Jefferson Davis and His Generals*, 136–39; Connelly, *Army of the Heartland*, 209–13.

gage Buell in Tennessee. Bragg's 27,000 infantry were insufficient for that task. Out of necessity, Bragg had to follow Kirby Smith into Kentucky, to stay within supporting distance and to prevent Buell from getting between the two Confederate armies.

The army that Bragg marched north from Chattanooga consisted of four divisions divided into two wings. Polk's wing consisted of the divisions of Cheatham and Major General Jones M. Withers, an Alabama-born 1835 graduate of West Point who was a veteran of the Mexican War and the fight at Shiloh. The divisions of Brigadier General James Patton Anderson of Florida and Major General Simon Bolivar Buckner of Kentucky made up Bragg's other wing, under Major General William J. Hardee. Known as "Old Reliable," Hardee was famous in the prewar United States Army for his adaptation of a French infantry tactics manual, which he published in 1855 with the title *Rifle and Light Infantry Tactics*. Hardee served well at Shiloh and was considered by Bragg to be his only "suitable" major general.[12]

Stewart's Brigade and the rest of Polk's wing moved up the east side of Walden's Ridge from Chattanooga, crossing into the Sequatchie Valley above Pikeville. The wing moved northwest to Sparta, then north to Gainesboro on the Cumberland River, then across the Kentucky line to Glasgow. On the march, Stewart summoned the commissioned officers of his brigade and admonished them on the importance of discipline in the enemy's country. Stewart stated that pillage and plunder not only damaged noncombatants, but demoralized the perpetrators. Stewart expressed the hope that when the army left Kentucky, no one could say that personal property had been stolen or damaged by a member of his brigade.[13]

Buell moved his army north in response to the Confederate advance, with the initial goal of covering Nashville. When Buell determined that Bragg was moving into Kentucky, the Federal general shifted his forces to Bowling Green. Bragg captured the Federal garrison at Munfordville on

12. McWhiney, *Bragg*, 262. For Hardee's background, see Nathaniel C. Hughes, Jr., *General William J. Hardee: Old Reliable* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1965), 4–6, 12, 14–18, 23–36, 41–46, 51–67, 112, 119, 320; Warner, *Generals in Gray*, 7, 38, 342–43. During the coming campaign, both Polk and Hardee would be elevated to the newly created rank of lieutenant general. Hughes, *Hardee*, 137 n. 5.

13. Connelly, *Army of the Heartland*, 222–26; Lindsley, ed., *Military Annals*, 197.

September 17. After two days further delay, Bragg marched east, Polk's wing moving to Bardstown. While Bragg has been criticized for not using his position at Munfordville astride the Louisville and Nashville Railroad to force Buell to battle, Buell had other routes to Louisville, and remaining at Munfordville would have surrendered the initiative to Buell while confining the Army of the Mississippi to a barren area.[14]

At the first of October, Bragg left the army in the care of Polk at Bardstown and occupied himself with the political task of installing a Confederate governor at Frankfort, the state capital, fifty-three miles from Bardstown. On October 2, Bragg received the unexpected news that Buell's replenished and strongly reinforced army was in motion, and that a Federal force was at Shelbyville, Kentucky, twenty-one miles to the east of Frankfort. Bragg ordered Polk to move north with his "whole available force" and strike the Federal column heading toward Frankfort in the flank. Polk called a council of several of his generals and secured the consensus of all not to obey the order. Stewart was on outpost nine miles away on the Louisville Road and did not participate. While Polk has been criticized for this unorthodox (and insubordinate) move, he had information that indicated a Federal force of unknown size was advancing on Bardstown, which would place it on the flank of the move north ordered by Bragg. Polk retreated east rather than advancing north.[15]

In his history of the army, Stewart wrote that by this juncture it was clear that Bragg was not going to achieve either of the "two great objects" of the Kentucky invasion: "Nashville would not be evacuated, and Kentucky would not join the Confederacy. Bragg, therefore, desired only to gain time to effect a retreat with his spoils." Bragg remarked that "the people here have too many fat cattle and are too well off to fight." According to a member of his staff, Bragg was aware he had made a mistake moving into Kentucky instead of against Buell in Middle Tennessee. He "was de-

14. Don Carlos Buell, "East Tennessee and the Campaign of Perryville," *B&L* 3:40–41; Connelly, *Army of the Heartland*, 228–33; Losson, *Tennessee's Forgotten Warriors*, 62–63.

15. Connelly, *Army of the Heartland*, 243–50; B. Bragg to L. Polk, October 2, 1862, Polk Papers, LC. While admitting that Bragg's intelligence was incomplete at the time that the order was made, both McWhiney and Woodworth argue that the attack Bragg contemplated on Sill's flank had a good chance of success. McWhiney, *Bragg*, 301–306; Woodworth, *Jefferson Davis and His Generals*, 156–57. For Stewart's absence from Polk's council, see *OR* 16(1):1105.

termined, however, not to expose his army to disaster, nor to take any chances." But Bragg's biographer writes that he intended to hold as much of the state as possible, protecting the new government at Frankfort to legitimize his conscription efforts, and covering his supply depot at Danville.[16]

Regardless of whether Bragg was seeking an escape, Buell's army converged on the Army of the Mississippi in three columns. Bragg ordered Polk to take Cheatham's Division south to Perryville to join with Hardee, "give the enemy battle immediately; rout him, and then move to our support at Versailles." Bragg personally rode to Perryville after ordering Polk to attack "vigorously" at first light on October 8.[17]

At first light on October 8, Polk suspected that Buell's whole army might be in his front. In such circumstances, compliance with Bragg's attack order was unwise. Polk substituted a "defensive-offensive" strategy, whereby he would "await the movements of the enemy and be guided by events as they developed." Around 9:45 that morning, Bragg arrived, irritated that his attack order had not been obeyed. Rejecting the premise that the bulk of Buell's army was on the field, Bragg substituted the offensive for the "defensive-offensive." Cheatham's Division shifted north to the right flank to control a strategic bend in the river and to provide strength to that portion of the line so Bragg could launch an attack with it.[18]

Bragg's original plan had been to strike the left flank of Major General Charles Gilbert's corps with Cheatham's Division shortly after noon. But Polk received a report from cavalry scouts that a large column of Federal infantry was approaching Perryville from the northwest, along the Mackville Road. These troops were Major General Alexander McCook's First Corps. Polk delayed Cheatham's attack so he could make sure Cheatham would be hitting the Federal left flank. Bragg decided to shift Cheatham's men further north, assemble the division in line of battle on Walker's Bend, cross the Chaplin River, and strike McCook with Cheatham's three brigades *en echelon*. The task of moving Cheatham's Division across the river

16. Lindsley, ed., *Military Annals*, 77; David Urquhart, "Bragg's Advance and Retreat," *B&L* 3:601; McWhiney, *Bragg*, 298–300.

17. McWhiney, *Bragg*, 308–12.

18. Kenneth A. Hafendorfer, *Perryville: Battle for Kentucky* (Louisville: KH Press, 1991), 132–33, 136, 162–65; *OR* 16(1):1110.

and up the bluffs so occupied Bragg that he neglected to direct the cavalry to keep in touch with the Federal left flank, which so extended itself that Cheatham's attack would not overlap the Federal flank on the north, as originally planned.[19]

As Stewart's Brigade moved into position with the rest of the division, one of its components, Stanford's Battery, engaged in an artillery duel started by Captain William W. Carnes's Tennessee battery. Carnes's cannon being smoothbores, his battery was quickly outranged by an Indiana battery of rifled guns. Stanford moved forward to deploy his three-inch rifles, but was hit by Federal fire before a shot could be fired. Two men were killed and an ammunition chest exploded. Stanford kept up the fight until fire slackened around 1:30 P.M.[20]

The five brigades of McCook's corps were placed with artillery support along a series of mostly open, rolling hills 3,000 to 4,000 feet from Cheatham's crossing of the Chaplin River. A sweep by a brigade of Confederate cavalry cleared Federal skirmishers off the bluff in preparation for Cheatham's attack. Thinking the Federal left was over 300 yards to the south of its actual position, Cheatham ordered Brigadier General Daniel Donelson's brigade forward to the attack. Donelson was missing two of his five Tennessee regiments, and moved to the attack with something over half his brigade's strength.[21]

Donelson proceeded in a westerly fashion toward Captain Samuel J. Harris' Indiana battery, located on a hill just south of the current Perryville Battlefield Park boundary. During Donelson's advance, the true extent of the Federal left became apparent, as Captain Charles Parsons' Federal battery on an open hill to the north of Donelson's line of advance opened an enfilade fire on Donelson's three regiments. Cheatham met this unexpected threat by sending Brigadier General George Maney's brigade from the rear of the division's line up to deal with Parsons and his supporting infantry.[22]

Maney advanced to a "strong staked rail fence" about a hundred yards from Parsons' battery and its support, an Illinois regiment. The Federals

19. Hafendorfer, *Perryville*, 180–83.

20. Daniel, *Cannoneers*, 50; Hafendorfer, *Perryville*, 178–80.

21. Hafendorfer, *Perryville*, 178–201; Losson, *Tennessee's Forgotten Warriors*, 65. For Donelson's background, see Warner, *Generals in Gray*, 74–75.

