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[Episode 6: Valley of the Shadow of Death](#) from PBS (Public Broadcasting Service, 1990)
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transcript

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Walt Whitman I had just this moment heard from the front there's nothing yet out of movement but each side is continually on the alert expecting something to happen. To think we are to have here soon what I've seen so many times, the awful loads and trains and boatloads of bloody and pale and wounded young men again. For that is what we certainly will have, I see all the signs here. Walt Whitman

SHELBY FOOTE Writer

Shelby Foote Man's belief, uh, had a startling simplicity to it. Uh, for example, a soldier in line at Gettysburg told you will advance a mile across that open valley and take that hill. Uh, I, for one, would say, uh, "General, I don't think we should this, I don't believe we can get there." But they, they, they took it in the matter of course. And you must remember they fought for four years which is, uh, a long time. And the simplicity was severely tested, but they never lost it. They, they have duty of, uh, bravery under adversity, very simple virtues and they had them.

THE CIVIL WAR EPISODE SIX

David McCullough In 1864, a rebellion in China, that cost 20 million lives, finally came to an end. In 1864, the czar's armies conquered Turkestan and Tolstoy finished "War and Peace." In 1864, Louis Pasteur pasteurized wine. Geneva Convention established the neutrality of battlefield hospitals. And Karl Marx founded the International Working Men's Association in London and New York. Nevada became a state. And for the first time, the words "In God We Trust" appeared on a US coin. In 1864, the Civil War was in its fourth year. Union ships controlled the Mississippi. The Union Blockade was tightening. Lee had been beaten at Gettysburg. Vicksburg and Chattanooga had fallen. As Confederate hopes begin to dim, Union objectives became clear, attack the heart of the Confederacy at Atlanta and destroy Lee's army of Northern Virginia. But there was still no real end in sight. As Robert E. Lee and Ulysses S. Grant prepare to confront each other for the first time, neither knew what awaited their armies along a hundred mile crescent east of Richmond. To win, one would have to outthink as well as outfight the other.

[sil.]

David McCullough In 1864, for the first time in history, a nation would try to hold an election in the midst of Civil War. After three and a half years of war, Abraham Lincoln's prospects for re-election did not seem bright. For Elisha Hunt Rhodes, stuck in the Union trenches outside Petersburg, the war stretched on interminably. To Confederate Sam Watkins of Franklin, Tennessee, it seemed the death angel was there to gather its last harvest. That same year William Tecumseh Sherman, now in command of the Union's western armies, would set out through the mountains of Georgia for Atlanta. Lieutenant Washington Roebling, who thought he'd seen the worst at Gettysburg, came close to losing his faith in the Union cause. In Washington, a sometime poet, Walt Whitman, worked as a nurse in the crowded Union hospitals until they overwhelmed him.

[sil.]

David McCullough In 1864, the pictures that would come back from the war would be too horrible to look at for years to come.

[sil.]

William Tecumseh Sherman It is enough to make the whole world startled at the awful amount of death and destruction that now stalks abroad. I begin to regard the death and mangling of a couple of thousand men as a small affair, a kind of morning dash. And it may be well that we become hardened. The worst of the war is not yet begun. William Tecumseh Sherman

1864 Valley of the Shadow of Death

David McCullough In early 1864, Spotswood Rice, a slave on a tobacco plantation, escaped and made his way to Glasgow, Missouri, where he enlisted in the Union Army.

Spotswood Rice Benton Barracks Hospital, St. Louis, Missouri. My children, a few lines to let you know that I have not forgotten you and that I want to see you as bad as ever. I feel confident that I will get you. You know Miss Kitty said that I try to steal you, but I let her know that God never intended for men to steal his own flesh and blood. I once thought that I had some respect for them, but now my respect has worn out and I have no sympathy for slaveholders. Spotswood Rice.

Washington, March 1864

Nathaniel Hawthorne The Willard Hotel maybe much more justly called the center of Washington than the Union, neither the Capitol, the White House or the State Department. Everybody may be seen there. Nathaniel Hawthorne.

David McCullough On the afternoon of March 8th 1864, a stubby, rumped man made his way across the crowded lobby of Willard's Hotel. A 14-year old boy carrying a satchel followed in his wake.

Shelby Foote He didn't have his three-stars on yet because he wasn't going to get his commission until the next day, but he just walked up the desk and asked for a room. And, uh, there'd been a great many generals in and out of Willard's, practically all of them been in and out of Willard's. And the desk clerk said he, "Well, I got something up on the top floor, if that will do?" And Grant said, "That'd be fine." And he gave the register to sign and Grant signed it. And when the clerk looked down and saw U.S. Grant and a son, Galena, Illinois, his eyes bugged out of his head.

David McCullough Word spread quickly that the man Lincoln had recently placed to the head of all the Union armies was in the hotel. And when he and his son entered the crowded dining room, everyone stood and cheered. Afterwards, he strolled two blocks up Pennsylvania Avenue to the White House, where President and Mrs. Lincoln were giving a reception.

