THE CIVIL WAR CAREER OF JACOB DOLSON COX

Thesis for the Degree of Ph. D.
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
JERRY LEE BOWER
1970

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
3 1293 00630 3899

Michigan State University

This is to certify that the

thesis entitled

The Civil War Career of Jacob Dolson Cox

presented by

Jerry L. Bower

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

Ph.D. degree in History

Frederick D. Williams
Major professor

Date Nov. 5, 1970

O-7639

MAY 08 1991

ABSTRACT

THE CIVIL WAR CAREER OF
JACOB DOLSON COX

By

Jerry Lee Bower

Jacob Dolson Cox (1828-1900) began his Civil War career as an Ohio Brigadier General. Despite his lack of previous military experience and his youthfulness, he developed into an outstanding officer and earned respect and praise from his superiors.

Cox saw his first action in western Virginia where he worked with Generals George B. McClellan, William S. Rosecrans, and John C. Fremont to secure the area for the Union. In the fall of 1862 Cox's Kanawha Brigade participated in the Antietam Campaign. During the Battle of Antietam Cox directed the successful assault on Burnside's Bridge. In November, 1862, he was appointed District Commander in West Virginia, but he desired a transfer to a more active field of operations. He believed that the geography of western Virginia precluded a decisive military victory.

Cox next served (April 14 to December 2, 1863) as the Commander of the District of Ohio. In this capacity he helped thwart John H. Morgan's famous raid. In December he

was ordered to the front in East Tennessee. After the Union army was reorganized in March, 1864, he commanded the Third Division of the Army of the Ohio, under General John M. Schofield. Subsequently his division participated in the Atlanta and Nashville Campaigns. On November 29, 1864, Cox reached the pinnacle of his military career when he directed the Federal troops in the bloody Battle of Franklin, Tennessee. In December, 1864, he was promoted to Major General upon the recommendations of Generals Schofield, William T. Sherman, and George H. Thomas.

After the Battle of Nashville, the Army of the Ohio was transferred to North Carolina. Here Cox assumed command of the Twenty-third Corps and directed a successful assault against Goldsboro to prepare a base for Sherman's army. The reunion was made on March 23, 1865, but the war ended before further serious contact was made with the Confederates. Cox resigned his commission in the fall to campaign successfully for Ohio's governorship on the Union ticket.

Throughout the great conflict Cox placed the Union cause above personal aspirations. He was a critic of the army structure and made several recommendations for improving its efficiency, but his ideas were never tested. Cox's own promotion to Major General, first considered in 1862, was delayed for two years by some of the very problems he underscored. He retained a life-long interest in the Civil War and wrote several books dealing with the great conflict.

He also served as a reviewer of military monographs for The Nation for many years.

The major sources used were the Cox Papers, located at Oberlin College in Ohio; The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, 70 volumes in 128 (Washington: General Printing Office, 1880-1901); and the James A. Garfield Papers and the John M. Schofield Papers, both in the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress. Cox's own books--Military Reminiscences of the Civil War, 2 volumes (1900), Atlanta (1882), The March to the Sea: Franklin and Nashville (1882), and The Battle of Franklin, Tennessee, November 30, 1864 (1897), all published by Charles Scribner's Sons of New York--were used extensively. Other manuscript collections and many secondary works were consulted. A bibliographical essay is included.

This work is divided into eight chapters; six of these describe Cox's military career. The first chapter traces Cox's pre-war experiences and the final chapter is a brief account of his varied post-war activities.

THE CIVIL WAR CAREER OF JACOB DOLSON COX

By

Jerry Lee Bower

A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of History

1970

461220

©Copyright by
JERRY LEE BOWER
1971

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I have received assistance from many people in preparing this thesis. To all who have given generously of their time, I extend my heart-felt thanks.

A few people deserve special mention. Miss Lelia F. Holloway of the Oberlin College Library assisted with the Cox Papers and helped to locate other collections of Cox items. Professor Frederick D. Williams served as the director of my doctoral committee. His patient guidance and constructive criticisms were very much appreciated. I thank especially my wife, Donna, for many hours of proofreading and typing, preparation of maps, and much moral support throughout this lengthy task.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF MAPS iv

Chapter

I. EARLY LIFE 1

II. WESTERN VIRGINIA 30

III. THE ANTIETAM CAMPAIGN 70

IV. RETURN TO FAMILIAR GROUND: WEST VIRGINIA AND OHIO 98

V. THE ATLANTA CAMPAIGN 123

VI. FRANKLIN AND NASHVILLE 155

VII. WAR'S END: THE NORTH CAROLINA CAMPAIGN AND THE OHIO GOVERNORSHIP 188

VIII. EPILOGUE 219

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY 242

LIST OF MAPS

WEST VIRGINIA AND EASTERN VIRGINIA 36
THE KANAWHA VALLEY, 1861 47
THE ANTIETAM CAMPAIGN. 77
ATLANTA CAMPAIGN 138
BATTLE OF FRANKLIN 165
BATTLE OF NASHVILLE. 180
FORT FISHER TO WILMINGTON. 192

CHAPTER I

EARLY LIFE

The American Civil War, a cataclysmic event, drove division and hatred deep into the heart of American society. The war forced men to make choices they preferred to avoid: should one take up arms, even if it meant fighting relatives and friends? The states, as collective bodies of citizens who held diverse opinions on the issues involved, also faced a similar, difficult decision. In 1860, as the secession movement unfolded and war became more and more likely, there was no such thing as a purely "Northern" or "Southern" state. Each state contained some people who would not support the majority decision. Thus men and states alike had to look hard at their own peculiar circumstances to determine what stand they should take. Each hoped that he would make the right choice.

Among the men deeply troubled by the ominous developments of 1860 was Jacob Dolson Cox, a freshman in the Ohio Senate from Warren, in Trumbull County. Cox had always opposed the spread of slavery. As a student of the ministry he had decided that the institution was morally wrong; as a lawyer, practicing on Ohio's anti-slavery Western Reserve, he was convinced that slavery's extension was illegal; and

as a politician he had continually supported those views and parties which opposed the extension of slavery. But did his attitude toward slavery justify the use of force against the South? Like so many others, Cox, in 1860, reviewed his personal situation, his family obligations, and his duties as a citizen in hopes of finding the basis for making a wise decision.

Jacob Dolson Cox (named after his father) was born in Montreal, Canada, on October 27, 1828. His parents' usual residence was New York City, but his father's occupation had brought the family to Canada in the summer of 1828. The elder Cox was an accomplished building engineer who had demonstrated great ability in roofing large areas without the use of internal supports. This skill convinced the leaders of the Church of Notre Dame in Montreal to employ him to supervise the roofing of their new church. In 1830, after the contract was fulfilled, the Cox's returned to New York City.[1]

---

[1]Unless otherwise indicated, the information in this Chapter is based upon: William C. Cochran, "The Early Life and Military Services of General Jacob Dolson Cox," MSS. copy in the Cox Papers located in the Oberlin College Library at Oberlin, Ohio. This source will hereafter be cited as: Cochran, ELMS. Cochran was Cox's stepson, his mother was Helen (Finney) Cochran; she married Jacob Cox in 1849. All subsequent manuscript material cited herein is from the Cox Papers, Oberlin, unless otherwise indicated. Brief sketches of Cox's life can be found in Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone, (eds.), The Dictionary of American Biography (20 vols.; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1930), IV, 476-78; Ezra J. Warner, Generals in Blue: Lives of the Union Commanders (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1964), 97-98; and Whitelaw Reid, Ohio in the War: Her Generals and Soldiers (2 vols.; Cincinnati: Moore, Wilstach & Baldwin, 1868), I, 770. Hereafter cited as Reid, Ohio in the War.

Following their return, the Cox family prospered for several years. Cox found fairly steady employment in the rapidly developing city, and he was able to provide for the education of his children. Then the Panic of 1837 struck, throwing the economy into turmoil and forcing businessmen to reassess their plans. Among the first cut-backs made, as businessmen struggled to stabilize their finances, were those in the building trades. Cox could not find steady employment, so the family had to cut expenses even to discontinuing the formal education of the children.

At the time Jacob was only nine and was probably unaware of the impact these financial reverses would have upon him. Until 1837 he had attended a private academy operated by Rufus Lockwood. There he received a basic education in the Classics, the core of almost every curriculum in the Nineteenth Century. In 1838 his parents, unable to continue tuition payments, arranged for him to study for a year under the tutelage of a Congregational minister. Thereafter, Jacob turned to "private study" partially directed by graduate students from Columbia University. Cox later said this period of his education was haphazard and relatively incomplete.[2] He skimmed the surface of many areas, but really did not concentrate upon preparing himself for a particular occupation. Nevertheless, he acquired a love for books which continued throughout his life, and a questioning mind which compelled him to investigate those

---

[2]Cochran, ELMS., 5.

areas of learning where he felt particularly weak.

From his parents Jacob acquired a valuable education in meeting the demands of everyday living and an ability to separate the important from the unimportant. His father, having come to America from Germany, deeply loved this country for the opportunities it provided. He gave to his son a professional pride and a spirit of scientific inquiry. The elder Cox's talent was revealed in Jacob who became, after the Civil War, a recognized authority on the architectural styles of European churches.[3] Jacob's mother, Thedia Kenyon Cox, was a deeply religious woman, who ably transmitted her feelings to her family. From her, Cox gained sufficient interest in religion to lead him to study for the ministry.

In 1842, at age fourteen, Cox began to train for a profession. He chose law, a selection that was undoubtedly influenced by the prestigious role lawyers played in American society. He worked as a clerk in a New York law office where his main duties were to file papers and to verify legal points in the law library. In 1845, his plans went awry when the partners fell to squabbling among themselves, eventually dissolving the firm. These developments abruptly ended Cox's legal studies. Needing employment, he went to work for Anthony Lane, a stock broker. In Lane's office Cox learned to keep books and obtained a rudimentary knowledge of business practices. Even though he quickly

---

[3]Dictionary of American Biography, IV, 477.

mastered his duties and drew praise from his employer, Cox was unhappy and frustrated.[4]

During the winter of 1845-46 Cox finally settled upon a plan for his immediate future which appeared to promise more permanence than anything he had previously attempted. From the autumn of 1842, when he had attended several revival meetings conducted in New York City by Charles G. Finney, he had been drawn toward the ministry. About a year later he had joined the Congregational Church of Samuel D. Cochran, a graduate of Oberlin College, who urged him to enroll in that Ohio school. After giving the matter careful consideration he reached a decision, influenced no doubt by his mother's attitude (she was delighted at the prospect of her son becoming a minister), and by the fact that Finney was President of the College. He determined to study at Oberlin.

In the spring Cox and a younger brother, Kenyon, set out for Oberlin. They travelled to Buffalo on a freight

---

[4]Shortly after leaving Lane's employ Cox made another ill-fated attempt to find a suitable occupation. As a lad Cox had fallen in love with the majestic sailing vessels which constantly moved in and out of New York harbor. Like many others he yearned to see the world as a crew member aboard a fast-sailing packet ship. But his mother refused to give her permission--surely sailors were not good Christians! After many tearful family discussions, however, consent was given and all the arrangements were made. Cox purchased a sea-chest, stocked it with sailor's clothing and other equipment, and placed it on board. Before departing he decided to pay one last visit to the family, for he expected to be away at least a year. When he returned to the dock at the appointed hour, he discovered the captain, taking advantage of favorable tides and currents, had already put out to sea. Cox was utterly dejected, but his mother was elated with the turn of events.

barge via the Erie Canal. The accommodations were poor and the pace terribly slow. The barges were designed for freight rather than people; the passengers often slept on top of boxes on the deck rather than in the stifling quarters where the bunks were so closely spaced that one had to get out of bed to change position. At Buffalo the brothers transferred to a steamer for the trip across Lake Erie to Cleveland. But the most grueling travel was between Cleveland and Oberlin; the only conveyance was a hard-spring stagecoach which physically tormented the passengers as it bounced from rut to rut. After a week, excluding Sunday when Oberlin students were not allowed to travel, the Cox's reached their destination.[5]

Following a brief rest, the brothers met with President Finney and discussed their academic plans. Jacob discovered that before he could enter the Theological Department he had to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree. Finney, who was cordial and encouraging, arranged for them to take a series of entrance examinations. Both passed and were enrolled as freshmen.

As Cox settled into the college routine, he was struck by the sharp contrast between Oberlin and New York City. In 1846 Oberlin was a pioneer village of about 1,700

---

[5]Although Cox did not leave a record of how he and Kenyon travelled to Oberlin, the college did keep records which reveal that most Eastern students followed this route. Robert S. Fletcher, A History of Oberlin College from Its Foundation Through the Civil War (2 vols.; Oberlin, Ohio: Oberlin College, 1943), II, 537-38. Hereafter cited as Fletcher, History of Oberlin College.

residents, including the college students. Most of the people depended upon agriculture for their livelihood, although a demand for goods and services had attracted merchants, blacksmiths, carpenters, an inn-keeper, and a variety of other tradesmen. Oberlin had been founded in 1833 by Easterners, mostly from New York, under the Presbyterian-Congregational Plan of Union which hoped to promote Christian principles on the frontier by making religion the rallying point for new settlements. Oberlin had only four streets when Cox arrived--two running east and west, and two laid out north and south, thus forming a large square. The college was the focal point of the square. The streets were unpaved; rain turned them into quagmires, threatening wagons and pedestrians with a sticky fate should they wander innocently from the safe track. Some boardwalks had been built, but they were often in bad repair and presented their own hazards. Village women and college girls often complained that their long skirts were torn by loose boards and nails. Another common sight greeting Oberlinites on their daily routine was stray animals--cows, hogs, sheep--pursuing their quest for grass on the village lawns. Village ordinances, of course, required the penning of all animals but enforcement of the law was lax. Occasionally a stray wandered into Tappen Hall, the main college building, and upset the classes. In retaliation the college men would round up all the strays, pen them on the square, and threaten to hold an auction unless the owners claimed their livestock

posthaste.[6]

Because religion had been the driving force in the founding of the village, community life centered around the Oberlin Congregational Church and the college it had organized in 1833. Despite the residents' common background in religion, they soon deviated from the original Presbyterian-Congregational Plan to establish an independent church organization. In 1835, at a meeting of the Western Reserve Congregational churches, the Oberlin representatives led the way in forming the "General Association of the Western Reserve." The issue was organizational. The Congregational-Presbyterian plan established a board of elders to oversee the operation of several churches. But the General Association decided in favor of a purely congregational structure which allowed each church to determine independently its policies. This action stamped Oberlin as a radical community, a reputation which earned more merit as time passed, not only in religion, but also on the issues of slavery, Negro rights, and co-educational colleges.[7]

The Oberlin Collegiate Institute had opened its doors in 1833 as a "manual training school." The college promised to provide, in addition to its academic program, sufficient employment to enable students to finance their education; but the college often failed to make good this promise, and many students had to seek employment outside

---

[6] Ibid., I, 102-116; II, 552, 555-57, 560-61.

[7] Ibid., I, 184-85, 219-21, 236-56.

the school. In 1835 the Board of Trustees created the School of Theology to complement the undergraduate program, and Reverend Finney was employed as the first Professor of Theology. Finney's reputation as a religious leader was well-established, and he drew many students to Oberlin.[8] These facts help explain why Cox came to Oberlin; he expected to earn money for his college expenses and he had been inspired by Finney to train for the ministry.

The college offered two terms of study per academic year; the Fall term ran from mid-August until December, and the Spring term from March until June. The course of study was rigorous, centering, even in the undergraduate program, upon subjects closely related to religion. Every Oberlin student studied Hebrew and was required not only to read the New Testament in that language, but to give recitations in Hebrew during the senior year. When Cox arrived the curriculum was undergoing change, moving from the traditional Greek and Roman classics toward more "Christian" literature, such as Hebrew poetry and the poems of various English authors. The science courses, psychology, anatomy, and physiology, were all directed toward demonstrating the proper way for a Christian to use his mind and body for the advancement of God's Kingdom. This brief list does not begin to include all the required subjects and, considering the other demands on the students' time, one wonders how they managed. Besides going to classes, each day they had

---

[8] Ibid., I, 117-41, 167-78, 180-81; II, 509-10.

to attend two chapel services, participate in formal evening religious discussions, work several hours and, somehow, devote a few hours to study in their rooms.[9]

A major problem for Cox and most Oberlin students was earning enough money to remain in school. In 1846, the "official costs" for the academic year were seventy-five dollars: tuition, fifteen dollars; board, forty dollars; room, four to six dollars; and incidentals, fourteen to sixteen dollars. Cox accepted a number of different jobs as he attempted to meet his expenses; during one term he baked all the bread consumed in the college dining hall, a task which demanded much work in the early morning hours before most students arose. In 1851, as a graduate student, Cox received 18-3/4 cents per hour for teaching algebra to undergraduates. During the long winter vacations, from December to March, he sought employment which would enable him to save a few dollars. A teaching position was the best way to achieve the objective. Teaching was especially desirable because it kept one indoors and somewhat protected from the elements, but it was a demanding occupation. Cox reported that he had to instruct forty to fifty pupils, with varying abilities, in geography, grammar, and spelling. Moreover the advanced pupils were to receive instruction in Latin, Greek, chemistry and rhetoric. Such a task, Cox admitted, demanded broad knowledge, patience, and strict discipline; for which he

---

[9]Ibid., I, 207-13, 366-68.

might earn from sixteen to twenty dollars per month.[10]

Late in 1847 Cox met and began to court Helen Finney Cochran, the recently widowed daughter of Reverend Finney. Helen had married William Cochran, an Oberlin theological student, in 1846. Soon thereafter the couple moved to New York City where William assumed the pastorate of his brother's Congregational church. Not long after they were settled, William contracted a respiratory ailment which grew steadily worse until it claimed his life. Thus it was a distraught Helen who, with her infant son, returned home to Oberlin.

Hoping to relieve her distress, the Finney's held a reception in Helen's honor for the college faculty and students. At this event Cox met his future wife for the first time. Helen was beautiful. Long dark hair framed her lovely face and sparkling eyes. But she was obviously saddened by the death of her husband; Cox hated to see someone so young carry such a heavy burden. He decided to cheer her up. He called upon Helen and took her to chapel services and to the evening discussions. Cox was fascinated with the baby and spent many hours entertaining the infant. He had always loved children, and his own sons remembered him as a kindly, yet strict father. Although Cox soon knew he loved Helen, he believed that he could not take on the added responsibilities of husband and father until he had completed his education. In November, 1848, he went to say

---

[10]Ibid., II, 589, 615-22, 629; Cochran, ELMS., 9-10.

goodbye to Helen before beginning teaching duties during the winter vacation. As they talked Cox realized that he could not bear the thought of the long separation without some permanent plan to spur him on. Their engagement was announced that evening. One year later, on Thanksgiving Day, they were married by Reverend Finney with almost the entire community in attendance. Shortly thereafter Cox adopted Helen's son and the little family settled down.

In view of his new obligations Cox decided to accelerate his studies. Shortly after the wedding he and Helen moved in with the Finney's, thereby reducing expenses and freeing Cox to spend more time with his books. In 1850 he received his baccalaureate degree and plunged directly into his graduate program. During his study of "systematic theology" and of the Greek and Hebrew Exegesis, Cox encountered religious questions which nagged at his mind. The most distressing question concerned free will. Did God intend that a Christian should exercise free will, or was everything foreordained? Cox wrote long letters to Oberlin theology graduates seeking their advice on this important issue. Of course he received conflicting answers to his queries, and it became clear that he had to make up his own mind.[11]

Cox was not alone in raising questions regarding

---

[11]Cox's most consistent correspondents on these topics were Thomas H. Robinson, John A. R. Rogers, and John W. Ellis, all Oberlin graduates who were now serving Congregational churches. Copies of Cox's letters may be found in Letter Book 1.

Oberlin's particular interpretation of Christian free will. In fact, Oberlin's attitude toward this subject caused great controversy among the Presbyterian and Congregational churches in the North during the 1840's. Critics openly berated Oberlin's "peculiar heresy." What Finney and the Theological Department had done was reject John Calvin's doctrine of election and accept in its place a "belief in human ability" or free will. The Oberlin doctrine taught that sinners were responsible for their transgressions and their atonement, and were free to accept or reject salvation. This view hit directly at Calvin's belief that God chose, God acted, and no individual could change God's decision. The Oberlinites argued that a Christian could perfect himself by leading a life acceptable to Christ, and in this fashion the sinner could achieve sanctification, or acceptance in the eyes of God. They did not contend that sanctification, once achieved, ruled out the commission of all sin by the sanctified person; but it did provide the sinner with a better opportunity to perceive his own errors and to make a new peace with God. Many Northern churches, particularly the Presbyterians, rejected this "peculiar heresy" as contrary to the Scriptures and they refused to permit Oberlin graduates to occupy their pulpits or to allow members of Oberlinite churches to transfer their membership unless they specifically renounced this doctrine.[12]

Cox's letters on this issue reveal that he never

---

[12]Fletcher, History of Oberlin College, I, 223-28.

clearly decided one way or the other; he wanted to accept the Oberlin doctrine but his studies of the original Hebrew and Greek Scriptures raised substantial doubts. In 1851 he began to argue with his father-in-law over the free will issue. Reverend Finney had recently returned from a disappointing revival tour in England and was deeply concerned about the poor condition of the Christian faith. Naturally he did not expect to have to defend his views in his own household and hot words were exchanged with Cox. During one of their stormy arguments Finney exclaimed, "Dolson, you are not honest. You do not want to see the truth."[13] That remark settled it. Cox could not continue study at Oberlin if he, as a theological student, was not allowed to arrive at the truth by questioning basic doctrines. Although this decision ended Cox's formal academic career, it marked the beginning of the intellectual independence which typified the remainder of his life. He was unwilling to accept ideas just because they were popular or promoted by someone with authority; instead he preferred to interpret facts independently and draw his own conclusions.

Shortly after abandoning plans for the ministry, Cox discovered that Warren, Ohio, was seeking a Superintendent of Schools. He applied for the position and was accepted. Helen packed their meager possessions and the family moved to Warren, where Cox began his duties in the fall of 1851.

Warren, located on Ohio's Western Reserve, was, like

---

[13]Cochran, ELMS., 13.

Oberlin, a small community dependent mainly upon agriculture for its economic livelihood. But the town had a woolen cloth manufacturing firm, several small furniture factories, a machine works, and the Western Reserve Bank. Two newspapers served Warren--the Western Reserve Chronicle, a free-soil Whig publication, and the News-Letter, begun by Jacksonian Democrats in the 1830's as a rebuttal to the Chronicle. The presence of these newspapers attested to Warren's importance in the political affairs of the Western Reserve.[14]

Warren's schools had expanded considerably in the 1840's; three frame "district" schoolhouses had been built in 1844-45 to meet the needs of elementary education. In 1849, under a new state law which facilitated the operation of local school districts, a high school was added to the district and M. D. Leggett became Warren's first Superintendent at an annual salary of $700. Leggett's resignation created the vacancy which Cox filled in 1851 at a stipend of $600. No doubt Cox's youthfulness and lack of experience explain the lower salary, and he served in this capacity for three years without receiving more money. The Superintendent's duties were vast; he had to coordinate the curriculum, hire and discipline the teachers, and urge the taxpayers to give adequate monetary support to the schools. The last task was the most difficult, as school taxes were

---

[14]History of Trumbull and Mahoning Counties, with Illustrations and Biographical Sketches (2 vols.; Cleveland: H. Z. Williams and Brother, 1882), I, 240-45, 250-59, 268-72.

levied and collected separately from the town taxes; sometimes the school district had to sue reluctant taxpayers.[15]

In Warren the Cox's resided in a rented house on Elm Street, near the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. Elm Street, one of the town's newer "developments," was little more than a trail through a dense stand of trees. At night, even during a full moon, so little light penetrated the thicket that Cox had to feel his way along a rail fence to get home. The residents of Warren later recalled that the Superintendent did not even own an overcoat, and in the coldest weather he was seen hurrying down the street with only a cape draped over his shoulders.[16] Perhaps this explains Cox's reputation for having a quick stride and long gait when walking--with such light attire he had to hurry from place to place to avoid freezing!

Although official duties were time consuming, Cox began immediately to renew his law studies. He arranged to study with M. D. Leggett, his predecessor as Superintendent. At the time it was relatively simple for a man to become a lawyer; Ohio required two year's study under a licensed lawyer or a certificate from the Cincinnati Law School. Cox followed the former course, was admitted to the Ohio bar in March, 1853, and began a brief partnership with Leggett.

---

[15]Harriet Taylor Upton, A Twentieth Century History of Trumbull County, Ohio: A Narrative Account of Its Historical Progress, Its People and Its Principle Interests (2 vols.; Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Co., 1909), I, 289-93.

[16]Ibid., I, 293.

The legal profession, the most highly esteemed occupation in Ohio in the 1850's, often served as a stepping-stone into politics.[17]

The first three years of practice were the most difficult for the neophyte lawyer. Cox complained bitterly that he could not establish a rewarding business until he had proven his ability, yet he needed clients to establish his reputation. By 1856, however, his practice had so improved that he could revamp his finances and arrange to purchase the house he had occupied since arriving in Warren. That same year he entered into a new partnership with John Hutchins, another Warren lawyer.

Despite the many demands on his time, Cox became involved in community affairs which brought him popular recognition and eventually, it appears, helped to involve him in Ohio politics. Warren did not have a Congregational church, but the local Presbyterian church operated on the congregational form of government and its membership was composed of both Presbyterians and Congregationalists. He and his family attended services at this church, and he directed the choir. He further displayed his musical talents by playing violin in a trio which often entertained at community affairs. In 1854 Cox organized a small "Home

---

[17]Eugene H. Roseboom, The History of the State of Ohio: The Civil War Era, 1850-1873 (Columbus: Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society, 1944), 205-206. Hereafter cited as Roseboom, Ohio: Civil War Era. Roseboom lists Salmon P. Chase, John Sherman, Rutherford B. Hayes, James A. Garfield and Cox as examples of Ohio lawyers who achieved prominence in politics.

Literary Union." It met periodically to discuss world literature and to comment upon the members' literary efforts. Whenever a member's article or poem was published by a local newspaper, a celebration was held in the author's honor. Cox also served as a speaker for a variety of occasions. In 1853, for example, he discussed "Music" at a band convention, talked about "Fairs" before the Trumbull County Agricultural Society, and described the "Emancipation of Science" before the Salem (Ohio) Teachers Association.[18]

Cox's interest in public affairs gradually drew him into politics. He began his political career as an anti-slavery Whig and, as might be expected, later transferred his allegiance to the Republican party. Undoubtedly Cox's environment shaped his opinion on slavery. Oberlin College strongly opposed human bondage and was one of the first Northern schools to allow colored students to enroll (as early as 1835). Cox saw fellow students, in spite of open hostility, found and operate elementary schools for free and fugitive Negroes; Reverend Finney often struck out against slavery as an inhuman and un-Christian institution. Moreover the Oberlin Congregational church demanded, as its membership certificate clearly stated, an anti-slave "confession" as a requirement for joining.[19] His move from Oberlin to Warren did nothing to change his mind. On the

---

[18]Cochran, ELMS., 16A-16B.

[19]Fletcher, History of Oberlin College, I, 254-56, 386-400.

contrary, Cox's views were strengthened because the entire Western Reserve was violently anti-slave. Warren, itself, contained many people from the South who had fled a society that condoned human bondage. To put it bluntly, Warren was no place for anyone who did not oppose slavery.[20] Thus when Cox began to participate actively in politics, his views meshed admirably with the prevailing sentiments.

Before we go further in tracing Cox's political activities, it would be well to comment generally upon the structure of Ohio politics. As of 1848, when slavery emerged as the paramount issue, the state contained three distinct party organizations--Whig, Democrat, and Free-Soil. All were essentially opposed to the extension of slavery and had supported the Northern efforts to apply the Wilmot Proviso to the territories acquired from Mexico in 1848. In terms of power the Whigs had dominated Ohio since 1844 and had managed a succession of victories in the state elections. By 1850, however, forces were at work which would shatter Whig unity and create conditions favorable to the formation of a new party unquestionably committed to an anti-slavery platform.[21]

The issue which threw Ohio Whiggery into turmoil was

---

[20]George H. Porter, Ohio Politics During the Civil War, Columbia University Studies in History, Economics and Public Law, Number 105 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1911), 15-16.

[21]For the general discussion of Ohio politics I have relied upon Roseboom, Ohio: Civil War Era, Chapters IX-XII; see also Porter, Ohio Politics During the Civil War, 20-75.

California's request, in 1850, for admission to the Union as a free state. Naturally the Ohio Whigs supported this request and were gratified when President Zachary Taylor, also a Whig, agreed to support the request. But the senators and representatives from the Southern states reacted violently to the proposal because the future of slavery was, as they saw it, at stake. To admit California as a free state would destroy the tenuous balance that had been maintained in the Senate between free and slave states; and there was no other territory which would, in the foreseeable future, become a slave state to restore the parity. Thus threatened, the Southerners forced a broad discussion of the slavery issue and the federal government's responsibility for protecting the institution. President Taylor, however, refused to budge; he wanted California admitted solely on the merits of her request and would not allow the broader slavery issue to interfere. But before the problem was resolved, President Taylor died (July, 1850) and Millard Fillmore succeeded him.

Northern Whigs waited, with foreboding, to learn Fillmore's position on California. Finally he accepted Henry Clay's compromise measures. Clay's major recommendations were that California be admitted as a free state, that the New Mexico and Utah territories be organized without restrictions on slavery, and that a stronger federal fugitive slave law be enacted. These proposals offered something to each section, but their impact in Ohio was a

bombshell. The Whigs were caught in a dilemma; on a state level they believed they should take an anti-slavery stance and oppose the compromise, but to do so would mean repudiation of the national Whig policy and a concurrent loss in federal patronage. Eventually the Ohio Whigs supported the Compromise of 1850 as a means of preserving the Union but they tried desperately to tone down the emphasis on slavery. The evasive policy, however, did not work; the party lost members to both the Democrats and the Free-Soilers.

While tension mounted the Ohio Democracy pursued a policy of watching and waiting. But once Clay's compromise measures were passed, they moved rapidly to exploit the Whig's embarrassment. The Democrats denounced the decision to allow slavery to expand into the New Mexico and Utah territories and bitterly assailed the new federal fugitive slave law. By these tactics the Ohio Democrats assumed a hard anti-slavery position and gained enough votes to elect Judge Reuben Wood governor in November, 1850.

The Free-Soil party never had a large following, but for several years its few members in the Ohio legislature held the balance of power between the Democrats and Whigs. On slavery, the Free-Soilers were the most outspoken and their radicalism undoubtedly explains their failure to develop greater strength. Like the Democrats, they experienced an increased popularity after 1850. In 1851, these two parties united to elect Benjamin F. Wade, from the Western Reserve, a United States Senator. Wade's well

publicized anti-slave views provided the basis for the inter-party cooperation, and his election reflected the majority sentiment in Ohio.

Until 1854 the Democrats enjoyed almost complete control over state offices; then they ran afoul of the same issue which had crippled the Whigs. In January, 1854, Senator Stephen A. Douglas, a Democrat from Illinois, introduced into Congress the Kansas-Nebraska Act which would organize the two territories and allow the residents to decide about slavery through the use of popular sovereignty. The real problem was that the bill, in its final form, specifically repealed that part of the Missouri Compromise which prohibited slavery north of 36° 30'. Thus an area the North had long considered free territory was suddenly thrown open to slavery, at least until an election was held. The impact of this measure in Ohio shattered traditional political alliances and created fertile ground for the formation of an anti-Nebraska coalition.

Anti-Nebraska protest meetings began in February, 1854, and increased in intensity when it became apparent that the Douglas proposal would receive congressional approval. These rallies were sponsored and attended by Free-Soilers, "Free Democrats," "Independent Democrats," and outright abolitionists. The largest gathering met in the state capital, Columbus, in February and adopted a resolution calling for a state convention of all dissidents. The convention, held in Columbus on March 22, failed to agree upon

the formation of an anti-Nebraska party. But after the Douglas bill was approved in May, the call for a "fusion ticket" was renewed. A second state convention met in Columbus on July 13, 1854. This time a slate of anti-Nebraska candidates was nominated for federal and state offices. Although a party name was not formally adopted, the fusion newspapers began to refer to their candidates as "Republican nominees." In November each of the anti-Nebraska candidates won by a sizeable margin; the success convinced the fusionists to establish a permanent party organization.

In 1855 the anti-slavery groups officially organized the Republican Party. At this point Cox's participation in politics can be documented. He had been active in the anti-Nebraska movement on the Reserve, because some of the best attended meetings were held in Warren. Cox's participation led to his selection as Warren's delegate to the state convention held in Columbus on July 13, 1855.[22] At this convention the Republican name was officially adopted, an anti-slave platform was written, and Salmon P. Chase was chosen to lead a slate of candidates for state offices. In addition, the Ohio party called for a national Republican convention to select a presidential candidate.

The Chase-led ticket swept Ohio in 1855 and the Republicans gained a majority in the state legislature. In

---

[22] History of Trumbull and Mahoning Counties, I, 194, 286-87; Cochran, ELMS., 18.

the following year the state's Republicans supported the nomination of John C. Fremont. And in the presidential campaign following his nomination, Cox stumped Ohio's Western Reserve for Fremont. These efforts increased Cox's stature within the party and enhanced his reputation with the voters on the Reserve. In 1857 and 1858 he campaigned for Republican nominees for state and federal offices. As a result of all this, Cox emerged as a potential candidate for the state senatorship from the Trumbull and Mahoning district in 1859. Although he specifically requested that he not be nominated, when the Republican senatorial convention met in Niles on August 22, 1859, a delegate from Warren placed Cox's name in contention. Cox rapidly gained strength over his six opponents and was nominated on the third ballot. Cox did not attend the convention and the first inkling he had of what occurred was when a Warren delegate knocked on his door and asked him to go to Niles. During the hectic five mile ride, Cox was informed of the convention's decision and, upon arrival, presented a brief acceptance speech. He campaigned actively during the next two months and was elected by a comfortable margin as the Republicans continued their mastery of the state offices.[23]

Cox assumed his seat in the Ohio Senate in January, 1860, and remained there until the Civil War erupted. Here

---

[23]William C. Cochran, "The Western Reserve and the Fugitive Slave Law," Western Reserve Historical Society Collections, Publication number 101 (Cleveland: n.p., 1920), 207-208.

he formed friendships with leading Ohioans, who later helped promote his military career. In Columbus, Cox roomed with James A. Garfield, another freshman senator. The two men became close friends and they generally agreed on political issues, but Garfield did say he wished that Cox would be more emphatic in presenting his ideas. Cox also made acquaintances with Governor Salmon P. Chase, who served from 1856-60, and William Dennison, who succeeded Chase as governor in 1860.

Cox's senatorial career was relatively brief, so his opinions on many issues never clearly emerged. But he did express himself on slavery and secession, which became critical issues after Lincoln's election in November, 1860. Cox was recognized as a member of the "Radical Triumvirate" in the senate, which also included Garfield and Senator James Monroe of Oberlin.[24] These three men were steady in their denunciation of slavery and its evils. Actually Cox's reputation as a radical is overemphasized for it appears that he was simply reflecting the views of the Western Reserve and of a majority of Republicans in Ohio. He was, it is true, opposed to the spread of slavery, but not a shred of evidence exists to suggest that he was an abolitionist. Cox did not even favor equality for Negroes. When in 1865 he was a candidate for Ohio's governorship, he refused to support a demand for amending Ohio's constitution to allow Negroes to vote.

---

[24]Cochran, ELMS., 18.

Cox's attitude toward secession, in contrast to his unwavering opposition to slavery, changed as the events unfolded. In November, 1860, shortly after Lincoln's election, Cox predicted it would be only a few months before the worst of the Southern "fire-eaters" left the Union. At the time he was so exasperated with their conduct that he would little lament their departure because their constant agitation made them an "unmitigated nuisance." Cox thought, however, that only South Carolina and Georgia would actually take the fateful step of secession.[25] If his predictions had proven correct, Cox would have let the rebels go in peace because he thought they would soon see the disadvantage of their position and seek contrite readmission. It was, Cox believed, an opportunity to teach the radical fire-eaters a valuable lesson. But when the secession movement expanded to include several Southern states, Cox's opinion shifted. If secession meant disruption of the Union and armed resistance to federal authority, he was ready to fight. When that issue arose, he was among those Ohioans who urged the state to fight for the preservation of the Union.

Nevertheless, despite his own convictions, Cox realized that his responsibility was more than just personal. Since he was a state senator, the broad impact of the developing crisis upon the state must be considered.

---

[25]Cox to J. A. R. Rogers, November 29, 1860, Letter Book 1.

Geographically Ohio was a northern state, but her development had brought within her borders all shades of opinion on slavery and secession. North of the old National Road an anti-slavery sentiment prevailed because most of the settlers had arrived from Northern states. Moreover the economic connections of this area were with the North and farmers regularly shipped their produce east via railroads or the Erie Canal for sale in the urban areas. Ohio was beginning to develop some industry--for example coal and iron deposits in Cox's Trumbull and Mahoning district were just beginning to be exploited--and these developments were strengthening the ties with the North. But southern Ohio presented a different picture. This area contained mostly Southerners and although they, too, opposed the institution of slavery, they were not convinced that the use of force against the South was justified. In addition, businessmen operating in the southern portion of the state, especially Cincinnati, had extensive economic connections with the slave states located below the Ohio River. Thus Ohio, Cox believed, would face a difficult decision if she had to choose sides in a civil conflict. Most of the evidence pointed toward support for the North, but such a decision would not be unanimous, and the dissidents, if they so decided, could cause serious trouble.[26]

By 1860 Cox had achieved a large measure of success.

---

[26]Porter, Ohio Politics During the Civil War, 13-14; Roseboom, Ohio: Civil War Era, 10, 15, 17-18, 72-79, 102-103, 107-113.

had established a law practice in Warren and he was a
ber of the Ohio Senate. But he had done little that pre-
ed him for the military career which he followed for the
t four years. In the spring of 1860 Governor Dennison
appointed Cox a Brigadier General of the Ohio militia.
the state forces had been inactive since the Mexican
so this position gave Cox no opportunity to develop
tary skills or leadership ability. In fact Cox's
nds in Warren thought the appointment a great oppor-
ty to tease the "General." They purchased several old
tary books and presented them to Cox in a hilarious
mony during one of his visits at home. Curious, Cox
the books and, his interest aroused, purchased more to
. This was the sum total of his preparation for Civil
eadership; he had read a few books dealing with mili-
operations.[27] But Cox's lack of military experience
ot unique. Allan Nevins has noted that the very size
e Civil War, and the dearth of trained leaders, caused
civilians to rise to high position during the conflict.

---

[27]Cochran, ELMS., 20-21. Cochran also listed some
e books which Cox read, among them were: Muller's
Engineer, Forbe's Volunteer Manual, Carlyle's Cromwell,
e's Rifle and Light Infantry Tactics, and Jomini's
on Great Military Operations and Napoleon. Cox
ly discovered that the most respected works on military
cs and strategy were in French, a language he had not
ed. He bought himself a dictionary and learned enough
to read it rather well. But his Paris-trained son,
, said that Cox could not converse in French. None-
ss, by his efforts Cox read some books which even grad-
of West Point had only heard about in their studies.
necdote is based on a letter: Allyn Cox to the author,
4, 1967.

"Nobody could say in after years that John A. Logan, Jacob D. Cox, Carl Schurz, Lew Wallace, Joshua Chamberlain and James A. Garfield were not capable generals."[28]

---

[28]Allan Nevins, The War for the Union: The Improvised War (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959), 277.

CHAPTER II

WESTERN VIRGINIA

Abraham Lincoln's victory in the 1860 presidential election plunged the nation into a crisis. The South had warned that the election of a Republican would be considered just cause for secession; on December 20, 1860, South Carolina left the Union. By February six other states had followed her ominous example and they formed the Confederate States of America. Thus, when Lincoln was inaugurated he assumed a heavy burden. He tried conciliation, but the Confederates refused to discuss anything short of an absolute guarantee for slavery. That Lincoln would not grant, or even consider.

By April the crisis was coming to a head. All federal property in the lower South had been seized except for Fort Pickens at Pensacola and three forts, including Sumter, in Charleston Harbor. Florida officials did allow the federal government to land provisions at Pickens, but South Carolina refused to make a similar arrangement. Instead she demanded an immediate evacuation of the federal troops. Lincoln must act soon to replenish the supplies at Fort Sumter or the garrison would be forced to surrender.

In Ohio the Senate attempted to operate as usual.

But the Senators, preoccupied with the national crisis, found it difficult to concentrate on routine business. On April 12 an excited Senator burst into the chamber and announced: "The Secessionists are bombarding Fort Sumter."[1] The American Civil War had begun. Amidst great confusion the Senate immediately adjourned. The men gathered in small groups and excitedly discussed how the war might affect their careers.

During the tense days after the fall of Sumter, Cox pondered his personal response to the war. He was convinced that the Union must be restored. But he also knew many problems stood in the way of volunteering his services. His large family,[2] sizable debts, and questionable health all gave him pause. Although only thirty-two, his pale complexion and slight build made Cox appear almost sickly to many of his associates. Garfield, especially, urged him not to volunteer, saying: "I am big and strong, . . . I shall have no excuse for not enlisting; but you are slender and

---

[1]Jacob Dolson Cox, Military Reminiscences of the Civil War (2 vols.; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1900), I, 2. Hereafter cited as Cox, Reminiscences.

[2]At this time Cox had six children: William Cochran, Helen Finney, Jacob Dolson III, Kenyon, Charles Norton, and Brewster, who was born in January, 1861 and died the following December. Two other children, Dennison (who also died in infancy) and Charlotte Hope were born after the war.

will break down."[3] After hours of discussion, however, both men offered to raise companies and to serve as their commanders. But Cox was chosen for a larger role when, on April 23, he was appointed an Ohio Brigadier General by Governor Dennison.[4] Cox accepted and arranged to have friends in Warren look after his family.