22. Hafendorfer, *Perryville*, 201–207, 214.

charged down the hill to confront Maney, but were sent reeling back. Maney's troops slowly advanced up the steep hill toward Parsons' guns, supported by the guns of Lieutenant William B. Turner's Mississippi battery, and opposed by fresh Federal troops from an Ohio regiment.[23]

After passing the river bluff, Stewart deployed his brigade some four hundred yards to the rear of Donelson, forming behind a ridge swept by Federal fire. While there, Maney moved from behind Stewart to the right and forward against Parsons' position. Stewart received no further orders, but Donelson requested support. Stewart advanced three of his regiments—the 4th, 5th, and 24th—into the gap between Maney and Donelson, while keeping the 33rd and 31st in reserve.[24]

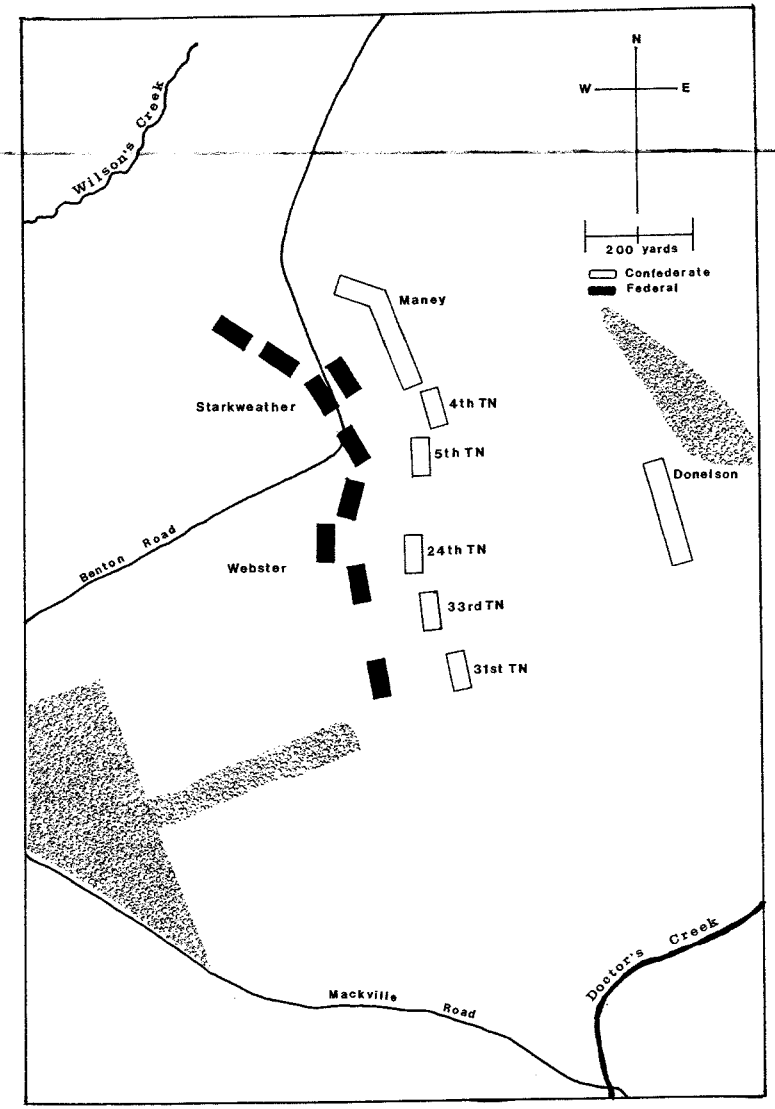
Stewart's Brigade, in filling the gap between Maney and Donelson, became involved in each of the other two brigades' fights. Initially, the 4th and 5th assisted Maney in routing the Federals on the hill occupied by Parsons' battery. The left regiment of the first line, the 24th, joined in the attack of Donelson's 16th Tennessee on the 24th Illinois, forcing the Federals up the ridge about two hundred yards to the south of Parsons. Stewart then committed the second line of the brigade, the 33rd going up the ridge to the left of the 5th, the 31st joining the attack of the 24th and Donelson's regiments.[25]

Stewart admiringly wrote that his brigade "pressed forward under a galling fire, with a coolness & yet impetuosity that could not be surpassed." The 4th and 5th continued to support Maney's attack on the extreme left, combining with Maney to eventually drive Brigadier General John Starkweather's brigade off the next ridge to the west of Parsons' now-overrun position, the area of the present-day park known as "Starkweather's Hill." Before this final assault, Captain Oscar Gilchrist of the 4th Tennessee ordered his men to lie down, making the practical remark: "If you don't, the Yankees will shoot you!" The 4th's color-bearer fell, so Lewis White picked up the standard and placed the broken staff in the muzzle of his gun. Colonel C. D. Venable of the 5th Tennessee was thrown from his

23. Ibid., 215–17, 240–41; Benjamin F. Cheatham, "The Battle of Perryville," *Southern Bivouac* (April 1886): 705.

24. APS Perryville Report, William P. Palmer Collection of Braxton Bragg Papers, Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland; Hafendorfer, *Perryville*, 242–45.

25. Hafendorfer, *Perryville*, 244–45.



Perryville
Map by Blake Magner

horse and crippled early in the fight but continued on, carried by two of his men. The regiment's lieutenant colonel and major were both unhorsed, but continued the fight. Members of the 5th suffered unusual wounds: Private Haywood of Company B was shot with a ramrod, which he pulled out of his breast himself; Private Tip Allen of Company I was shot in the neck by a minié ball, which he soon coughed up. Private Joseph Riley of the 33rd Tennessee, following the 5th Tennessee in the second line, watched as the 5th swept forward and captured a battery at a dead run, swaths being cut from its ranks by the terrible Federal fire.[26]

From Stewart's description in his report, it appears that he stayed with the 24th, 31st, and 33rd in their attack on Colonel George Webster's brigade in the area of the southern boundary of the current park. Supported by Donelson's regrouped brigade and Brigadier General Sterling A. M. Wood's Brigade of Hardee's Corps, the 24th, 31st, and 33rd Tennessee moved forward. The combined assault resulted in the capture of Harris' Federal battery of four guns. In honor of the capture, all three brigades were later allowed to place crossed cannons on their colors. Pushing past Harris' guns to the cheers of the men of the 5th Tennessee, the line moved to the top of the next hill, an extension of Starkweather's Hill to the south of the Benton Road, where, after a struggle with the reorganizing Federals, the three regiments fell back to the bottom of the ridge for lack of ammunition.[27]

By the end of this fight, it was about 5:15, and close to sundown. Stewart and his brigade had been in action since about 3 P.M. and, like the rest of Cheatham's Division, were fought out. The brigade went into battle with an effective strength of about 1,750 and suffered 428 casualties, just under a quarter of its strength. Cheatham's attack was so fierce that McCook reported that he was assaulted by "at least three divisions." While elements of three divisions were employed, the bulk of the Confederate fighting was done by Cheatham's three brigades, totaling about 4,500 men, against a Federal corps of over double that number.[28]

26. APS Perryville Report; Hafendorfer, *Perryville*, 252–53, 262–63, 274–75; Lindsley, ed., *Military Annals*, 186–87, 197–98; Riley Diary, CCNMP.

27. APS Perryville Report; Hafendorfer, *Perryville*, 272–73, 299–304, 320; Riley Diary, CCNMP; *OR* 16(1):1111; General Order No. 1, November 23, 1862, Army of Tennessee, General Orders, 1862, RG 109, NA.

28. Hafendorfer, *Perryville*, 234, 321; *OR* 16(1):1043; 16(2):896.

Polk's report of the battle complimented Stewart, along with Cheatham's other brigadiers. While Stewart could be criticized for the separation of his brigade during the battle, such criticism would be unjust, as the Federal line was emplaced along a long ridge, where an attack on one area of the ridge would necessarily assist an attack on another. Stewart competently filled his role as support for the attack of Cheatham's Division on the Federal left. Maney largely succeeded in driving the Federal left flank back on its supports, capturing several guns in the process. That attack would not have been nearly so successful without the support of Stewart's 4th and 5th Tennessee. The attack of the remainder of the brigade, personally supervised by Stewart, drove the Federal line back several hundred yards, participated in the capture of four pieces of artillery, materially assisted Maney by engaging Federal troops that would have reinforced the far left, and relieved pressure on Hardee on the right.

Stewart was effusive in praise for his men. He wrote in his report of the battle that "throughout the entire day, the men & officers behaved as I thought as only veterans from the Volunteer State could do, all did their duty well and bravely." Veterans of the brigade remembered that October 8 as a "matchless fight" and "one of the bloodiest in which Bragg's army was engaged."[29]

Bragg, Polk, and Hardee learned from captured prisoners and headquarters documents that the great bulk of the Federal army was at Perryville. The three Confederate divisions at Perryville, victorious but battered and vastly outnumbered, retreated northeast to Harrodsburg, where they were rejoined by Withers' Division and Kirby Smith's troops on October 10. Bragg moved the combined force on to the advance base at Bryantsville. There, on October 12, news reached him that Price and Van Dorn had been defeated at Corinth on October 4. The Army of the Mississippi was the only strong Confederate force in the field between the Federals and the Deep South. Bragg called a council of war, and Polk, Hardee, Cheatham, and Kirby Smith all voted to retreat. Without delay, the Confederates started for Cumberland Gap on October 13, Kirby Smith moving on an eastern route and Bragg's army on a western route through Crab Orchard. Cheatham's Division composed part of the rear guard.[30]

29. APS Perryville Report; Lindsley, ed., *Military Annals*, 187, 197.

30. McWhiney, *Bragg*, 320–22; Connelly, *Army of the Heartland*, 266–68, 279–80; Cheatham, "Battle of Perryville."

Stewart's Brigade marched south into Tennessee through the Cumberland Gap, thence to Knoxville by way of the neighborhood of Rogersville, which must have brought memories of his boyhood and early education back to its commander. The column reached Knoxville on October 20. The men were "tired, foot-sore, and hungry, many . . . ragged and barefooted," and marched into camp in the midst of a "terrible snow-storm." Some of the barefoot men left bloody tracks in the snow.[31]

On October 23, Bragg was summoned to Richmond to report in person on the Kentucky campaign. Davis was delighted by the Army of the Mississippi's safe return to Tennessee. After interviews with Bragg, Polk, and Kirby Smith, Davis sustained Bragg in his command, notwithstanding Polk's and Kirby Smith's labeling the campaign a failure. Bragg must have been astonished, since Polk's and Kirby Smith's failures in the campaign had played a significant role in foiling Bragg's designs.[32]

Buell kept up something of a pursuit until the Army of the Mississippi reached London, Kentucky. He then began moving his army to Nashville, which the Federals had held throughout the campaign in Kentucky. A small Confederate force under Nathan Bedford Forrest, later augmented by Breckinridge's infantry division, lurked at Murfreesboro for the purpose of holding Middle Tennessee and threatening Nashville.[33]

From Knoxville, Stewart's Brigade, with the rest of the army, moved by rail to Tullahoma.[34] For the first time during the war, Stewart was home again in Middle Tennessee.

