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Transcript



[Episode 3: Forever Free](#) from PBS (Public Broadcasting Service, 1990) 75:54.

transcript

A FLORENTINE FILMS PRODUCTION

NARRATOR Private Edwin Tennyson killed in action at Malvern Hill, July 1st, 1862.

[sil.]

David McCullough During the Civil War, photographers followed the armies everywhere to make proud portraits for the boys to send home and to capture as much of the action as cumbersome equipment, and slow shutter speeds allowed. Near the Battle of Fair Oaks, Virginia, Captain George

Armstrong Custer paused to have his picture taken with J.B. Washington, a close friend and classmate from West Point, and now a Confederate lieutenant who at just that morning been captured by Federal pickets.

THE CIVIL WAR EPISODE THREE

David McCullough As 1862 dragged on, the character of the war was changing, and much of the country was changing with it. By 1862, more than a million farm workers had enlisted in the Union Army, and travellers in the Midwest saw more women at work in the fields than men.

[sil.]

David McCullough The year which had begun so promisingly for the North had now gone awry. U.S. Grant's triumphs at Donelson and Shiloh were being overshadowed by disasters in the East. In Virginia, Union General George McClellan's army sat outside Richmond. Its commander in possession of vastly greater forces, but without the will to fight. Meanwhile, the Confederacy was beginning to appreciate the brilliance of a new commander, Robert E. Lee, who would soon establish a reputation as one of the greatest military leaders of all time.

[sil.]

David McCullough And there was still more trouble for the Union. At Blackburn, England, the public meeting declared that it was impossible for the North to vanquish the South, and called for a negotiated settlement of the war. With Europe poised to recognize the Confederacy, the unthinkable looked increasingly likely. The Union was going to lose the war. "We must change our tactics or lose the game," Abraham Lincoln wrote in 1862. To Lincoln, it was clear now that it was no longer possible to restore the old Union. A new one had to be embraced. By summer, he knew what tactic was needed to win the war, emancipation, but doubted whether he would ever have the political or military opportunity to use it.

[sil.]

David McCullough "I find it hard to maintain my lively faith in the triumph of the Nation and the Law," New York lawyer George Templeton Strong confided to his diary. These are the darkest days we have seen since Bull Run. What no one knew was that the year would soon see the bloodiest day of the war and then, the brightest.

BARBARA FIELDS Historian

Barbara Fields It could have been a very ugly, filthy war with no redeeming characteristics at all. And it was the battle for emancipation and the people who pushed it forward, the slaves, the free Black people, the abolitionists, and a lot of ordinary citizens. It was they who ennobled what otherwise would have been meaningless carnage into something higher.

1862 Forever Free

David McCullough Outside Richmond, George McClellan continued to call anxiously for more troops, though his 110,000 men force already greatly outnumbered Joseph Johnston's army.

Meanwhile, west of the Blue Ridge in the Shenandoah Valley, General Thomas J. Jackson was keeping three Federal armies busy.

Stonewall

General T.J. Jackson Always mystify, mislead and surprise the enemy; and when you strike and overcome him, never let up in the pursuit. Never fight against heavy odds if you hurl your force on only a part of your enemy and crush it. A small army may thus destroy a large one, and repeated victory will make it invincible. General T.J. Jackson.

SHELBY FOOTE Writer

Shelby Foote He was, he was a, a true eccentric. He believed that ah, if he had pepper in his food it would make his left leg ache. Ah, he would never mail a letter that would be in transit on a Sunday. Ah, he was a strict ah, observer of the Sabbath, and yet so many of his battles would fall on Sundays, that the soldiers began to believe that he would fight on Sunday ah, because the Lord would be even more with him.

David McCullough Jackson was a pious, blue-eyed killer, utterly untroubled by the likelihood of death. "It was a man's entire duty," he said, "to pray and fight."

Sam Wiseman He would have a man shot at the drop of a hat, and he had drop it himself. Sam Wiseman.

Shelby Foote He had a strange quality of overlooking suffering. It was ah, during one of the battles he had a young courier, and Jackson looked around for him; he wasn't there, and he said, "Where is Lieutenant so and so?" And they said, "Ah, well, he was killed, General." Jackson said, "Very commendable, very commendable." And they put him out of his mind.

"All old Jackson gave us was a musket, a hundred rounds and a gum blanket, and he drove us like hell."

David McCullough His men did not love him. He was too grim, too remote and he demanded too much. Some thought him mad. He believed that only by keeping one hand in the air could he stop himself from going out of balance, and he sucked constantly on lemons even in the midst of battle. Others worried that his religious fervor would cloud his judgment. "His command," Jackson said, "was an army of the living God as well as of its country." But his men were willing to endure the 36 mile-a-day marches he demanded, because he brought them victories. It was Jackson's duty in the Shenandoah to unsettle the Union and keep Washington from reinforcing McClellan. Operating in the midst of three Federal armies, each with more men than his own force of 17,000, Jackson lashed out at one army and then another. Armed with a detailed map that stretched eight-and-a-half feet, he surprised them every time at Winchester, Front Royal, Cross Keys, Port Republic and a half dozen other places. After routing Nathaniel Banks's army at the Battle of Winchester, Jackson chased it all the way to the Potomac. "Stop, men!" Banks shouted to his retreating troops, "Don't you love your country?" "Yes, by God," said one, "and I am trying to get back to it just as fast as I can."

[sil.]

David McCullough Jackson's valley campaign was a triumph. In just over a month, his men marched almost 400 miles, inflicted 7,000 casualties, seized huge quantities of badly needed supplies, and kept almost 40,000 Federal troops off the peninsula.