Cox's first duty, in cooperation with Major General George B. McClellan, was to inspect Ohio's arsenal and military installations to determine what must be done to put the state on an adequate military footing. The inspection did not take long, for at the arsenal only a few rusty muskets and worn-out batteries were found. The state militia existed in name only, the long period of peace having caused the public to lose interest in keeping the units fit for combat. McClellan and Cox reported that everything was needed, and immediately! Surely this was an inauspicious beginning. They drew up requisitions for supplies to equip ten thousand men and laid plans to begin training the first

---

[3]Frederick D. Williams, editor, The Wild Life of the Army: The Civil War Letters of James A. Garfield (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1964), 5-6. Hereafter cited as Williams, Wild Life of the Army; Cochran, ELMS., 21. It is interesting to note that Garfield's health broke down early in the war and forced his retirement from the military, while Cox's health was improved by the rigors of army life: Cox, Reminiscences, I, 7.

[4]Cox, Reminiscences, I, 6-7; Williams, Wild Life of the Army, 10. At the same time Newton Schleich and J. H. Bates were also appointed Ohio Brigadiers, but only Cox remained in the service after the ninety-day enlistments expired: Reid, Ohio in the War, I, 34.

volunteers.[5]

After completing this work, Cox assumed command of Camp Jackson at Columbus, where he organized and prepared recruits for combat. Camp Jackson soon proved inadequate and Camp Dennison was hastily erected near Cincinnati to accommodate the increasing number of volunteers. Cox moved to the new facility and, in fact, supervised much of its construction. Because the demand for troops was immediate, the first Ohio regiments merely paused at the camp before they were sent forward. The state volunteers enlisted only for three months, barely sufficient time to train them, let alone get them into combat before their enlistments expired. Thus, unfortunately, the training period was cut short and the first units went to war with scanty military knowledge and inferior equipment. Lincoln took steps to correct the problem in May when he asked men to volunteer for the federal army for a three year period. Many of those already in the state service responded to the President's request, as did Cox who on June 22, 1861, received a commission as a Brigadier General, United States Volunteers.[6] Within two weeks he was enroute to the Kanawha Valley in western Virginia in answer to a personal request made to the War

---

[5]Cox, Reminiscences, I, 9-11; Reid, Ohio in the War, I, 771.

[6]Cox, Reminiscences, I, 9-11, 38; Salmon P. Chase, former Governor of Ohio, and Lincoln's Secretary of the Treasury, strongly supported Cox's appointment. Chase to Cox, June 18, 1861. Governor Dennison wrote that the appointment was a "deserved tribute" to Cox's merit as a man and soldier. Dennison to Cox, June 24, 1861.

Department by General McClellan.[7]

Although often overlooked, western Virginia was an important part of the Eastern theater during the Civil War.[8] Both combatants had substantial reasons for desiring to control the region. From the Southern viewpoint, the area had political value. Some anti-slave, pro-Union sentiment existed in western Virginia, particularly in the foothills of the Allegheny Mountains where geography had prevented the profitable use of the plantation system. The South wanted to stop the further development of the pro-Union movement. If the Confederacy retained possession, she would demonstrate solidarity as a nation and maintain the Ohio River as the traditional dividing line between North and South.

Strategically, western Virginia was also important to Southern aspirations. Geographically, the region was a "panhandle" that nestled between the borders of Pennsylvania and Ohio. A vital railroad, the Baltimore and Ohio, ran through north-western Virginia, crossing the Ohio River at Parkersburg. If the South held even a portion of these tracks, commerce and troop movements from Ohio to the east would be interrupted, forcing the Union to use less convenient railroads much farther north. Finally, western

---

[7]For McClellan's role in bringing Cox to western Virginia, see Cox, Reminiscences, I, 59-62.

[8]West Virginia was not admitted to the Union until June 20, 1863. Until that time the area was called either the Department of Western Virginia or the Mountain Department.

Virginia might serve as a base for an invasion of Ohio or Pennsylvania, thus bringing the war to the heart of the North.[9]

Identical objectives persuaded the North to fight hard for western Virginia. If the Unionists could be persuaded to separate from Virginia, the Southern "nation" would be weakened.[10] By providing military support the North might hasten the decision and, hopefully, shorten the war. After Virginia seceded a convention did meet in Wheeling to discuss the course to be followed by the anti-slave people. Governor Dennison promised to send troops if the delegates requested aid. Anticipating a favorable response, he ordered General McClellan to prepare for an invasion of western Virginia. But President Lincoln showed no great interest in these developments, probably because he was busy trying to promote similar Union movements in Kentucky and Missouri.[11] Thus when the Wheeling group requested troops, Ohio responded.

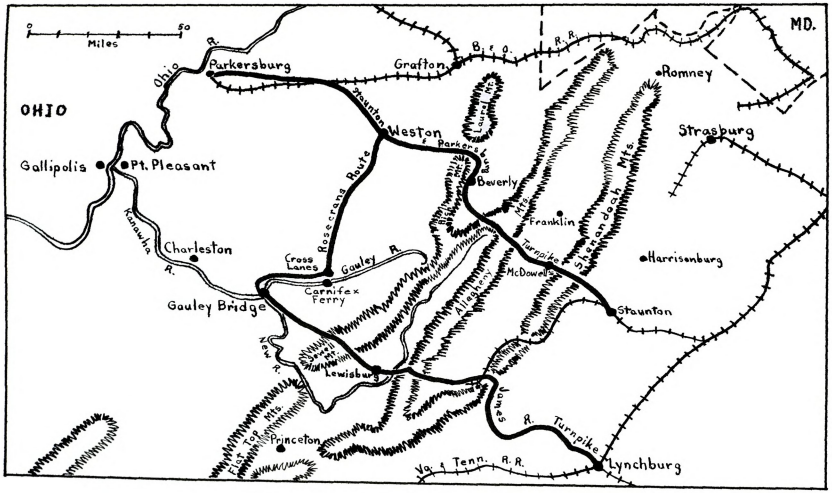
The North, too, saw considerable military value and potential in western Virginia. Protection of the Baltimore

---

[9]Thomas Harry Williams, Hayes of the Twenty-third; the Civil War Volunteer Officer (New York: Knopf, 1965), 68-69. Hereafter cited as Williams, Hayes of the Twenty-third.

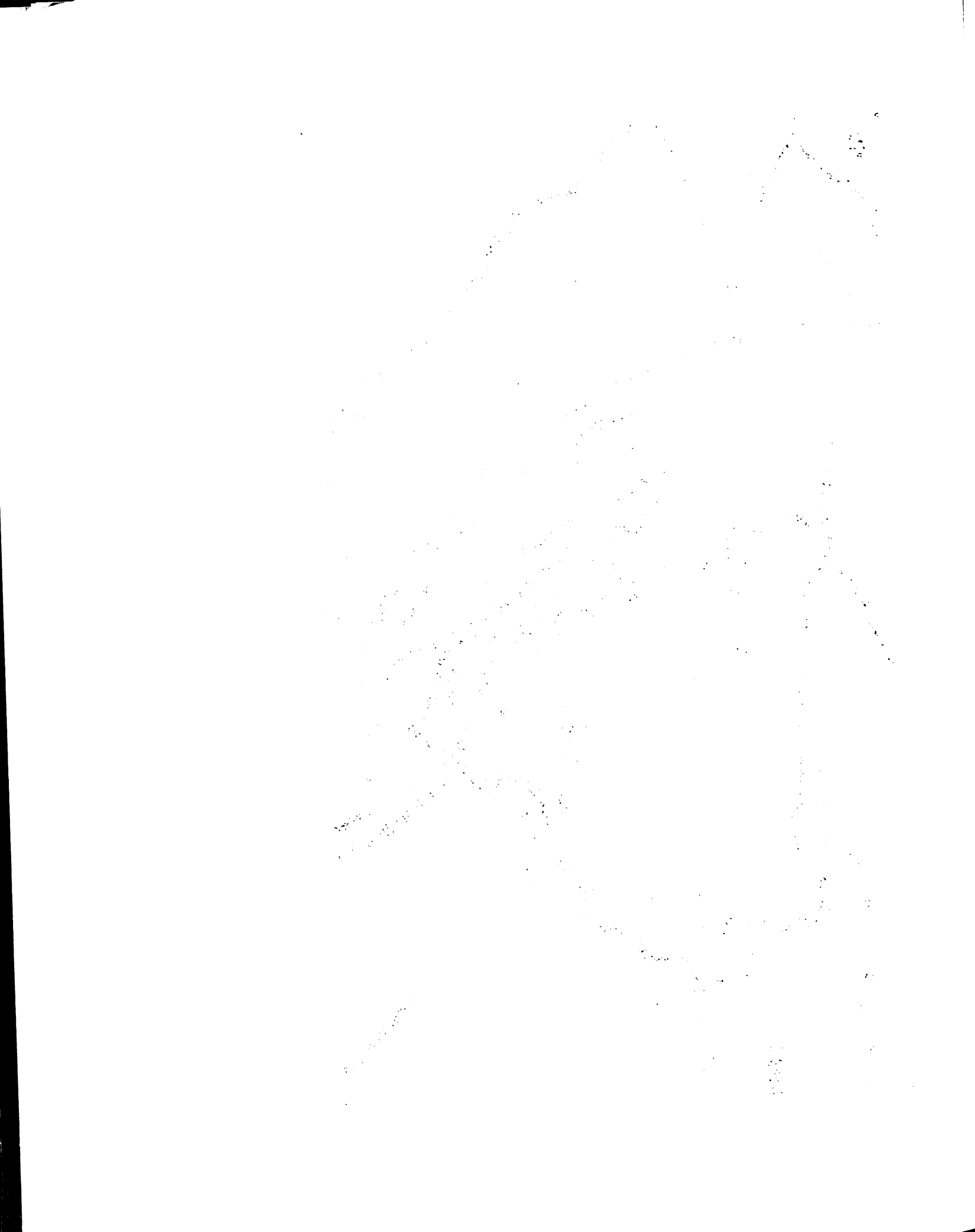
[10]Ibid., 68.

[11]William B. Hesseltine, Lincoln and the War Governors (New York: Knopf, 1948), 211-13. Hesseltine says Lincoln merely "tolerated" Francis H. Pierpont's Unionist government in western Virginia.



WEST VIRGINIA AND EASTERN VIRGINIA

Adapted from Cox, Reminiscences, I, 41; and Mark M. Boatner III, The Civil War Dictionary (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1959), 959.



and Ohio Railroad was a necessity.[12] Using the area as a staging base, the Northern forces could exercise several options: 1) turn the Rebel position at Harpers Ferry; 2) move from Grafton southeastward to Staunton in the upper Shenandoah Valley, thereby threatening the flank of the Army of Northern Virginia; or 3) advance south from the Kanawha Valley to strike the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad and interrupt communications between Virginia and the states to the west.[13] Despite the obvious importance of western Virginia to each side, neither committed adequate forces to secure fully its objectives.

The Rebels initiated hostile action in western Virginia on May 26, 1861, when they attacked the lightly guarded Baltimore and Ohio Railroad near Grafton. Striking swiftly, the Confederates burned bridges over the Monongahela River, where the two western branches of the railroad met the main line running to Baltimore. McClellan, who remained in Ohio, sent several regiments to Grafton, which was quickly recaptured and the damage repaired.[14]

After this raid the Confederates expanded and

---

[12]Thomas Weber, The Northern Railroads in the Civil War, 1861-1865 (New York: King's Crown Press of Columbia University, 1952), 75-76. Festus P. Summers, The Baltimore and Ohio in the Civil War (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1939), 17-18, 65-89, 223-24, also discusses the importance of the B & O to the Union war effort.

[13]Williams, Hayes of the Twenty-third, 68-69. Williams suggests in a footnote, 69-70, that the failure of the North to commit large enough forces to western Virginia to achieve its objectives was a mistake.

[14]Cox, Reminiscences, I, 40-44.

intensified their efforts. General Robert E. Lee, serving in the Shenandoah Valley, dispatched two additional columns. One column, under General Robert S. Garnett, advanced along the Parkersburg Turnpike to renew the pressure on the railroad. The other, led by General Henry A. Wise, entered the Kanawha Valley to protect Charleston and to strengthen the garrison at Gauley Bridge.[15]

Apprized of the increased enemy activity, McClellan decided that Garnett's force presented the greatest danger. On June 21, 1861, he assumed personal command of the Union troops in western Virginia. McClellan's scouts found the Confederates entrenched on Laurel and Rich Mountains, near Beverly, where they obstructed traffic on the Staunton and Parkersburg Turnpike. They intended to make Beverly a staging area for thrusts toward the railroad. McClellan determined to destroy or drive out the enemy. After pulling together his scattered forces, he advanced slowly toward the Confederates. As he approached Rich Mountain, he split his troops, sending General William S. Rosecrans to circle the mountain and threaten Garnett's flank. On July 11, Rosecrans hit the enemy flank and the surprised Confederates beat a hasty retreat. McClellan's victories during this brief campaign brought him much recognition and led directly to his appointment as the commander of the Army of the Potomac.[16]

---

[15] Ibid., 46-47.

[16] Ibid., 49-58.

Meanwhile, on July 2, Cox received orders from McClellan to bring an additional brigade to western Virginia. The orders explained Cox's duties in detail. His destination was the Kanawha Valley, where he was to attack General Wise and attempt to capture Charleston. Cox was warned to be extremely cautious and to avoid sharp engagements. Confident that he would defeat Garnett, McClellan planned a cross-country march from Beverly to get behind Wise and force his surrender.[17] Acting as decoys, Cox's men were to keep Wise busy until McClellan delivered the smashing blow.

Cox organized his command and requested necessary supplies. He then went to Gallipolis, Ohio, to await the arrival of his troops. On July 9, the Eleventh, Twelfth, and Twenty-third Ohio, and the First and Second Kentucky regiments rendezvoused at Gallipolis and were carried by steamer across the Ohio River to enter the theater of war. In addition to the infantry, Cox had been promised a company of cavalry and a half-dozen artillery pieces to support his operations. But he started without them. Eventually the cavalrymen caught up with the column, but they were so miserably trained that Cox used them only as messengers for several weeks. Moreover, because of the shortage of

---

[17]U.S. Government, The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (70 vols. in 128; Washington: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), Series I, II, 197, 200. Hereafter cited as O.R., all references are to Series I unless otherwise indicated.

artillery, he received only two smooth-bore six-pounders. When the campaign began Cox estimated his total strength at about 3,000; General Wise reportedly had 4,000 men.[18]

Two days later, Cox's command, using steamboats for transports, started pushing slowly up the Kanawha River. The steamers also served as floating supply depots because the wagons Cox ordered had not been delivered. Until the wagons arrived, Cox limited his activities to within a few miles of the river. For several days the small flotilla proceeded calmly upstream, pausing occasionally to check out wildly exaggerated rumors of enemy movements along the river.[19]

Entering the Kanawha Valley, the Federals were awed by the topography. Mountains appeared everywhere, they rolled toward the men like waves on the ocean until they felt insignificant. The mountains were divided by deep valleys and rocky gorges leading away from the river. Dense thickets of trees and brush grew on the mountains, except for the highest peaks. Great beauty hit the eye everywhere. But beauty masked the difficulties and dangers confronting the troops. Every valley provided the Rebels with an opportunity for flank attack. Each gorge had to be carefully scouted to assure safety to the main column. Cox often left behind small detachments to guard against surprises and to

---

[18] Ibid., II, 197, LI, pt. 1, 416-18; Cox, Reminiscences, I, 59-63.

[19] O.R., LI, pt. 1, 418-21; Cox, Reminiscences, I, 64-69.

protect the supply line. This reduced the strength of his assault force and made large-scale engagements impractical. The geography of western Virginia largely determined the nature of military operations there throughout the war.

On July 17, Cox received the first reliable report of Rebel troops operating along the river. A scouting party discovered about 500 Confederates camped on the bank of Scary Creek, where it enters the Kanawha River. Basing his decision solely upon their report, Cox resolved to trap the enemy. He sent the Twelfth Ohio across the Kanawha, ordering it to move up Scary Creek, cross over to the Confederate side and then drive the enemy toward the main column. The first messages indicated that the maneuver had succeeded. By evening, however, it became apparent that the regiment had been repulsed and was retreating in disorder. The Rebel force had been much larger than estimated and had given the Twelfth a "warm welcome" when it attempted to cross the creek. During the confusion, three of Cox's colonels had been enticed across the river by a small Confederate band and taken prisoner. The colonels had mistaken the enemy for Union troops because the standard blue and gray uniforms were not yet common, and the variety of dress worn by both sides made positive identification almost impossible. The captured officers, however, had failed to exercise a proper degree of caution and paid for their folly by spending several months in Libby Prison.[20]

---

[20]Cox, Reminiscences, I, 69-71.

Although greatly embarrassed by his failure to rout the enemy, Cox faithfully reported the full details of the incident. McClellan exploded! Complaining to the War Department, rather than directly to Cox, McClellan said he feared his subordinates were so "green" and uneducated in military affairs that he must stand beside them constantly to assure proper execution of orders. In addition, he stated that Cox would be ordered to stay put until a relief column could cut across country and get in behind Wise's force.[21] Either Cox never received the "stay put" directive or it was never sent, because a few days later he resumed his advance.

While resting in camp, Cox gathered more information about the enemy. His scouts located Wise's main camp on Tyler Mountain, near Charleston. Because his supply wagons had finally arrived, Cox decided to take Wise from the rear. The movement began at dawn on July 24, following a circuitous route over rough mountain roads. At sundown the Federals reached the Confederate camp. Cox sent the men forward. Surprised, the Rebels fired a few shots and rapidly retreated. Wise paused only briefly in Charleston to burn a few bridges and then continued his withdrawal toward Gauley Bridge. The next day Cox accepted the surrender of Charleston and established a garrison.[22] His second skirmish had been a great success.

---

[21] Ibid.; O.R., II, 288, 746.

[22] Cox, Reminiscences, I, 71-74.

Charleston, with a population of only 1,500 people, was the largest settlement in the Kanawha Valley. Near the city were excellent saline wells which the Confederacy had used to produce salt. Besides flavoring food, salt preserved meat, served as a packing medium for eggs (it kept air from the product and retarded spoilage), and was regularly mixed with fodder to keep livestock healthy. Before the war the demand for salt had been largely met by imports. But now the South, cut off from foreign trade by the Union blockade, was compelled to fill her own needs. This problem became more serious when the Federals captured Charleston.[23]

While in Charleston Cox learned that McClellan had been called to Washington; General William S. Rosecrans now commanded the Union troops in western Virginia. These changes resulted from a reorganization in the command of the Army of the Potomac, triggered by the Union defeat at First Bull Run on July 21, 1861. Rosecrans ordered Cox to organize his men into a brigade--soon to be commonly known as the Kanawha Brigade--and outlined his immediate plans. Cox was to advance to Gauley Bridge, fortify it, and place troops in front of Gauley to detect Rebel movements. At the same time Rosecrans would fall back to Weston, on the Parkersburg Turnpike, sending some of his units southward to tie in with Cox's line. If successful, this deployment

---

[23]Ella Lonn, Salt as a Factor in the Confederacy (New York: Walter Neale, 1933), 13-18.

would effectively screen the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad from Confederate attacks and give the Federals control of the Kanawha Valley.[24]

Leaving a small garrison to protect Charleston, Cox marched rapidly to Gauley Bridge, taking possession on July 29. Enroute the men picked up equipment thrown away by the Rebels in their hasty retreat. The enemy also left behind 1,500 small arms and much ammunition at Gauley. Cox could not understand Wise's failure to put up any real resistance. The country between Charleston and Gauley was even more rugged than that encountered in the lower valley. Wise could have at least slowed Cox considerably by making use of the excellent positions for the placement of artillery. The neutralization of such batteries, covering narrow defiles, would have required a tedious flanking movement. But Wise, perhaps completely rattled by the surprise received at Tyler Mountain, ran swiftly and did not halt until a safe distance beyond Gauley.[25]

The first night out of Charleston Cox had encountered a potential mutiny. After supper three regimental commanders came to Cox's tent. The spokesman announced that, in view of the narrow gorges ahead, they would not lead their regiments any farther. Cox inquired whether he understood what his remarks implied. Taken aback, the spokesman protested that none of them meant any disrespect,

---

[24] O.R., II, 762, 767.

[25] Cox, Reminiscences, I, 78-79.

but as their military experience equalled Cox's they should be consulted before any movement was made. Cox replied that only their unfamiliarity with proper military procedure restrained him for placing them under arrest. Furthermore, command decisions were his to make and he would not call a council of war until he felt incompetent. He dismissed them with the admonition that if they apologized and did not repeat their indiscretion, the matter would be forgotten. As Cox looked back upon the incident he became convinced that his calm approach had served better than "the regulation amount of cursing" in putting the officers in their place. Cox never swore at his troops, even in the heat of battle, and found that quiet orders were obeyed just as quickly as those accompanied by profanity.[26]

On the same march Cox had an unpleasant brush with two reporters representing influential Eastern newspapers. The men joined the column at Charleston and asked on what terms they could accompany the troops. Cox told them that the quartermaster would supply a tent and transportation and that their letters must be submitted to his staff for review to prevent publication of vital facts. The reporters, however, intimated that they expected to join Cox's mess and to be announced as volunteer aides. Patiently Cox explained that he could not confer military rank upon them and suggested that it would be better if they remained independent, for then they would feel no need to flatter

---

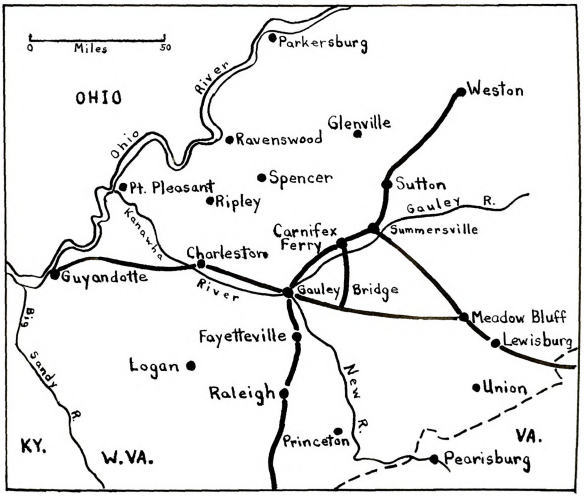
[26] Ibid., 74-76.

anyone in their reporting. Near Gauley they tried to reopen the discussion but Cox's adjutant-general reaffirmed the original decision. The reporters replied, "'Very Well; General Cox thinks he can get along without us, and we will show him. We will write him down.'" That very evening they left camp and wrote reports "'describing the army as demoralized, drunken, and without discipline, in a state of insubordination, and the commander as totally incompetent.'" Luckily the impact of these statements was slight because, at the same time, reports were published about Cox's occupation of Gauley Bridge and the Rebels' retreat out of the Kanawha Valley. Throughout the war Cox never deviated in his treatment of correspondents, although some officers acted scandalously in currying their support for personal ambitions.[27]

Gauley Bridge, a tiny community tucked away in the mountains, became, during the Civil War, one of the most sought after villages in western Virginia. It consisted of three homes, a tavern, a country store, and a church; the latter served surrounding farms and passing travellers. The buildings perched precariously on a narrow ledge between Gauley Mount and the waters of the Gauley River. At several points near the settlement the ledge was barely wide enough to carry one good-sized wagon, but the bridge provided the only convenient crossing for heavy freight for almost one

---

[27] Ibid., 76-78.



THE KANAWHA VALLEY, 1861

Adapted from Williams, Hayes of the Twenty-third, 79.

hundred miles in either direction.[28] Nearby was a saw mill, operated by a water wheel which turned furiously in the raging waters below Kanawha Falls. Cox used the mill to produce heavy timbers and other wooden materials needed to transform Gauley Bridge from a quiet, sleepy village into a fortified military camp.

Colonel Christopher G. Tompkins, recently in the United States army, but now fighting for the Rebel cause, owned an estate located atop Gauley Mount. The Tompkins' house, situated on a knoll with a commanding view in three directions, became a vital link in Cox's surveillance network. Colonel Tompkins had left a letter with his wife requesting that she and the family be treated with courtesy by the Federals. Cox agreed to honor the request as long as it did not interfere with his military obligations, and he did his best to prevent his soldiers from making life uncomfortable for the Tompkins' household. That he succeeded cannot be doubted. Mrs. Tompkins' letters described Cox as an "elegant, refined, handsome gentleman."[29] Some of the soldiers, however, resented his kind treatment of the Confederate "sympathizers" and were convinced that signals were sent to Rebel forces from the house.[30] Overall, Cox's

---

[28] Ibid., 83-84.

[29] Ellen B. Tompkins, "The Colonel's Lady," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, vol. 69, 390-93.

[30] Williams, Hayes of the Twenty-Third, 92. Colonel Hayes was one of those who disapproved of Cox's lenient attitude toward Mrs. Tompkins and of the use of Union troops to protect Confederate property.

conduct paid off handsomely. Even General Lee admitted that Cox "made himself very acceptable to the inhabitants of the Kanawha Valley by his considerate conduct."[31] Cox clearly understood the value of having the civilians on his side, rather than incurring their hatred, and possibly their retaliation, by needlessly interferring with their daily lives.

From a military viewpoint, Gauley Bridge was the key to the southwestern end of the Kanawha Valley. Here the James River Turnpike, the most practical route into the valley from eastern Virginia, crossed the Gauley River. If the Federals controlled the bridge, they could prevent Rebels from menacing the Kanawha Valley unless the enemy chose to enter via miserable mountain trails. To prevent surprises, Cox posted several companies in front of Gauley, fanned out on either side of the turnpike, to give advance notice of any unusual activity. From Gauley Bridge a mountain road followed the northern bank of the river for several miles in a northeasterly direction and then turned left toward Weston. This road, the only direct link between Cox and Rosecrans, served as the line of deployment for their troops.[32]

The inhospitable environment threw many obstacles in the way of vigorous military operations. Cox's supply

---

[31] O.R., LI, pt. 2, 220.

[32] Ibid.; Cox, Reminiscences, I, 80-89; Williams, Hayes of the Twenty-third, 73-75.

line extended eighty miles down the Kanawha River to the Ohio. During high water, steamers came to the headwaters of the Kanawha, then wagons carried the supplies the last few miles to camp. Because the Rebels could easily interrupt traffic on the river or on the narrow road, many men had to be posted along the route to keep it open. Although little trouble arose over getting adequate supplies and ammunition, Cox remained close to Gauley Bridge. The barren countryside failed to provide even fodder for the mule teams. Thus plans for any extensive movement had to include means for providing both men and animals with sustenance. Moreover the roads, except for the turnpike, were so bad that everyone tired quickly and could travel only a few miles each day. Consequently Cox decided that the only practical operations were those for which the men could precook several days' rations before leaving Gauley.[33] He probably found some consolation in the fact that the Confederates faced identical problems.

Until August 10 the enemy remained quiet. Then Cox's advance units detected suspicious Confederate movements. As further information arrived, it became clear that two columns commanded by Wise and General John B. Floyd planned to drive a wedge between Cox and Rosecrans. Another Rebel unit menaced the supply line. Cox turned his attention to insuring the safety of the line connecting his command with Rosecrans. Because of the thirty to forty foot

---

[33]Cox, Reminiscences, I, 80-85.

banks along the Gauley River, the enemy could cross in large numbers at very few points. Cox reinforced the garrisons guarding these fords. Simultaneously Rosecrans, alerted to the danger, began shifting more men toward Cox to strengthen the threatened line.[34]

During the redeployment a mix-up occurred which caused a temporary disaster and which stressed the importance of having reliable subordinates in the field, beyond the direct control of the commanding general. On August 13, Rosecrans sent Colonel E. B. Tyler and the Seventh Ohio to Cross Lanes, a little village situated on one of the fords. Now closer to Gauley, Tyler received his orders from Cox. But Tyler disliked (or misunderstood) the arrangement and wasted little time in showing his displeasure. On the twenty-first Cox sent Tyler to investigate a rumored Rebel movement below Cross Lanes. Tyler found nothing. Cox, fearing a ruse, ordered him to rush back to the village. But Tyler procrastinated and did not get back until dusk on the twenty-fifth. Worn out by what he considered to be futile marches, the Colonel failed to post proper pickets for the night. General Floyd, who had crossed the river during the Seventh's absence, took good advantage of Tyler's neglect and routed the Federals at dawn. The men scattered in every direction--some, including Colonel Tyler, straggled into Gauley Bridge, others fled toward Weston and a few eventually turned up in Charleston. The Cox-Rosecrans line

---

[34] Ibid., 90-93.

had been breached.[35]

The situation was not as serious as it appeared, but neither Cox nor Rosecrans knew the true circumstances. The Confederate plan depended entirely upon concentrating the forces under Wise and Floyd to exploit the foothold gained at Cross Lanes. The two generals, however, were busy giving each other more trouble than they gave the Federals. Floyd, who outranked Wise on the basis of seniority, had been put in command of all Rebel troops in western Virginia. But both men were former Virginia governors and Wise resented having to take orders from Floyd. Mostly he ignored them. Now, with the need for cooperation most pressing, Floyd failed to direct Wise to join him. Even if he had, it is questionable whether the latter would have obeyed.[36]

Rosecrans, informed of the break in the line, swung into action. He took personal command of several regiments and raced toward Cross Lanes to close the gap. Floyd, meanwhile, moved to Carnifix Ferry,[37] a few miles from Cross

---

[35] Ibid., 94-96; O.R., LI, pt. 1, 458-60, LI, pt. 2, 223-26.

[36] Cox, Reminiscences, I, 97-98. Cox wrote, "If he [Wise] had been half as troublesome to me as he was to Floyd, I should indeed have had a hot time of it. But he did me royal service by preventing anything approaching to cooperation between the two Confederate columns." Williams, Hayes of the Twenty-third, 78-79, agrees with these sentiments.

[37] Most contemporary sources use Carnifix Ferry as the proper spelling for this little town, but Cox used Carnifex in his Reminiscences and some sources even use Carnifax. According to Williams, Hayes of the Twenty-third, f. n. 5, 80-81, the modern version is Carnifex.

Lanes, and dug in. But he had failed to take enough men with him and did not really have sufficient strength to hold his position against the aroused Federals. On September 10, Rosecrans practically stumbled over the entrenched enemy. Recovering quickly, the Union commander put his men into an assault formation and attacked. Five separate rushes failed to crack the Confederate line. As darkness fell, Rosecrans pulled back to await daybreak and the renewal of battle. During the night, however, Floyd withdrew across the Gauley River, burned the ferries, and joined Wise.[38] Naturally, Rosecrans claimed a "victory" for his command and proceeded to re-establish contact with Cox.[39]

The battle at Carnifix Ferry was the last sharp engagement of 1861 in western Virginia. Floyd and Wise pulled back and established fortified camps near Big Sewell Mountain, approximately fifteen miles from Carnifix Ferry, and about the same distance from Gauley Bridge. Rosecrans therefore decided to use a pincers movement to dislodge the Rebels. In accordance with these plans Cox pushed forward to establish Camp Lookout on a small mountain about five miles from the Confederate position. Meanwhile Rosecrans experienced great difficulty getting under way because Floyd had destroyed all the transports at Carnifix Ferry. While Cox advanced slowly toward the Rebels, General Lee arrived

---

[38]Cox, Reminiscences, I, 106-107; Williams, Hayes of the Twenty-third, 82-86.

[39]Williams, Hayes of the Twenty-third, 89-90; O.R., IL, pt. 1, 515.

in western Virginia to visit the Confederate troops and to see if he could cool off the feud between Wise and Floyd. He failed to settle the difference between the rival generals and eventually had Wise transferred out of the area, leaving Floyd in sole command.[40]

While waiting at Camp Lookout for further orders, Cox's command experienced an incident which highlighted the difficulty of fighting in the mountainous terrain. One afternoon a wagonmaster, who had been out searching for forage, rushed into camp and excitedly related to Cox that he had stumbled upon a Rebel camp about five miles behind Camp Lookout. Cox, skeptical of the report, decided to verify the story. He sent out Lieutenant Bontecou of the Second Kentucky, an experienced woodsman and scout, with a small party to reconnoiter the suspected enemy encampment. About nightfall Bontecou returned and reported that the camp did indeed exist; he had crawled close enough to count the tents and had been challenged by the enemy sentries. Bontecou had escaped only by running away pell-mell through the dense woods. At daybreak Cox sent Colonel Robert McCook's brigade to circle behind the Rebels and drive them toward Camp Lookout. McCook's men followed their guides over twisting mountain trails and eventually reached the rear of the camp. But McCook's suspicions were aroused. He crawled forward to get a better look at the situation and to his great surprise found himself overlooking the rear of

---

[40]Cox, Reminiscences, I, 113-15.

Camp Lookout! The indignation at being fooled quickly passed, and the officers and men joined in hearty laughter, dubbing the entire episode "The Battle of Bontecou," much to the chagrin of that unfortunate scout.[41]

After failing to hear from Rosecrans for several days, Cox resolved to push ahead and feel out the enemy. His scouts verified that the Rebels were on Sewall Mountain but had neglected to occupy the highest ridge. If Cox could sneak his men onto the ridge, his artillery could shell the enemy's forward line and enfilade the only decent road in the area. After much hard work Cox's well-placed guns began firing. The astonished Confederates, who had failed to detect the movement, hastily withdrew to a safer location. When he first learned of this movement, Rosecrans was critical, for he feared that Cox would be cut off and destroyed. But when the commander viewed the position, he agreed that it was well-chosen and could not be outflanked.[42]

On September 26, Rosecrans' units finally arrived to reinforce Cox. Now the Federals were strong enough to seek a general engagement with the enemy. But before they got underway nature intervened and made further operations impossible. The skies opened up and poured down rain for days. Little mountain streams became raging torrents, presenting formidable barriers to troop movements. Roads turned into quagmires and supply wagons could barely move

---

[41] Ibid., 115-16.

[42] O.R., LI, pt. 1, 486-88.

with half-loads, not enough to sustain 5,000 men located several miles from their base camp. Therefore, during the first two weeks of October, the Federals withdrew slowly to Gauley Bridge to await drier weather.[43]

October passed quietly, with only occasional skirmishes breaking the interlude. Then, on November first, the enemy suddenly opened up with artillery on Gauley Bridge. Undetected, Floyd had maneuvered behind the Federal camp and placed his men and batteries upon Cotton Mountain, which overlooked the camp and the only road leading to it. Fortunately the threat was more irritating than serious. Rosecrans and Cox hastily ordered the supplies moved to a safe location below the cliffs, where Rebel shells could not destroy them.[44]

After recovering from the initial shock of being exposed to Rebel artillery fire, Rosecrans conceived a plan for trapping Floyd's command. Cox was to make a frontal assault on Cotton Mountain and keep the enemy occupied, while General Henry Benham led another contingent around the mountain to block the major withdrawal route. Other small detachments were posted elsewhere to seal the trap in case Floyd should avoid Benham's force. Cox's men stormed up the face of the mountain and chased the Rebels toward

---

[43]Cox, Reminiscences, I, 120-28.

[44]Ibid., 129-35; Cox to Garfield, November 8, 1861, James A. Garfield Papers, V, pt. 2, MSS. Division, Library of Congress. Hereafter cited as Garfield Papers.

Benham's supposed position, but the latter was not yet in place and Floyd escaped unscathed. Cox, greatly aggravated at the failure to trap the Rebels, put the blame squarely on Benham, who, he said, spent more time complaining about the difficult terrain than in carrying out his orders.[45]

With the Cotton Mountain fiasco behind, Rosecrans laid plans to move into winter quarters. The weather was getting worse and would soon make impossible any further large-scale movements. Garrisons would remain at Gauley Bridge, Cheat Mountain and Romney over the winter. Rosecrans established his departmental headquarters at Wheeling, placing Cox in command of the Kanawha District. At the end of November Cox prepared to move most of his brigade to Charleston, leaving behind a small force to hold Gauley.[46] Because the Confederates were making similar arrangements, no one expected to see any real action until the next spring.

Before leaving Gauley, Cox received exciting orders from army headquarters in Washington. He was directed to take three Ohio Regiments and report to General Don Carlos Buell in Kentucky. Cox was overjoyed. He had been complaining for several months about remaining in western Virginia and had requested a transfer to an area where more decisive action could be assured. Cox enthusiastically

---

[45]Cox, Reminiscences, I, 139-45; O.R., V, 255, 261-65, 266-68, 669; Cox to Garfield, November 8, 1861, Garfield Papers, V, pt. 2.

[46]O.R., IL, pt. 1, 508; Cox, Reminiscences, I, 146-47.

reported to Rosecrans that he was prepared to go to Kentucky immediately; but, to his dismay, discovered that Rosecrans had not received copies of the orders. Rosecrans, angered over Washington's failure to consult with him, protested strongly and won his case. The regiments would go to Kentucky, but Cox would remain in command at Charleston. Although Rosecrans' reasons for keeping him in western Virginia were personally flattering, Cox was most disappointed to see this opportunity escape.[47]

Cox now assumed command of the Kanawha District and moved to Charleston, resolving to use the quiet winter months to improve the discipline of his troops. He held daily drills for all men and officers, conducted separate classes for the officers, and continually urged everyone to work as if their lives depended upon a rapid, unhesitating execution of their duties. The necessity for additional instruction arose from two factors: first, the inadequate training before the regiments were sent forward and, second, the transfer of Cox's best-trained units to Kentucky. Naturally the men and officers grumbled about the stress on drills when there was no enemy within many miles, but Cox's serious attitude convinced them of his determination to make his men the best soldiers in the entire army.[48] As a result

---

[47] O.R., V, 259, 657; Cox to Garfield, November 8, 1861, Garfield Papers, V, pt. 2; Cox, Reminiscences, I, 147.

[48] O.R., LI, pt. 1, 515; Cox, Reminiscences, I, 146, 148-49, 165-70; Cox to Garfield, December 22, 1861, Garfield Papers, V, pt. 2.

special ties developed between the General and "his regiments" and the men put their hearts into perfecting the complex maneuvers. Their efforts were rewarded in 1862, during the Antietam Campaign, when Cox's Kanawha Brigade was recognized as one of the best-disciplined in the entire Army of the Potomac.

Just as the garrison was established for the winter at Charleston, a military court sentenced a private from the First Kentucky to death for desertion and mutiny. Some camp demagogues, trying to stir up trouble, claimed the sentence was unwarranted. Cox feared trouble because military custom required that the firing squad be drawn from the offender's regiment. Knowing that he must not appear timid, he ordered a detail selected from the First Kentucky to perform the execution. At the appointed hour, with all the troops present, Cox rode slowly down the lines; his eyes, as they met those of each man in First Kentucky, transmitted his feeling that this was an unwelcome, but inevitable duty. Afterwards Cox felt a deep sense of relief that the painful task was over, and was gratified that strict discipline had prevailed to the end. He could only hope that everyone understood the need for such punishment and that its intended purpose was to make the entire army more efficient by removing those who might endanger their comrades in time of battle.[49]

During the winter months, when many regiments

---

[49]Cox, Reminiscences, I, 149-52.

received long furloughs, Cox limited leaves of absence so that his troops could receive intensive training. He set a personal example by remaining on duty, although he strongly desired to visit his family. Instead he arranged to have Helen, his wife, come to Charleston. Her visit gave Cox an opportunity to entertain some of the local residents and to improve the army's relationship with them. Cox discovered that most citizens were sympathetic to the Confederate cause but, because of his even-handed treatment, they were not openly hostile.[50]

Winter quarters also allowed Cox to catch up on his letter writing. His favorite correspondent was Garfield (now a colonel commanding a brigade in Kentucky). A consistent complaint runs throughout these letters. Cox was bitterly disappointed at remaining in western Virginia and he thought his career was surely doomed unless he could somehow get out. "The command of the District here is a humbug," he wrote, " . . . it don't seem possible that I shall be left at a trifling post like this."[51] But it was possible and, in January, Cox lost his most experienced regiments for the second time and had to begin anew with meager replacements. The result was a reduction in his command to the point where it was barely sufficient for garrison duty, and wholly inadequate for active

---

[50] Ibid., 152-53.

[51] Cox to Garfield, January 9, 1862, Garfield Papers, V, pt. 2.

operations.[52]

Resigned to remaining in western Virginia, Cox looked ahead to the arrival of spring and the renewal of the war. He wanted to take part in developing plans that would give him more action. Near the end of February, he travelled to Wheeling to discuss with Rosecrans the coming spring campaign. Cox went with great expectations, but came away thoroughly disgusted. Rosecrans offered no firm plans and refused to consider seriously those presented by others. Cox had suggested that he operate along a line which would allow him to link-up with Garfield's troops in East Tennessee, near the north end of the Cumberland Mountains. Rosecrans rejected the proposal.[53] In any case, the plan undoubtedly would have failed because it involved a long march through enemy territory. Somehow Cox, desperate for active fighting, forgot to consider how geography might preclude the successful execution of this movement. But, since no alternative was offered, his anger is understandable.

Shortly after his return from Wheeling, Cox discovered why his commander had been reluctant to make a definite commitment to a particular campaign. In March

---

[52]Same to same, January 17, 1862; W. T. Bascom to Garfield, January 30, 1862, Garfield Papers, V, pt. 2.

[53]Cox to Garfield, February 6, 8, and 26, 1862, Garfield Papers, V, pt. 2. In the first two letters Cox explained his proposal to Garfield; in the last he reported its rejection and expressed a lack of confidence in Rosecrans' leadership ability.

Rosecrans was called to Washington for reassignment and John C. Fremont took over in western Virginia. At the same time Fremont's command was renamed the Mountain Department, which covered a broad area between McClellan's Army of the Potomac and General Henry W. Halleck's command to the west. McClellan's projected Peninsula Campaign so preoccupied him that the protection of western Virginia and the Shenandoah Valley was left to others. In the West, Halleck controlled operations west of a line drawn north and south through Knoxville, Tennessee. The new department was aptly titled, for it contained mostly mountains and served as the organizational bridge between the powerful Union armies on either side. Fremont's primary duty would be to protect the flanks of McClellan and Halleck.[54]

Cox, elated by Fremont's appointment, predicted a stepped-up tempo. He believed Fremont's "destiny" demanded a vigorous campaign because the "Pathfinder" had not yet impressed Lincoln with his military ability. Furthermore, Cox assumed he would have increased influence with the new commander because Fremont would need advice from someone who had served in the area. Cox volunteered his services.[55]

Fremont outlined the spring campaign. He divided his troops into two columns: the first would push along the Parkersburg Turnpike from Monterey to Staunton; the second,

---

[54]Cox, Reminiscences, I, 194-95.