31. Lindsley, ed., *Military Annals*, 198.
32. McWhiney, *Bragg*, 326–27; Horn, *Army of Tennessee*, 190–91.
33. Horn, *Army of Tennessee*, 189.
34. Lindsley, ed., *Military Annals*, 187.

— 5 —

In a Manner That Is Beyond Praise

Murfreesboro

For over a year, the Confederate Army of the Mississippi had fought for the possession of Tennessee. Shiloh was an effort to recover the losses in West and Middle Tennessee occasioned by the fall of Forts Henry and Donelson. The Kentucky campaign started as an effort to protect Chattanooga and engage the Federals in Middle Tennessee. While the Kentucky campaign failed to rally the Bluegrass State to the Rebel cause, it did relieve the pressure on Chattanooga and accomplish the recovery of a great portion of Middle Tennessee. In July, 1862, the Federal army was thirty miles from Chattanooga. In December, the Confederate army was thirty miles from Nashville. As the army gathered around Murfreesboro in the late fall of 1862, its primary mission, as well as the largest portion of its regiments, was recognized by its new name, the Army of Tennessee.

Murfreesboro lay on the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad thirty miles to the southeast of Nashville. It was a similar distance due south from Stewart's home in Lebanon, and about forty-five miles northwest of his father's home in Winchester. For the Confederates, the primary reason for occupying Murfreesboro was the political advantage and morale boost that being so close to Nashville provided. Substantial disadvantages included Murfreesboro's being much nearer to the Federal base in Nashville than to Bragg's base at Chattanooga and the position's susceptibility to a Federal move around either flank.[1]

1. Thomas L. Connelly, *Autumn of Glory* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971), 14, 23–25.

By the second week of December, the army was deployed in a thirty-mile arc around Murfreesboro, Hardee's Corps to the west, at Triune and Eagleville, Polk's Corps in the environs of Murfreesboro itself, and McCown's Division to the east, at Readyville. On November 22, the army was reorganized into three corps under Polk, Hardee, and Kirby Smith, but this arrangement soon evaporated when President Davis ordered Major General Carter Stevenson's division of 7,500 men to Vicksburg. Left with only one division, Kirby Smith returned to Knoxville. Kirby Smith's remaining division, McCown's, was attached to Hardee's Corps. Stevenson's Division, the army's largest, would be missed in the coming fight.[2]

A few days before Stevenson was detached, Bragg broke up Patton Anderson's division to achieve better balance between the corps of Hardee and Polk. In this process, the 19th Tennessee was added to Stewart's Brigade. The 19th had seen action at Mill Springs and Shiloh, had endured bombardment at Vicksburg, and had been part of Breckinridge's unsuccessful attempt to recapture Baton Rouge. The 19th was no doubt added to the brigade as a result of the consolidation of the 4th and 5th Tennessee and 31st and 33rd Tennessee into two regiments, part of an overall consolidation of eighteen understrength regiments into nine.[3]

The dissatisfaction with Bragg expressed to the authorities in Richmond by Polk, Kirby Smith, and others after the retreat from Kentucky occasioned a visit by President Davis himself in mid-December. Traveling incognito, Davis sought to ascertain the situation with the army and the morale of its men, and to gather information for planning the strategic defense of both Tennessee and Mississippi.[4] Davis found the army was well provisioned, well clothed, and in "fine spirits." Davis reviewed the troops and dined with the general officers at Bragg's headquarters. On December

2. Horn, *Army of Tennessee*, 193; Connelly, *Autumn of Glory*, 31–32; Lindsley, ed., *Military Annals*, 78.

3. Connelly, *Autumn of Glory*, 31–32; *OR* 20(2):448; Stewart Sifakis, *Compendium of the Confederate Armies: Tennessee* (New York: Facts on File, 1992), 120–21; TCWCC, *Tennesseans*, 1:183–84, 186, 214–16, 241, 245; McWhiney, *Bragg*, 343.

4. James Lee McDonough, *Stones River: Bloody Winter in Tennessee* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1980), 33–35; Woodworth, *Jefferson Davis and His Generals*, 180–83; McWhiney, *Bragg*, 338–39.

13, the president reviewed Stewart's Brigade and others in "fine weather." Stewart likely met Davis for the first time on one of these occasions.[5]

That December at Murfreesboro was remembered for its festivities. In addition to the pomp of Davis' review of the army, there were Christmas parties, games, athletic contests, and the wedding of a local belle to the cavalry's brigadier general, John H. Morgan. But the season had to have been bittersweet for Stewart. Although it would have been possible, given his nearness to Winchester, for relatives to visit him, there is no indication that any did. While Lebanon was also close, Harriet had left the town some months prior to July, 1862, and had "refugeed" to Georgia with the couple's sons. Lebanon had, moreover, changed hands at least twice since the start of the war. There had been fighting in the town, as Morgan's cavalry had engaged Federal cavalry around the public square on May 5, 1862. Although Nathan Bedford Forrest had reported there were no Federals there on August 12, there had been another skirmish at Lebanon on November 9. Although Stewart's wife and sons had been gone from Lebanon at the time of these fights, many neighbors and friends had not, and he must have been concerned for them and for the university as well. He had spent most of his life in Middle Tennessee, and while it was doubtless good to be home, it must have been sad to see the country overrun with warring armies.[6]

For the second time in the war, Stewart faced one of his old West Point roommates in command of an opposing Federal force. Major General William S. Rosecrans had, at the end of October, 1862, replaced Buell at the command of the Federal troops that became the Army of the Cumberland. Rosecrans had resigned from the army in 1854 to pursue a career as an architect and civil engineer. Appointed a brigadier general in May, 1861, he had won the battle at Rich Mountain in western Virginia on July 11 of that

5. Woodworth, *Jefferson Davis and His Generals*, 183; Manigault, *A Carolinian Goes to War*, 52–53; Horn, *Army of Tennessee*, 194; McDonough, *Stones River*, 46–56; John Euclid Magee Diary, December 13, 1862, John Euclid Magee Papers, DU; William A. Brown Diary (typed copy), December 13, 1862, KNBP; Special Order No. 17, December 13, 1862, Polk's Corps, Army of Tennessee, Special Orders, RG 109, NA.

6. Wingfield, *Stewart*, 211; APS to D. H. Hill, July 21, 1862, Hill Papers, SHC; Burns, *Wilson County*, 43; N. B. Forrest to I. G. Harris, August 12, 1862, Harris letter book, Isham G. Harris Papers, LC.

year. He had faced Stewart at Corinth after Shiloh, and had commanded Federal troops at Iuka and Corinth in the fall of 1862. Now, Rosecrans was across the lines at Nashville, gathering supplies for a thrust at Bragg.[7]

Rosecrans had recognized the Army of Tennessee's disadvantage of being so close to his base and so far away from its own. He had resisted increasingly insistent demands from Washington to advance before he was ready. As Christmas came to an end, however, threats from Washington, coupled with the news of Stevenson's departure and the absence of a large portion of the Confederate cavalry on raids, prompted Rosecrans to advance on Murfreesboro. At the time of this move on December 26, Rosecrans' mobile force totaled 46,940 in three corps under Major Generals Alexander McCook, Thomas L. Crittenden, and George H. Thomas. Bragg's force totaled 37,719 men.[8]

As if a harbinger of the terrible fight to come, the temperature, which had been unseasonably warm through Christmas, began to plummet. The marching Federals plodded through roads "full of mud and slush," and the miserable Confederates awaited them in a cold drizzle, unable to build fires to warm themselves or cook their rations, as Bragg did not want his men to betray the location of their line. Stewart's men struck their tents and sent their wagons to the rear on Sunday night, December 28, in preparation for moving into line of battle.[9]

Bragg awaited Rosecrans' attack in front of Murfreesboro, Polk's Corps on the left, in front of the river, Hardee's on the right, behind it. Bragg selected his line to cover the many good roads leading into Murfreesboro, "until the real point of attack could be developed." One writer credits Bragg with utilizing the modern concept of a mobile defense in employing this plan. But another, Bragg's biographer Grady McWhiney, termed Bragg's failure to entrench his army "a serious tactical error."[10] After the war, Stewart agreed:

7. Peter Cozzens, *No Better Place to Die* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 15–17; Herman Hattaway and Archer Jones, *How the North Won: A Military History of the Civil War* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1983, 1991), 310.

8. Hattaway and Jones, *How the North Won*, 310; Horn, *Army of Tennessee*, 196–98; Cozzens, *No Better Place to Die*, 45–46, 56–57.

9. Cozzens, *No Better Place to Die*, 48; David R. Logsdon, ed., *Eyewitnesses at the Battle of Stones River* (Nashville: Kettle Mills Press, 1989), 8; *OR* 20(1):723.

