



# MINIÉ BALL GAZETTE

The Official Newsletter of the Lowcountry Civil War Round Table, Inc.

Friday, July 27, 2018

Greetings LCWRT members,

We officially “open” on September 26 with a presentation entitled “Department of the South on the Offensive”. This should appeal to you all since we intend to provide such programs. We want to mentally place ourselves back into that time period and attempt to assess events and circumstances as they occurred then, not as we would consider them today. Thanks to you collectively, we have an intelligent, committed staff who are interested in continuing to keep LCWRT as a premiere roundtable. Unfortunately, we have had two resignations recently so with the “newness” of several of our officers and this loss I deemed it necessary to have an Executive Committee meeting in July. I, also, plan to have another in August. We currently have nine “volunteers” handling all the duties associated with having LCWRT function. Please understand that each of the nine individuals is the proverbial “one man band”; i.e., none have the staff to assist him/her.

If any of you is interested in volunteering, please let us know. The one position that is urgent is Program Committee. We are not asking for someone to assume this responsibility in toto – all of us will assist as we can. We are looking for persons who can help identify speakers for our monthly programs.

Several projects are of the utmost importance to me, and the officers are assisting in addressing them. First, the Lowcountry Operating Policies and Procedures is a 25-page document which outlines why and how we proceed. I, personally, have reviewed this several times and when I have addressed all the pertinent issues, I will consult with other officers and have the document printed and, to the extent indicated, submitted. Second, BY LAWS is most essential and was updated in 2003! It is a 14-page document and when reviewed and updated will be shared with LCWRT members for review and approval. Some could say it is the “nuts and bolts” of the round table’s existence and operation.

Several months ago we announced that we would donate Civil War books and reading material to the Hardeeville Library. It took awhile, relatively speaking, for this endeavor to become a reality. However, several weeks ago three officers, including me, delivered seven boxes of material. I was very impressed with the caliber of the books as was the library personnel; i.e., rather than send them en masse to Allendale for cataloging they will do so themselves. At this writing, I have 100 additional books to deliver – they have come from individual citizens and many from a local Book Exchange. Many of these will be in a separate room and eventually, a plaque will be made for display recognizing LCWRT.

The budget for 2018-2019 is near completion and will be shared with you in my next President’s Letter

I recently read that since 2015 17 public statues to the Confederacy have been removed. There are 772 remaining in 23 states; most are in Ga., N.C. and Va. There were a total of 2,261 engagements during the War; Va. had 519 (22.9%) and Tenn. 298. The most was in 1864, 772 followed by 627 in 1863.

There were 11 states in the Confederacy; 1,575 engagements (69.6%). Va., Tenn., and Miss. had the majority.

I hope you have a safe and fun summer.

Michael Sweeney,

President

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## ***2018 - 2019 Lecture Series for the LCWRT***

Sept. 26	Richard Thomas	“Dept. of the South on the Offensive”
Oct. 24	Candice Shy Cooper	“Lincoln's General's Wives”
Nov. 28	Doug Bostick	“Battlefield Preservation”
Jan. 23, 2019	Dr. “Bud” Robinson	“Robert E. Lee & the Quest for Peace”
Feb. 27, 2019	Jack Davis	“Rhett & the Fire Eaters”
Mar. 27, 2019	Dr. Larry Roland	“End of Reconstruction in Beaufort-Hampton Counties”
April 24, 2019	Jim Spirek	“Wrecks of Beaufort Sound”
May 22, 2019	Ron Roth	“Underground Railroad”

**We will meet in Pinckney Hall in Sun City unless otherwise noted.**

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**Members - I realize the following story about Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman is exceptionally long. Please download the story and read at your leisure. Many of you are not aware of his story, and I thought it would be helpful to learn about his wife and children. If the question was asked, "Who was and still is the most hated and despised man in the history of Georgia" the response would be William Tecumseh Sherman. From the onset of hostilities in the Atlanta Campaign on May 6, 1864, and the March to the Sea ending two days before Christmas 1864 with him capturing Savannah, no one created more destruction. - Caroline W. Kennedy**

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## **ELLEN EWING SHERMAN**

### **The wife of General William Tecumseh Sherman.**

Eleanor "Ellen" Boyle Ewing was born in Lancaster, Ohio, on Oct. 4, 1824, the eldest daughter of prominent Whig politician Thomas Ewing and Maria Boyle Ewing. Ellen's parents also raised William Sherman nicknamed "Cump" Sherman, after the 1829 death of his father.

Thomas Ewing's close friend Charles R. Sherman, a judge of the Supreme Court of Ohio, died suddenly in 1829, leaving his widow with many young children. The Sherman's were well educated and highly cultured by Lancaster standards at this time. Charles was a sixth generation attorney and Mary was a graduate of the Sketchley Finishing School. The children received strict guidance and direction regarding manners, education, and high moral values. He received good grades while attending Lancaster Academy and even more critical, was exposed to the intellectual conversations from his parents and their visiting guests. He was the sixth of eleven children born to Judge Charles and Mary Hoyt Sherman. His full name was William Tecumseh Sherman. His father gave him his unusual middle name as a tribute to the Shawnee's chief Tecumseh, a magnetic leader who built a confederacy of Ohio Indian tribes and fought with the British during the War of 1812. A relative later wrote that Sherman's father always disregarded that he had given his son a "*savage Indian name*" by arguing, "*Tecumseh was a great warrior.*" (In his memoirs, William wrote that his father gave him the name William Tecumseh because he admired the Shawnee's chief.)

Although his father's Supreme Court position kept him from home often, Cump led a relative happy childhood. There was a vacant lot between the Sherman house and the Ewing's which was a playground for the neighborhood children. Patience, sharing, compromise and getting along were attributes he learned from growing up in a large family. His parents enrolled him and the other older children in a private school for the dance and other art forms which stayed with him all of his life. At the age of nine, William's world turned upside-down due to the untimely death of his father. For financial reasons, his mother sent several of the children to live with friends and relatives. He was sent to live with the Ewing family whom he knew quite well. Life would never be the same. Having been a fostered child herself, Mrs. Ewing was sensitive to his needs and the trauma surrounding his family. He adjusted to the Ewing family, and although he saw his mother frequently, he was conscious of his awkward situation.

The Ewings wanted the "*smartest boy,*" so after some discussion between Mary and her oldest daughter, Mary Elizabeth, it was decided that Cump was the best choice. At the time the decision was made, he was playing in a nearby sandbox. W.T. Sherman was baptized and given the Christian name "*William*" by Ewing's religious wife, Maria. She was shocked that the boy had not been baptized and remedied it quickly after he became a part of their family. She also felt "*Tecumseh*" was not an appropriate name, hence he earned "*William*" as his new first name. However, those closest to him, would always call him Cump.

Tall for his age but very thin and wiry, at 13 years old, he got his first job working on the lateral canal being dug through Lancaster. Another summer he spent with his foster brother Phil Ewing on the farm of a Ewing relative outside of town. Although farm work was hard, he learned how and why things grow, and he looked at land differently for the rest of his life.

In 1836, Senator Ewing secured William an appointment to the U.S. Military Academy. He felt Cump would do well at West Point and had the makings of a soldier. Even as a youngster, he appreciated all of the things the Ewings had done for him but it was imperative that he prove to himself, to Thomas Ewing and the world that he could succeed on his own. Even though he had two families, neither was in a position to satisfy all of his needs. At the age of 16, he left home carrying many unmet needs and insecurities with him to the Military Academy. This was his first step toward independence. Understanding the value of an education, the senator told Cump to bone up on math, Latin and foreign language to prepare himself for schooling at the academy. Ewing wrote, *"I never knew so young a lad who would do an errand so correctly and promptly as he did. He was transparently honest, faithful and reliable, studious."*

Academically, he excelled but had little respect for the demerit system. He never got himself into deep trouble but had many minor offenses on this record. Sherman graduated in 1840, sixth in his class. He saw his first action against the Seminole Indians in Florida and had numerous assignments through Georgia and South Carolina, where he became acquainted with many of the Old South's most respected citizens. William T. Sherman's early military career was anything but spectacular, unlike many of his colleagues who saw action during the Mexican-American War. He spent this time stationed in California as an executive officer.

The young Sherman grew close with his foster sister — Ewing's eldest daughter, Ellen, and they regularly corresponded through letters during his tenure at West Point and his early military career. He took a four-month leave of absence so he could spend time with her and officially propose. They became engaged in the fall of 1843. Senator Ewing had hoped Sherman could join the Corp of Engineers. Since Sherman was not willing to do so, Thomas opposed his daughter becoming a *"soldier's wife."* He was very close to Ellen, and Ellen was very attached to her parents. She did not want to travel with Sherman around the country, going wherever he was stationed, though she did love him. But given that he was sent to California, it further delayed the marriage. Ellen would live in Washington, D.C. at the time, where her father continued to have roles in politics.