[55]Cox to Garfield, March 17, 1862, Garfield Papers, V, pt. 2; O.R., XII, pt. 1, 4.

with Cox in command, would advance from Gauley Bridge to Princeton. If the initial movement succeeded, Fremont planned to unite the two forces and send them into either Virginia or Tennessee. The major defect in the plan was that the two contingents would be widely separated and operating at the end of long, exposed supply lines. In opposition the Rebels could maneuver on interior lines, employing the Virginia and East Tennessee Railroad to bring together rapidly their men against either column.[56] Only by striking quickly and decisively could the Union troops hope to achieve success. Otherwise they were in danger of being defeated in detail.

Throughout March, Cox kept up a hectic pace getting everything ready for the campaign. He tried to obtain enough weapons of a single caliber to arm his entire brigade. The variety of rifles created headaches for the Quartermasters Corps because many different types of ammunition had to be stocked. But Cox's requests were not filled; the weapons went to more important columns elsewhere. Another annoyance involved the large tents issued in 1861; they had proved too cumbersome to carry and erect in the mountains. Cox attempted to replace them with smaller "French tents," but he received only one-third the required

---

[56] O.R., XII, pt. 1, 7; Jacob Dolson Cox, "West Virginia Operations Under Fremont," Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, eds. C. C. Buel and R. U. Johnson (4 vols.; New York: The Century Co., 1887-88), II, pt. 1, 278. Hereafter cited as Battles and Leaders.

number before his troops went into action.[57] Most of the men, therefore, slept in the open and prayed for dry weather. When it did rain, a piece of canvas, some small poles and ingenuity provided those lacking tents with adequate shelter. To reduce weight, Cox substituted "mountain wagons" for the heavy army-issue wagons. With the lighter conveyance, four mules hauled almost as many supplies as could six pulling the heavier vehicle. Additional mules, requested because of the eighty-mile supply line to Princeton, arrived unbroken and many hours of hard work were required before the surly beasts accepted their harnesses. As the departure date approached, Cox, not entirely pleased with his equipment, recalled that his men had never gone hungry. Even with below-average material, the Kanawha Brigade could accomplish much on full stomachs.[58]

In mid-April the Federals swung into action. Cox got away from Gauley without a hitch; but the other column, under General Robert Milroy, soon ran into trouble. Milroy's objective was McDowell's, a tiny village on the Parkersburg Turnpike between the Allegheny and Shenandoah Mountains, where he intended to meet General Robert Schenck's brigade. Before the rendezvous was made Rebels from Stonewall Jackson's Valley command hit Milroy (May 8). Schenck appeared in time to prevent a complete rout, but the Federals fell back rapidly to Franklin. Stonewall Jackson,

---

[57] O.R., XII, pt. 3, 45-48.

[58] Cox, Reminiscences, I, 196-98.

sensing victory, came over from the Shenandoah Valley and joined the pursuit. After reaching Franklin, however, Jackson turned his back on the entrenched Union soldiers and started on his Shenandoah Valley Campaign by attacking the force under N. P. Banks. Although Banks also escaped destruction, Jackson's attacks were successful enough to throw Union plans into disarray. The authorities in Washington, dismayed over the failures to stop Jackson, directed Fremont to order Banks, Milroy and Schenck back toward the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, where they could be quickly transferred to the capital if the Rebels threatened Washington.[59]

Meanwhile, after receiving Fremont's orders, Cox put his troops into motion. From Gauley he sent out regiments in fan-like fashion across a broad front to clear the area toward Princeton. For these operations Cox divided his troops into two small brigades and placed in command Colonels E. P. Scammon and George Crook. Scammon pressed directly toward Flat Top Mountain, above Princeton, to establish a base camp; Crook worked toward Lewisburg to protect Scammon's left flank. After the men left, Cox hurried to Charleston to keep in touch with his field commanders via telegraph.[60]

Evidently the size of the movement surprised the

---

[59] Ibid., 200-202; Cox, "West Virginia Operations Under Fremont," Battles and Leaders, II, pt. 1, 279-80.

[60] O.R., XII, pt. 3, 84-85, 89-90, 93, 100-101, 110-11, 113-14, 120.

Rebels because they offered little resistance, and then only by small bands of guerillas who burned supplies and bridges as they retreated. Scammon reached Flat Top Mountain on May 1, and established a fortified camp. On May 9 Cox left Charleston to join the brigade and direct the assault on Princeton. Poised for action, Cox now received word of Milroy's setback at McDowell's. This completely altered the picture. Fremont did not order Cox to retreat, but warned that he was vulnerable to flank attacks. Cox faced a hard decision. Should he gamble that the Confederates would continue to harass Milroy and proceed with his attack, knowing that if the Rebels turned on him he would be in deep trouble?[61]

After reviewing the situation, Cox resolved to remain at Flat Top and await further developments. His scouts reported that three Rebel units under Generals Humphrey Marshall, Henry Heth and John S. Williams were nearby with a total strength of about 12,000.[62] Cox had, counting both brigades, only 8,500 men; but if the Confederate Generals did not cooperate closely the Federals still might be able to take Princeton. Moving cautiously, Cox occupied the town on the night of May 13th, after driving out a few skirmishers from Marshall's command. The next day

---

[61] Ibid., 157-58, 188, 200-203, XII, pt. 1, 503-505; for a general discussion of the Princeton operation, see Cox, "West Virginia Operations Under Fremont," Battles and Leaders, II, pt. 1, 280-81.

[62] O.R., XII, pt. 1, 504-505.

Marshall brought up his main column and menaced Cox with superior numbers from hills north of town. Desperately Cox tried to gather enough men to hold his position, but to no avail; his troops were too scattered to achieve a rapid concentration. Now Cox realized that he had erred in moving into Princeton before Crook had secured Lewisburg. Crook had been delayed by orders from Fremont directing him to put an end to guerilla activity in several counties north of Lewisburg. Thus, when Cox attempted to concentrate his troops, Crook could not reach Princeton in time to help.[63] On the 18th Marshall finally forced the issue and Cox withdrew in orderly fashion to Camp Flat Top.[64] Five days later Crook defeated Heth and took Lewisburg, but his success came too late to alter events at Princeton.

Fremont, trying to help Cox, requested more troops from Secretary of War Stanton. Stanton replied that no reinforcements were available. Fremont relayed the bad news to Cox and told him that he must determine whether he could hold his exposed position. When Marshall failed to press him, Cox decided to stay put. His location allowed him to scan the countryside for thirty miles in three directions and, at the same time, it screened him from Rebel view. On May 29, Fremont suggested that Cox strike the Virginia and

---

[63] Ibid., pt. 3, 188, 200-203, 209.

[64] Ibid., pt. 1, 505; Marshall's report of the action, 513-17, states that the Federals were "routed" so quickly that lights were left burning in the tents. The evidence does not support Marshall's version of the withdrawal.

East Tennessee Railroad and throw Confederate communications into turmoil. Cox declined because such a raid would expose him to much danger with little chance for decisive success.[65]

At this point, with summer approaching, Cox had reason to be discouraged. The same old story had repeated itself; great plans were laid, men were committed to action, a little fighting occurred, but nothing significant had been accomplished. Cox's disgust at continuing to serve in this theater grew stronger. He wanted an assignment elsewhere.

By the end of May the Mountain Department was a shambles. Jackson's bold action in the Shenandoah Valley so bothered Washington officials that they pulled troops from Fremont to aid Banks. Milroy and Schenck, joined by another small force, moved across the Shenandoah Mountains to Harrisonburg. Meanwhile Banks, with headquarters at Strasburg, suffered constant harrassment. On May 28 the Rebels occupied Halltown, only three miles from Harpers Ferry. But Jackson did not attack because he had learned of Fremont's movement into the Valley and he feared he would be trapped. At the same time additional troops drawn from General Irwin McDowell at Fredericksburg also moved into action against Jackson. To avoid the converging forces, Jackson retraced his route back up the Valley and rejoined Lee before Richmond. The withdrawal was handsomely accomplished; several days elapsed before the Federals knew for

---

[65] Ibid., pt. 3, 203, 206, 209, 217-18, 288.

certain that Jackson was gone.[66]

These developments shifted the center of action out of western Virginia and left Cox isolated. His forces at Flat Top and Lewisburg were too small to take the offensive without reinforcements. Cox, therefore, assumed a defensive posture, holding the two positions and protecting his supply line. The Rebels, despite their numerical advantage, did not attempt to attack because the Federal camps were well located and could be easily defended. The stalemate continued until early August, when Cox received orders to pull back to Gauley, establish an adequate garrison to hold the Kanawha Valley, and send the remainder of his troops to the Shenandoah Valley.[67] With high spirits Cox acted quickly to carry out his orders; he assumed he would accompany the men going east, putting an end to his discouraging service in western Virginia.

---

[66] Ibid., 264, pt. 1, 642; Sanford C. Kellogg, The Shenandoah Valley, 1861 to 1865, A War Study (New York: The Neale Publishing Co., 1903), 50-70; Francis W. Palfrey, The Antietam and Fredericksburg (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1882), 1-2.

[67] O.R., XII, pt. 3, 567, 570; Cox, Reminiscences, I, 224-25.

CHAPTER III

THE ANTIETAM CAMPAIGN

Washington was tense. Rumors spread through the city. Some said that Stonewall Jackson's "foot cavalry" was advancing through the Shenandoah Valley to attack the capital. President Lincoln, Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, and Henry Halleck, now General-in-Chief of the armies, acted quickly to insure the defense of the city.[1] But the best troops--the Army of the Potomac under McClellan--were in Virginia engaged in McClellan's Peninsula Campaign. And they could not be withdrawn rapidly enough, or without danger of an attack by General Robert E. Lee during a withdrawal, to insure the safety of Washington. The defenders must be drawn from other areas.

Thus, Lincoln created the Army of Virginia by combining troops under Generals Nathaniel P. Banks, Irvin McDowell, and John C. Fremont, and placed in command General John Pope. Pope's duties were to (1) protect Washington, (2) control the Rebels in the Shenandoah Valley, and (3) draw Confederate forces away from Richmond to reduce

---

[1]General Halleck had been called to Washington in July, 1862. When Grant became the supreme commander in March, 1864, Halleck's role was reduced to that of Chief of Staff.

resistance to McClellan's advance.[2] Pope's immediate need was for reliable reinforcements, but he also worried about the poor morale in the units he already commanded.[3]

During the first few days of August, 1862, Cox communicated with Pope about moving part of his command from the Kanawha Valley to the Shenandoah, where they could help check Jackson's advance. Pope proposed that the junction be made at Staunton by a march through the mountains from western Virginia into the Shenandoah Valley.[4] Cox protested. The route, he said, was fraught with danger; it would require a seventeen day march through enemy territory putting him in constant danger of flank attacks or a sudden frontal assault by a superior Rebel force. The supply problem, alone, was sufficient to warrant reconsideration of the proposed route. After some discussion Cox suggested a water and rail route which would pass behind Pope's primary lines and bring his men to the Shenandoah in seven days.[5] General-in-Chief Halleck, who read Cox's correspondence with Pope, also believed the water-rail route was safer, but left the final decision to Pope.[6]

---

[2]Edward James Stackpole, From Cedar Mountain to Antietam: Cedar Mountain, Second Manassas, Chantilly, Harper's Ferry, South Mountain, Antietam (Harrisburg, Pa.: The Stackpole Co., 1959), 9. Hereafter cited as Stackpole, From Cedar Mountain to Antietam.

[3]O.R., XII, pt. 3, 295-97.

[4]Ibid., 551, 553.

[5]Ibid., 555.

[6]Ibid., 540, 543.

On August 11, Cox received orders to send all but 5,000 men to Pope via the water-rail route. But he was not elated because he was to remain in western Virginia with the remnants of his original force.[7] Naturally Cox had expected that he would be allowed to accompany his men; after all, that had been his intention in July when he had argued for a transfer by extolling the discipline and morale of his troops. Moreover, as he had pointed out, he had erected strong fortifications in the Kanawha Valley which would enable a small force to hold off the Rebels.[8] Now his plans seemed to have miscarried; his best men would join Pope while he garrisoned the Valley. Surely he deserved something better!

As he prepared to ship his troops east, Cox, unhappy about staying behind, asked Pope to reconsider his decision. His long service in western Virginia, he felt, had earned him the right to a more important assignment.[9] The next day, August 13, 1862, good news came; Cox could go east.[10]

The original plan called for Cox's Kanawha division

---

[7] Ibid., 560-61; XIX, pt. 1, 1069.

[8] Ibid., XII, pt. 3, 451, 457.

[9] Ibid., 567.

[10] Ibid., 570.

to join the Army of Virginia by way of Warrenton Junction.[11] But delays in securing railroad transportation altered this plan. Instead Cox and most of his men went directly to Washington, where they were ordered to Upton's Hill, a key point in the Capital's outer defenses, near Alexandria, Virginia.[12]

On August 29-30, Pope fought the Second Battle of Bull Run. It ended disastrously for the Army of Virginia and greatly increased the danger of an attack on Washington. During the battle Cox reported no enemy activity in the vicinity of Fairfax Courthouse, directly in front of Upton's Hill. He did report, however, that he could clearly hear heavy cannonading at the front.[13] After Pope's rout, Cox's men were busy several days covering the Federals' hasty retreat into the fortifications around Washington.[14] Soon the Rebels appeared in ever-increasing numbers near Fairfax Courthouse.[15]

Pope's report of the engagement placed some of the blame for his defeat on Cox and other commanders, whom he

---

[11] Ibid., XII, pt. 2, 57-59; XII, pt. 3, 623, 625, 630, 641. The title, Kanawha division, remained attached to Cox's unit throughout the Antietam Campaign; it was never given the usual numeral designation.

[12] Ibid., XII, pt. 3, 630.

[13] Ibid., 748, 789, 801, 802.

[14] Ibid., 805; Stackpole, From Cedar Mountain to Antietam, 259.

[15] O.R., XIX, pt. 2, 170, 176.

had ordered to secure Warrenton Junction.[16] He contended that their absence allowed Jackson to turn his flank. But Pope knew three days before the battle that Cox definitely would not be coming because Halleck and McClellan, who had just returned from the Peninsula, had decided to keep the Kanawha division near Washington.[17]

Shortly after the Second Battle of Bull Run, McClellan was reinstated as the commander of the Army of the Potomac. On September 5, he ordered Cox to report for duty to General Ambrose E. Burnside, the commander of the right-wing of his army. A few days later Burnside assigned the Kanawha division to General Jesse Reno's Ninth Army Corps. For several days Cox's men participated in routine reconnaissance patrols while McClellan attempted to determine Lee's location and strength.[18] But this changed radically on September 14, when Cox supported General Albert Pleasonton's cavalry in a movement toward South Mountain.

Before joining the Eastern troops Cox had worried that his rough Westerners would compare unfavorably with McClellan's well-disciplined troops. Upon comparison, however, the Kanawha division rated very highly, and Cox was especially proud that there was less straggling among his

---

[16]Ibid., XII, pt. 2, 33-34; see also John Codman Ropes, The Army Under Pope (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1881), 51-52.

[17]O.R., XII, pt. 3, 680, 712-13, 726; Ropes, The Army Under Pope, 161-63.

[18]Jacob Dolson Cox, "Forcing Fox's Gap and Turner's Gap," Battles and Leaders, II, pt. 2, 583.

men. Cox attributed this to the long, swinging stride his men had developed in the mountains of western Virginia, a stride that carried them with ease over the relatively smooth terrain of northern Virginia and southern Maryland.[19] Colonel Rutherford B. Hayes of the Twenty-third Ohio, a future President, believed that Cox's six regiments were the "best" in the East,[20] and James A. Garfield described the Kanawha division as the ". . . finest Corps in the whole Capitoline Army. . . ."[21]

Lee's famous "Lost Order," which accidentally fell into McClellan's hands on September 13, placed half of the Confederate army at Boonesboro and the other half at Harpers Ferry. If McClellan moved rapidly, Lee's Army could be cut in two. Resolving to hit the Rebels at Boonesboro first, McClellan ordered the left-wing to advance through Crampton's Gap to Rohrsville while the center and right-wing were taking Hagerstown via Turner's Gap. But McClellan was unaware that Lee had already changed his plans, moving both Longstreet and D. H. Hill to Hagerstown where they could defend Turner's Gap. Furthermore, the

---

[19]Cox, Reminiscences, I, 268.

[20]Hayes to Lucy, his wife, August 30, 1862; Hayes to his mother, September 1, 1862; in Charles Richard Williams, editor, The Diary and Letters of Rutherford Birchard Hayes, Nineteenth President of the United States (5 vols.; Columbus, Ohio: The Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society, 1926), II, 333, 338.

[21]Garfield to Burke [Hinsdale], September 12, 1862, Williams, The Wild Life of the Army, 134.

Union commander simply moved too slowly to take full advantage of a rare opportunity to divide the enemy and defeat him in detail.[22]

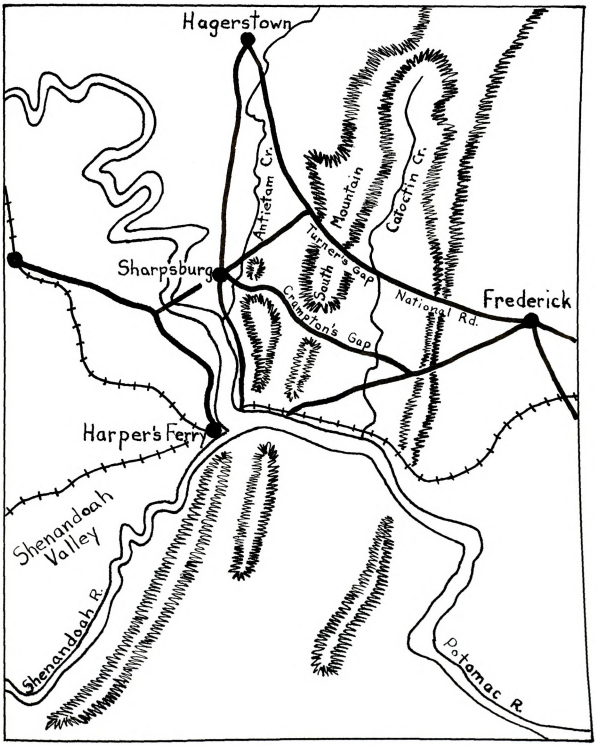
The terrain surrounding Turner's Gap reminded Cox of western Virginia, although the mountain slopes were not as steep. The National Road ran along the bottom of Turner's Gap rising to 1,100 feet between South Mountain and Catoctin Mountain. On the slopes south of the National Road cleared fields were visible to the advancing Federals, but many of the taller hills were covered with dense thickets. How many Rebels these might conceal, no one could guess.[23] In any event little resistance was anticipated because the "Lost Order" assured McClellan that the main Confederate force was at Boonesboro.

At 6 A.M. on September 14, after an early breakfast, the First Brigade of the Kanawha division, led by Colonel Scammon, accompanied General Pleasonton's cavalry on its reconnaissance toward Turner's Gap. Cox rode forward with the men for a short distance, then stopped on a hilltop to

---

[22]Daniel H. Hill, "The Battle of South Mountain or Boonesboro," Battles and Leaders, II, pt. 2, 570, describes the impact of the Lost Order from the Confederate viewpoint. Cox, "Forcing Fox's Gap and Turner's Gap," ibid., 585, agrees that McClellan did not anticipate real resistance at South Mountain because the Lost Order placed the Rebels' main force elsewhere. Stackpole, From Cedar Mountain to Antietam, 313-17, analyzes McClellan's opportunity and failure in some detail. Williams, Hayes of the Twenty-third, 136, also states that McClellan could have carried the mountain passes on September 13 if he had moved with rapidity.

[23]Cox, "Forcing Fox's Gap and Turner's Gap," Battles and Leaders, II, pt. 2, 585.



THE ANTIETAM CAMPAIGN

Adapted from: Fletcher Pratt, A Short History of the Civil War (Cardinal Edition, New York: Pocket Books, Inc., 1956), 154.

watch the column's progress. As the blue-jacketed soldiers approached the foot of South Mountain, white puffs of smoke appeared in the trees south of the National Road. The advancing regiments fled for cover wherever it could be found.[24]

Immediately Cox galloped back to camp and ordered up Colonel Crook's Second Brigade. As it hurried toward the rapidly developing battle, General Reno, commander of the Ninth Corps, arrived and told Cox to press the attack. Reno promised to send up more men to help clear the Rebels from their position atop the ridges.

At the front, Cox ordered an advance along an extended line, with Scammon's brigade forming the left and Crook's the right. They began immediately to move up the treacherous slopes, but expertly placed Confederate batteries raked the easiest avenues of advance with deadly fire. As Federal skirmishers closed on the Rebel infantry they discovered the wily enemy using every fence, stone-pile, and wood-lot to conceal his position. The advance against combined artillery and musket fire demanded great courage and discipline; the Kanawha division, suffering many casualties, pushed slowly but relentlessly forward.

---

[24]Unless otherwise indicated the description of the action by the Kanawha division and the Ninth Corps at South Mountain is based upon Cox's report, O.R., XIX, pt. 1, 458-61. McClellan's two reports, ibid., 27, 48-50, and Burnside's report, ibid., 416-18, follow Cox's report in detail; evidently both relied heavily upon his report in writing their own accounts of this phase of the battle at South Mountain.

Early in the engagement the Rebel right cracked under an assault led by Colonel Hayes's Twenty-third Ohio. Screened by trees and intervening hills, Hayes's regiment moved undetected to the crest of a ridge beyond the enemy's flank. The Twenty-third quickly swung around and charged headlong into the surprised Rebels. An entire Confederate brigade was shattered and its commander, General Samuel Garland, Jr., lost his life trying to rally his men. As the Twenty-third's success spread confusion down the entire Confederate line, the rest of Cox's division rushed forward to drive the Rebels from their position. Enemy counter-attacks failed to dislodge the determined Federals. About noon there was a lull in the fighting, during which the opposing commanders worked to prepare their men for new efforts.

Cox urged Generals Burnside and Reno to send up reinforcements, but Burnside, the ranking officer, delayed the reserves until General Joe Hooker's First Corps had begun its supporting attack north of the National Road. Burnside's decision probably saved D. H. Hill from total defeat.[25] At the same time the Rebel commander shifted his line to the left so that it slightly overlapped Cox's right. When additional Union troops arrived, Cox used most of them to protect his exposed flank.

At 2 P.M. the fighting began anew. Cox's right faced two dangers: a flanking movement, and an enfilading

---

[25]Stackpole, From Cedar Mountain to Antietam, 228-29.

artillery fire from Rebel batteries across the Hagerstown road. Since the road ran through a deep gorge it was impossible to attack these batteries directly, and they were not silenced until late afternoon. About 4 o'clock, four divisions of the Ninth Corps joined Cox's weary men. Subsequently General Reno, after consultation with McClellan and Burnside, ordered his commanders to sweep the enemy from their front and to silence the Confederate artillery. After a brief, but fierce, contest the Ninth Corps controlled South Mountain.

As night fell the Rebels made a last, desperate effort to regain their former position. Once again they keyed upon the right of the Federal line, placing great pressure upon General Samuel Sturgis' division and upon several of Cox's regiments. Having no success, the enemy ceased attacking after an hour. During the night the Confederates withdrew in the direction of Sharpsburg and the following day the Federals moved unimpeded through Turner's and Fox's Gaps toward Antietam Creek.

Many men had fallen at South Mountain. About sunset General Reno suffered a fatal wound. As the ranking Brigadier in the Ninth Corps, Cox assumed temporary command of the unit. The Kanawha division received 356 casualties, among them Colonel Hayes who, though wounded, had continued to fight until he collapsed from loss of blood. Overall the Ninth suffered 1,813 casualties in this action.[26]

---

[26] O.R., XIX, pt. 1, 461.

Many years after the Battle of South Mountain a controversy erupted over exactly what had occurred. Hooker stated that Cox was retreating at 1 P.M. when he arrived upon the scene,[27] a statement that Cox did not see until the Official Records were published. In his Reminiscences, he vehemently refuted it.[28] Moreover, Burnside, who saw Hooker's statement, refuted it in his own report on the action. In addition to defending Cox, Burnside castigated Hooker's conduct, saying that he ordered the First Corps to attack four times before Hooker responded.[29] This much is clear: Cox's men did not retreat at any time during the contest for control of South Mountain.

Two interesting and different viewpoints appear in Battles and Leaders where both Cox and his opponent, Daniel H. Hill, stated that they were outnumbered at Fox's Gap. Hill insisted that the entire Rebel force was only 9,000, whereas the Federals committed 30,000 to the battle.[30] However, Hill's figure represented the total force engaged at South Mountain, which Cox believed was misleading and unfair. As his division was the only Union command engaged until 2 P.M., Cox contended that his men ousted a

---

[27] Ibid., 214.

[28] Cox, Reminiscences, I, 291-92.

[29] O.R., XIX, pt. 1, 422-23.

[30] D. H. Hill, "The Battle of South Mountain," Battles and Leaders, II, pt. 2, 580. Hill's official report, O.R., XIX, pt. 1, 1019-22, puts the strength of his own division at 5,000.

numerically superior foe from a defensible position.[31] Actually each was correct. Cox had the smaller force until the early afternoon, when the arrival of reinforcements gave the Federals numerical superiority.

After the battle at South Mountain the Ninth Corps spent half a day burying its dead and reorganizing its forces. Then Cox moved the Corps through Fox's Gap along the Boonesboro and Sharpsburg Pikes toward Antietam Creek. Riding to the rear of the army, Cox found McClellan, Burnside, and other officers discussing the placement of the troops.[32] After the conference was over, Cox, aided by Burnside's staff, moved the Ninth into position on the extreme left of the Army of the Potomac.

The village of Sharpsburg, where Lee intended to reunite his separated forces, is situated on high ground overlooking Antietam Creek. To reach Sharpsburg, the Federals had to cross the winding creek and advance over hilly country. Three bridges spanned the stream, which could also be crossed at several suitable fords. The bridges and the fords became major targets for both armies.[33]

---

[31]Cox, "Forcing Fox's Gap and Turner's Gap," Battles and Leaders, II, pt. 2, 587-89. Cox insists the Confederates' method of computing "present for duty" strength differed from the Union's so that Hill actually had 6,000 present, instead of 5,000. Williams, Hayes of the Twenty-third, 137, says the murderous terrain greatly strengthened the Rebel position.

[32]Cox, "The Battle of Antietam," Battles and Leaders, II, pt. 2, 630-32.

[33]For a description of the battlefield see ibid., 630-31.

The Ninth's objective was the southern-most bridge, soon to be known as the Burnside Bridge.

Cox's troops camped behind the ridge of hills just east of the stream, which protected them from Rebel artillery and sharpshooters. The Corps was divided along the Sharpsburg road: a battery with twenty-pound rifled Parrott guns commanded the center of Cox's line, Crook's brigade of the Kanawha division and Sturgis' division were stationed to the right, while General Isaac P. Rodman's division and Colonel Hugh Ewing's brigade from western Virginia fanned out to form the left.[34] The next day passed without incident, but McClellan and Burnside visited Cox late in the afternoon and ordered him to be prepared for action in the morning. The Generals also changed Cox's line so that Sturgis was keyed on the bridge, leaving only Crook's brigade to the right of the Sharpsburg road.[35]

Even before the battle began Cox was unhappy with his personal situation. After Reno's death at South Mountain, Cox had taken command of the Corps. He assumed this was only a temporary arrangement and that Burnside would personally lead the Ninth at Antietam. But when he raised the issue he discovered that a dispute was in progress between Burnside and Hooker. Burnside was miffed

---

[34] O.R., XIX, pt. 1, 423-24. Colonel Scammon, who normally commanded a brigade, was now commander of the Kanawha division.

[35] Cox, "The Battle of Antietam," Battles and Leaders, II, pt. 2, 632.

because his command was separated with Hooker's First Corps on the extreme right and the Ninth on the extreme left of the line of operations. Moreover, Hooker had arranged to receive his orders directly from McClellan, thereby effectively cutting his nominal commander out of the picture.[36] Consequently, Burnside flatly refused to reduce further his role by accepting the command of only the Ninth. Cox then pointed out that his small staff was unable to handle an entire corps. But Burnside remained adamant; Cox would command the Ninth and Burnside's own staff would lend a hand. Therefore Cox found himself in an uncomfortable situation--technically he commanded the Ninth, but with his immediate superior ever present during the battle he hesitated to make independent decisions.[37]

McClellan's battle plan called for simultaneous attacks on both of Lee's flanks, saving the center of his army for action at the decisive moment.[38] The plan followed the theories of military tactics because it was simple and

---

[36]The difficulties between Burnside and Hooker were not new. It has already been noted that Hooker's report of the Battle of South Mountain contained inaccuracies which Burnside refuted in his report. See above, 81. Evidently Hooker was maneuvering in hopes of obtaining a more important command.

[37]There are several sources which comment upon the command situation. For example, see O.R., XIX, pt. 1, 177; Palfrey, The Antietam and Fredericksburg, 116-17; Stackpole, From Cedar Mountain to Antietam, 408; and Cox, "The Battle of Antietam," Battles and Leaders, II, pt. 2, 631-32.

[38]McClellan presents his plan in two separate reports of the campaign: O.R., XIX, pt. 1, 30-55.

implied use of all available troops. It was unfortunate that McClellan failed to follow his own blueprint. Had he done so, the Battle of Antietam might have ended in a disastrous defeat for Lee.

At 7 A.M. on September 17, Burnside, relaying orders from McClellan, directed Cox to prepare to attack. After completing his preparations, Cox joined Burnside to await further orders. From their vantage point on a high knoll behind their line, they saw waves of men moving across the fields to the north near the Dunker Church. They fully expected any moment to receive word to attack, but it was nearly 10 o'clock before McClellan sent orders to take the bridge.[39]

Immediately Cox put the men into motion. The left--Rodman's division and Ewing's brigade--went downstream one-half mile to cross at a ford and flank the enemy. Crook's brigade approached the target from the right and Sturgis' division hit it with frontal assaults. General Orlando Willcox's division remained under cover as a reserve.

In the contest for Burnside's Bridge the Rebels held an advantageous position. From the steep right bank of the Antietam, the enemy, hidden behind breastworks and a stone wall, poured a terrific fire into the attacking columns. In addition, that bank of the stream curved in such a way as to enable Confederate artillery to enfilade the

---

[39]Unless otherwise indicated the description of the Ninth's role at Antietam is based upon Cox's report, O.R., XIX, pt. 1, 423-27.

approaches to the bridge. Since the bridge itself was so narrow that it could carry only three men running abreast, the Rebels concentrated their firepower upon a compact target.[40]

During Crook's slow and confused advance toward the bridge, Sturgis tried a direct assault which was easily repulsed. Then Crook's men appeared and the Rebels zeroed in on them, compelling Crook to halt his brigade and return the devastating volleys. It soon became clear that a new approach was required to dislodge the entrenched enemy. And, so far, no word from Rodman and Ewing.

Cox and Sturgis sent forward two regiments in single-file columns. They fanned out in a skirmish line on the Union side of the creek and effectively pinned down the Confederates, who were now unable to sustain their previous rate of fire. Meanwhile Crook, under galling conditions, managed to place two mountain howitzers in a position from which they could cover the opposite end of Burnside's Bridge. Crook's gunners, using double-shotted canister, began to rake the Rebels, who dived for more cover.

With the preparations completed, Sturgis chose the Fifty-first New York and the Fifty-first Pennsylvania to attempt a crossing of the bridge. This time the men rushed forward, wavered momentarily at the approach to the structure, and then dashed across. Other regiments, following

---

[40]Cox, "The Battle of Antietam," Battles and Leaders, II, pt. 2, 649-50.

hard on their heels, clambered up the steep bank and drove the Confederates from their position above the bridge. Shortly Rodman and Ewing, who had carried out their assignment, arrived and formed on the left of Cox's line. After three hours of vicious, costly fighting the Union flag was at last raised on the Sharpsburg side of Burnside's Bridge.[41]

To his dismay Cox discovered that he could advance no further until reinforcements and ammunition arrived. Everyone was exhausted. Willcox's reserves would have to lead the next phase of the attack, but three precious hours passed before the drive toward Sharpsburg began.

At first the renewed advance moved steadily forward, but then Cox noticed a gap developing in the center of the line. The right, spearheaded by Willcox's fresh division, was advancing more rapidly than Rodman's division on the left, which had run into stiff resistance and could not keep up.[42] Unless both moved at the same pace, Cox's Corps faced the danger of being divided and beaten in detail.

At this point new troops came running across the fields toward Cox's left. Although they wore blue uniforms, they carried Confederate flags and were firing upon the

---

[41] Ibid., 641-53. Cox's article describes the storming of Burnside's Bridge in greater detail than his official report.

[42] Lieutenant General James Longstreet, C.S.A., reports Rodman's flank was hit by General Robert Toomb's division: O.R., XIX, pt. 1, 840-41.

Federals as they advanced. They belonged to Major General Ambrose P. Hill's small Confederate division which had just come from Harpers Ferry. Their timely arrival sealed the fate of Cox's assault on Sharpsburg.[43] Despite Willcox's penetration of the outskirts of the village, a retreat had to be ordered to save Rodman. The Federals fell back in orderly fashion to the banks of the Antietam, where they dug in to hold their position. By now the battle was almost over, the exhausted Rebels could not mount an attack to dislodge the Ninth. That night both armies slept on their weapons, fully expecting a renewal of the struggle at dawn.

But it was not to be. McClellan, convinced that Lee outnumbered him, allowed the Confederates to slip away unmolested. Revealing great audacity and considerable understanding of the Union commander, Lee remained in a battle-ready position for another day before beginning his retreat into Virginia. McClellan did not even harass the Rebels' withdrawal. If McClellan had vigorously renewed his attack against Lee on the 18th, he probably could have destroyed him and greatly shortened the war. But the Army of the Potomac rested and lost a great opportunity. Several weeks after Antietam, Lincoln, displeased by McClellan's failure, removed him and gave the command to Burnside.[44]

---

[43]See ibid., 980, for Hill's description of his arrival at Antietam. His men had taken the Union uniforms from a government warehouse at Harpers Ferry.

[44]Stephen E. Ambrose, Halleck: Lincoln's Chief of Staff (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1962), 86-87, 92-93.

Although Antietam lacked military decisiveness, it had tremendous political importance because Lincoln used this Northern "victory" as the basis for issuing his preliminary Emancipation Proclamation. This not only added strength to the Union cause in the North, but it also reduced the possibility of British intervention in behalf of the South. Now the Civil War had a dual purpose; it was a struggle to preserve the Union and a moral crusade to free the slaves behind enemy lines.[45]

During the days following the battle Cox had several conversations with McClellan. On one occasion McClellan asked Cox, Burnside, and General John Cochrane of New York what they thought of Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. When McClellan mentioned that some people had urged him to oppose openly the proclamation, Cox replied that such an action would surely destroy McClellan's career. He also pointed out that the military was subordinate to the civil authority and that if McClellan challenged that power "not a corporal's guard would stand by his side." Cox suspected that McClellan purposely broached the subject to them because all three opposed slavery and strongly supported Lincoln's administration. The very raising of this question, Cox wrote, revealed a weakness in McClellan; a stronger-willed commander would have summarily thrown the

---

[45]James Ford Rhodes, History of the Civil War (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1917), 170-74.

anti-administration schemers out of camp.[46]

In his Reminiscences Cox devoted considerable space to analyzing McClellan's defects as a commander. He concluded the greatest problem was that McClellan had convinced himself and his army that they were greatly outnumbered by Lee's forces. Thus McClellan's failure to act vigorously was not interpreted by his men as a lack of courage, but rather as a wise decision that saved them from certain disaster. As proof of this Cox admitted that while he served in the Army of the Potomac he, too, believed McClellan's statements about Lee's superiority. But in retrospect Cox agreed that the Union had to go on the offensive to win; McClellan was not the man to be entrusted with such a responsibility and had to be removed.[47]

McClellan's leadership at Antietam was faulty. To be successful his plan required simultaneous attacks by both wings of the army, with the center being thrown into the contest at an opportune moment. The assaults, however, were uncoordinated from the outset. The fighting on the right, where Hooker's corps bore the brunt of the battle, was almost over before Burnside received orders to begin his attack.[48]

---

[46]Cox, Reminiscences, I, 359-61.

[47]Ibid., I, 365-75.

[48]Cox, "The Battle of Antietam," Battles and Leaders, II, pt. 2, 635, puts particular stress upon the lack of coordination, as does Stackpole, From Cedar Mountain to Antietam, 413-14.

Any attempt to determine the responsibility of Burnside and Cox for the failures at Antietam hinges on the question of time. Did either or both of these generals fail to carry out quickly the orders received? McClellan's report (October 15, 1862) stated that Burnside had received directions to take the bridge at 10 A.M., which agreed with the latter's own account.[49] But in a later report (August 4, 1863) McClellan changed the time to 8 A.M. making it appear that Burnside, or his subordinates, wasted two hours before attacking.[50] A copy of the original orders, however, is clearly marked 9:10 A.M.; Burnside could not have received them over an hour before they were issued.[51] Depending on his sense of urgency, a messenger could have consumed fifty minutes covering the two miles from army headquarters to the Ninth's position.

More important is the three-hour delay between the successful assault on the bridge and the attempt to take Sharpsburg. If the final attack had commenced sooner, Lee could have still been defeated.[52] In his Reminiscences, Cox explained that the delay was caused by the necessity of moving all the fresh troops and ammunition over Burnside's

---

[49] O.R., XIX, pt. 1, 31, 419.

[50] Ibid., 63.

[51] Ibid., LI, pt. 1, 844.

[52] Bruce Catton, The Army of the Potomac: Mr. Lincoln's Army (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1962), 313-14.

Bridge.[53] But Cox erred in his handling of these maneuvers. On either side of the bridge the Antietam could have been waded. Had Willcox's division been ordered to wade across, the bridge would have been clear for transporting the ammunition and valuable time saved.[54] Once the bottleneck appeared Cox or Burnside should have sought a means to speed up operations. But they did not and precious hours slipped away, allowing A. P. Hill's men to arrive just in time to repel the Federals.

The failure on the left, however, rested mainly upon McClellan, who did not commit any of his reinforcements to the battle. Cox believed that McClellan expected defeat, not victory, and withheld his fresh troops to cover an anticipated retreat.[55] If McClellan had used his reserves, A. P. Hill's 1,800 men probably could not have stopped the Ninth's advance on Sharpsburg.[56]

A final point of interest involves the curious language Cox used in his report of the battle. Near the end, where he summarized the Ninth's efforts, he said the attack "had the effect of a most powerful diversion in favor of the center and right of the army, which by this means had

---

[53]Cox, Reminiscences, I, 345.

[54]Catton, Mr. Lincoln's Army, 301-302.

[55]Cox, "The Battle of Antietam," Battles and Leaders, II, pt. 2, 656-58.

[56]For example, Fitz-John Porter's Fifth Corps remained inactive throughout the battle.

been able to make decided and successful advances. . . ."[57] When he wrote these words Cox surely knew the battle on the left had been much more than a diversion. In fact, it had been the major action of the afternoon. Did he use this language to excuse or minimize the failure of his men to crush completely Lee's right? Or did he firmly believe that a diversion was all that McClellan had intended for the Ninth? The latter seems more plausible because Cox continually referred to the "diversion" created by his men at Antietam in his article in Battles and Leaders, and in his Reminiscences.[58] Possibly he heard the term used by Burnside and others in the conference he attended upon his arrival at Antietam and, therefore, he used it to describe the Ninth's role in the battle.[59]

Just when Cox was looking forward to continued service in the East, he received orders to return to western Virginia.[60] Affairs there had rapidly deteriorated. The Rebels, aware that Cox and his Kanawha division had left, decided to drive out or destroy the Federals still in the

---

[57] O.R., XIX, pt. 1, 426.

[58] Cox, "The Battle of Antietam," Battles and Leaders, II, pt. 2, 633-34; Reminiscences, I, 307.

[59] Cox, Reminiscences, I, 307.

[60] O.R., XIX, pt. 2, 380, 393.

area.[61] To thwart their plans, the War Department selected Cox to command the District of Western Virginia. Although his previous experience made him the best qualified commander available for the job, Cox was not happy with his new assignment.[62]

On October 6, 1862, Cox reported to General-in-Chief Halleck for instructions before returning to western Virginia, and was informed that he had been promoted to Major General.[63] The promotion had impressive support; McClellan, Burnside, Salmon P. Chase, and Garfield had all recommended Cox's advancement.[64] With this backing,

---

[61]Cox, Reminiscences, I, 391-99; copies of Confederate correspondence, O.R., XII, pt. 3, 940, 946, reveal that they knew Cox and the Kanawha division had gone to Washington. Both Lee and Secretary of War George Randolph were urging General William W. Loring to seize control of the Kanawha Valley and to disrupt the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad.

[62]Cox to Major General George Thomas, November 4, 1862. Cox was disgruntled because he still believed the mountainous terrain would prevent achievement of any lasting success against the Rebels. James A. Garfield, who visited with Cox just before he returned to western Virginia, also reported that he was unhappy with the assignment: Garfield to Crete [Lucretia, his wife], October 7, 1862, in Williams, Wild Life of the Army, 155.

[63]Cox, Reminiscences, I, 400. He related that Secretary of War Stanton personally handed him the notice of his appointment.

