

*The City was, on this day, occupied by the United States Forces, and the Council did not, therefore, meet.*

--APRIL 3, 1865 MINUTES OF RICHMOND CITY COUNCIL

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# RICHMOND OCCUPIED

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ENTRY of THE UNITED STATES  
FORCES into RICHMOND, VA.  
April 3, 1865

CALLING TOGETHER OF THE  
VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE AND  
REVOCAATION OF THE SAME

by

GODFREY WEITZEL  
*Major, Corps of Engineers*

AND

*Brevet Major General, United States Army*

EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION  
*by Louis H. Manarin*

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## PREFACE

From that early day in May, 1607, when Captains John Smith and Christopher Newport landed at "The Falls," the City of Richmond has become rich in the history of Virginia and of the United States.

In the formative years of the colony, Richmond served as a frontier trading post and river port. Colonel William Byrd established Richmond as a City in 1737.

Through the Colonial Period the young city flourished. It was in Richmond that Patrick Henry sounded his famous call of "liberty or death." The City was under attack and partially burned during the Revolutionary War. Again, in the War of 1812, the British unsuccessfully attempted to capture the City.

It was , however, during the War Between the States--1861-1865--that Richmond became the most notable City in the divided nation and in the world. Being the Capital of the Confederacy and of Virginia, Richmond was the center of activity for the governments, the armies, and the production of munitions. For four long years Richmond withstood capture until that fateful day in April 1865 when it finally became necessary to evacuate the City.

This publication presents the eyewitness account by the Union Commander of the tragic story of the fall of Richmond and its occupation by Union forces. General Godfrey Weitzel was the first of a number of Union military commanders in charge of the occupied city. His account, perhaps, will clear up many conflicting stories and legends of the events that actually occurred in the City during those chaotic days.

The Committee is deeply indebted to its historian, Dr. Louis H. Manarin, for his able commentary, amply footnoted, which will give the student of history and the interested reader as well, an insight into the life of a city, triumphant in victory, undaunted in defeat.

The Richmond Civil War Centennial Committee

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The Richmond Civil War Centennial Committee is exceedingly grateful to the Cincinnati Historical Society, owners of General Godfrey Weitzel's manuscript account of his occupation of Richmond which is published with their permission, and to Dr. Louis L. Tucker, Director, whose willing and able co-operation made this publication possible.

# **Richmond Occupied**

**By**

**Louis H. Manarin, Ph.D.**



Early in the spring of 1865 the Confederacy was only a shell of its onetime greatness. The Armies in the field were numerically inferior to those of its opponent, and the administration could not maintain a system of supply to provide the soldiers with the necessary food and supplies. When General Robert E. Lee was requested to provide his views, he informed Secretary of War John C. Breckinridge:

"It must be apparent to everyone that [the military condition of the country] is full of peril and requires prompt action ....

"While the military situation is not favorable, it is not worse than the superior numbers and resources of the enemy justified us in expecting from the beginning. Indeed, the legitimate military consequences of that superiority have been postponed longer than we had reason to anticipate."<sup>1</sup>

General Grant did not wish to give his opponent time to strengthen his forces during the favorable weather of spring. On March 24 he issued the orders which would sound the death knell of the Confederacy.

"On the 29th instant the armies operating against Richmond will be moved by our left, for the double purpose of turning the enemy out of his present position around Petersburg and to insure the success of the cavalry under General Sheridan, which

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<sup>1</sup> General Robert E. Lee to Secretary of War John C. Breckinridge, March 9, 1865. *War of the Rebellion: Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington, 1891), Series 1, vol. XLVI, part 2, p. 1295. Hereinafter cited as *O. R.*

In his narrative, printed herewith, General Godfrey Weitzel refers to this letter by Lee, stating that it was found in the drawer of President Davis' desk. Weitzel recalled that "this letter was written in the previous October, if I recollect correctly." Judge John A. Campbell, Confederate Assistant Secretary of War, wrote that the letter by Lee found by Weitzel was "dated about the 10th of March, 1865." (John A. Campbell, *Recollections of the Evacuation of Richmond* (Baltimore, 1880), p. 16.) The Federal Assistant Secretary of War, Charles A. Dana, telegraphed the letter to Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton on April 5, 1865. However, the next day he informed Stanton that the letter "was accidentally picked up by an officer." (*O.R.*, Series I, vol. XLVI, part 3, pp. 593-594.) General Weitzel informs us in his narrative that he sent the letter to Stanton by General H. W. Benham. What happened to the original letter became a mystery. A check of the publication files of the *O. R.*, on file at the National Archives in Record Group 109, revealed that the editors of that monumental work used a copy of the original on file at the Louisiana Historical Society.

will start at the same time, in its efforts to reach and destroy the South Side and Danville railroads."<sup>2</sup>

General Sheridan's cavalry moved and occupied Dinwiddie Court House; but were prevented from advancing further by the Confederate cavalry, reinforced by Lee's last reserves under General George E. Pickett. On April 1, the Union cavalry, now reinforced by the 5th Army Corps under General G. K. Warren, overwhelmed the Confederate position at Five Forks. Lee's right flank had been turned, his lines of communication westward were exposed. He had dispatched troops to try to stem the Federal tide advancing against his right, when news arrived of the disaster at Five Forks. Early on the morning of the 2nd, General Grant launched a general assault, the effects of which forced Lee to the realization that his lines would not hold, and he would have to evacuate Petersburg. At 10:40 a.m. Lee's telegram was received at the Confederate War Department at Richmond, stating that "I see no prospect of doing more than holding our position here till night. I am not certain that I can do that.... I advise that all preparations be made for leaving Richmond tonight."<sup>3</sup>

President Davis was notified of Lee's dispatch while attending services at St. Paul's Episcopal Church. He left immediately and summoned his cabinet for its last meeting in Richmond. Mayor Joseph Mayo, Governor William (Extra Billy) Smith, and former Governor John Letcher attended the meeting. Davis informed the group that Richmond would have to be evacuated. The cabinet members were instructed to direct their assistants to rush the packing of necessities and destruction of all materials and papers they would be unable to pack and carry. Everything was to be sent to the Danville station, where the officials were to meet and depart by train to Danville. Governor Smith announced his intention to ride to Lynchburg for the purpose of enlisting support to continue the fight. With the evacuation of the Confederate and State executives, all the functions of governing the City of Richmond would devolve on the City administration.

As the various branches of the Confederate and State governments prepared for the evacuation, the City Council was called for a special session. At this meeting it was:

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<sup>2</sup> *O. R.*, Series I, vol. XLVI, part 1, p. 50. General Weitzel quotes the portions of this order which affected his command in his narrative.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1264.



"Resolved, That in the event of the evacuation of the City, the Council and a committee of the citizens, to be appointed by the President, together with the Mayor, shall be authorized to meet the Federal authorities to make such arrangements for the surrender of the City as may protect the interests of the citizens." <sup>4</sup>

Upon the adoption of this resolution William H. Macfarland, Judge W. H. Lyons, Judge W. H. Halyburton, Judge John A. Meredith, and Loftin N. Ellett were chosen as the committee of citizens. In addition an ordinance was passed to destroy all liquor stored in the city. The councilmen were directed to organize committees within their wards execute this ordinance. <sup>5</sup>

As the local officials set about their task, the officials of the Confederate government gathered at the Danville depot to check final arrangements and to board the train for Danville. In the waning moments of April 2, 1865 the train carrying the President and members of his cabinet pulled out of the depot, leaving behind a bewildered, sad, but majestic city. Orders had already gone out for the Confederate troops in the outer entrenchments to withdraw. While they were in the process of executing these orders, final arrangements were being made in Richmond. In February, General Richard S. Ewell, commander of the Richmond defenses, had received orders from General Lee that it would be necessary to destroy all cotton and tobacco in Richmond should it be necessary to evacuate the capital. This order was a direct result of a Confederate statute which stipulated the destruction of the commodities to avoid their capture. Although efforts had been made to cause the removal of the articles or their destruction by another process; no final decisions had been made. General Ewell, therefore, issued orders on the 2nd to destroy the tobacco in Shockoe, Public, Mayo's, and Dibrell's warehouses. This was to be accomplished by setting the stores on fire after everything that could be carried was removed. Plans were also made to destroy the powder magazine and the vessels in the James River.

As these orders were being executed and the troops began to prepare to withdraw from the trenches, the people in Richmond began to gather in the

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<sup>4</sup> Richmond City Council Minutes, April 2, 1865, Virginia State Library, Richmond, Virginia.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* As these groups went about their work, they gave receipts for all the liquor destroyed. In 1868 the city was called on to pay the liquor destroyed on evacuation night.

streets in the business district. After the Confederate officials loaded all the provisions they could take, they let the people into the warehouses. Then, as the troops moved through the city and across the bridges to Manchester, the tobacco was set on fire at Shockoe and the other warehouses. Their efforts to obtain provisions, combined with the fear of the spreading fire, quickly turned the crowd of people (now reinforced by stragglers from the army and escaped prisoners from the penitentiary) into a pillaging mob. In such a frenzied state the mob assisted the fire in its destruction. It was not long before the vessels the river began to explode and the powder magazine went up in an earth-shattering roar, sending pieces of brick and glass flying in all directions. The explosions brought out more residents, and they too joined the mob. As the last Confederate cavalry moved over Mayo Bridge to Manchester they scattered lighted faggots to burn the structure behind them. The other bridges had already been fired. <sup>6</sup>

It was now early morning, both the mob and the fire were at their height. Through the streets rode Mayor Mayo and his committee in an open carriage on their mission to surrender the city to the advancing Federal troops. <sup>7</sup> Across the no man's land between the entrenchments the Federal forces had been alerted to a possible evacuation. As the night progressed, they could see a red glow over Richmond and could hear the explosions of the ordnance stores. At 4:30 a.m., April 3rd, Weitzel informed Grant that he would advance, and at 5:10 a.m. he ordered General Charles Devens to prepare to move at 6 a.m. <sup>8</sup> Weitzel informed Grant of the fires and explosions, and that he would move at daybreak. <sup>9</sup> Before daybreak Weitzel "felt pretty well convinced that the enemy were evacuating Richmond, and therefore as soon as day dawned I sent Major A. H. Stevens, 4th Massachusetts Cavalry, and Major E. E. Graves, aide-de-camp, both of my staff, with forty of my headquarters cavalry, belonging to Companies E and H, 4th Massachusetts Cavalry, to receive the surrender of the city, and to direct the authorities and

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<sup>6</sup> It is not intended to go into any great detail as to the events in Richmond on the night of April 2-3, 1865. The reader is referred to the following works:

Rembert W. Patrick, *The Fall of Richmond* (Baton Rouge, 1960).

William M. E. Rachal, "The Burning of Richmond", *Virginia Cavalcade*, I (Spring, 1952), pp. 23-28.