In 1847, Lt. Sherman came to be stationed in Monterey, Calif. during the Mexican-American War. Visiting newly-named San Francisco that same year, he found the backwoods hamlet a *"horrid place,"* and wished to get out of there at first chance. When gold was discovered at Coloma in 1848, Sherman traveled with Col. Richard B. Mason to the gold fields, working up an official report of the find for President James K. Polk. In 1850, the Army sent Sherman back east, but with the gold in California having planted visions of opportunity. (Coloma was the first important mining town of the 1848 gold rush days. It was here, on the South Fork River, that

James Marshall first found the gold that started the great California Gold Rush. News spread quickly and by the time it reached San Francisco, thousands began to flood the area.)

It wasn't until May 1, 1850, that William and Ellen married. He had just received a promotion to Captain, and that seemed to satisfy Thomas enough to allow the marriage. They married in at a highly social affair in Washington at the Ewing's home – Blair House which was across the street from the White House. At the time, Thomas was serving President Zachary Taylor as Secretary of the Interior. The President attended the wedding and reception, as did Senators Daniel Webster and Henry Clay. Clay gave Ellen a silver filigree bouquet-holder, which she carried. The service was performed by Dr. Ryder, President of Georgetown College, where Ellen had attended. Young Capt. Sherman and his bride first moved to St. Louis in 1850. Sherman served as Captain of the Office Commissary Subsistence Departments in St. Louis.

With his lack of combat experience, Sherman felt the U.S. Army was a dead-end, thus he resigned his commission in 1853. He moved his wife and newborn daughter to San Francisco, where he managed a branch of Lucas, Turner & Company, a St. Louis-based bank owned by his father-in-law's brother. They left their daughter Minnie with Ellen's parents in Lancaster when they moved to San Francisco and took their second child, Mary Elizabeth, age one, with them. They traveled to New York from Ohio, then by boat to San Francisco. It was an arduous trip. When they reached San Juan del Norte at the mouth of the Nicaragua River, they transferred to another boat with no cabins where they had to sleep on the floor. They went ashore at Virgin Bay and began a 12-mile overland trip by mule. From San Juan del Sur, they took another steamer to California, arriving on Oct. 15, 1853. Ellen did not like San Francisco with its tramps, fleas, and flies. She missed Minnie incredibly and yearned for her home in Lancaster. In June of 1854, Ellen had her third child, William Ewing Sherman.

Construction of "*Sherman's Bank*" began in 1853 and cost \$53K. The bank opened for business in July 1854, and though it started with a boom, it didn't remain that way. For a while they were able to navigate the post-gold rush depression and financial crisis of 1855 better than most banks, as commerce began changing. Sherman decided to close the branch just three years after opening. Ellen returned to Lancaster to bring Minnie home, but she was so attached to her grandparents that Ellen and William decided the child could stay longer with them. On Oct. 12, 1856, Ellen's fourth child, Thomas Ewing Sherman, was born in San Francisco.

They returned to Lancaster where their fifth child was born, Eleanor Maria Sherman. In 1859, William accepted the presidency of the Louisiana Military Academy (which became Louisiana State University in Alexandria.) He proved to be an accessible and capable administrator with the community. As sectional tensions rose, Sherman warned his secessionist friends that a war would be long and bloody, with the North eventually winning.

In mid 1860, just as Ellen and the children were preparing to join him in Louisiana in the new home he had built there, talk of Civil War renewed. It was no longer safe for her to travel. Then the Civil War ultimately disrupted their lives. Sherman was in Louisiana when it seceded from

the Union in January 1861. He could see that the Southern people were earnest and willing to go to war. It's a perspective many in the North did not fully understand for months to come. William resigns his post. He enjoyed the people and the students there, but could not support an institution that would supply troops against the U.S. government. When Louisiana left the Union, Sherman wanting nothing to do with the conflict. Though a conservative on slavery, he was a strong supporter of the Union.

*"A bundle of contradictions, occasionally all too vehement of speech he could be the most stimulating and delightful of men in his relations with associates, and also one of the most irritating," wrote historian Allan Nevins. "Altogether, he was the most remarkable combination of virtues and deficiencies produced in the high direction of the Union armies." He had a strong streak of 19th-century racism. Sherman once wrote his wife in 1860: "All the Congresses on earth could not make the Negro anything else than what he was. He has to be the subject to the white man, or he must amalgamate or be destroyed. The two races could not live in harmony save as master and slave."*

Although women did not have the right to vote in her day, Ellen declared herself to favor Abraham Lincoln in advance of the 1860 elections and was fierce in her pro-Union sentiment.

Sherman was not anti-slavery and sympathized with the South. However, he was very against the idea of secession. He explains to a friend of his, a professor in Virginia, what he predicted would become of the South if they were to secede: *"You people of the South don't know what you are doing. This country will be drenched in blood, and God only knows how it will end. It is all folly, madness, a crime against civilization! You people speak so lightly of war; you don't know what you're talking about. War is a terrible thing! You mistake, too, the people of the North. They are a peaceable people but an earnest people, and they will fight, too. They are not going to let this country be destroyed without a mighty effort to save it. Besides, where are your men and appliances of war to contend against them? The North can make a steam engine, locomotive, or a railway car; hardly a yard of cloth or pair of shoes can you make. You are rushing into war with one of the most powerful, ingeniously mechanical, and determined people on Earth — right at your doors. You are bound to fail. Only in your spirit and determination are you prepared for war. In all else, you are unprepared, with a bad cause to start with. At first you will make headway, but as your limited resources begin to fail, shut out from the markets of Europe as you will be, your cause will begin to wane. If your people will but stop and think, they must see in the end that you will surely fail."*

Decades of growing strife between North and South erupted in Civil War on April 12, 1861, when Confederate artillery opened fire on Fort Sumter — the Federal fort in Charleston Harbor. Fort Sumter surrendered 34 hours later.

After the firing on Fort Sumter, Cump asked his brother, Senator John Sherman from Ohio, to arrange a commission in the Army.

Sherman's attitude toward President Lincoln varied throughout the war. *"Gen. Sherman had Mr. Lincoln's respect – but not his friendship."* They met briefly once in March of 1861 before Sherman returned to the Union Army and once again that summer. For the next four years, however, they did not cross paths – until shortly before the end of the war. In their first meeting, the President's naive attitude toward the South's secession disgusted him. *"There is no doubt that Lincoln's earliest impressions of Sherman were quite as unfavorable to Sherman as were Sherman's early impressions of Lincoln,"*wrote Pennsylvania journalist Alexander McClure.

The family moved to St. Louis where he became president of the St. Louis Railroad — a streetcar company. The position only lasted two months in April and May of 1861. *"On May 14, I received a dispatch from my brother Charles in Washington, telling me to come on at once; that I had been appointed a colonel of the Thirteenth Regular Infantry, and that I was wanted at Washington immediately."* It became unsafe for the family to stay in St. Louis. Ellen and the children returned to Lancaster. They would be separated for another year. On July 5, 1861, daughter Rachel was born in Lancaster and named after her great-grandmother Ewing.

*"I repaired to Washington, and there found that the Government was trying to rise to a level with the occasion. Mr. Lincoln had, without the sanction of law, authorized the raising of ten new regiments of regulars, each infantry regiment to be composed of three battalions of eight companies each; and had called for 75,000 State volunteers. Even this call seemed to me utterly inadequate; still, it was none of my business. I took the oath of office and was furnished with a list of officers, appointed to my regiment, which was still, incomplete. I reported in person to Gen. Scott, at his office on 17th St., opposite the War Department, and applied for authority to return West, and raise my regiment at Jefferson Barracks, but the general said my lieutenant-colonel, Burbank, was fully qualified to superintend the enlistment, and that he wanted me there. He at once dictated an order for me to report to him in person for inspection duty."* - from Memoirs of General W.T. Sherman.

Sherman had what was in effect his first major military combat experience – the First Battle of Bull Run in July 1861, in which Union troops were badly beaten. Sent to Kentucky, he became deeply pessimistic about the war, complaining to his superiors about shortages and exaggerating the enemy's troop strength. Sherman told Gen. William McDowell, he was grossly outnumbered and asserting that he needed 200,000 men to prosecute the war. In mid-August, 1861, he was assigned to be second in command of the Army of the Cumberland, the key to what would become of the Western Theater — and perhaps of the Union itself.

In early October, Sherman begged Secretary of War Simon Cameron, who was traveling through the area, to come see him in Louisville. Cameron, hurrying back to Washington, reluctantly agreed. He met Sherman in the general's hotel room on Oct. 16. Cameron was aghast, about the number of troops he wanted exclaiming: *"Great God! Where are they to come from?"* A few weeks later, Sherman wrote to a relative: *"I suppose I have been morose and cross — and could I hide in some obscure corner I would do so, for my conviction is that our*

*Govt. is destroyed and no human power can restore it.*" Just after his participation in the Civil War had begun, Sherman's service was nearly destroyed.