He who does not see the hand of God in this is blind, sir, blind.

[sil.]

William E. Gladstone There is no doubt that Jefferson Davis and other leaders of the South have made an army. They are making it appear, a navy; and they have made what is more than either, they have made a nation. We may anticipate with certainty the success of the Southern States. William E. Gladstone.

David McCullough Confederate Gospel held that Britain and France could not survive without Southern cotton. Before long, one or both would surely intervene on behalf of the Confederacy to end the Union blockade. To put more pressure on Europe, the Confederates cut cotton production 90 percent. Two-and-a-half million bales were burned or left to rot on Confederate wharves to keep it out of English hands. Now, in addition to directing a war at home, Lincoln had to find a way to keep Europe from coming in on the side of the South. And increasingly in the North, there was pressure for emancipation, and it came from unlikely people in unlikely places.

The Beast

David McCullough On May 1st, 1862, Lincoln named General Benjamin F. Butler military governor of occupied New Orleans. Butler went right to work. He hanged the man suspected of having desecrated the American flag. He closed the secessionist newspaper, confiscated the property of citizens who refused to swear allegiance to the Union, and was given the scornful nickname, "Spoons" for allegedly pocketing silverware. New Orleans women routinely insulted his troops. When a woman in the French quarter leaned from a window to dump her chamber pot on the head of Admiral Farragut, Butler issued General Order # 28.

General Benjamin Butler As the officers and soldiers of the United States have been subject to repeated insults from the women calling themselves ladies of New Orleans, it is ordered that hereafter, when any female shall by word, gesture, or movement, insult or show contempt for any officer or soldier of the United States, she shall be regarded and held liable to be treated as a woman of the town plying her avocation. General Benjamin Butler.

David McCullough Southerners were outraged and called Butler "The Beast." A New Orleans entrepreneur sold chamber pots featuring Butler's portrait inside the bowl. In Charleston, South Carolina, a private citizen offered a \$10,000 reward for the capture of "Beast" Ben Butler, dead or alive, but the harassment of his men stopped. With the Union Army so near, unrest on Louisiana plantations increased. When desperate slave owners began complaining of rebellious Blacks, Butler declared the planters disloyal to the Union. Then, took away their slaves. "Go to the Yankees," one slave holder told his slaves. "They are kings here now."

Susan King Taylor I've been reading so much about the Yankees. I was very anxious to see them. The Whites would tell their colored people not to go to the Yankees, but they would harness them to carts and make them pull the carts around in place of horses. I asked grandmother, one day, if this was true.

She replied, "Certainly not." That the White people did not want slaves to go over to the Yankees and told them these things to frighten them. I wanted to see those wonderful Yankees so much, as I heard my parents say that the Yankees was going to set all the slaves free. Susan King Taylor

Barbara Fields The slaves understood that that war was about slavery before it was a war. They made a nuisance for the Army and they also made an issue that the Army had to deal with. And if the Army had to deal with it, the War Department had to deal with it. If the War Department had to deal with it, Congress had to deal with it. That means that every fugitive slave who made a nuisance of himself to the local commander eventually made a figure of himself to the Congress of the United States.

David McCullough Congress, controlled by Republicans now forbade the Army to return slaves to their masters. And in June, it outlawed slavery in the territories, finally reversing the old Dred Scott decision.

George Templeton Strong Only the damndest of damned abolitionists' dreamed of such things a year ago. John Brown soul is marching on with the people after it. George Templeton Strong.

Salmon P. Chase The slavery question perplexes the president to almost as much as ever, and yet I think he's about to emerge with the obscurities where he has been groping into somewhat clearer light. So you see, the man moves. Salmon P. Chase.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN July 4th, 1862. "I would do it if I were not afraid that half the officers would fling down their arms and three more states would rise."

David McCullough Lincoln continued to back up plans to pay \$400 dollars for every slave freed, and then encouraged the freed men to sail off to a colony in Africa or Central America. The abolitionist Wendell Phillips called Abraham Lincoln "a first-rate second-rate man".

Barbara Fields I lose patience with the argument that because of someone's time, his limitations are therefore excusable or even praiseworthy. It is not true that it was impossible in that time and place to look any higher. Think of Wendell Phillips, who commenting on Abraham Lincoln's proposal to colonize Black people out of the country was sarcastic. He said, "Colonize the Blacks? A man might as well colonize his own hands, or when the robbers are in his house, he might as well colonize his revolver."

Ralph Waldo Emerson Emancipation is the demand of civilization. That is a principle. All else is intrigue. Ralph Waldo Emerson.

The Seven Days

David McCullough On the Virginia peninsula, the rains came, inundating the bottom lands. Along the roads outside Richmond, George McClellan's force was divided in two, by the flooded Chickahominy River. The rebels saw their chance and attacked the smaller force on May 31st. In the fierce fighting that followed, the Confederates did best near a crossroads called Seven Pines. The Union soldiers were most successful at Fair Oaks.

[sil.]

David McCullough When the Battle of Fair Oaks was over, the North had lost 5,000 men, the South, 6,000, and it hadn't change a thing. Joseph Johnston, the overall Confederate commander was himself severely wounded and carried from the field.

JOSEPH JOHNSTON The shot that struck me down was the best ever fired for the Confederacy, for I possess in no degree the confidence of the government. And now a man who does enjoy it will succeed me, and be able to accomplish what I never could.

ROBERT E. LEE His name might be audacity. He will take more chances and take them quicker than any other general in this country, North or South.

David McCullough Now, for the first time in the war, Robert E. Lee was placed at the head of a major army.