R. U. Johnson and C. C. Buel, eds., *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War* (New York, 4 volumes, 1884-1888), IV, pp. 725-728.

<sup>7</sup> Thomas C. DeLeon, *Four Years in Rebel Capitals* (Mobile, 1892), p. 360.

<sup>8</sup> *O. R.* Series I, vol. XLVI, part 3, p. 533.

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

citizens to cause all liquor to be destroyed and to preserve order until my troops arrived." <sup>10</sup> This party rode through the picket lines of Devens' Brigade as they were advancing on the Confederate picket line.

At daybreak the 1st Division, 25th Army Corps , under General August V. Kautz, moved up the Osborne Turnpike, while the 3rd Division, 24th Army Corps, under General Devens, advanced up the New Market Road. Weitzel's cavalry, the 5th Massachusetts Cavalry under Colonel Charles F. Adams, Jr., moved up the Darbytown and Charles City roads. All were ordered "to halt at the outskirts of the city until further orders." <sup>11</sup> Weitzel rode ahead of the troops along the Osborne Turnpike. <sup>12</sup>

As the Federal infantry formed for the march into Richmond, the detachment of cavalry under Majors Stevens and Graves moved up the Osborne Turnpike to its junction with the New Market Road. Here they met Mayor Mayo, who handed Major Stevens the following:

Richmond  
Monday, April 3, 1865

To the General Commanding the United States Army in front of  
Richmond:

General,

The Army of the Confederate Government having abandoned the City of Richmond, I respectfully request that you will take possession of it with an organized force, to preserve order and protect women and children and property.

Respectfully,  
Joseph Mayo,  
Mayor.<sup>13</sup>

Major Stevens accepted the surrender note and informed Mayor Mayo that he would deliver it to General Weitzel. The Mayor and his party then turned

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* part 1 , p. 1227.

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

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

<sup>13</sup> *Evening Whig*, Richmond, Virginia, April 6, 1865, p. 3.

to return to Richmond and Majors Stevens and Graves continued on into Richmond. They entered the city just before 7 a.m.,<sup>14</sup> and rode through Rocketts, up Main Street and then up Governor Street to Capitol Square. Here they dismounted and raised two cavalry guidons over the capitol, the first Union colors to fly over the city after its fall.<sup>15</sup>

In the meantime, General Weitzel was riding up the Osborne Turnpike with his staff. At the junction of the Osborne Turnpike and New Market Road, where Majors Stevens and Graves had met Mayor Mayo, Weitzel saw the head of Devens' Division coming up the New Market Road. Weitzel then rode up the Osborne Turnpike and entered Richmond. He went directly "to the city hall, where I received the surrender at 8:15 a.m."<sup>16</sup>

At the junction of the New Market Road and the Osborne Turnpike the two advancing Federal columns met. After some discussion, General Devens' Division continued while the troops on the Osborne Turnpike waited for them to pass. Devens' Division was marching with the 1st Brigade, under General Edward H. Ripley, in the advance. General Ripley's skirmish line was under Captain George A. Bruce, 13th New Hampshire Regiment. When Captain Bruce approached Rocketts he "found that the town had already been, occupied by Major Stevens with a few cavalry, and a sentinel posted on the road to halt all troops at that point."<sup>17</sup> Here he waited for the balance of the brigade. General Ripley approached Rocketts "about 7 o'clock in the morning" and "received orders to deploy a strong line of guards across from the river up the ravine of Gillies Creek, with orders to permit no one to pass, but to turn everyone back to join his command, and get ready for the formal entry into the city."<sup>18</sup> Having three bands in his

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<sup>14</sup> *O. R.*, Series I, vol. XLVI, part 1, p. 1227.

<sup>15</sup> Later Lieutenant Johnston L. De Peyster, riding with Weitzel's staff, raised the first United States flag over the capitol. General Weitzel relates the facts in his narrative. The reader may also consult two other accounts:

J. L. De Peyster, *Colors of U. S. First Raised Over Richmond* (Morrisania, New York, 1866).

Major A. H. Stevens, "The First Federal to Enter Richmond," *Southern Historical Society Papers*, XXX, pp. 152-153.

<sup>16</sup> *O. R.*, Series I, vol. XLVI, part 1, p. 1227.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1213. After the war Captain Bruce wrote another highly romanticized account of his exploits on April 3, 1865. See: George A. Bruce, *The Capture and Occupation of Richmond* (n.p., n.d.).

<sup>18</sup> Edward H. Ripley, *The Capture of Richmond, April 3, 1865* (New York, 1907), p. 7.

brigade, General Ripley placed them at the head of his column. When the orders came for the troops to move, they did so "about 8:30 a.m." <sup>19</sup> General Ripley's Brigade was the first to formally enter Richmond. Marching up Main Street the column turned right up Governor Street to Capitol Square. Here General Ripley halted the column and received orders to report to General Weitzel on the eastern porch of the capitol.

"Upon the broad landing at the head of the tall flight of steps stood General Weitzel and staff, the noble personality of General Devens with his staff, and grouped around were the division commanders of the Twenty-fifth Corps of colored troops, with the Hon. Joseph Mayo, the mayor of the city, and other city officials." <sup>20</sup>

Here General Weitzel informed Ripley that he was to be in command of the city and that his brigade would constitute the city garrison. He was also informed that the primary concern at that moment was to stop the fire from spreading. Finding that the fire fighting equipment had been rendered useless by the mob, the Federal infantry had to resort to other measures. With the assistance of Captain Parsons' Company of engineers, the men of Devens' Division succeeded in containing the fire by tearing down walls and destroying other buildings to create a break between the fire and the

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<sup>19</sup> *O. R.*, Series I, vol. XLVI, part 1, p. 1213. The sequence of events on the morning of April 3, and the place and time the city was surrendered, have been subjects of debate. It has been a popular belief that the city was surrendered by the Mayor near the junction of the New Market Road and the Osborne Turnpike. Evidence proves that General Weitzel did send Majors Stevens and Graves with a detachment of cavalry to enter the city and receive the surrender. They did meet Mayor Mayo near the junction of the roads, and Mayor Mayo did hand Stevens a note, addressed to the "General Commanding the United States Army in front of Richmond," announcing the surrender of the city. This must have occurred between 6:30 and 7 o'clock a.m. Stevens and Graves left at daybreak and were in the city when the troops halted at Rocketts about 7 a.m.

After Mayor Mayo surrendered the city to Stevens, he went through the formality of a formal surrender to General Weitzel at 8:15 a.m. in the City Hall. Thus, it appears, that the City of Richmond was surrendered twice.

Later Weitzel sent the following telegram:

"We took Richmond at 8:15 this morning. I captured many guns. The enemy left in great haste. The city is on fire in two places. Am making every effort to put it out. The people received us with enthusiastic expressions of joy."

<sup>20</sup> Edward H. Ripley, *The Capture of Richmond*, April 3, 1865 (New York, 1907), pp. 9-10.

untouched buildings. By the evening of the 3rd the fire had been contained, and the wheels of government set in motion under the military. General Weitzel, as commander, established his headquarters in President Davis' residence. General Shepley, Military Governor of Richmond, was located in the capitol building, and Lieutenant Colonel Manning, Provost Marshal, was in the City Hall.

For the next ten days General Weitzel would remain in command at Richmond. During this period he would meet with President Lincoln and prominent citizens to discuss the call of the Legislature. The sole purpose of such a meeting was to nullify the act of secession in order to withdraw Virginia troops from the Confederacy. When Lee surrendered the Army of Northern Virginia at Appomattox Court House, Va., April 9th, for all intents Virginia's troops were out of the war. There was no need for the Legislature to act, and the call was rescinded.<sup>21</sup> A second major problem revolved around the churches of Richmond and their services. In his narrative General Weitzel presents his experiences in coping with these two problems. Weitzel does not appear to have realized that Assistant Secretary of War Charles A. Dana was in Richmond reporting on his actions to Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton, as well as to events in general.<sup>22</sup> In reporting on Weitzel's actions pertaining to the local government and the calling of the Legislature, Dana stated:

"I should add also Weitzel seems disposed to act in all respects with caution, and discretion, and that nothing was said or intimated in the convention of this morning [April 8] that could compromise or embarrass the government in any future action."<sup>23</sup>

Weitzel did not handle the problem with the churches as well. In his narrative he makes an attempt to justify his actions, but his lack of decisive action caused Dana to inform Stanton "that it shakes a good deal my confidence in Weitzel."<sup>24</sup> The problem arose over the prayer in the

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<sup>21</sup> On April 7, only five men of the Legislature met with Judge Campbell, but did not act on anything of importance.

<sup>22</sup> On the morning of April 3, Secretary of War Stanton directed Dana to go to Richmond "to report the condition of affairs." Dana arrived in Richmond on April 5, and remained until ordered to proceed to Grant's headquarters on April 10. For Dana's account see: Charles A. Dana, *Recollections of the Civil War* (New York, 1898).

<sup>23</sup> *O. R.*, Series I, vol. XLVI, part 3, p. 655.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 677.

Episcopal churches which had been changed in 1861 to substitute the President of the Confederate States for the President of the United States. The Federal authorities ordered this changed. However, the clergymen could not change it, only Bishop Johns could, and he was in Canada. Weitzel informed Dana that all the churches "were to be allowed to be opened on condition that no disloyalty should be uttered and that the Episcopal ministers would be required to read the prayer for the President of the United States." <sup>25</sup> Dana's "confidence" in Weitzel was shaken when "no special authority was given to omit the prayer for the President, but it was distinctly understood that that prayer would not be said in the Episcopal churches." <sup>26</sup> Weitzel was of the opinion "that this prayer should be required of all those denominations of whose service it forms a regular part, but on the urgent advice of Shepley, military governor, and Brevet Brigadier General Ripley, he did not give a positive order enforcing it." <sup>27</sup> His decision was also the result of Lincoln's verbal direction to him. Dana reported to Stanton on April 10 that he could not "learn that the prayer for the President was said in any church, though it is reported to me that in all the Episcopal churches, while the President was omitted from the prayer, the words 'all of those in authority' were included." <sup>28</sup>

As will be seen in Weitzel's narrative, he was held accountable by Stanton for his failure to give a positive order. In a very long dispatch, quoted in the narrative, Weitzel explains his actions, but Stanton felt his answers were not satisfactory. President Lincoln informed Weitzel: "I do not remember hearing prayer spoken of while I was in Richmond, but I have no doubt that you have acted in what appeared to you to be the spirit and temper manifested by me while there." <sup>29</sup>

On April 13, 1865 Weitzel left Richmond under a cloud of personal gloom. He had just received Lincoln's telegram to rescind the call of the Legislature and turned it over to General E. O. C. Ord, who was assuming command. General Ord published the orders rescinding the call issued by Weitzel. Public opinion assumed Weitzel had been relieved for issuing the call. Similarly, the prayer controversy was unsettled.