The first six months of the war, Sherman, a staunch conservative who did not want blacks in his army, but knew they were crucial to the war effort, was dominated by self-doubt and fear. When he was assigned to Kentucky, he told Lincoln of his *"extreme desire to serve in a subordinate capacity, and in no event to be left in a superior command."* This admission shocked Lincoln, used to bragging officers expecting essential commands. It was not modesty that led Sherman to his demonstration of uncertainty. On Oct. 5, his superior, Robert Anderson (the commander at Fort Sumter) resigned because of health issues thought to be significant depression. Three days later, Sherman replaced him. Sherman with his mental suffering only lasted a month before he was removed.

### **ALL IN THE FAMILY**

Gen. Sherman's brothers played all-important roles during the Civil War and benefitted by keeping the political power, all in the family. Sherman's foster brothers included Thomas Junior, Hugh Boyle and Charles Ewing. Conspicuous in the politics of the time were blood brothers, Charles Taylor, John and Hoyt Sherman. All six of these brothers' and the foster father, Thomas Ewing, assured William T. Sherman political, and financial leverage in the civil turmoil to come.

During the Civil War, in addition to her husband, three of her four then-living brothers became Union generals — Hugh Boyle Ewing was a diplomat, author, attorney, and Union Army general during the War, and the foster brother and brother-in-law of William T. Sherman. Maj. Gen. Ewing was an ambitious, literate, and erudite officer who held a strong sense of responsibility for the men under his command. He combined his West Point experience with the Civil War system of officer election. Ewing's wartime service was characterized by several incidents which would have a unique impact on history. In 1861, his political connections helped save the reputation of his brother-in-law, William T. Sherman.

Thomas Ewing, Jr. and, Sherman remained close during their years as Union army generals. Ewing attended Brown University and became the private secretary to President Zachary Taylor, while Ewing's father served in Taylor's cabinet. When the Civil War began, Ewing was elected colonel of the 11th Kansas Infantry and served under Gen. James G. Blunt at the Battle of Prairie Grove. His successful defense of Fort Davidson, in Mo. in September 1864 helped stop an invasion by Confederate Gen. Sterling Price. In February 1865, Ewing resigned his army commission and began practicing law in Washington where he was asked to be one of the defendants of the Lincoln assassination conspirators.

Charles Ewing studied law and was practicing in St. Louis at the outbreak of the Civil War. On May 14, 1861, he received a commission as Captain of the newly authorized 13th U.S. Infantry. This regiment was stationed at Alton, Ill., until October 1862 when they were ordered to Memphis during the furor occasioned by Braxton Bragg's invasion of Kentucky. At the siege of Vicksburg, Ewing's regiment — or a battalion thereof — was a part of Francis P. Blair's Division



of Sherman's 15 Corps, and he won praise from Blair for his conduct during an assault on the Confederate works. Shortly afterward he was appointed Assistant Inspector General with the rank of Lt. Col. and assigned to Sherman's staff. Although this may have been nepotism in this, he discharged his duties gallantly and was brevetted three times for services performed during the balance of the war, as he accompanied Sherman in many campaigns. After distinguished service at Chattanooga, in the Atlanta Campaign, on the famous "*March to the Sea*," and in battles of the Carolinas which resulted in the surrender of the Confederacy's second most critical army under Joseph E. Johnston. After the War he served as Capt. of the 22nd Infantry, to which he had transferred. He resigned in 1867, and began the practice of law in Washington.

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Another younger brother, Hoyt Sherman was schooled in the law and admitted to the bar in 1849. Hoyt was successful in real estate and started the investment banking firm of Hoyt Sherman and Company. President Lincoln appointed Sherman Paymaster of the Union Army, with the rank of Major a position he held for three years. He resigned to become one of the founders of the Equitable Life Insurance Company of Iowa and was general manager into retirement.

Thomas Ewing Senior, an Ohio politician, served as a U.S. Senator, Secretary of the Treasury and was the first Secretary of the Interior. Ewing was involved in Federal Government affairs instrumental in Sherman's appointment to the U.S. Military Academy and mentored the young cadet in social and political protocols.

Hugh Boyle Ewing attended the U.S. Military Academy but did not graduate. He studied the law, practiced in St Louis and moved with his brother Thomas Junior and W.T. Sherman to Leavenworth, Kan. , Opening a successful law office and land speculation firm. In April of 1861, Ewing was appointed by the Governor of Ohio, a Colonel of Volunteers and served under Gen.'s Rosecrans and McClellan. Sherman suffered a mental infirmity in late 1861, and the press spread rumors that he had gone insane. Hugh and his little sister, Sherman's wife, Ellen, canvassed Washington, dispelling the bad press reports, petitioned President Lincoln personally, explaining that the charges of mental incompetence were the dark deeds of Adj. Gen. Lorenzo Thomas. The Ewing power prevailed, Lincoln hailed Sherman, returned him to command and banished Thomas to a recruiting post in the Trans-Mississippi. Hugh Ewing saw action at South Mountain, Antietam, Vicksburg, and Chattanooga. Promoted to Brig. Gen. he was posted at Louisville, Ky. in command of the occupation forces. In 1865, Ewing was transferred to North Carolina, when Lee surrendered.

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John Sherman studied the law and began practice in 1844. John became obsessed with politics and after moving to Cleveland was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. Sherman next was elected U.S. Senator from Ohio and would eventually serve as Secretary of the Treasury

and Secretary of State. During the Civil War, Sen. Sherman counseled his brother, the general, on political and military rumor, innuendo and protocol. W.T. Sherman valued his brother's advice and it held him in good stead, and out of military turmoil for the remainder of his career.

Hoyt Sherman, was schooled in the law and admitted to the bar in 1849. Hoyt speculated successfully in real estate and started the investment banking firm of Hoyt Sherman and Company. President Lincoln appointed Sherman Paymaster of the Union Army, with the rank of Major and he held that position for three years. He resigned to become one of the founders of the Equitable Life Insurance Company of Iowa and remained in the position of general manager into retirement.

### ***"UNFIT FOR DUTY"***

In letters to his wife, Ellen, Sherman confirmed what others observed. He felt everyone around him was poised to betray him. He wrote her: *"I am up all night."* He had lost his appetite. Viewing his mental turmoil, he was convinced that he was caught in an impossible military combination of ideas where *"to advance would be madness and to stand still folly."* He lacked the means to lead others and to control himself: *"I find myself riding a whirlwind unable to guide the storm."* He anticipated total *"failure and humiliation,"* an onrushing infamy that *"nearly makes me crazy — indeed I may be so now."*

On Nov. 8, a captain on Sherman's staff telegraphed to ask Ellen to relieve her husband from the pressures of business. Sherman was relieved of his command and reassigned to a lesser post in St. Louis. Ellen came for him on Dec. 1, to take him home to Lancaster for three weeks' leave. She nursed him back to health with a rest cure, the frequently effective 19th-century therapy: favorite foods, reading him his most cherished books, especially Shakespeare, and calming him so he could sleep. In letters to the Ewing/Sherman clan during the next week, Ellen described what she found in Louisville: knowing that depression had a genetic predisposition. She recalled one of Sherman's uncles was a chronic *"melancholic."* She remembered *"having seen Cump in the seize of it in California,"* when the bank had failed. She said it was a mental event that was repeated at least twice before the war. Ellen added his behavior: he seldom ate or slept, had lost human contact with others, and scarcely talked unless repeating his obsessions that *"the whole country is gone irrevocably and ruin and desolation are at hand."* The real cure, as in all bipolar illness, is nature: the average mood episode rarely lasts longer than six months before it goes into remission by itself.

Sherman was eventually put on leave, considered unfit for duty. The press picked up on his troubles and described him as *"insane."* It is believed Sherman suffered from a nervous breakdown. Ellen worked to protect her husband's military standing during the war, especially in a January 1862 Washington meeting with Lincoln at a time when Sherman's reputation was under a cloud due to newspaper charges of insanity. During the first year of the war, on Nov. 9, 1861, Gen. Sherman, was relieved of his command in Kentucky at his request paralyzed by depression.

Five weeks later, the wire services proclaimed to the nation: *GENERAL WILLIAM T. SHERMAN INSANE*. Soon, newspapers across the North began carrying headlines about his instability. Humiliated, he asked for a 20-day leave of absence. He thought he'd brought shame on his family — especially his children. "*I am so sensible now of my disgrace that I do think I should have committed suicide, was it not for my children,*" he wrote his brother John in early 1862. He thought he could no longer be charged with a command, though he might be helpful in some place such as the Army's disbursing department.