10. Richard J. Reid, *Stones River Ran Red* (Owensboro, Ky.: Commercial Printing, 1986), 45; *OR* 20(1):663, 672; McWhiney, *Bragg*, 348.

> Some time before the battle of Murfreesboro General Bragg, while in conversation with an officer of his army, remarked that he would never again "use the spade;" that in the beginning of the war he had been compelled to resort to it, but he thought it did not suit the genius of the Southern people, and he would not use it again. Subsequent events made clear his error. In war there is no way of putting the weaker party on an equality with the stronger but by using the spade, or by superior strategy. Possibly by use of the spade he might have held Murfreesboro through the winter, and until his army could be sufficiently reinforced to enable it to take the offensive.[11]

Early on December 29, Stewart formed his brigade on the north bank of the Stones River, between Maney on the left and Donelson on the right, Cheatham's Division being in the second line behind Withers'. Stewart noted that nothing of great interest occurred that day. Stewart observed that an open country lay in front of his line; however, the field of conflict was generally wooded with dense cedar brakes, broken by open farmlands and cotton fields. Limestone outcroppings jutted out in both field and forest.[12]

On the afternoon of December 30, Colonel Arthur M. Manigault, commanding a brigade of Withers' Division, sent a request to Stewart for the rifled guns of Stanford's Battery. Manigault's one battery was involved in a contest with some Federal guns off to Stewart's left. Stewart dispatched two 3-inch rifles under Lieutenant A. A. Hardin. Manigault later wrote that the combined batteries had silenced one Federal battery and had fought to a draw with another. However, Stewart disgustedly reported that Manigault had not properly supported Hardin, "a most estimable and gallant young officer." Hardin had been killed, a rifled shell cutting him in two just after Manigault had relieved him. In Stewart's view, Hardin's longer-range rifles had not been employed to any "useful purpose." A member of Stanford's Battery observed that Hardin's rifles had been exposed to guns using shorter-range ammunition and to small-arms fire as well.[13]

11. Lindsley, ed., *Military Annals*, 79.

12. *OR* 20(1):723; Horn, *Army of Tennessee*, 197–98.

13. *OR* 20(1):723–24; Manigault, *A Carolinian Goes to War*, 56; Magee Diary, December 30, 1862, Magee Papers, DU; Brown Diary, December 30, 1862, KNBP.

That night, Bragg weakened his right to strengthen his left for the attack the next morning. Rosecrans also prepared for an attack on his left, which was Bragg's now weakened right. Rosecrans anticipated launching his attack at 7 A.M. on December 31, right after breakfast. McCown had his division of the Confederate left moving at dawn, however, so that it made contact with pickets on the extreme Union right at 6:22 A.M.[14]

Earlier that morning, Stewart received Bragg's order directing a wheeling attack against Rosecrans. He was also informed of Polk's decision that his brigade would be under Withers' command for the coming battle. Cheatham took command of Withers' two left brigades, Manigault's and Colonel J. Q. Loomis', along with his own two left brigades, those of Colonel A. J. Vaughn, Jr., and George Maney. Withers kept his two right brigades, Patton Anderson's and James R. Chalmers', and assumed direction of Stewart and Donelson. The logic behind this unusual move was to ensure that supports would be "thrown forward when necessary and with the least delay."[15]

Once again, Bragg's flanking attack fell upon the corps of the unfortunate Alexander McCook, whose two right divisions, those of Richard W. Johnson and Jefferson C. Davis, were pushed back some distance. McCook's third division, that of Philip Sheridan, proved to be of sterner stuff. Sheridan stubbornly fell back to the area between Harding's house and the Wilkinson Pike, posting a strong force of artillery to thwart Confederate attacks. Attacks by Manigault and Maney pushed Sheridan mostly across the Wilkinson Pike, into a dense cedar thicket on the southern edge of the present-day battlefield park. Sheridan later observed that his position was "strong," being "located in the edge of a dense cedar thicket and commanding a slight depression of open ground that lay in my front." Sheridan's left brigade, Colonel George W. Roberts', was at right angles to the rest of the division, facing roughly south, while the rest of the division faced roughly west. To Roberts' left were Colonel Timothy R. Stanley's and Colonel John F. Miller's brigades of James S. Negley's division.[16]

14. Horn, *Army of Tennessee*, 199–200; Cozzens, *No Better Place to Die*, 83–84.
15. *OR* 20(1):724, 754.
16. Alexander F. Stevenson, *The Battle of Stone's River* (Boston: James R. Osgood, 1884), 58–60; Philip H. Sheridan, *Personal Memoirs* (New York: Charles L. Webster, 1888), 1:226–27; Cozzens, *No Better Place to Die*, 122, 132; *OR* 20(1):345.

Stewart advanced his brigade into woods to the rear of Anderson's Brigade, arranging his line so that the brigade remained under the cover of the forest screened from the Federal artillery fire. Stanford's Battery went out of the fields onto the Wilkinson Pike, where it was intercepted by Polk and placed in a field along the pike to support a battery already placed there. While not at Stewart's immediate disposal during the battle, the position of the battery enabled it to support the brigade about as well as it possibly could, given the rough terrain on the field.[17]

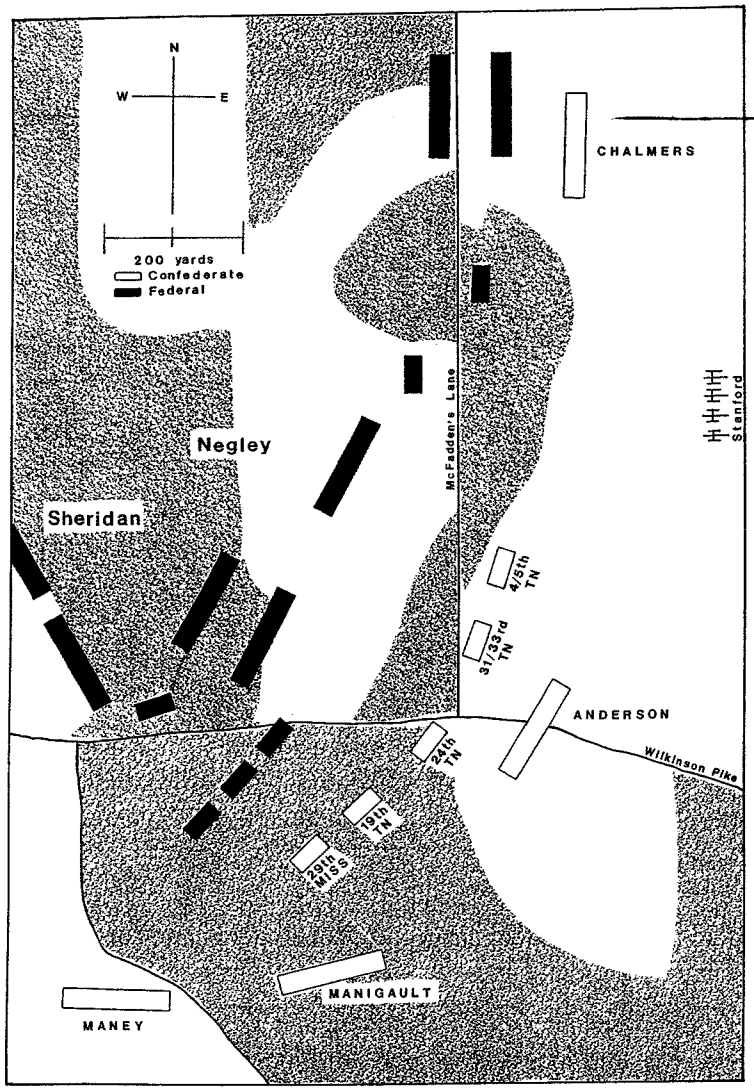
It was now about 10 A.M. Previously, Patton Anderson had thrown his brigade against the Federal salient in the cedars on both sides of the Wilkinson Pike. Anderson's five regiments assaulted the south and east sides of the salient in succession, their goal to capture three batteries of Sheridan's and Negley's divisions on the north side of the pike. The Federals among the trees held their fire until the advancing Confederates in the open fields were but thirty yards away. Anderson's piecemeal attacks merely resulted in each of his regiments being shot to pieces.[18]

During these attacks by Anderson's Mississippians, Stewart moved his brigade up to some small breastworks thrown up by Anderson's men. There, the Federal batteries in front played upon the brigade, wounding several men. Anderson's right two regiments, the 30th and 29th Mississippi, fell back in disorder, but were rallied in the rear by Major Luke W. Finlay, a member of Stewart's staff since the consolidation of his 4th Tennessee with the 5th.[19]

Withers ordered Stewart to send two regiments to the assistance of Anderson's three left regiments, which were still assaulting Roberts even though the rest of Anderson's Brigade had fallen back. Stewart demurred, and suggested to Withers that his whole brigade be committed to the attack. With his experiences at Shiloh and Perryville no doubt on his mind, Stewart meant to keep his brigade together for this assault. Fortunately, Withers saw the logic of this proposal and agreed.[20]

The coordinated attack of the entire brigade spelled the end of the obsti-

17. *OR* 20(1):724, 732.
18. *OR* 20(1):728, 755–56; Cozzens, *No Better Place to Die*, 124–27; Logsdon, *Stones River*, 28.
19. *OR* 20(1):724, 727.
20. Ibid., 724–25.



