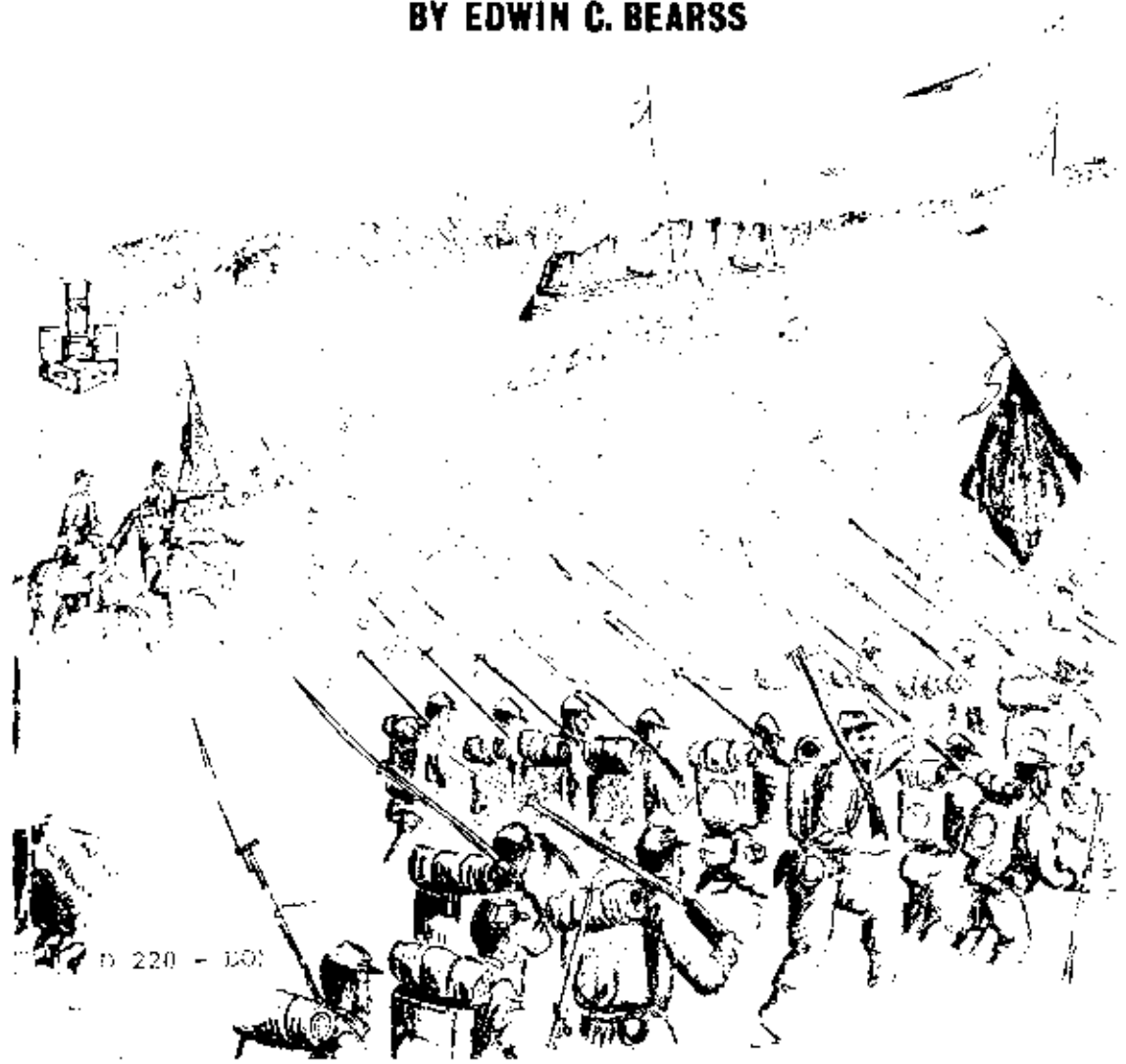


# Unconditional Surrender:

## *The Fall of Fort Donelson*

BY EDWIN C. BEARSS



# Unconditional Surrender:

*The Fall of Fort Donelson*

BY EDWIN C. BEARSS

Reprinted from  
*Tennessee Historical Quarterly*

Vol. XXI

March, June, 1962

Nos. 1 & 2

# Unconditional Surrender The Fall of Fort Donelson

BY EDWIN C. BEARSS

## PART I

Nightfall on February 15, 1862, found the Fort Donelson Confederates back in their rifle pits. Exhausted and cold, they had fought valiantly most of the day against the forces of General U. S. Grant, advancing over the slender neck of land between them and the already fallen Fort Henry. The men's spirits had been high. They had gained possession of the Charlotte and Forge Roads to Nashville in an early morning attack; and the day before the gunners in the fort had inflicted heavy damage on the advancing Federal fleet under Flag Officer Andrew H. Foote. Brigadier General John B. Floyd—self-hypnotized by some strange delusion—had telegraphed his superior, General Albert Sidney Johnston, that a great victory had been won.<sup>1</sup> But he had also withdrawn his men from the positions they had won on the snow-covered ridges and hollows. By doing so he had passed up his big opportunity.

Even after the advent of darkness, it was not too late for the majority of the Confederates to escape from Fort Donelson. The bluecoats had not yet reoccupied in strength the area adjacent to the Forge road. Furthermore, the Charlotte road was still open, though passage over Smith's Ford was rendered difficult by the backwater from the Cumberland. Divergent and conflicting opinions among the Rebel brass, however, served to prevent an evacuation of the Fort Donelson area during the early part of the night. Rather than act, Brigadier Generals John B. Floyd and Gideon J. Pillow talked of ways of extricating the army from its embarrassing position. In this way, valuable time was wasted. By midnight, the Confederate ambulance corps had gathered in all the Rebel wounded, who, along with the sick, and the Union prisoners, were loaded on steamboats and sent to Clarksville.<sup>2</sup> The rest of the men awaited the decision of their commander.

<sup>1</sup> *Fort Henry and Fort Donelson Campaigns, February, 1862* (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 1923), 1016; hereinafter cited as *Source Book*.

<sup>2</sup> *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (69 vols. and index; Washington, 1880-1900), Ser. 1, VII, 278, 293, hereinafter cited as *OR*.

COVER: The morning of the surrender of Fort Donelson.  
From a wartime sketch.

About 1:00 A.M., in response to a summons from General Floyd, all the general officers, the brigade, and the regimental commanders assembled at the Rice house. Floyd informed the assembled officers that his scouts, who were operating on the east side of the Cumberland, had reported that another Union convoy (composed of 14 transports) had tied up at the landing four miles below the water batteries. At this moment, Floyd continued, Union troops were being disembarked. (Floyd's information was correct. A convoy with five infantry regiments aboard—the 14th and 15th Illinois, the 23d Indiana, the 56th and 78th Ohio—reached the Fort Donelson area on the evening of the 15th.) Since it would be impossible for the Confederates to hold their ground in the face of these reinforcements, Floyd directed his officers to have their men under arms by 4:00 A.M. At that hour, the Confederates would evacuate the Fort Donelson perimeter, marching out by way of the Charlotte road.

An air of urgency was added to the situation when two messengers entered the room and reported to Brigadier General Simon B. Buckner. The first reported that a large force of Yankees was being massed on the ridges opposite Buckner's wing; the second stated that strong Union contingents had been observed moving from the Confederate right toward the Wynn's Ferry road. After these evil tidings, Floyd dismissed the assembled officers.<sup>3</sup>

While the brass discussed the situation in the friendly atmosphere of the Rice house, the remainder of the army spent an uncomfortable night on the lines. In accordance with Colonel John C. Brown's instructions, the units of his brigade "stood to their arms." The only troops not under arms were those assigned to fatigue parties. These groups were kept busy strengthening and extending the new fortifications, which had been laid out following the loss of the rifle pits covering the Eddyville road.

It was about 2:00 A.M. when Brown returned from the Rice house. As soon as he reached his command post, Brown issued instructions for his regimental commanders to recall their fatigue parties and for the battery commanders to spike their guns. After this business had been attended to, Brown's soldiers moved out of the rifle pits and marched into Dover. Though it had not been announced, it was the understanding among the officers and men of Brown's brigade that the generals had determined to evacuate the Fort Donelson perimeter.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 349, 354.

Returning to his headquarters from the meeting, Brigadier General Bushrod R. Johnson prepared to carry out Floyd's orders. By 3:00 A.M., Johnson had pulled all his soldiers out of the trenches. As on the previous night, Johnson massed his left wing on the Charlotte road, north of the fortifications.<sup>5</sup>

Following the departure of Johnson and the brigade commanders, Generals Floyd, Buckner, and Pillow remained in Dover. While anxiously waiting for 4:00 A.M. to arrive, the three generals passed the time in Pillow's headquarters at the Rice house. A senior member of Pillow's staff—Colonel John C. Burch—had been in an adjoining room during the briefing. After the brigade and regimental officers had dispersed, Pillow sent for Colonel Burch and directed him to assemble the staff. Hastening forth, Burch quickly informed the designated officers that Pillow wished to see them.<sup>6</sup>

At the time that Colonel Burch aroused him, Major Gustavus A. Henry, Pillow's adjutant, was asleep in his office which was located in one of the upstairs rooms of the house. Throwing on his clothes, Henry descended the stairs and entered Pillow's room. Here, Henry learned of the generals' decision to cut their way out of the Fort Donelson area. Pillow directed Henry "to gather up all the papers and books belonging to . . . [his] department." Whereupon, Henry left the general's room, returned to his quarters, and proceeded to execute the order which he had been given. As soon as he had completed his task, he rejoined the generals.<sup>7</sup>

After awakening Henry, Colonel Burch proceeded to the quarters of Majors William H. Haynes and J. Wyatt Jones. Haynes was Pillow's chief of commissary; Jones was in charge of the quartermaster department. Apparently, these two officers were not billeted in the Rice house—since, by the time they reported to Pillow, a hitch had developed in the Confederate plans for the evacuation of the Fort Donelson perimeter.<sup>8</sup>

A little before 2:00 A.M., a courier rode up to Pillow's headquarters with a dispatch from the commander of one of the units posted in the Forge road sector. Perusing the message, the generals discovered that the troops occupying the trenches in that area were able to hear dogs barking in front of their lines. This led the soldiers to believe the Federals were reinvesting their position.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 362, 369-70.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 287, 293.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 296.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 297, 299.

Learning of this distressing intelligence, General Floyd directed Pillow to send scouts to check on this report.\*

Pillow detailed two trusted men to reconnoiter and see if the Federals had re-established their position astride the Forge road. Within a short time, the scouts returned to the Rice house, and reported that "the enemy's campfires could be seen at the same places in front of our left that they had occupied Friday." Pillow was not "satisfied with the truth of the report." He determined to investigate further, and sent for Lieutenant Colonel Nathan B. Forrest and Major John E. Rice. Besides owning the building where Pillow had established his quarters, Rice served on the general's staff."

Since Rice was already in the house, he reached Pillow's room first. The generals, with Pillow taking the lead, questioned Rice closely on the geography and the character of the roads over which the army would have to pass. While this interview was taking place, two of Pillow's aides—Lieutenants Charles F. Martin and Hunter Nicholson—entered the room." Replying to the questions of the generals, Rice gave a "decidedly unfavorable" account of the condition of the Charlotte road."

Major Rice told the generals, however, that Doctor J. W. Smith was "more familiar" with the Charlotte road than he." Dr. Smith was immediately sent for, and having accompanied Rice to the house, entered Pillow's office immediately. Smith later recalled that General Floyd placed before him:

... a map of the battle-ground of Fort Donelson, which had been drawn by General Buckner. Finding that I understood the map and was familiar with the ground, roads, and creeks, General Floyd requested me to go out on the . . . [Charlotte] road and investigate and examine the ford of Lick Creek. He requested me especially to ascertain the depth of the water in said ford, whether or not it was possible to cross it on horseback, and to report as soon as practicable to him . . ."