Despite the public's awareness of his insanity, on Dec. 19, Sherman seemed strengthened by the time he returned to St. Louis. His bipolar illness appeared to have bottomed out after taking a lengthy period of self-repair for seven weeks. Trusting Sherman's recovery sufficiently, Halleck assigned him to Cairo, Ill., to serve as the logistical coordinator for Grant's army. Henry Halleck, Sherman's commander, who understood and sympathized with Sherman's inner turmoil, valued his intelligence and training. He soon placed him in charge of the training camp in St. Louis under his direct supervision. Then, Sherman was assigned a rear-echelon command in Kentucky, where he provided logistical support for Brig. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's capture of Fort Donelson in February 1862.

The following month, Sherman was assigned to serve with Grant in the Army of West Tennessee. Grant brought Sherman down to the front at Pittsburg Landing, Tenn., and put him in charge of a division as Major General at Shiloh. On April 6, a massive surprise attack on Grant's army led to the horrific Battle of Shiloh, in which the casualties totaled 20,000 men. Sherman was mainly responsible for the poor state of preparedness at Shiloh but redeemed himself during the defensive fighting. He suffered two slight wounds during the battle and had four horses shot from under him. In the battle, Sherman led his men with personal bravery and tactical skill. Following the battle, his spirits soared, and he experienced a nearly instant internal transformation: from the sad loser in Kentucky to the confident and creative commander who would do so much, to destroy the Confederacy.

Not long after the Battle of Shiloh, Sherman persuaded Grant to *not* resign from the army, despite the serious difficulties he was having with Gen. H. W. Halleck, during the advance on Corinth, Miss. Together they fought to capture Vicksburg, shattering the Confederate defenses and opening the Mississippi River to Northern commerce again. During the early Vicksburg operations Sherman ordered an assault at Chickasaw Bluffs and a few days later was superseded by Gen. John A. McClernand who accepted Sherman's proposal to attack Arkansas Post. (The Battle of Arkansas Post, aka the Battle of Fort Hindman, was a combined land-river assault by Union forces on the Confederate Fort Hindman, which loomed over a bend in the Arkansas River near the town of Arkansas Post.) He was superseded by McClernand, a political officer who was almost universally despised in regular Army circles. Sherman later called the replacement "the severest test of my patriotism."

Grant initially criticized this movement as unnecessary but declared it an important achievement when it succeeded and he learned that Sherman had suggested it. Sherman's corps did little fighting in the advance on Vicksburg in May until the disastrous assaults were made.

Fearing renewed criticism of appearing overly alarmed, Sherman initially dismissed intelligence reports that showed Confederate Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston was in the area. He took little precaution shoring up picket lines or sending out reconnaissance patrols. On the morning of April 6, 1862, the Confederates struck with Hell's fury. Sherman's troops were caught by surprise when the Rebels attacked the morning of April 6. He neglected to set up proper outposts but scornfully rebuffed all warnings brought to him by his commanders that a massive Confederate force was nearby ready to strike. *"I do not apprehend anything like an attack on our position."* He wrote to Grant, thereby committing what McDonough characterizes as one of the worst mistakes a general can make: *"to assume that a nearby and powerful enemy force will remain in place, day after day, waiting to be attacked."* In the storm that followed the surprise attack, Sherman was almost always under fire. He was grazed twice by bullets, rallied commanding men with a renewed confidence that would never afterward abandon him.

Sherman and Grant rallied their troops and pushed back the rebel offensive by day's end. By night, reinforcements arrived, so the Union troops were able to launch a counterattack in the morning, scattering Confederate forces. Sherman and Grant bonded to a lifelong friendship over the experience.

Like Ulysses S. Grant, Sherman's prewar life was filled with failure after failure. The difference was that Grant self-medicated his frustrations with drink and retreated into stoic silence. Sherman experienced emotional ups and downs that he shared with his friends and family in a manner that intensified his self-laceration.

Grant had a calming influence upon Sherman. They developed close personal ties during the two years they served together. Years later, Sherman said: *"Grant stood by me when I was crazy, and I stood by him when he was drunk. Now we stand by each other always."* Sherman had a warm friendship with Grant, and a strained relationship with his wife, Ellen, and terrible grief over the death of his young son, Willy.

Sherman remained in the West with Grant serving in the long campaign against Vicksburg. The press was relentless in its criticism of both men.

In May 1862 Sherman wrote his brother: *"I think Mr. Lincoln is a pure-minded, honest and good man. I have all faith in him. In Congress and the cabinet, there is too much of old politics, too much of old issues, and too little realization. I think it is a great mistake to stop enlistments. There may be enough on paper, but not enough in fact."*

If you want to know Sherman's attitude toward Southerners during the Civil War look at a July 31, 1862 letter to his wife. *"Extermination, not of soldiers alone, that is the least part of the*

*trouble, but the Southern people."* His charming and nurturing wife Ellen wrote back that her fondest wish was for a war *"of extermination and that all Southerners would be driven like the Swine into the sea."*

### **SHERMAN'S FAMILY VISITS VICKSBURG.**

Because of the confidence, he had in his location in a camp in an oak grove between the Black and Yazoo Rivers near Vicksburg, Miss, and because he was unable to take a furlough home, Sherman violated his policy against officers' bringing their families into camp. He thought the practice contributed to laxity, but he decided, in this case, to send for Ellen and four of their six children, including his beloved Willie. The family joined him in late August 1863, after the Sherman children returned home to Ohio. Ellen took them to visit Gen. Sherman's encampment on the Big Black River, below Vicksburg, Miss. during a respite in the fighting. They spent six weeks at the camp.

On Sept. 9 a contented Sherman wrote his brother about the arrangements he had made for them all. He and Ellen were together in adjoined hospital tents, with the children nearby in two other tents. *"You would be surprised to see how well they get along,"* he happily reported. *"All are well and really have improved in health down here."*

Unsurprisingly, in his memoirs, Sherman records nothing about his other children's experiences in camp, while he says a great deal about Willie's. He remembered that his son *"was well advanced for his years, and took the most intense interest in the affairs of the army."* A favorite of the 13th Regulars, the battalion assigned to guard Sherman's headquarters, Willie was made an honorary sergeant in the unit, wore a specially made uniform and regularly attended its parades. Sherman would remember years after the war how much pleasure Willie and he took in horseback rides and in observing the drills and reviews of his troops. For a few weeks, Sherman enjoyed life with Willie and the others, but that time ended in late September due to events in far-off southeastern Tennessee. After the Union defeat at Chickamauga, Sherman was ordered to take command of forces gathered in nearby Chattanooga.

On Sept. 28, Sherman moved his headquarters and family to the steamboat Atlantic to begin their journey from Vicksburg back up the Mississippi River and home to Ohio. That night Willie complained of diarrhea. A regimental surgeon was sent for, and concluded that the boy was suffering from dysentery and malaria. Sherman noticed that Willy, their firstborn, did not look well. The boy was quiet, and his cheeks were flushed. Surgeon E. O. F. Roler of the 55th Illinois was consulted, and he sadly diagnosed young Willy as having yellow fever\*. During the five-day trip to Memphis, Willy suffered the symptoms associated with yellow fever. Arriving in Memphis on Oct. 2, the semiconscious boy was carried by ambulance to the Gayoso Hotel and was seen by the best of physicians. The situation was grim. A Catholic chaplain was summoned to administer the last rites. Nothing could be done to help Willie. As he floated in and out of consciousness, he realized that he was dying, and told the priest that he was quite willing to die if it was God's will, but that he did not want to leave his father and mother. With this

revelation, Ellen and William Sherman began to weep. Willy reached out and caressed their faces, then closed his eyes and slipped away. He died at 5:00 p.m. on October 3, 1863, at the age of nine years old. *"We were with him at the time,"* Sherman wrote later: *"And we all, helpless and overwhelmed, saw him die."*

\*(Yellow fever is an acute viral hemorrhagic disease transmitted by infected mosquitoes. The "yellow" in the name refers to jaundice that affects some patients. Symptoms of yellow fever include fever, headache, jaundice, muscle pain, nausea, vomiting, and fatigue.)

