

1862 June 12 - 15 Jeb Stuart set out from the army's lines with the cavalry and for the next three days made a complete circuit of the Army of the Potomac, gathering facts about Union dispositions - especially along the Chickahominy River. "When they [Stuart's men] found their way blocked by the flooded Chickahominy, they banged together a bridge, clattered across it, then set it ablaze, leaving Stuart's father-in-law's men cursing on the other side."

The Civil War

by Geoffrey C. Ward, Ric Burns and Ken Burns p. 142. By American Documentaries, Inc.1990

Assigned to track down his son-in-law, Philip found this note stuck to a telegraph pole. "Dear Father: I am very sorry that I cannot wait to see you as I have pressing business elsewhere. Your loving son-in-law, J.E.B. Stuart." (I'm not sure where this came from or even if it is true).

The "Chickahominy Raid" made Stuart's reputation and boosted the morale of the cavalry and the Confederate Army. He returned to a hero's welcome in Richmond and the warm praise of his Commander General Lee.

"His dash, his joyous courage, his jests and his daring became the pride of the whole South. If there rang through the night air in Richmond the notes of a silver bugle, the echo of a gay marching song and the fast clatter of saucy horses' hoofs, good people aroused from slumber would say, 'There goes Stuart - God bless him!' And that night they would sleep without fear of alarm." - From Flora's Obituary Cavalry Leader's Widow Dies At Home in Norfolk .

The New York Times observed that it "excites as much admiration in the Union army as it does in Richmond." Stuart was then promoted to Major General and given command of the newly formed Cavalry Division of two brigades. The Generals of Gettysburg: *The Leaders of America's Greatest Battle*

: by Larry Tagg.

www.rocernabra.com/~roger/tagg/generals/general66.html

[One can only imagine what Cooke's reaction was to such lavish praise for Stuart from a Northern paper! And it is ironic that in many books, Philip's fame comes through his link with Jeb...]

1862 June 12 - 15 Jeb Stuart's famous scouting and raiding ride around McClellan's forces [including Philip St. George's Cavalry]. Burke Davis in his book *Jeb Stuart The Last Cavalier* gives details of Jeb's ride, and comments on Philip St. George Cooke's slow response: (p. 119) "Already, it seemed, officers were looking askance at General Cooke, wondering if his strange lethargy stemmed from his affection for his daughter's husband. General Fitz John Porter, commander of the sector, said: 'I can only express surprise that General Cooke...did not join

earlier his command in front and there act as circumstances required, and that when General Cooke did pursue, he should have tied his legs with the infantry command. I have seen no energy or spirit in the pursuit by General Cooke of the enemy or [seen] exhibited the characteristics of a skillful and active guardian of our flanks.'

(p. 120)...It was after daylight (the next day) when he began the chase. He expected, he said, to meet the enemy momentarily in the hot morning of June fourteenth. By then, the gray column had left him hopelessly behind. There was only smoking debris to mark its trail. ... "By now even John Esten Cooke, galloping up and down the column on Stuart's errands, was wondering whether his uncle, the Federal cavalry commander, was not remiss in his duty, since there was no sign of pursuit."

(p. 127) "Cooke [John Esten] had an interesting conversation with Jeb. 'I believe General Cooke really tried to catch us across the river,' Stuart said. 'I can't believe it,' Cooke said. 'Yes, the General is a man who'll do his duty to the hilt.' 'Granted,' Cooke replied, 'but he was a poor cavalry officer if he couldn't find the tracks of 1,200 cavalry in a big road, and catch them ten miles off in twelve hours.' John Esten Cooke thought Stuart too devoted to his father-in-law to condemn him."

The Seven Days Battles

1862 June 27-28 Gaines's Mill/Cold Harbor Philip St. George Cooke, Jeb Stuart, and John Esten Cooke were all in this battle which began at noon and lasted until after dark. Philip St. George Cooke rode to the front and ordered the "ill-fated" charge to Captain Whiting of the 5th US Cavalry. The Rev. W. H. Hitchcock, a participant, said, "Our commissioned officer was the only one not wounded, except some who were captured. Only about 100 returned from that bloody field for duty the next day. Some were captured, but a large number fell in that terrible charge." In this battle, nearly an entire regiment of Regulars was sacrificed.