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<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 684.

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

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

<sup>29</sup> See General Weitzel's narrative.

General Godfrey Weitzel was the first of many military commanders to assume command over Richmond. It was not until January 26, 1870, when Virginia was readmitted to the Union, that Richmond end was free from military rule.

General Weitzel's narrative, entitled *Entry of the United States Forces into Richmond, Virginia, April 3, 1865. Calling Together of the Virginia Legislature and Revocation of the Same*, was located at the Cincinnati Historical Society and is here reproduced with their permission through the courtesy of Louis L. Tucker, Director. The manuscript is located in Weitzel's Letter Press of Correspondence, Official Reports, Financial Statements, &c. --1878-81-- Detroit, Philadelphia, &c., in two volumes. It is found on pages 606-673 of Volume I. The bulk of the material in the collection deals with Weitzel's duties in the Corps of Engineers, and consists mostly of letters written by clerks and signed by Weitzel.

It appears that Weitzel wrote the narrative for the editors of the *Philadelphia Weekly Times*, as it was published in that paper on August 27, 1881 under the title "The Fall of Richmond." It was published as part of that paper's annals of the war series. However, it was not republished in the collection of that series published in 1879 under the title *Annals of the War, Written by Leading Participants North and South*. Upon comparison it appears that the editor printed the entire manuscript with the exception of the final letter, which it appears that Weitzel just added on.

The manuscript is herein reproduced as it appears in the letter press volume. The original spelling and capitalization have been retained. It should be noted that he used two spellings of General Mackenzie's name: Mackenzie and Mac Kenzie. All misspellings are retained without the use of *sic*. The only changes made were in punctuation, and then only when necessary.

This narrative by Weitzel does not answer all the questions arising as to the sequence of events on the morning of April 3rd. However, it does provide additional insights as to the command responsibilities he had to assume. Although he states his desire was to present the facts in order, he did not do so. After covering the ten days in Richmond and the movement of his troops southwestward, he begins to ramble, inserting events out of chronological order. This in no way detracts from the general narrative. He does develop some events just touched on in the earlier portion. This



narrative reveals something of the man, and sheds new light on events in Richmond during the period April 3-10, 1865.

# **Richmond Scenes**

**April 2-3, 1865**

## PICTORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the following section the story of Richmond's occupation is told from the point of view of observers - both northern and southern - by means of photographs of the period, captioned with contemporary quotations.

The photographs are from various collections of Civil War photographers, mostly northern, and the quotations are from persons who were in the city at the time. A few quotations are from the manuscript of Godfrey Weitzel, which is reproduced herein, but the majority come from Sallie A. Putnam's **RICHMOND DURING THE WAR; FOUR YEARS OF PERSONAL OBSERVATION** by a Richmond Lady, published anonymously by G. W. Carlton & Co. in 1867.

The Richmond Civil War Centennial Committee wishes to express its sincere appreciation for the generous assistance of the Library of Congress, National Archives, the Valentine Museum and the Virginia State Library for the material used to make up this section.



"A sad sight reached us on reaching Capitol square. It was covered with women and children who had fled here to escape the fire... Their poor faces were perfect pictures of utter despair. It was a sight that would have melted a heart of stone."

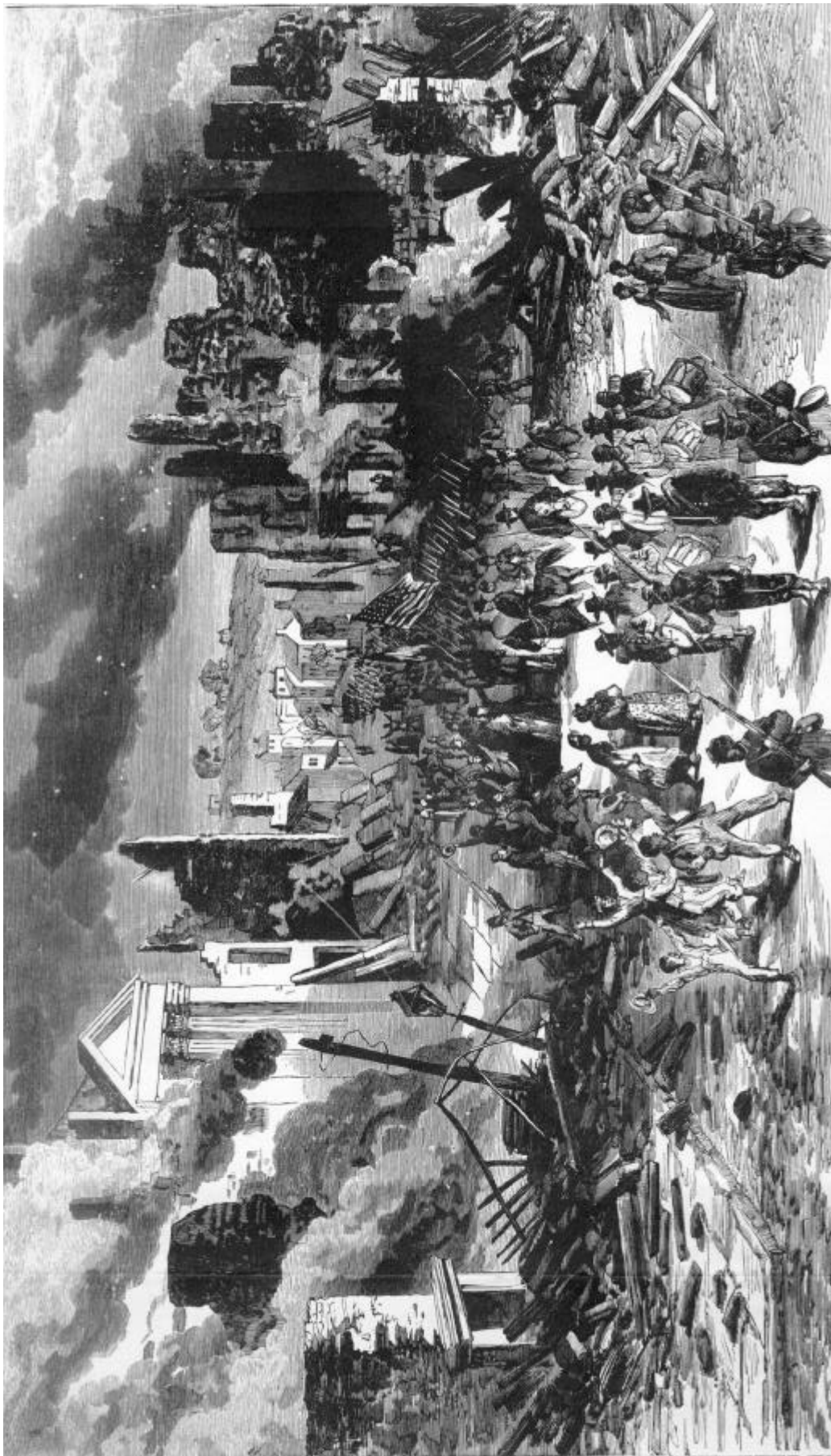
-Weitzel

Currier & Ives



"As the sun rose on Richmond, such a spectacle was presented as can never be forgotten by those who witnessed it..."  
-Putnam





"...a cry was raised: 'The Yankees are coming!'"

-Putnam

"[Lieutenant Johnston Livingston dePeyster, riding with General Weitzel's staff] proceeded directly to the Capitol, and planted once more the "Stars and Stripes" - the ensign of our subjugation - on that ancient edifice. As its folds were given to the breeze, while still we heard the roaring, hissing, crackling flames, the explosions of an old, familiar tune floated upon the air - a tune that, in days gone by, was wont to awaken a thrill of patriotism. But now only the most bitter and crushing recollections awoke within us, as upon our quickened hearing fell the strains of "The Star Spangled Banner." For us it was a requiem for buried hopes..."

-Putnam



Lt. DePeyster raising U.S. Flag over Confederate Capitol in Richmond



Main Street from its eastern end looking west. Union troops rode up this street into the city.



"On the next day, April 5, I received a dispatch from City Point that Mr. Lincoln had started for Richmond on the Malvern, Admiral [David D.] Porter's Flagship, and the time of probable arrival at the 'Rocketts' was given."

-Weitzel



Mr. Lincoln visited the late residence of Mr. Davis, and the principal places of interest in Richmond, and as night approached returned to the steamer that had conveyed him thither, and departed forever from the conquered capital of the rival government."

-Putnam





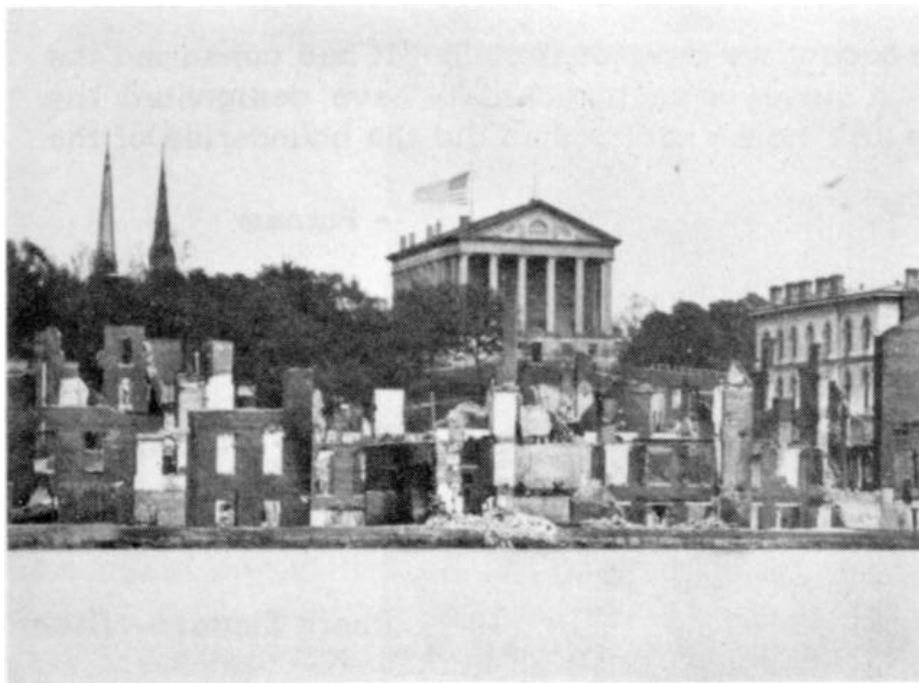
East on Bank Street to Governor

"The Capitol Square now presented a novel appearance. On the south, east, and west of its lower half, it was bounded by burning buildings. The flames bursting from the windows, and rising from the roofs, were proclaiming in one wild roar their work of destruction."