It was no secret that Willie was the favorite child of Sherman. In fact, Ellen reproved him repeatedly for making his preference for Willie uncomfortably apparent to their other children. Sherman wrote to Ulysses S. Grant that Willie was *"the one I most prized [sic] on earth."* Willie's death was the tragic consequence of a series of decisions for which Sherman would blame himself the rest of his own life. In another letter to his brother, he noted flatly that *"here I fear not yellow fever or any other epidemic."*

He placed his family on the steamer to return to Ohio on Oct. 6, 1863 at 7:00 a.m. Sherman was alone at the Gayoso Hotel, preparing to return to Vicksburg and the War. He wrote his wife a letter of total despair: *"Dearest Ellen, I have got up early this morning to steal a short period in which to write you, but I can hardly trust myself. Sleeping, waking, everywhere I see poor little Willy. His face and form are so deeply imprinted on my memory as were deep seated the hopes I had in his future. Why, oh why, should this child be taken from us, leaving us full of trembling and reproaches? Though I know we did all human beings could do to arrest the ebbing tide of life, still I will always deplore my want of judgment in taking my family to so fatal a climate at so critical a period of the year . . . To it must be traced the loss of that child on whose future I had based all the ambition I ever had. - Always yours - W.T. Sherman. The following day he wrote his wife: "I will always deplore my want of judgment in taking my family to so fatal a climate at so critical period of the year,"* he continued in his letter to his wife, Ellen. *"It nearly kills me to think of it."*

Sherman threw himself into his duties as a way to escape his grief. His letters from this time are filled with terrible self-recrimination. Three days after Willie's death, he wrote to Ellen. *"I will always deplore my want of judgment in taking my family to so fatal a climate at so critical a period of the year."* On Oct. 14 he wrote to say he occasionally gave in to: *"the wish that some of those bullets that searched for my life at Vicksburg had been successful that it might have removed the necessity for that fatal visit."* Sherman blamed himself. *"I will always deplore my want of judgment in taking my family to so fatal a climate at so critical period of the year,"* he continued in his letter to his wife, Ellen. *"It nearly kills me to think of it,"* he wrote her the next day. *"Why was I not killed and left Willy to grow up to care for you? God knows I loved that boy and he will pardon any error of judgment that carried him to death."*

One newspaper complained, the *"Army was being ruined in mud-turtle expeditions, under the leadership of a drunkard (Grant) whose confidential adviser (Sherman) was a lunatic."* When

Vicksburg fell, Sherman was given command of three armies in the West. He launched a campaign from Vicksburg, Miss. in February 1864, to destroy the rail center at Meridian and evident Confederate resistance from central Mississippi. Three railroad lines crossed at Meridian, located between Jackson, the state's capital, and the cannon foundry and manufacturing center in Selma, Ala. As speed was of the essence, Sherman's army cut supply lines from Vicksburg and foraged off the land. The Confederates, under Gen. Leonidas Polk, put up some resistance, but his 10,000 troops were no-match for the 45,000 Union overwhelming forces.

While Sherman moved west from Vicksburg, he employed tactics to keep Polk's forces protecting Mobile, Ala. On February 11, 1864, Sherman's army attacked and destroyed the railroad center at Meridian, then dispersed detachments in four directions destroying railroad tracks, bridges, trestles, and any train equipment. It was an important milestone in the evolution of strategy in the Civil War's relentless ascent toward "*a total war.*"

Ellen, as her mother, was a devout Catholic and often at odds with Cump over religious topics. She raised their children in that faith. In 1864, she took temporary residence in South Bend, Ind. to have her family educated at the University of Notre Dame and St. Mary's College. Their son, Thomas Ewing Sherman, became a Catholic priest. She also took an interest in Indian missions and was credited as the principal organizer of the Catholic Indian Missionary Association. In "*the most absorbing and monumental work of her life,*" Ellen played an active role in U.S. observances of the Golden Jubilee of Pope Pius IX (May 21, 1877) for which she received the personal thanks of the Pope.

Thomas Ewing Sherman, as he was commonly known, was named after his maternal grandfather Thomas Ewing, a U.S. Senator and cabinet secretary. Tom was born in San Francisco while his father worked there as a bank executive. His mother, Ellen, was of Irish ancestry on her mother's side and devoutly Catholic. He was an American lawyer, educator, and Catholic priest. He was the fourth child and second son of Gen. Sherman and his wife, Ellen. Tom attended the preparatory department of Georgetown College and graduated with a B.A. degree from that institution in 1874. He then entered Yale University's Sheffield Scientific School as a graduate student in English literature. He received a law degree from Washington University in St. Louis in 1878 and was admitted to the bar, but to his father's tremendous and lasting displeasure he soon gave up the profession of the law to study for the priesthood in the Roman Catholic Church. Thomas Sherman was a source of conflict and rage for the general, rejecting his father's dictate that he study law and opting for the priesthood instead. That same year he joined the Jesuit Order and studied for three years in Jesuit novitiates in London, England, and Frederick, Maryland. He was ordained a priest in 1889 and belonged to the Western Province of the Jesuit Order (headquarters in St. Louis). He taught for some years in Jesuit colleges, principally in St. Louis and Detroit.

Thomas served as an army chaplain during the Spanish – American War of 1898. He was in demand as a public lecturer and frequently spoke against anti-Catholic prejudice in the United

States. While in his mid-fifties, he began experiencing mental problems and long bouts of clinical depression. He left the Jesuit community and lived in various places in Europe and the U.S. before settling in Santa Barbara, Calif. In poor health, after 1931 he lived with his wealthy niece Eleanor Sherman Fitch in New Orleans, La., where he died of acute dilation of the heart and arteriosclerosis, at the age of 76. He had renewed his Jesuit vows shortly before his death. After long periods of mental instability, Thomas died in 1933 in a New Orleans nursing home.

### **SHOCK AND AWE IN GEORGIA**

In 1864, Sherman succeeded Grant as the Union commander in the Western Theater of the war and he proceeded to lead his troops to the capture of the city of Atlanta, a military success that contributed to the reelection of Abraham Lincoln.

Sherman was a skeptic when it came to politics and to President Lincoln. In the fall of 1864, he wrote his brother: *"I got your letter about my being for McClellan\*. I never said so, or thought. So, or gave anyone the right to think so. I almost despair of a popular Government, but if we must be so inflicted I suppose Lincoln is the best choice, but I am not a voter."*

*\*(George B. McClellan was a general for northern command of the Army of the Potomac in 1861; nicknamed "Tardy George" because of his failure to move troops to Richmond; lost battle vs. General Lee near the Chesapeake Bay; Lincoln fired him twice.)*

Willie haunted Sherman throughout the remainder of the war. In 1864, during his assault on Atlanta and the long march across Georgia, Sherman's letters to his wife were filled with obsessive, endlessly searching discussions of their dead son. Sherman's sorrow takes the form of wishing that Willie were able to rejoice in his father's accomplishments. In late October 1864, as plans for the Georgia march were being finalized, Sherman's thoughts turned toward imagined praise from Willie: to be able to see Willie's *"full eyes dilate and brighten when he learned that his Papa was a great Gen. would be to me now more grateful than the clamor of millions."*

U.S. President Abraham Lincoln and General Ulysses S. Grant had reservations about Sherman's plans. From November 15 until December 21, 1864, Gen. Sherman led 60,000 soldiers on a 285-mile journey from Atlanta to Savannah. Sherman's escort was the 1st Alabama Cavalry Regiment; a unit made up of Southerners who remained loyal to the Union. (The 1st Alabama Cavalry Regiment was a cavalry regiment recruited from southern loyalists that served in the Union Army during the American Civil War.)

The 1st Alabama Cavalry was raised from Alabama Unionists at Huntsville, Ala. and Memphis, Tenn. in October 1862 after Federal troops occupied the area. It was attached to the 16th Corps in various divisions until November 1864, when it became part of the 15th Corps. During this time, its duties mostly consisted of scouting, raiding, reconnaissance, flank guard, and providing screening to the infantry while on the march. The regiment was commanded by Col. George E. Spencer from September 11, 1863, till July 5, 1865. It was assigned to the Third Division of the



Cavalry Corps, Military Division of the Mississippi in January 1865. It fought at the battles of Monroe's Crossroads and Bentonville and was present at the surrender of the Army of Tennessee at the Bennett Place. It was sent to the District of Northern Alabama, Department of the Cumberland in June 1865.

They tore through prime cotton plantation country. He cut loose from his extended communications, which were subject to attack from Hood's troops. After taking precautions to deal with the eventuality of Hood moving against Tennessee, did Sherman undertake his famous march. At the time, Sherman's decision to abandon his line of communications and cast off for the Georgia coast was looked upon as extremely risky. He'd, however, seen Grant to something very similar during the Vicksburg campaign, when he moved his army down the west bank of the Mississippi, crossed the river at Bruinsburg, and then marched inland toward Jackson.

Grant's army had lived off the land and Sherman was confident his troops could do the same thing. Sherman's army was larger, had a longer distance to travel, and the potential for disaster was much greater, but Sherman was confident he could make this march.