When Colonel Forrest reached Pillow's quarters, the generals were discussing the information obtained from Major Rice and Doctor Smith. Hailing Forrest, Pillow told the cavalryman that information had been received indicating that the Yankees had

\* *Ibid.*, 287.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 287, 293.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 299.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 293.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 299.

<sup>14</sup> John A. Wyeth, *Life of Lieutenant General Nathan Bedford Forrest* (New York, 1899), 64.

reoccupied the ground from which they had been driven on the morning of the 15th. The hard hitting Forrest expressed disbelief. He pointed out that when he had left that portion of the field, earlier in the evening, there had been no signs of Union activity. Pillow countered with the scouts' reports. Reinforced by Forrest's positive opinion, which coincided with his own, Pillow ordered the cavalry leader to have a patrol visit the Forge road sector. Its mission would be to verify or disprove the reported Federal occupation of that area. Simultaneously, Forrest would have "two reliable men" ascertain if Smith's Ford, where the Charlotte road crossed Lick Creek, were passable. Furthermore, these two scouts were to see if the Federals had established a roadblock on the Charlotte road."

Being a man of action and not words, Forrest left immediately. Arousing two of his most trusted men, the colonel gave them the task of reconnoitering the Charlotte road, in company with Dr. Smith. No Union patrols were encountered and the scouts reached Smith's Ford without any difficulty. Crossing the stream, the Southerners found that the water just touched their saddle skirts. Having successfully completed its mission, the scouting party retraced its steps."

In the meantime, Forrest had sent two other trusted scouts—Adam R. Johnson and S. H. Martin—to check on the purported Yankee activity in the Forge road sector. After being gone about an hour, Johnson and Martin returned. They informed Forrest that the only Federals they had observed near the Forge road were "the wounded, and possibly some few stragglers searching for the killed and wounded." The fires seen and reported by the other scouting parties, Johnson and Martin stated, were the smoldering campfires abandoned by the bluecoats on the morning of the 15th. In an effort to keep warm, the wounded had rekindled these fires."

Immediately following the departure of Forrest's scouts, the officers in charge of the commissary and quartermaster departments reported. Major Jones arrived first, closely followed by Major Haynes. Lieutenant Nicholson recalled later that he had been out of the room, and that when he returned:

<sup>15</sup> *OR*, Ser. 1, VII, 287, 295.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 295; Wyeth, *General Nathan Bedford Forrest*, 56-57. The ford where the Charlotte road crossed Lick Creek was located on Dr. Smith's farm. Having been born and reared on the farm, the doctor was thoroughly familiar with the area.

<sup>17</sup> *Source Book*, 1344. Adam R. Johnson became a brigadier general in the Confederate army; Martin was advanced to the rank of lieutenant colonel.

Major Jones . . . was just entering the room. General Pillow at once approached him, and taking him a little [to] one side, explained to him that it had been determined to evacuate the place, and that he must prepare to burn the quartermaster's stores in his hands. Major Jones inquired at what time. General Pillow replied, "About daybreak; about 5:30 o'clock." Major Jones left very soon, and I did not see him in the room afterwards . . ."<sup>18</sup>

Pillow also took Haynes aside. After informing the major of the decision to have the army cut its way through the enemy's lines, Pillow ordered him "to destroy all the commissary stores" and then escape across the river. Before taking leave of the general, Haynes inquired when the orders were to be executed. Glancing at his watch, Pillow replied, "At 5:30 o'clock."<sup>19</sup>

Following the departure of Jones and Haynes, a very excited scout was shown into the room. He announced that he had just returned from the Forge road sector. He reported, "the woods were perfectly alive with troops, and that their camp-fires were burning in every direction." Pillow was still skeptical of any intelligence indicating that the bluecoats had reoccupied their former position astride the Forge road but he sent another scout to report on the situation.<sup>20</sup>

Shortly thereafter, the party sent to check on the Charlotte road returned. The scouts reported the "overflowed valley [of Lick Creek] was not practicable for infantry; that the soft mud was about half-leg deep, and that the water [at the ford] was about saddle-skirt deep to the horses, and that there was a good deal of drift in the way." When questioned by Pillow, Dr. Smith corroborated the cavalymen's statements. Previously, the generals had been advised by their medical authorities that a number of the troops were suffering from frostbite. Consequently, this matter was given some weight when the generals determined their course of action. In view of the cold weather and the depth of the water, the Rebel brass decided that the infantry would be unable to use the ford.<sup>21</sup>

Having abandoned the plan to utilize the Charlotte road to evacuate the Fort Donelson area, the generals endeavored to find another way out of their predicament. General Floyd inquired, "Well, gentlemen, what is best now to be done?" When neither Pillow nor Buckner promptly answered, Floyd repeated his question, addressing the former by name.

<sup>18</sup> OR, Ser. I, VII, 299.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 297-98.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 298, 299.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 297, 295-96; Wyeth, *General Nathan Bedford Forrest*, 64.

Pillow remarked "it was difficult to determine what was best to be done, but . . . [he] was in favor of cutting our way out." Floyd then asked Buckner what he thought ought to be done." Buckner, taking the floor, stated that he:

. . . regarded the position of the army as desperate, and that an attempt to extricate it by another battle, in the suffering and exhausted condition of the troops, was almost hopeless. The troops had been worn down with watching, with labor, with fighting. Many of them were frosted by the intensity of the cold; all of them were suffering and exhausted by their incessant labors. There had been no regular issue of rations for a number of days and scarcely any means of cooking. Their ammunition was nearly expended. We were completely invested by a force fully four times the strength of our own. In their exhausted condition they could not have made a march. An attempt to make a sortie would have been resisted by a superior force of fresh troops, and that attempt would have been the signal for the fall of the water batteries and the presence of the enemy's gunboats sweeping with the fire at close range the positions of our troops, who would thus have been assailed on their front, rear, and right flank at the same instant. The result would have been a virtual massacre of the troops, more disheartening in its effect than a surrender.<sup>22</sup>

Continuing, General Buckner expressed the opinion that it would cost Floyd three-quarters of his command if he sought to cut his way through the enemy's lines. Buckner stated, "he did not think any general had the right to make such a sacrifice of human life."<sup>23</sup>

Even if the Confederates were able to steal a march on the Yankees and slip out of the Fort Donelson perimeter, Buckner believed, they would be followed and cut to pieces.

Forrest assured Buckner that his cavalry would be able to cover the army's retreat. General Floyd, however, sided with Buckner. The commanding general stated that their force was so demoralized as to cause him to agree with General Buckner as to their probable loss in attempting to cut their way out.

Forrest did not view the tactical situation in the same light as Floyd and Buckner did. The cavalryman confidently announced he "would agree to cut . . . [his] way through the enemy's lines at any point the general might designate, and . . . could keep back their cavalry, which General Buckner thought would greatly harass our infantry in retreat."

Either Floyd or Buckner replied, "they (the enemy) would bring their artillery to bear on us."

<sup>22</sup> OR, Ser. I, VII, 297.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 334.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 295, 297.

At this remark, the thoroughly disgusted cavalryman left the room."

With the proposal for the Confederate army to cut its way out disposed of, Pillow offered another suggestion. He stated:

... we could hold our position another day and fight the enemy from our trenches; that by night our steamboats that had taken off the prisoners and our ... [wounded] men would return; that during the next night we could set our troops on the right bank of the river, and that we could make our escape by Clarksville, and thus save the army."

General Buckner expressed strong opposition to Pillow's plan to hold the Fort Donelson perimeter for another 24 hours. The West Pointer observed that his right was already turned, and a portion of the entrenchments was in the Yankees' possession. From the vantage point gained, Buckner believed, the foe would be able to launch a massive attack on his reorganized defense line and capture the water batteries. Buckner said that he was confident the Federals "will attack my lines by light, and I cannot hold them for half an hour."

General Pillow, who was sitting next to Buckner and immediately fronting the fireplace, interrupted, "Why can't you?" He then added, "I think you can hold your position; I think you can, sir."

Buckner hotly retorted, "I know my position; I can only bring to bear against the enemy about 4,000 men, while he can oppose me with any given number."

To reinforce his statement concerning the condition of his command, Buckner observed:

You, gentlemen, know that yesterday morning I considered the Second Kentucky (Hanson's) Regiment as good a regiment as there was in the service; yet such was their condition yesterday afternoon that, when I learned the enemy was in their trenches (which were to our extreme right and detached from the others), before I could rally and form them I had to take at least twenty men by the shoulders and pull them into line as a nucleus for formation."

Continuing, Buckner remarked that he understood the principal reason for the defense of Fort Donelson was to cover the retreat of General Johnston's army from Bowling Green to Nashville. If Johnston had not yet reached Nashville, Buckner observed, the Confederates should attempt to hold Donelson, "even at the risk

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 295.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 288.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 298-300, 334.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 294.

of the destruction of our entire force, as the delay even of a few hours might gain the safety of General Johnston's force."

Floyd interrupted to say, "that General Johnston's army had already reached Nashville."

Buckner again pointed out "it would be wrong to subject the army to virtual massacre when no good could result from the sacrifice." He then expressed the opinion "that the general officers owed it to their men, when further resistance was unavailing, to obtain the best terms of capitulation possible . . ."

General Floyd agreed with Buckner on this point.

Regarding General Buckner's statement as a rejection of his plan to hold the Fort Donelson area for another 24 hours, Pillow stated, "Gentlemen, if we cannot cut our way out nor fight on there is no alternative left us but capitulation, and I am determined that I will never surrender the command nor will I ever surrender myself a prisoner. I will die first."

Floyd chimed in, "Nor will I; I cannot and will not surrender, but I must confess personal reasons control me."

General Buckner replied, "But such considerations should not control a general's actions."

Floyd acknowledged that personal considerations influenced his decision, "but nevertheless such was his determination."

General Pillow spoke up, informing the officers that "he thought there were no two persons in the Confederacy whom the Yankees would prefer to capture than himself and General Floyd." Pillow then asked Floyd's opinion as to the propriety of his accompanying him.

To this inquiry, Floyd replied, "that it was a question for every man to decide for himself."

Next, Pillow addressed the same question to Buckner. The Kentuckian remarked he "could only reply as General Floyd had done, that it was a question for each officer to decide for himself, and that in . . . [his] own case . . . [he] regarded it as . . . [his] duty to remain with . . . [his] men and share their fate, whatever it might be."

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 334.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 288.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 300.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 298, 300.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 334.

While this discussion was taking place, Colonel Forrest re-entered the room. The fiery colonel inquired "if they were going to surrender the command." Buckner announced that they were.

This was more than the cavalryman could stomach. He remarked that he had not come to the fort for the purpose of surrendering his command, and he would not do so if his men would follow him through the investing lines. Forrest stated he "intended to go out if . . . [he] saved but one man."<sup>22</sup>

Overhearing the conversation between Buckner and the colonel, Floyd announced "he would take his chances with Forrest."

Addressing Buckner, Floyd asked him "if he would make the surrender."<sup>23</sup>

Buckner replied in the affirmative, "remarking that a capitulation would be as bitter to . . . [him] as it could be to any one, but . . . [he] regarded it as a necessity of our position, and . . . [he] could not reconcile it with . . . [his] sense of duty to separate . . . [his] fortunes from those of . . . [his] command."<sup>24</sup>

Floyd then said, "General Buckner, I place you in command; will you permit me to draw out my brigade?"

"Yes, provided you do so before the enemy act upon my communication," Buckner remarked.

Floyd, facing Pillow, stated, "General Pillow, I turn over my command."

Pillow exclaimed, "I pass it."

General Buckner said, "I assume it; bring on a bugler, pen, ink, and paper." The general then sat down at the table and began to draft a message, addressed to General Grant.<sup>25</sup>

As Buckner sat down at the table, Forrest turned to General Pillow and asked what he should do. Pillow replied, "Cut your way out." The cavalryman wheeled about and strode out of the room to make arrangements for his brigade's escape.<sup>26</sup>

Immediately following Forrest's departure, Pillow asked, "Gentlemen, is there anything wrong with my leaving?"