Abraham Lincoln I wish to express my entire satisfaction with what you have done up to this time so far as I can understand it. The particulars of your plans I neither know nor seek to know. Abraham Lincoln.

David McCullough Three years earlier, Grant had been notable only for his failures. Now he was the conqueror of Donelson, Vicksburg and Chattanooga, come to Washington to receive the rank of Lieutenant General, last held by George Washington.

[sil.]

David McCullough He had command now of 533,000 men, the largest army in the world.

Grant

Ulysses S. Grant I want to push on as rapidly as possible to save a hard fighting. These terrible battles are very good things to read about for persons who lose no friends. But I am decidedly in favor of

having as little of it as possible. The way to avoid it is to push forward. Ulysses S. Grant.

David McCullough Hiram Ulysses Grant was born at Point Pleasant, Ohio on April 27, 1822. His father, Jesse, ran a tannery and its stench was one of his first memories. He was sensitive and withdrawn with people but wonderful with horses. His father taught him hopelessly impractical and got him an appointment to West Point. A clerk mistakenly registered the boy as Ulysses S. Grant and rather than complain, he lived with it. His friends called him Sam.

[sil.]

David McCullough He was graduated in the middle of his class. The next year he was engaged to Julia Dent, the daughter of a Missouri slave-owner. He adored her and she bore him four children. Grant thought the Mexican War wicked but went anyway. I consider my supreme duty was to my flag, he wrote, and served bravely in battle riding alone through a hail of enemy fire to bring ammunition to his men. After the war, the Army sent him to a remote California outpost; very lonely and miserable without his family, he began to drink.

Ulysses S. Grant Dear Julia, I sometimes get so anxious to see you and our children that I am almost tempted to resign and trust the Providence and my own exertions for a living. Whenever I get to thinking up the subject, however, poverty, poverty, begins to stare me in the face.

David McCullough In 1854, he left the Army and returned east to rejoin Julia and work a piece of land his father-in-law gave him. He called it Hardscrabble Farm and could not make a go of it. He tried bill collecting, real estate, raising potatoes, even peddling firewood in the street; nothing worked. One year in St. Louis he pawned his watch to buy Christmas presents for his family. He had been reduced to working as a clerk in his father's harness shop in Galena, Illinois when the war began. As a West Point graduate, Grant was a scarce commodity. He re-entered the Army and never looked back.

John A. Rawlins In this season I saw energies in Grant. He dropped the stoop-shouldered way of walking and set his hat forward on his head in a careless fashion. John A. Rawlins.

David McCullough He was promoted to Brigadier General, won a small battle at Belmont, Missouri then a big one at Fort Donelson at the time when other Northern generals were going down to defeat.

John A. Rawlins The soldiers do not salute him, they only watch him with a certain sort of familiar reverence. They observe him coming and rising to their feet, gather on each side of the way to see him pass. No Napoleonic displays, no ostentation, no speech, no superfluous flummery.

David McCullough He was distinctly unglamorous and had only one personal attendant, a runaway Missouri slave named Bill. He didn't like marching bands and could recognize only two tunes. One was Yankee Doodle, he said, and the other wasn't. He insisted that his meat be cooked dry because even a suggestion of blood on his plate made him sick. Once on the eve of a battle in which thousands of men would die, he had a teamster tied to a tree for six hours for mistreating a horse. He was methodical, dogged, and uncommonly clear-headed under fire.

Shelby Foote Grant the general has, uh, many qualities but he had, uh, a thing that's very necessary for a great general; he had what they call four o'clock in the morning courage. You could wake him up at four o'clock in the morning and tell him that they just turn his right flank and he would be as cool as a

cucumber. He had an ability to concentrate; a good example of that is he would working at his desk, bent over writing and he would need something across the room, a document or something, he would get up and never get out of that crouch position, go over there and pick up the document he needed, come back to his desk and sit down again without ever having straightened up. It's an example of how he could concentrate.

David McCullough He drank bourbon and he got drunk easily. A Galena neighbor, John Rawlins, was made his chief of staff, and took it upon himself to keep Grant sober.

Shelby Foote Grant never got drunk when his wife was around. It was only two conditions when Grant would drink; number one was his wife wasn't there, and the other was there wasn't anything going on. He went on a true bender during the Vicksburg campaign, but it was when nothing was happening. He was as if he, uh, well, there was anything sexual about his wife being out of touch, I'm not too sure, but, but I do know that it was uh, boredom that would, that would make him drink.

David McCullough Now, he traveled south to Meade's headquarters at Brandy Station, near Culpeper, Virginia, the largest Union encampment of the war.

Elisha Hunt Rhodes April 19. Yesterday, the 6th Corp was reviewed by Lieutenant General U.S. Grant. He is a short, thickset man, and rode his horse like a bag of meal. I was a little disappointed in the appearance, but I like the look of his eye. Elisha Hunt Rhodes.

