

A Week of Both Politics and Fighting

<http://civilwar150.longwood.edu>

Major political and military events occurred during this week. The United States were counting down until the next national election and the citizens were completely engrossed in the total war ideal. The main battlegrounds were the siege of Petersburg, headed by Grant in the Eastern Theater, and the Union advance, headed by Sherman in the Western Theater.

June 29th saw an important political move from the Confederacy. Union forces at this time were moving closer and closer to Atlanta, which warranted a voice of great concern from Governor Brown of Georgia. President Davis corresponded with the governor claiming that he had sent all available troops to assist him.

June 30th marked the formal resignation of Salmon Chase, the United States Secretary of the Treasury. This was not the first time that Salmon Chase had attempted to resign, but this time Lincoln accepted his resignation. The reason for the resignation was a disagreement over an appointment; however, this was the latest in a long list of discrepancies between the two. Chase's assistant, George Harrington, assumed the duties temporarily while Lincoln searched for a replacement. This move certainly helped Lincoln and he knew this, as having as many allies in his cabinet was important during this national crisis. The next day, July 1st, President Lincoln found his replacement for Secretary of the Treasury; he appointed William Pitt Fessenden to the position. Fessenden would prove to be a competent politician and performed his duties well. Meanwhile in Petersburg, military fighting was relatively quiet at this time.

July 2nd marked the day with the most military conflicts. Joseph Johnston of the Confederacy maneuvered his troops on Kennesaw Mt. in Georgia in reaction to the onslaught of

Union forces in the area. Federal forces landed in Charleston, SC and successfully repelled the Confederate defenders from the region. Skirmishing occurred in Virginia in Winchester near the Potomac River, near the Tennessee/Mississippi border and in southern Mississippi as a Federal expedition moved from Vicksburg. In political news, U.S. Congress passed a land grant act that gave lands to the Pacific Northwest and authorized a telegraph line to be built to the Puget Sound.

Sunday, July 3rd, marked another Confederate advance towards Harper's Ferry. Under General Early, the raid sent Union forces back into retreat across the Potomac to Maryland. This was an outrage for both the citizens near Harper's Ferry and Washington. In the Charleston area, Federal troops restarted their advances towards the city with a sea to land invasion of the area. This was ultimately a failure, and they were forced to retreat. Sherman's armies blazed past Johnston's old positions and through Marietta, GA and fighting erupted near Johnston's new defensive line. The majority of fighting occurred near Ruff's Mills, Kingston and Big Shanty and included major cavalry harassment of the Union lines.

July 4th marked the first session of the Thirty-Eighth Congress of the United States. The main issue was reconstruction policy. The question of who would control it and how lenient it would be ranged congressmen against each other until the so called Wade-Davis Bill came out of the Senate. Named after its authors, Sen. Benjamin Wade of OH and Henry David of MD, it called for a vote of white citizens in order for southern states to re-enter the Union, complete emancipation of the slaves through a Constitutional amendment, and office holding restrictions on southerners. Essentially, this was viewed as a Congress controlled measure. In the Western Theater, Sherman's armies were closing in on both Johnston and Atlanta. Johnston again evacuated his men and moved to the defensive position at Chattahoochee. In the East, the

fighting near Harper's Ferry continued as Confederate Gen. Early made preparations to cross the Potomac. July 5th proved to be the breaking point for Gen. Early as his men could not take Harper's Ferry and decided to cross the Potomac. Washington sent twenty four thousand troops down from New York to bolster the defense of Maryland. Sherman, in the Western Theater, pushed against the defensive line of Gen. Johnston, attempting to find a hole in his strategy but failed to do so.

The war, once again, seemed to have no end.