-Putnam



South from Capitol Square



United States flag over  
Confederate Capitol

"Upon reaching the city, General Weitzel established his headquarters in the Hall of the State Capitol, previously occupied by the Virginia House of Delegates. He immediately issued an order for the restoration of quiet and intended to allay the fears and restore confidence and tranquility to the minds of the inhabitants."

-Putnam

Looking north  
on Ninth Street



"From an authentic account we copy at length: 'It had consumed the very heart of the city. A surveyor could scarcely have designated the business portion of the city than did the boundaries of the fire.'"

-Putnam



Southern Express office

Exchange Bank



Cary Street

View from  
Gamble's Hill



"The miseries of our situation, which would have been incalculable at best, were inconceivably enhanced by the disastrous burning of the business portion of the city. Nearly all the supplies of food were kept in the stores which were consumed in the fire, and our poor people were almost totally dependent upon the mercy of the captors."

-Putnam



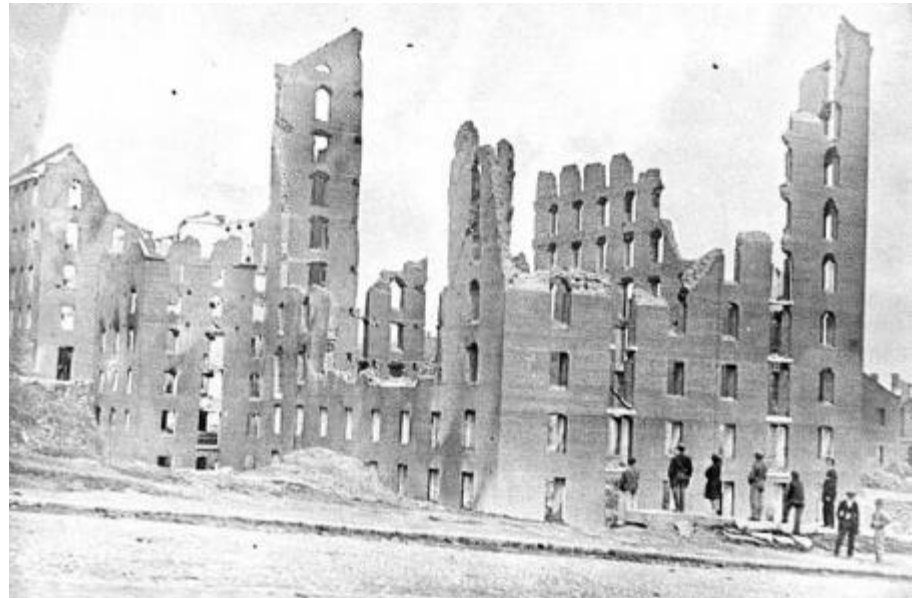
Multiple ruins  
at foot of  
Gamble's Hill





Looking west on  
Cary Street

Gallego Mills



Basin

"All the horrors of the final conflagration, when the earth shall be wrapped up in flames and melt with fervent heat, were, it seemed to us, prefigured in our capital."

-Putnam

11<sup>th</sup> Street from  
Capitol Square



Franklin Paper Mill



Gallego Mills

Custom building



Franklin Paper Mills

Fire Engine #3







Looking north from 13<sup>th</sup>  
and Cary Streets.

"The roaring, crackling and hissing of the flames, the bursting of shells at the Confederate Arsenal, the sounds of instruments of martial music, the neighing of the horses, the shoutings of the multitude, in which could be distinctly distinguished the coarse, wild voices of the negroes, gave an idea of all the horrors of Pandemonium. Above all this scene of terror, hung a black shroud of smoke through which the sun shone with a lurid angry glare like an immense ball of blood that emitted sullen rays of light, as if loth to shine over a scene so appalling."

-Putnam

Armory, arsenal  
and other ruins





Richmond and Petersburg  
Railroad Depot



Railroad tracks  
Tredegar Iron Works in  
left background

Destroyed Locomotive  
Richmond and Petersburg  
Railroad Depot





Richmond and Petersburg  
Railroad Station with  
destroyed locomotive

"Next to the river the destruction of property was fearfully complete. The Danville and Petersburg Railroad depots, and the buildings and shedding attached, for the distance of half-a-mile from the north side of Main Street to the river, and between Eighth and Fifteenth Streets, embracing upwards of twenty blocks, presented one waste of smoking ruins, blackened walls, and solitary chimneys."

-Putnam



Richmond-Danville Railroad station and tracks





Arsenal Ruins

"By this time the flames had been applied to or had reached the arsenal, in which several hundred carloads of loaded shell were left. At every moment the most terrific explosions were sending forth their awful reverberations, and gave us the idea of a general bombardment."

-Putnam



Tredegar Iron Works in background  
Armory ruins in foreground



View of ruins looking south from Capitol Square



Chimneys standing amidst rubble



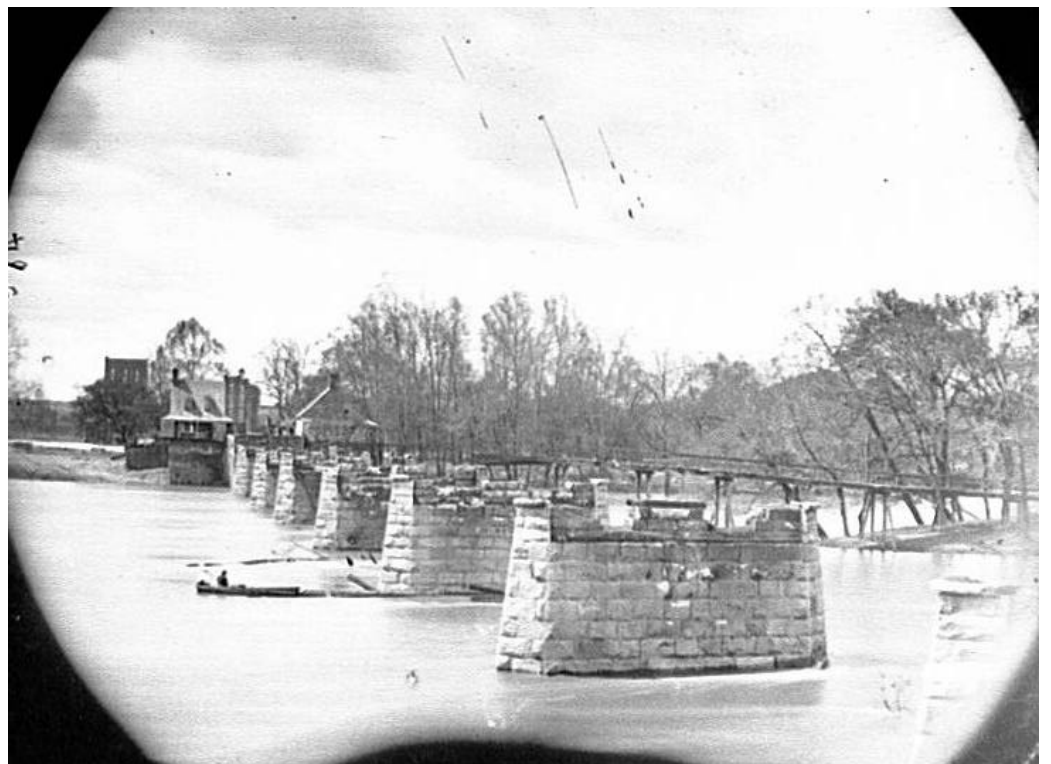
Probably 12<sup>th</sup> and Cary streets



Richmond and  
Petersburg Railroad  
ruins of bridge

"All the railroad bridges, and Mayo's Bridge, that crossed the James River and connected with Manchester, on the opposite side, were in flames."

-Putnam



Mayo Bridge ruins



River bank view of the city with youngsters at play - Mayo Bridge and Mill ruins in the background



"Major Graves had reconnoitered up to the Capitol square in the city. Below the latter he had been met by Mayor Mayo and others of Richmond and received its surrender. "

- Weitzel



Honorable Joseph Mayo  
Mayor of Richmond  
1853 - 1865  
1866 - 1868

Joseph Carrington Mayo was born in Powhatan County, Virginia, November 16, 1795. He entered Medical College in Philadelphia in 1814, but left and entered the law office of Abel Upshur in 1815. Later he entered into partnership with Upshur. He served as Commonwealth's Attorney from 1822 to 1852. From 1832 to 1845 he served as a member of the Richmond City Council, and from 1846 to 1850 was a member of the State Legislature. Later he served as Mayor of the City of Richmond from July 1853 until he was removed by the Federal occupation of April 3, 1865. He was restored by election to the mayorship in April 1866 and remained in office until May 4, 1868. Later in 1868 he moved to New Kent County where he resided until his death on August 10, 1872. He is interred in Shockoe Cemetery, Richmond.



Godfrey Weitzel  
Major, Corps of Engineers  
Brevet Major General, U. S. Army

Godfrey Weitzel was born in Winzeln, Bavaria, November 1, 1835 and emigrated with his parents to the United States where they settled in Cincinnati, Ohio. In 1850 he received an appointment to the United States Military Academy at West Point. Graduating in 1855, he was made a Brevet 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant of Engineers and assigned to the defenses of New Orleans, Louisiana, and was promoted to 2nd Lieutenant July 27, 1856. He served at New Orleans until August 1859 when he was ordered to West Point where he served as Assistant Professor of Engineering. On July 1, 1859 he was promoted to 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant. He remained at West Point until attached to an Engineer Company at Washington, D.C., January 19, 1861. From April 19 to September 17, 1861 he was stationed at Fort Pickens, Florida.

After a brief tour of duty constructing fortifications at Cincinnati, Ohio, from October to December 9, 1861, Weitzel returned to Washington, D. C. where he commanded a company of sappers and miners until February 22, 1862. On February 23, 1862 he was assigned as Chief Engineer on Major General Benjamin Butler's staff in the Department of the Gulf, and took part in the attack and capture of New Orleans, April 30, 1862. At this time General Butler made Weitzel second in command and appointed him acting mayor of the city. On August 29, 1862 he was appointed Brigadier General of Volunteers. Actively engaged in the campaigns in Louisiana, Weitzel commanded a division under General N. P. Banks at the siege of Port Hudson in 1863. On March 3, 1863 he was promoted to Captain of Engineers and Brevet Lieutenant Colonel of Engineers on July 8, 1863 for gallant and meritorious services at the siege of Port Hudson.



Early in 1864 he returned East and took part in the operations against Richmond as commander of a division of the 18th Army Corps May 2-20, 1864. From May 20 to September 30, 1864 he served as Chief Engineer of the Army of the James, being promoted to Brevet Major General of Volunteers on August 29, 1864. On September 30, 1864 he assumed command of the 18th Army Corps, and was promoted to Brevet Colonel of Engineers on September 29, 1864 for gallant and meritorious services at the capture of Fort Harrison. He was promoted to Major General of Volunteers November 17, 1864. On December 3, 1864 he was assigned to command the 25th Army Corps, and from December 7 through the 29th he was second in command of the first expedition to Fort Fisher, N. C. After the failure of this expedition Weitzel's troops were returned to the lines north of the James River, and he was placed in command of the lines. On April 3, 1865 his troops entered Richmond. He received promotions of Brevet Brigadier General and Brevet Major General, U. S. Army, to rank from March 13, 1865 for gallant and meritorious service. At the end of April he was placed in command of the Rio Grande District, Texas, where he served until February 4, 1866.