The purpose of this "March to the Sea" was to frighten Georgia's civilian population into abandoning the Confederate cause. He began ripping through Georgia with a 60-mile-wide path of destruction. Gen. Sherman's burning of Atlanta solidified his legacy as a ruthless leader. He understood that to win the War and save the Union; his Army would have to break the South's will to fight "*make Georgia howl.*" Sherman can be criticized for not keeping better control over his troops and for turning a blind eye to their excesses, especially regarding theft. His attitude is consistent with his belief that the war would end sooner if the Southern people lost the will to fight in Virginia and wrote to their husbands, sons, and brothers to come home.

Sherman's army included an estimated 20,000 horses and 5,500 cows. His men all liked him and thought he knew everything, although Sherman secretly admitted he "*really didn't know it all.*"

Charley, their healthy baby boy, had contracted a cold in Lancaster. It was felt a change of climate might be good for him. However, his condition worsened after they arrived in South Bend. On December 4, 1864, a year and two months after Willy's death, ten-month-old Charley died in Ellen's arms. Sister Angela asked Ellen to be allowed to take the body to Minnie's school. St. Mary's Academy. There the St. Mary's children kept constant watch beside the casket until Wednesday afternoon when Father Sorin performed the beautiful and touching rites of infant burial in the Church of Sacred Heart at Notre Dame. The General was on the march, engaged in hazardous maneuvers through enemy country when the baby he never saw died. He did not even know the baby was dead. His father had never seen him. For several months Ellen had heard nothing from him.

Sherman planned to travel to Savannah by way of Jasper County with the intent to bring the war up close and personal to the people living in the rural areas. He planned to enforce the 'shock and awe' strategy and cause the people to surrender by sheer force. He dispatched his 14th Corps through Jasper County – through Newborn, Farrar and they ended up camping out in Shady Dale where they watered their horses and themselves at the well which still stands across from Shady Dale's City Hall.

Both the 17th and 15th Corps went through Jackson where they burned the Courthouse; fortunately, the Butts County records were saved and were hidden in the woods in Jasper County. The 15th Corps ended up heading toward Hillsboro, and a rumor had the 17th Corps believing there were Union soldiers being held in the jail in Monticello, so they burned down the jail. (The reality is that Sherman had superior number of troops, he and his generals made some serious blunders but managed to keep it together across the state of Georgia.)

The answer to the question of why Sherman's mission chose to adopt a burn and destroy as his legacy lies in his theory that this would bring about a quicker end to the war. He wanted people to know and feel the pain and suffering of war. The State Militia recruited old men and boys to help with the war effort, and that left only the women and young girls the task of struggling to maintain the farms and plantations.

Late on the night of Nov. 29, 1864, Union Maj. Henry M. Hitchcock saw a shadow pass over his tent in central Georgia and heard someone rustling the embers of the campfire. He went out and found a man wearing slippers over his bare feet, red flannel underdrawers, a nightshirt and a blue cape. It was Sherman. He was "*the most restless man in the army at night,*" Hitchcock recalled. "*Never sleeps a night straight through, and frequently comes out and pokes round in this style.*" Hitchcock, a bespectacled lawyer who had just joined Sherman's staff and would later leave a fascinating diary and letters, chatted with the general. He said he liked to be up late at night to wander around in the quiet and listen.

The March to the Sea was devastating to Georgia and the Confederacy. Sherman estimated that the campaign inflicted \$100 million (about \$1.4 billion in 2010 dollars) in destruction, one-fifth of which "*inured to our advantage*" while the "*remainder is simple waste and destruction.*" The Army wrecked 300 miles of railroad, numerous bridges, and miles of telegraph lines. It seized 5,000 horses, 4,000 mules, and 13,000 head of cattle, and confiscated 9.5 million lbs. of corn and 10.5 million lbs. of fodder and destroyed many cotton gins and mills.

By waging war against the minds of his opponents, Sherman achieved his goal of hastening an end to the conflict: the wives of Confederate soldiers begged their husbands to come home. Desertions increased significantly during the fall and winter of 1864 - 65. The hemorrhaging of soldiers from Gen. Robert E. Lee's army in Virginia further depleted his already thin ranks and allowed Gen. Ulysses S. Grant to deliver the knockout blow in the spring of 1865.

\*(Desertions escalated in the last months of the War, as Grant broke through Lee's defense of Richmond and Petersburg, on April 2, and sent the Confederate army west in retreat. Several hundred men per night fled even before Richmond fell. On the march toward Appomattox, thousands more deserted — mostly Virginians and North Carolinians, who were nearer their homes.)

Another myth deals with the notion that Sherman had girlfriends and mistresses along the route and spared certain cities. Can the many rumors and claims of Sherman's girlfriends in places like Madison, Milledgeville, Macon, and Savannah be spawned by a true story? Perhaps. . . . One does not know how many women he chased, or the number of his conquests — Victorian codes of seduction were deliberately cloaked with ambiguity, and the archival record is far from complete in such matters. Ellen got the short end of the stick. Always gone - forever pregnant - getting pregnant every time he came home. Was it planned - I doubt it. They were hungry for each other. He was known as a “Mad Man.”

America's best commanders were often subject to allegations of womanizing. Some controversial biographers have alleged that William Tecumseh Sherman, the man who gave Lincoln the 1864 election by taking Atlanta, engaged in a number of affairs during his postwar military career.

What husband signs his letters to his wife or lover so formerly “W.T. Sherman?” That is how he signed letters in the field to other generals and to President Lincoln.

### **CHRISTMAS IN SAVANNAH IN 1864**

On Dec. 9, 1864, the Union used a pontoon bridge to cross Ebenezer Creek, on the pretense that his army would encounter the enemy on the other side, Brig. Gen. Jefferson C. Davis ordered the refugees to halt for their safety. Once his men were safely across, he ordered the pontoon bridge removed, stranding thousands of refugees. Thinking Confederate troops were coming after them; panic ensued the freed slaves. Many plunged into the cold waters in an attempt to escape but drowned instead, since most slaves did not know how to swim. Others were shot by Confederates as they fell back from the bank. Hundreds of African Americans drowned attempting to cross Ebenezer Creek north of Savannah while following Sherman's Army.

At the end of the march, the people of Savannah surrendered without a fight — they were “*completely subjugated*,” he wrote. Five months earlier, Sherman had told the mayor of Atlanta, “*If you and your citizens will give up, I and this army will become your greatest protectors.*” It was a lesson not lost on Savannahians. The fate of the city where the March to the Sea ended was different from Atlanta where it began.

Sherman's men were able to surround Savannah and lay siege to the city without major losses. Arriving at Savannah, at 4:30 a.m. on Dec. 21, the mayor formally surrendered the city. Sherman rode into town the next morning.

Sherman's telegram arrived at the White House on Christmas Eve, the day that troops of the two Federal wings were being encamped around, rather than within, Savannah, while orderly life in the city was restored. The President responded on the day after Christmas; his message carried south by walrus-mustached Maj. Gen. John "Black Jack" A. Logan, a veteran of Vicksburg and Atlanta, who would be taking over 15th Corps from Gen. Peter Osterhaus. Logan had been given leave by Sherman to return to Illinois to use his considerable political influence to campaign for Lincoln.

*Savannah, Georgia, December 22, 1864*

*To His Excellency President Lincoln, Washington, D.C.*

*I beg to present you as a Christmas-gift the city of Savannah, with one hundred and fifty heavy guns and plenty of ammunition, also about twenty-five thousand bales of cotton.*

*W. T. Sherman, Major-General*

*My Dear General Sherman,*

*Many, many thanks for your Christmas gift – the capture of Savannah.*

*When you were about to leave Atlanta for the Atlantic coast, I was anxious, if not fearful; but feeling that you were the better judge, and remembering that "nothing risked nothing gained," I did not interfere. Now, the undertaking being a success, the honor is all yours, for I believe none of us went further than to acquiesce. And taking the work of General Thomas into the count, as it should be taken, it is indeed a great success.*

*Not only does it afford the obvious and immediate military advantages, but in showing to the world that your army could be divided, putting the stronger part to an important new service, and yet leaving enough to vanquish the old opposing forces of the whole – Hood's army – it brings those who sat in darkness to see a great light.*

*But what next? I suppose it will be safe if I leave General Grant and yourself to decide.*

*Please make my grateful acknowledgments to your whole army, officers, and men.*

*Yours very truly,*

*A. Lincoln*

Sherman's attitude toward the President improved after the President praised his capture of Savannah in December 1864. Sherman wrote Grant: "Please say to the President that I received his kind message through Col. Markland, and feel thankful for his high favor. If I disappoint him in the future, it will not be from want of zeal or love to the cause." Sherman wrote Senator Thomas Ewing, "I know full well that I enjoy the unlimited confidence of the President and

*Commander in Chief, and better still of my own Army.” The same day, the General wrote his wife, “I did hope for some rest but all lean on me so, Grant, the President, the Army, and even the world now looks to me to strike hard and decisive blows that I cannot draw out quietly as I would and seek rest.”*

*“Many and many a person in Georgia asked me why we did not go to South Carolina; and, when I answered that we were en route for that State, the invariable reply was, ‘Well, if you will make those people feel the utmost severities of war, we will pardon you for your desolation of Georgia.’” — William T. Sherman, in a letter to Maj.-Gen. H. W. Halleck, Chief-of-Staff, Washington, D.C., December 24, 1864.*

### **MARCH THROUGH THE SWAMP**

Sherman’s Army in South Carolina is a whole other subject, and “all bets were off” in the Cradle of Secession.