George McClellan I prefer Lee to Johnston. Lee is too cautious and weak under grave responsibility. Personally brave and energetic to a fault. He's yet wanting in moral firmness when pressed by heavy responsibility. George McClellan.

David McCullough McClellan completely misjudged the new Confederate Commander. Robert E. Lee was a fighter. Wanting to get at the Union men who had dared to invade his state, Lee renamed his force "The Army of Northern Virginia," seized the initiative and never let it go. First, Lee sent his cavalry chief J.E.B. Stuart to reconnoiter McClellan's forces. Stuart now lead 1,200 troopers on a pounding three-day, 150 mile ride around McClellan's huge army. His men burned Federal camps, cut down telegraph poles, took prisoners and horses and mules, and slowed only to accept bouquets and kisses from women along the way. In vain pursuit was Stuart's own father-in-law, who would stay loyal to the Union and become a general. A decision Stuart said he would regret but once, and that would be continuously.

[sil.]

David McCullough Throughout the whole campaign, Lee carefully observed McClellan's tentative advance up the peninsula. As McClellan was preparing at last to lay seige to Richmond, Lee surprised him first at Mechanicsville on June 26. It was a daring move. Defying all military convention, Lee divided his tiny force and then attacked the huge Union Army, gambling that McClellan would be too cautious to move into Richmond. Lee's assault did not work. He lost 1,500 men at Mechanicsville, but he would not let up. Determined to drive McClellan out of Virginia, Lee kept on the attack, and so it went. For seven days, the two armies clashed. From Gaines' Mill, from Savage's Station, to Frazier's Farm and Malvern Hill, where Federal gunners stopped the Confederates who came at them up the long slope.

[sil.]

Our years had been filled all night with agonizing cries before the fog was lifted. But now our eyes saw that 5,000 dead or wounded men were on the ground. A third of them were dead or dying, but enough of them were alive and moving to give the field a singular crawling effect.

Each of the battles of those seven days brought a harvest of wounded to our hospital. I used to veil myself closely as I walked to and from my hotel that I might shut out the dreadful sights. Once, I did

see one of those dreadful wagons. In it a stiff arm was raised, and it shook as it was driven down the street, as though the dead owner appealed to heaven for vengeance.

[sil]

David McCullough All but one of the battles of the seven days were Union victories, yet McClellan treated them as defeats, continuing to back down until he reached the safety of Federal gunboats at Harrison's Landing on the James River. Union officers urged a counter attack. Lee had lost 20,000 men, McClellan refused. One officer suggested his commander was motivated either by cowardice or treason. In just one week, Lee had completely unnerved the Union general, and demonstrated for the first time the strengths that would make him a legend. Surprise, audacity and an eerie ability to read his opponent's mind. In just seven days, McClellan had been totally out-generalled.

George McClellan I'm tired of the sickening sight of the battlefield with its mangled corpses and poor suffering wounded. Victory has no charms for me when purchased at such cost.

David McCullough On July 7th, an exasperated Lincoln sailed down to see his commanding general. "He had not lost," McClellan insisted, "he had merely failed to win. He needed 50,000 more men or perhaps a 100,000." "No such numbers were available," Lincoln told him. If McClellan did not feel he could resume the offensive, his men would be withdrawn from the peninsula.

Abraham Lincoln If I gave McClellan all the men he asks for, they couldn't find room to lie down. They'd have to sleep standing up. Sending men to that army is like shoveling fleas across a barnyard, not half of them get there.

Elisha Hunt Rhodes September 3, today we took a steamer and went up the Potomac past Washington and landed at Georgetown. It is hard to have reached the point we started from last March, and Richmond is still the rebel capital. Elisha Hunt Rhodes.

kiss Daniel for me

David McCullough Union guns battered Fort Pulaski, Georgia into surrendering, choked off the Savannah River to Southern ships. There was fighting at Voights plantation North Carolina, St. Andrew's Bay, Florida, Wartrace, Tennessee, and at Albuquerque in far off New Mexico territory.

[sil.]

Lieutenant Charles Francis Adams Sea Islands, Georgia. Here I am, surrounded by troopers, missionaries, contrabands, cotton fields and serpents, in a summer climate, disgusted with all things military and fighting off malaria with whiskey and tobacco. No man seems to realize that here in this little island, all around us, has begun the solution of the tremendous nigger question. Some 10,000 former slaves are thrown upon the hands of the unfortunate government. They are the forerunners of hundreds of thousands more. Lieutenant Charles Francis Adams.

David McCullough Stationed in places like Hilton Head and Beaufort, New Englanders got their first taste of the tropics. None of the 2nd Massachusetts had ever seen a palm tree before. When Union forces took parts of the South Carolina coast, plantation owners fled, leaving behind empty houses and 10,000 slaves. Missionaries, teachers and other volunteers soon arrived to help the newly liberated.

"We have come to do anti-slavery work," one teacher wrote. "We think it noble work, and we will do it nobly."

John Boston My dear wife, this day, I can address you, Thank God as a free man. I had a little trouble getting away, but as the Lord lead the children of Israel to the land of Canaan, so he lead me to a land where freedom will reign in spite of earth and hell. My dear, I trust the time will come when we will meet again, and if we don't meet on earth, we will meet in heaven where Jesus reigns. Dear wife, I must close. Rest yourself contented. I am free. Your affectionate husband. Kiss Daniel for me. John Boston.

[sil.]

David McCullough At Deer Isle, Maine, people were afraid to go to the post office where the casualty list were posted.