Murfreesboro
Map by Blake Magner

nate Federal position in the cedars. The Tennesseans advanced "in splendid order and with a cheer" with the 19th, 24th, 31st-33rd, and 4th-5th in line from left to right. Upon reaching the Wilkinson Pike, Stewart faced the brigade by the left flank and marched it down the pike about 300 yards, enabling the right of the brigade to form under the cover of "a dense cedar grove." By this maneuver, Stewart minimized casualties, although Anderson's regiments, still in close contact on the south side of the pike, must have drawn a great deal of fire. While the men were not subjected to a heavy fire during the greater portion of their advance, they did have to move through a portion of Anderson's retreating and demoralized troops, and over ground marked by Confederate casualties. A member of the 19th Tennessee later recalled seeing "a poor comrade's head in a small bushy tree."[21]

Stewart's attack struck the intersection of the Wilkinson Pike with McFadden's Lane, the 19th sweeping over the low rise upon which Captain Asahel K. Bush's 4th Indiana battery and a section of Battery G, 1st Missouri, was posted. Having exhausted their ammunition, both batteries were moving with some difficulty to the rear, hindered by the rockiness of the ground and the denseness of the cedars. Much of Roberts' brigade had also run low on ammunition, apparently just as the left of Stewart's Brigade burst into the dense cedars. Roberts' 42nd Illinois did not detect the Confederate advance until its troops "saw their glistening bayonets a few feet from them." The Federals delivered a "most galling fire" with their remaining ammunition, but Stewart's troops soon pushed the Federals back through the cedars. Out of ammunition, the Federals "fled in confusion."[22]

The 31st-33rd Tennessee came across two guns of Bush's battery which their crews were trying to drag out of the cedars. Doubtless these Federals were experiencing problems similar to those observed by a member of Miller's brigade, who, retreating from the woods, saw a lone artilleryman trying to remove his piece from the field with one horse, "the other five having been killed. One wheel of the gun carriage was fastened between

21. Cozzens, *No Better Place to Die*, 133; *OR* 20(1):724, 725, 728, 731, 756; Losson, *Tennessee's Forgotten Warriors*, 86; Lindsley, ed., *Military Annals*, 187; J. H. Warner, *Personal Glimpses of the Civil War* (Chattanooga: privately published, 1914), 6–7.

22. Cozzens, *No Better Place to Die*, 132; Stevenson, *Battle of Stone's River*, 68–69, 72–73; *OR* 20(1):725, 727–31.

two rocks, and the brave artilleryman was trying with a rail to pry it out." Members of the consolidated regiment dispersed the guns' crews with a "well aimed volley" and overran the guns, leaving them in their pursuit of the retreating Yankees. The Federals attempted several times to make a stand in the woods, but were unable to hold.[23]

The battle raged on either side of Stewart's Brigade. In keeping with Bragg's plan of a wheeling attack by brigades *en echelon,* on Stewart's right Chalmers' Brigade of Withers' Division rolled forward soon after Anderson's attack, striking the extreme right of the Federal line on the west side of the river, which was anchored in an area that became known as the "Round Forest." This area of the Federal line was so named because it consisted of a dense circular area of cedars on rocky, elevated ground along the railroad and the Nashville Pike. Packed into this area were the better part of John M. Palmer's division and a brigade of Thomas J. Wood's division, supported by over fifty cannon. Chalmers was hit with a whirlwind of fire from the massed guns and the rifles of the Federals jammed in the cedars. Chalmers himself was wounded, and his Mississippi regiments decimated.[24]

Donelson's Brigade constituted the last uncommitted Confederates west of Stones River. As Chalmers broke, Donelson led his cheering men forward against the brigades of Colonel William B. Hazen and Brigadier General Charles Cruft. Intending to disorganize the advancing Confederates, Cruft ordered the Federal 1st Kentucky of his brigade forward, which simply exposed it to the rifles of the oncoming Confederates. As this regiment came streaming back, Cruft experienced further troubles, as Stewart's advance had penetrated into the Federal rear. Stewart's attack forced Cruft back. Major General George H. Thomas then committed Lt. Colonel Oliver H. Shephard's regular brigade, which charged into the cedars to confront Stewart's oncoming Tennesseans. Stewart, aided by Donelson's left regiments, repulsed the regulars.[25]

At the height of the fighting, Stewart was observed but a few paces behind the firing line, leisurely smoking a pipe and quietly giving orders to his staff officers, "whilst ball, canister and grape were rattling around thick

23. *OR* 20(1):725, 731; Logsdon, *Stones River*, 28–29.
24. Cozzens, *No Better Place to Die*, 151–54.
25. Ibid., 154–56; *OR* 20(1):726, 729.

as hail." In the midst of this hot winter fight, Stewart added to his reputation for quiet courage among his men and competence among the officers of the army.[26]

Having driven the Federals out of the cedars, Stewart saw that they were rallying across an open field from the cedars on the somewhat higher ground in the area of the railroad. There, Union artillery was concentrated to hold off the Confederate pursuit of the routed Federals. Stewart sent staff officers out to summon Stanford's Battery to engage the Federal artillery. He also ordered up additional ammunition. Although the ammunition was soon procured, Polk notified Stewart that he had work for Stanford and he could not be spared.

At this point, a bizarre incident occurred, the record of which is sketchy. Colonel John A. Jaques of the 1st Louisiana appeared, presented himself to Colonel Tansil of the 31st-33rd, and said he was a member of Cheatham's staff with an order for the 31st-33rd to fall back. The 31st-33rd's retreat caused a short retreat of the entire brigade before Stewart could bring it to halt, upon which Jaques disappeared. It turned out that earlier in the battle Jaques had panicked and had disgracefully run away from his real regiment, which was in Loomis' Brigade on Stewart's left. It is not known whether Jaques meant well, had gone insane, or was actively attempting to sabotage Confederate operations. In any case, Stewart re-formed his line and moved it forward to the edge of the woods, where the brigade remained until after dark.[27]

During this unexpected retreat, the 24th lost its commander, Colonel Bratton. Bratton's left leg was shattered by a piece of shell or grape shot, which subsequently passed through his horse, killing it and wounding Bratton's right leg. Bratton's left leg was later amputated, and he remained in the hospital at Murfreesboro after the battle, where he soon died. Stewart lamented Bratton as "one of the best and bravest officers in the entire army."[28]

26. *Chattanooga Daily Rebel*, June 11, July 8, 1863.
27. *OR* 20(1):725; McWhiney, *Bragg*, 356; Arthur W. Bergeron, Jr., *Guide to Confederate Military Units, 1861–1865* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989), 69. Even if Jaques *had* been a member of Cheatham's staff, Stewart was under Withers' command that day. Stewart apparently did not know Jaques (whom he called "Jacquess") was a deserter.
28. Frank H. Smith, "'The Duck River Rifles,' the Twenty-fourth Tennessee Infantry,"

Donelson's Brigade joined Stewart's in driving the Federals out of the cedars south of the Round Forest. However, Donelson's right regiments, along with Chalmers' survivors, were unable to dent Hazen's salient in the Forest, which came to be known as "Hell's Half-Acre." On the extreme Confederate left, Hardee was calling for reinforcements to complete the victory on that side of the field. Bragg originally determined to use a portion of Breckinridge's uncommitted division east of the river to reinforce Hardee, but Breckinridge mistakenly thought the Federals were advancing on his front, and spent some time ascertaining that the Yankees were in fact quiet there. By the time Breckinridge moved four of his five brigades across the river, Bragg had determined to reinforce failure (Polk's attacks on the Round Forest) rather than success (Hardee's attack on the left). Furthermore, instead of concentrating Breckinridge's brigades for one massive assault, Bragg and Polk sent them forward one after the other to assault the Federal stronghold. In attacks eerily reminiscent of Bragg's assaults on the Hornets' Nest at Shiloh, Breckinridge's piecemeal attacks were repulsed. Meanwhile, Hardee's troops, unreinforced and worn out from a day's long fighting, stopped tantalizingly close to Rosecrans' escape route along the Nashville Pike.[29]

By nightfall, the Confederates had bent the Yankee line almost perpendicular to its location that morning. Only in the area of the Round Forest did Rosecrans hold his original line. Bragg justifiably telegraphed Richmond: "God has granted us a Happy New Year." As Bragg stated in his report of the battle, "Nearly the whole field with all its trophies—the enemy's dead and many of his wounded, his hospitals and stores—[was left] in our full possession." The Confederate commander fully expected that Rosecrans would fall back, and it seemed for a while that he would. After an inconclusive meeting with his corps commanders on the issue of retreat, Rosecrans actually rode to the rear with McCook to scout a fallback position. Seeing some troops moving by torchlight, Rosecrans mistakenly believed that the Rebels had moved to cut off his retreat, and returned to his

in *The Civil War in Maury County, Tennessee*, ed. Jill K. Garrett and Marise P. Lightfoot (Columbia, Tenn.: privately published, 1966), 87; *OR* 20(1):725–26, 730.

29. Cozzens, *No Better Place to Die*, 144–50, 156–66; McWhiney, *Bragg*, 357–61; Charles M. Spearman, "The Battle of Stones River: Tragic New Year's Eve in Tennessee," *Blue & Gray Magazine* 6 (February 1989): 8, 26.

headquarters resolved to "fight or die." Only at daylight was it determined that the torches had been carried by Federal cavalrymen. By an accident that Stewart would have no doubt ascribed to the will of God, the Army of the Cumberland stayed on the field.[30]

As night fell, Stewart withdrew the brigade "a few hundred yards" to bivouac, leaving a small picket guard. His troops removed a substantial amount of booty from the field as it withdrew.[31] Members of the brigade were among the thousands of both armies that suffered through that cold night. A member of the 19th wrote: "We lay all night with a feeling of loneliness as if all were dead but ourselves, knowing that although [*sic*] the cedars and rocks were lying thousands of friends and foes alike unconscious in that sleep from which the morning reveille will not awake them. There were many wounded too who had not been cared for, suffering not only from wounds but from cold."[32]

Corporal John Magee of Stanford's Battery rode out over the field after dark looking for some harness, tearful from hearing the groans of the suffering wounded. Sergeant William Brown of the battery noted the gloominess of resting that night with dead comrades lashed to the caissons.[33]

The first day of 1863 found both exhausted armies on the field, each waiting for the other to make a move. Stewart's Tennesseans held their position on the edge of the cedar brake facing the Union line along the railroad embankment, subject to "frequent shelling" by the batteries there. Rosecrans ordered the occupation of high ground above the river at McFadden's Ford, and consolidated his line among the railroad, giving up the Round Forest to Polk. Bragg continued to wait for the Federal withdrawal, which never came.