We all felt at last that the boss had arrived

David McCullough While Grant conferred with Meade, members of his staff described Grant's triumphs in the West. Veterans of the Army of the Potomac were not impressed. That maybe, one said, but Grant never met Bobby Lee.

Lee

Can anybody say they know the General? I doubt it. He looked so cold, quiet and grand.

Henry Adams I think that Lee should have been hanged. It was all the worst that he was a good man and a fine character and acted conscientiously. It's always the good men that do the most harm in the world. Henry Adams.

Shelby Foote Lee is uh, one of the most difficult people to talk about because he's been immortalized, or as they call him now, some people, the Marble Man. He's been dehumanized by the glory and the worship. Uh, he, he was a warm, outgoing man, always had time for any private soldier's complaint. Once a Northern soldier being marched to the rear as a prisoner complained to Lee in person that someone has taken his hat, and he said that man got it. And Lee made the man give him his hat back.

David McCullough The man Grant faced across the Rapidan River in Virginia came from a family as celebrated as Grant's was obscure. Robert E. Lee was born in 1807 at Stratford in Westmoreland County, Virginia and was raised by his mother. She taught him to revere General Washington, a neighbor remembered, to practice self-denial and self-control in all things. His father, Light Horse Harry Lee, had been a friend and favorite lieutenant of George Washington. But Light Horse Harry also squandered two wise fortunes before deserting his family for the West Indies. At West Point,

Robert E. Lee did not earn a single demerit. Classmates called him the Marble Model, but liked him in spite of his perfection. He was graduated second in his class in 1829. In 1831, he married Martha Washington's granddaughter, Mary Custis. She bore him seven children and endured his long absences as best she could. The mansion at Arlington with its 250 slaves was her home before it was his. Appointed to the prestigious Corp of Engineers, he was three times promoted for bravery during the Mexican War, where he once met a young Ulysses S. Grant. Superintendent of West Point, captor of John Brown, he was at the start of the War, the nation's most promising soldier. In 1861, Lee refused command of the Union Army and followed his state out of the Union, not because he approved of slavery or cessation, but because he believed his first duty was to Virginia.

ROBERT E. LEE I did only what my duty demanded. I could have taken no other course without dishonor.

The man who stood before us was the realized King Arthur. The soul that looked out of his eyes was as honest and fearless as when it first looked out on life. One saw the character as clear as crystal without complication, and the heart as tender as that of ideal womanhood.

David McCullough A Union girl watching Lee ride past her Pennsylvania home said, "I wished he were ours." Early in the war, he was ridiculed as the King of Spades because of his fondness for entrenching and Granny Lee because of his grey hair and strict ways. But after he drove McClellan off the Peninsula, stopped Pope at Second Manassas, demolished Burnside at Fredericksburg and destroyed Hooker at Chancellorsville, all despite overwhelming odds, he won the unshakeable confidence of Jefferson Davis and the unqualified love of his officers and men.

Shelby Foote He is a very great general and, uh, he, he is superb on both the offensive and the defensive. Uh, he took long chances but he took them because he had to. If Grant had not had superior numbers, he might have taken chances as long as Lee took. The only way to win was with long chances and it made him brilliant.

David McCullough No one ever called him Bobby Lee to his face. His men called him Marse Robert or Uncle Robert. He had a terrible temper which he worked all his life to control. When angered, his icy stare was unforgettable.

Shelby Foote There was young man brought before him for some infraction of the rules, and can you imagine being brought before General Lee for having broken the rules? And the young man was trembling and Lee said, "You need not be afraid; you'll get justice here." And the young man said, "I know it, General, that's what I'm scared of."

David McCullough He referred to the Union Army as "those people" rather than as the enemy. Now, those people had a new commander whom Lee had not tested.

In the Wilderness

Shelby Foote When Grant began his Spring Campaign at '64, he took what they called the heaviest. The heavy artillery man out of the forts in Washington and put them in the field, and many of them have been in the army two or three years who never had heard or shot, fire at an angle. And as these units marched in the camp, they were so much larger than the combat regiments that the soldiers along side the road used to say, "What division is that?" They were so many of them. But they had some

fierce things. The first time they go into combat, they did have a mangled corpse that, of artillery casualty by the side of the road with a blanket over him. And as the new green regiments came abreast and they whisked the blanket, blanket off and said, "That's, this is what waiting for you up ahead." Not a, not a very pleasant story.

Ulysses S. Grant To get possession of Lee's Army was the first objective. With the capture of his army, Richmond would necessarily follow. It was better to fight him outside his stronghold than in it. Ulysses S. Grant

[sil.]

John B. Gordon This advance by General Grant inaugurated the Seventh Act and beyond to Richmond drama, played by the armies of the Union. General John B. Gordon.

James Longstreet That man, Grant, will fight us everyday and every hour till the end of the war. General James Longstreet.