Floyd replied, "Every man must judge for himself of that."

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 295.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 294.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 334-35.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 288, 294, 297-98, 300.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 295.

Pillow answered, "Then I shall leave this place." At that, General Pillow left the room.<sup>27</sup>

Encountering Pillow in the passage outside the room, Colonel Burch asked the general, "if there was any possibility of a misunderstanding as to his position."

Pillow remarked that he thought not.

Burch, however, believed it would be wise if the general again discussed the situation with Floyd and Buckner. Pillow re-entered the room.<sup>28</sup> Taking a seat between the two generals, Pillow said, "Gentlemen, in order that we may understand each other, let me state what is my position; I differ with you as to the cost of cutting our way out, but if it were ascertained that it would cost three-fourths of the command, I agree that it would be wrong to sacrifice them for the remaining fourth."

Generals Floyd and Buckner replied, "We understand you, general, and you understand us."<sup>29</sup>

Floyd, Pillow, and the latter officer's staff now left the room. As he was walking out, Major Haynes asked Buckner "if Pillow's order to destroy the commissary stores should be carried out."

The general answered, "Major Haynes, I countermand the order." Buckner now returned to his headquarters, which were located in the Dover Hotel.<sup>30</sup>

While the three generals argued, the soldiers had been kept standing in ranks, shivering with the cold. C. W. Tyler of the 50th Tennessee recalled, "The enemy's camp-fires blazed brightly all around us, and looked cheerful enough as we stamped our feet in the snow. We expected orders to cut our way through them, but instead we were ordered back to the fort . . ."<sup>31</sup>

Most of the units received orders to return to the rifle pits. Colonel Brown's brigade retraced its steps and by daybreak reoccupied the fortifications west of Indian Creek.<sup>32</sup> Not all of the heavy artilleryists or the troops of Colonel John W. Head's brigade returned to Fort Donelson as ordered. Among the individuals who declined to re-

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 300.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 294.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 300.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 298.

<sup>31</sup> *Source Book*, 1372-73.

<sup>32</sup> *OR*, Ser. 1, VII, 349, 354.



turn to the fort and escaped before the surrender were Colonel Head and Captain Bell G. Bidwell."

In their eagerness to escape from the area, the generals apparently forgot all about General Johnson's command. Johnson first began to suspect that something was afoot when Floyd's Virginia regiments moved off toward the landing. When no orders arrived, Johnson began to grow impatient. Finally, Johnson sent an aide to headquarters with the information that his command was formed and ready to move. The staff officer soon returned with a note from General Buckner. Glancing at the message, Johnson found that Buckner was now in command of the garrison. Furthermore, Buckner directed Johnson to hold his division where it was, pending the receipt of additional instructions. Shortly thereafter, one of Buckner's couriers rode up and told Johnson that the general was looking for him. Johnson accordingly proceeded to the Dover Hotel. Here, Johnson first learned of the decision to surrender. At this time, General Buckner was absent, having gone to search for Johnson. One of the staff officers therefore directed Johnson to establish contact with the Union outposts and request them not to fire on his troops when they returned to their camps. Johnson then retraced his steps."

Within a few minutes of his return, one of Buckner's aides rode up and handed Johnson a message signed by the general. Scanning the dispatch, Johnson received formal notification that the command of the troops holding the Fort Donelson perimeter had devolved upon General Buckner "by the order of General Floyd." Buckner also informed Johnson that he had "sent a flag to General Grant and during the correspondence and until further orders," the Confederates should refrain from making any hostile demonstration. To keep the Federals from firing on his men, Buckner requested Johnson to send a flag of truce party through his lines. This party would inform the Yankees, who were holding the right flank of the investment lines, that Buckner was endeavoring to establish con-

"*Ibid.*, 378, 396. The surgeon of the 30th Tennessee had informed Head that if he were taken prisoner in his condition (The colonel was suffering from exposure which gave indications of turning into pneumonia.), it might cost him his life. Head accordingly called upon and explained the situation to General Buckner. The colonel asked the general's advice "as to the propriety" of his making an escape. Buckner informed the colonel that it was a matter which he would have to decide for himself. The general pointed out, however, "that he felt it his duty to remain and share the fate of his men." Head, believing that he could be of no further service to his command or his country if he surrendered, fled Dover by boat.

"*Ibid.*, 362-63.

tact with General Grant. In addition, the truce party would make inquiries regarding the location of Grant's headquarters."

After directing Major W. E. Rogers and another officer to get in touch with the Federals, Johnson issued instructions dismissing his brigade commanders. Three of Johnson's brigades (Baldwin's, Drake's, and Simonton's) were quickly put in motion. By dawn, these three units had reoccupied their former positions." Colonel Adolphus Heiman's brigade, however, did not return to the front. Instead, Heiman's troops milled around in the Dover area."

Having determined to save his mounted brigade, if possible, Forrest returned to his encampment. The field and company officers were hurriedly summoned to the colonel's quarters, and Forrest tersely explained the tactical situation. He informed his subordinates that he had resolved not to surrender. Furthermore, the colonel declared that "he would lead forth all who desired to accompany him." Next, Forrest inquired as to the number who wished to hazard the attempt. The reply was unanimous. After directing the officers to arouse their men, Forrest dismissed them. Since Lieutenant Colonel George Gantt of the 9th Tennessee Cavalry Battalion was not present at the meeting, Forrest sent Major David C. Kelley to acquaint him with the situation."

Within a few minutes, the cavalry encampment was alive with activity. After the men had packed their gear, they were formed and mustered. By 4:00 A.M., the officers of the 3d Tennessee reported that their troopers were ready to march. Forrest, however, was troubled when he failed to hear anything from Colonel Gantt. Major Kelley was again sent to see what had happened to Gantt's battalion. When the major returned with the information that he had been unable to locate Gantt, Forrest passed the word for the cavalymen to move out. Riding out of the ravine where the camp was located, the head of the column turned into the Charlotte road.

Besides his own regiment, the 3d Tennessee, Forrest was accompanied by Captain S. B. Williams' company of the 1st Kentucky Cavalry. Colonel Gantt's battalion and the two other companies of the 1st Kentucky Cavalry which were attached to Forrest's brigade refused to try to escape. All told, about 500 cavalymen followed Forrest as he headed eastward away from Dover. Approximately

"*Ibid.*, 303.

"*Ibid.*

"*Ibid.*, 370.

"*Source Book*, 1346-47.

200 stragglers from other commands trailed along behind the grim horsemen."

A lieutenant and three men had been sent ahead to see if the way was clear. Before the head of the column had proceeded very far, these scouts returned with evil tidings. They told Forrest that a strong Union force had blocked the road. Forrest determined to see if the men were telling the truth. He therefore called for volunteers. When no one responded, he turned over the command to Major Kelley. Next, Forrest told Kelley that he would personally reconnoiter the line of march. If he were killed, Forrest continued, Kelley "would do the best he could, but *must, in the meanwhile, advance along the road upon which they had set out.*" After being joined by his brother, Lieutenant Jeffrey Forrest, the colonel headed up the road.

Reaching the area where the patrol had reported that they had seen the bluecoats, the Forrest brothers reined in their horses. They were unable to see or hear anything which might indicate the presence of a Union roadblock. Advancing cautiously, the two Confederate officers watched as "the supposed Federal battle array was speedily resolved into a line of fencing, formidably staked with short rails into somewhat the resemblance of a line of infantry in the dim light and gray atmosphere of that early hour." Subsequently, Colonel Forrest expressed the opinion that this fence had also been mistaken by the scouts, whose report had carried so much weight in producing the decision to surrender."

After having made this discovery, Colonel Forrest and his brother wheeled their horses to the right and rode up onto Dudley's Hill. Reaching the scene of the previous morning's combat, the two Confederate officers came upon a number of campfires. Clustered around the fires were a number of wounded Union soldiers. In answer to the officers' inquiries, the bluecoats stated that the only men they had seen during the night were scouts. Convinced that the Charlotte road was still open, Forrest and his brother rejoined the column. In view of what he had learned, the colonel felt it was his duty to relay this information to General Buckner. But, upon reflecting on the situation, the colonel decided it was too late; he knew that steps had already been taken to surrender the army."

" *Ibid.*, 1347; OR, Ser. 1, VII, 295, 386. A number of the artillerymen from Porter's battery had unhitched their horses and accompanied Forrest's column in its dash.

" *Source Book*, 1347-48.

" *Ibid.*, 1348.

Shortly thereafter, Forrest's vanguard reached Smith's Ford. At this point, Lick Creek, enlarged by the backwater from the Cumberland, was about 100 yards across. A thin sheet of ice covered the creek near the bank. The stream looked like a formidable barrier. Forrest again called for a volunteer to test the depth of the ford. As no one came forward, the colonel rode his horse into the icy stream. Crossing the creek, Forrest found that the water was "about saddleskirt deep." The rest of the command quickly followed the route pioneered by the colonel. As soon as the last of his troopers had reached the right bank of Lick Creek, Forrest ordered the march resumed. Leaving the Charlotte road, the column filed into the road leading to the Cumberland Iron Works. Major Kelley with one company was detached and left to guard the junction. Kelley was to engage the Union cavalry in case it sought to follow Forrest. At daybreak, Kelley's combat patrol, having seen no Yankees, rejoined Forrest."

With scouts and flankers thrown out, Forrest's command moved at a deliberate pace as it withdrew. To keep from freezing, the troopers were forced to dismount and walk at frequent intervals. Nightfall on the 16th found Forrest's column camped 20 miles from the scene of the disaster. Not a single armed bluecoat had been seen during the course of the retreat. On the 17th, the march was resumed. At 10:00 A.M. on the following day, Forrest's troopers reached Nashville."

It had been Floyd's original intention to accompany Forrest on his dash through the Union lines." But, when Buckner had given him permission to withdraw his command, Floyd changed his mind. He determined to use his own troops to cut his way through the investing lines. The general sent members of his staff to tell Colonels John McCausland and Gabriel C. Wharton and Major William N. Brown of the decision to capitulate. Besides telling these officers that Floyd would not surrender, the aides informed them of the general's determination to fight his way out of the Fort Donelson trap. Earlier (in accordance with General Johnson's instructions) McCausland, Wharton, and Brown had pulled their troops out of the rifle pits. Moving to the Charlotte road, the officers started to deploy their troops on the ground where Pillow had marshaled his attacking column 24 hours before."

" *Ibid.*, 1348-49; OR, Ser. 1, VII, 295-96, 386.

" *Source Book*, 1349; Wyeth, *General Nathan Bedford Forrest*, 72.

" OR, Ser. 1, VII, 270.

" *Ibid.*, 381.

While his troops were taking position astride the Charlotte road, Floyd learned that two steamboats were scheduled to reach Dover before daylight. This information caused him to change his plans. He determined that, in view of the reportedly all but impassable condition of the ford, he would use the boats to ferry as many troops as possible across the river. Having made this decision, Floyd sent an officer to acquaint McCausland, Wharton, and Brown with the change in plans. These officers were directed to march their troops "to the steamboat-landing, to embark on one of the two boats momentarily expected."<sup>1</sup>

At the landing, Major Brown, not having a clear picture of what was expected of his command (the 20th Mississippi), obtained an interview with General Floyd. The general told the major "that we would embark according to the rank of [the] commanding officers." In that case, McCausland's and Wharton's brigades would precede Brown's regiment when they went aboard the transports. Floyd also ordered Brown to put "a strong guard around the steamboat landing, to prohibit stragglers from going aboard." Upon receipt of these instructions, Brown stationed his Mississippians in a semi-circle around the wharf.<sup>2</sup>

It was almost daybreak before the two anxiously awaited steamboats tied up at Dover. The transport *General Anderson*, the larger of the two, had "on board about 400 raw troops." Floyd immediately commandeered the boats and ordered the bewildered recruits ashore. Hardly were the vessels emptied before McCausland's Virginians clambered aboard. The boats then crossed the river, and the troops were disembarked on the opposite side. After all the soldiers had gone ashore, the transports recrossed the Cumberland, preparatory to picking up another load. As soon as the boats touched the bank, Wharton's troops thronged aboard.