The next day, Bragg discovered the Federal force on the high ground above the ford. Bragg figured that he had two choices, drive the Federals off the hill or withdraw Polk's lines. The latter being deemed inappropriate, Breckinridge was ordered to drive the Federals off the heights. Even

30. Hattaway and Jones, *How the North Won*, 322; *OR* 20(1):666; Logsdon, *Stones River*, 46–47. For Stewart's conviction that the war's result was the will of God, see Ridley, *Battles and Sketches*, 624.

31. *OR* 20(1):725.

32. W. J. Worsham, *The Old Nineteenth Tennessee Regiment, C.S.A.: June, 1861–April, 1865* (Knoxville: Paragon Printing, 1902), 73.

33. Logsdon, *Stones River*, 48.

the nonprofessional soldier Breckinridge could see what Bragg could not: that the proposed attack was a potential disaster. Breckinridge turned out to be right, as a good portion of his fine division was massacred by the massed Federal artillery.[34]

Both armies were worn out. The Confederate infantry had been in line of battle for five days and nights, had no reserves, were subject to severe weather, and in some places could not have any fires. Due to rain, Stones River was rising, threatening to isolate one part of the army from the other. Reduced by over 10,000 casualties, the Army of Tennessee could put only about 20,000 infantry in line. To compound these problems, late on the morning of January 3 Bragg learned from McCook's captured papers that Rosecrans had 70,000 men under his command, and cavalry reported Rosecrans was being reinforced from Nashville. After a consultation with Hardee and Polk, both of whom counseled withdrawal, Bragg ordered a retreat, which started at 11 P.M. that night.[35]

Stewart and his brigade left the field for Shelbyville early on the morning of January 4, 1863. During the three days after the hard fighting on December 31, the brigade had been under intermittent artillery fire. Stewart had spent the time trying to police the battlefield in his sector, and getting both Federal and Confederate dead buried. Despite the Rebel soldiers' need for clothing, Stewart deplored "the plundering and stripping of the dead." Among those Federals buried on the field was Colonel George Roberts, killed on the north side of the Wilkinson Pike trying to resist Stewart's attack. Major Finlay wrapped Roberts in his own military cloak and gave him a military funeral. Soldiers of another Tennessee regiment placed a stone over the grave and scratched an inscription with a bayonet.[36]

Murfreesboro was Stewart's best performance to date. Colonel Francis M. Walker of the 19th made mention in his report of Stewart's skill in maneuvering and keeping the brigade together. The brigade accomplished as much as any other Confederate unit at Murfreesboro, as its devastating assault routed the Federals out of the cedars northwest of the Wilkinson

34. *OR* 20(1):667–68, 725; Cozzens, *No Better Place to Die*, 177–98.

35. McWhiney, *Bragg*, 370–73; Woodworth, *Jefferson Davis and His Generals*, 194. For the condition of the Army of the Cumberland, see Cozzens, *No Better Place to Die*, 202.

36. *OR* 20(1):726; Smith, "'The Duck River Rifles,'" 88.

Pike. Stewart had resisted the temptation to blindly obey Withers' order to throw his brigade piecemeal into the fight. His insistence on a concerted attack doomed the hitherto successful defense of Sheridan and Negley. Like any good officer, Stewart recognized the valuable services of the regimental officers and his own staff, and noted the price in blood that his men paid for their success: 399 out of 1,635 killed, wounded, or missing. Stewart paid special tribute in his report to the conduct of his men, who "throughout the week . . . behaved in a manner that is beyond praise."[37]

37. *OR* 20(1):726, 709.

— 6 —

Old Straight

Interlude in Middle Tennessee

Bragg's retreat from Murfreesboro after announcing a hard-won victory set off a storm of criticism in portions of the press, the army, and the government. In response, Bragg embarked upon a clumsy campaign to confront his critics and gain reassurance, seeing himself as a martyr for the Cause. The net result of his efforts in that regard was the expression of opinions on the part of his staff and such officers as Hardee, Cleburne, and Breckinridge that he no longer had the army's confidence.

When this unseemly episode came to Davis' attention, the president sent his western theater commander, General Joseph E. Johnston, to Tullahoma to determine just what was transpiring within the army's command. Johnston was uncomfortable with the task and thwarted Davis' intention that he supplant Bragg. Johnston spent two periods with the army in the late winter and early spring of 1863, both of which ended in reports favorable to Bragg. Johnston's first endorsement emboldened Bragg to strike at certain of his critics in the army.[1]

One of the first officers to feel Bragg's wrath was McCown, who commanded a small division of three brigades nominally in "Smith's Corps," although that entity, as such, had not existed in the Army of Tennessee for some weeks. With some justification, Bragg blamed McCown for bungling

1. McWhiney, *Bragg*, 375–88; Connelly, *Autumn of Glory*, 77–86; Woodworth, *Jefferson Davis and his Generals*, 196–98.

the initial attack on McCook on December 31, 1862. Bragg had for some time considered McCown incompetent. McCown compounded matters by openly making anti-Bragg remarks, and by terming the Confederacy "a damned stinking cotton oligarchy." McCown was arrested, relieved of his command, and court-martialed on technical grounds.[2]

McCown's arrest order of February 27, 1863, appointed Stewart to the temporary command of the division, and assigned it to Polk's Corps. Stewart was placed at the head of the division instead of its sole surviving brigadier, Matthew D. Ector, and instead of other brigadiers in the army at that time, including such well-known officers as S. A. M. Wood, Bushrod Johnson, St. John R. Liddell, George Maney, William Preston, and Patton Anderson (who had commanded a division at Perryville). The advancement was indicative of Stewart's solid record, but doubtless also reflected such factors as his being a graduate of West Point (the only other was Johnson), his being the ranking Tennessee officer in the army on record as a Bragg supporter, and his having powerful support both within and outside the army.[3]

Indeed, several of Stewart's prominent friends had for some time been agitating for his promotion. Just before the Battle of Murfreesboro, Stewart wrote Jefferson Davis, enclosing recommendations for his promotion from Andrew Ewing, a former congressman, Governor Isham Harris, and Chancellor Bromfield Ridley, a Tennessee judge and a fellow faculty member of Stewart's at Cumberland. Stewart, who must have felt some awkwardness in writing the president directly on such a subject, forwarded the recommendations out of respect to his friends, "and because the promotion they ask for me would be very gratifying to me, if in the judgment of my military superiors, & especially your own, I am worthy of it. I would not desire or accept promotion on any other grounds." Efforts on Stewart's behalf continued into the new year, as Senator Gustavus A. Henry of Tennessee wrote letters to both Davis and Secretary of War James A. Seddon, stating that officers in the army and citizens of Tennessee felt Stewart

2. Connelly, *Autumn of Glory*, 81.

3. *OR* 23(2):654; McWhiney, *Bragg*, 330–31. Bragg's favorite Tennessee brigadier at the time was old Daniel S. Donelson, whom he recommended for a major generalcy in November, 1862. Donelson had been assigned to duty in East Tennessee on January 30 and died of natural causes there in the spring. See *OR* 20(2):417–18, 23(2):621.

was deserving of promotion, and that both Bragg and Polk had expressed that sentiment to him. Both Polk, and, interestingly, McCown, also wrote recommendations. All of these recommendations in December, January, and February made Davis inquire if there was a vacancy—which, at least until McCown's permanent removal, or the creation of a new organization, there was not.[4]

Stewart's senior colonel, Otho French Strahl, assumed temporary command of Stewart's Brigade. Strahl had served with the 4th Tennessee since Columbus and New Madrid, and became acquainted with Stewart at Corinth. A native Ohioan, Strahl lived in Tennessee and had practiced law there for several years before the war. A man who spoke in "clear, silvery tones," Strahl was the officer at Shiloh who, when asked by Stewart whether the 4th could take a Federal battery, responded, "We will try." As Stewart had earlier recommended Strahl for promotion, he must have believed his beloved brigade of Tennesseans was left in good hands.[5]

At the time Stewart assumed command, McCown's Division, which during McCown's court-martial proceedings retained that name, was made up of Ector's Brigade of dismounted Texas cavalry, Evander McNair's Arkansas brigade, under the command of the colonel of the 1st Arkansas Mounted Rifles, R. W. Harper, and Rains' Brigade of Georgia and North Carolina infantry, temporarily commanded by Colonel Robert B. Vance. James E. Rains, a Tennessean, had been killed in the division's devastating attack on the Federal right at Murfreesboro. Soon after Stewart assumed command of the division, Shiloh veteran Brigadier General William B. Bate was appointed to command the brigade.[6]

4. APS to Jefferson Davis, December 28, 1863, Henry to Seddon, February 10, 1863, Henry to Seddon, February 12, 1863, Henry to Davis, February 12, 1863, Recommendation of McCown, January 13, 1863, endorsed by Polk and Cheatham, February 5, 1863, Officers File, RG 109, NA; Robert Ewing, "General Robert E. Lee's Inspiration to the Industrial Rehabilitation of the South, Exemplified in the Development of Southern Iron Interests," *Tennessee Historical Magazine* 9 (January 1926): 215–16. APS and McCown appear to have been on good terms, as Stewart had earlier recommended McCown's promotion. See APS to A. S. Johnston, January 24, 1862, APS/CSR, RG 109, NA.