David McCullough Grant's plan called for four simultaneous blows. William Tecumseh Sherman had orders to strike out from Chattanooga for Atlanta. Franz Sigel would advance up to Shenandoah Valley. Benjamin Butler was to lead an army up from the James River and George Gordon Meade was to lead the army of the Potomac 110,000 strong south against Lee. "Wherever Lee goes, you will go also," Grant told Meade and Grant would come along too. Lee's strategy was unchanged: Destroy the Union resolve to wage war. He would refuse to fight Grant in the open, force him to attack fortified Confederate positions and there by offset Grant's superior numbers. The bloody cost of trying to force the South back into the Union at gun point would bolster any war sentiment in the north.

James Longstreet If we can break up the enemies arrangements early and throw him back, he will not be able to recover his position or his morale until the presidential election is over and then we shall have a new president to treat with. General James Longstreet.

[sil.]

Washington Roebling April 1st 1864. The president came down to Culpepper to review the army. President was mounted on a fractious horse. Soon after the march began, his tall hat fell off, his pantaloons slipped up to the knees showing his white homemade drawers which President Lee slipped up also revealing a long hairy leg. While we were inclined to smile, we were very much a grinned to see our poor president compelled to endure such torture. Washington Roebling.

A.M. Stewart On the morning of May 4th 1864, we, with the entire grand army of the Potomac were in motion toward the Rapidan. The dawn was clear, warm and beautiful. As the almost countless encampments were broken up with bands in all directions playing lively airs, banners waving, regiments, brigades, and divisions falling into line. The scene even to eyes long familiar with military displays was one of unusual grandeur. Chaplain A.M. Stewart.

David McCullough Lee's 60,000 men were waiting for Grant in the tangled thicket known as "The Wilderness" in which they had trapped the same army under Joseph Hooker only a year before.

Covered by a dense forest, almost impenetrable by troops in line up battle, the undergrowth was so

heavy that it was scarcely possible to see more than 100 yards in any direction. The movements of the enemy could not be observed until the lines were almost in collision.

David McCullough Advance units of the Union Army camped for the night on the old Chancellorsville battlefield where winter rains had washed open the shallow graves.

In glades, they meet skull after skull where pine cones lay, the rusted gun, green shoes full of bones, the moldering coat and cuddled up skeleton and scores of such. Some start as in dreams and comrades lost bemoan. By the edge of these wild stonewall had charged, but the year and the man were gone.

[sil.]

Frank Wilkinson It grew dark and we built a fire. The dead were all around us. Their eyeless skulls seem to stare steadily at us. The trees swayed and side gently in the soft wind. Private Frank Wilkinson.

David McCullough The Battle of the Wilderness began in chaos; units got lost, fired on their own comrades, officers tried to navigate by compass.

[sil.]

David McCullough But on the second day, Union forces drove through the Confederate center. As a worried Lee watched, General John Gregg's Texans hurried to plug up the hole.

Scarcely had we moved a step when General Lee in front of the whole command raised himself in the stirrups, uncovered his gray hairs and with an earnest voice exclaimed, "Texans always move them."

[sil.]

Never before in my lifetime did I ever see such a scene as was enacted when Lee pronounced these words. A yell rant the air that must have been heard for miles around. A courier riding by my side with tears coursing down his cheeks exclaimed, "I would charge hell itself for that old man."

David McCullough The Texans held the position until reinforcements came. By the end of the day, the Confederates has smashed Grant's right, seized two generals, and 600 prisoners and come close to cutting the Union's supply line.

[sil.]

David McCullough Grant received these reports without comment.

SHELBY FOOTE Writer

Shelby Foote Right in the middle of the Battle of the Wilderness, all staff man who had been fighting in the east all this time and he had just come from the west, kept talking about Bobby Lee, Bobby Lee. He will do this and do that. General Grant finally told them, "I'm tired of hearing about Bobby Lee. You think he's gonna do a double somersault and land in our area. Quit thinking about what he's gonna do to you and think about what you're gonna do to him, bring some guns up here." Things like

that. Grant, he's wonderful.

ED BEARSS Historian

Ed Bearss The Wilderness is probably not the bloodiest battle in the war, but the most terrible battle in the war in many ways. Grant in two days loses more men than Hooker did, did at Chancellorsville. But in the Wilderness, the leaves from the previous year covered the ground. And using the type of weapon they used in the Civil War, you have lots of lit and linen smoldering, falling into the leaves and it will set these leaves a fire. And men who have been shot badly to the bawls, with broken legs, will not be able to move as the fire starts burning toward them and large numbers of wounded men will perish in the flames.

David McCullough Grants first move had been a disaster. The Wilderness had caused 17,000 men. That night, brush fires raged through the woods, 200 wounded federal soldiers burned alive while the entrenched armies listened to their screams.

Clara Barton I am holding my breath in awe at the vastness of the shadow that floats like a pole over our heads. It has come that men has no longer an individual existence but is counted in thousands and measured in miles. Clara Barton.

David McCullough In the Wilderness, surgeons amputated limbs without let-up for more than 100 hours and sent back behind the lines 2,000 thousand wounded men each day.