[64]O.R., XIX, pt. 2, 383-84. This is McClellan's recommendation and he stated that Burnside concurred in urging the promotion. No record of Burnside's personal recommendation appears in the Official Records. Salmon P. Chase, Inside Lincoln's Cabinet: The Civil War Diaries of Salmon P. Chase, ed. David Donald (New York: Longmans, Green, 1954), 161, entry for September 27, 1862; Garfield to Crete, September 27 and October 7, 1862, in Williams, Wild Life of the Army, 145, 155.

confirmation by the Senate appeared to be a mere formality.

In July, 1862, Congress had voted to limit the number of additional Major Generals to forty. But the administration had ignored the measure.[65] When Congress convened in December, the War Department recommended forty-three men for promotion. Several Senators and Representatives challenged the list and said it must be reduced. Stanton defended the request as necessary to provide for the proper staffing of the army and asked that the entire issue be reviewed.[66] During the subsequent debate, the House approved a bill authorizing forty more major generalcys, for a total of eighty. Assuming that the Senate would concur, the administration, negotiating with Congressmen, added twenty-seven men to the group. At the last minute, however, the Senate rejected the House measure; finally, both houses agreed to approve appointments for seventy major generals. With only a few days remaining before adjournment, the War Department worked quickly to remove six names: Napoleon B. Buford, George W. Morell, William F. Smith, Horatio G. Wright, John M. Schofield, and Cox. Therefore, in March, 1863, Cox was notified that his "temporary promotion" had expired. Naturally he was dismayed.

---

[65] The Congressional Globe (46 vols.; Washington: Congressional Globe Co., 1833-1873), 32, Appendix, 386. The limit had been attached as a "rider" to an appropriations bill and Lincoln doubted its constitutionality.

[66] U.S. Congress, Senate, Senate Executive Documents, No. 29, 37th Congress, 3d Sess. (January 30, 1863), Serial 1149.

Cox noted wryly that none of those eliminated, except for Schofield, had been among the twenty-seven recommended by Congressmen. It appeared that "political pull" was more important in winning advancement than proven service on the battlefield.[67] If such was the case, Cox admitted that he stood little chance of success. He was only slightly acquainted with Ohio Senator Benjamin Wade and had campaigned against John Sherman in 1860. Neither could be expected to promote vigorously his claim. As Cox described it, the contest among Ohioans narrowed down to a choice between himself and Robert G. Schenck. Despite Cox's more important commands, he lacked Schenck's political influence. Cox was virtually unknown outside of Ohio, whereas Schenck had already served several terms in the House of Representatives. Therefore Schenck received the promotion.[68]

In November, 1861, Cox had said he fought for the Union cause, not glory. If his "utter Disgrace" would serve the cause he could accept even that. He believed this attitude separated the regular army and civilian volunteer officers. The former sought fame and glory on the battlefield to advance their careers, while a civilian regarded

---

[67]Cox, Reminiscences, I, 431-34. Retirements and resignations had eliminated four other men. It is interesting to note that the law permitting the appointment of the new officers also required "that the president appoint no one except for gallant and meritorious service." Congressional Globe, 33, 1309.

[68]Cox, Reminiscences, I, 433-35.

the war as a temporary interruption of his normal life.[69] The rejection of his promotion was not "utter disgrace" but it must have shaken Cox's philosophy that personal advancement was unimportant.

---

[69]Cox to Garfield, November 8, 1861, Garfield Papers, V, pt. 2.

CHAPTER IV

RETURN TO FAMILIAR GROUND: WEST VIRGINIA AND OHIO

During August and September, 1862, the Union armies suffered a series of setbacks. The Army of the Potomac had been forced on the defensive by Lee's invasion of Maryland; and although McClellan turned it back at Antietam, Lee's army escaped destruction. In the West Rebel General Braxton Bragg carried the war into central Kentucky, compelling the Federals to give up Nashville, Tennessee. After a hectic pursuit, Bragg was repulsed at Perryville, Kentucky. But the results were inconclusive. Despite much hard fighting the Federals had little to show for their efforts and faced the unhappy task of regaining ground taken earlier from the enemy.

Union reversals on the battlefield extended into West Virginia.[1] There the Confederates successfully wrested the Kanawha Valley from the grip of the federal government and temporarily interrupted the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad.

---

[1]On April 3, 1862, the citizens in fifty western Virginia counties approved a state constitution (18,862 to 514) for West Virginia. Although the state's request for admission to the Union was still under consideration by the federal government when Cox returned in October, 1862, the region was commonly referred to as West Virginia. James G. Randall and David Donald, The Civil War and Reconstruction (2d ed.; Boston: D. C. Heath & Co., 1961), 236-42.

The Rebel's campaign had been triggered by Jackson's capture of Pope's headquarters at Second Bull Run. Among the items seized by the Confederates were letter-books which contained accurate information about the strength and location of Union forces in West Virginia. After studying these records Lee sent General William A. Loring into the Kanawha Valley. Loring was to sweep down the valley to the Ohio River, then turn eastward to link up with other Rebel units operating near Harpers Ferry.

When Cox went east, he had left Colonel Joseph A. J. Lightburn in command of 5,000 men in the Kanawha Valley. Lightburn's job was to dig in and hold Gauley Bridge. Cox believed that the fortifications were strong enough to stop an attack by an enemy force outnumbering the defenders three or four to one. Lightburn, unfortunately, did not share Cox's confidence in the strength of his position. As Loring advanced, Lightburn called his scattered units into the breastworks to make a stand. Then he panicked. With Loring closing in from two sides, Lightburn feared he could not hold out, put the torch to the vast amount of supplies stored at Gauley, and retreated toward Charleston. In the hasty withdrawal the Federals became separated and some had to cut through rugged mountains to avoid capture. Pausing at Charleston only long enough to burn more supplies, Lightburn continued his withdrawal to Point Pleasant on the Ohio River. Almost without effort, the Confederates chased the Federals from the Kanawha Valley. Thus, when Cox

returned to West Virginia he faced a situation strikingly similar to that encountered in 1861.[2]

The Rebels learned of Cox's reassignment to West Virginia almost as soon as the orders were issued. Lee, and other Confederate officials, alerted Loring and implored him to make every effort to retain control of the valley. Lee expressed special concern for maintaining possession of the highly productive salt wells near Charleston.[3] When Loring failed to prepare vigorously for the approaching contest, he was replaced by General John C. Echols.

On October 4, 1862, Cox assumed his new duties as commander of the newly-created District of West Virginia,[4] which included most of the present state of West Virginia and several Ohio counties bordering on the Ohio River.[5] Cox set up headquarters at Gallipolis, Ohio. He commanded directly the Kanawha Division under Crook (6,000 men), Lightburn's Division (7,200 men), and the Railroad Division headed by General Benjamin F. Kelley (8,600 men).[6] In addition, if he needed help, Cox had authorization to bring in George W. Morgan's Division from Tennessee. Since Kelley's troops were committed to keeping open the Baltimore and Ohio

---

[2]Cox, Reminiscences, I, 391-99.

[3]O.R., XIX, pt. 2, 666.

[4]Ibid., 421.

[5]Ibid., L, pt. 1, 289.

[6]Ibid., XIX, pt. 2, 522-23.

tracks, only Crook's and Lightburn's units were available for offensive operations.

General Horatio G. Wright, whose Department of the Ohio included the West Virginia District, urged Cox to move quickly. Wright wanted the Confederates driven out before fall rains turned the roads into seas of mud. He suggested an advance by two columns--one to move up the Kanawha Valley from Point Pleasant, and the other to proceed southward from Clarksburg. It was hoped that the columns could converge on the Rebels and destroy them.[7] Cox disliked the plan because he had experienced too many failures by the use of widely separated forces in the mountainous terrain. But since speed was essential, he decided to go ahead rather than argue.

Before sending his troops into action, Cox tried to replace the equipment destroyed during the recent retreat. The most essential items--weapons, ammunition and food--were easily obtained, but wagons and mules were in short supply.[8] Now even the Kanawha River failed to cooperate; indeed, the water level was so low that steamboats could not navigate beyond Charleston. Despite the difficulty, Cox pushed ahead, hopeful that he could gather enough wagons by the time he reached Charleston to continue the march to Gauley. He worried needlessly. Just as the operation

---

[7] Ibid., XVI, pt. 2, 402, 579.

[8] Ibid., XIX, pt. 2, 474-76, 535-37.

began, an extended rain raised the river and provided the steamers with adequate clearance to the headwaters of the Kanawha.[9]

Cox's column left Point Pleasant on October 15; it proceeded cautiously, expecting a stiff fight above Charleston. The Rebels were dug in on Laurel Mountain, using the camp established the previous year by Wise. Cox had sufficient manpower to dislodge the enemy by driving directly toward their position, but such a tactic might result in high casualties. He, therefore, decided to use a flanking movement, combining speed and surprise in an effort to trap the Confederates. The main force marched down the left bank of the Kanawha, crossed the river several miles below Charleston, and proceeded toward the rear of Laurel Mountain. They were too late. Echols had already pulled out and was moving toward Gauley. Cox ordered a vigorous pursuit, but the Rebels crossed Gauley Bridge to make good their escape. The Federals reclaimed their former camp on October 31.[10] Halleck instructed Cox to station a large garrison at Gauley and to post detachments where they could watch the enemy.

Guerrillas who had refused to leave with Echols remained in the valley. Cox had little use for these "irregulars," as he called them, because their conduct

---

[9] Ibid., 456, 459.

[10] Ibid., 448-49, 456, 474, 481-82, 515, 520-21. The Clarksburg column, delayed by a host of problems, did not even get started before Cox claimed his victory.

violated prescribed military procedures. He branded them armed outlaws, and commanded his men to remove them completely.[11] With their identities disclosed by citizens who had suffered harassment at their hands, the guerrillas were soon captured and sent North to prison.

Cox personally stationed the troops at Gauley, and then returned to his headquarters at Gallipolis. On November 13, he received an urgent request from General Kelley (Railroad Division) for reinforcements. Kelley feared that Stonewall Jackson, who had returned to the Shenandoah Valley, meant to attack the railroad junction at Grafton.[12] At the same time Kelley had alerted the War Department and Halleck recommended that Cox send troops from Charleston to Grafton. Cox demurred, explaining that it would be unwise to reduce the garrison in the Kanawha Valley just when the situation was returning to normal. Such a step might undermine the recent victories and trigger renewed resistance. But more importantly, Cox thought that Kelley exaggerated the danger.[13]

Kelley insistently repeated his request for help. Halleck, more impressed by Kelley's reports than by Cox's reasoning, pressured Cox to send at least Crook's brigade to Point Pleasant, where it could be moved quickly by rail

---

[11] Ibid., 529-31.

[12] Ibid., 570, 586-87; XXI, 759.

[13] Ibid., XXI, 763; Cox to Aaron F. Perry, November 17, 1862, Letter Book 1.

to Grafton. But Halleck left the final decision up to Cox. Cox remained calm and carefully analyzed the situation. His scouts reported no unusual activity. Surely if Jackson planned a determined attack on the railroad he would have either ordered a diversion toward Cox to keep him busy, or pulled the Confederates out of Cox's area to assist his column. Thus Cox decided to hold his troops until a clear danger emerged. He was right. Jackson took a quick run at the Baltimore and Ohio, then moved eastward to join Lee near Fredericksburg.[14]

During December Cox's troops moved into winter quarters, garrisoning Charleston and Gauley, and setting up a few advanced posts in front of the latter. During the winter Cox's command steadily diminished. The War Department decided that fewer men could hold the Kanawha Valley, so several regiments were transferred to Rosecrans in Tennessee.[15] The Rebels, confused by these movements, thought that Cox personally accompanied the units. But they were wrong.[16] Although Cox certainly would have preferred to go along, he remained in command in West Virginia. The only excitement during the winter occurred near the end of March, 1863, when about 400 Rebel raiders hit Point Pleasant

---

[14] O.R., XXI, 768, 775, 778-79, 786-87.

[15] Ibid., XX, pt. 2, 260; XXI, 855, 896, 899, 944.

[16] Ibid., XXIII, pt. 2, 646, 647, 685; XXV, pt. 2, 679. General Braxton Bragg, the Confederate commander in Tennessee, was the source of the inaccurate information about Cox.

on the Ohio River and briefly severed communications between Cox's headquarters at Gallipolis and Charleston. More embarrassed than hurt, Cox scrounged up some Ohio militia units and quickly regained the village.[17]

In February, 1863, Cox made a personal request for a leave of absence and a transfer to a more active theatre. Earlier, in November, 1862, Cox had intimated that he desired to return to civilian life--to his quiet home, his books and his profession. But, at the same time, he admitted that he had scant reason to resign because his health was admirable despite much exposure to the elements. In fact, he had gained weight.[18] Probably he was bored and disgusted with his routine duties when he made these comments. He was serious, however, about the transfer. His command had been sharply decreased by the shifting of troops to Rosecrans, and the Rebels were quiet in the district. His subordinates, Crook and Scammon, were competent officers and he thought either of them could easily replace him. Moreover, Cox had made many recommendations for increasing the efficiency of the army, and he wanted an opportunity to put his ideas into practice. He would even accept a less important position in preference to his present inactivity.[19] The leave was speedily granted. But

---

[17] Ibid., XXV, pt. 1, 75-77; pt. 2, 171-73, 175, 177.

[18] Cox to Major General George Thomas, November 4, 1862.

[19] Cox to Adjutant General of the Army, February 2, 1863.

ten months elapsed before Cox obtained a battlefield command.

During the quiet winter months Cox worked on his long neglected correspondence. In these letters he thoroughly reviewed the political and military situations, and presented his personal opinions. He expressed alarm over the gains made by the "peace party" in the 1862 congressional elections. As a result the Union Party's majority in the House had been sharply decreased.[20] (The Union Party consisted of Republicans, "War Democrats" and Unionists, who supported the military effort against the South.) Reports indicated that the anti-war representatives and senators intended to propose a compromise to the South in an effort to halt the war. Cox feared the compromise might go so far as to propose recognition of slavery everywhere, although this would undoubtedly convince New York and New England to leave the Union. Such an offer must never be made. Reviewing the circumstances, Cox thought there were two ways to defeat the peace party delegates. First, and clearly more desirable, would be a complete military victory by the North. But Cox doubted whether such a victory was

---

[20]Randall and Donald, Civil War and Reconstruction, 458, give the following figures for the House of Representatives. The Thirty-seventh Congress, 1861-1863 (after the withdrawal of Southern delegates), contained 106 Republicans, 42 Democrats and 28 Unionists. The Thirty-eighth Congress, 1863-1865, had 102 "Republicans and Unconditional Unionists" and 75 Democrats, resulting in a sharply diminished Republican and Unionist majority. The Democrats had majorities from five states which had voted Republican in 1860--New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana and Illinois. Wisconsin's congressional delegation was evenly split between the two parties.

imminent. On the other hand, the anti-war Democrats might defeat themselves through internal dissensions. They had won the elections by stressing local issues and by running candidates who appealed to strong local passions. Cox suspected that these men, holding many divergent opinions, would not be able to agree upon a unified course of action. Even if they agreed on a compromise and presented it to the Confederacy, Cox thought the Southern leaders, interpreting the negotiations as a sign of weakness, would hold out for complete political independence.[21] All things considered, Cox knew a very serious danger existed. The North must win both the political and military struggles.

Cox recognized that the Union's political problems were closely related to military events. Success on the battlefield would end most of the current dissension. But he believed that the military structure lacked proper organization and utility to bring about a quick, sure conclusion to the war. He disliked the "Anaconda Plan" because the Union lines were too extended. The Confederates had consistently used inner lines to thwart uncoordinated Federal attacks. At best, the Anaconda policy had only a slight chance of succeeding because it required a long war of

---

[21]Cox to Aaron F. Perry, November 7, 1862, in William C. Cochran (ed.), "The Political Correspondence of Major General Jacob D. Cox" (2 vols.; unpublished typewritten manuscript), I, 1-4. Hereafter cited as Cochran, "Political Correspondence." There are copies of this manuscript in the Oberlin College Library, the University of Cincinnati Library, the Ohio State Historical Library at Columbus and the Library of Congress.

attrition against the South.[22] But time, itself, worked against the North. Somehow new vigor must be injected into the army to bring a quick end to the hostilities.

Dismissing the current policy as futile, Cox outlined his own formula for success. He would bring the half-dozen small Federal armies into one large, well-organized, well-supplied unit. This huge army (400,000 to 500,000 troops) would operate against a single target--the Confederate right in Virginia, or the center in Tennessee and Kentucky, or the left along the Mississippi River. Only small units would be left elsewhere for defensive purposes. Cox believed such a concentration of troops would force the Confederates to follow suit. But Cox suspected his plan would never be adopted. Northern politicians, especially governors, seeing their states left relatively unprotected would put pressure on Lincoln to detach troops for garrison duty. Such action would defeat Cox's proposal before it received a fair trial. Concentration of troops had been Napoleon's key to success, it could win for the Union, but circumstances in the North worked against its proper application.[23]

Cox recommended, in addition to his overall strategy, that changes be made in the army's structure to increase its efficiency. He expressed dismay at the distinction made between "veteran" and newly-recruited regiments. At first,

---

[22]Same to same, November 17, 1862, Letter Book 1.

[23]Ibid.

the competition between the units served to increase their morale, but this no longer was true. Many of the veteran regiments, decimated in battle, were mere organizational skeletons. Unfortunately the War Department, rather than using new recruits to restore the under-manned regiments to full strength, accepted entirely new regiments into the service. These new troops, because they lacked proper training or had inferior officers, frequently collapsed under fire. It would be better, Cox thought, to integrate veteran and novice. At full strength the veteran regiments' zeal would return; and the recruits, learning by example, would more rapidly become well-disciplined soldiers.[24]

Debilitating conditions also existed among the officers. Cox believed the government had made poor use of the regular army officers. Rather than spreading these better trained men throughout the army, where they could have helped train the multitude of civilian officers, the War Department assigned several to commands in a single brigade or corps. This left inexperienced civilian officers in complete charge of other units, a situation often resulting in disaster. Moreover, regular army officers received preferential treatment when promotions were granted. This practice diminished the civilian officer's desire to excel. The army failed, many times, to remove incompetent officers and even if the poor officers were forced out, they

---

[24]Cox to Aaron F. Perry, December 18, 1862.

frequently returned to the field with higher ranks than when dismissed. Cox had a personal acquaintance with the latter problem.

> I have known a lieutenant to be forced by his captain (a splendid soldier) to resign on account of his general inefficiency. I have seen that same lieutenant take the field a few months later as a lieutenant-colonel of a new regiment, whilst the captain still stood at the head of his fraction of a company in the line. This is not a singular instance, but an example of cases occurring literally by the thousand in our vast army during the year past . . . .[25]

Cox proposed a complete review of the officer corps and the dispersal of the regulars throughout the army, with all assignments based solely on merit. Thereafter open competition should determine who received promotions. This system would, Cox thought, reward proven ability, rather than "pull." Consequently all officers would be encouraged to produce their best, incompetents could be removed, and the increased efficiency of the officers would benefit the entire army.[26]

Cox even suggested increased use of Negro troops. In this scheme Cox sought to solve two problems, one military and the other social. Negro volunteers would be promised a separate "colony," to be established by the federal government at the end of the war. (Cox thought part of

---

[25]Cox to Salmon P. Chase, January 1, 1863.

[26]Ibid.; Cox to Major General Ethan Allan Hitchcock, January 2, 1863. These letters are undoubtedly more important than those to Aaron F. Perry because they were directed to men in important positions. Chase was Lincoln's Secretary of the Treasury and Hitchcock was on the War Department staff in Washington.

Texas could be set aside for a colored settlement.) In the meantime, the military training and discipline would help prepare the Negro to accept the responsibilities of freedom. Cox based his proposal on Jomini's Guerres de la Revolution, which described France's use of Negro soldiers in Santo Domingo and Guadaloupe. These Blacks, when led by white officers, had proved to be excellent fighters. Besides these advantages, the call for Negro recruits would further drain labor from the South and hamper the Confederate economy.[27] If this war was aimed at ending slavery, the Negro should be given an opportunity to fight for his own liberation.

In 1862 the federal government appointed a commission, headed by Major-General Ethan Allen Hitchcock, to revise the army regulations. Cox, responding to a general request by the commission, sent many of his recommendations to Hitchcock. Cox pointed out that the United States was following the military practices established by the first French Republic, including even the procedures that had proved defective. He hoped that the government would learn from history and remove the most flagrant abuses. But time and politics prevailed and no substantial changes were ever made. It is to the credit of the Union soldiers and officers that they overcame such handicaps and fought through to

---

[27]Cox to Aaron F. Perry, February 9, 1863, Cochran, "Political Correspondence," I, 9-11.

eventual victory.[28]

As the spring campaigns approached, Washington reorganized the Departments of Ohio and Maryland, completely reshuffling the command structure. West Virginia would now report to General Schenck at Baltimore, rather than to Cincinnati. Since West Virginia relied on the latter for most of its supplies, Cox thought the shift was a drastic error. But even more distressing, General Robert H. Milroy became Cox's immediate superior, a man he considered unqualified for the position. Now Cox worked feverishly for a transfer. Fortunately for him he had a good relationship with General Schenck, who helped convince Washington officials that his request should be granted.[29]

After some deliberation, the War Department assigned Cox to the military post at Columbus, Ohio. This pleased him immensely because General Burnside had just been appointed commander of the Ohio Department. Cox had served under Burnside at South Mountain and Antietam, had established a warm relationship with him, and now hoped he could convince Burnside to give him a battlefield command. In the meantime, however, his orders directed him to assist in enrolling eligible Ohio males for the draft under the

---

[28]In his analysis of the army's problems, Cox stressed weaknesses long recognized as important by students of the Civil War. For example see: Randall and Donald, Civil War and Reconstruction, 325-33; T. Harry Williams, "The Military Leadership of North and South," Why the North Won the Civil War, ed. David Donald (New York: Collier Books, 1966), 33-54.

[29]Cox, Reminiscences, I, 444-45.

federal Enrollment Act of March 3, 1863. All men between twenty and forty-five had to register and the list of registrants would be used to draft men if state quotas were not filled by volunteers. As events turned out, very few men were drafted in Ohio, or elsewhere, because the state, counties and municipalities offered handsome bonuses to volunteers.[30] The Civil War draft served more as a "club" to spur enlistments than as an effective means of bringing men into the army.

When he arrived at Columbus, Cox found Burnside engaged in reorganizing the department to increase its efficiency. After discussing the matter with Governor David Tod, Burnside announced the establishment of the Military District of Ohio, and put Cox in charge. Consequently Cox moved to Cincinnati, setting up his office a few blocks away from Departmental Headquarters. His major duty was to prevent civilians from interfering with the smooth operation of the military. Normally this would be an easy task; but the presence of Southern sympathizers in Ohio, who were not above inciting riots, created a situation requiring a firm, but delicate, touch. The District contained 2,500 regular troops; if conditions deteriorated beyond their control Cox had authority to call out the state militia to assist in restoring peace.[31]

---

[30] Ibid., 446-47.

[31] O.R., XXV, pt. 2, 299; Cox, Reminiscences, I, 450-72, passim.

Cox spent most of his time in administrative work--filling out numerous reports, writing letters, and issuing orders. In addition to his own district, he often aided Burnside's staff with departmental paperwork. Under these circumstances he had an opportunity to renew and expand his acquaintance with Burnside. Burnside, he found, was averse to the official routine required for the smooth operation of the department, often leaving to subordinates tasks which needed his personal attention. Even under this loose arrangement many reports languished on Burnside's desk awaiting his signature. Frequently Burnside tackled these during the early morning hours when his staff was abed; Cox became accustomed to being roused at 1 or 2 a.m. by an orderly, who requested that he come to the office to help with some pressing matter. Cox liked and respected Burnside, but thought a closer attention to detail would have spared the commander much unnecessary embarrassment.[32]

At the beginning of the war some cities and counties spurred volunteering by paying cash bounties to enlistees. In July, 1861, the federal government further encouraged the practice by authorizing an additional federal premium of $100 per man. In 1862 and 1863 national conscription laws were passed. The states, attempting to avoid resorting to a draft, added even more money to the system. As a result bounty jumping--a man would enlist, collect his money, then

---

[32]Cox, Reminiscences, I, 451-53; II, 54-55.

desert to repeat the practice in another area under an assumed name--became a problem. The most flagrant instance involved a man, from New York, who confessed to jumping bounty thirty-two times.[33]

The violators fell into two classes. The first, and most despised, were the "professionals" who made a regular practice of abusing the system. If caught, they were charged with desertion and were judged by a military court. Harsh sentences usually resulted from the trial--a long prison term or, in extreme cases, death before a firing squad. The other class consisted of the supposedly innocent offenders. They were underage, but mature-appearing lads who enlisted to collect the bounty. Later their parents would appear with proof of the boy's age and demand his release from the service. The military officials could never be certain whether to believe the parents' assertion that their son had enlisted without their knowledge. The army, however, seldom pressed such a case, preferring to release the boy after arrangements had been made for the repayment of the money. In the course of his duties, Cox frequently dealt with bounty jumpers. Most cases were rather routine, but in one instance Cox found himself in a touchy situation.

A man named Hicks, arrested in Cincinnati as a deserter and bounty jumper, was being held for military

---

[33]Randall and Donald, Civil War and Reconstruction, 312-15, 328-29.

trial in barracks under Cox's direct command. Friends of Hicks persuaded the county Probate Judge to issue a writ of habeas corpus demanding that the prisoner be turned over to the civilian court. The judge, a well-known Copperhead, ordered the county sheriff to serve the writ and return with the prisoner. The sheriff, recognizing an explosive situation, met with Cox, who explained that Hicks was held under federal law and that he could not be released to the civil authorities. The sheriff reported this to the court, but the judge was adament, "Raise a posse if necessary but get the prisoner!" The distraught sheriff returned to Cox to ask how he would react if a posse tried to enforce the court order. Cox replied calmly that he would instruct his men to resist; they would have orders to fire at the leaders first. Cox's determination convinced the sheriff that a collision between the civil and military authorities must be avoided. But, since both he and the judge were up for re-election, the sheriff did not want to hurt his political career by backing down alone. Thereupon Cox suggested a clever solution: return to the judge, explain the entire situation, and if he insists on pursuing the matter, tell him he will be deputized to lead the posse. The judge quietly withdrew the writ and the affair blew over without further trouble.[34]

During the summer of 1863 great political tension gripped Ohio. State elections, scheduled for October, would

---

[34]Cox, Reminiscences, II, 48-51.

reveal much about the public attitude toward the war. Clement Vallandigham, an anti-war Democrat and leading Copperhead, opposed John Brough, the Union Party's nominee, for the governorship.[35] In May, Vallandigham had been arrested by Burnside after delivering an anti-war speech at Mount Vernon, Ohio. Subsequently a military court found Vallandigham guilty of "declaring sympathies for the enemy" and sentenced him to imprisonment for the duration of the war. But, because Vallandigham had not urged the use of force against the federal government, a huge public outcry followed his conviction. Embarrassed, President Lincoln commuted the sentence to banishment within the Confederate lines. Vallandigham fared no better in the South; he became embroiled in arguments with Jefferson Davis over the conduct of the war and was ordered out of the Confederacy. After successfully running the Union blockade, the Ohio Copperhead took up residence in Canada. While in Windsor, Ontario, he was nominated for Ohio's governorship by the Democrats. Lincoln's commutation, however, included a promise of renewed imprisonment should Vallandigham return to the North.[36] Cox issued a general order stressing that military officials in Ohio would indeed perform their duties if Vallandigham

---

[35]The Union Party replaced the Republican Party in the North after the outbreak of hostilities. The name stressed the fact that the party was not partisan, it supported the Union and the federal government. Rallied under its banner were Republicans, War Democrats and others who supported the war against the South.

[36]Randall and Donald, Civil War and Reconstruction, 302-303.

reappeared.[37] Everyone wondered whether he would force a showdown. Fortunately he decided not to return, thereby defusing the situation. Further relief was provided in October when Brough and the Union Party won a smashing victory.[38]

The political campaign had scarcely begun when John H. Morgan's "Raid" pushed politics from the headlines. Morgan, an outstanding but unpredictable cavalry officer attached to Bragg's command in Tennessee, had instructions to attack Rosecrans' supply line. The raid on the Louisville and Nashville railroad utterly failed due to the stiff resistance put up by Federal garrisons. Morgan kept moving north and exceeded his orders by crossing the Ohio River into Indiana on July 8, 1863. Cox, in his account of the raid, suggests Morgan took this action to "save face."[39] Whatever the reason, what followed was one of the most bizarre episodes of the Civil War.

Morgan burned his hijacked ferry to delay his pursuers. The Indiana militia reacted quickly and held the raiders to within forty miles of the river, driving them eastward toward Ohio. The responsibility for stopping Morgan fell upon Burnside, who had recently sent most of his

---

[37] O.R., XXX, pt. 3, 522; Cox, Reminiscences, II, 51-54.

[38] For a more complete description of the election and Vallandigham's role see Roseboom, Ohio: Civil War Era, 404-423.

[39] Cox, Reminiscences, I, 497-98.

troops into East Tennessee. He quickly recalled the cavalry, put General Edward Hobson in charge, and sent them after the Rebels.[40] With Burnside's attention directed toward supervising the general pursuit, the responsibility for arranging the finer details in Ohio fell upon Cox.

Because Morgan followed an erratic course through Indiana, it was difficult to determine where he would enter Ohio. Cox assumed the Confederates must have a particular target in mind, probably the railroads. His first efforts were directed toward providing protection for them. Cox used a proclamation, issued by Governor Tod, to mobilize every able-bodied man between twenty and forty-five to meet the emergency. This provided adequate manpower, but the men were untrained and ill-equipped. Thus Cox limited his orders to defensive measures: throwing up breastworks at vital points along Morgan's suspected route, felling trees across roads and tearing up planks from bridges to delay the raiders. As the Rebels approached Cincinnati during the early morning hours on July 14th, a show of force by the hastily gathered militia deflected Morgan toward Camp Dennison. Morgan refused a confrontation with the camp garrison and continued to wind his way across southern Ohio.[41] By now his objective was to escape. But Burnside's regulars

---

[40] Ibid., 499-500.

[41] Ibid., 501-509. For the official correspondence relating to Cox's efforts to delay or capture Morgan, see O.R., XXIII, pt. 1, 743, 748, 755, 756, 768, 773, 786-87, 789, 790, 795.

held the Ohio River crossings, supported by steamers carrying rifled artillery. Meanwhile Hobson's men narrowed the gap between hunter and quarry to just ten miles. On the 18th the Confederates made a desperate effort to recross the Ohio at Buffington Island, but troops called from West Virginia easily thwarted the attempt. For eight more days Morgan eluded the Federals, losing hundreds of men through capture and sheer exhaustion. On July 26, the leader and his 400 remaining men were brought to bay at New Lisbon, Ohio. Lincoln ordered that Morgan be held in the federal penitentiary at Columbus in retaliation for reported Rebel abuse of captured Union officers. Although Morgan later carried off a spectacular escape and returned to the South, his career was ruined. He never again received an independent command.

In retrospect, Morgan's Raid must be written off as a spectacular, but entirely futile, operation.[42] Although the Confederacy lost 3,000 men, the raiders failed to delay Rosecrans' drive toward Chattanooga. North of the Ohio, the hard-pressed Rebels had been unable to burn supply depots or damage the railroads. The suppression of the raid, including payment of damage claims to citizens, cost Ohio a little more than one million dollars. The money, however, was well spent because it proved that the militia could react reasonably well under pressure to protect the state. It is

---

[42]Cox, Reminiscences, I, 508-509.

interesting to note that Southern sympathizers were not a problem throughout the entire episode.[43]

With Morgan behind bars, quiet returned to Ohio. Nothing important interrupted the routine until November 9, when Cox received an alarming message from Detroit. (Before Burnside went to East Tennessee, he added the Military District of Michigan to Cox's command.) The telegram said that some of Morgan's men, who had escaped to Canada, planned to launch an amphibious attack on the Federal military prison on Johnson's Island in Sandusky Bay.[44] It contained captured Confederate officers and their release would be a worthy objective. At first Cox was inclined to ignore the report, especially after he wired the United States Consul-General at Montreal, who replied that the entire thing was a fabrication. On the 12th, however, Secretary of War Stanton telegraphed that the British Minister in Washington had confirmed the rumor and directed Cox to take steps to defend the prison. Cox went quickly by rail to Sandusky and inspected the defenses on Johnson's Island. Because an attack had been considered so improbable, the prison was virtually undefended. Cox, aboard a yacht loaned by a citizen, scouted Sandusky Bay and decided the best plan would be to prevent a hostile craft from ever entering the harbor. At the mouth of the bay, where sandbars forced

---

[43]Roseboom, Ohio: Civil War Era, 424-25.

[44]O.R., Series III, III, 1012-13, 1015, 1043.

vessels into a narrow channel, Cox placed artillery so that the gunners could fire broadside at any unwelcome ship. Then, just in case the raiders managed to get past the shore batteries, Cox positioned more artillery on the island and strengthened the garrison with militia. By now the Confederates knew their security had been breached. They dropped their plans.[45] Cox had done his work well, the prison could be easily defended in the future.

While still at Sandusky Cox received long-awaited orders. He was directed to report for active duty to General Burnside in East Tennessee.[46] With high spirits, Cox quickly wrapped up his affairs at Cincinnati and left for the field.

---

[45]Cox, Reminiscences, II, 58-63.

[46]O.R., XXXI, pt. 3, 314.

CHAPTER V

THE ATLANTA CAMPAIGN

Cox left Cincinnati on December 9, 1863, for Knoxville, Tennessee, where he would report to General Burnside. He travelled by train to Lexington, Kentucky, where he requisitioned horses and wagons for the remainder of the journey. On the 11th the entourage left Lexington to wend its way across the mountains. The terrain reminded Cox very much of his travels in West Virginia; the roads were narrow and often so steep that double teams were required. Rain fell intermittently, adding to the discomfort of the travellers. At night they sought shelter with local residents, but sometimes were forced to camp out.

One evening the wet, exhausted group found shelter with a widow and her children. The large log cabin was divided into two parts, the family lived in the front half and the rear portion was unfinished except for a large fireplace and a bed in a small, partitioned chamber. The men dried their clothes before a roaring fire as they ate supper. Shortly they all laid down and dropped off to sleep quickly. But a short while later one man, in deep sleep, began to rattle the windows with his "nasal trumpeting," each measure ending with a high whistle. As Cox listened to

this racket, he debated whether to plug his ears or get up and rouse the offender. By this time everyone was awake. Just then the snorer ended a long passage with a loud snort, followed by complete silence. From the corner a drawling voice said, "Thank God he's dead." Gales of laughter swept through the room. Cox long wondered whether their entertainer slept another wink that night for fear that he might repeat his exhibition.[1]

While enroute Cox met Burnside, who had been relieved of his command and was returning to Ohio. Cox had anticipated continued service under Burnside and had expected an important assignment.[2] Now, with his friend being replaced by General John G. Foster, Cox was troubled. Before they parted, Burnside assured Cox that he had given a strong recommendation to Foster and said he believed Cox would receive a battlefield command. Hearing this cheerful news, Cox hurried to reach Knoxville before any decision was made. Leaving the wagons behind, he and a small escort reached their destination on December 18.[3]

When Cox met with General Foster the following day, he was informed that orders had been issued placing him in

---

[1]Cox, Reminiscences, II, 73-74.

[2]Cox to Garfield, December 6, 1863, Garfield Papers, VI, pt. 1. In this letter Cox stated that he was on his way to the front to assume command of the Twenty-third Corps. Evidently Burnside had promised the position to Cox during the time they worked together in Cincinnati.

[3]Cox, Reminiscences, II, 75-83.

command of the District of Kentucky.[4] Cox was dismayed by the appointment, which meant more of the inactivity he had disliked so intensely in Ohio. He prevailed upon Foster to reconsider, citing his long-standing request for active duty and his understanding with Burnside. Foster reviewed the situation and, after reading Burnside's notes, assigned Cox to the Twenty-third Corps, Army of the Ohio. As he was the senior brigadier serving with the corps, Cox became its commander.[5]

Cox moved to Blain's Crossroads, where the Twenty-third Corps was bivouacked, and set up headquarters in four tents. He believed that constant exposure to the elements, rather than continually transferring back and forth between a comfortable office and temporary field quarters, made him less susceptible to illness. Cox also thought his relationship with the men in the ranks improved when his living conditions closely resembled theirs. Within a few days Cox had appointed his staff officers and had reviewed the troops.[6]

The condition of the Union troops in and around Knoxville was desperate. Bragg's two-month siege of Chattanooga, following the Confederate victory at Chickamauga (September 19-20, 1863), had drastically reduced the flow of supplies. The Federals tried to open up a supply route, using wagons, from Lexington; but the miserable roads and

---

[4] O.R., XXXI, pt. 1, 283; pt. 3, 407.

[5] Ibid., pt. 3, 457, 468.

[6] Ibid., 463; Cox, Reminiscences, II, 87-89.

poor weather kept the flow of provisions to a mere trickle. The men needed to be completely reoutfitted before they could return to the field. Their uniforms were tattered; many men lacked a complete set of clothing. The appearance of bloody footprints in the snow attested to the shortage of shoes. The men had been on half-rations for several weeks because the mainstay of the army's diet--meat and bread--could not be secured in adequate amounts. There were cattle at Lexington, but they could not even be driven forward due to the lack of fodder along the route. Small rations, such as coffee, sugar, and salt, had long since disappeared from the camp mess. The solution to the problem, of course, was to reopen the railroad to Chattanooga, where a huge supply depot was located. But the tracks needed to be completely rebuilt. Meanwhile, the men struggled along with what they had.[7]

Knoxville, nestled in the Holston River Valley between the Cumberland and Great Smoky Mountains, served as the forward base for the Union forces operating in East Tennessee. Cumberland Gap, sixty miles to the northeast, was also held by the Federals. With a firm grip on these two positions, the Federals prevented the Confederates from moving into southern Kentucky or upon Chattanooga. By securing Knoxville, the Federals also denied the Rebels use of the most direct rail connection between Virginia and

---

[7]Cox, Reminiscences, II, 89-91.

Georgia.[8]

The Confederates in the Holston Valley, led by General James Longstreet, desired to drive the Federals out of Knoxville. This would clear the way for an advance upon Chattanooga, catching Rosecrans in a vise between Longstreet and Bragg. But such a maneuver was not anticipated before spring because the Rebels, too, lacked supplies. Yet for all their deficiencies, both armies sparred continually seeking a weak point in the opponent's line.

On Christmas Eve Cox received orders to move his men to Strawberry Plains where they would reinforce the garrison and assist in rebuilding the long railroad trestle over the Holston River.[9] Cox immediately sent up two divisions and on the 27th he brought forward the remaining division. Strawberry Plains had been used continually as a base by either the Federals or Confederates. It was a shambles. The constant tramping of men and animals had stripped the ground bare and, with a thaw in progress, mud dominated the scene. Being late arrivals, the corps did not have much choice in selecting a camp and considered it a rare stroke of luck when they located a grassy knoll nearby. They soon discovered why this particular ground had remained unoccupied; the raw winds swept over and around the hill so

[8]The railroad was known as the Virginia and East Tennessee north of Knoxville, and as the Tennessee and Georgia below the town.

[9]O.R., XXXI, pt. 3, 482-83, 490, 519-20, 537-38.

that its chilling currents could not be escaped. On New Year's Day, about 10 P.M., a cold wave and snow moved in with a vengeance. A gale wind threatened to tear the tent stakes from the soft ground and sent burning embers rolling across the camp. Fortunately the tents, still wet from earlier rains, did not catch fire. After seeing to his own tent and staff, Cox spent the rest of the night going through the camp to look after his men and to chat with them as they sat huddled about their fires. It was too cold to sleep. The men, having received no soap for two months, were covered with grime from the smoke, appearing not unlike chimney-sweeps. Despite all the discomfort, Cox heard no complaints and his heart swelled with pride, with men like these he need not worry about their performance in battle.[10]

General Ulysses S. Grant, the supreme military commander in the West, stopped at Strawberry Plains on January 3, 1864, during a general inspection tour. Grant's report to Washington stressed the problems confronting the troops in East Tennessee and urged that every effort be made to repair quickly the railroad from Chattanooga to Knoxville.[11]

Cox was not impressed with the man destined to lead the Union armies to victory. He found Grant shy and reticent; Grant spoke only when asking or answering a question. Even when the officers gathered informally after the

---

[10]Cox, Reminiscences, II, 94-100.

[11]O.R., XXXI, pt. 2, 43.

tour, he did not take an active part in the conversation. Cox was especially disappointed that Grant said little about military affairs or his previous experiences. After the war, however, Cox commented that Grant's genius lay in his quick grasp of details and in his decisive orders. These qualities had not been revealed during Grant's brief visit to Strawberry Plains.[12]

Three brigades of the Twenty-third went, on January 13, to Dandridge to support a reconnaisance mission.[13] At Dandridge Cox's units linked up with two divisions from the Fourth Corps and several companies of cavalry. General Phil Sheridan, of the Fourth Corps, commanded the entire operation.[14] On the 16th Longstreet's cavalry unexpectedly engaged the advance units. Cox feared that the cavalry, with its greater mobility, might block their escape route to Strawberry Plains. The following day Rebel infantry skirmished with Sheridan's troops and the dismounted cavalrymen, but Cox's men did not get into the fight.[15] A council of officers agreed that Dandridge could not be held and a couple of regiments were put to work building a narrow bridge across the French River to facilitate the withdrawal. Sheridan planned to march several miles on the night of the

---

[12]Cox, Reminiscences, II, 101-104.

[13]O.R., XXXII, pt. 2, 82.

[14]Ibid., 102.

[15]Ibid., 116.

17th, but the movement got fouled up. The bridge led only to an island and another channel separated the men from shore! Someone had neglected to make certain that the entire stream had been spanned. Working quickly, some temporary barges were constructed and most of the Federals were brought across by daybreak, but they were still vulnerable should Longstreet press them.[16] Luckily the Rebels did not give hot pursuit and the column returned safely to Strawberry Plains. As a scouting operation the affair had been futile.