When he was mustered out of the Volunteer Service on March 1, 1866, he reverted in rank to Captain of Engineers. On August 8, 1866 he was promoted to Major of Engineers. After his discharge from the Volunteer Service, Weitzel spent the rest of his life in the Corps of Engineers, and was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel June 23, 1882. His most notable accomplishments were the ship canal at the falls of the Ohio River, the great lock at Sault Saint Marie, and the lighthouse on Stannard's Rock in Lake Superior. In August 1882 he was stationed at Philadelphia where he served until his death on March 19, 1884. He was interred in Spring Grove Cemetery, Cincinnati, Ohio.

**ENTRY OF THE UNITED STATES FORCES  
INTO RICHMOND, VIRGINIA, APRIL 3, 1865.**

**CALLING TOGETHER OF THE VIRGINIA  
LEGISLATURE  
AND REVOCATION OF THE SAME**

ENTRY OF THE UNITED STATES FORCES INTO RICHMOND,  
VIRGINIA,  
APRIL 3, 1865  
CALLING TOGETHER OF THE VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE AND  
REVOCATION  
OF THE SAME.

By Godfrey Weitzel, Major, Corps of Engineers, and  
Brevet Major General, United States Army

General Grant's instructions for the general movement of the armies operating against Richmond, which resulted in the fall of this city and Petersburg, and eventually in the surrender of the rebel army of Northern Virginia, were dated City Point, Va. , March 24, 1865. These instructions have been so often printed and so extensively and widely published , that I do not consider it necessary to insert them in this narrative. At the time they were issued I was in command of the 25th Army Corps, with my headquarters east of the Varina road about one half mile due north of the H. Cox house. [Brigadier General Charles J.] Paine's division of my corps was in North Carolina. My command formed a part of the Army of the James commanded by Major General E. O. C. Ord. The left of the lines of this army rested upon the Appomattox river, about -a mile west of the Point of Rocks , [and] extended thence almost due north to within about three eighths of a mile of the Varina road, thence northeasterly to a point about a quarter of a mile beyond the New Market road thence easterly to cover this road. Their total length not counting the cavalry lines was about eleven miles.

The force on these lines, commanded by General Ord, consisted of a mixed command under Major General George L. Hartsuff; the 24th Army Corps commanded by Major General John Gibbon; a small division of cavalry commanded by Brigadier General R. S. Mackenzie; and two divisions of the 25th Army Corps commanded by me. The divisions of the 24th Corps were commanded respectively by Brigadier Generals Charles Devens , Robert S. Foster, and John W. Turner. Those of the 25th Corps were commanded by Brigadier Generals William Birney and August V. Kautz.

General Hartsuff's command formed the garrison of that portion of the lines included between the Appomattox and James rivers; the left of my Corps rested on the north side of the James at Fort Brady, and the left of the

24th Corps joined my right near the Varina road and formed the right of the main line. The cavalry was thrown out to the front and right to observe the roads leading into Richmond from that direction.

The part assigned to the Army of the James in the final movement will appear from the following extract from General Grant's instructions:

"General Ord will detach three divisions, two white and one colored, or so much of them as he can, and hold the present lines, and march for the present left of the Army of the Potomac. ...During the movement Major General Weitzel will be left in command of all the forces remaining behind from the Army of the James. The movement of troops from the Army of the James will commence on the night of the 27th instant. General Ord will leave behind the minimum number of cavalry necessary for picket duty, in the absence of the main army."

The part assigned to me and my command appears from the following extract:

"General Weitzel will keep vigilant watch upon his front, and if found at all practicable to break through at any point, he will do so. A success north of the James should be followed up with great promptness. An attack will not be feasible unless it is found that the enemy has detached largely. In that case it may be regarded as evident that the enemy are relying upon their local reserves, principally, for the defense of Richmond. Preparations may be made for abandoning all the line north of the James, except inclosed works only to be abandoned, however, after a break is made in the lines of the enemy."

The final paragraph of these instructions contained general directions applicable to all officers in command of troops left in the trenches.

In accordance with the instructions General Ord moved during the night of March 27th with Foster's and Turner's divisions of the 24th Corps, under the immediate command of General Gibbon, Birney's Division of the 25th Corps, and about 1,500 cavalry commanded by General Mackenzie. He left his department headquarters open for the recording of papers, with two staff

officers in charge, but I was left in command of the forces which remained behind.

His instructions to me were written by himself on two telegraph blanks. This is an exact copy:

"Headquarters Dept. of  
Virginia  
Army of the James  
In the Field, March 27,  
1865

General Weitzel  
Commanding 25th Corps

General:

If an evacuation occurs during my absence look out for torpedoes and mines - it is now reported that large numbers of the former are put down on Chaffin's farm and Bermuda front - don't let your columns take the roads - keep them in the woods and by paths - send cattle and old horses up the roads first - tonight and tomorrow keep camp fires going as usual in empty camps - and the usual picket on make as little change as possible at conspicuous points - if you can do so, cover the prominent part of the vacated camps with shelter tents - for a day or two - or old newspapers; go on with drills and parades in sight as usual - 5 Mass. col'd cavalry is on its way to Deep Bottom - may arrive tomorrow or day after - better camp them near where McKenzie's outside camps were - it is very full - besides this, I leave about 500 cavalry of McKenzie's Division - command'g officer to report to you - Birney's Division will move very quietly soon as 'tis dark, cross at Aiken's, thence cross at Broadway, behind Turner - both put waggons in front -

Yours &c.,  
E. O. C. Ord"

On the morning of March 28, 1865, I therefore had under my command the garrison on the Bermuda Hundred front under General Hartsuff, Kautz's division of the 25th Corps, Devens' division of the 24th Corps, and about 500 remnants of Mackenzie's cavalry. The 5th Massachusetts Colored

Cavalry, a very fine regiment about 900 strong, commanded by Colonel Charles F. Adams, Jr., joined me during the week.

Attached to my headquarters I had [Captain Charles B.] Parsons' very fine company of the 1st New York Volunteer Engineers and a detachment of two companies from the 4th Massachusetts cavalry.

Hartsuff ranked me but waived his rank on account of my more intimate knowledge of the locality, plans, and troops. General Alfred H. Terry did this once before to me while we served together in the Army of the James. Those who have had the honor of an acquaintance with these two gentlemen will not be surprised at this. Yet I mention this since I believe such examples of generous unselfishness are as rare as they were 17 years ago, and are therefore as brilliant.

The works on the north side of the James, which were open in the rear, were enclosed and all were supplied with ammunition, provisions, and water sufficient for a siege of ten days. They were all armed with artillery, properly manned, and had for infantry garrisons mainly those men who could not march well.

The remainder of Kautz' s and Devens' divisions, numbering about 5,000 men each, were disposed of on the lines between these works so that they could be rapidly concentrated either for attack or defense.

During the six days and nights which succeeded the morning of March 28 every man in my command seemed to be fully impressed with the gravity of the situation. There were three high signal towers on my lines. One on Cobb's Hill in front of Point of Rocks on the Appomattox river, another near the south bank of the James opposite Fort Brady, and one a few steps north of my headquarters. These towers overlooked a large part of the enemy's lines and the Richmond and Petersburg pike and railroad; and from the one in front of my headquarters the signal officers could see into portions of Richmond with their glasses on a clear day. I offered special rewards to the men on picket for bringing in prisoners and deserters. Extra officers from division and brigade headquarters were placed on duty on the picket lines; and Colonel Adams, with his cavalry, was constantly feeling for and hunting up the enemy on the right and front, and gathering information.

Everything known in warfare, and all that the ingenuity of my command could devise, were employed in obtaining information concerning the enemy in my front.

I was kept advised daily of the progress of events on the left of the Army of the Potomac by dispatches from Generals Grant and Sheridan, as well as from Colonel [Theodore S.] Bowers at City Point.

As a specimen of dispatches which passed, I will here give the following:

"U. S. Military Telegraph  
March 31, 1865  
By Telegraph from Gravelly Run

To Maj. Gen. Weitzel:

Prisoners captured near Hatcher's Run this A. M. report that part of their line strongly reinforced from their left. What news do you get from your front?

U. S. Grant, Lt. Gen. "

About at the same time, when this came, I received the following from General Hartsuff on the Bermuda Hundred front:

"I have just rec'd the following from the Field officer of the day:

'Genl:

Since writing this morning, I have had communication with the enemy and am positive that four brigades , all of [ Major General William] Mahone's division, is still in front of the 10th N. Y. Art'y. Not the least change is discernible at other points.

Respy,  
Genl. Gordon  
Officer of day.'

G. L. Hartsuff

Maj. Gen."

A little later I received the following:

"U. S. Military Telegraph  
March 31, 1865  
By Telegraph from 24th A. C.

To Maj. Gen. Weitzel:

The scouting party under Lieut. [ John] Robb, 20th N. Y. Cav., has returned. He crossed to the Charles City road, striking it at White's tavern. He found it was impossible to go through White Oak swamp, as had been his intention, on account of the height of the water. He therefore proceeded up the road and found the rebel picket about a mile above White's, observed the camp which was apparently as large as it had ever been, and saw soldiers moving about among tents. Lt. Robb was about a mile from the camp, which was behind the enemy's breastwork, and, apparently, infantry. The picket was mounted and about half a mile in front of the breastwork. The picket has usually been found at White's tavern. Mrs. White says it has been drawn in within the last ten days. There were no tracks on the Charles City road since the rain of this morning: about White's. On Wednesday a scouting party of the enemy came down near our picket at Fussell's Mills, as reported to Lt. Robb.

All quiet along the cavalry picket today. A few shots fired at the colored troops when first posted.

Chas. Devens  
Brig. Genl. Comdg."

And later the following:

"March 31, 1865  
By Telegraph from Hd. Qrs. 24th A. C.

To Maj. Gen. Weitzel:



Capt. [Josiah L. I Elder, A. D. C. , reports no apparent change in enemy's camps. He has visited all our picket line in front. Col. [Edward H. ] Ripley, 1st Brigade, has lookouts on trees in three places along his line. They report that they can observe no change.

Chas. Devens, Brig. Gen."