Meanwhile, the news of the impending surrender had spread like wildfire through the Confederate camps. Major Brown recalled that many of the soldiers flocked "to the river, almost panic-stricken and frantic, to make good their escape by getting aboard" one of the boats.<sup>3</sup>

Captain John H. Guy of the Goochland Light Artillery described the hurried evacuation:

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, 274, 381.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 381.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 274-75, 302, 381.

We arose from our quiet place of repose [in the Wynn's Ferry road sector] and packed our knapsacks. Upon looking around we failed to see any of our troops. The works had been abandoned. The condition of affairs was not comprehended by us [the personnel of the Goochland Artillery]. We, however, proceeded to the wharf . . . which was nearly two miles distant. The strange situation of our troops was discussed. Upon our arrival at the wharf we found assembled a large number of our soldiers, many of whom were much excited. I then saw a steamer of considerable dimensions landing some of our troops [McCausland's] on . . . [the right bank]. I was ignorant of the cause of the peculiar proceedings going on at the time. I did not understand them; but very soon I fully comprehended the true condition of affairs and gravity of the situation, especially when I saw various kinds of provisions and munitions of war being thrown into the river, and I determined not to be captured, if there was any possible means of escape. The steamer *General Anderson* was just returning for another load of soldiers, and my only hope of escape was on the steamer. I anxiously awaited its return, but, instead of coming near me, as I expected, it stopped about 100 yards above where I was standing. Several thousand soldiers had now congregated at the wharf, and the possibility of my escape seemed very improbable. To force my way through this immense body of men was impossible. This was a predicament, indeed, delay was dangerous. I at once resolved, if possible, to get on board of that steamer. The only chance was for me to wade the surging Cumberland river for some distance. Whether justifiable or not, I had a horrid conception of a prison pen. I proceeded to make my way in the direction of the steamer, keeping as near as possible to the bank of the river, though up to my waist in mud and water, and coming in contact with melting snow and ice most of the time. After no little perseverance I succeeded in accomplishing my object, though before reaching the steamer I was nearly over my shoulders in the water, very cold, and much exhausted. On board of the steamer there happened to be a barrel of whiskey, which had been bayoneted by soldiers. I needed a stimulant, and at once procured some in a tin cup and drank it, then took a position by the engine and warmed and dried myself as thoroughly as possible.

The members of my battery also came off on this steamer, one of whom, Private Perkins, was pulled out of the water into the steamer by a colored man.

The commotion among our soldiers at this time was very great, many of them were frantic with excitement, and attempted to get on board of the steamer, though failed to accomplish their object.<sup>4</sup>

This chaotic scene caused Major Brown to worry lest the boats depart without his command. At this time, there were about 200 officers and men milling around in the space between his regiment and the *General Anderson*. Finally, Brown sent his adjutant to inform Floyd that the Mississippians were ready to embark. Boarding the transport, the adjutant spotted Floyd standing on the deck with drawn saber, shouting, "Come on my brave Virginia boys." Unable to get a satisfactory answer from the general, the adjutant rejoined Brown. Simultaneously, Brown received a report that Floyd and

<sup>4</sup> *Source Book*, 1353-54.

his aides were struggling to keep the stragglers from boarding the *General Anderson*.<sup>87</sup>

From his vantage point on the shore, it seemed to Major Brown that there was room enough on the boat for his soldiers. If Floyd wanted the stragglers cleared out of the way, Brown knew his Mississippians "could have cleared the bank in a moment's time." Before this excitement had abated, General Buckner sent for Major Brown. The general informed the major "that unless the steamboat left the landing immediately he would have a bomb-shell thrown into it." One of Buckner's staff carried a similar message to General Floyd. In justification of this extreme course of action, Buckner pointed out that "we were in danger of being shelled by the gunboats of the enemy, as he had surrendered the place, and the gunboats were or might be at the fort." Furthermore, the general stated that both his and the Confederacy's honor required that, under the terms of the capitulation he had signed with General Grant, everything under his command should be turned over to the Federals.<sup>88</sup>

Upon being dismissed, Brown rejoined his regiment, intent on making one final effort to get his troops aboard the transport. The major, however, was too late. When Buckner's aide told Floyd that the transport would have to leave, near panic ensued. The stragglers, who were milling around on the shore, made a wild rush for the boat. Seeing this, the captain informed Floyd that the boat would be swamped unless he shoved off immediately. Just as the sun started to rise over the horizon, the *General Anderson* pulled away from the wharf. As they watched the two transports start upstream, the Mississippians bitterly observed that not over 50 men were visible on the *General Anderson's* deck. The regiment then "stacked arms in perfect order, without the least intimidation, but full of regret."<sup>89</sup>

In the wake of the decision to capitulate, General Pillow aroused Lieutenant Colonel Jeremy F. Gilmer. After telling the chief engineer of the surrender, Pillow invited Gilmer to join his staff, since it had not been included in the surrender. The colonel readily acceded to the general's proposal.<sup>90</sup>

Shortly after the arrival of the transports, Major Rice hailed Pillow. He informed the general that he had procured a small

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 1354; OR, Ser. 1, VII, 274, 381-82.

<sup>88</sup> OR, Ser. 1, VII, 275, 382.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 275, 381-82.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 264. Colonel Gilmer's quarters were located in one of the upstairs rooms.

flatboat (four feet wide by 12 feet long) from the opposite side of the river. Rice then ferried the general and his staff across the Cumberland. The officers waited on the right bank of the river until the transports shuttled McCausland's brigade across. Along with the troops came the horses belonging to Pillow and his staff. Securing their mounts, the officers started for Clarksville. McCausland's infantry, however, was forced to hike to the same destination over ice- and snow-covered roads.<sup>91</sup>

Pillow reached Clarksville during the late afternoon. Here, he rejoined General Floyd aboard the *General Anderson*. The two transports, with Wharton's brigade and the stragglers from a number of other units aboard, had tied up at Clarksville several hours earlier. Taking the troops with them, the two generals proceeded to Nashville, where they arrived at 7:00 A.M. on the 17th.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 288, 302-303. Pillow was forced to leave his Negro servant and trunk at Dover. Fortunately for the general, Floyd saw that they were sent to Nashville on one of the boats. Having borrowed the horse he used during the Donelson campaign from Brigadier General Charles Clark, Pillow was greatly relieved when the mount was ferried across the river. *Ibid.*, 305-306.

# Unconditional Surrender The Fall of Fort Donelson

By EDWIN C. BEAUS

## PART II

The night of February 15 was a disagreeable one for the men of General C. F. Smith's command on the Union left before Confederate-held Fort Donelson. Bitter cold still tortured troops worn and weary from the day's battle. There was little rest. Smith's troops had captured a key position in their late afternoon attack, and common sense indicated that a counterattack would be launched against them in the morning. Thus the soldiers of Colonel Jacob G. Lauman's brigade and Colonel John McArthur's 12th Illinois spent the long, cold night under arms, alert for signs of Confederate activity at their front.<sup>1</sup>

Dawn broke, and Lauman's tired soldiers were alerted by a bugle call from the Confederate rifle pits on the opposite side of the hollow. But the call was not for the expected attack; rather, it drew attention to a white flag. Lauman ordered his men not to fire, and sent Lieutenant Colonel James C. Parrott to see what the Confederates wanted. Parrott soon reported that Confederate Major George B. Cosby wanted to confer with Lauman. Lauman hastened to the spot and received from Cosby a letter from General Simon Bolivar Buckner, commanding Fort Donelson, to General Ulysses S. Grant. Informed that the letter was a proposal for surrender, Lauman quickly sent it on to General Smith, who in turn carried the letter to Grant.<sup>2</sup>

Walking into Grant's headquarters at Mrs. Crisp's house, Smith handed Buckner's communication to the commanding general. The message drafted by Buckner read:

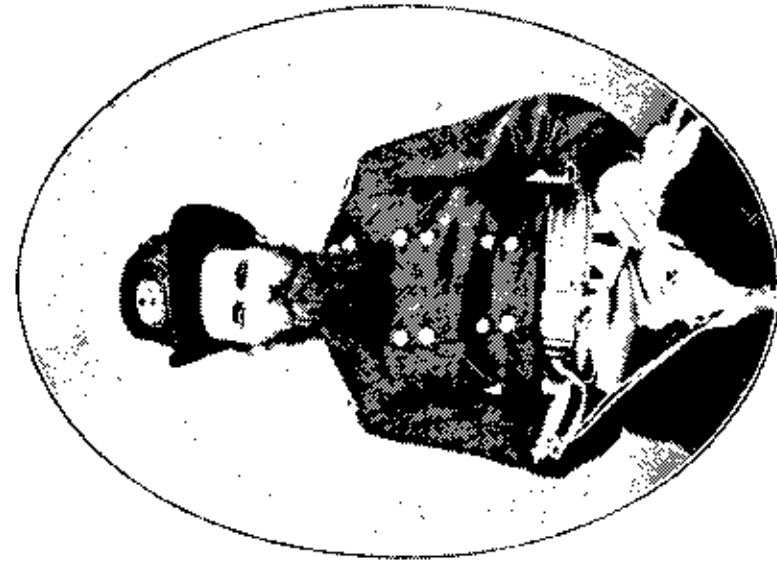
Sir: In consideration of all the circumstances governing the present situation of affairs at this station I propose to the commanding officers of the Federal

<sup>1</sup> *Fort Henry and Fort Donelson Campaigns, February, 1862* (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 1923), 914-15, hereinafter cited as *Source Book*.

<sup>2</sup> *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (89 vols. and index; Washington, 1880-1900), Ser. 1, VII, 160, hereinafter cited as *OR*; *OR*, Ser. 1, LII, Pt. I, 10; *Source Book*, 915.



Brigadier General Simon Bolivar Buckner surrendered the Confederate garrison at Fort Donelson.



From *Photographic History of the Civil War*  
At Fort Donelson Brigadier General Ulysses S. Grant achieved national recognition as a military leader of high caliber.