Carl Shurtz As a wounded man was lifted on the table, often shrieking with pain as the attendants handled him, the surgeon quickly examined the wound and resolved upon cutting off the wounded limb. Some ether was administered. The surgeon snatched his knife from between his teeth, wiped it rapidly once or twice across his blood-stained apron and the cutting began. The operation accomplished; the surgeon would look around with the deep sigh and then, next. Carl Shurtz.

Washington Roebling The Wilderness was a useless battle fought with great loss and no result. Washington Roebling.

Shelby Foote Grant, in the Wilderness, after that first night in the Wilderness went to his tent, broke down and cried very hard. Some of the staff members said they'd never seen a man so unstrung, but he didn't cry until the battle was over him, and he wasn't crying when it began again next day.

David McCullough What was different about Grant became clear the next morning when he gave the order to march. For the first time after a defeat, the army of the Potomac was moving forward.

Elisha Hunt Rhodes May 7. If we were under any other general except Grant, I should expect to retreat, but Grant is not that kind of soldier. Elisha Hunt Rhodes.

David McCullough "Our spirits rose," one Union man remembered. "We marched free. The men began to sing." "Ulysses," another soldier said, "Don't scare worth a damn."

[sil.]

ROBERT E. LEE General Grant is not going to retreat. He will move his army to Spotsylvania. I'm so

sure of his next move that I have already made arrangements.

Shelby Foote He knew what Grant was gonna do because he can make himself Grant for long enough to figure out what Grant would do in a situation. When they fired, let's see five or six generals before they got to Grant and by the time they let McClellan go, Lee said, "I'm afraid they're gonna keep making these changes until they get someone I don't understand." They never got anyone he didn't understand, but they finally got Grant who knew how to whip him and did.

David McCullough In the first years of the war, battle was bloody but sporadic. From now on, it would be waste without a break. From the Wilderness to Cold Harbor, it would not stop for 30 days. It was one soldier wrote "living night and day within the valley of the shadow of death.

Mary Chesnut May 8. The dreadful work is beginning again. John L. Miller my cousin, killed at the head of his regiment. The blows now fall so fast on our heads; it is bewildering. Mary Chesnut.

[sil.]

David McCullough At Spotsylvania, the two armies mauled each other for days without gaining ground. It was the most relentless exchange of fire in the history of warfare up to that time. Some men were hit by so many bullets that their bodies fell apart. A Union veteran remembered it simply as the most terrible day I had ever lived.

The enemy's dead were piled upon each other in front of the captured breast works in some places four layers deep. Below the mass of fast decaying corpses, the convulsive twitching of limbs showed that there were wounded men still alive. The place was well-named, the Bloody Angle.

[sil.]

David McCullough The two armies lost another 20,000 men.

[sil.]

May 12, Yellow Tavern, Virginia. General J.E.B. Stuart killed.

David McCullough When Lee got the news, he said, "I can scarcely think of him without weeping."

Move by the left flank

David McCullough Again and again Lee anticipated Grant. And again and again, the Union commander skirted south and east in a semicircle. Two armies locked in a brutal clumsy stranglehold as the battle lines lurched toward Richmond.

Robert E. Lee We must destroy this army of Grant's before he gets to the James. If he gets there, it will become a siege and then it will be a mere question of time.

Ulysses S. Grant May 11th. We have now ended the sixth day of very heavy fighting and the result up to this time is much in our favor. I propose to fight it out on this line if it takes all summer.

David McCullough Grant continued his stubborn flanking maneuvers in an attempt to get around Lee's right and move on Richmond.

[sil.]

Shelby Foote He did it with superior numbers and doggedness, kept going, move by the left flank, move by the left flank, move by the left flank and Lee's backing up the whole time losing men that he couldn't replace.

Washington Roebling May 15th, 1864. Dear Emily, the papers must have told you that we've been fighting a little. Our corps has only 12,000 left out of 27,000. Uncle Robert E. Lee isn't licked yet by a long shot and if we are not mighty careful, he'll beat us. I think we have done very well to reward that fate so far. Tomorrow, we have another battle. I don't think it will amount to much. Washington Roebling.

David McCullough Grant and Lee now race through a crossroads called Cold Harbor near the Chickahominy River. Again, Lee got there first and ordered his men to dig in and prepare for the all-out assault he knew would follow. As they settle down for the night on June 2nd, veterans on the Union side sensed what was coming.

Horace Porter The men were calmly writing their names and home addresses on slips of paper and pinning them to the backs of their coats so that their bodies might be recognized and their fate made known to their families at home. General Horace Porter.

David McCullough When the bugles blew for the attack at 4:30 a.m., 60,000 Union men started toward the unseen enemy. The Battle of Cold Harbor had begun.

I had seen the dreadful carnage in front of Marye's Hill at Fredericksburg, but I had seen nothing to exceed this. It was not war; it was murder.

[sil.]