E.A.P. Brewster New Bern, North Carolina, March 28th, 1862. To Mr. John Webster, Jr. Deer Isle, Maine. Dear Sir, it is with pain that I have to announce to you the death of your brother, Charles Gray. By his good conduct and bravery while with me, he had risen to the rank of corporal and had he lived, I should have promoted him again. He was shot through the body at the Battle of New Bern. His last words were, "We will never give up." He is buried here. His effects I shall send home at the earliest opportunity. Yours truly, E.A.P. Brewster, Captain, Commanding Company A, 23rd Massachusetts.

David McCullough Deer Isle had lost its first soldier. A parcel containing Charles Gray's personal effects arrived in the mail. His hat, promotion papers attesting to his valor, and a cartridge box in which someone had placed the mangled bullet that killed him. His mother refused to look at it. The men of the reduced fishing fleets struggled to harvest a catch. Wives tended kitchen gardens and scraped linen for the lint from which army bandages were made. More bad news arrived. Private Alex Henderson had died of disease at Fort Jackson, Louisiana, leaving a widow and several children.

[sil.]

David McCullough At Clarksville, Tennessee, tensions between the town and the occupying Union Army ran high. Federal troops vandalized Stewart College, wrecking laboratories and stealing books, then set up headquarters there. Soldiers burst in on a church service, arrested the preacher, commandeered horses and forced reluctant parishioners to take a loyalty oath. As much as possible, the residents stayed at home.

SHELBY FOOTE Writer

Shelby Foote The answer to a, a Southerner would give you as to why you are fighting if you were a Northerner, he would say "I'm fighting 'coz you are down here." He was being invaded, and he fought as he thought to defend his home. Lincoln had a much more difficult job of sending men out to um, shoot up somebody else's home, and ah, he had to unite them before he could do that. And his way of doing it was double. One was to say that ah, the Republic must be preserved and not split in two. That was one. And the other one, he gave them as a cause, the freeing of the slaves.

David McCullough On the morning of July 22nd, 1862, the president called a Cabinet meeting. What he said took everyone by surprise. After long thought, he told them, he had decided to emancipate the

slaves.

WILLIAM SAFIRE Journalist

William Safire It was a stunning moment. It was against everything Lincoln had promised ah, to all the Republicans and, and indeed the country, that he would not become an abolitionist. He would not strike at slavery where it existed. And here suddenly, he was changing the character of the war.

David McCullough But Secretary of State, Seward worried that until the Army had won a real victory, emancipation would seem like the last shriek on the retreat. Lincoln agreed to wait for a victory.

BARBARA FIELDS Historian

Barbara Fields It's hard to separate one issue from another. Obviously, Lincoln had to win the war. He had to keep his respectability ah, as president of a country that would not allow itself to be defeated by a group of rebels, so that was always an issue and it was especially an issue, of course, in, in ah, 1862. He could not let himself be made a fool and the Union be made a fool by standing up for principles that could not be vindicated on the battlefield.

Saving the Union

I have read a fiery gospel writ in burnish'd rows of steel as ye deal with my condemners, so with you my grace shall deal. Let the hero, born of woman, crush the serpent with his heel since God is marching on.

[sil.]

David McCullough Desperate for a victory, Lincoln removed McClellan and put tall, bombastic John Pope in command. Pope so often bragged that his headquarters were in the saddle, people began to say he had his headquarters where his hind quarters should have been.

Shelby Foote Lincoln was warned at the start that Pope was not to be trusted with telling the truth, and Lincoln said, "I've known the Popes back in Illinois and known all of them. They are all liars and braggarts, but I don't know of any particular reason why a liar and a braggart shouldn't make a good general."

David McCullough Pope wasted no time charging into Northern Virginia after the rebel armies, but he was in trouble from the start. First, Stonewall Jackson fought him to a standoff at Cedar Mountain. J.E.B. Stuart hit him next, raiding his headquarters and getting away with \$35,000 in cash, and the Union Commander's dress coat. Then, the rebels simply disappeared. It took Pope two days to find them, dug in along an abandoned railroad overlooking the old Bull Run battlefield. On August 29th, Pope attacked, promising to bag the whole crowd. But the Confederates held, Jackson's men hurling rocks when ammunition ran low. At 2:00 the next afternoon, Confederate General James Longstreet sent five divisions storming into the Union flank. It was another Union disaster.

[sil.]

David McCullough Twenty-five thousand men were killed, wounded or missing at Second Bull Run,

five times the figure that it so horrified the country the first time North and South fought there. Lincoln sent Pope west to Minnesota to deal with an uprising among the Sioux and reluctantly put George McClellan back in command. "We must use the tools we have," Lincoln said. McClellan told his wife he'd been called upon to save the country once again.

[sil.]

John Casler We would ask the North Carolinians if they had any tar and coal and tar hills, and they would reply that they were just out, as they had let us Virginians have all they had to make us stick in the last fight, and call us "sore backs" as they'd knocked all the skin off our backs running over us to get into battle. And so it would go, but all in the best of humor. Knowing that all did their duty. John Casler, 33rd Regiment, Virginia Infantry, Stonewall's Brigade.

Shelby Foote We must remember they were all from the same state. Ah, they had followed the same flag. The battles they had fought in, the, the names were stitched on that flag, and it was a great deal of unit pride and I'm sure there was a great deal of sadness over the losses that they suffered. But there was a closeness among those men that came from years of being exposed to the most horrendous warfare that I know of.

Dear father, the next morning we had our second battle. It was rather strange music to hear the ball scream within an inch of my head. I had a bullet strike me on top of the head just as I was going to fire; a piece of shell struck my foot. A ball hit my finger and another hit my thumb. The firing increased tenfold and then, it sounded like the rolls of thunder, and all the time every men shouting as loud as he could. I got rather more excited than I wished to again.