On the day Cox's men returned, a dispatch arrived from Grant directing General Foster to concentrate his troops in Knoxville.[17] This precaution was taken because reports arriving in the Capital asserted that Longstreet had been reinforced and would soon attack. When the authorities learned about the engagement at Dandridge, they interpreted it as the beginning of Longstreet's advance. Cox discounted the "rumors," however, and complained bitterly (and privately!) about officials in Washington who moved troops from place to place although they were hundreds of miles from the action. He believed the officers in the field were better judges of the situation.[18] Although the reconnaisance to Dandridge had not been particularly fruitful, there had been no evidence that Longstreet was reinforced or that he planned

---

[16]Cox, Reminiscences, II, 116.

[17]O.R., XXXII, pt. 2, 162.

[18]Cox, Reminiscences, II, 122-24.

a major operation. But orders were orders; the men broke up camp and returned to Knoxville.

When the enemy failed to appear, the troops were sent into winter quarters. Although no one expected an attack, the three corps were posted so that Knoxville could be defended: the Twenty-third was assigned to quarters within the city, the Fourth and Ninth were stationed nearby. In the following weeks the supply problem eased due to the reopening of the railroad to Chattanooga on a limited basis and the reduction of the number of men in camp.[19]

Excitement of a different nature pulsed through the army camps during these quiet months. A bill promoting Grant to Lieutenant-General and giving him command of the Union armies was before Congress. A contest was on to determine who would receive the many promotions that would be opened up by Grant's elevation. The army's entire command structure buzzed with rumors, and intrigues were soon underway in Washington to push for the advancement of particular men. The uncertainty in Knoxville was compounded by General Foster's request to be relieved of duty. In January Foster's horse had fallen on him, reopening an old leg wound. With the passage of time the wound became infected and forced Foster to retire. After several weeks the War Department announced the new commanders for the Western theater. Sherman became the commander of the

---

[19] Ibid., 128-29; O.R., XXXII, pt. 2, 173, 176-77.

Military Division of the Mississippi, with control over the Armies of the Cumberland, the Ohio and the Tennessee. General George Thomas was tapped to lead the Army of the Cumberland; Rosecrans was transferred to Missouri. Serving as the top officer in the Department of the Ohio and as the active leader of its army was John C. Schofield. James McPherson became the leader of the Army of the Tennessee. Cox's old friend, Burnside, finally got his wish when Grant transferred him and the Ninth Corps to North Carolina. Cox's future was left up in the air by these arrangements. With Schofield moving in to take over the Army of the Ohio (the Twenty-third Corps), he was out of a job.[20]

Schofield arrived in Knoxville on February 9 and invited Cox to become his Chief of Staff. Since an independent command was unavailable at the time, Cox accepted. The Chief of Staff serves as the eyes, ears, and legs of the commanding officer. It is his responsibility to convey orders to the field officers and to relay back information received from the front. When delay could result in disaster, the Chief makes important decisions.[21] Although Cox did not underestimate the importance of his position, he requested an assignment to active duty at the earliest opportunity.[22]

---

[20]Cox, Reminiscences, II, 132-34, 137-40.

[21]Ibid., 145-46, 157-59.

[22]O.R., LII, pt. 1, 521.

While Schofield remained in Knoxville organizing Departmental affairs, Cox directed a reconnaissance up the Holston Valley to New Market. Longstreet did not offer serious resistance and the advance was completed with little difficulty. From New Market Cox sent forward a cavalry column to keep an eye on the enemy. This was Secessionist country and many residents had fled with Longstreet; those who remained were sullen and uncooperative. Late one night a pro-Union citizen came to headquarters and warned that an attack on the advanced cavalry camp was scheduled at dawn. Two hours before dawn Cox set out, accompanied by an orderly, for the front. It was raining again. The murky darkness prevented them from seeing the road and Cox allowed his horse to pick the trail. At last they reached a few tents; Cox asked to be shown to the Captain's quarters. In a few minutes their Irish guide had dressed and, taking the lead, moved away from the firelight into the still, deep darkness. The guide warned that they must follow him closely "for there's pits every little way where thim ribils dug foundations for their chimbleys." Then "Paddy" disappeared; Cox jerked his reins so hard that his horse sat back on its haunches--their guide had found a chimney pit the hard way. Hardly a rod farther Paddy exclaimed, "Be jabers, I've found another." After an understandably slow trip through the area, Cox met the captain and ordered out extra patrols to insure that an attack would not catch them asleep. Retracing his steps, Cox arrived back at headquarters before

his staff had arisen. This sort of night duty occurred often.[23] Despite a deep conviction that the alarm was merely a rumor or ruse, he felt obligated to make sure that his men were not surprised and routed because their commander had failed to exercise proper caution.

After he became General-in-Chief, Grant met with his subordinates in Washington to discuss strategy. Grant recommended that the Federals concentrate most of their manpower in two huge armies--the Army of the Potomac in the East and a conglomerate of the three armies in the West under Sherman.[24] The plan was accepted.

During April the Twenty-third Corps finished its work in the Holston Valley so that it could join Sherman near Chattanooga by May 1st. The objective was to drive out the Rebels, then quickly withdraw, ripping up the railroad and burning bridges to make impractical further enemy operations in the Valley.[25] Before these activities began, Cox was placed in command of the Third Division of the Corps.[26]

The Twenty-third pushed Longstreet steadily until he left the Valley via Bulls Gap. He aided the Federals during his retreat when he burned bridges and wrecked parts of the railroad, thereby allowing the Union soldiers to

---

[23]Cox, Reminiscences, II, 148-50.

[24]O.R., XXXII, pt. 3, 245-46.

[25]Cox, Reminiscences, II, 157.

[26]O.R., XXXII, pt. 3, 245.

conceal their plan to do the same thing. Cox's Division completed the destruction of the railroad as it withdrew. Cox had mixed emotions when his men put the torch to the trestle at Strawberry Plains, which they had earlier helped rebuild; but he knew it must be done to prevent the Rebels from quickly returning to the area. On May 3 the Corps reached Cleveland, Tennessee, and the following day moved forward to Red Clay, Georgia, on the extreme left of Sherman's huge army.[27]

The long planning sessions now bore fruit as the three Western armies moved into position for the Atlanta Campaign. Sherman placed Thomas' Army of the Cumberland, 60,000 strong, in the center. The Army of the Tennessee (McPherson) with 35,000 men formed the right wing, and Schofield's smaller Army of the Ohio (17,600) fell in on the left. This gave Sherman 112,000 men, including approximately 15,000 cavalry.[28] To maintain this army Sherman estimated that 150 carloads of supplies would be consumed daily. In view of this requirement the railroad was of vital importance. As he advanced, Sherman planned to construct blockhouses at strategic points along the railroad to insure its uninterrupted operation.[29]

The Rebel army encamped near Dalton, Georgia, also

---

[27] Ibid., pt. 1, 53; pt. 3, 477, 492-93, 500-501, 512.

[28] Ibid., pt. 3, 468-69.

[29] Cox, Reminiscences, II, 176-78. Chattanooga served as the storage depot for the supplies until they were shipped forward.

prepared for the inevitable collision. Joseph E. Johnston had been placed in command in December, 1863, after General Bragg asked to be relieved. Through the subsequent months Johnston had labored to develop a strategy for preventing a Union victory in the West. Since his army (about 75,000) was smaller than Sherman's, he concluded to operate on the defensive, to avoid a pitched battle and to exploit every opportunity to whittle away at Sherman's flanks and supply lines. As a result the Atlanta Campaign developed into a long exercise in tactical maneuvering as Sherman attempted to drive the Confederates into the open and Johnston worked desperately to avoid a direct confrontation.[30]

The push toward Dalton began on May 7, 1864, timed to coincide with the start of operations by the Army of the Potomac in Virginia. By sending two huge armies into action simultaneously, Grant believed the Federals could prevent the Confederates from transferring their troops from theater to theater. Sherman's tactics before Dalton set a pattern that was used, with minor variations, throughout the campaign. He sent forward Schofield and Thomas to engage the Rebels, and ordered McPherson to move around the enemy's left flank. McPherson was to block Johnston's escape route by seizing Resaca, located fifteen miles below Dalton, thus forcing the Rebels to fight. But delays prevented McPherson from reaching Resaca before the Confederates covered their

---

[30] Ibid., 182-95.

flank. With McPherson bogged down, Sherman ordered Schofield to transfer his men from the left wing of the army to the right. Sherman thought this maneuver would force the Confederates to stretch their line so thin that the Federals could break through.[31]

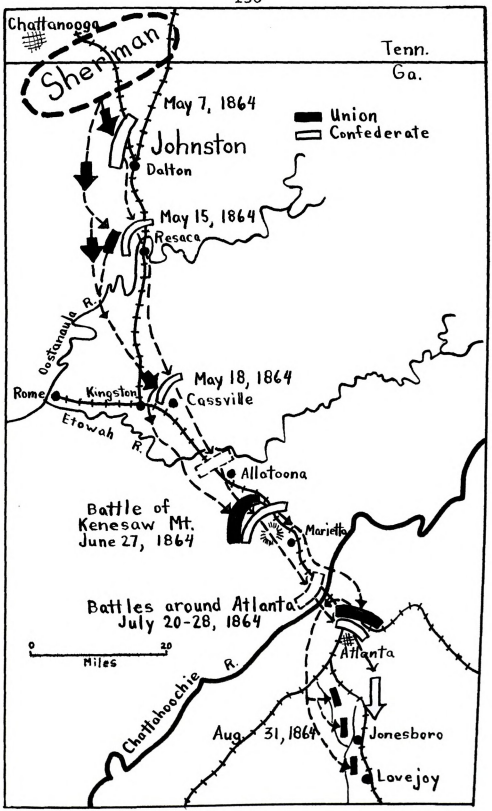
Cox's Third Division, which formed the extreme left of Sherman's line, began to move around the rear of the army on May 10. The maneuver was fraught with danger; a division cannot turn its back on the enemy and march away without inviting disaster. To provide protection, Cox devised a highly successful scheme. He stationed his troops in two lines about one hundred yards apart. The second line was ordered to lie down and be prepared to give cover to the first line during the withdrawal. After the first line passed through it went a short distance, laid down and covered its comrades. In this fashion half of the men always faced the Rebels and kept them at a safe distance. With Cox's Division leading the way, the entire Army of the Ohio circled behind Thomas and McPherson to extend the right wing of Sherman's army.[32]

The Federals got into position by May 12th and prepared to drive toward Resaca. But that same evening Johnston, who had learned of the Federal's effort to get

---

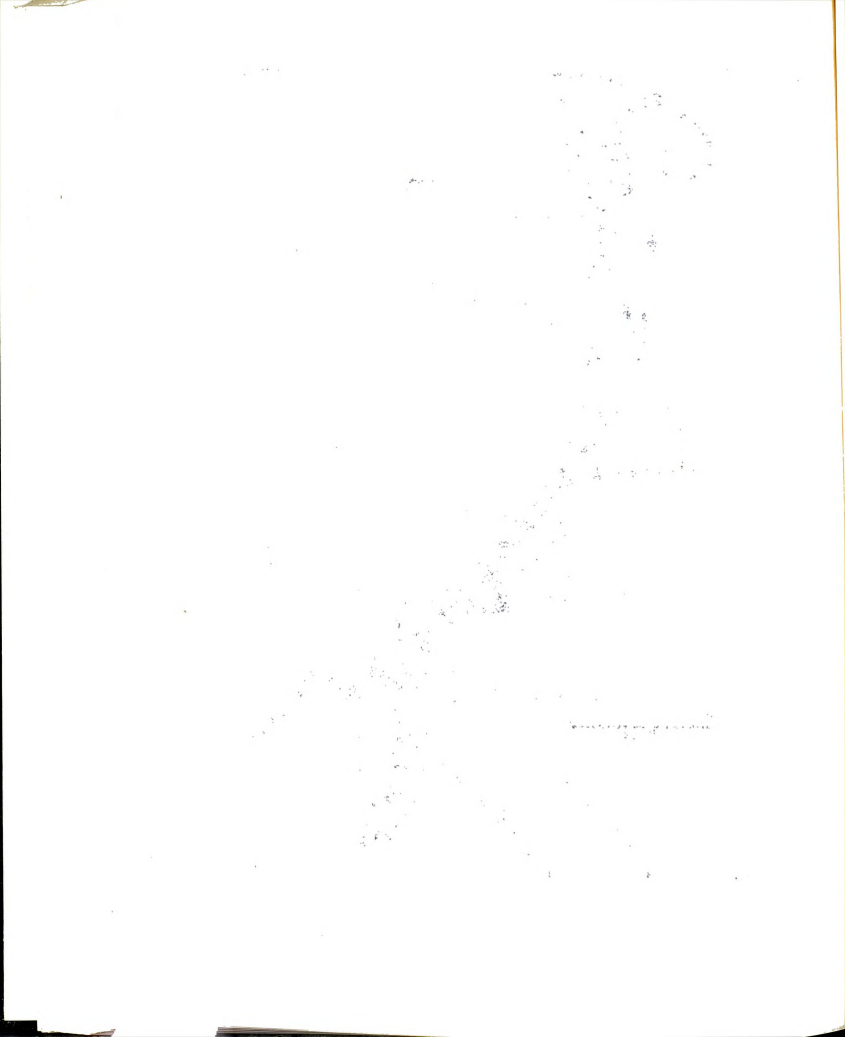
[31] Ibid., 200-213.

[32] O.R., XXXVIII, pt. 2, 674-79, this is Cox's report of operations from May 7-16, 1864, covering action around Dalton and Resaca. Unless otherwise indicated the description of this part of the campaign is based on his report.



ATLANTA CAMPAIGN

Adapted from Boatner, Civil War Dictionary, 31.



behind him, pulled out of Dalton and dug in around Resaca. Sherman's excellent plan had been thwarted by its slow execution.

The action around Resaca involved constant skirmishing as the Union troops pressed in upon the Rebel fortifications. Sherman, keeping his army in constant motion, continued the wheeling movement so that eventually Cox's division once again formed the left of the Union line, with the Army of the Cumberland returning to the center and the Army of the Tennessee to the right. On May 14 McPherson slipped across the Oostanaula River, southwest of Resaca, and threatened the railroad to Atlanta. Johnston, reacting to the danger, pulled out of Resaca the following day and retreated southward to keep his army between Sherman and Atlanta.

Cox's men fought well at Resaca. They attacked the enemy lines, carried the Rebels' advanced rifle-pits, and forced them to retire to their stronger secondary line. This was perilous work. The soldiers were exposed to constant rifle and artillery fire. When they reached the rifle-pits, the men dug in quickly to protect themselves from the worst of the barrage. Cox personally directed these operations, riding continually up and down the line to urge his troops forward.[33]

---

[33]Oliver Otis Howard, Autobiography of Oliver Otis Howard (2 vols.; New York: The Baker and Taylor Co., 1907), I, 511. Howard describes Cox as a "handsome, gallant young officer and able man."

After pulling out of Resaca, the Rebels concentrated at Cassville, just north of the Etowah River. Sherman made a vigorous effort to bring the enemy to bay. The terrain in front of and around Cassville was relatively level and cleared, in stark contrast to the sharp ridges and tangled forests at Dalton and Resaca. To exploit the favorable ground and to prevent delays, Sherman spread out his army along an eight mile front and assigned to each corps a specific line of march. Unfortunately, when General Hooker's scouts reported that the ford assigned to him was impassable, he shifted his corps several miles to the east and preempted the route reserved for the Army of the Ohio. Thus, when Cox reached the stream he found Hooker's men starting across. Cox complained bitterly about Hooker's unwise action because it delayed several thousand men for twenty-four hours just when speed was essential.[34]

It appeared for a time that the Confederates would make a determined stand at Cassville. But Johnston's corps commanders, John B. Hood and Leonidas Polk, counseled against offering battle. They feared Sherman could outflank their army and destroy it. Consequently the Confederates evacuated Cassville, pulled across the Etowah River, and fortified a new position at Allatoona.

During the brief stay near Cassville the Federal army was reinforced by the return of several veteran

---

[34]Cox, Reminiscences, II, 225-28; O.R., XXXVIII, pt. 2, 679.

regiments from furlough. Cox's division received nine regiments, more than enough to replace losses incurred in previous action.[35] The Union's manpower advantage began to take effect; Johnston could not get replacements for his casualties and the odds grew greater in favor of the invaders. Moreover, the flow of supplies to the front continued unchecked despite interference by Confederate cavalry. Sherman's blockhouse plan worked admirably and prevented the raiders from seriously damaging the railroad. Increased in size and fully-equipped, the Union army prepared to cross the Etowah River to make Johnston fight.

Since the Rebels had avoided every effort to trap them, Sherman decided to employ a new tactic. The Federals had been following the Confederates' movements along the railroad connecting Chattanooga and Atlanta. This had been the most practical route because they could readily get supplies by rebuilding the tracks as they advanced. On May 20th Sherman issued orders for all units to prepare for twenty days separation from the railroad. He planned to move west and south of Allatoona and place his army between Johnston and Atlanta.[36] To screen the movement of his main column, Sherman ordered several units to press directly toward the Etowah River bridges. Among these units was

---

[35]Cox, Reminiscences, II, 237.

[36]O.R., XXXVIII, pt. 2, 679-85, Cox's report for operations from May 16 to July 8, 1864; Cox, Reminiscences, II, 231-32.

Cox's division, which pushed through Cartersville and struck the Rebel rear-guard covering the railroad bridge. After several hours of sharp skirmishing the enemy withdrew across the river, putting the torch to the trestle as they retreated. In the meantime Cox sent a detachment upstream to burn flour mills and to destroy the Etowah Iron Works. Cox reported that the riverbanks were very steep, enabling a handful of Confederates to stop a much larger force. In view of this, Sherman's determination to move south of the river by an indirect route gained more support as the wisest plan.[37]

The immensity of the operation precluded keeping it secret. On May 23rd the Federals began crossing the Etowah; seven days elapsed before the one-hundred thousand blue-coated soldiers had tramped over the temporary bridges. As Sherman approached Allatoona, Johnston's scouts penetrated the screen and reported the location of the main column to their commander. On June 4 the Rebels once again eluded Sherman; they withdrew southward to Marietta, anchoring their line on Brush and Lost Mountains. There, facing northwest, the Confederates prepared to contest Sherman's advance.

During June, 1864, the question of Cox's promotion arose once again. As seen earlier, Cox's advancement to Major General had not been ratified by Congress in 1862

---

[37] O.R., XXXVIII, pt. 2, 680-81, pt. 4, 286, 298.

despite support from Burnside and McClellan.[38] Now Sherman and Schofield renewed the issue with their personal recommendations. They supported the promotion because it would reward Cox for his excellent service and would allow him to command the Twenty-third Corps in Schofield's absence. Cox was convinced that nothing would happen; he was, however, pleased to receive renewed assurance that he was performing his duties well.[39]

At about this same time General Alvin Hovey, commander of the First Division, Twenty-third Corps, resigned his post. Sherman tried to dissuade Hovey, pointing out that quitting in the face of the enemy would be considered cowardice. But Hovey persisted and was relieved. This had hardly transpired when word came that Hovey had been made a Brevet Major-General.[40] What an uproar! Why should an undeserving man, who resigned his battlefield commission in the midst of a crucial campaign, be promoted, while Cox, better qualified, remained at the front with a lower rank? Sherman protested vehemently that no promotions should be

---

[38]See above 94-97.

[39]Cox to Garfield, June 5, 1864, Garfield Papers, VI, pt. 1; Cox to Aaron F. Perry, June 9, 1864, Letter Book 2. To Garfield, Cox wrote, "I shall look on with quite as much amusement as interest, to see how far the administration will carry the game of snubbing its friends."

[40]Technically a "Brevet" rank was purely honorary and did not give to its holder the authority delegated to a man with full rank. During the war, however, the distinction was blurred and in many instances the owner of a brevet rank could act as though he held a regular appointment. Boatner, Civil War Dictionary, 84.

made among his officers without his personal recommendation. The complaint, however, did not alter the outcome of the incident. Hovey's troops were divided between Cox and General Milo Hascall's Second Division.[41]

As the Federals pressed toward the Confederates near Marietta, the weather turned nasty. Almost three weeks of continuous rain hampered their movements and made miserable the task of carrying the fight to the enemy. Sherman steadily broadened his flanks, trying to force the enemy to overextend his line. But Johnston thwarted the plan by shortening and curving his line to avoid being outflanked. On June 25th, Sherman reluctantly changed his tactics and issued orders for a general assault for the 27th.[42]

Sherman's plan called upon Schofield's army to create a diversion on the right before McPherson and Thomas rushed against the Rebel lines on Kenesaw Mountain. Sherman hoped Johnston would transfer men to stop Schofield, thereby weakening the Confederate line where the major attack would

---

[41]Cox, "Diary," June 9, 1864; Cox, Reminiscences, II, 249-53. Brigadier General Peter J. Osterhaus was also promoted at this time, largely for political reasons. Sherman's indignation was great: "I wish to put on record this, my emphatic opinion, that it is an act of injustice to officers who stand by their posts in the day of danger to neglect them and advance such as Hovey and Osterhaus, who left us in the midst of bullets to go to the rear in search of personal advancement. If the rear be the post of honor, then we had better all change front on Washington." O.R., XXXVIII, pt. V, 247.

[42]Cox, Reminiscences, II, 259-60. Sherman's reluctance to attack arose from the strength of the outlying works captured from the Confederates; their main line would be even stronger and many Federals would fall in the assault.

strike. Cox pushed his men forward on the 26th to get in a position for the demonstration, and, despite exposure to constant fire, established a beachhead across Olleys Creek. In front of and above the beachhead lay the main Rebel works.[43] At 4 A.M. on the 27th Cox sent his First Brigade into action; the other two brigades followed at half-hour intervals. As Cox's men fought their way up the ridge, the rest of the Army of the Ohio swung into action to support the movement. By early afternoon Cox had captured a portion of the breastworks overlooking the Rebel supply line, and if the advantage could be followed up rapidly the Confederates might be trapped.[44] Setbacks suffered elsewhere, however, ruled out such a thrust, and the overall assault failed. Nevertheless, both Sherman and Schofield commended Cox for the brilliant handling of his division.[45]

McPherson's and Thomas' assault on Kenesaw Mountain quickly bogged down. The rough ground and tangled forest compelled the attackers to move forward in narrow columns, rather than on a broad front, enabling the Confederates to concentrate their rifle and artillery fire on compact targets. Union casualties were heavy. After penetrating the enemy's outlying works, the Federals ceased their attack. The ferocity of the action and the impenetrable nature of

---

[43] O.R., XXXVIII, pt. 4, 597-600.

[44] Ibid., 619-21.

[45] Ibid., 621-22; John M. Schofield, Forty-six Years in the Army (New York: The Century Co., 1897), 144.

the Rebel works was reflected in the casualty figures for the day: Sherman lost 2,500, Johnston only 500.[46]

Although Johnston succeeded in repulsing Sherman, he withdrew cautiously toward Atlanta. At first he intended to make a stand north of the Chattahoochee River, but a vigorous pursuit by McPherson and Thomas compelled him to retreat across the stream. He destroyed all bridges and ferries and the Federals were delayed several days until they found a safe crossing.

With careful planning and a bit of luck, Cox's Division was the first to cross the river. For several days many Federal units had hammered unsuccessfully at the Rebels on the opposite shore. Since brute force had failed, Cox resolved to use trickery. Scouting the area, he discovered a narrow creek flowing into the Chattahoochee where small boats could be hidden for a surprise movement. At 3:30 A.M. on July 8th, Cox sent a regiment upstream to a fishdam to pretend that it was forcing its way over the dam. Half an hour later about 100 seasoned sharpshooters rowed out of the creek and headed for the opposite bank. The plan worked beautifully. The Rebels, distracted by the diversion, had left only a few men at the point where the sharpshooters landed. The Federals quickly cleared the area and secured an excellent position on the high bank without losing even one man. Cox rushed across more men and a couple of batteries to

---

[46]Jacob Dolson Cox, Atlanta (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1882), 127-29.

enlarge the beachhead.[47] During the next few days Sherman's entire army crossed without further incident. Now the route to Atlanta was open; there were no more rivers to cross.

On July 17, the Confederate army defending Atlanta got a new commander. For several weeks President Davis had expressed displeasure with General Johnston because he had not acted offensively to halt the Federal's advance. The Confederate President could not understand why Johnston continually retreated southward, surely he must fight somewhere! Johnston had operated on the defensive to avoid complete destruction, but had failed to report fully the compelling reasons for his decisions. Consequently Davis dispatched General Bragg to inspect the army and to determine whether Johnston had any solid proposal for stopping Sherman. Johnston remained tight-lipped and Bragg recommended his removal.[48] Davis acted, replacing him with General Hood, a move destined to have a decisive impact on the outcome of the campaign.

Sherman and his officers were elated by the news. They knew Hood was a fighter; now the Rebels would try to smash their lines.[49] Quietly Sherman passed the word, "Be prepared for attack at all times."

---

[47] O.R., XXXVIII, pt. 5, 85-86, 89-90; Record Group 393 - Twenty-third Army Corps, Letter Book 19, 87-91, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

[48] Cox, Reminiscences, II, 270-74.

[49] Ibid., 277.

Sherman's plan for taking Atlanta followed the pattern used so successfully throughout the campaign. His army first extended its line to the east cutting the Georgia Railroad; then it wheeled to the west circling the city and tearing up the Atlanta and West Point Railroad. This action effectively isolated Hood, making it almost impossible for him to receive reinforcement or supplies. Throughout the operation Sherman used Thomas' large Army of the Cumberland as the mainstay of his line, swinging McPherson's and Schofield's smaller armies to the left or right as conditions dictated.[50]

On July 18, Schofield and McPherson moved toward Decatur, through which ran the Georgia Railroad. By the 20th both forces had reached their objective and delivered destructive blows to the tracks. During the movement Cox's Division led the advance of the Twenty-third Corps. Despite steady resistance from skirmishers, they pushed the Rebels back with resolute efforts. On every ridge they constructed light fortifications just in case the Confederates should launch a heavy counter-attack.

Meanwhile Thomas' army pushed across Peachtree Creek. During these movements, at a point where the terrain was marshy, a gap opened up between Thomas and the other two

---

[50]For the description of the final action around Atlanta I have relied upon a variety of sources: Cox's report of Operations, July 9- September 8, 1864, O.R., XXXVIII, pt. 2, 688-692; Cox, Atlanta, Chapters XII-XV; Cox, Reminiscences, II, Chapters XXIX-XL; and Schofield, Forty-six Years in the Army, Chapter IX.

armies. Hood learned of the gap and resolved (July 20) to attack Thomas' flank, hoping to divide the Federals and defeat them in detail. But he had considerable difficulty getting his men into proper position, and his attack did not begin until 3 P.M., two hours behind schedule. The delay aided the Federals immeasurably because, during those two hours, Thomas brought over many regiments and Schofield extended his line to the right, nearly closing the gap between them. Despite the rapidly changing scene Hood stubbornly proceeded with the assault. After minor, initial success the Rebels suffered severely as Thomas and Sherman brought forward reinforcements and used massed artillery to turn them back. Again and again the valiant Confederates charged, but each desperate effort was repulsed. Both sides took heavy casualties during the engagement; Hood lost 6,000 and Thomas 2,000.

Hood, having failed to neutralize Thomas or to separate the Federal armies, now turned his attention to McPherson's army approaching Atlanta from the east. He struck savagely on July 22, triggering a battle which eventually extended along a five-mile front. Despite repeated attacks, the Rebels could not breach the Union line and were thrown back with losses amounting to approximately 10,000 before the day's action came to an end. By contrast the Federals suffered only 3,500 casualties, although the death of General McPherson, during the opening minutes of the engagement, added greatly to their sorrow. To replace

McPherson, Sherman chose General O. O. Howard.

Sherman now executed the second phase of his plan, a swing westward above Atlanta. Using Thomas' army as a pivot, Schofield and Howard marched their men from the left wing to the right wing of the Federal line. Then the entire army moved southward toward its target, the Atlanta and West Point Railroad. Although they met constant resistance, the Federals moved according to schedule until July 28th. On that day Hood's men delivered, at Ezra Church, a third desperate attack. The Army of the Tennessee, on the extreme right, again received the brunt of the assault. The results were the same as earlier: the Confederates expended 5,000 troops, while Howard's men took only 600 casualties. This brought an end to sharp fighting around Atlanta; in eight days Hood had lost 21,000 irreplaceable soldiers. The morale in the Rebel ranks sank so low that some Confederate units would not obey orders to attack. At the same time confidence within the Federal forces reached a new peak; they were convinced that they could achieve their objective.

For another tedious month Sherman edged southward. On August 29, 1864, the Federals finally crossed the West Point Railroad and began to drive east around the city. Two days later, Cox's Division took Rough and Ready Station below Atlanta, and pressed on to join Howard at Jonesboro, where Hood was expected to make a final resistance.[51] Hood,

---

[51] O.R., XXXVIII, pt. 5, 732-35.

however, did not offer battle; he withdrew rapidly to the north, leaving Atlanta open to Federal occupation. On September 1, Thomas' men entered the city, bringing the Atlanta Campaign to a close.

The capture of Atlanta set off rejoicing in the North. A mortal blow had been struck against the Confederacy; the eastern Confederacy had been deeply penetrated and Hood's army was now in terrible condition. Sherman's success, coupled with Grant's continued pressure on Lee, brought for the first time some assurance that the Union would emerge victorious. Even high-ranking Confederate officials admitted privately that the South probably could not recover from the disaster.[52]

The Federals spent nearly a month encamped around Atlanta, enjoying a much needed rest and replenishing their supplies. The Army of the Ohio was posted near Decatur. On September 16, Schofield left to visit Knoxville and Louisville on departmental business, neglected since May. During his absence, Cox commanded the Twenty-third Corps, holding that position until Schofield returned towards the end of October.[53]

Sherman and Schofield both urged again that Cox be promoted to Major-General in recognition of his service. Schofield's recommendation was especially strong and

---

[52]Cox, Reminiscences, II, 291.

[53]O.R., XXXIX, pt. 2, 377, 379.

complimentary:

> I have no hesitation in saying that I have never seen a more able and efficient division commander. General Cox is possessed of a very high order of talent and superior education. As a commander he is discreet, energetic and brave. As a just reward for long, faithful and efficient services and as an act of justice to the army and the country, I earnestly recommend that Brig. Gen. J. D. Cox be appointed Major-General of volunteers.[54]

Sherman seconded these sentiments and personally assured Cox, before he left on the March to the Sea, that he believed the promotion would finally be granted.[55]

When he had met with Grant in March, Sherman had indicated that Atlanta would be only his first objective. From there he proposed to advance eastward to Savannah or Augusta. At that time, Grant had directed that a second Federal column should move toward Atlanta from Mobile, Alabama, but Rebel resistance around Mobile had prevented the execution of the plan. If the line to Mobile had been secured, Sherman could have obtained his supplies for renewed action from that base. Instead his provisions and equipment had to be brought to Atlanta from Chattanooga via the railroad, a distance of 140 miles. In order to speed up his preparations, Sherman ordered all civilians out of Atlanta and turned the city into a vast supply depot. Simultaneously he put several regiments to work constructing fortifications which would allow a small garrison to hold

---

[54] Ibid., 366.

[55] Ibid., pt. 3, 413; Cox, "Diary," October 30, 1864.

the city after he departed.[56]

Meanwhile Hood mapped out his next move. From Sherman's preparations he judged that an inactive winter in camp was not in the offering. He accurately surmised that the Federals would go east, hoping to force him to resist the advance and draw his army away from its base. To thwart such an effort, Hood resolved to strike at Sherman's line of communications and keep him tied down in Georgia or Tennessee. Consequently, Hood sent his cavalry north to harass the railroad, while he started with his infantry toward Allatoona.[57]

Sherman alerted Thomas, who was at Chattanooga, and prepared to follow Hood north. Sherman decided to delay his move until Hood committed his troops at Allatoona, thinking that the Rebels could be trapped between his own and Thomas' armies. In accordance with the plan, Cox's command left Decatur on October 10 enroute to Rome, Georgia. Although Hood did attack Allatoona he remained wary enough to avoid being caught. From Allatoona the Rebels moved further north to threaten Resaca and Dalton, but did not attack in force. As a result the Federals retraced the route they had travelled during the Atlanta campaign. On October 28, Sherman issued his last orders before returning

---

[56]Cox, Reminiscences, II, 293-94, 303-306, 318-32; Jacob Dolson Cox, The March to the Sea: Franklin and Nashville (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1882), Chapter I.

[57]Cox, Reminiscences, II, 310-12.

to Atlanta to begin the March to the Sea. Sherman sent some units back to Atlanta to bring his column up to 50,000 men; the rest, including Cox, were ordered to Chattanooga. Cox's men arrived by rail on November 7, and came under the command of Thomas, to whom Sherman had given command of all operations in Tennessee.[58]

During the march toward Dalton, Schofield, bringing additional troops from Chattanooga, rejoined the main column. Sherman, Schofield and Cox met to discuss the future role of the Twenty-third Corps. Earlier Sherman had intimated that he would take the Corps, with Cox in command, along on his march, while Schofield remained behind as departmental commander. When Schofield learned of the proposal, he demurred, saying he preferred to retain personal control over troops in the field. Sherman allowed Schofield and Cox to decide among themselves. Schofield urged that they both remain behind, pointing out that Hood's present course would soon carry the war into central Tennessee. Any hard fighting would be done by the troops under Thomas and they could see plenty of action. The logic of the argument and his high regard for Schofield's friendship convinced Cox that he should stay with the Twenty-third Corps.[59] He and Schofield bade farewell to Sherman and turned north to help Thomas deal with Hood's army.

---

[58] O.R., XXXIX, pt. 2, 540, 789-95.

[59] Cox, Reminiscences, II, 315-16.

CHAPTER VI

FRANKLIN AND NASHVILLE

After the train carrying the Twenty-third Corps steamed into Chattanooga on November 8, 1864, Cox set up polls in a box car to allow the soldiers to vote in the presidential election. A carnival atmosphere prevailed as the men cast their ballots solidly for Abraham Lincoln. The military victories of previous months had removed many doubts about the ability of Lincoln and the Union Party to lead the North to eventual victory. The Federal troops in Tennessee had also gained new confidence, and they looked forward with relish to the approaching confrontation with Hood.

On the following day the Twenty-third completed its journey to Nashville. Cox reported immediately to Schofield. He learned that Thomas had ordered the Twenty-third and Fourth Corps to Pulaski, eighty miles below Nashville, to contest Hood's advance. Previously, Thomas had planned to concentrate all of his troops in Nashville before confronting the Rebels, but Cox's arrival changed his mind. Thomas remained in Nashville and gave Schofield command of the

three corps (two infantry and one cavalry) in the field.[1]

The Twenty-third left for Pulaski on November 10. Despite the short distance and a direct rail connection, the men spent five tedious days reaching their destination. The delays arose from running trains in two directions on a single track. Several times Cox, disgusted with the snail-paced progress, marched his men around obstructions to take another train. When it finally reached Pulaski, the Twenty-third set up camp and remained relatively inactive for nearly a week.[2]

Meanwhile Hood had been busy. On November 15 his army, covered by Forrest's cavalry, crossed the Tennessee River at Florence, Alabama. Hood's objective was to reach the railroad at Columbia before the Federals could organize their resistance. But the weather delayed his movements. Intermittent rains and frost created seas of mud, frozen only on the surface. The supply wagons easily broke through the thin crust and bogged down. Thus the Federals were ready when Hood's army came forward in force.[3]

---

[1] O.R., XXXIX, pt. 3, 638, 685. Thomas, by designating Schofield as the field commander, went beyond normal procedure. Thomas should have executed these duties personally, but he felt compelled to remain in Nashville to receive the reinforcements promised to him and to look after other details. The War Department eventually approved Thomas' action.

[2] Cox, "Diary," November 13-22, 1864; O.R., XLV, pt. 1, 76, lists briefly Cox's location from November 1, 1864, to January 31, 1865.

[3] Cox, Franklin and Nashville, 63-64.

Instead of advancing through Pulaski, the Confederates bypassed the village to the west and pushed toward Columbia. On November 21 Cox's division moved to interpose itself between the Rebels and Columbia. Hood, however, continued to evade the Federals and swept beyond Cox's position on the following day. Schofield ordered the infantry toward Columbia, while his cavalry fought desperately to delay the Confederate advance. Despite these efforts Forrest's cavalry relentlessly pushed the Federal horsemen to within a few miles of Columbia. When darkness fell on the 23rd, only the cavalry stood between the Confederate column and its objective. If Hood reached Columbia first, Schofield would be in serious trouble.[4]

Schofield ordered Cox to bring his division to Columbia without delay. Cox's men set out at 4 A.M. After three hours of forced marching, just as the town came into view, Cox heard rapid firing off to the west. It sounded serious. Moving along country lanes, he hurried his division toward the sound. They arrived in the nick of time

---

[4] O.R., XLV, pt. 1, 399-405, this is Cox's report of operations from November 22-29, 1864. Unless otherwise indicated the description of the Federals' movements during this interval is based on this report. See also Cox, Franklin and Nashville, Chapter IV; and Schofield, Forty-six Years in the Army, Chapters X-XI. John B. Hood, Advance and Retreat: Personal Experiences in the United States and Confederate States Armies (New Orleans: published by P. T. G. Beauregard for the Hood Orphan Memorial Fund, 1880), Chapter XVI, presents the Rebel commander's account of the action prior to the battle of Franklin. Hood's narrative is very one-sided, designed evidently to explain why he failed to trap the Federals--he placed the blame upon his corps commanders, especially B. F. Cheatham. Hereafter cited as: Hood, Advance and Retreat.

and helped the cavalry stop Forrest in front of Bigby Creek, only 2 miles from Columbia.[5] Despite a sharp skirmish, which continued throughout the morning, Cox's troops threw up light breastworks to give them more cover. About 10 A.M. the first units of the Fourth Corps appeared and took positions on either end of Cox's line. By sheer good fortune Hood's plan to grab Columbia had been thwarted.

Schofield wrestled with a difficult problem. The Union line on the 24th, in front of Columbia and south of the Duck River, was temporarily safe because the rampaging stream was unfordable. But the rains had stopped and it would soon recede enabling the Rebels to cross beyond the Federal flank. Because Hood's army outnumbered Schofield's by about 10,000, the Confederates had sufficient manpower to execute just such a movement. Schofield searched for a more defensible position. The most logical decision, from a tactical viewpoint, would be to give up Columbia and entrench on the north bank of the Duck River, thereby using the stream to offset Hood's numerical superiority. But the north bank could be commanded from the higher ground on the southern shore. After carefully weighing the alternatives, Schofield resolved to cross the river.[6]

On the evening of November 25, Schofield pulled his troops over to their new position. Cox's division covered

---

[5] O.R., XLV, pt. 1, 1017.

[6] Cox, Franklin and Nashville, 66-67; Schofield, Forty-six Years in the Army, 168.

the operation, and he remained with one brigade before Columbia to keep the Rebels at bay while Schofield constructed breastworks. After a tense one-day vigil, these men gladly ferried the river, under cover of darkness, to join their comrades.

Cox's division manned breastworks at the most advanced point in the Union line, a tongue of low-lying land created by the meandering of the river as it flowed past Columbia. Rifle pits were dug at the edge of the river, with stronger barricades upon small knolls where they could rake the opposite shore. The Fourth Corps reinforced the Twenty-third from a second line of carefully constructed barricades. General James H. Wilson's cavalry division patrolled for several miles on both flanks to sound the alarm if Hood slipped over the river.

Hood finally moved a strong force into Columbia on the 28th, touching off a day-long skirmish. This ruse covered important Rebel operations at Huey's mill, about eight miles to the east. At 1 A.M. (November 29) Forrest's cavalry, supported by several infantry brigades, forced its way over the Duck River. Outmanned, Wilson could only delay the Rebels for a short time. The Confederates circled behind Schofield's line toward Spring Hill, where they intended to block the turnpike to Franklin. Wilson sent a warning to Schofield, but the courier travelled a devious route to evade the enemy and did not reach headquarters

until daybreak.[7] Schofield immediately sent the Fourth Corps to Spring Hill to help the cavalry keep the road open.

Hood left two divisions of infantry, and all of his artillery, at Columbia with orders to move over the river and push the Federals toward Spring Hill. In Hood's mind his troops at Columbia were a hammer, those at Spring Hill an anvil--he would crush Schofield between them. But Schofield anticipated the plan. Cox remained at the Duck River with the Twenty-third Corps to stall the Rebels. A steady rattling fire continued throughout the day, punctuated occasionally by loud bursts from the artillery. The Federal batteries, consisting of rifled pieces, easily outdistanced the enemy's smooth-bores and prevented the Rebels from bringing their pontoons down to the river until late afternoon. Then they ferried across about two hundred men. Cox's soldiers, however, kept the Confederates pinned down with accurate fire whenever they tried to clamber up the bank. The wet, hapless Rebels were trapped; they could go neither forward nor backward.

General Wilson was fooled by Forrest's early morning dash toward Murfreesboro; he sent his men galloping to reach the town before the raiders. After going only a short distance, however, Forrest backtracked and interposed his men between the Federal cavalry and Spring Hill. Consequently Schofield lost his best reconnaisance for twenty-four hours

---

[7]Cox, Franklin and Nashville, 69-70.

and had to rely upon less mobile infantry scouts to track Hood's movements.

The Fourth Corps reached Spring Hill at noon, just in time to stop enemy skirmishers approaching the village. During the afternoon the Fourth Corps established a curved line, almost entirely encircling the town, to cover the railroad and the Franklin Turnpike.[8] Hood came up personally, in the early afternoon, to direct the fight at Spring Hill. Fortunately for the Union he misjudged the situation. Hearing the steady firing at the Duck River, the Confederate commander assumed that Schofield wanted him to cut across the Franklin Pike so that the Federals could crush him between two forces. Hood evidently feared that he might be victimized with a version of his own plan and, therefore, did not push vigorously to gain control of the turnpike. Instead he placed his troops parallel to the road.[9] If Hood had pressed the contest for the turnpike, he could have at least cut off Cox's division from the rest of Schofield's command.