After a month’s preparation, operations began on February 1, 1865. Sherman organized his 60,079 men into left and right wings, commanded by Gen. Henry Slocum and Gen. Oliver Howard, respectively, and a cavalry force under Gen. Judson Kilpatrick. Few people thought that the Union army could cross the swamps and rivers that formed a natural barrier to Columbia. Winter rains made Lowcountry roads impassable. Sherman’s scouts used canoes, and his engineers navigated the Gen. Wheeler’s cavalry and occasional Confederate attempts to defend key terrain as happened at Rivers Bridge from February 2 to February 4, the Union forces averaged almost ten miles daily.

For more than two weeks, Sherman's veterans faced an unforgiving quagmire, coupled with daily battles with gallant bands of outnumbered Confederates. Along the way, a ruined countryside and wrecked towns marked the path of an army unlike any *"since the days of Julius Caesar."* It would take an army as adept with the axe as they were with the rifle to tame the rivers, tributaries and swamps of the South Carolina Lowcountry. The right-wing (15th and 17th Corps) feinted through an unrelenting enemy — the swamps of the Palmetto State toward Charleston. The Union naval blockade and occupation of the Sea Islands had reduced the city’s usefulness as a port, but Charleston had remained a haven for blockade-runners, a munitions center, and a target of rich symbolic value.

Sherman told one South Carolina woman that he was ransacking her plantation so her husband would come home and Grant would not have to kill him in battle at Petersburg. He was fighting to return the wayward Rebels back into the Union, not to annihilate them.

Confederate Gen. P. G. T. Beauregard responded as Sherman hoped by concentrating his defenses at Charleston and Augusta. This Union deception aside, the Confederate leadership suffered from personnel shortages and disunity of command. Beauregard had 20,000 soldiers, many of whom were poorly trained boys and old men. From Virginia, Lee sent a depleted infantry brigade under John Doby Kennedy, a Georgia cavalry brigade, and a small cavalry

detachment commanded by two South Carolinians, Maj. Gen. Matthew Butler and Gen. Wade Hampton III. These officers mainly added to the confusion. The only general to successfully engage Sherman was Gen. Joseph Wheeler. On February 11 Wheeler's cavalry achieved one of the few Confederate victories of the campaign by ambushing Kilpatrick's cavalry at Aiken.

Meanwhile, the left wing of Sherman's army (14th and 20th Corps) angled toward Augusta, which contained essential munitions and gunpowder factories. After several days, however, Sherman brought the wings together and advanced north toward Columbia. They reached Columbia's outskirts on Feb. 15. Wade Hampton resisted briefly with his forces before evacuating leaving the mayor to surrender on February 17.

Fire destroyed one-third of Columbia. Sherman blamed Hampton for leaving burning cotton bales in the streets, and a northern wind spread the blaze. Supposedly, civilians gave the Union troops alcohol. Sherman's detractors accused him of not controlling his soldiers, and for planning arson. Vengeful former slaves and ex-Union prisoners of war interned and released at nearby Camp Sorghum were named as possible culprits.

Although controversial, his "*hard war*" concept was brilliant. He ravaged the South's economic infrastructure and simultaneously severely weakened its morale by demonstrating he could march and burn at his leisure. Sherman repeated this technique in South Carolina, which he was particularly interested in punishing as it was the cradle of secession.

Sherman continued his campaign into North Carolina after successfully moving through South Carolina. When his Confederate opponent Gen. Joseph E. Johnston heard of the pace Sherman's men were making through the swamp lands then in their path. Sherman defeated Johnston at Bentonville after a well conceived and a valiant attempt by the Confederates which brought the surrender of Johnston's army, a vital piece in the conclusion of the War.

In early January 1865, Sherman wrote President Lincoln: *"I am gratified at the receipt of your letter of December 26, at the hand of Gen. Logan, Especially to observe that you appreciate the division I made of my army and that each part was duly proportioned to its work. The motto, 'Nothing ventured, nothing won' which you refer to is most appropriate, and should I venture too much and happen to lose I will bespeak your charitable inference. I am ready for the Great Next as soon as I can complete certain preliminaries, and learn of Gen. Grant his and your preferences of intermediate 'objectives.'"*

In March 1865, Sherman met with President Lincoln outside Richmond a few weeks before his assassination but never again visited the White House. After their City Point conference, Sherman wrote Ellen: *"I continue to receive the highest compliments from all quarters, and have been singularly fortunate in escaping the envy and jealousy of rivals. Indeed officers from every quarter want to join my 'Great Army.' Grant is the same enthusiastic friend. Mr. Lincoln at City Point was lavish in his good wishes, and Since Mr. Stanton visited me at Savannah, he too has become the warmest possible friend."*

Lee commanded the Army of Northern Virginia, while Maj. Gen. John Brown Gordon commanded its Second Corps. Early in the morning of April 9, Gordon attacked, aiming to break through Federal lines at the Battle of Appomattox Court House, but failed, and the Confederate Army was then surrounded. At 8:30 a.m., Lee requested a meeting with Grant to discuss surrendering the Army of Northern Virginia. Shortly after twelve o'clock, Grant's reply reached Lee, and in it Grant said he would accept the surrender of the Confederate Army under certain conditions. Lee then rode into the little hamlet of Appomattox Court House, where the Appomattox county court house stood, and waited for Grant's arrival to surrender his army.

Gen. Sherman wrote to his wife Ellen, on April 9, 1865, before leaving Goldsboro: *"Poor North Carolina will have a hard time, for we sweep the country like a swarm of locusts. Thousands of people may perish, but they now realize that war means something else than vain glory and boasting."* Sherman discussed some of the recent War happenings. Because of Union Gen. Grant's victories at Petersburg, Sherman did not need to move north right away. Instead, he turned his direction to Raleigh. Sherman bragged to his wife about his men, as they had rested a great deal in Goldsboro and were now ready for the *"toil and uncertainty of war."* This letter further demonstrated how he viewed his actions as legit war tactics. He was forced to carry out the operations to prove to the South's home front, in this case, North Carolina, what war *really* meant. He wanted to destroy North Carolinians' abilities to fight physically and mentally.

Despite his reputation for *"hard"* warfare, Sherman could also be surprising — perhaps even naively — generous in victory. Sherman accepted Confederate Gen. Joseph E. Johnston's surrender in Bentonville, N.C., after hearing of Gen. Lee's surrender.

Sherman's subsequent march through Georgia and the Carolinas further undermined the Confederacy's ability to continue fighting. He accepted the surrender of the Confederate armies in the Carolinas, Georgia, and Florida in April, having been present at most of the significant military engagements in the Western Theater.

Sherman offered very forgiving terms that granted Gen. Joseph Johnston was giving amnesty to the rebels and even allowing the Southern states to immediately re-enter the Union upon swearing an oath of allegiance. The sweeping agreement enraged U.S. Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, who rejected it out of hand and criticized Sherman for giving up *"all the advantages we had gained from the war."*

At the War's end, assured of his place in history from helping to defeat the Confederacy, Sherman wished only that Willie *"could hear and see — his proud little heart would swell to overflowing."*

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After the Civil War, Sherman was given command of the Military Division of the Mississippi and tasked with pacifying the Plains Indians during the building of the transcontinental railroad. Sherman took to the job with characteristic vigor, orchestrating the relocation of the tribes and warning their chiefs, *"you cannot stop the locomotive any more than you can stop the sun or the moon, and you must submit."* To help break the natives' spirit, Sherman took a page from his Civil War playbook and set his sights on destroying one of their primary resources: the buffalo. Beginning in the late 1860s, he organized the killing of some five million bison to drive the creatures to the brink of extinction. He continued his harsh policies after becoming commanding Gen. of the army in 1869, and by the 1870s, he had helped force most of the Plains peoples onto reservations. Sherman advocated total war against hostile Indians to force them back onto their reservations.

