



# SHERMAN'S MARCH

## DESTRUCTION TO HASTEN VICTORY NOVEMBER 15 – DECEMBER 22, 1864



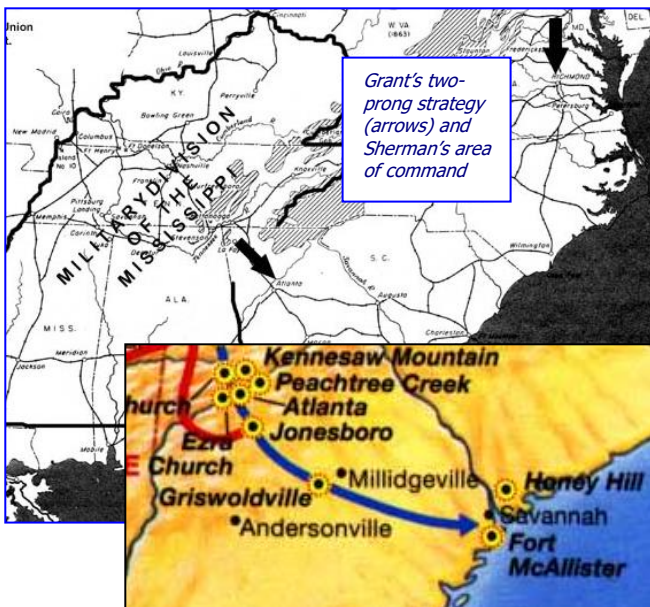
Lt. Gen. William J. Hardee  
Dept. of South Carolina, Florida  
& Georgia

Maj. Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman,  
Military Division of the Mississippi

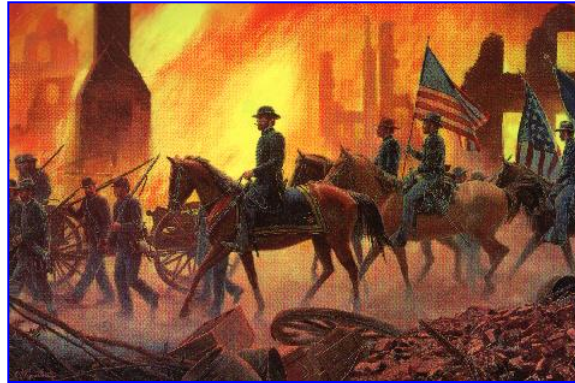
**Confederate Army**  
Strength: 26,000 (scattered)

**Union Army**  
Strength: 62,000

- **Maj. Gen. Grant** planned two campaigns for 1864: his own drive against **Gen. Lee** in the east, and **Sherman's** against Atlanta.
- Sherman moved against Atlanta with an overwhelming force of 100,000 men.
- After capturing Atlanta in September, Sherman made plans to drive across the heart of the Confederacy to destroy its capacity for making war, and to increase the pressure on Lee.
- Sherman's experience from the Vicksburg campaign gave him confidence that he could move without a supply train -- he would live on the country.
- Not even Confederate **Gen. Hood's** invasion of Tennessee caused Sherman to be deflected; Sherman just sent **Gen. Thomas** to catch Hood and destroy him.
- On November 15<sup>th</sup>, with Atlanta in flames, Sherman's men set out to cross 300 miles of enemy territory. As far as Grant was concerned, it was as if they had disappeared off the map.



## "Make Georgia Howl"



"Behind us lay Atlanta, smouldering and in ruins," said Sherman as his soldiers filed by towards the sea.

- Sherman's march took place in two columns: the Army of the Tennessee on the right, commanded by **Maj. Gen. Howard**, and the Army of Georgia, under **Maj. Gen. Slocum**.
- The front of the columns cut a 60 mile swath, making it easy for his troops to get fed and very hard for the Confederates to guess their exact destination.
- **Lt. Gen. Hardee's** army was woefully inadequate by comparison: 13,000 soldiers and 10,000 cavalry **under Gen. Wheeler**.
- Foragers called "bummers" moved ahead of Sherman's army, collecting food and horses. Little was done to ensure that they took only what was needed. A sable cloud of 25,000 slaves followed behind.



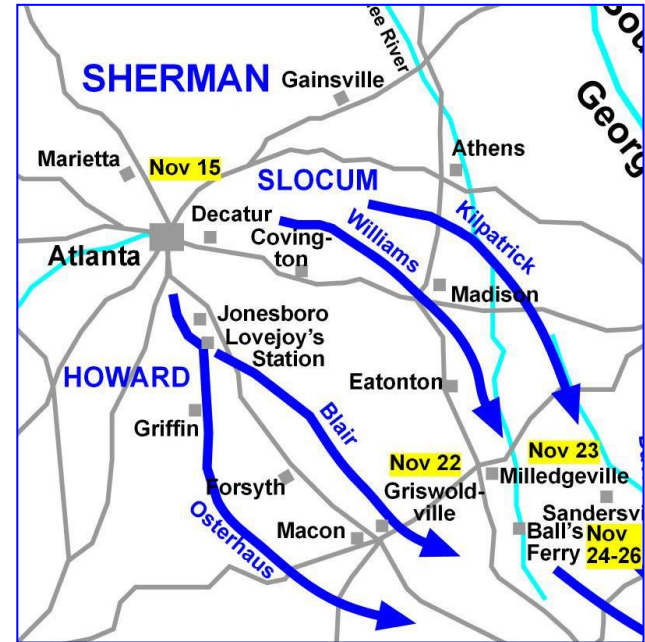
(above) Sherman's 'bummers' foraging; it was said that "no living thing is found in Sherman's track."