5. *OR* 23(2):734, 10(1):409, 427; Lindsley, ed., *Military Annals*, 184–85; Warner, *Generals in Gray*, 295; Charles M. Cummings, "Otho French Strahl: Choicest Spirit to Embrace the South," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 24 (winter 1965): 341, 349.

6. *OR* 23(2):655, 688; Warner, *Generals in Gray*, 19; *OR* 10(1):429.

Stewart's assumption of divisional command, even temporarily, necessarily involved the expansion of his staff. Already, two members of his staff had died in battle. Captain Thomas W. Preston of Memphis had been killed by a shot through the head at Shiloh. Lieutenant Colonel W. B. Ross, an aide-de-camp, who had joined Stewart before Shiloh, served until he was wounded in the neck at Murfreesboro, where he died on January 2.[7]

At the time of Murfreesboro, Stewart's staff included Ross and aides Captain Robert A. Hatcher of New Madrid, Missouri, Captain John A. Lauderdale of the 5th Tennessee, Major Luke W. Finlay of the 4th, and Lieutenant Paul Jones, Jr., of the 33rd, all having lost their regimental positions by reason of the consolidation of their units, but who "preferred to be in the field." Major Joseph D. Cross of Nashville served as commissary, Lieutenant Colonel T. F. Sevier as assistant inspector general, Major John C. Thompson of Nashville as acting assistant inspector general, Lieutenant Nathan Green as assistant adjutant general, and Stewart's brother John as ordnance officer.[8]

In February, Stewart's eldest son, Caruthers, then sixteen, was placed on the staff as an aide. Another young man joined Stewart later that spring, Bromfield Ridley. Ridley was a native of Rutherford County who aided Confederate forces at Murfreesboro as a member of the "Seed Corn Contingent," boys under eighteen who helped with prisoners and other support roles. Young Ridley was the son of Stewart's friend and supporter, Chancellor Bromfield Ridley. Before joining Stewart, Ridley fought with Morgan's cavalry in several skirmishes in Kentucky and Tennessee. Ridley would come to write a valuable account of his experiences during the war as a member of Stewart's staff.[9]

7. *OR* 10(1):428, 20(1):725; Joseph E. Crute, Jr., *Confederate Staff Officers, 1861–1865* (Powhatan, Va.: Derwent Books, 1982), 185–86. Stewart lauded both men for their bravery and devotion.

8. Crute, *Confederate Staff Officers*, 185–86; Ridley, *Battles and Sketches*, 475; Special Order No. 43, May 17, 1862, Special Orders, Polk's Corps, Army of the Mississippi, RG 109, NA; J. W. Stewart, CSR, RG 109, NA. Hatcher eventually left Stewart's staff to join the Confederate Congress. Portions of Hatcher's diary are extant, but they are in private hands and the author was unsuccessful in gaining access to them.

9. R. C. Stewart, CSR, RG 109, NA; Crute, *Confederate Staff Officers*, 185–86; Ridley, *Battles and Sketches*, 148–58, 474; APS to Samuel Cooper, June 20, 1863, Special Order Book, Stewart's Division, Departmental Records, Army and Department of Tennessee, RG

Though Ridley had ample cause by reason of family connections and deference due to age to admire Stewart, there is no reason to doubt his description of Stewart's personality as a general, for Ridley would serve with Stewart for the remainder of the war. He described Stewart as

> Quiet, modest, but withal a positive soldier of high moral character[;] his command was properly managed yet scarcely did he give an order. . . . The only unnatural thing about General Stewart was that he never dodged a bullet—(any natural man was bound to do it). [He was] as kind as a father to his command, and possessing their confidence that he would not willingly sacrifice them, [thus] whatever he said to do they did, even to leap into the very jaws of death. His counsels were so much looked to that the soldiers nicknamed him "Old Straight," as significant of their respect.[10]

Ridley was not alone in his opinion. Later that year, a correspondent for the *Chattanooga Daily Rebel* wrote:

> Very few possess more of the essential qualities for a commanding officer than Gen. Stewart. Coolness and skill coupled with a thorough acquaintance of the art militaire, a firm disciplinarian, but with a thorough, even temper, that never suffers itself to be exerted or betrayed into any rash or intemperate expression, always the same calm, unmoved demeanor, whether by the camp or parlor fire, as well as amidst the clang and clash of arms. Three times he has led his brigade into the fight, successively at Shiloh, Perryville and Murfreesboro, and every time it has been with credit to himself, honor to the brigade and to the State.[11]

Although Stewart was noted for his abstention from army politics, his new position as the temporary holder of one of the army's major commands called for some political skill on the treacherous ground created by Bragg's struggle with his corps commanders, Polk and Hardee, and their supporters. Bragg was criticized from several quarters for the conduct of

109, NA. See Ridley's book's introduction, written by Stewart in 1905, as to Ridley's background.

10. Ridley, *Battles and Sketches*, 474–75.

11. *Chattanooga Daily Rebel*, July 8, 1863.

the Kentucky campaign the previous autumn. Polk and Hardee added fuel to the fire by submitting reports insinuating they were aware that the bulk of Buell's army was at Perryville, and that each had warned Bragg, though in fact they had not. In April, 1863, Bragg sent out another of his clumsy circular letters, inquiring as to Polk's council at Bardstown on October 3, 1862, which resulted in Polk's disobeying the order to attack Joshua Sill's advance on Frankfort, and Polk's dawn council on October 8, 1862, at Perryville, which resulted in the disobeying of Bragg's order to attack immediately.[12]

Stewart was among the fourteen officers who received Bragg's letter. Unlike Hardee or others in the army, Stewart does not seem to have considered Bragg the particular cause of the failure in Kentucky. The letter placed Stewart in the difficult position of siding with either Bragg, the army commander, or Polk, the corps commander under whom he had served since Columbus. Polk appears to have canvassed certain of the officers at Shelbyville about Bragg's inquiry, including Stewart, who was reluctant to mention it to Polk. Stewart was able to honestly reply to Bragg that he did not attend either council, and was not even aware of the October 8 meeting. He covered matters with Polk by providing a courtesy copy of his reply to Bragg, yet made a record by confirming to Polk that it was Polk who initiated the contact between the two on the subject, noting that otherwise he "had an honest doubt of the propriety of mentioning the matter to you myself." This episode was the first of several in which Stewart skillfully stayed in the good graces of both camps in the midst of the high command's internecine struggle.[13]

During this period, a lengthy article in "bitter spirit" appeared in a soldier's newspaper, the *Daily Rebel Banner*. The article complained about Stewart's being kept at the rank of brigadier general notwithstanding his divisional command and Strahl's remaining a colonel in spite of his commanding a brigade. There is no evidence that either Stewart or Strahl was behind the article, which in any event reflected the esteem in which both men were

12. *OR* 16(1):1097–98. For Stewart's abstention from army politics, see Pollard, *Lee and His Lieutenants*, 712–13.

13. Connelly, *Autumn of Glory*, 87–89; *OR* 16(1):1097, 1105. For Stewart's opinion of the Kentucky campaign, see Lindsley, ed., *Military Annals*, 76–77.

held. The article indicates the partisan aspects of promotions in the army, and was no doubt an effort by a more vociferous member of or supporter of the army's "Tennessee clique" to advance the careers of two deserving Tennesseans. Of course, the real reason neither man could be promoted was that at the time, no vacancy existed for either, as McCown's absence was deemed temporary.[14]

Stewart's (McCown's) Division was based at Shelbyville on the Confederate left, with the remainder of Polk's Corps. Stewart's men, as well as the rest of the army, enjoyed the plenty of the Duck River valley, the general respite from battle, and entertainments ranging from revivals to gambling and old-fashioned horse races. Strahl observed that the army was "in the finest condition I have known it," its men "hearty, fat and in fine spirits." Stewart no doubt approved of and probably participated in a revival meeting of over a thousand men from Ector's and Vance's brigades in a cedar grove. One hundred forty conversions were reported for the entire division. A spiritual lift of a different sort doubtless occurred when Harriet was able to join the general.[15]

Stewart later wrote that during this time, "there occurred numerous reconnoissances [*sic*] and affairs of outposts." Stewart's command spent some time on outpost, being ordered from Shelbyville out the Triune Road to a place called Hooker's shortly after Stewart assumed command. However, there is no indication that Stewart became involved in any sort of fighting while in command of McCown's Division. Stewart's command was the subject of an inspection by Colonel William Preston Johnston, President Davis' aide, on March 30. Curiously, Johnston singled out some troops in the division, observing that "some dismounted Arkansas and Texas troops showed marks of neglect in many important points." Stewart was not personally criticized for this problem, probably because he had

14. Note, *CV* 4 (October 1896): 344; Larry J. Daniel, *Soldiering in the Army of Tennessee* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 93.