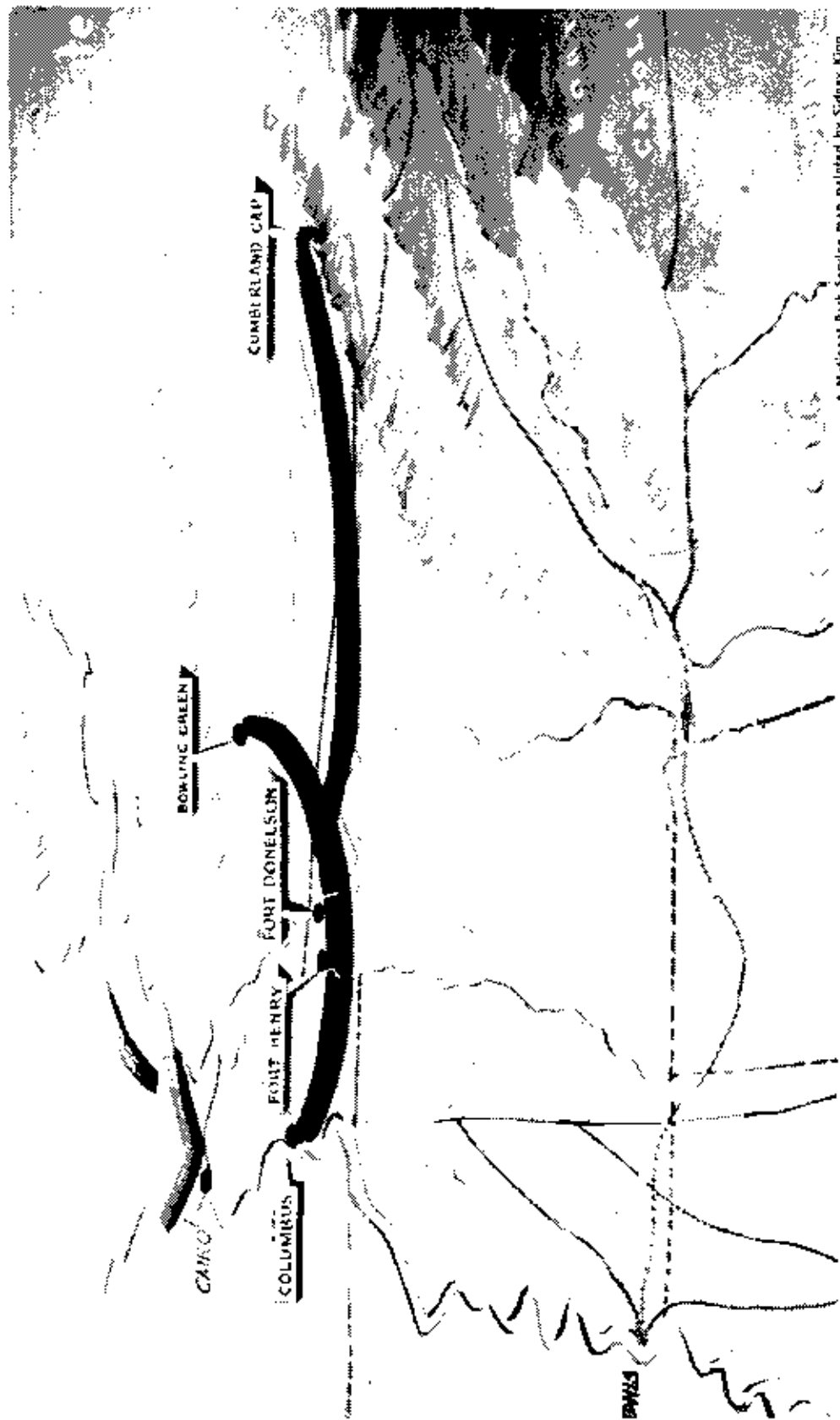
From That Devil Portrait

Lieutenant Colonel Nathan Bedford Forrest escaped from Fort Donelson across icy Lick Creek with about 500 cavalymen and 200 other Confederates.



Dover Hotel in Dover, Tennessee in which Buckner surrendered to Grant.

From Battles and Leaders of the Civil War



A National Park Service map painted by Sidney King

The fall of Fort Donelson in February, 1862 shattered the Confederate defense line in the West. The Confederates abandoned all of Kentucky and most of Middle and West Tennessee. The Union army had taken a giant step toward the accomplishment of their grand strategy—to split the Confederacy from North to South along the Mississippi Valley.

forces the appointment of commissioners to agree upon terms of capitulation of the forces and post under my command, and in that view suggest an armistice until 12 o'clock to-day.\*

Grant replied immediately, acknowledging the receipt of Buckner's letter, and curtly adding, "No terms except unconditional and immediate surrender can be accepted. I propose to move immediately upon your works."<sup>1</sup>

At the time that Grant's answer reached Buckner, only a small proportion of the garrison had returned to the rifle pits. Furthermore, a number of the artillerists had spiked their guns when they had marched into Dover. The gunners assigned to the Water Batteries had not had time to return to their pieces. The supply of ammunition available to the garrison also was getting short. Worse, Buckner believed that he detected signs that a number of the Confederate units were beginning to fall apart and were becoming badly disorganized. For the better part of the past four days, the garrison "had been almost constantly under fire." To make matters more disagreeable, the weather had turned bitterly cold on the evening of the 12th. Thus, from Thursday night until Sunday morning, Buckner reported, the troops "had suffered intensely in a heavy snow-storm and from intense cold, almost without shelter, with insufficient food, and almost without sleep." This condition had led, in Buckner's opinion, to a weakening of the will to fight.<sup>2</sup>

At this time, reports from the front indicated that Smith's division was massed for an assault on the northwestern sector of the perimeter. To oppose this massive attack, the Confederates had less than 1,000 men in position. With the exception of the Charlotte road, every road leading into the Fort Donelson perimeter was blocked by the Federals. After having weighed these conditions, Buckner decided that the only alternative left open to him was to accept Grant's terms.<sup>3</sup> Buckner drafted his reply:

The distribution of the forces under my command incident to an unexpected change of commanders and the overwhelming force under your command compel me, notwithstanding the brilliant success of the Confederate arms yesterday, to accept the ungenerous and unchivalrous terms which you propose.<sup>4</sup>

\* *OR*, Ser. 1, VII, 160.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, 161.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 335.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 161.

When Buckner's message reached his headquarters, Grant had his adjutant, Captain John A. Rawlins, draw up several orders calculated to insure an orderly and speedy disarmament of the Confederates. General C. F. Smith's division was to occupy the portion of the perimeter west of Indian Creek, including Fort Donelson; Brigadier General John A. McClelland's division was to garrison the area east of Indian Creek. In selecting their camps, the two division commanders would be governed by two criteria—security and comfort. Brigadier General Lewis Wallace's division was to return to Fort Henry. Grant wanted the Tennessee River forts held in force.<sup>8</sup>

All the public property falling into the Union hands was to be turned over to Captain Algernon S. Baxter of the quartermaster corps. McClelland and Smith would each detail 100 men from their commands to assist Baxter. Pillaging and the appropriating of public property for private use was strictly forbidden. Grant called upon his officers to see that this order was strictly enforced.<sup>9</sup>

The Confederate prisoners were to be disarmed as rapidly as possible and collected in camps near the Dover landing. Unless General Buckner objected, the officers were to remain with their units. Before being transferred to Cairo, each Rebel would be issued two days' rations. Prisoners were to be allowed to retain their clothing, blankets, and any of their private possessions which they carried on their persons. The commissioned officers would be permitted to retain their side arms.<sup>10</sup>

As soon as Buckner's communication acceding to Grant's terms had passed through the lines, the Confederate soldiers began to display white flags along the works. The news of the surrender reached the fort and the Water Batteries a few minutes after the troops had returned to their positions. One of Buckner's aides galloped up and told Colonel James E. Bailey, who had taken charge of the brigade after Colonel Head's departure, to raise the white flag. Since nobody anticipated a surrender, there was no white flag available. Finally, Ordnance Sergeant R. L. Cobb of the 50th Tennessee procured a white sheet, which was run up.<sup>11</sup>

Since his brigade had spearheaded the assault on the Confederate rifle pits covering the Eddyville road, Colonel Lauman asked

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 625-26.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 626.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *Source Book*, 1373; Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant* (2 vols.; New York, 1885), 1, 250.

General Smith to have the honor of entering the works first. Smith agreed to Lauman's request, specifying that the 2d Iowa have the post of honor when the column marched. After receiving Smith's approval to his proposal, Lauman quickly put his command into motion. With drums beating and colors flapping in the breeze, Lauman's brigade proudly moved off. The Eddyville road served as the line of march. Entering the perimeter, the bluecoats saw the Confederates "drawn up in line, with their arms in great heaps." Colonel Lauman thought the greyclads looked "quite woebegone" as the victors swung rapidly along. When the 2d Iowa reached the fort, they planted their "colors upon the battlements beside the white of the enemy." After all his men had entered the fort, Lauman permitted them to camp. Lauman would be in charge of the fort; his brigade would constitute its garrison.<sup>12</sup>

General Smith's other two brigades, Cook's and McArthur's, followed Lauman's soldiers as they passed through the works. These two units bivouacked on the ridges and in the hollows west of Indian Creek. Details from Cook's and McArthur's commands were assigned the task of guarding the prisoners and captured public property.<sup>13</sup>

While the communications were passing back and forth between the opposing commanders, Union officers on the right were preparing to renew the attack. Lew Wallace had his soldiers under arms at an early hour. Preparatory to assaulting the Rebel rifle pits covering the Wynn's Ferry road, Wallace deployed Colonel John M. Thayer's troops on his right and had his other two brigade commanders, Colonels Charles Cruft and Morgan L. Smith, form their troops along the Wynn's Ferry road ridge, in order to launch a massive assault on the left flank of the Fort Donelson perimeter "about breakfast time." Since his troops were being concentrated within range of the Rebel earthworks, Wallace was surprised when the Southerners failed to open fire. It appeared to the general that perhaps the Confederates' will to fight had been sapped.<sup>14</sup>

General McClelland also had aroused his troops before day-break. In accordance with the instructions which he had received from Grant on the previous evening, McClelland alerted his three

<sup>12</sup> OR, Ser. 1, LII, Pt. 1, 10; OR, Ser. 1, VII, 230; *Source Book*, 914, 916.

<sup>13</sup> OR, Ser. 1, VII, 216; *Source Book*, 916.

<sup>14</sup> OR, Ser. 1, VII, 234, 246; *Source Book*, 995.



brigade commanders to be ready to support Smith's and Wallace's attacks.<sup>16</sup>

Having completed his dispositions, General Wallace awaited the order from Grant which would send his men toward the Confederate entrenchments. The absence of any opposition caused some of Wallace's soldiers to speculate on the possibility that the Southerners had laid down their arms, but the sight of the Confederate flag flying over the fort, faintly visible "in the dawn's early light," appeared to squelch this rumor.<sup>17</sup>

Suddenly Wallace observed two Confederates riding through a gap in the fortifications, one of them carrying a white flag affixed to a pole like a lance. Fearful lest the greyclads utilize the flag of truce to reconnoiter his position, Wallace shouted for Captain Frederick Knefler to find out what the Rebels wanted. Knefler galloped forward and stopped the Southerners before they reached Wallace's picket line. After a few words with them, Knefler rejoined Wallace, and reported:

The bearer of the flag is Major [W. E.] Rogers, of Mississippi. He brings a request from General Buckner that you refrain from further hostilities as he and General Grant have been in correspondence about a surrender, and they have reached an understanding. The major has a dispatch for Grant which he wants permission to deliver in person.<sup>18</sup>

Wallace considered this "great news indeed—news to justify a display of excitement." He did not consider Major Rogers' statement entirely satisfactory, however, and determined to ask the two officers some additional questions. Following a rather stiff introductory ceremony, Wallace inquired of the Confederates, "Do I understand, gentlemen, that the surrender is perfected?"

"I do not know if a formality will be required," the officer who had accompanied Major Rogers replied, "With that exception it is a surrender."

Satisfied with the greyclads' answers, Wallace inquired, "Are you ready to give possession?"

"Yes," the butternuts replied, "The troops are drawn up in their quarters, arms stacked."

Subsequently, Wallace recalled, "At this time I felt a quick thrill, which if the reader pleases, may be set down to a recognition of an

<sup>16</sup> *OR*, Ser. 1, VII, 180, 196.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 209; *Source Book*, 995; Lewis Wallace, "The Capture of Fort Donelson," in *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, I, 428.