I saw the body of a man killed the previous day this morning, and a horrible sight it was. Such sights do not affect me as they once did. I cannot describe the change, nor do I know when it took place, yet, I know there is a change, for I look on the carcass of a man now with pretty much the same feeling as I would do were it a horse or a hog.

Elisha Hunt Rhodes Sunday, a soldier of Company A died and was buried. Everything went on as if nothing had happened, for death is so common that little sentiment is wasted. It is not like death at home. Elisha Hunt Rhodes.

[sil.]

David McCullough Falling back from the Bull Run battlefield, Union troops skirmished briefly with rebel forces at Fall Church, Virginia, where the men stopped long enough to scribble their names on the chapel walls. In great contest, Abraham Lincoln wrote as the summer waned, "Each party claims to act in accordance with the will of God. Both may be, but one must be wrong. God cannot be for and against the same thing at the same time."

New York City

Horace Greeley August 28th, 1862, an open letter to the President. "We think you are unduly influenced by the councils of certain fossil politicians hailing from border slave states. We ask you to consider that slavery is everywhere, the inciting cause and sustaining base of treason. It seems to us, the most obvious truth that whatever strengthens or fortifies slavery drives home the wedge intended

to divide the Union. Horace Greeley.

Abraham Lincoln August 22nd. My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union and is not either to save or to destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it. If I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it. And if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that.

[sil.]

Prime Minister Palmerston It seems to me that time is fast approaching when some joint offer of mediation by England, France and Russia might be made with some prospect of success to the combatants in North America. The proposal would naturally be made to both North and South. If both accepted, we should recommend an armistice and cessation of blockades with the view to negotiation of the basis of separation. Prime Minister Palmerston.

David McCullough Lincoln had to have a victory.

Robert E. Lee September 3rd, 1862. The present seems to be the most propitious times since the commencement of the war for the Confederate Army to enter Maryland. Robert E. Lee.

David McCullough The brilliant Southern victories of spring and summer had brought Lee's army international renown. "One more successful campaign," he wrote Jefferson Davis, "would force Europe to recognize the Confederacy." Now, for the first time, Lee lead 40,000 soldiers across the Potomac and onto Union soil.

This body of men moving along with no order, their guns carried in every fashion, no two dressed alike. Their officers, hardly distinguishable from the privates. Were these the men that had driven back again and again our splendid legions? They were the dirtiest men I ever saw. The most ragged, lean and hungry set of wolves. Yet, there was a dash about them that the Northern men lacked.

David McCullough Lee's target was the Federal Rail Center at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Hoping Marylanders would rise up against the Union, he instructed his men to sing "Maryland, My Maryland" as they marched. It didn't work. Most residents of the small town stayed fearfully behind closed doors. Then on September 13th, in a meadow near Frederick, a Union soldier found three cigars wrapped in a piece of paper. It was a copy of Lee's battle plans, accidentally left behind. McClellan now knew Lee had divided his army, sending one part off to seize Harper's Ferry. McClellan had in his hands the instrument with which to destroy Lee. Still, he did nothing for 18 crucial hours.

[sil.]

David McCullough On September 15th, Lee and his Confederates took up positions along the crest of a three-mile ridge just east of the town of Sharpsburg, and only 52 miles from Washington. The Potomac was at their back. In front, ran a creek called "Antietam".

General James Longstreet On the forenoon of the 15th, the blue uniforms of the Federals appeared among the trees that crowned the heights on the eastern bank of the Antietam. The number increased in larger and larger grew the field of blue to what seemed to stretch as far the eye could see. And from the tops of the mountains down to the edges of the stream gathered the great army of McClellan.

General James Longstreet.

David McCullough Had McClellan hurled his army at the Confederates that day, the war might have ended, but he did not. "There was a single item in our advantage," an aide to Lee remembered, "but it was an important one." "McClellan had brought superior forces to Sharpsburg," the aide conceded, "but he had also brought himself."

Captain Edward Hastings Ripley September 16th. That night I lay beside the Charlestown pike and watched until morning the grimy columns come pouring up from the pontoons. It was a weird, uncanny sight, and drove sleep from my eyes. It was something demon-like, a scene from an inferno. They were silent as ghosts, ruthless and rushing in their speed, ragged, earth-colored, disheveled and devilish. The shuffle of their badly shod feet on the hard surface of the pike was so rapid as to be continuous like the hiss of a great serpent. The spectral ghostly picture will never be erased from my memory. Captain Edward Hastings Ripley.

As night grew nearer, whispers of a great battle to be fought the next day grew louder, and we shuddered at the prospect, for the battles had come to mean to us as they never had before: blood, wounds, and death.

Antietam

David McCullough The battle that began the next day was really three battles. The first began at 6:00 am on Lee's left, where a Federal force charged along the Hagerstown pike to attack Stonewall Jackson's men hidden in woods beyond a big corn field. The Union objective was a plateau edged with artillery, on which stood a small white-washed church built by a German Baptist pacifist sect, the Dunkards, for whom even a steeple was thought immodest. The Union field commander was Major General Joe Hooker, a profane and hard-drinking Massachusetts soldier known as "Fighting Joe". As Hooker cautiously advanced, he noticed the glint of bayonets in the cornfield and ordered four batteries to fire into it. The rebels counter-charged. The battle surged back and forth across the corn field 15 times. In a matter of minutes, the 12th Massachusetts lost 224 of 334 men. Hooker himself was carried from the field, shot through the foot.

The men are loading and firing with demoniacal fury and shouting and laughing hysterically, and the whole field before us is covered with rebels fleeing for life into the woods.