15. Foote, *The Civil War*, 2:175; Horn, *Army of Tennessee*, 230–31; O. F. Strahl to Dr. Richardson, April 25, 1863, O. F. Strahl and W. A. Taylor Civil War Letters, GA; Daniel, *Soldiering*, 117, 122; G. Clinton Prim, Jr., "Born Again in the Trenches: Revivals in the Army of Tennessee," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 43 (fall 1984): 250, 254; W. M. Gentry, "Surgeons of the Confederacy," *CV* 40 (September–October 1932): 336–37.

been in command of the division for only a month. In the following weeks, however, "much attention was given to drilling."[16]

As the spring wore on, events in Mississippi began to affect the army. Ulysses S. Grant's pressure against Vicksburg occasioned Davis to look to the Army of Tennessee, as he had before Murfreesboro, for help in Mississippi. In May, the Army of Tennessee sent reinforcements to Mississippi, which involved considerable shuffling of units within the army, including Stewart's temporary command. Bate's Brigade was disrupted considerably. His two North Carolina regiments, the 29th and 39th, were detached on May 11, and his two Georgia battalions, the 3rd and 9th, were consolidated into a new regiment, the 37th Georgia. On May 24, Breckinridge's Division, excepting Brigadier General John C. Brown's Tennessee brigade, and a single Tennessee regiment from another brigade, the 20th, was placed on the train for Mississippi. The 20th was given to Bate, who also retained his Eufaula battery of Alabama artillery and the 37th Georgia.[17]

On May 26, Bragg reported to Adjutant General Samuel Cooper in Richmond that "all McCown's division except one Georgia regiment" had gone with Breckinridge to Mississippi. Stewart had relinquished command of the division a few days previously, and returned to his brigade of Tennesseans on May 15. He received a note from Polk's headquarters on May 23, telling him to support the cavalry in his front (at Guy's Gap) whenever required. Stewart's prompt reply suggested that he did not need to be told the obvious, as "I have supposed my business here on outpost was to afford prompt support to the cavalry in front, whenever such support seemed necessary or might be called for." Stewart took the opportunity to suggest the placement of a brigade at a key location.[18]

Stewart's reunion with his brigade would not last long. The departure of the substantial portion of two divisions left the army with only three organized divisions, those of Cheatham, Withers, and Cleburne, as well as

16. Lindsley, ed., *Military Annals*, 79; *OR* 23(2):683, 757–58; D. H. Reynolds Diary, April 1–12, 1863, Daniel H. Reynolds Papers, UAR.

17. *OR* 23(2):735, 829, 849, 851, 853; Stewart Sifakis, *Compendium of the Confederate Armies: South Carolina and Georgia* (New York: Facts on File, 1995), 187, 247.

18. *OR* 23(2):849–50, 853; John Euclid Magee Diary, May 15, 1863, Magee Papers, DU.

Bate's reorganized brigade, Brown's brigade of Tennesseans, and Henry Delamar Clayton's Alabama brigade, a unit from the defenses of Mobile that had been with the army for some weeks, independent of the two corps. Hardee, down to only Cleburne's Division, organized a new division from these unattached brigades. On May 27, he telegraphed President Davis directly, advising him as to Breckinridge's departure and stating: "Another division will be immediately organized to replace his and I desire you will appoint Brig. Gen. A. P. Stewart major-general, to command it." Davis asked for Adjutant General Cooper's advice, and Cooper telegraphed Bragg to inquire whether Stewart had gone to Mississippi with McCown's Division. Bragg replied on May 28, stating that Stewart had returned to his brigade when McCown's Division had departed.[19]

Hardee's telegram asking for Stewart's promotion was one of several efforts by Stewart's friends and fellow officers to secure him a promotion. These efforts had continued into the spring of 1863. In mid-April, theater commander Joseph E. Johnston requested that Stewart be promoted to major general and permanently made commander of McCown's Division. Johnston deemed it of "great importance to the army" that McCown not join it. Johnston stated that Stewart was "an educated & gallant soldier & Christian gentleman who has done much service." Davis replied to the effect that creating a vacancy by transferring an officer (i.e., McCown) thought incompetent in one army to a similar command elsewhere was not his practice. Governor Harris wrote Seddon on Stewart's behalf on April 18, and Cheatham wrote a lengthy recommendation that was endorsed by Polk and Johnston, the latter stating: "I have already recommended Brig. Gen'l Stewart's promotion. I regard him as an officer of great merit." Curiously, Bragg did not endorse the document, but did forward the recommendations of Polk and Cheatham to Richmond.[20]

Nothing seems to have happened until June 2, when Bragg telegraphed

19. Stewart Sifakis, *Compendium of the Confederate Armies: Alabama* (New York: Facts on File, 1992), 82, 105–108; *OR* 23(2):854.

20. J. Johnston to J. Davis, April 18, 1863, Jefferson Davis Papers, Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University; Dunbar Rowland, ed., *Jefferson Davis—Constitutionalist: His Letters, Papers and Speeches* (Jackson, Miss: Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1923), 5:475; I. Harris to J. Seddon, April 18, 1863, Recommendation of B. Cheatham, April, 1863, endorsed by L. Polk, April 27, 1863, J. Johnston, April 29, 1863, Officers File, RG 109, NA.

Cooper that the need for a commander for the new division in Hardee's Corps was "most pressing." Bragg felt constrained by a general order from Richmond issued that March, prohibiting the detachment of brigadier generals from their brigades or colonels from their regiments, "except on ordinary temporary duty, without the special authority of the War Department." Stewart's command of McCown's Division was such an "ordinary temporary duty." Command of a new division, a new permanent establishment, was a different matter. Fortunately, the next day, June 3, 1863, Cooper telegraphed Bragg: "Brig. Gen. A. P. Stewart is appointed major-general for the division in Hardee's corps, as mentioned in your dispatch of yesterday."[21]

Stewart's promotion clearly arose more from merit than from the influence in Richmond of his powerful friends in Tennessee politics. His solid performance and soldierly bearing had impressed the officers of the army, and they made that known in Richmond. Bragg's silence is hard to explain; nevertheless, he did nothing to sidetrack Stewart's promotion. Stewart's serendipitous absence from Polk's Kentucky councils and his ability to walk the tightrope in the controversy between Bragg and his detractors had served him well.

On the morning of June 4, Stewart was commanding a reconnaissance in force of his own brigade and Maney's in support of a probe out from Shelbyville by Rebel cavalry. About noon, Cheatham rode out to check the probe's progress. Major W. B. Richmond of Polk's staff rode out with the army's English visitor, Lieutenant Colonel Arthur Fremantle, to inform Old Straight of his promotion and orders to report to Hardee. Congratulations were extended, and Stewart rode to the rear, leaving Cheatham in command. On June 7, Stewart's farewell was read to the brigade, whose members had mixed feelings over Old Straight's departure. John Magee of Stanford's Battery wrote: "The boys are all sorry to part with their well-beloved General, who has commanded them so long, but are glad to see him promoted."[22]

21. *OR* 23(2):856, 860.

22. John Euclid Magee Diary, June 4, 1863, Magee Papers, DU; see James A. L. Fremantle, *The Fremantle Diary*, ed. Walter Lord (Boston: Little, Brown, 1954), 133–34; *Chattanooga Daily Rebel*, June 11, 1863. Fremantle's diary does not mention Stewart, but his entry for the day agrees in most other relevant particulars with Magee's account.

Stewart's formal orders to report to Hardee for duty were dated June 6. Stewart was assigned to command Hardee's new division, to be composed of Johnson's, Bate's, Brown's and Clayton's brigades. With the exception of Clayton's Brigade, the troops of the new division were veterans of at least one of the previous battles at Shiloh, Murfreesboro, or Perryville, and the 18th Alabama of Clayton's Brigade had fought at Shiloh. William Brimage Bate, Henry Delamar Clayton, John Calvin Brown, and Bushrod Rust Johnson were all veterans who had been wounded in previous fighting.[23]

Stewart spent the days after his appointment familiarizing himself with his new command. In vain he wrote Bragg's chief of staff, Brigadier General William W. Mackall, asking reconsideration of the assignment of the unknown Major J. W. Eldridge as his chief of artillery, preferring the proven Captain T. J. Stanford. Old Straight sought promotions for his staff officers as befitted their new duties at the divisional level, and solicited nominations from his brigadiers of men "distinguished for their bravery, intelligence, soldierly qualities and good marksmanship," each to be armed with one of the division's four new Whitworth rifles. Eleven of the seventeen regiments and battalions in the new division were Tennessee units. They and their commander would face Rosecrans during the summer to renew the struggle for their home state. As events would transpire, Stewart would be at the center of the opening moves of the renewed struggle.[24]

23. *OR* 23(2):867; Warner, *Generals in Gray*, 35–36, 52–53, 157–58; Cozzens, *No Better Place to Die*, 186; *OR* 20(2):498. Johnson appears to have expected the new command. Charles M. Cummings, *Yankee Quaker, Confederate General: The Curious Career of Bushrod Rust Johnson* (Teaneck, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1971), 245–47.

24. Special Orders No. 1, June 8, 1863, No. 4, June 10, 1863, APS to W. Mackall, June 15, 1863, APS to Samuel Cooper, June 20, 1863, Special Order No. 12, June 15, 1863, Special Orders, Stewart's Division, Departmental Records, Army and Department of Tennessee, RG 109, NA.

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An Entire Failure

The Tullahoma Campaign

The possession of a large portion of Tennessee was a spiritual as well as a material source of strength to the army that bore the state's name. Yet in the space of less than two weeks, the Army of Tennessee abandoned Middle Tennessee almost without firing a shot—and what shots were fired, were fired mostly by Stewart's Division. The loss of Middle Tennessee constituted the last of three disasters suffered by the Confederacy on or about July 4, 1863, and was, in many ways, the most perplexing and demoralizing. Unlike Vicksburg and Gettysburg, the Tullahoma campaign lacks notoriety primarily because it accomplished a great result for the Union without massive effusion of blood.

Looking southward from Murfreesboro toward Tullahoma and Bragg's line of communications, Rosecrans observed six principal routes along which to advance. He regarded the easterly route via McMinnville as impractical. That left the Manchester Pike through Hoover's Gap, the Wartrace Road through Liberty Gap, which passed into the road along the railroad by Bell Buckle Gap, the Shelbyville Turnpike through Guy's Gap, the dirt Old Stage Road through Middleton, and the road by Versailles that intersected the Shelbyville-Triune turnpike. The last two routes avoided the "range of high, rough, rocky hills" that covered Bragg's position.[1]

1. *OR* 23(1):404.