<sup>18</sup> *Source Book*, 995-96.

opportunity and an irresistible impulse to get there [into Dover] first."<sup>19</sup>

Wallace lost no time. He ordered one of his staff officers, Lieutenant James R. Ross, to escort Major Rogers to General Grant's headquarters.<sup>20</sup> Ross was also directed to tell Grant that Wallace was moving to take possession of the fortifications. Captain Knefler was instructed to:

... ride to the brigade commanders, and tell them to move the whole line forward, and take possession of persons and property. Tell them to see to it personally that their men are kept in close check—that I want the business done as delicately as possible. Not a word of taunt—no cheering.<sup>21</sup>

The officer who had accompanied Major Rogers looked at Wallace gratefully. Thereupon, Wallace asked him if he knew where General Buckner was quartered. The Confederate replied that he had left the general at the Dover Hotel. After informing the Rebel officer that he and Buckner were personal friends, Wallace suggested a visit to the general's headquarters. Seeing that Major Rogers had not yet departed, the officer borrowed the flag of truce. On doing so, he remarked, "You won't need it." Then, turning to Wallace, he said, "Our people are in a bad humor; but I will be glad to have you go with me."<sup>22</sup>

Guided by the Southern officer, Wallace and his staff passed through the Rebel lines. The Union officers rode into town, accompanied by their guide, and drew rein in front of the Dover Hotel. Wallace dismounted, entered the building, and asked his guide to be good enough to give his name to General Buckner. Passing through a door at the far end of the hall, the Confederate officer disappeared from view. When he returned to the hall, the officer told Wallace "to walk in."<sup>23</sup>

The general found Buckner seated at the head of a table in the dining room. Eight or ten members of Buckner's staff were seated at the sides of the table. Wallace recalled that upon his entry Buckner rose. The Rebel general met him in the center of the room, "grave, dignified, silent; the grip he gave . . . [Wallace], however, was an assurance of welcome quite as good as words."<sup>24</sup>

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *OR*, Ser. 1, VII, 239; *Source Book*, 996.

<sup>21</sup> *Source Book*, 996-97.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 997.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*; Wallace, "The Capture of Fort Donelson," in *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, I, 428.

<sup>24</sup> *Source Book*, 997.

Turning to his comrades seated at the table, Buckner, waving his hand, remarked, "General Wallace, it is not necessary to introduce you to these gentlemen; you are acquainted with them all." The officers rose, came forward one by one, and shook the Union general's hand. Wallace recalled that he had met every one of them two years before when he was General Buckner's guest at the encampment of the Kentucky State Guard in Louisville. Two of Buckner's staff, Major Alexander Casseday and Lieutenant Thomas J. Clay, had won Wallace's esteem at the time of the Louisville encampment. The latter was the last to come forward. As young Clay extended his hand, he turned his face to one side. Wallace remembered that Clay "cried like a child—and I could see nothing unmanly in his tears."<sup>44</sup>

Next, Buckner wanted to know if Wallace had eaten any breakfast. When Wallace remarked that he hadn't, the Confederate said, "I'm afraid you are a little late, but we will see." The general called for his Negro servant. When the slave thrust his head through the door, Buckner told him, "Another breakfast here."

In response to Buckner's request, the servant brought in another place setting. Taking a seat, Wallace prepared to partake of a breakfast of corn bread and coffee. The Confederate officers made no apology for the limited fare, which was the best their kitchen could provide. Nevertheless, Wallace decided in his "own mind that the surrender had not been any too soon."<sup>45</sup>

During and after the meal, the conversation became quite animated. The subject discussed was the war and, more particularly, incidents in the Fort Donelson operations. It amused Wallace to observe how steadfastly the Confederates clung to their belief that the Federals had 50,000 men with more arriving hourly. Since this opinion helped soften the pangs of defeat, Wallace chose not to enlighten them.<sup>46</sup>

Finally, Wallace said something to Buckner about the "old flag." As the Union general recalled, "It was an expression of wonder that his congress gave it up for a new one." With this, Buckner slammed his hand down on the table with a bang! "The old flag!" he shouted, "I followed it when most of your thousands out yonder were in swaddling clothes—in Mexico—on the frontier—and I love it yet."

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 997-98; Wallace, "The Capture of Fort Donelson," in *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, I, 428.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> *Source Book*, 998.

Wallace knew that Buckner's statement was not meant for retort. He therefore held his tongue.

Buckner inquired, "What will Grant do with us?" This question caused Wallace to pause for a moment before answering:

I can't say. But I know General Grant, and I know President Lincoln better than General Grant, and I am free to say that it is not in the nature of either of them to treat you, or these gentlemen, or the soldiers you have surrendered, other than as prisoners of war.<sup>47</sup>

After Wallace had finished, Buckner remarked, "I thought as much." Continuing, the Confederate officer commented, "The only favor I have to ask is that I may not be separated from my friends here." Buckner then inquired if it were proper for him to bring the matter to Grant's attention. Wallace thought that he should.<sup>48</sup>

When General Wallace rode through the Confederate lines, Grant's order regarding the disposition of the troops had not reached the Wynn's Ferry road sector. Wallace accordingly had directed Cruft to march in and take possession of Dover. As soon as Cruft gave the word, the bands struck up a lively air, and the brigade marched off. Passing through the works, Cruft's soldiers quickly occupied the town. A soldier in the 4th Mississippi, Ben H. Bounds, sadly recalled Cruft's troops tramping over the breastworks "with one band coming down one ridge playing Yankee Doodle and another . . . down another ridge playing Dixie and we sitting mum with our arms stacked."<sup>49</sup>

Wallace's other two brigades, M. L. Smith's and Thayer's, did not get to enter the fallen stronghold. Before they could take up the advance, a staff officer galloped up and told the brigade commanders of Grant's decision to have their units proceed to Fort Henry. McClelland's troops accordingly followed Cruft's into the perimeter. Two brigades, Colonels Richard J. Oglesby's and Leonard F. Ross', entered the Confederate works by way of the Wynn's Ferry and Forge roads; Colonel William H. L. Wallace's brigade used the Pinery road as its line of march. In compliance with Grant's directive, McClelland had his troops establish their camps in the hollows and on the ridges south and east of Dover.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 999.

<sup>49</sup> *OR*, Ser. 1, VII, Ben H. Bounds, "Civil War Memoirs," in Unpublished Manuscript (files, Fort Donelson National Military Park).

<sup>50</sup> *OR*, Ser. 1, VII, 180, 196.

In the meantime, the soldiers had started inspecting the town. Dover, they found, contained a number of houses, a few buildings formerly used as stores, a doctor's office, and a dilapidated church. The town, as was to be expected, had suffered considerably during the battle. Nearly every building had been converted into a hospital. Trees had been cut down, fences burned, windows broken, and a number of buildings razed and used for fuel. In the basement of one of the stores, the bluecoats found a Rebel arsenal. There were piles of rifles, old shotguns, many of them ticketed with the owners' names. In another building was located the Confederate commissary department. Here, were hogsheads of sugar, barrels of rice, boxes of abominable soap, and a few barrels of flour."

The Union navy also tried to participate in the final act of the Fort Donelson drama. At daybreak on the 16th, Commander Henry Walke, having heard rumors that the Rebels were about to surrender, ordered Commander Benjamin M. Dove to take the ironclads *Louisville* and *St. Louis* up the river and see if he could induce the foe to surrender to the navy. (Up to this hour, the crew of the *Carondelet* had been unable to complete temporary repairs of the damage suffered in the February 14 attack on the Water Batteries, and the flagship was, as yet, unable to get under way.) Casting off with his two ironclads, Dove observed, on approaching the Water Batteries, that two white flags were flying over the upper one. The gunboats stopped, while Dove transferred to a tug. After a flag of truce had been hoisted, the tug proceeded up the Cumberland. The small boat pulled in to the shore immediately below the Water Batteries. Here, the commander was met by a Confederate major, who tendered his sword to the naval officer. Dove declined the sword, believing that it was proper to "consult with General Grant" first. Taking the major on board, the tug again headed upstream. As soon as the vessel tied up at the upper steamboat landing, Dove proceeded to the Dover Hotel, where Buckner maintained his headquarters."

Reaching the hotel, the naval officer, accompanied by the major, headed for the dining room. Dove observed that General Wallace,

\* Charles C. Coffin, *Four Years of Fighting: A Volume of Personal Observations with the Army and Navy—From the First Battle of Bull Run to the Fall of Richmond* (Boston, 1868), 82.

\*\* Source Book, 999; *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion* (30 vols.; Washington, 1894-1922), Ser. 1, XXII, 589-90, hereinafter cited as *ORN*).

a ranking army officer, was breakfasting with the Confederates. After introducing himself to Buckner, Dove addressed several questions to Wallace regarding, as the general subsequently recalled, the terms of the capitulation. Wallace then explained the situation to the naval officer and told him that he was momentarily expecting General Grant. After some general conversation, Dove left the room and returned to the tug."

Following the naval officer's withdrawal, Wallace told his aide that he was highly suspicious of the navy's designs. The general remarked "that the navy seemed to be abroad very early; they were looking for swords, perhaps. I flattered myself, however, that this time I had been about three-quarters of an hour ahead of him."

About three-quarters of an hour after Dove's exit, General Grant, accompanied by his staff, rode up to the hotel. Despite the brusque tone of his demand for "unconditional surrender," Grant, when he arrived at the hotel, was, to use Buckner's words, "very kind and civil and polite." In the course of their conversation, Buckner told Grant that if he had been in command of the Confederate forces during the investment, the Federals would not have been allowed to make an unopposed approach on Donelson. Grant replied that if Buckner "had been in command . . . [he] should not have tried in the way . . . [he] did." Continuing, Grant added facetiously that Pillow need not have been so anxious to escape. "If I had captured him," Grant said, "I would have turned him loose. I would rather have him in command of you fellows than as a prisoner."

In the meantime, the crew of the *Carondelet* had effected emergency repairs. The vessel, for the first time since its fearful hammering on the 14th, was able to make way. Casting off, the ironclad started up the river, with the gaily decorated transports following. While en route up the river, the *Carondelet* passed the *Louisville* and the *St. Louis*. Hailing the two ironclads, Walke ordered them to accompany him. Shortly thereafter, the convoy drew abreast of the now silent Water Batteries. A little over 36 hours before, the

\*\* *Ibid.*

\*\* *Ibid.*

\*\* Wallace, "The Capture of Fort Donelson," in *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, I, 428; Stanley F. Horn, *The Army of Tennessee* (Indianapolis, 1941), 97; Grant, *Personal Memoirs*, I, 256-57; M. B. Morton, "Gen. Simon Bolivar Buckner Tells Story of Fall of Fort Donelson," in *Nashville Banner*, December 11, 1909.

\*\* *Ibid.*; John R. Porter, "A Blue and Gray Friendship," in *Century Magazine* (April, 1897), 944.

Union gunboats had been pounded unmercifully by these same guns. As the vessels chugged slowly up the swollen river, they "steamed past Fort Donelson, thick with Confederate soldiers,—past the intrenched camp of log-huts, past a school-house on a hill, above which waved the hospital flag,—and on to Dover, the gunboats thundering a national salute the while."<sup>17</sup>

As soon as the gunboats and transports had arrived off Dover, Commander Dove boarded the *Carondelet*. Reporting to Walke, Dove informed his superior that the Rebels had surrendered, but he had been unable to determine under just what conditions. After religious services, the *Carondelet* started for Cairo, where she arrived the next morning. The *St. Louis* and the *Louisville* would remain at Dover until ordered elsewhere, or until a fall in the stage of the river compelled them to return to the Ohio River.<sup>18</sup>

A number of the transports, including Grant's headquarters boat, the steamer *New Uncle Sam*, tied up at the lower landing. One of the first men to go ashore was the noted newspaper correspondent Charles C. Coffin, who described events in detail. He pronounced the Confederate prisoners a careworn, haggard, melancholy looking lot. The Rebel soldiers, he said, all told the same story—they had fought well, but had been outnumbered. Furthermore, they stated that there had been discord and disagreement among the generals. Floyd and Pillow had escaped; Buckner had been left holding the bag. The Mississippians and Texans were especially incensed against Floyd and Pillow for having deserted them. "Floyd always was a d . . . d thief and sneak," said one. Others swore with mighty oaths that "they would shoot Floyd as they would a dog, if they could get a chance."<sup>19</sup>

The uniforms and equipment of the Confederates made a lasting impression on the Yankees. In his wandering, Coffin came upon a squad of soldiers hovering around a fire. Some of the Rebels had wrapped themselves in old patched bed quilts which they had brought with them when they had been mustered into the army. Others had covered themselves with white cotton blankets. Still others wore bright bocking, evidently furnished by some merchant. One had wrapped himself in a faded piece of threadbare carpet. Their weapons were stacked, their accouterments thrown aside,

<sup>17</sup> Coffin, *Four Years of Fighting*, 80; ORN, Ser. 1, XXII, 509; Henry Walke, "The Western Flotilla at Fort Donelson, Island Number Ten, Fort Pillow and Memphis," in *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, I, 437.