David McCullough Hooker's men were closing in on the Dunkard church. At that moment, Stonewall Jackson sent in his last reserves, John Bell Hood's division, fierce fighters at anytime, but now enraged at having missed breakfast which had promised to be their first real meal in days. "Their first volley was like a scythe running through our line," one Union survivor remembered. And then the Confederate counterattack came on.

[sil.]

Joseph Hooker Every stalk of corn was cut as closely as it could have been done with a knife and the slain lay in rows, precisely as they had stood in their ranks a few moments before. Joseph Hooker.

[sil.]

David McCullough The Northern troops ran back through the corn field. Hood's men ran after them, but were stopped by a hail of shells and Federal reinforcements. When the Confederates finally withdrew, one officer asked Hood where his division was. "Dead on the field," he answered.

Elisha Hunt Rhodes I have never in my soldier's life seen such a sight. The dead and wounded covered the ground. In one spot, a rebel officer and 20 men lay near a wreck of a battery. It is said Battery A 1st Rhode Island Artillery did this work. Elisha Hunt Rhodes.

David McCullough By 10:00 a.m. 8,000 men lay dead or wounded. Jackson's lines have wavered but held.

Shelby Foote After his part of battle was over, Jackson was sitting on his horse eating a peach and his ah, medical director Dr. McGuire was there, and ah, he, he looked out over this field where there were dead at both sides littered all over the place. And as he's eating a peach, he said, "God has been very kind to us this day."

[sil.]

David McCullough The second part of the Battle of Antietam began at the center of Lee's line, a sunken country road, that now served as a readymade rifle pit for two Confederate brigades. Lee ordered at held at all costs. General John B. Gordon assured him, "These men are going to stay here, General, till the sun goes down or victory is won." Then, the Union attacked.

General John B. Gordon The brave Union commander superbly mounted, placed himself in front while his band cheered him with martial music. I thought, what a pity to spoil with bullets such a scene of Marshall Beattie. General John B. Gordon.

David McCullough Gordon let the blue line get within a few yards, then, gave the order to fire. The Union commander was killed instantly. His men wavered, retreated, then came back at the Confederates five more times.

[sil.]

David McCullough Gordon was hit twice in the right leg, once in the left arm, a fourth time through the shoulder. He refused all aid, limping along the line to steady his men as the Federals kept coming.

JOHN B. GORDON I was finally shot down by a fifth ball that struck me squarely in the face. I fell forward and lay unconscious with my face in my cap. It might have smothered in blood but for a Yankee bullet hole which let the blood run out.

David McCullough Still the Confederates held. Unit after unit of Northern troops fell back from the sheets of Southern fire. Finally, some New Yorkers managed to find a spot from which they could shoot down on the roads to fenders. The tide of battle turned. The Sunken Road remembered now as "Bloody Lane" rapidly filled with Southern bodies, two and three deep. And the triumphant Federals knelt on top of what one called "this ghastly flooring to fire at the fleeing survivors". The Confederate's center is splintered. One more push might have broken it apart. General McClellan, however, decided it would not be prudent to attack again. All day long in hastily constructed field hospitals, Clara Barton tended the wounded. She worked so close to the fighting that a bullet went

through her sleeve and killed the man she was treating.

I had to wring the blood from the bottom of my clothing before I could step, for the weight about my feet.

[sil.]

Lieutenant Matthew J. Groen I was lying on my back supported on my elbows watching the shells explode overhead and speculating as to how long I could hold up my finger before it could be shot off. When the order to get up was given, I turned over to look at Colonel Kimball thinking he had become suddenly insane. Lieutenant Matthew J. Groen.

David McCullough The third battle took place on the Confederate right where the Union Army led by General Burnside's corps tried to fight his way across a strongly defended stone bridge over Antietam Creek. Ambrose Burnside was a genial dapper man. His distinctive whiskers or sideburn set a fashion. "But he shrank from responsibility," an admiring fellow officer said, "with sincere modesty, and he owed his position to his old friend McClellan, who now promised to support his assault across the bridge." Burnside had 12,500 men against barely 400 Georgians led by Robert Toombs. But the Confederates commanded the bluff overlooking the bridge and poured a relentless volley of fire down on the Union troops. It took three hours and three bloody charges for the Federals to cross the creek and begin fighting their way up the slope toward Sharpsburg. Seven successive Union color bearers were hit before the Confederates finally broke, racing back into the town.

Private John Dooley Oh, how I ran. I was afraid of being struck in the back and I frequently turned around and running so as to avoid if possible, so disgraceful a wound. Private John Dooley.

David McCullough Union victory again seem certain, but while the Union troops cheered, the Confederate Light Division was arriving from Harper's Ferry. Three thousand men, foot sore from their 17 mile march, but otherwise ready to fight, and commanded by General A.P. Hill, dressed in the red shirt he liked to wear in battle.

Shelby Foote A.P. Hill is the finest division commander in Lee's army. Hill arrived at another one of those nick of the moment things, and ah, it was the last one and it succeeded in throwing Burnside back after he finally got across the bridge.

David McCullough Hill slammed into the celebrating Union troops. Burnside begged McClellan to send up the reinforcements he had promised. McClellan refused. As night fell, Burnside withdrew to the stone bridge his men had fought so hard to seize. The battle was over. No ground had been gained.

[sil.]

Before the sunlight faded, I walked over the narrow field. All around lay the Confederate dead, clad in butternut. As I looked down on their poor pinched faces, all enmity died out. There was no secession in those rigid forms or in those fixed eyes staring at the sky. Clearly, it was not their war.