At dusk (November 29) Cox received orders to move the Twenty-third Corps to Spring Hill. To cover the withdrawal, Schofield left a small skirmish line in the trenches on the Duck River until midnight. Darkness had fallen before the first units moved out on the Franklin turnpike at

---

[8] Ibid., 71-73.

[9] Ibid., 74-75.

7 P.M. Enroute they met a few of Wilson's cavalry, who warned them that they would pass directly in front of Hood's line below the village. All metal utensils were wrapped to avoid making any sound. The Federals marched along the road with the Confederates' campfires in full view; some of the men remarked that they could have lit their pipes with the embers. Receiving a report of the movement, Hood directed Benjamin F. Cheatham's Corps to check it out. But the darkness and unfamiliarity with the terrain prevented Cheatham from interfering with the withdrawal. Only a few inaccurate shots were exchanged. After midnight, Cox pulled out with the skirmishers and reached Spring Hill at 2 A.M. Cox met briefly with Schofield, who ordered him to move north to Franklin. Without resting the Twenty-third pushed on, reaching their objective an hour before daybreak (November 30, 1864). Cox was greatly pleased with the performance of his troops; there had been little straggling during the twenty-two mile forced march from Columbia and the roll-call at Franklin revealed that only eleven men were missing.[10]

Schofield did not plan to remain in Franklin; he intended to cross the Harpeth River there and continue on to Nashville. Schofield had telegraphed headquarters several

---

[10] O.R., XLV, pt. 1, 404-405; Hood considered the failure to stop the Federals from reuniting their forces at Spring Hill the crucial point in the campaign. He was so incensed with Cheatman's lack of vigor that he withdrew his recommendation that Cheatham be promoted to Lieutenant General. As he later admitted, however, Hood should have seen to it personally that his orders were carried out. Hood, Advance and Retreat, 288-91.

days previous to order bridging materials because the bridges at Franklin had been burned. The river was too high to permit use of the ford. When he came up to direct the crossing of the supply wagons, however, Schofield discovered that the pontoons and planks had not been delivered.[11] While he personally supervised the construction of a temporary bridge, Cox's men threw up breastworks to cover the delay. Schofield also instructed Cox to station the troops of the Fourth Corps in these fortifications as they arrived from Spring Hill.

Cox anchored the right wing of the line on the river and the left on a deep railroad cut, which ran parallel to the stream. Since Fort Granger's batteries covered the railroad from the north bank, Cox refused his left at the edge of the cut. To secure timbers for their breastwork, the soldiers tore down an abandoned cotton gin and warehouse. They cut brush from a thorny Osage Orange hedge to create a formidable abatis in front of a portion of the line. A frontal assault on this position required a thick hide! The Franklin Turnpike, passing through the center of the line, presented a problem. Cox could not completely obstruct the road because this would delay the rearguard in getting to safety. He left a gap, constructed another short breastwork about 100 yards to the rear, and placed behind it several artillery pieces aimed directly down the turnpike.

---

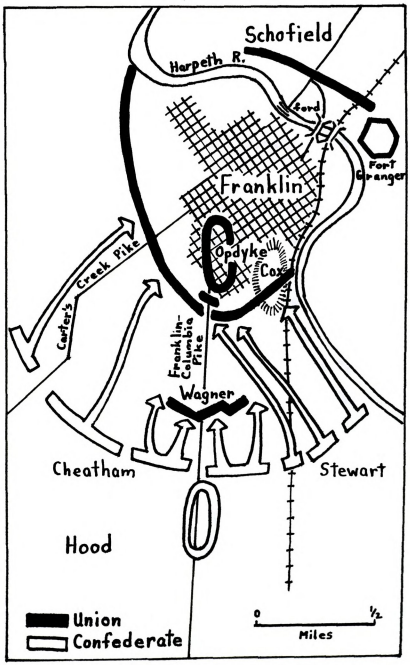
[11] O.R., XLV, pt. 1, 1107-8, 1138; Schofield, Forty-six Years in the Army, 175-76.

Cox hoped these batteries, supported by infantry, could prevent the Confederates from rushing through the gap before it could be closed.[12] Working steadily, the men completed their task at mid-day and then laid down in the trenches for a quick nap, their first sleep in over thirty-six hours.

Cox filled approximately two-thirds of the entrenchments with the Twenty-third Corps. The Second Division manned the breastworks between the Carter's Creek and Franklin Turnpikes, while the Third Division occupied the works running from the Franklin Pike to the railroad cut. When Nathan Kimball's First Division, Fourth Corps, arrived from Spring Hill about 1 P.M., Cox placed it on the right to cover the remainder of the breastworks. T. J. Wood's Third Division, Fourth Corps, came up a short time later and was posted on the north bank of the river as a reserve. By 2:30 P.M. only George Wagner's Second Division of the Fourth Corps had not reached Franklin. Wagner's three brigades--commanded by Colonels Emerson Opdycke, Joseph Conrad, and John Lane--fought as the rear-guard during the march from Spring Hill. At 3 P.M. these units appeared over the rise of hills about two miles south of Franklin; the Rebels were

---

[12] O.R., XLV, pt. 1, 348-49.



BATTLE OF FRANKLIN

Adapted from Boatner, The Civil War Dictionary, 304.

in hot pursuit.[13] Within a short time, General Wagner accompanied Opdycke's brigade into the Federal line. Schofield sent word to Wagner to order in immediately his other two brigades.

The men behind the breastworks watched in awe as the action unfolded before them. Rebel batteries raced toward Conrad's and Lane's brigades, unlimbered, and fired a few hasty shots at the retiring men. Then, when the Federals moved out of range, the horses were rehitched and the process repeated a few hundred yards down the road. Within minutes Hood's entire army hove into view, strung out in battle formation. Cheatham's Corps formed the left of the advancing line, Alexander P. Stewart's the right, and Lieutenant-General Samuel D. Lee's Corps followed in reserve. The Confederates had approached so rapidly that, although Schofield had moved his wagons across the river, the Federals could not avoid a battle.[14]

---

[13]There are numerous reports describing the Battle of Franklin. I have relied most heavily upon Cox's two reports: "Preliminary Report," December 2, 1864, in ibid., and his "Official Report," January 10, 1865, in ibid., 349-56. Cox described the battle in some detail in his Franklin and Nashville, Chapter V. In 1897 Cox published The Battle of Franklin, Tennessee, November 30, 1864 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons), devoting Chapters II-XIV to a minute description of the engagement.

[14]Schofield's original plan had been to withdraw his infantry at 6 P.M. if the Rebels did not offer to fight. Cox, Franklin and Nashville, 87. Schofield's engineers had laid planks on the railroad trestle to provide a temporary bridge. They also discovered that the pilings on the burned-out wagon bridge were sound near the water line; they sawed these off and constructed another narrow bridge. The wagons were brought to safety just as Hood's army came into view.

Cox stationed Opdycke's brigade directly behind the men covering the Franklin Turnpike, to act as a reserve if the Confederates broke through. Cox assumed that the other two brigades would retire in time to allow the breastwork to be closed across the road. Imagine his amazement, then, when he saw Conrad's and Lane's brigades halt about one-half mile from Franklin and deploy in a skirmish line. Surely they did not mean to fight Hood's entire army! Before he could react, Cox saw smoke rising from the Federal's thin line and heard the report of their muskets. Just as quickly Cheatham and Stewart's men were upon the brigades, outflanking them on both sides. The overwhelmed units turned tail and raced pell-mell down the turnpike for the safety of the breastworks. But it was too late. The slower running soldiers were captured with flying tackles by their pursuers. There was no space between onrushing Confederates and Federals; the Twenty-third Corps had to hold its fire for fear of hitting their comrades. Like a tidal wave the mixed mass of humanity hit the Union line. Rebels swept through the opening for the turnpike, over the parapets on either side, and charged into the confusion. What followed was sheer mayhem; rifles were swung as clubs in hand-to-hand combat and many enemy soldiers were wrestled physically to the ground and disarmed. Cox sent word to Opdycke's brigade to charge into the gap; but that valiant Colonel, exercising his own judgment, had put his men into motion before the message arrived. Opdycke's action saved the day. After

thirty minutes of bitter fighting the line was repaired, although curved back about a hundred yards where the Rebels had broken through.

The battle raged until 9 P.M. For five hours the rattle of muskets and boom of artillery pounded the soldiers' ears into deafness. The Twenty-third Corps bore the brunt of Cheatham's and Stewart's repeated assaults. Kimball's division, on the right, was also engaged, but not as heavily. Cox rallied some of Conrad's and Lane's men and rushed them to the most threatened portions of the line, but others from these units did not stop until they had crossed the river. The heavy atmosphere held down the clouds of black powder until it appeared that darkness had fallen. The men could not see more than a few yards, and each unit fought its own private war, hoping the line did not break elsewhere and leave them isolated.

Cox rode back and forth behind the line encouraging the men to deliver their best. General Stanley, commandant of the Fourth Corps, came forward just as the battle began, but within minutes he received a painful neck wound and had to seek medical attention. Throughout the engagement Schofield remained on the north bank of the river, where he could view the entire action. Except for Stanley's brief appearance, Cox was the senior officer on the line.

Although Cox was confident that the Federals could hold their position, at 11 P.M. Schofield ordered the troops

across the river.[15] During the evening Thomas had countermanded his original instructions to hold at Franklin and directed Schofield to fall back to Brentwood, where he would be reinforced by troops from Nashville. The withdrawal almost miscarried when a fire broke out in Franklin; the flames spread rapidly and clearly outlined the Union soldiers. The Confederates, however, made no effort to interfere with the movement. During the night, Thomas further altered his plans and instructed Schofield to bring his men into Nashville.[16]

The Battle of Franklin was the fiercest one-day engagement in the Western theater during the Civil War. The Federals committed 27,939 men to the action; they suffered 1,222 casualties and listed 1,104 as missing (mostly from Conrad's and Lane's brigades). Hood's army numbered 26,897, making the engagement an almost even match. The Rebel losses were severe. Hood reported 6,252 casualties, of which only 702 were missing and presumed captured. The battle decimated the Confederate officer corps; five Rebel generals fell at Franklin and in many units captains were forced to assume duties usually borne by colonels or

---

[15]Cox, The Battle of Franklin, 169.

[16]Cox believed that if they had been allowed to remain at Franklin, Hood's army would have been destroyed there and the Battle of Nashville would never have occurred. Ibid., 169-70.

majors.[17] Hood's forces were so mauled at Franklin that the army he led against Nashville in early December was but a battered remnant of his original command.

Many years after the war, a controversy arose over two questions related to the Battle of Franklin. Briefly stated these were: (1) who failed to issue orders to Conrad and Lane to bring their men immediately into the breastworks? (2) was Cox "the commandant upon the line" throughout the engagement? Cox had a great personal interest in answering these questions with factual information. At stake was his reputation, not only as a soldier, but also as a military historian. In his Franklin and Nashville he made statements bearing on these issues which triggered irate responses from readers who had participated in the battle.[18]

In the book just cited Cox wrote as follows:

> Wagner placed the rest of his division (Lane's and Conrad's brigades) astride the Columbia Turnpike, about half a mile in front of the principal line. The commandant upon the line [Cox] was notified by General Schofield that Wagner's orders told him to remain in observation only till Hood should show a disposition to advance in force, and then to retire to Opdycke's position and act as a general

---

[17]The Generals were John Adams, Patrick Cleburne, S. R. (States Rights) Gist, Hiram Granbury and Otto F. Strahl. The latter was killed along with so many men from his division that his body was found in an upright position, held there by the bodies of his fallen soldiers. Boatner, Civil War Dictionary, 305.

[18]This book was part of the series published by Charles Scribner's Sons entitled "Campaigns of the Civil War." In addition to the volume mentioned, Cox also wrote Atlanta for the series. Both were published in 1882.

reserve. Wagner, on being shown the note conveying this notice, said that such were his orders.[19]

At 3 P.M. Cox repeated the directions to Wagner and then went to a knoll to get a better view of the field.[20] In summing up his description of the battle Cox lays the blame for the near disaster squarely upon Wagner. "General Wagner's place of duty was with the two brigades of his division which were exposed in front, and the order to bring them in without fighting had been sent through the Fourth Corps headquarters, and had been received by him." Instead of complying with the instructions, "he sent back a command to fight."[21] By these statements Cox clearly faulted Wagner for failing to get the two brigades into the lines before they were so hotly engaged that they could not withdraw safely.

At the time he wrote his official reports, however, Cox did not censure Wagner's conduct and one must inquire why. Cox related that Wagner visited him shortly after they reached Nashville and offered an explanation for his apparent neglect of duty. Wagner said the proper orders had been sent out but that they did not reach Colonels Lane and Conrad in time. Cox, always willing to give someone the benefit of the doubt, assured Wagner that he bore him no

---

[19]Cox, Franklin and Nashville, 86-87. Underline added for emphasis.

[20]Ibid., 87, evidently this message was carried to Wagner by one of Cox's aides.

[21]Ibid., 97.

grudge. On December 3, 1864, Cox sent a letter to Wagner in which he said, "Indeed an excess of bravery kept the two brigades a little too long in front, so that the troops at the main line could not get to firing upon the advancing enemy till they were uncomfortably near." He sent along with the letter a copy of his preliminary report to General Thomas which stated: "In the early part of the engagement a portion of the Second Division, Twenty-third Corps, was somewhat disordered by misunderstanding the purpose of retiring through the lines of the two brigades of Wagner's division which had been engaged in advance."[22]

Cox was kind toward Wagner, others were not. Wagner's brigade commanders, Conrad and Lane, censured their superior in their reports, stating that instead of being ordered to retire they were directed to stand and fight where they were.[23] The hard feelings thus aroused convinced Thomas to relieve Wagner of his divisional duties on December 3, 1864, demoting him to command of the second brigade. Six days later, Wagner, at his own request, was relieved of all further duty with the Army of the Cumberland

---

[22] O.R., XLV, pt. 1, 348-49.

[23] Ibid., 256. Lane stated that he received his last orders from Wagner at 2 P.M.; Wagner told him to give battle as long as possible. Lane did not mention receiving specific directions to retire. Conrad, in ibid., 270, said that he sent an aide to Wagner seeking orders; just then a staff officer arrived and "gave me orders to hold the line as long as possible, and to have the sergeants to fix their bayonets and to keep the men to their places." General David S. Stanley, who commanded the entire Fourth Corps, also reported that the men were told to fight: ibid., 115.

and went to Indianapolis to receive a new assignment.[24]

The second controversy grew out of a letter written by General Stanley in February, 1889. Stanley contradicted the statement that Cox was "commandant upon the line" during the Battle of Franklin.[25] Stanley insisted that he shared with Cox the responsibility for directing the fight. After a thorough review of the orders issued by General Schofield, on November 30, 1864, and of the reports written by other participants in the battle, Cox maintained that he correctly described his role at Franklin. Schofield, in his own book of recollections, stated that he indicated to Cox "the line upon which the troops were to be formed; and intrusted to him the formation, as the several divisions of both corps should arrive, General Stanley being in the rear directing the operations of the rear-guard."[26] This clearly put Cox in charge of directing the construction of the breastworks and placement of the troops, whether from the Twenty-third or Fourth Corps, in those fortifications. Schofield's official report affirmed the substance of this statement although he does limit Cox's responsibility to "the greater

---

[24]Cox, The Battle of Franklin, Chapter XVII, deals entirely with this issue. I have relied heavily upon Cox's narrative to reconstruct the argument and must say that Cox did his homework as a historian. He presented both sides of the question and drew sound conclusions.

[25]Century Magazine, February, 1889; Cox's statement appears in his Franklin and Nashville, 86.

[26]Schofield, Forty-six Years in the Army, 175, underline added.

portion of the line" without telling who commanded the remainder of the troops.[27] If anyone else did share the duty, it would have been General Stanley. But, as noted earlier, Stanley appeared on the battle-line only a few minutes before being wounded. He then returned to the north side of the river to obtain medical attention and remained there until the troops were withdrawn. Surely Stanley could not have believed he had commanded the line! But in his official report he implied that he did so, and he "graciously" thanked Cox for his assistance during the confrontation.[28] In view of the evidence one must agree that Cox acted as the "commandant upon the line" during the Battle of

---

[27] O.R., XLV, pt. 1, 343.

[28] Ibid., 118. "Although Brigadier-General J. D. Cox was not in my command, he was my close neighbor in the battle of Franklin, and I take this opportunity to express to him my thanks for his gallant help at that time." Stanley did mention receiving a wound but said it did not prevent him from remaining on the field. This is in direct contradiction with testimony from Cox's aides who saw Stanley with Schofield on the north side of the river when they made reports to headquarters: Colonel L. T. Schofield, "The Retreat from Pulaski to Nashville," Sketches of War History (5 vols.; Cincinnati: Ohio Commandary of the Loyal Legion, 1888-1903), II, 137; and Theodore F. Cox to Cox, June 16, 1881. Colonel Emerson Opdycke's report also omitted any mention of his having received any orders from Stanley during the battle: O.R., XLV, pt. 1, 240-41, and since his brigade arrived just before the fighting began this omission suggests that Stanley did very little active commanding during or after the engagement. Opdycke stated his brigade was also withdrawn upon Cox's orders.

Franklin.[29]

Thomas received a telegram from Grant, on December 2, ordering an immediate attack at Nashville. But Thomas waited a few days to allow his cavalry to replace the mounts they had lost during the fall campaign. He scheduled the attack for December 8, but nature intervened. A freezing rain covered the entire area with a sheet of ice; an assault over such treacherous ground was out of the question. More urgent messages arrived instructing Thomas to attack or turn over the command to Schofield. Thomas called a council of the officers to discuss the situation. Schofield supported a further postponement; the others concurred. Thomas sent this information to Grant and explained the reason for the delay. Despite the explanation, officials in the War Department concluded that Thomas had lost his nerve; on December 13 they sent General John A. Logan to Nashville to take over. Logan, however, did not arrive until the early hours of the 15th, only a short time before the Federal assault would begin. Under the circumstances, he decided not to execute his orders and allowed Thomas to remain in

---

[29]For a much more detailed discussion of the entire issue, see Cox, Battle of Franklin, Chapters XX-XXI. In the Cox Papers at Oberlin there are several dozen letters written by Cox or to him during the years 1887-1889, dealing with a variety of questions related to the Battle of Franklin. The overwhelming majority support Cox's description of the battle in his Franklin and Nashville and were used by him to prove his case in the Battle of Franklin.

command.[30]

During the lull at Nashville, Cox inquired into what action the government had taken upon Sherman's and Schofield's recommendations that he be promoted to Major-General. Shedding his usual restraint, he wrote to Garfield (who was now in the House of Representatives) and asked him to check into the matter.[31] A few days later Garfield replied that he had gone personally to the War Department and had seen Stanton place Cox's name on the promotion list to be sent to the Senate for approval.[32] General Schofield also renewed his recommendation in a letter to Halleck, in which he used even stronger language than earlier in urging that Cox be rewarded for his service in the army. Schofield said that Cox had merited promotion several times because he often exercised duties which were above those of a brigadier-general. Schofield described Cox as the best division commander he had ever seen, yet others, with less experience and carrying less responsibility, had already been promoted. Such an oversight, Schofield believed, would soon cause Cox to resign in disgust. Schofield concluded by writing: "Excuse, General, the earnestness with which I

---

[30]O.R., XLV, pt. 2, 104-106; Thomas B. Van Horne, History of the Army of the Cumberland (2 vols.; Cincinnati: Robert Clark and Co., 1875), II, 225-26. Hereafter cited as: Van Horne, Army of the Cumberland.

[31]Cox to Garfield, December 6, 1864, Garfield Papers, VI, pt. 1.

[32]Garfield to Cox, December 14, 1864.

refer to this matter. I do not exaggerate the merits of the case. On the contrary, I do not half state them."[33] Thomas forwarded the statement to Washington, adding his own endorsement that Cox deserved recognition for his work during the Atlanta Campaign and for his especially distinguished service at Franklin.[34] Actually all this was unnecessary, the promotion was approved on December 7, 1864, but the notification did not reach Cox until January 15, 1865.[35] At long last justice had been done.

Although the Confederate and Union armies had been evenly matched at Franklin, the odds weighed heavily in favor of the Union at Nashville because reinforcements had gradually swelled the size of Thomas' command. During the last days of November, General A. J. Smith arrived with 9,200 men from the District of Tennessee and General James B. Steedman added 5,200 from the Chattanooga garrison. The arrival of Schofield's army pushed the aggregate to about

---

[33] O.R., XLV, pt. 2, 273. I cannot determine whether Cox asked Schofield to write this letter, probably it was unsolicited. Cox abhorred others who pushed their own careers and it is doubtful whether he went further in his own case beyond asking Garfield to check out the facts.

[34] Ibid., 274.

[35] Ibid., pt. 1, 364; Record Group 94, Army Register for 1865, 54, 95, National Archives.

55,000.[36] Much confusion exists regarding the strength of Hood's army at Nashville. Hood claimed that he had just slightly more than 23,000 on December 10, but other sources give a much larger total.[37] Regardless of the figures used, one must inquire why Hood led his smaller army against Thomas at Nashville. Hood says he expected momentarily to be reinforced by soldiers from Texas, and that he hoped to secure more men by active recruiting in Tennessee.[38] The Texans, however, never appeared and his recruiters enlisted very few volunteers.

In an effort to even the odds a little, Hood attempted to draw some of the Federals away from Nashville by sending Forrest's cavalry, and three infantry brigades, toward Murfreesboro. But the strong garrison stationed there turned back the Rebels in a sharp clash on December 7.[39]

---

[36]Colonel Henry Stone, "Repelling Hood's Invasion of Tennessee," Battles and Leaders, IV, 473, reproduces an official report using the figure 55,000 as the "available forces" in and around Nashville, but the report also states that only 43,260 were "actually engaged" on December 15. Cox, Franklin and Nashville, 219, presents another report indicating that Thomas had about 70,000 under his command, but this figure included several thousand troops posted in garrisons outside of Nashville.

[37]Hood, Advance and Retreat, 298. Stone, "Repelling Hood's Invasion of Tennessee," Battles and Leaders, IV, 474, places Hood's total at 39,000. Cox, Franklin and Nashville, 222, using Hood's official return for December 10, 1864, puts the Confederate strength at 36,440.

[38]Hood, Advance and Retreat, 299.

[39]Cox, Franklin and Nashville, 103-104.

In the meantime, Thomas had developed an excellent plan for engaging Hood's army.

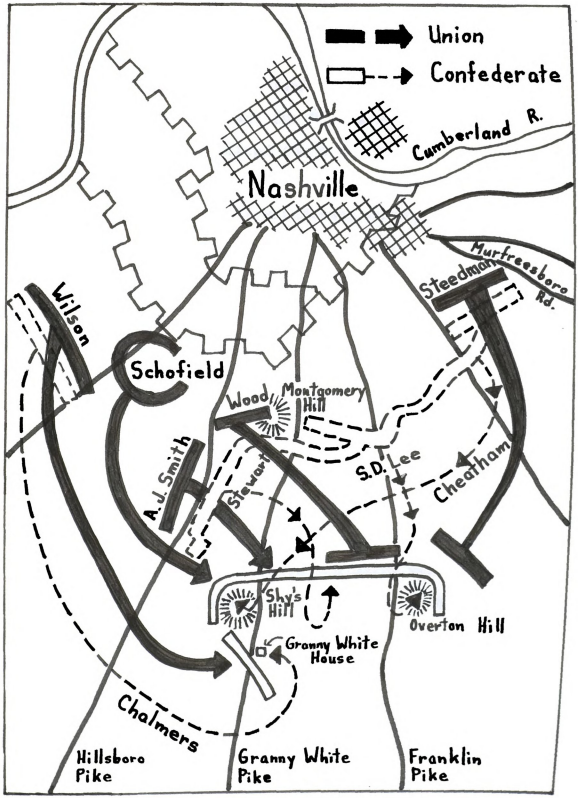
> Thomas' tactical plan was masterly: it was a coordinated attack; his main effort--Smith and Wood--was weighted to assure combat superiority at this point [Hood's left], his secondary attack (Steedman) was planned so as to give maximum assistance to the main effort; he had provided for an adequate, properly located reserve (Schofield); and he used his mobile troops (cavalry) to screen his flank and extend the envelopment of the enemy left.[40]

Hood's disposition of his troops, on the other hand, played right into the Federals' plans. The Rebel line was over-extended and it formed a concave curve, thereby denying Hood use of interior lines. Moreover Hood lacked an adequate reserve, if the line weakened at any point he would have to pull men off the breastworks to strengthen the threatened portion of his fortifications.

On December 15 a heavy fog enshrouded the area and the Federals were in battle formation before Hood detected any activity. At 8 A.M. Steedman struck the Confederate right, intending only to make a convincing demonstration, but the fighting soon developed into a sharp engagement. This action continued for several hours and Hood, convinced that this was the major assault, pulled men from the left of the Confederate line. Meanwhile Smith's and Wood's artillery softened up the Rebels in front of them. At 1 P.M. the two Corps rushed forward, overwhelming the outnumbered Rebels so rapidly that they captured 1,200 prisoners and

---

[40]Boatner, The Civil War Dictionary, 579.



BATTLE OF NASHVILLE

Adapted from Boatner, The Civil War Dictionary, 580.

sixteen batteries. To support the main attack Schofield swung the Twenty-third Corps around Smith and hit the Confederates' extreme left flank. This finished the destruction of Hood's line; the Rebels were driven two miles before darkness halted the pursuit.[41]

Naturally the Federals expected that the routed enemy would continue their withdrawal during the night. But once again General Hood defied reason and remained on the field. His soldiers worked feverishly throughout the night to construct a new line of breastworks, running from Shy's Hill[42] on the left to the Overton Hills on the right, a distance of about two miles. Hood refused both flanks by bending them sharply southward. The weakest point was on Shy's Hill, where the bend created a salient.

The Federals reopened the contest with artillery at 5 A.M. on December 16. Their rifled batteries easily outdistanced the Confederate smooth-bores and forced them to withdraw. Smith's and Schofield's gunners bombarded the salient on Shy's Hill with a terrific crossfire, knocking holes in the Rebel breastworks. During this barrage, Union skirmishers crept to within a few hundred yards of the

---

[41] O.R., XLV, pt. 1, 405-406. For general descriptions of the Battle of Nashville see Van Horne, Army of the Cumberland, II, 229-43, and Cox, Franklin and Nashville, 107-123.

[42] This hill did not have a special name before the battle began; it was named by the Confederates in honor of Colonel T. M. Shy, who fell there on December 16. Cox, Franklin and Nashville, 113.

Confederate works. At 4 P.M. Schofield and Smith ordered a general assault. Their men rushed forward, jumped over the works and drove the Confederates from Shy's Hill. Cox's division came on so rapidly that the Rebels fired only one volley before they fled. The entire Confederate left collapsed. Smith's and Schofield's men raced forward and met at the Granny White Turnpike, where they halted to avoid firing at one another in the confusion.[43] Wood's Corps, unsuccessful in an earlier attempt, renewed its assault on the enemy's right and swept away the remaining resistance.

The Federals strained every muscle to finish off Hood's battered army. The Union cavalry dashed after the rapidly retreating enemy but darkness, a drizzling rain, and Forrest's excellent horsemen made them keep their distance. The following day (December 17), Thomas' infantry joined the pursuit. The roads soon deteriorated into strips of mud, sometimes reaching forty or fifty feet in width, broadened by thousands of feet trying to avoid the deep holes. Ten days later the ragged Confederates reached the Tennessee River, the last obstacle to be surmounted before reaching safety. But their scouts could not find a bridge, all had been destroyed in previous actions, and the water was too high to permit fording. Suddenly several Federal pontoons came floating downstream; these were quickly

---

[43] O.R., XLV, pt. 1, 406-407.

rescued and used to build a narrow bridge.[44] The last Confederate reached the opposite shore just a few minutes before a Union gunboat appeared and blasted the structure. At this point Thomas gave up the chase and ordered his troops into winter quarters. But the War Department overruled his decision. Although Hood's army no longer constituted a real threat to the Union, Grant wanted it watched carefully. Thomas, therefore, sent several divisions after the Confederates; those units not involved in this task settled down to await their next assignment.

The Franklin-Nashville Campaign virtually shattered the Confederate resistance in the Western theater. Although the figures are discrepant, it appears that Hood's army suffered losses approaching fifty per-cent. The Union reports estimated Hood's strength above 36,000 and listed 20,752 Confederate prisoners and casualties.[45] Hood placed his strength at around 23,000, his losses at 10,000.[46] The results were so discouraging that Hood asked to be relieved of his command, a request honored by the Confederate

---

[44]Cox, Franklin and Nashville, 125.

[45]O.R., XLV, pt. 1, 46, 664. Thomas listed these enemy losses: 13,000 prisoners, 6,252 casualties at Franklin and 1,500 casualties at Nashville.

[46]Ibid., 656. In his Reminiscences, II, 285-89, Cox took issue with Hood's report of so few casualties and defended the accuracy of the Federal reports. The Union and Confederate armies did not use the same method for reporting their effective strengths. For example, if his command actually suffered 2,000 casualties and received 1,000 reinforcements, Hood would admit a loss of only 1,000.

government on January 10, 1865.

By contrast, the Federal forces operating in Tennessee gained strength throughout the campaign. The additional troops brought into Nashville during November and December more than offset the Union losses of 5,383 incurred during the two major battles.[47] Thomas' great victory completely reversed the attitude of his superiors; Lincoln, Grant, and Stanton vied with one another in heaping praise upon the "Rock of Chickamauga."

The end of the campaign found Schofield's Corps encamped at Columbia, Tennessee. Schofield did not relish the prospect of a long period of inactivity. He, therefore, wrote to Grant suggesting that the Twenty-third assist the Army of the Potomac in Virginia, or that it could go to North Carolina to prepare a base for Sherman when his column came up from the south. These recommendations meshed perfectly with a plan Grant had already forwarded to Sherman. On January 7, 1865, Schofield received orders to bring his men to Washington, from there the navy would transport them to North Carolina.[48]

During the encampment at Columbia, Cox fought a mild case of malaria. Many men had been stricken and the doctors traced the outbreak to contaminated water used by the soldiers during their bivouac on December 16 at

---

[47]Casualties at Franklin were 2,326; at Nashville, 3,057. Boatner, The Civil War Dictionary, 305, 582.

[48]Cox, Reminiscences, II, 375-76.

Nashville. Cox had unwisely assumed he could fight off the disease without special attention and he led his division until they reached Columbia. Here he found quarters in a farmhouse, rested in bed and took medicine prescribed by the corps' medical director. Although he was back on his feet by January 2, he did not regain full strength for another month.[49]

On December 29, after learning that the corps would be going into winter quarters, Cox requested a thirty-day leave so he could visit his family and recover his health. The request was speedily granted and Cox prepared orders turning command of the division over to Colonel Charles C. Doolittle, the senior brigade officer. Before the order was executed, however, Cox heard about the transfer to North Carolina; without hesitation he rescinded the directions and remained with his troops.[50]

The Twenty-third Corps left Columbia on January 2 and marched west to Clifton on the Tennessee River, reaching there on the eighth. The march took the men through desolate country. They crossed the Buffalo River several times as it twisted and turned through the countryside. After each crossing the men built huge fires with wooden rails stripped from nearby fences so that they could dry their clothing to reduce the danger of sickness. After they reached Clifton the supply problem became critical; Smith's

---

[49] Ibid., 376-77.

[50] O.R., XLV, pt. 1, 426, 474, 475, 486.

Sixteenth Corps, who preceded them, had stripped the area. Boats and barges carrying supplies passed Clifton, but did not stop. Angered, Schofield finally ordered a battery to fire in front of the next boat to force it to shore so he could send a message to Thomas at Nashville requesting transportation for his men.[51]

While at Clifton Cox described his wretched condition. "I am," he wrote, "getting ragged and barefoot. My boots are worn out, my coat is worn out, my waistcoats are worn out, my hat is worn out, and I am only whole and respectable when I am in my shirt and drawers. If I ever get near civilization again, I shall be obliged to lie abed somewhere till I can get some clothes made."[52] On January 14, the day after Cox wrote this letter, General Thomas arrived with a fleet of transports. As the word spread through the camp, distress changed to enthusiasm. Although the troops were about to embark on a two thousand mile journey by water, rail and foot, they looked forward to the trip in preference to remaining in Tennessee to shiver in the winter snow and rain.[53]

After placing his division aboard the transports, Cox left the entourage to spend a few days with his family at Warren, Ohio. Cox had not been home for two years.

---

[51]Cox, Reminiscences, II, 380-85.

[52]Ibid., 385.

[53]Ibid., 386.

Jacob, Jr. recalled his father's arrival.

> . . . one winter's night, when we were getting ready to go to bed, the smaller children having already been tucked in, the door bell rang. As mother was busy, she sent me to the door to see who was there. On opening it, I was very much surprised to see a very tall man with big bushy beard in a soldier's uniform. He stepped in and asked if Mrs. Cox was home, and I flew off to the nursery to tell mother that there was a big soldier in the front room wanting to see her. Imagine the surprise of the children when the big soldier soon came back into the nursery and routed us all out of bed. It proved to be father home on a furlough.[54]

Although Cox had planned to get plenty of rest, he hardly slept at all. Somehow, during these few whirlwind days, he also acquired sparkling new uniforms to replace the miserable outfits he had described so graphically. Despite their condition, his son related: "It is interesting to remember that during the war years my best Sunday clothes were made out of father's discarded uniforms."[55] On January 26, 1865, a tired, but spiritually refreshed General Cox set out for Washington.[56] He looked forward to a speedy termination of the war and a permanent reunion with his loved ones.

---

[54]Jacob Dolson Cox, Building An American Industry: The Story of the Cleveland Twist Drill Company and Its Founder (Cleveland: The Cleveland Twist Drill Co., 1951), 33. The author is General Cox's eldest son; he was twelve years old at the time of the incident related here. Hereafter cited as: Cox, Building An American Industry.

[55]Ibid.

[56]O.R., XLVII, pt. 2, 131.

CHAPTER VII

WAR'S END: THE NORTH CAROLINA CAMPAIGN AND THE OHIO GOVERNORSHIP

Consultations between Grant and the principal officers of the Federal army had brought forth a detailed plan for operations in North Carolina. The first objective was Fort Fisher, an elaborate fortification guarding the mouth of the Cape Fear River. By controlling the fort, the Confederates were able to sneak blockade running vessels to safety upstream. This brought in only a mere trickle of supplies, but it helped the Rebels to keep fighting. The Union resolved to seal this loophole, but the initial attempt to do so was a complete failure (December, 1864). Early in 1865 more men and new leaders were assigned to the undertaking.[1]

Once Fort Fisher had been taken, the city of Wilmington, which the fort guarded, would become a primary target. New Bern, fifty miles farther north, was also desired for a second supply depot. From these two bases, the Union troops would execute a double envelopment of Goldsboro, where they would meet Sherman's rugged veterans.

---

[1]Harry Hansen, The Civil War (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1962), 621-22, describes briefly Butler's futile assault.

Then, if necessary, the entire column could march into Virginia to assist Grant.

In the attack on Fort Fisher, General Alfred H. Terry's Tenth Corps directed maneuvers on land, supported closely by a large fleet under Admiral David D. Porter. The assault was difficult because of the location of the fort, which lay on the southern tip of a peninsula of sand, with the Atlantic Ocean on the eastern side and the Cape Fear River on the western side. Smaller forts on the opposite shore of the river covered approaches to Fort Fisher and prevented Federal ships from running upstream to outflank it. Operations against the fort began by landing troops on the Atlantic beach, where the pounding surf threatened to capsize the landing craft. Despite the difficulties Terry's men were put safely ashore on January 13. They spent two days reconnoitering the fort and deciding where to make their attack. Meanwhile Porter's fleet kept up a steady barrage with its long-range guns in an effort to silence as many Rebel batteries as possible. But they knocked only a few small holes in the stockade which was constructed of sodded sand banks. On January 15, Terry threw his men against the structure, attacking a wall extending toward the Cape Fear River. Despite steady artillery barrages from Porter's ships, the Rebels poured a withering fire into the advancing Federal column. Between rushes, the men dug shallow trenches in the sandy soil to gain some cover. After three hours the Tenth Corps finally

forced its way over the outer wall and into the fort. Once inside, however, they discovered that the battle had just begun. The Rebels had constructed a series of "bombproof" shelters within the wall and each of these had to be taken before the Union flag could be raised. By nightfall the work was completed; Fort Fisher was in Union hands.[2]

After the Rebels were driven from Fort Fisher, they retired up the Cape Fear River several miles to Fort Anderson. Situated on the west bank of the river, the fort commanded a line running from the stream westward to Orton Pond, a large lake several miles in length. On the east bank of the river, the Confederates also established fortifications which ran to Myrtle Sound, another large body of water. Their position appeared secure because both flanks were protected by water and were covered by artillery to prevent an amphibious assault. Only a few causeways ran through the bogs and the Confederates naturally secured these with batteries and infantry. In some respects Fort Anderson would be harder to take than Fort Fisher, especially since there seemed to be no safe place to land troops near the structure.

The Twenty-third Corps rendezvoused in Washington, where Cox joined them on January 28. They intended to leave on February 1 via naval transports, but their departure was delayed for three days by large ice floes in the

---

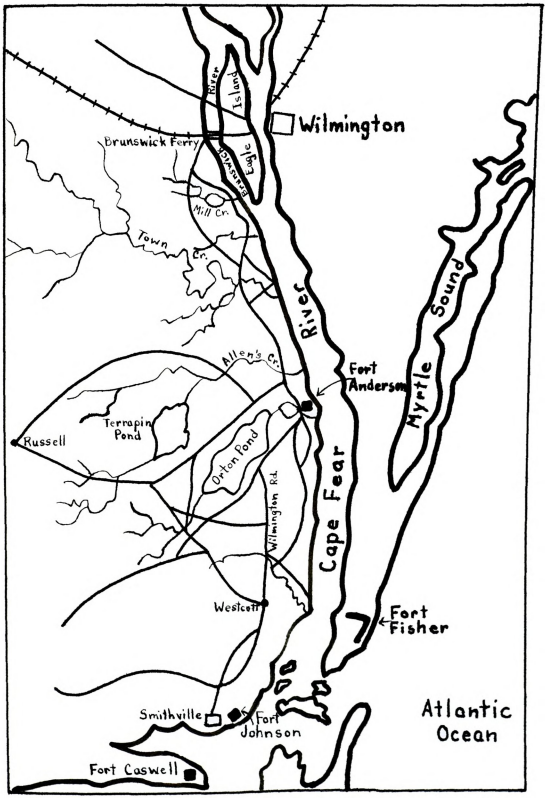
[2]Cox, Franklin and Nashville, 138-145.

Potomac. The trip along the Atlantic coast was rough and the soldiers, unaccustomed to the pitching and rolling of the ships, suffered greatly from seasickness. To make matters worse, the surf was so heavy when they arrived off Fort Fisher that they spent two more miserable days aboard ship before being put safely ashore on February 9.[3]

Upon his arrival, Schofield assumed command of the newly created Department of North Carolina and personally directed the operations against Fort Anderson. At first Schofield employed both the Twenty-third and Tenth Corps in a united effort against the Rebel line on the eastern bank of the river. Since the terrain and fortifications ruled out a direct assault, the decision was made to cross Myrtle Sound and attack the Confederates from the rear. During the night of February 12 the infantry marched north from Fort Fisher along the beach to a point where a naval fleet was to put ashore the pontoons. But a heavy surf prevented the navy from landing the pontoons and the dejected soldiers, wet and cold, returned before daybreak to the fort. Two nights later a second attempt was made. This time the pontoons arrived on time, but the soft sand proved too great an obstacle; the horses could not move the boats to the sound rapidly enough. About 2 A.M. the moon broke through the clouds, exposing the Federals to enemy view. The Rebels

---

[3] O.R., XLVII, pt. 1, 958-64. This is Cox's report for operations from February 8-22, 1865. I have used this report for the general description of movements during this period.



FORT FISHER TO WILMINGTON

Cox, Reminiscences, II, 406.

opened up with artillery across the sound, putting an end to another futile effort.[4]

Now Schofield changed his tactics. He ordered Cox and the Twenty-third Corps across the Cape Fear River to threaten directly Fort Anderson, keeping General Terry and the Tenth Corps on the east bank to engage the Rebel line between the stream and Myrtle Sound.[5] On February 17, Cox's men left Smithville, where they had landed the previous day, and pushed toward Fort Anderson.[6] They encountered enemy cavalry about three miles from the village, but easily forced them back into the fortifications.[7] After personally scouting the Rebel entrenchments, Cox saw that a frontal assault would be foolhardy. During the night of the seventeenth Cox led half of his troops westward along the shore of Orton Pond, leaving behind two brigades to distract the Confederates. About midnight the small force reached the head of the pond, where a causeway ran through a swamp to dry ground on the opposite shore. The causeway was well

---

[4]Cox, Nashville and Franklin, 147-154, presents a brief description of the struggle for Fort Anderson and the subsequent capture of Wilmington.

[5]The disposition of the troops was such that Cox acted as the commander of the Twenty-third Corps throughout the North Carolina campaign. Schofield found that he could not personally lead the corps and serve as the District Commander. Schofield set up headquarters aboard a steamer in the river and allowed Cox and Terry to direct the soldiers in the field.

[6]O.R., XLVII, pt. 2, 470.

[7]Record Group 393, Twenty-third Army Corps, Letter Book 6, number 229.

guarded, but Cox's men waded through waist-deep water to outflank the defenders and sent them scurrying for a safer position. Cox's elation over having his plan work so smoothly evaporated when he discovered Terrapin Pond, not on his maps, blocking the route to Fort Anderson. It appeared that several more hours of tiresome slogging would be required to reach the objective. The Federal's native scout, however, pointed out a little used trail between the two ponds, leading directly to the rear of the Rebel line. Despite the possibility of being trapped if the Rebels detected his route, Cox decided to use the path. At daybreak the brigades emerged from the swamp, ready to attack. They were greeted by silence. The Confederates surprised on the causeway had given the alarm and the enemy pulled out in time to avoid Cox's trap.[8] Cox's success also compelled the Rebel commander, General Robert Hoke, to pull back his men in front of the Tenth Corps because Federal batteries in Fort Anderson could now enfilade his line.