On Saturday April 1, things opened lively. First, I received a dispatch from General Grant at Dabney's Mills that the wonderfully ubiquitous Mahone's division was reported over there. Then General G. H. McKibben reported from the Bermuda front that there were fewer troops in the enemy's lines on that front than the day before. Then came another from General Grant at Dabney's Mills that they had prisoners, he believed, from every brigade of [Major General George E.] Pickett's division, and that nothing had been seen of any of [Major General Charles W.] Field's, [Major General Joseph B.] Kershaw's, or Mahone's divisions. When I received the first two, I requested Hartsuff to open with artillery, to be followed by an infantry attack, and see what it would develop. Before I heard the result of this, General Grant's second dispatch arrived. Hartsuff's artillery fire developed nothing, but a prisoner was captured belonging to [ Brigadier General Joseph] Finegan's brigade. From his statements Hartsuff was positive that the whole of Mahone's division was in his front, and therefore did not attack with infantry. Then Devens reported no change. At 7 in the evening, General Grant telegraphed me that he did not think that Mahone had moved, unless possibly during the evening. In order to settle this question, I requested Hartsuff to attack the next morning and ascertain. This was done as vigorously as he was able to make it. He lost 7 killed, 39 wounded (several severely), and 35 prisoners, and obtained the desired information. The following is what he said about it:

"Hatcher's Farm  
April 2, 1865

General Weitzel:

My demonstration this morning resulted in developing the enemy in force along his line. They were driven out of their picket line with ease for a distance of more than half a mile, and six of their pickets captured. Our advance was then opened

upon by artillery throughout the whole of their line, which bore upon it. Having ascertained by this, and from the prisoners , that their line was still held in force, and by Mahone's division, the troops were directed to withdraw. The enemy followed with a strong line of infantry to their picket line, which they reoccupied."

During this morning a large number of the officers of the James River fleet came on shore and to my headquarters to learn the news. While they were thus assembled I received a dispatch requesting me to inform the senior officer that all the vessels which could be spared were wanted at City Point without delay. This produced quite an excitement and the hasty departure of our web-footed comrades. None of us knew the mean of it then, but I soon received a dispatch from Col. Bowers, at City Point, that [ Major General John G.] Parke [Commander 9th Corps], I had captured two forts and two redoubts in his front [at Petersburg], and later that the marines and sailors of the fleet were wanted at City Point to guard the great number of rebel prisoners which were continually coming in.

Later in the day a nervousness became manifest on some portions of the enemy's lines in my front. In order to assist this, I ordered the artillery to open, but no changes of any importance were observed.

Then I received a dispatch in the afternoon from the operator at City Point that General [Horatio G.] Wright had carried the works in his front, and that General Parke had carried the works in front of Fort Sedgwick. About 5 P. M. my chief signal officer, [Lieutenant Sylvester B.] Partridge, came down from the tower near my headquarters and reported to me that he had observed evidences of great excitement in Richmond, and that people were rushing to and fro in the streets.

I immediately gave orders for the concentration of some of my brigades to make an assault, and informed General Grant. In the meantime, Hartsuff received an order from Grant looking towards an attack at a different point than the one selected by me; and afterwards I received one from him that the success of the day had been so great that he could spare me R. H. Jackson's (formerly W. Birney's) division of my corps, and that he would send it to me, and that then I could make a sure thing of the attack.

Further than this, I heard nothing from the other side of the Appomattox during April 2d.

Extra vigilance was enjoined on all during the night. I laid down at midnight for a rest, leaving my Chief of Staff, General George F. Shepley, and my ordnance officer, Captain George F. Howard, 40th Massachusetts, on guard at my headquarters. A little before two o'clock I was awakened by General Shepley and informed that bright fires were seen in the direction of Richmond. Shortly after, while we were looking at these fires, we heard explosions, and soon a prisoner was sent in from Kautz's front. This prisoner was a colored teamster. He informed me that immediately after dark the rebels began making preparations to leave, and that they had all gone. A forward movement of the entire picket line corroborated this. I therefore directed all of my troops to be awakened and furnished with breakfast, and to be held in readiness to move as soon as it was light enough to see to pass through the lines of rebel torpedoes without injury .

At the same time I directed my senior Aid-de-camp, Major Emmons E. Graves, and my Provost Marshal, Major Atherton H. Stevens, Jr., to take a detachment of about forty men from the two companies of the 4th Massachusetts cavalry attached to my headquarters, and, as soon as they could possibly get through the rebel lines, to advance towards Richmond on a reconnaissance. I then telegraphed the state of affairs north of the James to Generals Grant and Hartsuff. As soon as I could see, I passed through Kautz's lines and the rebel lines in his front with my staff and orderlies. No difficulty was experienced in doing this in single file, since the rebels had left passages through the lines of torpedoes for the use of their pickets, and these passages were plainly visible at dawn. Soon after passing through the rebel lines, we observed a party of mounted man on a slight elevation and but a short distance from us. They were the overcoats of United States soldiers and were standing still and observing us. At first it seemed as if they were a part of the cavalry detachment which I had sent ahead under Major Graves. But suddenly they wheeled and went off at a gallop. I immediately directed Lieut. [Charles D.] Phillips, 4th Massachusetts- cavalry, of my staff, with an orderly, to ride ahead and ascertain, if he could, what they were. He dashed off on a run followed by the orderly and ascertained what they were, but could not report the result of his investigation to me until five days thereafter. He then did it by telegraph from Burke's station.

The mounted party that we saw were rebel scouts observing our movements. When they saw Phillips and the orderly alone pursuing them, they formed an ambush and took them in. They in turn escaped at Sailor's Creek, having been in charge of the retreating garrison of Richmond in the meantime.

My staff and I then rode along the Osborne pike, and when we arrived at its junction with the Newmarket road, we saw Devens' division coming up the latter marching rapidly. Upon looking to the rear we saw Kautz's division coming up the pike at a similar gait. Only one man was killed in passing through the rebel torpedo lines. I afterwards understood that the two columns met here and that Devens claimed the pike by virtue of seniority in rank and that Kautz yielded it on this account, but struck out straight across the fields. When we arrived at Battery 2, below Rucketts, we found a solitary sentinel on post in a bright and gorgeous militia uniform. He said he had been posted the night before and not relieved. He had served in the old country and seemed to me to be an Alsatian, for he spoke poor French and worse German. I sent him home to his family.

From the time I was first awakened in the night, the fires seemed to increase in number and size, and at intervals loud explosions were heard; and now when we entered Richmond we found ourselves in a perfect pandemonium. Fires and explosions in all directions; whites and blacks, either drunk or in the highest state of excitement, running to and fro on the streets, apparently engaged in pillage or in saving some of their scanty effects from the fire; it was a yelling, howling mob.

Major Graves had reconnoitered up to the Capitol square in the city. Below the latter he had been met by Mayor Mayo and others of Richmond and received its surrender. They informed him that all the liquor in the city had been ordered destroyed, but it seems that many of the poor wretches had scooped it up from the gutters and drank it. To add to the horror of the scene, the convicts broke out of the penitentiary and began an indiscriminate pillage and cut the hose of some of the fire engines. When the mob saw my staff and me, they rushed around us, hugged and kissed our legs and horses, shouting hallelujah and glory. This continued until we arrived at Capitol square. I escaped considerable of this disagreeable infliction by an amusing circumstance. Major William V. Hutchings, of Roxbury, Mass., rode by my side. He was dressed in full uniform except epauletts and had the regulation equipments, &c., on his horse. He had quite a venerable and very handsome

appearance. I was in undress uniform. The mob naturally supposed Hutchings to be the General, and he received the bulk of the caresses and attentions. A sad sight met us on reaching Capitol square. It was covered with women and children who had fled here to escape the fire. Some of them had saved a few articles of furniture, but most had only a few articles of bedding, such as a quilt, blanket, or pillow, and were lying upon them. Their poor faces were perfect pictures of utter despair. It was a sight that would have melted a heart of stone. I first ordered my aid, Captain Horace B. Fitch, of Auburn, N.Y., to write a dispatch to General Grant announcing my entrance into Richmond. This was the dispatch which was taken off the wires at City Point and sent to the country via Washington. Then I sent an order to Devens to march his division into the city and endeavor to extinguish the flames, and ordered Parsons' Engineer company to assist. I directed Kautz to occupy the detached forts nearest the city and Manchester, and Adams to picket the roads. Colonel Adams asked as a special favor to be allowed to march his regiment through the city, and I granted it. I was told that this fine regiment of colored men made a very great impression on those citizens who saw it. I directed my staff and headquarter orderlies to scour the city and press into service every able bodied man, white or black, and make them assist in extinguishing the flames. Devens' command anticipated my orders. They marched into the city, stacked arms, and went to work. In this manner, the fire was extinguished and perfect order restored. Colonel Fred. L. Manning, Provost Marshal at Department Headquarters, reported to me and was placed on duty in the city. General Shepley, my chief of staff, was placed on duty as Military Governor. He had occupied a similar position in New Orleans after its capture in 1862 and was eminently fit for it by education and experience.

I understood from leading citizens of Richmond that the fires had been started in the large tobacco warehouses, which had been fired by order of General [Richard S.] Ewell, in order that their contents might not fall into our hands.

Thus the rebel capitol, fired by men placed in it to defend it, was saved from total destruction by soldiers of the United States, who had taken possession. The bloody victories which opened the gates of Richmond to my command were won at Five Forks and on the left of the Army of the Potomac, but my men won equally as great a one in the city although it was bloodless.

The telegraph corps did not have wire enough to carry the I in e s into Richmond on the first day, and, hence, the nearest station was about three miles distant. My dispatch announcing my entrance into Richmond was sent down by cavalry courier, and on his return he brought the following:

"April 3, 1865  
From Grant's Headquarters

To Maj. Gen. Weitzel:

I do not doubt that you will march into Richmond unopposed. Take possession of the city and establish guards and preserve order until I get there. Permit no one to leave town after you get possession. The army here will endeavor to cut off the retreat of the enemy.

U. S. Grant, Lt. Gen. "

In the afternoon I was astonished to receive the following:

"April 3, 1865  
By Telegraph from Petersburg, Va.

To Maj. Gen. Weitzel:

How are you progressing ? Will the enemy try to hold Richmond? I have detained the division belonging to your corps, and will send it back if you think it will be needed, I am waiting here to hear from you. T he troops moved up the Appomattox this morning.

U. S. Grant, Lt. Gen."

I was still more astonished to hear a few days ago that [General Adam] Badeau in his book, [*Military History of Ulysses S. Grant*], stated that General Grant did not receive my 8:15 A. M. dispatch until nearly 2 o' clock in the afternoon. I immediately sent to the office of the Detroit Free Press and found that they printed the extra announcing my occupation at 10 A. M.

The delay was therefore between City Point and General Grant's Headquarters.

With this I might consider the narrative of my entry into Richmond as ended, but the history of the letter from Mr. Lincoln directing me to permit the assembling of the Virginia Legislature, and its subsequent revocation, is so intimately bound up with the history of my brief occupation of the city that I will, in order to comply with the request which has been made of me, continue the narrative in regular order of date.