After his cruelties against the people of the Confederacy, Sherman continued his maniacal murders by overseeing the genocide of the Native American population in the West in Indian Wars for the next 15 years. Given command of the Military Division of Missouri, he was tasked with keeping the railroad expansions of the West free from marauding Indians. He wrote: *"We must act with vindictive earnestness against the Sioux ... even to their extermination, men, women, and children."* In a phrase that should give every modern-day reader a hard chill, he referred to this extermination of the Plains Indians as *"the final solution of the Indian problem."*

Of the Plains Indians, he said, *"It is one of those irreconcilable conflicts that will end only in one way, one or the other must be exterminated. We must act with vindictive earnestness against the Sioux, even to the extermination, men, women, and children" . . . "The more Indians we can kill this year, the less we will have to be killed next year,"* wrote Sherman. *"They all have to be killed or be maintained as a species of paupers."*

***"I WILL NOT SERVE IF ELECTED."***

In 1865, the Shermans moved to St. Louis. He acquired a family lot in Calvary Cemetery so that Willy and Charley could be buried there.

Much has been written about the proud and fierce Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman, but a little item in a 1874 Scholastic, *"The Gen. at a Circus"* tells another side of his personality when he attended a circus in South Bend. *"Sitting in front of us was General Sherman and with him quite a number of children whom he had gathered up from the 'byways and hedges.' We saw him look down under the seat, and then haul out a dirty, ragged little darkey, who had crept in under the tent and then seat him at his feet, where, by crowding, was made a place for the little rascal. 'Now,' said the General, 'sit there, my boy, and see everything. Bless me! Many is the time I've done just the same thing, and many a thrashing have I had.' Sherman seemed like a child; everything pleased him, and we wondered where was the vanity of which people talked so loudly. Whom has a better right to be proud than Sherman? Proud of his valor, proud of his deeds, proud of his wife, proud of his children, and proud of the love of his country people?"*



He published his memoirs in 1875 — *The Memoirs of William T. Sherman* consisted of a two-volume set. Sherman's standing in American history is formidable. The first version of his Memoirs appeared in 1875 and caused a storm of controversy with its offensive language, self-serving version of history, and headline-making disparagements of Civil War men who were still alive to take offense. The book sold well even in a pricey edition, and the revised edition, issued with softer language and copious additions in 1886, sold even better. Add to this the fact that Sherman was an indefatigable, almost compulsively prolific letter-writer, and you have the kind of raw material biographers just can't resist.

Hailed as the prophet of modern war and condemned as a harbinger of modern barbarism, Sherman is the most controversial Gen. of the Civil War. "*War is cruelty, and you cannot refine it,*" he wrote in an angry letter to the Confederate mayor of Atlanta. His memoir is filled with dozens of such wartime exchanges. With the energy and intelligence that marked his campaigns, Sherman describes incidents and anecdotes and publishes dozens of his incisive wartime orders and reports. This complex self-portrait of an innovative and relentless American warrior provides firsthand accounts of the war's crucial events — Shiloh, Vicksburg, Chattanooga, the Atlanta campaign, the marches through Georgia and the Carolinas.

Time did nothing to lessen Sherman's self-blame. "*The blow was a terrible one to us all,*" he would write years later in his memoirs, "*so sudden and so unexpected, that I could not help reproaching myself for having consented to his visit in that sickly region in the summertime.*" It's striking that here Sherman seems to shift responsibility for Willie's presence in Mississippi to an unnamed other, with Sherman merely "*consenting*" to his family's joining him there.

Sherman and Ellen had eight children, including three sons in addition to Willie. None came close to replacing him in their father's affections. One, Charles, was conceived during the ill-fated visit to Mississippi; he died of pneumonia at the age of five months, without Sherman's ever seeing him. Sherman puts the child's name in quotation marks as if his son weren't really a person to him. His youngest son Philemon's achievements in law and business gave Sherman a small measure of satisfaction late in his life.

He had loving relationships with his daughters, but to the end of his life his heart remained only Willie's. The boy's body was originally buried in Sherman's hometown of Lancaster. In 1867 Sherman had it moved to St. Louis, where he and his family had taken residence after the war. On the occasion of his 70th birthday, less than a year before he died, Sherman instructed the St. Louis post of the Grand Army of the Republic as to where he wished to be buried. "*Deposit my poor body in Calvary Cemetery, the warrior father requested of his old army comrades, "alongside my faithful wife and idolized 'SOLDIER BOY'"*

### **RETIRED FROM THE ARMY IN 1883.**

Sherman retired from the army on November 1, 1883. The family returned to St. Louis at war's end. Grateful businessmen raised \$30,000 to buy and furnish a spacious two-story home for

them. He made no secret of his dislike for politics, once quipping he would rather spend four years in jail than in the White House. Nevertheless, during the 1870s and 1880s, Washington, movers and shakers often tried—and failed—to convince him to make a run at the presidency. When asked to be a Republican nominee for president, Sherman sent the Republican National Convention of 1884 the most famous of *all* rejections re their presidential nominee. *"I will not accept if nominated and will not serve if elected."* Even today, *"a Sherman"* is well-understood slang for a firm refusal. (When approached about running for president, for instance, Sherman quipped, *"You may tell all that I would rather serve four years in the Singing Penitentiary than in Washington and believe that I could come out a better man."*)

They moved to New York City in 1886. Sherman the military strategist, a master of logistics with an uncanny grasp of terrain and brilliant sense of timing. Then there is *"Uncle Billy,"* Sherman's public persona, a charismatic hero to his troops and quotable catnip to the newspaper writers of his day. In his life, Sherman was a soldier, banker, college president, firebrand battlefield commander, a scourge to the Plains Indians, Army figurehead during his friend Ulysses Grant's presidential administration, sought-after public speaker, and a fashionable man-about-town in New York City. There was a private Sherman, whose appetite for women, parties, and the high life of the New York theater complex his already unstable marriage. He devoted his time to amateur painting and speaking at dinners and banquets.

Ellen Sherman, died in 1888, and was returned for burial in Calvary Cemetery in St. Louis Obituary in the *New York Times*: *Eleanor Boyle Ewing, the wife of Gen. W. T. Sherman, died on November 28, 1888, at 9:30 at the family residence, 75 West Seventy-first street. Though Mrs. Sherman has been more or less of an invalid for the past five years, suffering greatly from an affection of the heart, her death came as a very sudden blow to her family. Survived by her husband and six of their eight children, she is buried in Calvary Cemetery in St. Louis, Mo.*

Gen. Sherman mourned Ellen and Willy for the rest of his life. One year before his death on February 14, 1891, he left detailed instructions that he was to be buried in Calvary Cemetery in St. Louis, *"alongside my faithful wife and idolized soldier boy."*

In 1891, in response to his daughter when, on his deathbed, she asked him about the inscription he wished to have on his monument. *"Put on my tombstone: 'Faithful and Honorable; faithful and honorable!'"*

Sherman died of pneumonia in New York City at 1:50 p.m. on February 14, 1891. President Benjamin Harrison sent a telegram to Gen. Sherman's family and ordered all national flags to be flown at half-staff. On February 19, a funeral service was held at his home, followed by a military procession. Gen. Joseph E. Johnston, the Confederate officer who fought against Sherman's troops in Georgia and the Carolinas, served as a pallbearer in New York City. A bitterly cold day and Gen. Johnston did not have on a hat. A friend of his, fearing he might become ill, asked him to put on his hat. Johnston replied: *"If I were in Sherman's place, and he*

*was standing in mine, he would not put on his hat."* Johnston did in fact catch a severe cold and died of pneumonia a month later.

According to his wishes, he was buried at Calvary Cemetery in St. Louis. The Pennsylvania Railroad provided its executive train to return the Gen. to Ellen's side. At Union Depot, the casket was placed on an artillery caisson pulled by four black horses. Cavalry escorted it north, followed by once-wiry veterans of Sherman's Army of Tennessee. Other units, including Confederate veterans, joined the solemn clattering over cobblestones.

Sunshine pierced low, billowing clouds as people jammed the rain-washed bridges and Union Depot platforms. A special train eased onto Track 1 at 8:48 a.m. with an officer's saber slung from the locomotive headlamp. A volley by the St. Louis Light Artillery shattered the respectful silence. Thus, began the funeral procession of Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman, Civil War hero, and occasional St. Louisian. For four hours on Feb. 21, 1891, a parade of 12,000 soldiers, veterans and notables marched past mourners on a winding, seven-mile path from the depot to Calvary Cemetery. At Calvary, Sherman's son, the Jesuit Rev. Thomas Sherman, recited graveside prayers in Latin and English. An honor guard fired three crisp volleys, followed by the last rumble of artillery from a distant hill.

Vilified in the South as a devil who perpetrated atrocities on Southerners, historians give Sherman high marks as a military strategist and tactician. He changed the nature of war saying: "*War is hell.*"

To this day, there are many in the South that view this man as the most significant villain in American history. Here, we will look at the life of William Tecumseh Sherman, and whether or not he was indeed a hero or a villain.

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*Gen. Sherman's Family Ties to Notre Dame and St. Mary's*

\* \* \*

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