Although forced to give ground, the Confederates did not retreat far. They moved behind Town Creek, tore up the bridges, and dug in. Schofield ordered Cox to send one division across to help General Terry, because it appeared that the main enemy force was on the opposite side of the Cape Fear River. With the remaining four brigades Cox pushed toward Town Creek. Again the swampy ground limited

---

[8] Ibid., numbers 234, 235.

his maneuvers. Luck, however, continued to ride with the Federals. Cox's scouts found an abandoned flatboat in the creek about two miles above the main Rebel line. Cox put a guard over it and had repairs made.[9] On February 20, Cox left one brigade to keep up a demonstration on the causeway leading to the Town Creek bridge, while he personally led the other three units upstream to the flatboat. The rickety craft could carry only fifty men at a time, but by 3 P.M. the transfer was completed. No resistance had been encountered, evidently the enemy believed the ground was too swampy to allow a vigorous movement. Cox led the men through two miles of murky bogs until they struck the Old Town Creek road, leading toward the enemy's rear. He took two brigades down the road, and sent the third to barricade another farm lane, which the Confederates might use during a retreat. Without warning Cox's men crashed in upon the Rebels and blasted them from their trenches, capturing 375 prisoners and several cannon. Despite the surprise several hundred Rebels evaded the attackers and escaped before Cox's reserve brigade reached the farm lane. (The reserve had been delayed by treacherous swamps and managed to fire only a few shots at the fleeing Rebels.) This time, however, Cox's success did not help Terry's operations, General Hoke held stubbornly to his position across the river.

At dawn the Federals struck out rapidly toward

---

[9] O.R., XLVII, pt. 2, 495; Record Group 393, Department of North Carolina, Letter Book 40, number 59.

Wilmington. They reached the Brunswick ferry before the enemy had completely destroyed the bridges. Although the planking was ablaze, Cox's men saved about half of the pontoons and used them to construct quickly a narrow span to Eagle Island. Several regiments went over immediately to dislodge the Confederate rear-guard. Later the artillery were brought across and the gunners lobbed shells into Wilmington.

During the late afternoon, in the midst of the movement to Eagle Island, Cox received orders from Schofield to disengage and bring his entire command downstream. Schofield wanted the Twenty-third ferried across the river to help General Terry dislodge the Confederates in front of Wilmington. Cox was convinced, however, that Schofield's plan was unnecessary. He could see the Rebels setting fire to their warehouses; this did not suggest that General Hoke planned to make a staunch effort to defend the city. Nonetheless Cox did send one brigade to the rendezvous, and a message to Schofield explaining the situation. Hours passed without a word, then a second message, more urgent than the first, reinforced the original directions. Still Cox delayed. At last, about midnight, Cox got another communication from headquarters cancelling the operation. Schofield explained that Cox's messenger had gotten lost and had not reported until after dark.[10] The next day Cox's

---

[10]See ibid., 521-23, for the messages exchanged between Cox and Schofield.

assessment proved correct; the Rebels evacuated Wilmington and General Terry's Tenth Corps entered the city unopposed. The bridge to Eagle Island was quickly rebuilt and Cox's men rejoined the main column for a victory celebration. Now, if the Federals failed to secure Goldsboro, Sherman could come to Wilmington to replenish his supplies.

After the capture of Wilmington, Federal strategy dictated that Schofield's command be divided to bring Goldsboro under greater pressure. Schofield remained at Wilmington with the Tenth Corps; Cox and the Twenty-third were sent north to Newberne. When prepared, both columns would move forward simultaneously.

The Twenty-third reached Newberne on the last day of February. Cox assumed command of the District of Beaufort, replacing General I. N. Palmer, who had failed to execute vigorously his orders. Grant expected Cox to reorganize the troops and end their lethargic inactivity. Schofield recommended, in view of his separation from the Twenty-third, that Cox also be given permanent command of the corps. Grant concurred and the necessary orders were issued on March 27, 1865.[11]

Cox wasted no time. The next day he moved forward with two divisions to find the Rebels. He proceeded slowly along the railroad, providing protection for the engineers who rebuilt the tracks. These repairs were vitally important to assure that Sherman's army could be reoutfitted at

---

[11] Ibid., 579-80; pt. 3, 34, 195.

Goldsboro.[12] The column advanced steadily until it encountered enemy breastworks near the Southwest River. Cox deployed the men in front of the Confederate trenches; Palmer's division anchored on the railroad and Carter's division covered roads on the left. When Ruger's division came up, Cox stationed it near the center as a reserve.[13]

From March 8-10, 1865, Cox's men fought three desperate engagements (referred to as the Battle of Kinston). The Rebels seized the initiative because time was against them; they had to destroy Cox before Sherman got closer. Early on the eighth, the Confederates struck Cox's left (Carter's division), sweeping away the advance guard and taking 900 prisoners. But the main line fought valiantly and Cox brought up part of Ruger's reserves to reinforce the weak points. The Rebels slashed repeatedly at the Federal line, but could not break through before nightfall ended the action. The following day Bragg[14] attempted the same thing on the right, battering Palmer's division and trying desperately to turn that flank. The Confederates bent the line a bit before Ruger's division again saved the day. On the tenth, the enemy made one last vigorous assault. They hit Carter, near the center of the line.

---

[12]Record Group 393, Department of North Carolina, Letter Book 150, 201-204.

[13]O.R., XLVII, pt. 1, 973-80.

[14]General Braxton Bragg had recently arrived from Tennessee to help defend Goldsboro.

The Federals were prepared. Field artillery, loaded with death-dealing canister, were fired repeatedly into the attacking waves. Accurate musket fire dealt with those who escaped the artillery barrages. During the night the enemy evacuated their lines and pulled back to Goldsboro.[15]

Although Cox expected continued fighting, his column entered Kinston unopposed. More surprisingly, they encountered no further resistance during the march to Goldsboro. General Joseph E. Johnston, the over-all Confederate commander in North Carolina, had quietly evacuated the city and had concentrated all available troops for a last desperate effort to stop Sherman's advance.

After failing to halt Cox outside Kinston, Johnston had ordered all available units to rendezvous south of Goldsboro. The results were meager; despite an all-out effort the Confederates could not muster more than 22,500 men. Johnston hurled them against Sherman at Averasboro (March 16), and at Bentonsville (March 19). The Rebel's best opportunity came at Bentonsville because Sherman, laboring over miserable roads, had divided his army into three separate columns. The Confederates hit General Henry Slocum's Twentieth Corps near Bentonsville, hoping to crush Sherman in detail. Although hard pressed, Slocum's soldiers

---

[15] O.R., XLVII, pt. 2, 734, 749-51, 789; Cox, "Diary," March 8 and 10, 1865; Cox, Franklin and Nashville, 158-62. The bridge over the Neuse River leading into Kinston became known as "Cox's Bridge" in subsequent correspondence between Sherman and Schofield. O.R., XLVII, pt. 2, 910; pt. 3, 913.

held their ground and, in fact, had stopped the Rebels before reinforcements came on the field. This shattered Johnston's hope of preventing the link-up at Goldsboro, which Sherman reached on March 23. The carnival atmosphere triggered by the reunion of long separated comrades beggars description; even usually strict officers looked on indulgently or openly participated in the jubilant celebration. Now the Union's combined army of 80,000 cast an engulfing shadow over the small Confederate force gathering at Raleigh.[16]

With the original plans fulfilled, Sherman, Grant and Lincoln met at City Point, Virginia, to discuss future strategy. Sherman was instructed to press toward Raleigh, remaining ready, however, to send some troops north to Virginia in case Lee did something unexpected. The brief respite at Goldsboro sufficed to allow Sherman's ragged men to receive new uniforms and replace equipment. On April 5, Sherman issued confidential orders for an advance to begin within five days.[17] They were about half-way to Raleigh when, on the eleventh, news arrived of Lee's surrender at Appomattox. The shouts of joy travelled faster than the messenger who carried the official announcement. Hats were flung into the air, everyone hugged someone as a carefree

---

[16]Cox, Franklin and Nashville, Chapter XI.

[17]O.R., XLVII, pt. 2, 969.

celebration broke out. The Confederacy had been crushed.[18]

Sherman's army bivouacked around Raleigh on April 13. The following day an informal armistice was arranged and Sherman began negotiations with Johnston for the surrender of his troops. Johnston, who had recently consulted with Jefferson Davis and several members of the Confederate cabinet, however, offered to surrender all the remaining Rebel armies if the proper guarantees were made. Sherman, recalling Lincoln's conciliatory attitude during the meeting at City Point, agreed to consider terms going beyond a simple military capitulation. But Sherman cautioned that the document must be approved by the President and his cabinet before becoming official. Working as amicably as possible under the circumstances, the two men hammered out an agreement by April 18th. The military terms were simple. The Confederate soldiers were to return to their state capitals, deposit their arms with federal authorities and sign a declaration to abide by state and federal laws. The other items dealt with political affairs, stipulating recognition of existing Southern state governments after their members executed a loyalty oath, promising protection for personal property and personal political rights, and stating that no one would be prosecuted for their part in the war.

Although the news of Lincoln's death, on April 15, spread rapidly throughout the North, it did not reach

---

[18]Cox, "Diary," April 6-12, 1865.

Sherman's camp until the seventeenth. Sherman swore his staff to secrecy and directed Cox quietly to strengthen the guard around Raleigh. All troops not on duty were sent to their quarters. After Cox completed the arrangements, Sherman sadly went from camp to camp to read the tragic announcement and to caution the men against any rash action. The news stunned the soldiers; but there were no incidents and Cox reported that his guards encountered less trouble than usual.

The Sherman-Johnston agreement reached Washington after Lincoln's death, when the entire government was reeling from shock. President Andrew Johnson, General Halleck and Secretary of War Stanton reacted violently to the leniency concerning civil affairs. They voted to reject the document and, what is worse, sent Grant to secure a new agreement under conditions which appeared to express a lack of faith in Sherman's patriotism. Grant arrived in Raleigh on April 24, and diplomatically instructed Sherman to reopen the negotiations with Johnston. Johnston had no alternative but to accept a new statement which excluded recognition of state governments, personal rights and immunity for acts committed during the war. The revised agreement was sent to Washington on April 26 and it received speedy ratification.[19]

---

[19]This affair caused a complete rupture between Sherman and Halleck and Stanton. Unfortunately Sherman's agreement was printed in Northern newspapers, without proper explanation, making it appear his inclusion of political terms bordered on treason. Sherman felt then, and throughout the rest of his life, that he had not exceeded the

The responsibility for administering the paroles to the defeated Rebels fell upon Cox and Schofield. They went by train from Raleigh to Greensboro on May 1, accompanied during the last half of the trip by Confederate General William Hardee, whose book on Tactics Cox had used throughout the war. Cox brought along only a couple of regiments, enough to complete the task but not so many as to arouse hatred. At Greensboro they met briefly with Johnston, who assured them that his only desire was to have the men returned home before they broke up into outlaw bands.[20] Within three days the paperwork was completed and the paroled soldiers, accompanied by General Johnston, set out for their respective states. Schofield had underscored the Union's desire for a speedy reunification by arranging for the Confederates to receive rations during their journey home.

---

instructions received from Lincoln in March. He could not know, due to slow communications, that recognition of the Virginia state government had been withdrawn before he reached an accord with Johnston; he assumed he was applying an approved principle to the other state governments. Sherman's bitterness over this treatment caused him to reject Halleck's invitation to meet in Washington in May, and to refuse to shake Stanton's hand when they reviewed Sherman's army in the capital on May 24, 1865. Hansen, The Civil War, Chapter 44, presents a brief account. Cox, in his Reminiscences, II, Chapters XLIX-L, analyzed the dispute in detail and approved Sherman's actions. Joseph E. Johnston, Narrative of Military Operations Directed During the Late War Between the States (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1959), 403-415, discusses the affair from his viewpoint and suggests that Sherman agreed to include political terms because he believed the war had been a fight to restore the Union.

[20]Cox, "Diary," May 1, 1865.

Subsequently Cox was put in charge of the western part of the state to supervise the return of authority to civilian officials.[21] Many citizens feared that they would be punished for having supported the Confederacy. Cox accepted numerous speaking engagements for the sole purpose of explaining the federal government's intention. Cox stressed that no one need fear reprisals for past activities, but he also bore hard upon the abolition of slavery and urged Blacks and Whites to work diligently in adjusting to their new relationship. To this end, Cox recommended that work agreements be drawn up defining the obligations of each party. The Negroes constituted the greatest problem; many assumed that wealth would automatically follow emancipation and they lolled about awaiting the division of the plantations into small farms, which they expected to receive free and clear. Cox frequently and strenuously discouraged such notions, but with little effect.

During May, Garfield wrote that many men within Ohio's Union Party wanted to present Cox's name to the state convention for the nomination for governor. Although Cox did not encourage the move, he believed that the governorship might serve as a transition back to civilian life and that it would give him time to renew business contacts.[22] After being nominated Cox requested a transfer to Ohio,

---

[21] O.R., XLVII, pt. 3, 396, 407.

[22] Cox to Garfield, June 1, 1865, Garfield Papers, VI, pt. 2.

ostensibly to supervise the mustering out of Ohio troops, but actually to bring himself on the scene for some quiet campaigning. The request was approved and at the end of July, Cox returned to Ohio.[23]

As Cox travelled toward home his thoughts went, naturally, back over the four years he had spent in the army. He entered the service as a novice, but had proven his ability through unstinting dedication to duty. Some said he was not "popular" with the men because he was too aloof to develop warm personal relationships, but the officers of the Sixteenth Kentucky thought otherwise; they had presented Cox with a horse and a testimonial citing their thanks for his uniform kindness and courteous handling of the troops.[24] Moreover Cox had developed warm friendships with other officers, particularly Schofield and Sherman; both held high estimates of his value as a Volunteer officer and wished him every success in the gubernatorial campaign. Sherman even made personal endorsements of Cox's candidacy in Ohio during the canvass. If any single trait dominated Cox's military career, it was his devotion to the Union. He felt deeply the refusal of the Senate to ratify his promotion in 1862. Even more galling was the subsequent promotion of other men, when Cox had served longer and in more important capacities. But he could not justify resigning

---

[23] O.R., LXVII, pt. 3, 679.

[24] Officers of the Sixteenth Kentucky to Cox, March 13, 1865.

for personal reasons. In a very great measure Cox accepted the nomination for Ohio's governorship as a recognition of his service and as a reward for his unrelenting efforts to see the Union restored. Although thankful that the war was over at last, he knew he would miss the close comradship experienced in camp and field, where men had drawn together for a common purpose.

The Union Party of Ohio held its convention in Columbus on June 21, 1865. Among the delegates were one hundred forty-five uniformed men representing Ohio's soldiers. Governor Brough, a nominal Democrat elected under the Unionist banner in 1863, had withdrawn his name from contention on June 16. This left Generals Cox, Schenck and John B. Steedman (a former Democrat) and one civilian, Samuel Galloway, in the race. By the time nominations were made the contest had narrowed to Cox and Galloway. At the last minute Galloway withdrew and the delegates unanimously endorsed Cox on the first ballot.[25]

National issues rather than state questions dominated the platform. The document praised, in a subdued tone, President Johnson's determination to carry out Lincoln's reconstruction plans; but warned that the federal government must insure the security of "loyal" Southern Whites, the

---

[25]The general description of Ohio's political picture, Cox's election and his administration is based upon Roseboom, Ohio: Civil War Era, Chapter XV, and Porter, Ohio Politics During the Civil War, Chapter IV.

peace and prosperity of the Union, and the abolition of slavery. On the particularly thorny issue of Negro suffrage, the platform remained silent. The radical delegates, especially those from the Western Reserve, had demanded a plank approving the extension of political rights to Blacks in Ohio and throughout the South. The conservative majority, however, beat back all attempts to include such a statement. Cox heartily approved of this decision. In fact, he had instructed his friend, Aaron F. Perry of Cincinnati, to withdraw his name if the party decided to push forward on the issue.[26]

Despite the spirited debate in the convention, Cox wanted to avoid taking a stand on Negro suffrage. But pressure from many sources increased and Cox finally resolved to make his position clear. He did so with a private reply to a letter from an Oberlin Committee, knowing that the response would receive wide publicity. The Committee's letter raised two major questions: did Cox support changing Ohio's Constitution to allow Negroes to vote; and did he favor extending the same right to Blacks throughout the nation?[27] In his reply, known throughout the state as

---

[26]Cox to Perry, May 25, 1865, Cochran, "Political Correspondence," I, 26-27.

[27]Oberlin Committee to Cox, July 24, 1865, ibid., 57-60. The Oberlin Letter is usually represented as the work of a committee of Negroes. See, for example, Porter, Ohio Politics During the Civil War, 210, and Eugene Roseboom and Francis P. Weisenberger, A History of Ohio (Columbus: Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society, 1954), 294. William C. Cochran, Cox's stepson, pointed out,

the "Oberlin Letter," Cox devoted most of his attention to the second query.[28] He thought that Negroes would be more hindered than helped if they received the franchise. He based his opinion upon four years of close observation of Southern racial conditions; he believed that mutual distrust, and sometimes hatred, dominated the relationship between the races. Cox suspected that granting the suffrage to Negroes would only make the situation worse because they were generally uneducated, often outnumbered, and could not be expected to use the ballot intelligently. Cox predicted a violent reaction from Whites if their former slaves suddenly became their equals in the polling booth. Instead of equal rights, Cox proposed "a peaceful separation of the races on the soil where they now are." A "Negro Territory" could be created by the federal government within each Southern state, preferably where the Blacks already constituted a majority of the population. Within these enclaves the qualified Negroes would receive full voting rights and could operate their own separate government. Writing bluntly, Cox feared that the American ideal of a homogeneous

---

however, that at least two of the signatories were white. Samuel Plumb was Oberlin's mayor and banker; E. H. Fairchild held the position of Chairman of the Preparatory Department at Oberlin College. Cochran contends that these two men were the "true committee" and that the Negroes' signatures were merely window-dressing. Cochran cited several letters from Oberlinites which suggest strongly that this was the actual circumstance. Cochran, "Political Correspondence," footnote, I, 57-58.

[28]Cox to the Oberlin Committee, July 25, 1865.

population could never be achieved between Blacks and Whites; color would always keep them apart.

Cox opposed amending Ohio's constitution before the suffrage issue had been debated and determined at the national level. It would do little good for Ohio to act alone. Even more importantly, Cox failed to see any measureable benefits for Ohio's Negroes if voting rights were granted because they were a minority and could not significantly influence the outcome of state elections. Encouraging more Blacks to move into Ohio in quest of broader rights would merely compound the existing problems.

In closing, Cox castigated the Committee for its not so subtle threat that he would lose votes if he refused to answer their questions. He lectured them on party unity, stating that they had no right to demand opinions from him on issues not included in the party platform. But it was too late for lectures. If Cox had really wanted to avoid controversy he should have remained silent. In answering the Committee Cox took a calculated risk, but at least he would know for certain how much support he had from within the party ranks. Moreover, the public debate over his views would indicate the reaction of many voters.

Cox's forthright statement reflected the view of a majority of Ohio's returning soldiers, and it received strong support in the southern part of the state, where most

of Ohio's Negroes resided.[29] But it aroused the ire of the radical Unionists, who attacked the statement on suffrage as too conservative and the proposal for the separation of the races as impractical. Judge William M. Dickson of Cincinnati emerged as a radical spokesman by quickly preparing a rebuttal which was widely publicized. After rejecting Cox's idea that a deeply rooted antagonism prevailed between the races which might compel their separation, he devoted most of the reply to discussing party unity. Dickson, who had served as Chairman of the Committee on Resolutions (platform) during the convention, said that a majority of the delegates favored Negro suffrage, but had refrained from pressing the issue in the interest of harmony. Now Cox had endangered that principle. Dickson recommended that Unionists and voters view Cox's statement as a purely personal pronouncement, not as a commonly held party belief. The Western Reserve press echoed Dickson's sentiments, but the conservative newspapers came to Cox's rescue.[30] Out of the controversy one thing became clear, Negro suffrage would be a key issue in the campaign despite all efforts to avoid it.

---

[29]William T. Sherman to John Sherman, August 3, 1865, in Rachel Sherman Thorndike (ed.), The Sherman Letters: Correspondence between General and Senator Sherman from 1837 to 1891 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1894), 252; Cochran, "Political Correspondence," I, 77-112, reproduced dozens of letters Cox received supporting the Oberlin Letter.

[30]Porter, Ohio Politics During the Civil War, 211-13; Roseboom, Ohio: Civil War Era, 450; Emilius O. Randall and Daniel J. Ryan, History of Ohio: The Rise and Progress of an American State (4 vols.; New York: The Century History Co., 1912), IV, 294-97.

The Union party campaign opened with a rally in Warren, Cox's home town, on August 15. Heading the list of speakers were Cox, Garfield, and former governor David Tod. Speaking first, Cox placed special emphasis on party harmony, saying that the Unionists must remain united to prevent Northern Copperheads and Southern Whites from controlling reconstruction. He talked very briefly about Negro suffrage, repeating the substance of the Oberlin Letter. Garfield agreed on every point except Negro voting rights; he favored giving the franchise to Blacks in Ohio and in the South without further delay. Tod supported Cox and warned that if Ohio changed her constitution a large number of Negroes would move into the state. Six days later, speaking at Oberlin, Cox further clarified his position on Negro suffrage. He said he would support an amendment to the state constitution if each state had to decide for itself, but he preferred that the issue be resolved by the federal government to provide a uniform policy for the entire nation.[31]

On August 23, in an unusually late convention, the Democrats nominated General John H. Morgan for the

---

[31]Porter, Ohio Politics During the Civil War, 216-17; Roseboom, Ohio: Civil War Era, 451.

governorship.[32] Morgan had served in the Mexican War and during the first three years of the Civil War; he had also been minister to Portugal during the Buchanan administration. In view of the division within the Union Party, the Democrats came out flatly against Negro suffrage. They represented their party as the true defender of White supremacy in Ohio. They appealed to the soldier and labor vote by warning that Whites' social status and wages would be drastically affected if large numbers of Blacks flooded into the state. When Morgan began his active campaigning in mid-September, he attacked Cox's separation scheme as impractical and costly. It would be better, Morgan thought, to protect Negroes where they now resided, but without extending them voting rights.[33]

In October Ohio voters returned their verdict. Cox won over Morgan by a majority of about 30,000, although the Union party drew 65,000 fewer votes than in 1863. The sharp reduction in Unionist support was attributed to thousands of men who refused to vote, rather than to defections to the Democrats. Almost one-third of the decrease occurred in the Reserve, where the suffrage issue was especially

---

[32]One week earlier, August 17, a small group of extreme states-rights Democrats had held a convention which nominated Alexander Long for governor and adopted a platform embodying the doctrine of state nullification of federal laws. Long received only 360 votes in the election. Porter, Ohio Politics During the Civil War, 214, 219.

[33]Ibid., 214-16, 217-18.

volatile. The Union party retained control of the state legislature by a 70 to 35 margin in the House and by 25 to 12 in the Senate.[34]

Although Cox had clearly indicated his opposition to extending the franchise, the radicals in the state legislature refused to let the issue rest. The 1866 legislative session was barely underway when a resolution was introduced to strike the word "white" from Ohio's voting qualifications. The conservatives prevented a stampede by sharply pointing out that the resolution would amend the constitution and must, therefore, be approved by the voters in a referendum. The measure eventually passed and appeared upon the state ballot in 1867.[35] Throughout the protracted debate, Governor Cox maintained a resolute silence which undoubtedly increased the radical's resentment toward him.

During the first few months of 1866 Cox labored to conciliate differences within his party arising over national reconstruction. In response to a suggestion by William Dennison, former Ohio governor and currently Postmaster General, Cox asked the state legislature to adopt a resolution approving the President's program.[36] But,

---

[34]Porter, Ohio Politics During the Civil War, 219.

[35]Ibid., 219-20, 235-38. For a summary of the votes on the resolution in its various stages see Ohio Senate Journal, 1866, 8, 498; Ohio Senate Journal, 1867, 240, 273, 338, 390, 411; Ohio House Journal, 1867, 490, 540, 552, 561, 570, 573, 579, 580, 586, 588.

[36]William Dennison to Cox, January 3, 1866.

because the rift between Congress and the President was widening, the request was tabled. Later, after Johnson had vetoed the Freedman's Bureau Bill, the Ohio Unionists coalesced into pro-Johnson and pro-Radical factions. Deeply concerned, Cox journeyed to Washington to see the President and determine first-hand if the controversy could be resolved. As his train rumbled eastward, the dispute was intensified. Johnson, on February 22, delivered a speech lashing the Radicals for their opposition. By the time Cox arrived in the capital, the Ohio congressional delegation was furious and several members advised him to cancel the appointment with the President. In spite of the warnings that he might seriously harm his political future, Cox went ahead.

The interview (February 24) ran smoothly. Cox sounded out Johnson on reconstruction policies, and especially on Negro suffrage. He came away convinced that both factions within the Union Party desired the same objectives; the major difference lay in whether the program should be carried out by executive or congressional action. Cox issued a public statement on the meeting and concluded it by observing that, ". . . although he may not receive personal assault with the forebearance Mr. Lincoln used to show, there is no need to fear that Andrew Johnson is not sincere in his adhesion to the principles upon which he was elected."[37] He urged the Ohio Unionists to support the

[37] Cincinnati Commercial, February 27, 1866.

Chief Executive and pleaded for everyone to remain temperate until a common agreement could be reached. Cox observed, privately, that hot tempers were the most serious problem.[38] Despite these earnest efforts Cox failed to reunite his party and, as a result, his effectiveness as a party leader steadily diminished.[39]

As preparations were made for the congressional campaign of 1866, the animosity of the Union party leadership toward Cox emerged. The party's central committee had originally invited Cox and Dennison to open the contest, but abruptly reversed itself at the last minute and gave the honor to Senator John Sherman and Representative Robert Schenck.[40] The deliberate slight took place although Cox, by mid-summer, had sharply reduced his support of President Johnson.[41] In the few speeches he presented during the canvass, Cox continually stressed the need for party unity on the basis of a just reconstruction program. He urged ratification of the proposed Fourteenth Amendment as the best way to guarantee the Negroes' rights. The election returns revealed that the Union Party in Ohio had done well; it lost

---

[38]Cox to Aaron F. Perry, March 10, 1866, Cochran, "Political Correspondence," I, 183-87.

[39]For a description of Cox's conciliatory efforts see Porter, Ohio Politics During the Civil War, 220-23.

[40]Cox to William Dennison, August 3, 1866, Cochran, "Political Correspondence," I, 242-43.

[41]Cox to Charles Anderson, August 7, 1866, and Cox to Willard Warner, August 27, 1866, ibid., 243-44, 250-52. Cox to James Monroe, November 21, 1866.

only one seat by a narrow margin to the Democrats.[42]

Despite the emphasis on national issues and the struggle to maintain party harmony, Cox's administration managed to complete or initiate action on several state programs. The state tax laws were thoroughly studied and remedial legislation was adopted to provide for a statewide reassessment. In 1867, at Cox's urging, a study group was formed which recommended the construction of a new Girls Reform School. In March, 1867, the state legislature empowered first-class cities to establish Boards of Health to enforce local health regulations. The final important action, in April, 1867, created a State Board of Charities to assist the legislature in operating the various public assistance agencies. All of these marked Cox's term as one beneficial to the state.[43]

Even the radicals agreed that Cox had served well, but they had serious doubts about his loyalty to their cause. They disliked his independent attitude.[44] Cox sensed their uneasiness and early in 1867 made his decision regarding his political future. He believed he could be renominated if willing to fight, but what would he gain? Even if victorious, he could not count upon enough support

---

[42]Porter, Ohio Politics During the Civil War, 232-34.

[43]James R. Ewing, "The Public Services of J. D. Cox," Ph. D. Dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 1899, 17-18; Randall and Ryan, History of Ohio, IV, 299-300.

[44]Roseboom, Ohio: Civil War Era, 458.

in the legislature to carry out his policies.[45] After weighing the alternatives, Cox wrote the Central Committee on January 25, 1867, withdrawing from any consideration for a second term.[46] As time passed many people urged him to run, but Cox remained steadfast in his resolution to return to private life.[47]

The Union Republican Party, as it now called itself, met in Columbus on June 19. After Cox's announcement, the radicals had openly supported Rutherford B. Hayes, a man of greater party regularity. Samuel Galloway again provided the strongest opposition, but Hayes easily won the nomination on the second ballot. The Democrats countered with Allen G. Thurman. The campaign was highly emotional because the proposed amendment to the state constitution providing for Negro suffrage was on the ballot. Hayes supported the measure, while Thurman vigorously upheld the principle of White supremacy. Hayes won by a narrow 2,983 votes, but the constitutional amendment was defeated by 38,000.[48] Cox

---

[45]Cox to Aaron F. Perry, January 14 and 17, 1867, Cochran, "Political Correspondence," 273-76, 280-81.

[46]Cox to General B. R. Cowan, Chairman of the State Central Committee, January 25, 1867, ibid., 283.

[47]Cox to Aaron F. Perry, June 3, 1867, ibid., 316-18; John W. Andrews to Cox, January 27, 1867; Frederick Hassaurek to Cox, May 6, 1867; S. D. Harris to Cox, June 6, 1867.

[48]Porter, Ohio Politics During the Civil War, 241-48; Roseboom, Ohio: Civil War Era, 458-62.

considered the referendum results as a vindication of the position he had sternly upheld through two stormy years.[49]

[49]Cox to Charles F. Cox, October 16, 1867, and Cox to Garfield, November 22, 1867, Cochran, "Political Correspondence," 330, 341-46.

CHAPTER VIII

EPILOGUE

In the spring of 1868 Cox moved his family to Cincinnati, where he had arranged a law partnership with General Henry L. Burnett. He purchased a large two-story house on Dayton Street. The spacious lot soon contained a wide variety of flowers planted and tended by Mrs. Cox and the children.

The Cox home was a constant beehive of activity; old army comrades and political associates frequently lodged there during visits to the Queen City. Although many of the visits were social, some were made by friends seeking help in their business ventures. Sometimes former army acquaintances, down on their luck, sought Cox's assistance in finding them employment. He usually succeeded. On one occasion Colonel E. A. Tracy, a former member of Cox's staff, arrived with his family. Tracy was in such poor health that he had to be carried into the house. The front parlor was turned into a bedroom and Mrs. Cox struggled to make him comfortable.[1]

It was during this trying time that one of Cox's

---

[1]Cox, Building An American Industry, 42.

sons, Kenyon, had a brush with death. Kenyon, a sickly lad since birth, had developed a tumor on his face. Doctors had treated it for more than a year with external applications of iodine, which they hoped would be absorbed and arrest the spread of the tumor. But the treatment failed and the growth enlarged until it was the size of a man's fist. One day as the children played in an upstairs bedroom, Ken suddenly collapsed and began bleeding profusely from the mouth. Thereafter the tumor hemorrhaged often, causing Ken to lose much blood and reducing his weight drastically. Finally, as a last resort, an operation was performed by Doctor Mussy of Cincinnati in February, 1869. The danger was great and the family steeled itself for the possibility of Ken's death. Happily, the operation was a success and, although periodic surgery was required thereafter, Ken recovered fully from the ordeal.[2]

After Grant's smashing victory in the election of 1868, politicians speculated over the make-up of his cabinet. Many believed that an Ohioan would be included in the select group due to that state's continued support of the Republican party. Ex-governor Jacob Cox and Senator

---

[2]Ibid., 43-44; Cox to Rutherford B. Hayes, September 16, 1869, Cox Papers, The Rutherford B. Hayes Memorial Library, Fremont, Ohio. Hereafter cited as: Cox Papers, Hayes Library.

Benjamin Wade were frequently mentioned as choices.[3] Cox reacted without enthusiasm to rumors of his appointment. He had privately written off his chances as rather slim and intimated that he preferred to remain in Cincinnati because ". . .to go would be an onerous though honorable duty."[4]

Grant withheld announcement of his decision until shortly before the inauguration, much to the exasperation of the press. In keeping with the uncertainty of the entire episode, Cox read in a newspaper that he would fill the post of Secretary of Interior.[5] After several long frustrating days, in the midst of teaching a class at the Cincinnati Law School, Cox finally received a telegram from Grant bearing the official notification of his appointment.

Grant's administration faced a number of turbulent issues. Reconstruction of the South remained incomplete. Wealthy holders of greenbacks and federal bonds demanded

---

[3]William Dennison to Cox, March 7, 1869. Former Governor Dennison was in contact with Grant regarding the selection of an Ohioan. But Dennison got the impression that Wade, whom he disliked, had the best chance, so he backed off and did not press vigorously in favor of Ohio. After the appointment, Dennison apologized for not making a more determined effort in Cox's behalf.

[4]Cox to Theodore Cox, January 27, 1869, and to Charles F. Cox, March 3, 1869, Cochran, "Political Correspondence," I, 403-404.

[5]This was somewhat of a surprise because the rumor-mills had connected Cox with the War Department. This probably occurred because both Grant and Sherman had urged President Johnson to appoint Cox as Secretary of War in the midst of the battle over Stanton's dismissal, early in 1868. See Benjamin P. Thomas and Harold M. Hyman, Stanton: The Life and Times of Lincoln's Secretary of War (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), 568-69.

payment in gold. Men-on-the-make, a numerous species during those years, approached the government seeking assistance with their schemes. Some people sought political reforms, including the establishment of a civil service system, in the hope that the government might become more efficient. It was a time that required a strong leader at the head of the government to check the malevolent impulses. Grant never provided strong presidential leadership, but at the outset few suspected serious wrongdoing in the administration. Three of the cabinet members--Cox, E. Rockwood Hoar, and Hamilton Fish--were all hailed as "reformers." Yet some skeptics intimated that these men might not find the political climate in the capital amenable to their ideas. Time would tell.[6]

One of Cox's first official acts established a new method for selecting employees in the Patent Office and Census Bureau.[7] Using the Civil Service Law of 1853 as the basis for his decision, Cox ruled that prospective employees

---

[6]Allan Nevins, Hamilton Fish: The Inner History of the Grant Administration (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1936), 137-38.

[7]Cox to Charles Cox, March 14, 1869, Cochran, "Political Correspondence," I, 412; U.S. Congress, House, Report of the Secretary of the Interior for 1870, House Executive Document No. 7, 41st Cong., 3rd Sess., v-vi. Hereafter cited as Report for 1870. In the report Cox said he would apply the new method to other offices in his department if this trial proved successful.

had to submit to an oral and written examination.[8] This procedure, Cox believed, would increase the quality of personnel in those two offices and reduce the number of office-seekers who beseiged the cabinet members, often hindering the proper execution of their duties.[9] The initial reaction to Cox's policy was favorable, and the test results proved that a screening process was necessary and desirable.[10] But some complaints were registered. For example, one woman became furious when informed that a written test was required to become a copyist in the Patent Bureau. After some questioning she admitted her inability to read or write, yet maintained that she could copy with the best![11]

During 1870 Cox initiated two additional policies to increase further the morale and efficiency of his employees. First, he prohibited Republican fund raisers from using coercion in collecting political assessments. Cox announced

---

[8]U.S. Statutes at Large, X, 211. The act left the implimentation of the law to the discretion of the secretaries of the departments. Cox was the only secretary to use the law during Grant's administrations.

[9]U.S. Congress, House, Report of the Secretary of the Interior for 1869, House Executive Document No. 1, part 3, 41st Cong., 2d Sess., xxiv-xxvi. Hereafter cited as Report for 1869.

[10]New York Tribune, September 17, 1869, 1; Washington Chronicle, December 9, 1869, 2; Jacob D. Cox, "Civil Service Reform," North American Review, Vol. 112, No. 230 (January, 1871), 102-104. Cox's article gave the most complete statistics. He reported that 621 applicants were tested, only 54% (338) received a qualifying score of 400 points out of a total of 1,000 points. Moreover only 17% (107) earned over 600 points.

[11]Washington Chronicle, June 22, 1869, 1.

that political contributions were voluntary and promised that no disciplinary action would be taken against anyone who refused payment.[12] This policy reversed traditional practices; each federal employee had been compelled to contribute a percentage of his salary if he wanted to retain his job. By opposing these collections, Cox raised the hackles of the Republican leadership and made some powerful enemies.

Cox's second decision also abolished a traditional practice. During elections federal employees were given a leave of absence, with pay, while they returned to their home states to vote. Cox informed his staff that, henceforth, they would have to forfeit their pay for the days absent or they could deduct the time from their vacation. This announcement triggered a storm of protest. President Grant did not overrule Cox, but he did ask that the Interior Department follow the procedure used by a majority of the departments.[13] Cox held his ground and never reversed his decision.

Revealing his broad interest in civil service

---

[12]New York Tribune, October 31, 1870, 5. The Tribune reprinted three letters exchanged between Cox and the Republican Executive Committee of Ohio in which Cox flatly refused to require his clerks to contribute to the party finances. One of these letters, R. D. Harrison (Chairman, Ohio State Union Executive Committee), to Cox, May 14, 1870, hit the nail squarely. Harrison asked Cox's cooperation so "our assessments may be made at once, and that each and every recipient of federal patronage be afforded the opportunity to contribute." (Underline added.)

[13]Washington Chronicle, October 5, 1870, 1.

reform, Cox urged passage of the Jenckes bill. The measure would require a competitive examination for all civil servants.[14] Instead of a single Civil Service Commission, however, Cox favored a separate commission for each department to prevent a few men from controlling the entire program.

Cox worked earnestly to improve the operation of the Office of Indian Affairs. His recommendations, made with the President's approval, laid the basis for "Grant's Peace Policy."[15] Acting on a suggestion made originally by the Society of Friends, Cox had representatives of religious denominations appointed as Indian agents. In 1869 Quakers were given control over Indian affairs in Kansas and Nebraska and they served with distinction. After their initial success, several other churches accepted invitations to participate.[16] These churchmen, who struggled to improve the welfare of their charges, earned the respect of the Indians.[17] In those areas where the program was established

---

[14]Ari Hoogenboom, Outlawing the Spoils: A History of the Civil Service Reform Movement, 1865-1883 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1961), 16, 65. The sponsor of the measure was Representative Thomas A. Jenckes of Rhode Island.

[15]Jacob D. Cox, "The Indian Question," International Review, Vol. VI (1879), 617-634; Henry E. Fritz, The Movement for Indian Assimilation, 1860-1890 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1963), Chapter III.

[16]Report for 1869, x-xi; Fritz, The Movement for Indian Assimilation, 71-75.

[17]Report for 1869, x-xi; William B. Hesseltine, Ulysses S. Grant, Politician (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1935), 160-161; New York Tribune, September 23, 1869, 1.

it brought about generally a less hostile relationship between the federal government and the Indians. Cox also arranged for between sixty and seventy unassigned army officers to serve as Indian agents. This resulted in a considerable monetary savings because these men were already drawing a regular salary. Moreover the officers remained under military discipline and faithfully executed the orders of the Indian Commissioner. These innovations improved the quality of the field personnel in the Indian Bureau and Cox reported a marked increase in efficiency.[18] Despite the success of these programs, however, the "spoilsmen" within the Republican party bitterly criticized Cox. They had planned to reward some of their supporters with an Indian agency, and became angry when Cox filled many of the positions with men selected on merit rather than on political loyalty.[19]

During his term in office, Cox struggled to unravel the "McGarrahan Claim." The claim, located in Fresno County, California, contained quicksilver deposits valued at $5,000,000. The dispute revolved around William McGarrahan's efforts to secure a clear title to the tract

---

[18] Report for 1869, x; New York Tribune, April 29, 1869, 1, and May 8, 1869, 1.

[19] One complaint was registered by Senator Zachariah Chandler of Michigan in September, 1870. Chandler was incensed because a New Jersey man had been appointed an Indian Agent in Michigan in preference to Chandler's favorite, the Reverend W. H. Brockway. Zachariah Chandler: An Outline Sketch of His Life and Public Service (Detroit: The Post and Tribune Co., 1880), 307.

from the General Land Office. The original grant had been made by the Mexican government to Vincente P. Gomez in 1844, but the records had been destroyed when the Monterrey archives burned during the American attack on that city in 1846. Gomez, working under the Treaty of Guadaloupe Hidalgo and several American land laws, supposedly had secured a clear title from the California Federal District Court in June, 1857. Shortly thereafter McGarrahan purchased the claim from Gomez and had it recognized by the court in February, 1858. Subsequently, in 1862, he had applied for a patent (title) to the General Land Office. But for some unexplained reason the claim had not been registered and when found in the files it lacked President Lincoln's signature and the official government seal.[20] In 1869 McGarrahan appealed to Cox to complete the transaction and officially record his claim. Cox's duty appeared clear, but as a precaution he ordered the Land Office to make an extensive investigation.[21]

---

[20]There are several government documents which present a detailed review of the McGarrahan Claim. I have used extensively: U.S. Congress, House, "Report on the Memorial of William McGarrahan," House Reports, No. 24 (February, 1871), 41st Cong., 3d Sess., 86 pp. Also helpful was a lengthy editorial in the Washington Chronicle, April 5, 1869. The Chronicle favored McGarrahan's claim and frequently criticized Cox's refusal to issue the patent.