"Sherman's neckties" were Southern railway lines that were heated over a fire and twisted so they could not be used again.

## November 23: Fall of Milledgeville

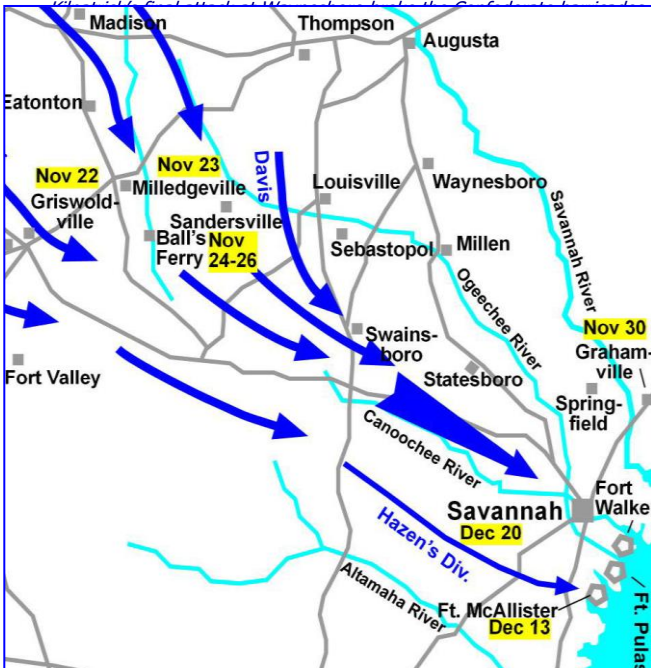
- As he marched, Sherman destroyed anything useful to the Confederate war effort. Anything connected with slavery was also destroyed.
- The march closed in on Georgia's capital, Milledgeville.
- Georgia's legislature called on every white man to come to the army; no one rose up.
- The legislature then called on Georgians to "die freemen rather than live as slaves", and then fled the capital.
- Wheeler's cavalry struck the Federal cavalry at Griswoldville on November 22<sup>nd</sup>, killing three men. A charge by Georgia militia resulted in 600 Confederate prisoners out of 1,100 attackers.
- The next day, Sherman entered Milledgeville. His staff sat in the legislature and jokingly voted Georgia back into the Union.





## December 9: At the Gates of Atlanta

- Sherman's men moved out on November 24<sup>th</sup>, heading for Savannah.
- Federal cavalry commander Brig. Gen. Kilpatrick made a lunge towards Augusta to mislead the Confederates and cover the army's crossing of the Ogeechee river.
- Wheeler's cavalry again fought small rear-guard actions, nearly capturing Kilpatrick.
- Kilpatrick finally drove Wheeler through Waynesboro and opened the way for Sherman to reach Savannah.



## The Siege

- When the Federal army reached Savannah they found that General Hardee's 10,000 men were in good defensive positions.
- The Southern soldiers were behind trenches and protected by forts; they had also flooded the rice fields to make impassable swamps.
- Blocked from reaching the sea by Fort McAllister, Sherman's men assaulted the fort on December 13<sup>th</sup>. Fort McAllister was the first fort to be bombarded by Federal Monitor iron-clads.
- After 15 minutes, the fort fell.
- With a link established between Sherman and the Federal fleet, Hardee saw that further defence of Savannah was pointless, and he withdrew from the city north into South Carolina.
- On December 22<sup>nd</sup> Sherman sent a telegram to President Lincoln: "I beg to present you as a Christmas gift the city of Savannah..."



Attack on Fort McAllister

Sherman in front of Savannah

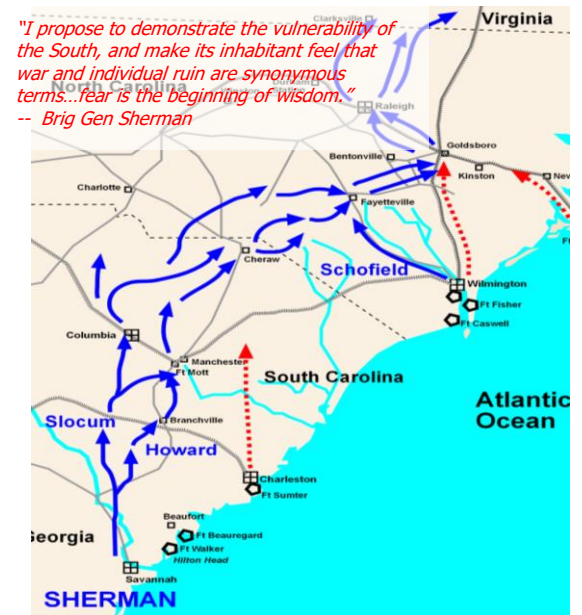


## Consequences

- The civil war was not fought to conquer territory, but to preserve or attack a way of life.
- Sherman fought the war with a new and radical fire: destroy the enemy's way of life and ability to continue to fight. He is regarded by many as the first of the "modern" military thinkers.
- "In showing to the world that your army could be divided, putting the stronger part to an important new service, and yet leaving enough to vanquish the old opposing force of the whole—Hood's army—it brings those who sat in darkness, to see a great light," President Lincoln wrote to Sherman. It was a revelation about Union power that Sherman, splitting his army, could win two great campaigns..
- On January 15, Sherman headed north towards Grant, and Lee, and the end of the civil war.



*"I propose to demonstrate the vulnerability of the South, and make its inhabitant feel that war and individual ruin are synonymous terms...fear is the beginning of wisdom."  
-- Brig Gen Sherman*



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