Those were men who knew how to take a position where you can do the most killing from. The whole army was lined up there waiting, and hoping, and praying some would come out at them. Then Grant threw three course at them and approximately seven minutes, they've shot about 7,000 men down. It was a bloody mess. It's the only thing Grant ever admitted that he'd done wrong.

Ulysses Grant I've always regret it that the last assault at Cold Harbor was ever made. No advantage whatever was gained to compensate for the heavy loss we sustained.

[sil.]

David McCullough When another assault was suggested, Union officers rejected the idea outright. "I will not take my regiment in another such charge," said a New Hampshire captain. "If Jesus Christ himself should order it."

David McCullough After the battle, the diary of a young Massachusetts volunteer was found spattered with blood. It's last entry read, "June 3rd 1864, Cold Harbor, Virginia. I was killed."

[sil.]

Washington Roebling Our matters here are at deadlock, unless the rebs commit some great error, they will hold us in check until kingdom come. We're thoroughly tired and disgusted. These two armies remind me very much of two school boys trying to stare each other out of countenance. Everyone knows that if Lee were to come out of his entrenchments, we could whip him, but Bob Lee is a little too smart for us. Washington Roebling.

David McCullough From the Wilderness to Cold Harbor in a single month, the army of the Potomac had lost 50,000 men, half as many as it lost in three years of struggle.

June 5th, 1864. Our people lost very severely yesterday. In every calculation that we make, we make ourselves out to be 20,000 men stronger. Yet, in every fight, they show as many men as we have and they always show us long a line as we do, no matter how long we make ours. June 7th 1864, another one of my best friends in the army has been killed. One goes after the other with perfect regularity.

Mary Chesnut Grant doesn't care a snap that men fall like the leaves fall. He fights to win that chap does. He has the disagreeable habit of not retreating before irresistible veterans. Mary Chesnut.

He keeps his own counts on, padlocks his mouth while his countenance indicates nothing that is gives no expression of his feelings and no evidence of his intention. He smokes almost constantly and has a habit of whittling with a small knife cutting a small stick into small chips making nothing.

Mary Lincoln Grant is a butcher and not fit to be at the head of an army. He losses two men to the enemies' one. He has no management, no regard for life. I could fight an army as well myself. Mary Lincoln.

David McCullough When several of Lee's officers denounced Grant as a butcher, Lee quieted them. "I think Grant has managed his affairs remarkably well up to the present time," he said. Grant kept moving. He slipped his army out of his trenches, crossed the Chickahominy, faded toward Richmond then shifted left again, to the James River. His target now was Petersburg, south of the Confederate capital where he hoped to cut off Lee's supplies and destroy the army of Northern Virginia. For the first time, Lee misjudged Grant's intentions, rushing much of his army to the outskirts of Richmond to meet an attack, Grant did not plan to make. Instead, Union engineers laid a pontoon bridge all the way across the James in just eight hours. On June 12th, the massive army of the Potomac began to cross, it took four days.

[sil.]

Abraham Lincoln General Grant, I begin to see it, you will succeed. God bless you. A. Lincoln.

Petersburg, Virginia

David McCullough 16,000 Union troops under General William Smith were the first to reach Petersburg. The city was defended by fewer than 3,000 Confederates under General Beauregard.

[sil.]

David McCullough Smith moved slowly to the attack. Reinforcements intended to aid him, got lost on the way. Still, his late afternoon assault made progress. When night fell, Petersburg was seen within the Union's grasp. General Winfield Scott Hancock urged a moonlight assault, but Smith begged off, remembering Cold Harbor. During the night, Confederate reinforcements were brought up. The opportunity was gone.

The rage of the enlisted men was devilish, the most blood-curdling blasphemy I've ever listened to, I heard that night.

David McCullough In just six weeks, Grant and Lee had all but crippled each other. And now both armies dug in for a siege. The burrowing would go on for ten months. The men lived in a 20-mile labyrinth of trenches, plague by flies, open to rain in the fierce Virginia sun, and exposed to shell and mortar fire.

John W. Hailing Nothing for excitement except to the few were picked off by sharpshooters. The feeling prevails that sooner or later, this experience will befall us all. Private John W. Hailing.

[sil.]

David McCullough Colonel Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, one of the heroes of Gettysburg, led his regiment in an assault on Petersburg. As he turned to rally his men, a bullet smashed through his pelvis, severed arteries, nicked his bladder. He stayed on his feet leaning on his sword with one hand and waving his men on with the other, until they all had passed him by then he sank to the ground. Doctors did not expect him to live. In tribute to his courage, Grant promoted him on the field to brigadier general. Chamberlain's obituary appeared in the newspapers the next day.

[sil.]

Shelby Foote Petersburg is a magnificent salute to the durability of men on both sides. It was just a, it was a rehearsal for World War I, trench warfare. And they stood up very well to it, but the soldiers always did in that war. They were, it's to us an almost incredible bravery, considering the casualties.