The sun went down, the thunder died away, the musketry ceased. Bivouac fires gleamed out as if a great city had lighted its lamps.

David McCullough It had been the bloodiest day in American history. The Union lost 2,108 dead, another 10,293 wounded or missing, double the casualties of D-Day, 82 years later. Lee lost fewer men, 10,318 casualties, but that was a quarter of his army.

[sil.]

Elisha Hunt Rhodes Why did we not attack them and drive them into the river? I do not understand these things, but then I am only a boy. Elisha Hunt Rhodes.

David McCullough McClellan had plenty of reserves waiting outside Sharpsburg, but he never used them. Lee, outnumbered three to one, braced for a new attack all the next day. It never came. On the 18th, Lee and his army slipped back across the Potomac. McClellan could claim a victory but he could have won the war. Lee's invasion had been halted. He had suffered terrible losses, but his army had not been destroyed.

[sil.]

Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain The causes of the war were wide apart, but the manhood was the same. Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, 20th Maine

David McCullough Held in reserve outside Sharpsburg, the 20th Maine included farmers and lumbermen, seamen and shopkeepers and trappers. Its colonel was Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, a 33-year-old professor of rhetoric, oratory and modern languages at Bowdoin College. Denied a leave of absence to enlist, he applied for a sabbatical to study in Europe, then volunteered. On paper, his only qualification for command was that he was a gentleman of the highest moral, intellectual and literary worth. Chamberlain was still at Sharpsburg when Abraham Lincoln came to see the battlefield.

[sil.]

We could see the deep sadness in the president's face and feel the burden on his heart, thinking of his great commission to save this people, and knowing that he could do this no otherwise than as he had been doing, by and through the manliness of these men.

David McCullough Watching the president review his troops, it seemed to Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain that a mystic bond, wonderful in its intensity, joined the men to their commander-in-chief. The object of Lincoln's visit was to get McClellan to pursue Lee.

Abraham Lincoln I came back thinking he would move at once, but when I got home, he began to argue why he ought not to move. I peremptorily ordered him to advance. I was 19 days before he put a man over the river, and nine days longer before he got his army across, and then, he stopped again.

David McCullough Lincoln, at last, had had enough of George McClellan. The President relieved him of command permanently.

Abraham Lincoln I had made a great mistake. Alas for my poor country.

[sil.]

MARGARET HOUSTON September 21st, 1862. Dear Sam Jr., a great many of your old friends and schoolmates have died or been killed. I will merely name, Lem Ambercrombie, Jeff Montgomery, John Garrett, Lem Hatch, John Hill, Proctor Porter, Bill Haymes(ph), John Wyatt, Walter Maxey, Angus Austin. Old Mrs. Thomas of our neighborhood has lost five sons. Your mother, Margaret Houston.

Shelby Foote You do have a, a big problem when you have units that are from states and counties and even towns, and one of those regiments can get in a very tight spot in a particular battle, like in a corn field at Sharpsburg, and the news maybe that there are no more young men in that town. Ah, they're all dead.

[sil.]

David McCullough In October of 1862, at his New York gallery, Matthew Brady opened an exhibition of photographs entitled "The Dead of Antietam." Nothing like them had ever been seen in America before.

[sil.]

The dead of the battlefield come up to us very rarely even in dreams. We see the lists in the morning paper at breakfast, but dismiss its recollection with a coffee. Mr. Matthew Brady has done something to bring to us the terrible reality and earnestness of the war. If he has not brought bodies and laid them in our dooryards and along our streets, he has done something very like it.

The Higher Object

David McCullough Against the advice of his advisors, Lincoln reinstated U.S. Grant to field command. "I can't spare this man," Lincoln said. "He fights." A thousand miles to the west, Vicksburg, high on a bluff overlooking the Mississippi River remained Confederate. "Vicksburg," Jefferson Davis said, "is the nail that holds the South's two halves together." That fall, Grant tried to take the heavily fortified city. He failed.

ED BEARSS Historian

Ed Bearss Confederacy was on this offensive over a thousand mile front. Mr. Gladstone, a power in the English cabinet is saying Jeff Davis has made a Navy, made an army and what's more important, in dividing that he's made a nation, but the invasion of Maryland fails. Their's defeated, falls back. They lose at Perryville in Kentucky. They lose at Iuka and Corinth in Mississippi and even Newton in Missouri, and the Confederate tide rolls back. Lincoln, as the result of Antietam, converted the war to a higher plane. Again the master politician, he announces the preliminary emancipation proclamation but he doesn't free a single slave in revolt. Free is only as or major: it only frees a slaves in states where the Confederacy is control, and it will take effect on the first day of January.

Abraham Lincoln On the first day of January, in the year of our Lord 1863, all persons held as slaves within any state or designated part of a state, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, henceforth and forever free. Abraham Lincoln.

David McCullough On September 22nd, just five days after the Battle of Antietam, the president issued his Emancipation Proclamation. "If my name ever goes into history," Lincoln said, "it will be for this act." The South was outraged. Jefferson Davis called it the most execrable measure recorded in the history of guilty man.

[sil.]

David McCullough At a Washington dinner, John Hay, the President's 23-year-old secretary, noted that everyone seemed to feel a new sort of exhilarating life. The President's proclamation had freed them, as well as the slaves.

It was no longer a question of the Union as it was, that was to be re-established. It was the Union as it should be, that is to say "washed clean from its original sin." We were no longer merely the soldiers of a political controversy. We were now the missionaries of a great work of redemption. The armed liberators of millions. The war was ennobled. The object was higher.