[21]The Land Office investigation revealed that McGarrahan's claim had been turned down by the United States Supreme Court on appeal by the Justice Department in 1865; the verdict was based partly upon the fact that fraudulent practices had been associated with the suit from the very outset. Excerpts from the Supreme Court's decision may be found in: U.S. Congress, Senate, Senate Miscellaneous

Before the investigation was completed, the New Idria Mining Company filed a counter-claim to 486 acres within the McGarrahan tract. Now Cox found himself caught between two contending parties and he turned to Attorney General E. Rockwood Hoar for advice. Hoar's opinion (December 17, 1869) stated that Cox must issue a patent to the claimant that had most clearly complied with the law. Hoar also said that it appeared the New Idria Company's case was more valid than McGarrahan's.[22]

After several more months of complicated legal maneuvering, Cox decided, in August, 1870, to complete the New Idria claim. But Grant intervened and ordered him not to issue a patent to anyone unless specifically directed to do so.[23] In his reply to Grant's letter, Cox protested vigorously McGarrahan's interference and asked the President to put an end to it. He closed by saying that he could not

---

Documents, No. 85 (1878), 45th Cong., 2d Sess., 231. In 1868 Representative George S. Boutwell had charged that Gomez and his principal witness, Jose Albrigo, had both been convicted of perjury in a similar case. Boutwell also asserted that a U.S. District Attorney had been bribed to support the claim in 1858. See Boutwell's speech in the Congressional Globe (46 vols., Washington, D.C.: F. and J. Rives and George A. Bailey, 1833-73), vol. 39, 2471-75. Hubert Howe Bancroft, The History of California (7 vols.; The History Company, 1886-1890), stated that the entire claim was based upon a "pretended Spanish grant" in VII, 657, f. n. 21.

[22]Senate Misc. Doc., No. 85, 871-72.

[23]Evidently McGarrahan's efforts to have some of his friends speak to Grant had borne fruit. McGarrahan to Frederick Franck, December 17, 1869 and January 10, 1870, in "Report on the Claim of William McGarrahan," House Reports, No. 951 (June 13, 1878), 45th Cong., 2d Sess., 359-60.

deviate from his chosen course; if Grant failed to back him, he would feel compelled to resign.[24] Grant did not respond, forcing Cox to conclude that the President would not support his position.

At the end of September the Coxes went to Staten Island for a brief vacation. After spending many hours in deep thought Cox wrote a long letter to Grant. He reviewed his operation of the Interior Department and placed special emphasis upon the civil service reforms which had triggered so much protest. Cox reasoned that his policies might have embarrassed Grant by going farther than the President desired. Therefore, he wrote, "I deem it my duty to place in your hands my resignation. . . ."[25] Two days later, before he had received a reply, Cox read in the newspapers that Grant had accepted his resignation. In his acceptance letter Grant thanked Cox for his work and asked him to remain at his post until the department's Annual Report had been completed. Cox agreed and left office on November 1, 1870.

Cox returned to Cincinnati and his legal practice in an effort to recoup his finances, which had been impaired by fifteen years of almost constant public service. He hoped

---

[24]Washington Chronicle, November 10, 1870, 1. Both Grant's and Cox's letters were printed after Cox had left the cabinet. At first Grant had refused to make the correspondence public: Chronicle, October 19, 1870, 1.

[25]Cox to Grant, October 3, 1870, Cochran, "Political Correspondence," II, 50-51.

to remain aloof from politics, but his reputation prevented him from realizing this objective. Friends and politicians continually sought out his advice or his cooperation on a variety of issues.[26] In 1871 Cox began corresponding with Carl Schurz and other leaders of a movement for monetary, tariff, and civil service reform.[27] These men feared that no satisfaction on these points could be obtained from the Grant administration. Thus they decided to oust Grant by either taking control of the Republican party or by forming a third party. At first Cox rejected the third party idea but he gradually accepted it as the only practical course.

By the time the Liberal Republican Convention opened in Cincinnati on May 1, 1872, the delegates had generally coalesced behind two candidates--Horace Greeley and Charles Francis Adams. Cox strongly favored the latter and had warned Schurz about the danger of compromising with the Greeley faction.[28] Although Adams led on the first ballot, Greeley slowly gained strength and secured the nomination on

---

[26]In 1871 a group of maverick Republicans joined hands with the Democrats in the state legislature in an attempt to defeat Senator John Sherman's bid for re-election. They wanted to use Cox as their candidate, but he flatly rejected the overtures. Cochran, "Political Correspondence," II, 270-350 passim, contains many letters urging Cox to run. Roseboom, Ohio: Civil War Era, 478-80, gives a brief description of the episode.

[27]Schurz to Cox, February 3, October 14 and 22, 1871. Cox to David A. Wells, July 22, 1871, Cochran, "Political Correspondence," II, 274-78.

[28]Cox to Carl Schurz, April 5, 1872, Cochran, "Political Correspondence," II, 407-410.

the sixth ballot. Greeley's avowed support for the protective tariff and his shallow interest in the other reforms persuaded Cox, and many others, to withdraw from active participation in the party. As Cox put it, "Greeley will get no help from us."[29] Greeley later received an endorsement from the Democrats, but his candidacy was doomed. In November Grant and the Republicans swept to a smashing victory. During the next four years Cox avoided an active role in public affairs, limiting his participation to occasional letters.

Among Cox's legal clients were a group of New York investors whose financial misfortunes during the Panic of 1873 unexpectedly provided him with a new position. The New Yorkers owned a large block of stock in the Toledo, Wabash, and Western Railroad, with headquarters in Toledo, Ohio. When the company's books were closed for 1873 these men held enough votes to control the annual meeting, but subsequent monetary reverses compelled them to sell many shares. Now a question arose: were the New Yorkers entitled to vote the recorded shares or only the current shares? With control over the railroad at stake, they engaged Cox to represent their interests. In his brief Cox argued that the record book was official; what had transpired since the closing date should be ignored.[30] Many Ohio investors, however,

---

[29]Cox to Allyn Cox, May 6, 1872, ibid., 428-32.

[30]Ewing, "Public Services of J. D. Cox," 28.

refused to accept his opinion and declared their willingness to fight out the issue in the annual meeting. At this point a compromise emerged. J. S. Casement, who had served under Cox throughout the war, recommended that Cox accept the presidency of the corporation because all parties trusted him.[31] He agreed and moved to Toledo. During his tenure, December, 1873 until March, 1877, he successfully guided the company through bankruptcy proceedings, during which he acted as the court-appointed referee.[32]

While in Toledo Cox developed an interest in microscopic research and especially in photomicrography (taking photographs through a microscope). With characteristic zeal he plunged into a study of the entire field. Within a few years he became an expert in microphotography and in 1881 he was elected to membership in the Royal [Dutch] Microscopical Society and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. In 1884 and in 1892, Cox served as president of the Royal Society. He wrote several articles for scientific periodicals explaining the techniques he used to produce superior quality photos. Cox crowned his endeavors in 1891 by earning a gold medal with his

---

[31]J. S. Casement to Cox, September 26, 1873.

[32]Shortly after Cox resigned, the corporation was reorganized on a sound financial basis. Clark Waggoner (ed.), History of the City of Toledo and Lucas County, Ohio (Toledo: Munsell and Co., 1888), 414.

photomicrography display at the Antwerp Exposition.[33]

By 1876 Cox had drifted back into the Republican Party. The miserable failure of the third party effort in 1872 had convinced him that if reform would ever triumph it had to occur through regular political channels. Even though he worked with the local Republican committee on several occasions, he expressed no desire to become involved as a candidate. Despite this reticence, however, he was nominated for the House of Representatives by the Sixth District convention in the summer of 1876.[34] After a dull and unexciting campaign, he was elected by a majority of 1,915.[35]

Throughout the presidential campaign, Cox corresponded with Rutherford B. Hayes, the Republican nominee and a fellow Ohioan. Their friendship dated back to the Civil War when Hayes had served under Cox in West Virginia. Cox pleaded that Hayes base his campaign on reform, especially in the area of civil service.[36] Hayes did not respond warmly to Cox's ideas but agreed to "hint at least

---

[33]Cox, Reminiscences, II, 550, note by William Cochran; The Governors of Ohio (Columbus: Ohio Historical Society, 1964), 92. There is a bibliography of the scientific articles in the Cox Papers.

[34]Cox to James Monroe, August 14, 1876, Cox Papers, Hayes Library.

[35]Joseph P. Smith, History of the Republican Party in Ohio (2 vols.; Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1898), I, 365.

[36]Cox to Hayes, June 20, 1876, Cox Papers, Hayes Library.

in the direction you [Cox] suggest."[37] The deals the Republicans made to secure victory restricted Hayes' freedom of action as chief executive. Thus Cox saw another effort at reform swept aside. In the House he discovered that the traditional forces still predominated and he suffered his final political disillusionment. He served out his term without distinction; the party apparently recognized his lack of enthusiasm and did not renominate him.[38] In March, 1879, Cox returned once again to Cincinnati and briefly revived his law practice.

Two years later, Cox accepted an appointment as Dean of the Cincinnati Law School.[39] The school, established in 1833, was the oldest legal training institution west of the Appalachians. Only Harvard (1817), Yale (1824) and Virginia (1826) antedated it. Prospective lawyers transferred to the school for their junior and senior years. The school, during Cox's tenure (1881-97), enrolled from 100 to 200 students annually.[40] A degree from the

---

[37]Hayes to Cox, June 23, 1876, ibid.

[38]Dictionary of American Biography, IV, 477; The Governors of Ohio, 92; William A. Taylor, Ohio in the Congress from 1803-1901, with Notes and Sketches of Senators and Representatives (Columbus: The XX Century Publishing Co., 1900), 260.

[39]Alex H. McGubby to Cox, June 22, 1881, relays news that Cox was selected unanimously by the Board of Trustees.

[40]John B. Shotwell, A History of the Schools of Cincinnati (Cincinnati: The School Life Co., 1902), 260-61; Henry A. and Mrs. Kate B. Ford, compilers, History of Cincinnati, Ohio, with Illustrations and Biographical Sketches (Cleveland: W. W. Williams and Co., 1881), 323-24.

institution entitled graduates to join the Cincinnati bar without further examination.

In addition to his administrative duties, Cox taught courses in Constitutional Law, Civil Procedure, Real Property and Elementary Law.[41] To avoid a conflict of interest, the Board of Trustees required that Cox give up personal court appearances and limit himself to a "chamber practice."[42] Cox remained at the head of the school until 1897. During four of these years (April, 1885 to June, 1889) he also served as the President of the University of Cincinnati. In 1896 the University created its own legal department and the following year merged with the Cincinnati Law School. Cox did not approve of the merger which he said had been engineered by the "[University of] Cincinnati crowd."[43] Therefore, he selected this as an opportune time to retire. He announced that he would go to Oberlin and devote his time to writing.[44]

Shortly before his retirement, President McKinley had offered Cox an appointment as ambassador to Spain. Even then tensions were high between the United States and Spain

---

[41]History of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, Ohio: Their Past and Present (Cincinnati: S. B. Nelson and Co., 1894), 140.

[42]Ewing, "Public Services of J. D. Cox," 28-29.

[43]Cox to James Ford Rhodes, July 19, 1897, Cox Papers, MSS. Division, Library of Congress.

[44]"Action of the Board of Trustees in Relation to the Retirement from the Faculty of the Honorable Jacob D. Cox," June 23, 1897.

due to the Cuban revolt and the methods used by Spanish authorities to quell the uprising. Cox politely declined, giving several reasons for his decision.[45] First, his health had deteriorated during the past few years; he had a bad heart which doctors warned could fail if overtaxed. Second, the salary for the post was not large enough to cover the "social obligations" required of an American ambassador. Although Cox had adequate resources for the foreseeable future, he did not think his money could be stretched to cover a large expenditure. Third, and most important, Cox declined because he could not speak the language. For a man who had frequently criticized the diplomatic corps for the inability to speak the native tongue of their assigned station, accepting the proffered position would be the height of inconsistency. Cox recognized that with "burning questions at stake" the ability to converse in Spanish would be even more important and necessary than usual.[46]

During the years in Cincinnati, Cox had devoted much of his spare time to writing. Atlanta and The March to the Sea: Franklin and Nashville were published by Scribner's in 1882 as part of their "Campaigns of the Civil

---

[45]Charles G. Dawes, who had read law under Cox, relayed the refusal to President McKinley. Dawes reported the President to be "much disappointed." Dawes to Cox, June 22, 1897.

[46]Cox to James Ford Rhodes, July 19, 1897, Cox Papers, Library of Congress.

War" series. Although Cox wrote mainly for "the surviving officers and men who served in the late war," he hoped that general readers would also find the works valuable.[47] He meticuously documented his narratives, using the then unpublished records in the office of the War Department. Cox added to his raw materials by writing to those who had taken part in a particular engagement and soliciting their recollections.[48] He frequently sent out portions of his manuscript to these same people for review before submitting it to the publisher. Despite his direct connection with the events described, Cox displayed an even impartiality throughout these books; this especially impressed one reviewer who commended the ". . .fairness of tone and general accuracy of statement [which] characterize this valuable contribution to the history of the war."[49] The favorable reception given these monographs helped establish Cox's reputation as one of the leading authorities on the Civil War.[50]

---

[47]Cox, Franklin and Nashville, "Preface."

[48]There are many letters in the Cox Papers dealing with questions which arose while he was preparing a manuscript; the majority, however, were written or received in 1880-81.

[49]Unsigned review in The Nation, XXXV, No. 905 (November 2, 1882), 385-86.

[50]That same year, however, Cox deviated from the sound historical methodology demonstrated in these two books. The Second Battle of Bull-Run, as Connected with the Fitz-John Porter Case triggered some harsh comments. One reviewer hit the nail squarely when he stated that Cox had ". . .approached his task more in the spirit of an advocate

In 1897 The Battle of Franklin appeared.[51] Cox listed two reasons for writing this monograph: first, to demonstrate the importance of the battle in the overall perspective of Sherman's plans to cripple the Confederacy, and second, to fulfill a promise to comrades who felt that their role had not received proper emphasis. Although he and several other authors had already described the battle generally, Cox justified his work by observing that ". . .we can hardly place a limit to the desirability of detailed knowledge. Everything which helps to a complete understanding is then made welcome. Even those things which at first blush may seem trivial are not so if they aid us in comprehending how men live, and act, and think, and fight, and die, on such a stubbornly contested field."[52] Cox contended that this battle smashed Hood's army and rendered it incapable of achieving success against Thomas' combined forces at Nashville.[53] The action at Franklin was Cox's most outstanding battle but his role does not dominate the narrative. He placed the discussion of the controversy

---

than of a judge." (The Nation, XXXIV, No. 880 [May 11, 1882], 404-405). The same analyst pointed out that Cox had used very shaky testimony to prove his contention that General Porter deserved the punishment dealt out by the army for failing to act vigorously at Second Bull Run on August 29, 1862. Fortunately this work did not permanently damage Cox's reputation as a military historian.

[51](New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1897).

[52]Ibid., 1-2.

[53]Ibid., 194-97.

over his personal contribution at Franklin in separate chapters; even in these, he used accepted methods of historical inquiry to test and prove the soundness of his conclusions.[54]

Cox spent the last three years of his life writing Military Reminiscences of the Civil War. He promised to donate his collection of books to Oberlin College in exchange for a work room in their library. Here Cox gathered his personal papers, the Official Records and many reference works. In contrast to many memoirs that had appeared without a single footnote, Cox constantly verified his recollection of events with supporting evidence. These two volumes recounted much more than just his career; Cox wove his narrative into the broader picture of overall strategy and events. The completed manuscript went to the publishers only a few weeks before his death. William C. Cochran, his stepson, reviewed the press proofs and prepared a detailed index. The Reminiscences highlighted the smooth and scholarly style that Cox had used throughout his productive and successful literary career.[55]

In addition to the works cited Cox contributed 168 items to The Nation. The vast majority were book reviews; the remainder were obituaries of leading Civil War figures

---

[54]Ibid., Chapters XX-XXI.

[55]American Historical Review, VI (1901), 602-606, contains a review of these volumes.

such as Grant, Sherman and Schofield.[56] In an editorial, published after his death, The Nation recalled its relationship with Cox:

> For a generation we have enjoyed him with an intimacy characterized by utter frankness and mutual esteem through all vicissitudes of opinion; enlivened by constant intercourse by letter, in connection with that attached and cordial collaboration which has lent so much weight to the reviews of this journal . . . .

The editor also praised Cox's style and his impartiality:

> He wrote with great fluency, seldom amending his proofs, and maintained to the end the vigor of thought and expression which marked his prime. His fairness was remarkable for a nature so hearty as to be almost fervid. If his judgement of Fitz-John Porter seems unwarranted, or at least not that which will finally prevail, his admiration for Grant was unimpaired by his experience with him as a politician-ridden President.[57]

When one considers Cox's other duties during the period encompassing his literary career, one cannot help but wonder how he managed. The only answer can be his intense intellectual curiosity, great industry, and a compelling desire to lay his ideas before the reading public.

During the summer of 1900 Cox and his wife went East to Magnolia, Massachusetts, to spend the hottest months at the seashore. This was an annual trip, looked forward to with anticipation because most of the family managed at least a brief visit. They enjoyed sailing and Cox, despite

---

[56]These were unsigned reviews; thus it is fortunate that the Cox Papers contain a bibliography of Cox's contributions.

[57]The Nation, LXXI, No. 1832 (August 9, 1900), 108.

his advanced years, insisted on taking his turn as crewman. On July 30, an especially warm, sultry day, the sea breezes seemed more welcome than ever and the hours passed quickly as the craft swept along. That evening Cox was exhausted and he excused himself to rest. Checking a little later his son, Jacob, discovered that he was unconscious. He had suffered a massive heart attack. The end came quietly on August 4, 1900.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

Manuscript Collections

The largest collection of Jacob Dolson Cox Papers is in the Oberlin College Library at Oberlin, Ohio. The holding is made up of a wide variety of items: six boxes of letters sent and received, two large letterbooks containing copies of letters sent from 1852 to 1879, a "Civil War Diary" dated April, 1864 to May, 1865, reprints of several speeches, and newspaper clippings concerning Cox's postwar political activities. Unfortunately the clippings are neither identified nor dated. One box of letters is devoted solely to Cox's correspondence relating to the Battle of Franklin. The collection has not been indexed, but it has been generally arranged in chronological order. Oberlin College has attempted to complete its holding by obtaining photo-copies of Cox letters in other manuscript collections, most notably the Rutherford B. Hayes Papers.

The most striking and disappointing gap in the Cox Papers is the absence of Civil War letters from Cox to his family. This is explained by Allyn Cox, Cox's grandson, in a letter to the author (April 4, 1967) stating that after Cox's death, "Mrs. Jacob D. Cox cut up my grandfather's

letters, and distributed the fragments among all her children." Thus, the only references to these letters are those included by Cox in his Military Reminiscences of the Civil War.

The Cox Papers at Oberlin include a typewritten manuscript, "The Political Correspondence of Major-General Jacob D. Cox," edited by Cox's stepson, William C. Cochran. These two volumes contain approximately 800 letters; the editorial notations are particularly helpful in identifying the correspondents and in placing the letters in their historical context. There are also copies of this manuscript at the Rutherford B. Hayes Memorial Library (Fremont, Ohio), The Cincinnati Historical Society, The Ohio State Library (Columbus), The Western Reserve Historical Society (Cleveland), The Wisconsin Historical Society (Madison), The University of North Carolina Library (Chapel Hill), and the Library of Congress.

A short manuscript by Cochran, "Early Life and Military Services of General Jacob Dolson Cox, A Patriotic Address Delivered at Oberlin, Ohio, February 22, 1901," provides information about Cox's pre-Civil War career that cannot be found elsewhere.

Other libraries have smaller collections of J. D. Cox Papers. The Cincinnati Historical Society has eight letters (all post-war) and twenty-two copies of speeches and articles. Almost all of the speeches and articles can also be found at Oberlin or in the periodicals in which

they were published originally. The West Virginia University Library at Morgantown has thirty telegrams Cox sent to Governor Francis H. Pierpont during his tour of duty in West Virginia from 1861 to 1863. They are located in the F. H. Pierpont Letters and Papers and deal with routine military matters in the recruitment of soldiers and the suppression of guerilla activities. The Cox Papers in the Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, consist of only sixteen items; thirteen of these are letters exchanged between Cox and James Ford Rhodes in the 1890's discussing military law and its application during the Civil War and during Reconstruction.

The Kenyon Cox Papers at the Avery Library of Columbia University contain about one hundred letters exchanged between Cox and his son. But these were all written after the war and, except for a few, do not deal with either Cox's military or political career. The few letters which do comment on political issues were included by Cochran in his manuscript, "Political Correspondence."

The James A. Garfield Papers, located in the Library of Congress, contain numerous Cox letters. Most of these were included in the manuscript by William Cochran cited above. Cochran, however, had deleted portions of some letters from the Civil War years; a comparison with the originals revealed that he had removed all discussion of military matters. The Diary of James A. Garfield, 1848-1874 (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press), published

in 1967 by Professors Harry Brown and Frederick D. Williams contains important references to Cox.

The Cox letters in the John M. Schofield Papers in the Library of Congress have been placed in the Special Correspondence Series, Box 39. Also of special interest is Box 74 which contains Schofield's correspondence on the Franklin and Nashville campaigns.

The Ulysses S. Grant and Andrew Johnson Papers in the Library of Congress have very few items pertaining to Cox. Those in the Grant collection are of a routine nature dealing with Cox's brief service as Secretary of the Interior. The items in the A. Johnson Papers are concerned with Cox's views on Reconstruction and his interview with the President on February 24, 1866.

The War Department's collection of reports, orders, telegrams, field dispatches and correspondence from the Civil War, located in the National Archives in Washington, D.C., was used as the resource pool for the Official Records. "Record Group 94: General Reports, 1861-1865," is divided into three categories: (1) "Union Battle Reports, 1861-1865," (2) "Selections from the Records of the 25 [Union] Army Corps," and (3) "Selections from the Original Records of Geographical Military Commands, 1861-65." It was used to determine that Cox's most important reports and dispatches had been included in the Official Records. Slight use was made of "Record Group 393, Department of North Carolina." Fortunately there are numerous indexes to

these documents.

Public Documents

An invaluable source for any student of the Civil War is The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, 70 volumes in 128 (Washington: General Printing Office, 1880-1901). In his Reminiscences Cox states that certain letters and telegrams written during his tour of duty in West Virginia had been omitted. A comparison of Cox's original papers (which are located in the National Archives) with the Official Records revealed, however, that the printed source was not misleading. It appears that Cox was piqued because not every document he considered relevant had been included. There is an excellent general index to the Official Records and each volume has its own index.

The Congressional Globe, 46 volumes (Washington: Congressional Globe Printing Company, 1833-1873), is the official record of the United States Congress for the forty-year period. It was used to trace the debate on the military promotion controversy in 1862-1863, and to determine congressional action on the McGarrahan Claim. While the Globe provided some insight on both subjects, the author found that the special reports of both houses contained better coverage.

U.S. Congress, Senate, Senate Executive Documents,

No. 29, 37th Cong., 3d. Sess. (January 30, 1863), Serial 1149, included, in addition to committee decisions, Stanton's correspondence with Congress on the military promotion issue. For the McGarrahan Claim the following were used extensively: Senate Miscellaneous Documents, No. 85 (1878), 45th. Cong., 2d. Sess., Serial 1786; House Reports, No. 24 (February, 1871), 41st. Cong., 3d. Sess., Serial 1388; and House Reports, No. 951 (June, 1878), 45th Cong., 2d. Sess., Serial 1826. Senate Miscellaneous Document No. 85 is particularly helpful because it contains much of McGarrahan's correspondence pertaining to the claim over a twenty year period. Most of these letters do not relate directly to Cox's role in the case, but they reveal McGarrahan's willingness to use almost any method to win a favorable decision.

Cox's Reports of the Secretary of the Interior for 1869 and 1870 appear, respectively, in: House Executive Document, No. 1, pt. 3, 41st. Cong., 2d. Sess., Serial 1414, and House Executive Document, No. 1, pt. 4, 41st. Cong., 3d. Sess., Serial 1449. These consist of brief statements about the Interior Department's yearly activities with emphasis on those programs Cox considered of special significance. If one wishes more information on a particular office or bureau, it is a simple matter to refer to the detailed report of the chief of that division.

The Ohio Senate Journal for 1866 and 1867, and the Ohio House Journal for 1867, were used to establish the

dates for legislative consideration of the Negro voting rights issue during Cox's term as governor.

Monographs and Special Studies

George H. Porter, Ohio Politics During the Civil War Period, Columbia University Studies in History, Economics and Public Law, Number 105 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1911), is an excellent study. It provides a general background on Ohio's development before the Civil War, as well as an in-depth analysis of political issues. Porter carries his narrative up to 1870 and his work on the Negro suffrage question during Cox's governorship proved very helpful.

Robert S. Fletcher, A History of Oberlin College From Its Foundation Through the Civil War, 2 volumes (Oberlin: Oberlin College, 1943), is a definitive study. Fletcher ably works Oberlin College into the broad background of Ohio's development in the three decades before 1860. His description of the community, as well as the college, provides a good picture of the environment in which Cox studied and shaped many of his pre-war opinions. John B. Shotwell, A History of the Schools of Cincinnati (Cincinnati: The School Life Company, 1902), is a less scholarly work, but his sketch of the Cincinnati Law School is helpful in tracing the school's history.

William C. Cochran, "The Western Reserve and the

Fugitive Slave Law," Western Reserve Historical Society Collections (Publication no. 101; Cleveland, 1920), was used to determine the reaction of the Reserve to the Fugitive Slave Law in the 1850's. The period encompassed by this article included the years Cox spent at Warren, Ohio.

Two other politically oriented works--Joseph P. Smith, History of the Republican Party in Ohio, 2 volumes (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1898), and William A. Taylor, Ohio in Congress from 1803-1901, with Notes and Sketches of Senators and Representatives (Columbus: The XX Century Publishing Co., 1900)--have limited value. Each, however, contains a few bits of information not uncovered in other sources. "Grant or Greeley? The Abolitionist Dilemma in the Election of 1872," American Historical Review, LXXI, No. 1 (October, 1965), 43-61, by James M. McPherson explains why Horace Greeley was an unacceptable candidate to Cox and many other Liberal Republicans.

Thomas Weber, The Northern Railroads in the Civil War, 1861-1865 (New York: King's Crown Press--Columbia University, 1952), and Festus P. Summers, The Baltimore and Ohio in the Civil War (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1939), stress the importance of railroads as a factor in the Union's eventual victory. They both conclude that Federal control over West Virginia reduced Rebel interference with the vital Baltimore and Ohio.

Ella Lonn, Salt as a Factor in the Confederacy (New

York: Walter Neale, 1933), to judge by its title, appears to be a peripheral monograph. But such a conclusion is far from true. Miss Lonn stresses that the shortage of common salt made life increasingly miserable in the South. The high quality salt wells located near Charleston, West Virginia, gave added importance to the Kanawha Valley.

Jacob Dolson Cox wrote several books and articles on the Civil War. His Military Reminiscences of the Civil War, 2 volumes (1900), Atlanta (1882), and The March to the Sea: Franklin and Nashville (1882), and The Battle of Franklin, Tennessee, November 30, 1864 (1897), were used extensively to trace his military career. All were published by Charles Scribner's Sons of New York. These books are briefly reviewed in Chapter VIII of the present work. There is, of course, some danger in using a man's own writings while evaluating his career; but if one is careful to check out controversial points, the hazards can be minimized. Actually Cox's description of his role is so muted that one hardly would suspect that the General Cox referred to in the text is also the author. The continued use of Cox's books by modern authors also indicates that his general description of military events is accurate.

Cox's articles in Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, edited by C. C. Buel and R. U. Johnson, 4 volumes (New York: The Century Co., 1887-88), deal with the first two years of the war. "War Preparations in the North," (I, pt. 1, 84-98), describes the utter lack of advance planning for

the conflict and the many make-shift arrangements used during the first months of the war. "McClellan in West Virginia," (I, pt. 1, 126-48), and "West Virginia Operations under Fremont," (II, pt. 1, 278-81), provide a good description of the difficulties encountered in conducting military operations in the mountainous terrain. Cox also explained the Antietam Campaign from the Union viewpoint in two articles: "Forcing Fox's Gap and Turner's Gap," (II, pt. 2, 583-90), and "The Battle of Antietam," (II, pt. 2, 630-80). These articles contain some very good comments on McClellan's failure to achieve success against Lee.

Several studies were utilized to test the accuracy and validity of Cox's writings and his conclusions. Thomas Harry Williams, Hayes of the Twenty-third; The Civil War Volunteer Officer (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965), contains only a few direct references to Cox. It is, nonetheless, an illuminating book. Williams' portrayal of the difficulties encountered by the soldiers in West Virginia reinforces Cox's complaints about the futility of military operations in the region; but Williams reveals the real importance of West Virginia to the Union, a fact which never lodged firmly in Cox's mind.

Additional background material on the first two years of the war was gathered from: Sanford G. Kellogg, The Shenandoah Valley, 1861-1865, A War Study (New York: Neale Publishing Co., 1903); Edward J. Stackpole, From Cedar Mountain to Antietam, August-September, 1862: Cedar

Mountain, Second Manassas, Chantilly, Harper's Ferry, South Mountain, Antietam (Harrisburg, Pa.: The Stackpole Co., 1959); John Codman Ropes, The Army Under Pope (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1881); and Francis W. Palfrey, The Antietam and Fredericksburg (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1882). The latter two are part of Scribner's excellent series--Campaigns of the Civil War--to which Cox contributed two volumes.

Daniel H. Hill, who directed the Confederate resistance at South Mountain (Fox's and Turner's Gaps), wrote "The Battle of South Mountain," Battles and Leaders, II, pt. 2, 559-81. Hill's account differs sharply from Cox's on the question of which side held the advantage during the engagement.

"The Colonel's Lady: Some Letters of Ellen Wilkins Tompkins, July-December, 1861," edited by Ellen Watkins Tompkins, The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, 69 (October, 1961), 387-419, presents some interesting impressions of Cox's treatment of "hostile" civilians in West Virginia. Mrs. Tompkins' husband, Colonel Christopher G. Tompkins, was in the Confederate service but his family and estate near Gauley Bridge came under Cox's control. Mrs. Tompkins requested and received protection for her family and property and she made her appreciation of Cox's kind treatment very clear in these letters.

Also helpful was The Wild Life of the Army: Civil War Letters of James A. Garfield, edited by Frederick D.

Williams (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1964). These letters span the period from the beginning of the war to December, 1863. Some of them were to Cox and a few to other correspondents contain comments on Cox. John M. Schofield, Forty-six Years in the Army (New York: The Century Company, 1897), is a handy reference because Cox and Schofield served together from February, 1864, to the end of the war. Schofield's high regard for Cox as an officer is readily apparent. Oliver Otis Howard, Autobiography of Oliver Otis Howard, 2 volumes (New York: The Baker and Taylor Co., 1907), and Inside Lincoln's Cabinet; The Civil War Diaries of Salmon P. Chase, edited by David Donald (New York: Longmans, Green, 1954), include some favorable, but brief, comments on Cox.

Joseph E. Johnston, Narrative of Military Operations Directed During the Late War Between the States (Bloomington: Indiana State University Press, 1959), and John Bell Hood, Advance and Retreat; Personal Experiences in the United States and Confederate States Armies (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1959), provide valuable insights. Johnston's monograph explains why he refused to meet Sherman in open battle during the Atlanta Campaign, and poignantly reveals his desperate, but futile, efforts to prevent the reunion between Sherman's and Schofield's armies in North Carolina. Hood's book presents his reasons for advancing upon Nashville, even after the severe repulse at Franklin. But his account should be used

with caution because he blamed others for many of his own shortcomings.

George B. McClellan, My Own Story (New York, 1886); Ulysses S. Grant, Personal Memoirs, edited by E. B. Long (New York: Grossett and Dunlap, 1962); and William T. Sherman, Memoirs of General William T. Sherman (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1957), were useful in determining the reasons for decisions made by these important generals. McClellan's defense of his inactivity after the Battle of Antietam is brilliant, but many others have rejected his conclusions, as did Lincoln by removing him from command. General George Crook, His Autobiography, edited by Martin F. Schmitt (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1946), only briefly mentions Cox, despite the fact that Crook served under Cox in West Virginia until February, 1863.

Several special studies and monographs help to sketch Cox's post-war activities. Jacob Dolson Cox [III], Building an American Industry: The Story of the Cleveland Twist Drill Company and Its Founder (Cleveland: Cleveland Twist Drill Co., 1951), is the autobiography of Cox's son. The first two chapters present a brief glimpse of family life, houses, and the hustle and bustle connected with Cox's various public offices and legal occupation.

James Rees Ewing, "Public Services of Jacob Dolson Cox, Governor of Ohio and Secretary of the Interior," (Ph.D. Dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 1899), is a

very brief survey (31 pp.). It offers, however, information on how Cox became president of the Toledo Railroad in 1873; none of Cox's own papers give any clue to the reasons for his selection.

Ari Hoogenboom, Outlawing the Spoils: A History of the Reform Movement, 1865-1883 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1961), and Henry Adams, "The Civil Service Reform," North American Review, vol. 109, no. 225 (October, 1869), 443-75, discuss Cox's efforts toward civil service reform. Both studies clearly indicate the frustrations encountered by those interested in increasing the efficiency of federal employees. Henry E. Fritz, The Movement for Indian Assimilation, 1860-1890 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1963), devotes one chapter to "Grant's Peace Policy." Fritz points out the desirability of removing the office of Indian Agent from the sphere of political patronage, but notes that such attempts greatly angered the politicians. Each of these three sources helps to explain why Cox got into hot water as Secretary of the Interior.

Also useful were three articles by Cox dealing with his brief stint as Secretary of the Interior. Although these were written after he left office, Cox did not make any startling revelations. "The Civil Service Reform," The North American Review, vol. 112, no. 230 (January, 1871), 81-113, deals with Cox's attempt to establish a limited civil service program in the Interior Department and his

opposition to political assessments. The article, however, cannot be labeled as a defensive presentation, rather it was aimed at marshalling public support for the establishment of personnel screening practices throughout the entire federal government. In "The Indian Question," International Review, VI (1879), 617-34, Cox defends Grant's efforts to overhaul the Bureau of Indian Affairs. On the other hand, Cox criticizes President Grant--"How Judge Hoar Ceased to be Attorney-General," The Atlantic Monthly, vol. 76, no. 454 (August, 1895), 162-73--for his handling of the Santo Domingo annexation issue in 1870. Cox indicates that Hoar was forced to resign because he opposed Grant's scheme, as did Cox. But there is no evidence in this article, or elsewhere, that Cox considered his opposition on this issue a factor in his own departure from the cabinet.

James Ford Rhodes, Historical Essays (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1909), 185-88, contains an essay summarizing Cox's post-war career, with special emphasis on his efforts at political reform and his stature as an author.

General Works

Eugene H. Roseboom, The Civil War Era, 1850-1873 (Columbus: Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society, 1944), is the best general history of Ohio for the Civil War period. Roseboom's conclusions on political events do not differ materially from those found in George

Porter's, Ohio Politics, cited in the previous section. Some information was gleaned from Eugene Roseboom and Francis P. Weisenberger, A History of Ohio, revised edition (Columbus: Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society, 1954); Emilius O. Randall and Daniel J. Ryan, History of Ohio: The Rise and Progress of an American State, 4 volumes (New York: The Century History Company, 1912); and Charles B. Galbreath, History of Ohio, 5 volumes (New York: The American Historical Society, Inc., 1925).

Several Ohio county and municipal histories were also useful. Harriet Upton Taylor, A Twentieth Century History of Trumbull County, Ohio: A Narrative Account of Its Historical Progress, Its People and Its Principle Interests, 2 volumes (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Co., 1909); and History of Trumbull and Mahoning Counties, with Illustrations and Biographical Sketches (Cleveland: H. Z. Williams and Brother, 1882), provide facts about Warren, Ohio, and the surrounding area. A History of Cincinnati, Ohio, with Illustrations and Biographical Sketches, compiled by Henry A. and Mrs. Kate B. Ford (Cleveland: W. W. Williams and Co., 1881); History of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, Ohio; Their Past and Present (Cincinnati: S. B. Nelson and Co., 1894); and History of the City of Toledo and Lucas County, Ohio (Toledo: Munsell and Co., 1888), present information about Cox's post-war cities of residence.

Charles H. Ambler, West Virginia: The Mountain

State (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1958), serves as a general source on the development of the pro-Union movement in western Virginia. Ambler's treatment of the military aspect is very brief. West Virginia in the Civil War (Charleston: Education Foundation, Inc., 1963) is a collection of Civil War illustrations and photographs, accompanied by brief historical descriptions. One section, "Preparing for Battle on the Kanawha, June-July, 1861," contains illustrations of the Kanawha Valley, Charleston and Gauley Bridge at the time of Cox's penetration into the area. Roy Curry Watson, "The Newspaper Press and the Civil War in West Virginia," (M.A. Thesis; Morgantown: West Virginia University, 1940), deals with press coverage of military and political events, and the relationship between correspondents and the army. Clarice Lorene Bailes, "Jacob Dolson Cox in West Virginia," (M.A. Thesis; Morgantown: West Virginia University, 1944), is rather disappointing. Bailes did not carry her research beyond the Official Records and Cox's Reminiscences, except for a few manuscript items held by the West Virginia University Library. Both theses have been published in West Virginia History, 6, 225-64, and 5-58, respectively.

Brief outlines of Cox's military career can be found in Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone, editors, The Dictionary of American Biography, 20 volumes (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1930), IV, 476-78; Whitelaw Reid, Ohio in the War: Her Generals and Soldiers, 2 volumes (Cincinnati:

Moore, Wilstach and Baldwin, 1868), I, 770; and Ezra J. Warner, Generals in Blue: Lives of the Union Commanders (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1964), 97-98. All of these indicate that Cox received his promotion to Major General in 1862, overlooking the fact that this was withdrawn and not officially confirmed until December, 1864.

A good general source is Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, edited by R. U. Johnson and C. C. Buel, 4 volumes (New York: The Century Co., 1887-88). This is a collection of articles, written by participants in the war, which were published originally in the Century Magazine. They cover virtually every aspect of the war; the editors underscore controversial points and guide the reader to other appropriate articles. There is an index in the last volume.

Two works by James Ford Rhodes, History of the Civil War (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1917), and History of the United States From the Compromise of 1850 to the Final Restoration of Home Rule at the South in 1877, 9 volumes (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1900-1928), provide useful information. Although some of the interpretations are outdated, Rhodes' scholarship is meticulous and his books often contain data that cannot be found in briefer treatments. Harry Hansen, The Civil War (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1962), and Bruce Catton, The Army of the Potomac: Mr. Lincoln's Army (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1962), are useful as general sources. Both books

contain solid facts on military events and the authors' analysis of leading personalities is especially helpful. A more scholarly approach to military developments is used by Allan Nevins in The Improvised War, 1861-1862, and War Becomes Revolution, 1862-1863 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959, 1960). Mark Mayo Boatner III, The Civil War Dictionary (New York: David McKay Co., Inc., 1959), is a handy reference for identifying officers, checking dates and for brief descriptions of military battles and campaigns.

Thomas B. Van Horne, History of the Army of the Cumberland, 2 volumes (Cincinnati: Robert Clark and Co., 1875), provides supplementary material on the Atlanta Campaign and the Battles at Franklin and Nashville. Van Horne defends Thomas' decision to delay his attack at Nashville and gives major credit for the victory to the Army of the Cumberland, slighting, in Cox's estimation, the role played by the Army of the Ohio.

Lincoln and the War Governors (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948), by William B. Hesseltine, considers the impact of Lincoln's relationship with Union governors on the war. This monograph was used to ascertain Lincoln's attitude toward the pro-Union movement in western Virginia.

Benjamin P. Thomas and Harold M. Hyman, Stanton: The Life and Times of Lincoln's Secretary of War (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), provides insight into the operation of the War Department and a description of Stanton's feud

with President Andrew Johnson. Stephen E. Ambrose, Halleck: Lincoln's Chief of Staff (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1962), has useful information on Halleck and the command structure. Why the North Won the Civil War, edited by David Donald (New York: Collier Books, 1966), a collection of essays, contains one by T. Harry Williams, "The Military Leadership of North and South," 33-54, which underscores the validity of Cox's criticisms of the command structure.

A general work on the post-war period is Ellis Paxson Oberholtzer, A History of the United States since the Civil War, 5 volumes (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1922). Like the multi-volume Rhodes' work cited above, the interpretations drawn from some of the events have been reversed or tempered by more recent scholarship. William A. Dunning, Reconstruction, Political and Economical, 1865-1877 (New York: Harper and Row, 1907), devotes one chapter (12) to the "Liberal Republican Movement, 1870-72." Dunning agrees that Greeley's nomination took the steam out of the attempt at reform. James G. Randall and David Donald, The Civil War and Reconstruction (Boston: D. C. Heath and Co., 1961), is a widely-used textbook. The scholarship is excellent and the book has an extensive bibliography which was used as a general reference.

Assistance in analyzing briefly Cox's service as Secretary of the Interior came from Allan Nevins, Hamilton Fish: The Inner History of the Grant Administration (New

York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1936), and William B. Hesseltine, Ulysses S. Grant, Politician (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1935). These authors come to opposite conclusions about Cox's resignation; Hesseltine says that Cox was in error when he believed Grant was obstructing civil service reform in the Interior Department, while Nevins states that the attacks upon the Indian Bureau personnel policies were not imagined. Reverend W. H. Brockway, Zachariah Chandler: An Outline Sketch of His Life and Public Service (Detroit: The Post and Tribune Co., 1880), reinforces Nevin's conclusion by revealing Chandler's anger when Cox passed over Chandler's choice for an Indian Agency in Michigan. Henry Adams and His Friends: A Collection of His Unpublished Letters, compiled by Harold Dean Cater (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1947), contains one letter to Cox. This letter reveals that Adams considered Cox's efforts at civil service reform in his department very important.

Three newspapers--the New York Times, the New York Tribune, and the Washington Chronicle--were consulted to determine the press's reaction to Cox as Secretary of the Interior. The Chronicle has the most extensive coverage, probably because it was published in the capital and was directed at an audience whose interests were tied closely to the operation of the government. The Chronicle, after praising Cox at the outset, became increasingly critical, especially with regard to the McGarrahan Claim. In contrast the Times and Tribune are much more restrained in their

comments upon Cox's role in the case. It should be noted that the New York Times Index is invaluable in helping to locate specific articles.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIV. LIBRARIES
31293006303899