<sup>18</sup> ORN, Ser. 1, XXII, 617-19.

<sup>19</sup> Coffin, *Four Years of Fighting*, 80-82.

cartridge boxes, belts, and ammunition trampled in the mud. The soldiers' arms were a heterogeneous lot—single and double barreled shotguns, hunting rifles, flintlock muskets (some of which had been altered to percussion locks), and English manufactured Enfields.

There were all sorts and colors of uniforms represented, Coffin reported. Brown predominated, but Coffin also saw men clad in all shades of grey—sheep-, iron-, blue-, and dirty-grey. The correspondent for the *New York Times* informed his readers that most of the Confederates whom he saw were clad in "citizen's clothes, their only military insignia being black stripes on their pants. Many of the officers had the regular gray uniform, while others wore the army blue, the only difference from the United States style being the great profusion of gold lace."<sup>20</sup>

For protection against the chilling wind, the soldiers used a conglomeration of overcoats, blankets, quilts, buffalo robes, and pieces of carpeting of all colors and figures. Each of the Rebels had a pack slung over his shoulder. Coffin recalled, "Judging by their garments, one would have thought that the last scraping, the odds and ends of humanity and of dry goods, had been brought home together."<sup>21</sup>

Coffin also visited the upper landing near the Dover Hotel, where the Confederate stores were piled. Here, there were sacks of corn, tierces of rice, sides of bacon, barrels of flour, hogsheads of sugar—enough rations to last for several days. At the time of Coffin's visit, the ironclads were lying off the landing, and a portion of McClelland's division was posted on Robinson's and Dudley's hills; the stars and stripes and regimental banners flapping in the breeze, and the bands gaily playing patriotic airs. In the distance, Battery B, 1st Illinois Light Artillery could be heard firing a national salute.<sup>22</sup>

Milling around the landing were a large number of Confederates, "evidently the rabble, or the debris of the army," belonging to various regiments. Some of these men were sullen, some indifferent, some gave the appearance of feeling a sense of relief, mingled with an apprehension for the future. Mingling among the Rebels were a number of Union soldiers. Despite their exuberance, the blueclads manifested no disposition to add to the unhappiness of the vanquished.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 81, 83; *Source Book*, 783.

<sup>21</sup> Coffin, *Four Years of Fighting*, 83.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 81; OR, Ser. 1, VII, 180.

<sup>23</sup> Coffin, *Four Years of Fighting*, 81-82.

Before the day was over, the Union soldiers began to get out of hand. Notwithstanding the precautions taken in accordance with Grant's orders, many of the men commenced plundering. Both private and public property fell prey. Coffin reported:

Later in the day we saw soldiers luxuriating like children in the hogsheads of sugar. Many a one filled his canteen with New Orleans molasses and his pockets with damp brown sugar. Looking into a store we found a squad of soldiers taking things of no earthly use. One had a looking-glass under his arm, one a paper of files, another several brass candlesticks, one a package of bonnets."

In an effort to keep the miscreants from making off with their ill-gotten gains, Grant ordered all the steamboats searched before they would be permitted to leave Dover. Guards were also stationed on the vessels to keep the men from carrying their booty aboard. Grant, however, directed his officers to collect from the Confederates the blankets which McClelland's troops had been forced to abandon on the morning of the 15th, when they had been driven from their camps. Since these blankets were grey with the letters "U. S." in the center, they could be easily identified."

By late afternoon, the Union officers had made an inventory of the captured war matériel, and a rough estimate of the number of prisoners that had fallen into their hands. As soon as these figures were in his hands, Grant sent a message to Major General Henry W. Halleck:

We have taken Fort Donelson and from 12,000 to 15,000 prisoners, including Generals Buckner and Bushrod Johnson; also about 20,000 stand of arms, 48 pieces of artillery, 17 heavy guns, from 2,000 to 4,000 horses, and large quantities of commissary stores."

It seems that Grant overstated the number of cannons captured by his troops. There were 13 pieces of heavy ordnance emplaced in the Water Batteries; and one 8-inch siege howitzer was mounted in the fort. This indicates that, instead of capturing "17 heavy guns," the Federals took 14. Furthermore, the eight Confederate field artillery batteries at Fort Donelson were equipped with 41 guns. In addition, there were the two 9-pounders mounted in the fort. It appears that Grant had likewise overstated the number of field pieces captured by his forces. Instead of the 48 light guns claimed, the Yankees had actually taken 43.

"Ibid.; Source Book, 781; OR, Ser. 2, III, 271.

"OR, Ser. 2, III, 271.

"OR, Ser. 1, VII, 625.

The cold snap which gripped Middle and West Tennessee continued through the 16th. During the day, General Buckner observed that his men were suffering from the elements. Thousands of the Confederate soldiers were kept standing throughout the day in the mud without food or fires. Whenever the Rebel officers attempted to muster their men, they were arrested by some of the Union guards. Buckner therefore decided to ask General Grant "to make some disposition for the comfort" of the Confederate soldiers, and accordingly visited Grant on the *New Uncle Sam*, and asked that the Confederate prisoners be allowed to board the available steamboats.

Grant replied, "I am newly arrived here; my staff is not completely organized, and I find difficulty in doing this."

"Gen. Grant," Buckner answered, "my staff is perfectly organized, and I place them at your disposal for this purpose."

After hesitating a moment, Grant promised to issue an order directing his troops to obey any order which Buckner might give in respect to the comfort and movements of the Rebel prisoners."

Correspondent Coffin witnessed this meeting between Grant and Buckner. He recalled that Buckner sat on one side of the table and Grant on the other. Coffin described the Confederate general as:

... in the prime of life, although his hair had turned iron gray. He was of medium height, having a low forehead and thin cheeks, wore a moustache and meagre whiskers. He had on a light-blue kersey overcoat and a checked neckcloth. He was smoking a cigar, and talking in a low, quiet tone. He evidently felt that he was in a humiliating position, but his deportment was such as to command respect when contrasted with the course of Floyd and Pillow."

When Buckner rose to leave, Grant followed him. Outside the cabin, Grant stopped and remarked, "Buckner, you are, I know, separated from your people, and perhaps you need funds; my purse is at your disposal."

After declining Grant's offer, Buckner thanked him. Nevertheless, it was a clear indication that the Union general remembered Buckner's kindness to him" in the summer of 1854, when the future Union general reached New York from the West Coast in an almost destitute condition. His financial affairs had reached

"Morton, "Gen. Simon Bolivar Buckner Tells Story of Fall of Fort Donelson," in *Nashville Banner*, December 11, 1909.

"Coffin, *Four Years of Fighting*, 83.

"Morton, "Gen. Simon Bolivar Buckner Tells Story of Fall of Fort Donelson," in *Nashville Banner*, December 11, 1909.

a crisis when his hotel refused him further credit for board and room. In this emergency, Grant appealed to his old friend, Captain Buckner, whom he had known at West Point and in Mexico. Buckner restored Grant's credit at the hotel, had his baggage returned, and tided him over until he was able to collect some money from a creditor. Grant then went home to Missouri."

Returning to his quarters, Buckner encountered Captain George Dodge of the Union cavalry with two Confederate colonels. The two Rebel officers had been placed under arrest by a Union officer and were being escorted to Grant's headquarters boat. One of the colonels stated that he had been personally paroled by General Smith. Addressing a letter of protest to Grant, Buckner observed, "There seems to be no concert of action between the different departments of your army in reference to these prisoners." Buckner requested in writing that either the Union sentries be permitted to respect his passes, or that Grant appoint a provost marshal vested with the necessary authority." Grant acquiesced, and ordered Union guards to honor all passes signed by General Buckner."

About dusk, Coffin again went ashore. As he rode about the area, the Confederate officers were mustering their troops preparatory to embarking them upon the steamers. Standing on Robinson's Hill, Coffin was able to get a good view of the entire proceedings. The reporter recalled:

Hogarth never saw such a sight: Shakespeare, in his conception of Falstaff's tattered demerits, could not have imagined the like;—not that they were deficient in intellect, or wanting in courage, for among them were noble men, brave fellows, who shed tears when they found they were prisoners of war, and who swore with round oaths that they would shoot Floyd as they would a dog, if they could get a chance, but that for grotesque appearance they were never equalled, except by the London bagmen and chiffoniers of Paris."

Boarding the transports, the enlisted men were quartered on the lower deck; the officers were given the freedom of the boat. The saloons, cabins, berths, and staterooms were filled with the sick and wounded from both armies.

The number of Confederates captured at Fort Donelson has never been determined with precision. Grant, on the day of the surrender, reported the number of prisoners bagged by the Federals

" Horn, *The Army of Tennessee*, 97.

" OR, Ser. 2, III, 267-68.

" *Ibid.*, 268.

" Coffin, *Four Years of Fighting*, 82-83.

as "from 12,000 to 15,000."<sup>44</sup> Colonel Adam Badeau, in his *The Military History of U. S. Grant*, states that the number of Rebels captured was 14,623." According to a report made by Major Thomas M. Johnston of the 1st Mississippi and found among his papers in Mississippi in 1864, the number "engaged" was 15,246; the number surrendered was 11,738." General Floyd made no estimate of the strength of the Confederate force engaged, nor how many were captured." General Pillow placed the number of the defenders at 13,000." General Buckner, in a report filed after his exchange in August, wrote, "The aggregate of the army, [was] never greater than 12,000, . . . [and was] reduced to less than 9,000 men after the departure of General Floyd's brigade."<sup>45</sup> An estimate appearing in the Nashville *Patriot* soon after the surrender placed the number of Confederates engaged at 13,829." All told, the Confederate army charged with the defense of the Fort Donelson area probably totaled 15,500 effectives. This figure did not take into account the men in hospitals, those assigned to supernumerary details, and the 400 recruits who reached Dover early on the morning of the 16th. When these are added to the garrison, it probably exceeded 18,000.

Whatever the number, the task of taking care of the thousands of prisoners proved to be a difficult one. Grant, on the 17th, informed the Union commander at Cairo, Brigadier General George W. Cullum, that he was sending the prisoners down the Cumberland River as rapidly as possible, and that the last of the Confederates should be en route to Cairo by the next day. Grant informed Cullum that he would be "truly glad" to get rid of them. He was of the opinion that they were easier captured than taken care of, and expressed the fear that the prisoners would "prove an elephant." In the future, Grant wrote, he thought it would be best if the government adopted a policy of paroling any captured Confederate. In view of his difficulties with the prisoners, Grant observed, he had already begun to pity Cullum "the moment the first cargo started."<sup>46</sup>

When Grant's immediate superior, Major General Henry W.

<sup>44</sup> OR, Ser. 1, VII, 825.

<sup>45</sup> Manning F. Force, *From Fort Henry to Corinth* (New York, 1881), 61.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> OR, Ser. 1, VII, 267-75.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 263.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 305.

<sup>50</sup> Force, *From Fort Henry to Corinth*, 61.

<sup>51</sup> OR, Ser. 2, III, 271-72.

Halleck, learned that the victor of Fort Donelson was sending thousands of prisoners to Cairo, he ordered Cullum to send 3,000 to Springfield, Illinois, 3,000 to Indianapolis, Indiana, and the remainder to Chicago. The officers, on giving their paroles in writing, would be transferred to Columbus, Ohio." But Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton did not see the situation in the same light as Halleck did. Through General-in-Chief George B. McClellan, Stanton issued instructions countermanding Halleck's orders regarding the granting of paroles to the Confederate officers. In addition, Stanton directed that "no arrangements either by equivalents or otherwise will be made for the exchange of the rebel generals Johnson, Buckner, Pillow and Tilghman, nor for that of prisoners who had served in . . . [the] Regular Army, without special orders from" Washington."