Washington Roebling June 23rd 1864. The demand down here for killing purposes is far ahead of the supply. Thank God, however, for the consolation that when the last man is killed, the war will be over. This war, you know, differs from all previous wars, in having no object to fight for. It can't be finished until all the men on either the one side or the other are killed. Both sides are trying to do that as fast as they can because it would be a pity to spend this affair out for two or three years longer. Washington Roebling.

[sil.]

Mollie Vanderberg Dear Henry, I feel more lonely and sad than I had been in some time. Oh, that I knew what the termination of this awful conflict would be. Henry, I want to see you, but don't you come. Join for the war if it's 40 years. If you get killed, it's the most honorable death. If you escape, I will rejoice. I love thee still. Mollie Vanderberg.

[sil.]

Horace Greeley Our bleeding, bankrupt, almost dying country longs for peace. Shudders at the prospect of further wholesale devastation, of new rivers of human blood. Horace Greeley.

Now, Fix Me

Alexander Hunter At night, my ward became like a dimmed caverns of the catacombs where instead of the dead in their final rest, they were wasted figures burning with fever and raving from the agony of splintered bones, tossing restlessly from side to side with every ill would seem with human flesh was there to. From the rafters, the flickering oil lamps swung mournfully, casting a ghastly light. Private Alexander Hunter, 17th Virginia.

David McCullough When the war began, there were only a handful of army hospitals in the north. When it ended, the Union was running more than 350, the Confederacy, 154. There were 16 hospitals in Washington alone. When these proved insufficient, men were cared for in the patent office. Even in the house in the Senate chambers. Hospitals were giant warehouses for the dying. The biggest and best, north or south, was Chimborazo at Richmond with 8,000 beds, 5 soup kitchens, ice houses, dairy cattle, a herd of goats, a bakery that turned out 10,000 loaves of bread a day, and a 400 keg brewery.

Walt Whitman Aroused and angry, I thought to beat the alarm and urge relentless war. But soon my fingers failed me. My face drooped and I resigned myself to sit by the wounded and soothed them or silently watch the dead. Walt Whitman.

David McCullough Walt Whitman was too old for the ranks, not qualified to be an officer, not enthusiastic about firing a gun or drawing a sword on another man. But when his younger brother was wounded at Antietam and Whitman went to find him in the hospital, he was appalled by what he saw. He moved to Washington to help with the wounded, giving out small gifts, changing dressings, and reciting his poetry.

Walt Whitman The doctors tell me, I supplied the patients with a medicine which all their drugs and bottles and powders are helpless to yield. That has saved more than one life, so, I go around. Some of my boys die, some get well.

Dorothea Dix No woman under 30 years need to apply to serve in government hospitals. All nurses are required to be very plain-looking women. Their dresses must be brown or black with no boles, no curls, no jewelry, and no hoop skirts. Dorothea Dix.

David McCullough Early in the war, Dorothea Dix volunteered her services to the Union. The 59-year-old crusader for the mentally-ill was put in charge of all women nurses employed by the armies. Tireless and so autocratic, one woman called her Dragon Dix. She barred any applicant she thought interested in romantic adventure. Even nuns were sometimes, turned down. By the end of the war though, the only question she asked potential recruits was, "When you can start?" Under her strict guidance, care for the sick and wounded was vastly improved. Despite the bitter criticism and petty rivalry of male colleagues, she stayed at her post for all four years, the entire war without pay.

[sil.]

Harriet Foote Hawley Army Square Hospital. I am learning not to let myself feel as much as I did at

first. Yet, I never can get used to it. Harriet Foote Hawley.

[sil.]

Shelby Foote They would say it to the doctor who gave them up. And they would ask me about it. I would tell them the truth. I told one man that and he asked, "How long?" I said, "Not over 20 minutes." He did not show any fear; they never do. He put his hand up, so, and closed his eyes with his own fingers and stretched himself out and crossed his arms over his breast. "Now, fix me," he said. I pinned the toes of his stockings together that was a way we laid corpses out. And he died in a few minutes. His face looked as pleasant as if he was asleep. And many is the time, the boys would fix themselves that way before they die.

[sil.]

Lorenzo Strong Lorenzo Strong, Company A, 9th United States Cavalry, shot by a shell last Sunday. The right leg amputated on the field, took a turn for the worse. I stayed and saw all. The doctor comes in and gives him a little chloroform. One of the nurses constantly fans him for it is fearfully hot. He asked to be raised up and they put him in a half sitting posture. He called for Mark, repeatedly, half-deliriously all day. Life ebbs, runs now with the speed of a mill race. His eyes turned back. A crowd including two or three doctors, several students and many soldiers had silently gathered. The struggle goes on and dwindles a little more and a little more and then welcome oblivion, painlessness, death. A pause, the crowd drops away. June 17th 1864. Dearest mother, this place seems to have got the better of me, but I think I shall come home for a short time.

The Remedy Chattanooga, Tennessee

William Tecumseh Sherman I think I understand the purpose of the South properly and that the best way to deal with them is to meet them fair and square on any issue. We must fight them, cut into them, not talk to them, and pursued till they cry, "Enough." War is the remedy our enemies have chosen and I say, let us give them all they want. William Tecumseh Sherman.