I had my headquarters during the day in the Senate Chamber of the Capitol.

After the fires had been extinguished and order restored in Richmond, I was desirous to obtain lodging and food.

Upon inquiry I found that Major Graves, in the course of his reconnoissance, had found the Davis mansion, and that the housekeeper, under instructions from Mr. Jefferson Davis, had surrendered it for the occupancy of the commanding officer of the federal troops which might occupy the city.

In addition to the housekeeper a few servants remained. The supplies in the larder were very scant, but everything else in the house was in good order and furnished elegant quarters for my staff and me.

On April 4 I received a dispatch of which the following is a copy:

"By Telegraph from Hd. Qrs. Dept. , Va.

Army of the James  
April 4, 1865

Genl. Weitzel, Comd'g:

You will seize what tobacco may be within reach to sell for the purpose of feeding the poor of the city. You are appointed Governor of Richmond, and in my absence will act as commander of the Dept. in all matters which require prompt action. Let food and necessaries come to the city. Register the white men. Appoint a military commission for the punishment of offences against law or order. Organize a police force. Start



gas and water companies, and protect all inhabitants in their property who come forward and take the oath of allegiance on due notice - by property, persons are not meant. You will not allow any taxes to be imposed or rents paid other than necessary to recognize ownership of loyal landlords. Be your own Treasury agent - allow loyal men to open hotels, but not grog shops.

E. O. C. Ord  
Maj. Genl. Comd'g.

Approved by Genl. Grant."

On this day I was delighted also to see Admiral [ David G.] Farragut, with whom I became acquainted on the New Orleans expedition in 1862. As soon as he heard that Richmond had fallen he came up the river, regardless of torpedoes, landed at Varina, and rode into the city. He was accompanied by General George H. Gordon, Commanding officer at Norfolk. He looked even happier and younger than he did after New Orleans fell.

On the next day, April 5, I received a dispatch from City Point that Mr. Lincoln had started for Richmond on the *Malvern*, Admiral [David D.] Porter's Flagship, and the time of probable arrival at the "Rocketts" was given. I ordered my ambulance to be at my office in abundant time for me to reach the "Rocketts" at the appointed hour to meet the President. I was therefore very much surprised to hear, just about the time I intended to get into my ambulance, that the President was already at my quarters. I drove over as hastily as possible and found the report correct. It seems that the *Malvern* came up quicker than was expected, and, not finding any one at the landing to meet him, the President started on foot. Porter ordered a guard of marines for an escort, but I am told that Mr. Lincoln saw nothing of his escort on his way. It differed from John Phoenix's cavalry escort to the surveying party in California in this respect, too, that it followed instead of preceding the President. He arrived at the Davis house closely followed by a rabble mostly composed of negroes. Some of the rabble had been told that he was Jefferson Davis, and consequently there were some cries of "Hang him! Hang him!"

Soon after my arrival Judge [John A.] Campbell, General [Joseph R.] Anderson, and others called and asked for an interview with the President. It

was granted and took place in the parlor with closed doors. At the special request of Mr. Lincoln, I was present at this and the subsequent one on the *Malvern* as his witness.

The pith of these interviews was , briefly, that Mr. Lincoln insisted that he could not treat with any rebels until they had laid down their arms and surrendered; and that if this were first done, he would go as far as he possibly could to prevent the shedding of another drop of blood; and that he and the good people of the north were surfeited with this thing and wanted it to end as soon as possible. Mr. Campbell and the other gentlemen assured Mr. Lincoln that if he would allow the Virginia Legislature to meet, it would at once repeal the ordinance of secession and that then General Robert E. Lee and every other Virginian would submit; that this would amount to the virtual destruction of the Army of Northern Virginia and eventually to the surrender of all the other rebel armies, and would ensure perfect peace in the shortest possible time.

After the second interview, Mr. Lincoln told me that he would think over the whole matter carefully and would probably send me some instructions from City Point on the next day. Immediately after, the *Malvern* steamed down the river.

On the next day I received a letter by the hands of Senator [Morton S.] Wilkinson of Minnesota (I think) marked "Confidential." The letter was written throughout in Mr. Lincoln's handwriting and was as follows:

"Headquarters Armies of the United States  
City Point, April 6, 1865

Major General Weitzel  
Richmond, Va.

It has been intimated to me that the gentlemen who have acted as the Legislature of Virginia in support of the rebellion may now desire to assemble at Richmond and take measures to withdraw the Virginia troops and other support from resistance to the General Government. If they attempt it, give them permission and protection, until, if at all, they attempt some action hostile to the United States , in which case you will notify them and give them reasonable time to leave; and at the end of which time, arrest

any who remain. Allow judge Campbell to see this, but do not make it public.

Yours &c. ,  
A. Lincoln"

During the interval between these two interviews I took the President to Libby Prison and Castle Thunder. Both were very crowded with rebel prisoners. I had considerable conversation with him in regard to the treatment of the conquered people. The pith of his answers was that he did not wish to give me any orders on that subject, but as he expressed it: "If I were in your place, I'd let 'em up easy - let 'em up easy."

As soon as I received Mr. Lincoln's letter I directed my chief of staff, General George F. Shepley, to publish a call, in accordance with its terms, in the Richmond papers. The General looked at me with surprise and asked me whether I was doing this on my own responsibility. I informed him that I was not, but that I had an order to do so. He then asked me to permit him to read the order. I did so. After he had read it carefully he said to me smilingly "General, this is a political mistake. Don't you lose that letter, for if you do, your Major General's commission may not be worth a straw." He afterwards said that he felt confident that the letter would be recalled as soon as the President reached Washington.

General Shepley had a fine legal and judicial mind, and had had considerable experience as a politician. General Grant, when he was President, appointed him judge of the First Circuit, a position which he held until his death in 1878. I turned over to him everything relating to civil administration in Richmond, just as General [Benjamin F.] Butler had done in New Orleans.

He published the call in the papers of the next day. One of these papers came into the possession of General [William T.] Sherman and led him into some difficulty in his negotiations with General [Joseph E.] Johnston in North Carolina.

On the next day, April 6, Mr. Charles A. Dana, Assistant Secretary of War (now publisher of the *New York Sun*), who had come to Richmond, handed me the following dispatch:

"April 6, 1865

By Telegraph from Washington, D. C.

To Hon. C. A. Dana:

Please ascertain from General Weitzel under what authority he is distributing rations to the people of Richmond, as I suppose he would not do it without authority; and direct him to report daily the amount of rations distributed by his orders to persons not belonging to the military service and not authorized by law to receive rations, designating the color of the persons, their occupation, and sex.

Edwin M. Stanton  
Secy. of War."

The poor had been fed from the evening of the day I entered Richmond with the captured rebel rations and supplies generously furnished by the agents of the Sanitary and Christian commissions which accompanied my command. I was fully protected also by the order from General Ord approved by General Grant, which I have already given.

On the afternoon of Saturday, April 8, Dr. [Charles] Men[n]ingerode and several other ministers of Richmond called upon me in reference to services on the next day. I, of course, authorized them to hold services, and although I do not remember now the whole of the conversation I suppose I left it pretty much to themselves who they should pray for. But the dispatch below will show, I believe, that Mr. Dana was in the room during the interview.

On Monday, the 10th, I received a telegram from Mr. Stanton in reference to this subject, to which I sent the following reply:

"April 10, 1865

Hon. E. M. Stanton  
Sec'y. of War-

The order[s] in relation to religious services in Richmond were verbal and applicable alike to all religious denominations without distinction of sect. They were, in substance, that no expression would be allowed in any part of any church service, in the form of prayer, preaching, or singing, which in any way implied a recognition of any other authority than that of the

United States, or gave any countenance to the rebellion. The clergymen were notified. that any prayers for the rebel government, or officials, or for the success of the rebellion, would be considered as treason, and punished as such. As in the ritual in use in the episcopal churches here, there was a form of prayer for the rebel authorities - they were ordered to omit that. No orders were given as to what should be preached or prayed for, but only as to what would not be permitted.

Neither in New Orleans, Norfolk, Charleston, Savannah, or any other captured city, as I have been informed, have the episcopal churches been ordered at first to adopt the form of prayer for the President of the United States. Do you desire that I should order this form of prayer to be used in the episcopal, roman catholic, hebrew, and other churches where they have a prescribed liturgy and form of prayer? I have had personally but three interviews with judge Campbell, two of them in the presence of, and the other by a written command of, the President of the United States. In neither of these interviews was there a discussion in relation to churches and prayers. These interviews were all held with a view to attain a certain result, and to attain this result I was advised by the President to make concessions in small matters. The above was done in accordance with this advice. The autograph order from the President, which I now have, compels me to hold conference with Judge Campbell on a certain subject. The surrender Of Lee's army removed the necessity for further conference. Shall I stop it? The Hon. Green Clay Smith has just called on me, and says that in the episcopal church which he attended prayers were offered for those in authority. Similar prayers, I am told, were offered in other episcopal churches, and all present understood them to refer to our government. In the course I have pursued, by following the advice of the President, I have intended to show him the greatest respect, instead of any disrespect. One of my staff conferred with Mr. Dana, the Assistant Sec'y., and distinctly understood him to authorize and sanction my course upon the subject .

Godfrey Weitzel  
Maj. General.

To this I received the following:

"By telegraph from Washington  
April 11, 1865

To Maj. Gen. Weitzel:

The Sec'y. of War directs me to say that your explanation in regard to the omission of prayers for the President in the city of Richmond is not satisfactory, and that there is a conflict of statements between yourself and Mr. Dana, who asserts that he gave no direction or authority upon the subject to Gen. Shepley or to any other officer. The Secy. also directs me to instruct you that officers commanding in Richmond are expected to require from all religious denominations in that city to regard those rituals in no less respect for the President of the United States than they practiced towards the rebel chief, Jefferson Davis, before he was driven from the Capitol.

J. A. Hardie  
Insp. General.

To this I replied as follows:

"April 11, 1865

Lieut. Col. J. A. Hardie Washington City:

I have the honor to request authority, through the War Department, of his Excellency the President of the United States to state to the Honorable the Secretary of War conversations, suggestions, and orders which took place and were given me confidentially, in order that I may enable the Hon. Secretary of War to judge correctly of my action in in regard to churches and prayers in this place. Not having had authority to divulge these things, I am convinced my action had been judged incorrectly. With, regard to Mr. Dana's statement, it is a matter between him and my chief of staff (Genl. Shepley).

G. Weitzel, Maj. Genl. "

In reply to this I received the following:

"April 12, 1865

In Cipher By Telegraph from Washington

To Maj. Genl. Weitzel:

I have seen your dispatch to Col. Hardie about the matter of prayers. I do not remember hearing prayer spoken of while I was in Richmond, but I have no doubt that you have acted in what appeared to you to be the spirit and temper manifested by me while there. Is there any sign of the rebel legislature coming together on the understanding of my letter to you?