When Governor Richard Yates of Illinois learned that Halleck planned to send 3,000 prisoners to Springfield, he was aghast. Telegraphing Halleck, the governor warned, "We think it unsafe to send prisoners to Springfield, Ill.; there are so many secessionists at that place." But Halleck received encouraging dispatches from Chicago and Indianapolis. Adjutant General Allen C. Fuller of Illinois informed Halleck that the state had a lease on Camp Douglas which did not expire until May 1. Fuller was confident that 7,000 prisoners could be quartered there." Assistant Quartermaster James A. Ekin notified "Old Brains" that he was seeing that barracks for 3,000 prisoners of war were prepared at Indianapolis." In view of these developments, Halleck again contacted Cullum on the 19th in regard to the disposition of the prisoners. In accordance with Governor Yates' fears, Cullum was not to send any of the Confederates to Springfield. Three thousand were to go to Indianapolis and seven thousand to Chicago; the remainder would probably be sent to Columbus, Ohio. Before leaving Cairo, the officers would be separated from the enlisted men and sent to St. Louis under a strong guard."

By the evening of the 18th, 11,000 prisoners had reached Cairo. General Cullum had forwarded over 9,000 of these to St. Louis, before Halleck's first message arrived regarding the disposal of the

" *Ibid.*, 278.

" *Ibid.*, 275-76.

" *Ibid.*, 277.

" *Ibid.*, 277-78.

" *Ibid.*, 278.

" *Ibid.*, 281.

Confederates. Following the receipt of Halleck's telegram, Cullum began to send the prisoners to Camp Douglas. On the night of the 19th, 1,000 Confederates left Cairo by rail for Chicago. A second 500-man contingent started for Chicago the next morning. Since there was a shortage of guards and steamboats, Cullum, despite Halleck's orders to the contrary, was compelled to send the officers and men off together. He gave instructions, however, for the guards to keep them separated. Cullum was also deeply disturbed to learn that the Confederate officers had their side arms when they reached Cairo. Apparently, the officers in charge of the prisoners had not followed Grant's instructions. Upon being questioned, the Rebels mistakenly stated that Grant had agreed to let them retain their pistols and swords. Cullum had the officers disarmed and their side arms shipped to Camp Douglas."

The last big shipment of prisoners, about 2,000 strong, left Dover on the morning of the 19th. General Buckner and his staff departed the following day." When these soldiers reached Cairo, General Cullum sent about 2,000 of them to Indianapolis; the rest went to Chicago. Since there was a shortage of passenger cars, many of the Confederates had to make the journey in unheated freight cars."

When the transports with the 9,000 prisoners aboard reached St. Louis, the officers and men parted company. Pending the receipt of instructions from Washington, the Confederate officers were quartered on a steamboat which was anchored in the middle of the Mississippi River. The enlisted men were transferred either to Camp Douglas or to camps in Indiana. Altogether, about 7,000 of the Fort Donelson Confederates were sent to Camp Douglas, while over 4,210 were quartered at Camp Morton, Indiana. Smaller numbers of enlisted men were held at Alton and Camp Butler, Illinois, and Terre Haute and Lafayette, Indiana. The junior Confederate officers were sent to Camp Chase, Ohio." Generals Buckner and Tilghman and the field officers were confined at Fort Warren, Massachusetts."

" *Ibid.*, 277, 278, 282. The Transports *White Cloud*, *Empress*, *Gladiator*, and *D. A. January* were used to ferry the first contingent of from 4,000 to 5,000 Rebels to St. Louis.

" *Ibid.*, 283; *Source Book*, 1025-27.

" *OR*, Ser. 2, III, 291.

" *Ibid.*, 281-92, 311, 315, 325.

" *Ibid.*, 326; Morton, "Gen. Simon Bolivar Buckner Tells Story of Fall of Fort Donelson," in *Nashville Banner*, December 11, 1909. Camp Butler was at Spring-

Besides the prisoners sent to northern camps, there were a number of Confederate sick and wounded confined in the military hospitals in the Dover area, who also fell into the Yankees' hands. Colonel Charles Whittlesey estimated that altogether the Federals, counting the patients, had captured about 13,000 Rebels.<sup>77</sup>

An undetermined number of soldiers escaped from Dover, in addition to those who had accompanied Forrest. General Floyd reported that the boats which ferried his command across and up the Cumberland River carried about as many stragglers from other organizations. Floyd stated that when he reached Murfreesboro on the 21st, his four Virginia regiments numbered 986 officers and men.<sup>78</sup> General Pillow stated on March 14 that several thousand infantry, by hook or crook, had escaped from the Fort Donelson area. Many of these men had already reported to Pillow at Decatur, Alabama; the rest were under orders to rendezvous with their comrades there.<sup>79</sup>

Even after the surrender, the Confederates continued to slip through the Union lines, much to Grant's consternation. On the 17th, he informed General McClelland that "during the night a large number of captured animals have been run off and many prisoners escaped." Since a large proportion of the cavalry was attached to McClelland's division, Grant wanted him to organize a number of roving patrols to prevent any further traffic of this sort. McClelland would also send out a mounted detachment in an effort to apprehend the escapees. Evidently, McClelland's patrols were not very alert, because a very important prisoner soon succeeded in giving the Federals the slip.<sup>80</sup>

By the afternoon of the 18th, all of General Johnson's troops had been sent down the river. The general accordingly concluded that it would be very unlikely that he would be of any further service to his men. Furthermore, Johnson had neither been enrolled nor had he given his parole not to try to escape. About sunset, the general, accompanied by another officer, went for a stroll. Scaling the hill where Heiman's brigade had formerly been posted, the two officers, seeing no bluecoated sentries, kept on going. Passing beyond the Union encampments, Johnson and his companion suc-

Beld, Illinois; Camp Morton was at Indianapolis; and Camp Chase was at Columbus, Ohio.

<sup>77</sup> *Force, From Fort Henry to Corinth*, 82.

<sup>78</sup> *OR*, Ser. 1, VII, 275.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 290.

<sup>80</sup> *OR*, Ser. 2, III, 272.

ceeded in getting away.<sup>81</sup>

General Floyd placed the number of killed and wounded suffered by the Confederates at Fort Donelson at 1,500.<sup>82</sup> Pillow estimated the Rebel casualties at 2,000. He reported that the Southerners had evacuated 1,134 wounded from Dover before the surrender. In addition, he subsequently learned that about 400 wounded greyclads had fallen into the Yankees' hands upon the surrender and were confined in the hospital at Paducah.<sup>83</sup> At Fort Donelson, the Federal officers reported they had 500 killed, 2,108 wounded, and 224 missing—an aggregate of 2,832 casualties.<sup>84</sup> The Union navy, which had supported the army's attack, had lost 9 killed and 49 wounded.

Grant's dispatch reporting the fall of Fort Donelson reached Halleck's St. Louis headquarters about noon on the 17th. At 1:00 p.m., the jubilant Halleck wired General-in-Chief McClellan, "Make [Don C.] Buell, [Ulysses S.] Grant, and [John] Pope major-generals of volunteers and give me command in the West. I ask this in return for Forts Henry and Donelson."<sup>85</sup> It appears that the ambitious armchair general, Halleck, was trying to capitalize on his able subordinate's success. Furthermore, by bracketing Grant's name with Buell's and Pope's, Halleck apparently was trying to put up a smoke screen, to make the Washington authorities believe that other Union generals had shared equally in the victory.

Two days later, on the 19th, Halleck wired Major General David Hunter (the commander of the Department of Kansas) his congratulations. Halleck informed Hunter:

To you more than to any other man out of this department are we indebted for our success at Fort Donelson. In my strait for troops to re-enforce General Grant I appealed to you. You responded nobly and generously, placing your forces at my disposition. This enabled us to win the victory.<sup>86</sup>

At the same time, Halleck wired Washington:

Brig. Gen. Charles F. Smith, by his coolness and bravery at Fort Donelson, when the battle was against us, turned the tide and carried the enemy's outworks. Make him a major-general. You can't get a better one. Honor him for this victory and the whole country will applaud.<sup>87</sup>

<sup>81</sup> *OR*, Ser. 1, VII, 384-85.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 270.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 291.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 169.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 628.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 636.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 637.



Except for a general order published at St. Louis on the 19th, Halleck took no further notice of Grant's role in the Forts Henry and Donelson operations. In this document, Halleck formally congratulated "Flag Officer [Andrew H.] Foote and General [Ulysses S.] Grant, and the brave officers and men under their commands, on the recent brilliant victories on the Tennessee and Cumberland."<sup>44</sup>

On the 20th Halleck, seeking to capitalize on the successes scored by his subordinate, wired McClellan in urgent terms, "I must have command of the armies in the West. Hesitation and delay are losing us the golden opportunity. Lay this before the President and Secretary of War. May I assume the command?"<sup>45</sup>

Following the receipt in Washington of the news of the fall of Fort Donelson, President Abraham Lincoln nominated Grant a major general of volunteers as of February 16; the Senate immediately confirmed the appointment. Subsequently, Buell, McClelland, Pope, C. F. Smith, and Lew Wallace were also promoted to major general, to rank from March 21.

General Halleck, on March 11, was granted his fondest wish: a new command, the Department of the Mississippi, was constituted and Halleck was placed in charge. The new department included the departments formerly commanded by Halleck and Hunter, and the portion of Buell's which lay west of a north-south line drawn through Knoxville, Tennessee.<sup>46</sup>

By their capture of Fort Henry, the Federals had driven a wedge into the Confederate defense line guarding the heartland of the Confederacy. The left flank of this line had been anchored on Columbus, Kentucky, and the right on Cumberland Gap, and with the loss of Fort Donelson, this line was hopelessly shattered. To make matters worse, the Confederates had lost a powerful field army and an immense amount of war matériel.

The fruits of the victory at Fort Donelson were quickly apparent. As early as February 8, two days after the fall of Fort Henry and in the face of the threat to Fort Donelson, General Albert Sidney Johnston had notified Secretary of War Judah P. Benjamin that he was giving up his position at Bowling Green, Kentucky, and was retiring on Nashville. When Fort Donelson fell, Nashville was uncovered, and it was expected that Federal gunboats would ascend

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 638-39.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 641.

<sup>46</sup> *OR*, Ser. 1, X, Pt. II, 28-29.

the Cumberland, compelling the Confederates to give up Nashville, a vital industrial and transportation complex. On February 17 and 18, Johnston evacuated Nashville and moved the main body of Major General William J. Hardee's Central Army of Kentucky to Murfreesboro. The Confederate rear guard left Nashville on the night of the 23rd, and the vanguard of General Buell's Army of the Ohio appeared the next morning on the right bank of the Cumberland, opposite the city.

At the same time, Columbus, the Confederate bastion on the Mississippi River, was rendered untenable. Major General Leonidas Polk (the commander of the First Division, Western Department) was forced to order the evacuation of "The Gibraltar of the West," which was carried out on the night of March 2. The Union troops occupied Columbus the next day. Thus, by the capture of Fort Donelson and the destruction of the defending army, the Federals at one fell swoop had forced the Confederates to give up southern Kentucky, and virtually all of Middle and West Tennessee. Falling back, the Confederates began to concentrate their troops for a new stand on Corinth in northeast Mississippi.

With the fall of Fort Donelson, the entire picture of the "War in the West" was changed almost overnight. Grant had seized the initiative and, despite temporary setbacks, he was never to lose it. The deep wedge driven into the South by the fall of Fort Donelson would eventually split the Confederacy. Just over the horizon lay Shiloh, Corinth, Memphis and, 18 months later, Vicksburg. The South was to pay for the disaster at Dover with three more years of bitter warfare, but the ultimate price was total defeat.