David McCullough On the same day that Grant stepped off into the Wilderness, Sherman's grand army of the West moves south from Chattanooga towards Atlanta, 100 miles away. William Tecumseh Sherman and Ulysses S. Grant had survived hard times together. Their friendship had been forged in Kentucky when Sherman had come close to breaking down, persuaded the war that would never end.

William Tecumseh Sherman Grant stood by me when I was crazy and I stood by him when he was drunk. And now, we stand by each other always.

David McCullough Sherman was an orphan and had graduated sixth in his class at West Point when he was only 20. Tall and red-haired, intelligent and irritable. He wore shoes rather than military boots, slept little, and talked a lot, boiling over with ideas, a friend said.

He was always too busy to eat much. He talked and smoked cigars incessantly, giving orders, dictating telegrams, bright and chipper.

David McCullough He hated politicians, profiteers, sentimentalists. Above all, he hated reporters whom he considered worst than spies because they printed military secrets just to sell newspapers.

William Tecumseh Sherman These dirty newspapers scribblers have the impedance of Satan. They come into camp, poke about among the lazy sharks and pick up their camp rumors and published them as facts. They're a pest and I treat them as spies which in truth they are.

David McCullough He was convinced, if he kill them all, there would be news from hell before breakfast. Family friends called him Comp(ph), his men called him Uncle Billy. He was ruthless in war. Now, Grant entrusted his friend with a second most important part of his grand strategy, to seize Atlanta and smash the combined Confederate armies of Tennessee and Mississippi under Joseph E. Johnston.

[sil.]

David McCullough In Washington, Lincoln's chances for reelection were slim. "I'm going to be beaten," Lincoln wrote that summer, "and unless some great change takes place, badly beaten." With Grant stalled at Petersburg, Sherman had to win.

[sil.]

David McCullough Sherman had surveyed parts of Georgia as young lieutenant. "I know Georgia better than the rebels did," he wrote. He knew the fighting there would be scattered and sporadic. "A big Indian war," he called it.

[sil.]

David McCullough Joseph E. Johnston, the Confederate commander, who now face Sherman was heartily disliked by President Jefferson Davis. But he was very nearly worshipped by his men.

Sam Watkins I do not believe there was a soldier in his army, but would gladly have died for him. With him, everything was his soldiers. He would feed his soldiers if the country starved. Sam Watkins.

David McCullough Outgunned, outsupplied, and outnumbered almost two to one, Joseph E. Johnston, could only hope to slow Sherman's advance and perhaps lure him into making the kind of doom frontal attack that would help swing the election against Lincoln. But Sherman's advance was a masterpiece of planning. In a matter of hours his engineers replaced burned bridges and repaired ripped up rail lines.

David McCullough When Nathan Bedford Forrest raiders collapsed a tunnel in Sherman's rear, one weary southern private was not impressed. Sherman, he said, probably carried a spare tunnel with him.

David McCullough Slowly, relentlessly, he forced Johnston out of Dalton, Resaca, Cassville, Allatoona, New Hope Church. A surrendering Confederate told his captors, Sherman will never go to hell, he'll flank the devil, and make heaven in spite of the guards.

William Tecumseh Sherman June 14th. We killed General Poke yesterday and made good progress today. William Tecumseh Sherman.

David McCullough At Kennesaw Mountain, north of Atlanta, the Confederates dug in. On June 27th, 13,000 Union men stormed up the mountain and were hurled back. The Federals seemed to walk up and take death, a southerner remembered, as coolly as if they were automatic or wooden men.

I've heard men say that if they ever killed a Yankee during the war, they were not aware of it. I am satisfied that on this memorable day, every man in our regiment killed from 20 to 100 each. All that was necessary was to load and shoot.

David McCullough The Union loss 3,000 men, the Confederates only 750. One or two more such assaults, and they had warned Sherman, would use up this army. Sherman never admitted he had made a mistake at Kennesaw Mountain, but he never repeated it either. Reluctantly, he returned to his slow flanking maneuvers, forcing Johnston back to within sight of Atlanta itself. But there, he stalled just like Grant.

[sil.]

David McCullough Two months of relentless fighting had resulted in identical stalemates. Sherman was stopped north of Atlanta. Grant and Lee were deadlocked outside Petersburg. Without a decisive victory somewhere, Abraham Lincoln was sure to lose the fall election. Time was running out.

[sil.]

Spotswood Rice Miss Kittey Diggs, I want you to understand that Mary is my child and she is a God-given rite of my own. And you may hold on to her as long as you as can, but I want you to remember this one thing that the longer you keep my child from me, the longer you will have to burn in hell and the quicker you'll get there. I have no fears about getting Mary out of your hands. This whole government gives cheer to me and you cannot help yourself. Spotswood Rice.

[sil.]

To be continued 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 Chestnut 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 JAKOBI 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

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