If there is any such sign inform me what it is. If there is no such sign you may withdraw the offer.

A. Lincoln"

On the next day, I received another telegram from Mr. Lincoln in which he directed me to revoke the authority for the assembling of the legislature. I turned this over to General Ord, who had arrived at Richmond and assumed command, and started the next day at daybreak with all the troops of my corps in the direction of Petersburg. I have been requested to state why this authority for the meeting of the legislature was revoked by the President. I do not know. It seems natural, however, that since Lee had surrendered on April 9, and the original permission was granted simply to disband that army, there was no longer any use for legislature. It seems to me that if General Grant and his subordinate commanders had not pushed matters so much the legislature would have been allowed to meet, and Mr. Lincoln's permission would have been held as another proof of his great wisdom.

I desire to say here in regard to Mr. Dana's visit to Richmond, that he stated to me that he had no intention nor wish to give me any instructions, and that he was there only to look on and report. If my memory serves me correctly he sent daily bulletins to the *New York Tribune* from Richmond. He wrote a single note to me while I was in command at Richmond. It was in reference to some rebel records which he had heard of. I had made the collection of all these documents a special duty of one of my staff officers. While on this subject, I desire to touch upon a letter, the existence or non-



existence of which has caused considerable correspondence lately in the newspapers of the country. Among the documents found in the drawer of Mr. Davis' desk was a confidential letter written by General Lee and laid before the Confederate Senate in secret session. This letter was written in the previous October, if I recollect correctly, and in it Lee frankly and clearly showed that their cause was lost, and, I think, advised them to make the best terms they could. This letter was considered by me so important that I sent it to the Secretary of War by General H. W. Benham, who was on that day on a visit to Richmond. It certainly ought, therefore, to be among the archives of the War Department.

The object of my departure from Richmond in a southerly direction was to bring together all of my corps stationed in Virginia at some point south or southwest of Petersburg. Here I was to hold myself in readiness to move in the direction of North Carolina with the Sixth Corps and the cavalry, all under the command of General [Philip H.] Sheridan. The object of this was to be on hand to help General Sherman in case General Johnston had not surrendered. As I left Richmond on the same day on which the revocation of the call for the Virginia legislature appeared in the papers of that city, the rumor was spread, and I am told generally believed, that I had been removed for issuing that call. Advantage of this was taken to fan the east and south winds which had been blowing for me during some time, and against which I had been cautioned by warm friends who were more solicitous about my welfare than I was myself. It fanned these breezes so strongly that even the fair and just mind of General Grant nearly became tainted, and a false reputation for myself and corps was nearly started. A few moments statement of facts to General Grant in person made everything all right, and as the officers of my corps got a fair share of honor in the re-organization of the regular army, I did not consider it necessary to say anything more, either officially or publicly. I can confidently refer to the muster-rolls of officers of the 25th Army Corps for April 30, 1865, to prove that as a body they were at that time the peers of any body of officers in any corps in the United States service, in every quality that goes to make a good soldier and perfect gentleman. In this narrative I was compelled to name a few, and I would not dare to trust my memory to mention more without doing injustice to others.

I can assure my readers that I was delighted to get out of Richmond and get back to real military duties. I was as happy only once afterwards, and that was when I was relieved on the Rio Grande in February of the next year.

It will be clear, to my military readers at least, how much trouble it is to satisfy four different commanding officers - two soldiers and two civilians. Richmond was too near Washington and in telegraphic communication with it. There was no trouble in regulating affairs in New Orleans, and elsewhere, outside of telegraphic communication.

I do not believe that the unfortunate people of Richmond ever were aware how near they came to being governed to death, after they were rescued from destruction by fire. In saying this, I do not wish to reflect in the least on my commanders. They were all kind to me. The disagreeable state of affairs I refer to was the natural result of the great excitement of that period.

Among other minor experiences I had during my ten days occupation of Richmond, were the receipt of abusive letters for extinguishing the fire. Then again I was paraded in some papers, and in one even published in my own home, as a flunky. It was stated that I had placed a guard of colored troops over Mrs. Lee's house, and upon her protest had substituted white troops. The truth of this incident is as follows:

My brother, Captain Lewis Weitzel, aid-de-camp on my staff, was riding through the city in obedience to my orders engaged in gathering all the able-bodied men to assist in extinguishing the fire, when he was hailed by a servant in front of a house towards which the fire seemed to be moving. The servant told him that his mistress wished to speak to him. He dismounted and entered the house and was met by a lady who stated that her mother was an invalid, confined to her bed, and as the fire seemed to be approaching she asked his assistance. The subsequent conversation developed the fact that my brother was addressing Miss Lee, and that the invalid was no other than Mrs. R. E. Lee. My brother knew that when I was a cadet at West Point, General Lee was superintendent of the academy, and had often heard me speak in high terms of him and his family. He at once, therefore, went to the nearest commander, Col. Ripley, who furnished him with a corporal, two men, and an ambulance from his own regiment, the 9th Vermont. Captain Weitzel ordered the corporal to remain near the house and if there were serious danger to remove Mrs. Lee. These men remained on duty until all danger was over. These are the facts upon which the lie was based. As I have herein before stated, no colored troops were placed on duty in the city. Devens' division of white troops, having had more experience in extinguishing fires, was alone on duty with Parsons' company of the 1st New York Volunteer Engineers.

Again the charge of flunkyism was made against me because I held a review in Richmond of Devens' division and not of Kautz's.

The review was ordered for both. In order not to strip the lines completely, I ordered Devens' review one day and Kautz's another. The former came off, but before the latter could take place we were under orders to move south. Hence it did not take place.

There was some dispute as to which troops first entered Richmond, white or colored. As there was no fighting, in going in, I did not consider it of much consequence.

This narrative gives the facts. Major Emmons E. Graves, senior aid-de-camp on my staff, in command, with Major Atherton H. Stevens, Jr., and about forty men of the 4th Massachusetts cavalry were the first to enter.

Then there was some dispute as to the first flag hoisted over Richmond after its capture. This detachment of Massachusetts cavalry had two guidons with it. These guidons were raised first, one at each end of the roof of the Capitol building, and were, therefore, the first, United States colors raised. When our troops took possession of New Orleans in May 1862, General George F. Shepley was colonel of the 12th Maine Volunteers, and his regiment was detailed to take possession of the new custom house. As soon as this was done, Shepley raised a United States flag, which was his private property, over the building, and many believe today that this was the first United States flag raised in New Orleans after its capture. But this is not true. The first flag was raised over the mint by the navy, and was torn down by a mob headed by W. B. Mumford. The latter was subsequently arrested, tried by a military commission, and hung for it. General Shepley had this New Orleans custom house flag with him, and an aid-de-camp on his staff carried it into

Richmond with him, and hoisted it over the Capitol. This was, therefore, the first real American flag which was displayed. The aid-de-camp was Lieut. [Johnston L.] dePeyster, son of General J. Watts de Peyster, of New York city, and nephew of General Philip Kearney.

In looking over my notes and copies of telegrams while writing this I came across some which exhibit the humors of a campaign, and, although

not properly belonging to the subject matter of my narrative, I will here give two as samples.

The first is from that great admirer and warm eulogist of the distinguished soldier General [Robert H.] Milroy, namely, General George H. Gordon, who was in command at Norfolk, Va., in April 1865. It reads as follows:

"April 13, 1865

By Telegraph from Norfolk

To Maj. Genl. Weitzel  
General:

By your order Col. [Edwin V.] Sumner with his command reported to me on the eleventh inst. I ordered him to Suffolk. I learn from Genl. [Charles K.] Graham that on the twelfth Col. Sumner and his command disappeared from my district. I cannot think he has deserted, but I apprise you of the fact of his disappearance that proper steps may be taken to discover his whereabouts.

Genl. Gordon"

Col. Sumner is now Major of the 5th U. S. Cavalry. It is probably superfluous to state that he moved away from Gordon in accordance with orders from General Ord's headquarters.

The other is from Hartsuff, who was placed in command of Petersburg and City Point in addition to Bermuda Hundred, with headquarters at Petersburg, on the day I entered Richmond.

It had been determined that it would be unnecessary to send any assistance to General Sherman, and, therefore, General Sheridan was moving eastward to get his command more easily supplied. I was moving northward to get a good healthy camp near the Southside railroad, and thus we were apparently concentrating on Petersburg. I heard that Sheridan had a fine camp and would leave it the next day, and, therefore, telegraphed to Hartsuff about it as I had no telegraphic communication with Sheridan. This is Hartsuff's reply:

"April 18, 1865

By Telegraph from Petersburg

To Maj. Genl. Weitzel:

Sheridan intends to remain where he is. I fear I shall be unable to defend the city against both, and, as I hold the balance of power between you, would be glad to know the terms on which you will combine with me against him. I shall make the same proposition to him.

Geo. L. Hartsuff."

In conclusion, I desire to say that I have written this narrative in the intervals of my duties in the busy season of the year. There may be some slight errors of date, but I believe that I have the facts arranged in order, so that they may easily be comprehended. Such has been my main aim.

The battle at Sailor's creek proved that my officers were right throughout in their estimate and description of the forces in my front from March 28 to the night of April 2. Besides Mahone's division, there was a dispute between us and our forces on the extreme left as to the whereabouts of Coose's and Barton's [Brigadier General Montgomery D. Corse's and Brigadier General John Bratton's Confederate] brigades. We were right. They were in our front.

The following copy of a letter received from Mr. E. F. Williams, agent United States Christian Commission, Army of the James, may also be of interest:

Major General Weitzel:

Having understood that you would like to know something of our work in this city, I have the honor to report briefly, as follows:

1. We entered Richmond with the advance guard, our delegates having left the stations behind the works with the

expectation that there would be an engagement, and they might be of service in helping minister to the wounded.

2. Our present rooms, corner of 10th and Capitol streets were opened Monday afternoon, April 3.
3. We have distributed supplies, and visited hospitals, prisoners, troops, and needy citizens every day.

When transportation could be had we have distributed rations to the hungry, requiring from all a voucher for their integrity.

The Young Men's Christian Association of this city, the leading pastors of the same, Mr. Mumford and Col. Clapp, have aided us in many instances to furnish aid in a delicate way to very many suffering families. A tolerably accurate report gives us the following result for the four days' distribution:

- (1) 1,951 rations distributed at the door
- (2) 3,394 rations distributed at the door
- (3) 845 (food ran out) at the door
- (4) 2,514 rations issued at the door.

In this account no regard is had to the amount distributed in hospitals.

Religious reading has been distributed in large quantities .

Twenty thousand copies of the leading newspapers, at least, having been circulated by us since Richmond was taken.

I have the honor to be, General,  
Your obedient servant,  
E. F. Williams  
Agt., U. S. C. C.  
Army of the James."