David McCullough Abroad, the proclamation had the effect Lincoln had hoped for. Neither England nor France was willing openly to oppose the United States' pledge to end slavery.

John Stuart Mill The triumph of the Confederacy would be a victory of the powers of evil which would give courage to the enemies of progress and damp the spirits of friends all over the civilized world. The American Civil War is destined to be a turning point for good or evil of the course of human affairs. John Stuart Mill.

Jefferson Davis Put not your trust in princes and rest not your hopes on foreign nations. This war is ours. We must fight it out ourselves. Jefferson Davis.

[sil.]

David McCullough That December, Lincoln spoke to Congress.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN The dogmas of the quiet past, are inadequate to the stormy present. As our case is new, so we must think anew and act anew. We must disenthrall ourselves, and then we shall save our country. Fellow citizens, we cannot escape history. The fiery trials through which we pass, will light us down, in honor or dishonor, to the latest generation. We say we are for Union. The world will not forget that we say this. In giving freedom to the slave, we assure freedom to the free. Honorable, alike in what we give and what we preserve. We shall nobly save, or meanly lose, the last best hope of earth.

[sil.]

Elisha Hunt Rhodes December 31, while the year 1862 was drawing to a close, and as I look back, I am bewildered when I think of the hundreds of miles I have tramped, the thousands of dead and wounded that I have seen. But we hope for the best and feel sure that in the end, the Union will be restored. Goodbye 1862. Elisha Hunt Rhodes.

[sil.]

Frederick Douglass We shout for joy that we live to record this righteous decree. Free forever! Oh, yea millions of free and loyal men who have earnestly sought to free your bleeding country from the dreadful ravages of revolution and anarchy, lift up now your voices with joy and thanksgiving, for with freedom to the slave will come peace and safety to your country. Frederick Douglass.

David McCullough On December 31st, a large crowd of abolitionists including Harriet Tubman and Wendell Phillips gathered together in the music hall in Boston. At midnight, the Emancipation Proclamation would take effect. On the stage, William Lloyd Garrison wept with joy beside Frederick Douglass. The cheering crowd called for Harriet Beecher Stowe. She stood in the balcony, tears in her eyes. At a Washington, D.C. contraband camp, former slaves testified. One remembered the sale of his daughter. "Now, no more of that," he said. "They can't sell my wife and children anymore. Bless the Lord." On the Sea Islands off South Carolina, Federal agents read the proclamation loud to former slaves under the spreading boughs of a huge oak tree. As the commander of a new all-black regiment unfurled an American flag, his men broke into song. "It seemed the choked voice of a race at last unloosed," he wrote.

[sil.]

In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea, with a glory in His bosom that transfigures you and me. As He die to make men holy, let us die to make men free, while God is marching on. Glory! Glory! Hallelujah! Glory! Glory! Hallelujah! Glory! Glory! Hallelujah! His truth is marching on!

A Film by KEN BURNS Produced by KEN BURNS and RIC BURNS Written by GEOFFREY C. WARD and RIC BURNS with KEN BURNS Edited by PAUL BARNES BRUCE SHAW TRICIA REIDY Narrated by DAVID McCULLOUGH Voices SAM WATERSTON Abraham Lincoln JULIE HARRIS Mary Chesnut JASON ROBARDS Ulysses S. Grant MORGAN FREEMAN Frederick Douglass PAUL ROEBLING Joshua L. Chamberlain, etc. GARRISON KEILLOR Walt Whitman, etc. GEORGE BLACK Robert E. Lee ARTHUR MILLER William T. Sherman CHRIS MURNEY Pvt. Elisha Hunt Rhodes CHARLEY McDOWELL Pvt. Sam Watkins HORTON FOOTE Jefferson Davis GEORGE PLIMPTON George Templeton Strong PHILIP BOSCO Horace Greeley, etc. TERRY COURIER George McClellan JODY POWELL Stonewall Jackson, etc. STUDS TERKEL Benjamin F. Butler With DEREK JACOBI PAMELA REED JEREMY IRONS RONNIE GILBERT KURT VONNEGUT M. EMMET WALSH GENE JONES HOYT AXTON JEROME DEMPSEY JOHN HARTFORD LARRY FISHBURNE WALT MACPHERSON SHELBY FOOTE COLLEEN DEWHURST BETSY APPLE LATANYA RICHARDSON CAROL CRAVEN BRADFORD WASHBURN MARISSA COPELAND JESSE CARR HALO WINES WENDY TILGHMAN DAVID MARKS JOE MATTYS and LIBRARY OF CONGRESS EX-SLAVE RECORDINGS Cinematography KEN BURNS ALLEN MOORE BUDDY SQUIRES Assistant Editors PHOEBE YANTSIOS MEREDITH WOODS Apprentice Editors JOSHUA LEVIN ED BARTESKI Coordinating Producer CATHERINE EISELE Associate Producer/Post-Production LYNN NOVICK Co-Producers STEPHEN IVES JULIE DUNFEY MIKE HILL Consultants SHELBY FOOTE BARBARA J. FIELDS C. VANN WOODWARD DON FEHRENBACHER STEPHEN SEARS WILLIAM MCFEELY JAMES MCPHERSON RICHARD SNOW MIKE MUSICK BERNARD WEISBERGER ERIC FONER STEPHEN B. OATES ROBERT JOHANNSEN DANIEL AARON WILLIAM E. LEUCHTENBURG TOM LEWIS CHARLES FULLER CHARLEY MCDOWELL IRA BERLIN GENE SMITH ROBERT PENN WARREN JEROME LIEBLING DAYTON DUNCAN AMY STECHLER BURNS Senior Creative Consultant DAVID McCULLOUGH

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