"During the day [John Esten] Cooke had halted for a moment in the yard of a Mrs. Johnson, where, he was told, General Philip St. George Cooke had made headquarters until the early morning. Stuart's father-in-law had lived in a small tent there, Mrs. Johnson said. [John Esten] Cooke recorded: 'He is wretched, they say, and hopes the first ball will kill him.' The army had suffered horribly in the day." Jeb Stuart *The Last Cavalier* by Burke Davis p. 137

Was this the dark swamp of Philip St. George Cooke's life? In his youth he had been fearless against the Indians in the exotic "big sky" land of the West, but now at age 53, he was fighting

battles in the rich well-loved soil of his youth and facing close relatives, army comrades, and fellow Virginians. This was a man with little experience of failure. Had this war created in him a state of stasis and shock? On June 6th, 1861 he declared that he had "the hope that he would die before he would be disloyal". Could it be that his failure to track down Jeb - who was not only a kindred spirit, but probably his favorite son-in-law - despite "the tracks of 1,200 cavalry in a big road" as John Esten Cooke put it, represented disloyalty in his mind, so that at this point he wished for death? Perhaps it was not so much disloyalty as conflicting loyalties? And although he had no physical wounds, the emotional wounds must have been deep as the internal conflict between duty and not injuring kin took place. His son had been wounded a few weeks earlier at Seven Pines, and his daring son-in-law was close at hand. How could he have faced his family if he had killed Jeb?

1862 June 27 Anita Withers's Diary: "The enemy retreated several miles - it is reported we are whipping them."

1862 June 30 White Oak Swamp/Glendale/Frazier's Farm Philip St. George Cooke was involved in this battle.

The Peninsular Campaign was to be Philip St. George Cooke's only actual field service during the Civil War. He was relieved from the command of the Cavalry Reserve, and from duty with this army at Harrison's Landing. The generals who performed well were recommended for promotion. <http://www.civilweek.com/1862/jun2962.htm>

1862 July 5 When Philip St. George Cooke left active duty during that hot and blood soaked summer, the fact was that for many strenuous years on the frontier Philip had been on a limited diet, which could have, at the age of 53 impaired his ability to be an effective field commander. As well, my feeling is that he was most likely emotionally crushed by the experience not only of the family being shattered, but of having come within firing range of some of his comrades and relatives. In May he had even been in the same battle but on opposite sides from his own son with the possibility of coming within firing range of him. Added to all of this was the suspicion of some Northerners of his loyalty - the loyalty which was so important to him that he had sacrificed the unity of his family to uphold it. In the West, not only was the setting different - and alien to the place as a child he had called home - but his foes were Indians, not people he considered to be of his kin and class. Fighting in the West to protect travelers and settlers was one thing. Fighting relatives and former companions in Virginia was another. And although his duties were mainly administrative from this point on, the worry over his children and grandchildren would have continued for both Philip and Rachel throughout the remaining years of the war and then some.

Otis Young wrote: "When Brigadier General Philip St. George Cooke left the Army of the Potomac on the morning of July 5, 1862, he was fully aware that his career had effectively ended and that he had forfeited all chance of further advancement or even, barring the wildest possibilities, of action. He did not know of Fitz-John Porter's request for his relief, which alone was sufficient to damn him in the eyes of the service, but his own request for other duty was the equivalent of resignation from ambition; one of the chief clauses of the unwritten service code is that no professional officer shall protest his combat assignment, no matter how personally demeaning it may be. Yet on the other hand, when a capable officer has failed, means are found to preserve whatever value to the service he still possesses; he can no longer exercise command in any important place, but there are literally hundreds of administrative positions which he can fill ably as the result of his long experience."

1862 July 15 Anita Withers's Diary: "I finished my skirt. I sang in the choir this morning, practicing to sing a requiem Mass for Mrs. McNulty. Mrs. Stuart played the organ."

1862 July In Richmond, Jeb was commissioned as a Major General of cavalry and placed in command of all cavalry forces in the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia. John Esten Cooke was commissioned as a captain. Although Jeb recommended that he become a major, and it was endorsed by Lee, Richmond never approved of the promotion, but his companions referred to him as "Major" anyway. He continued writing throughout the war, giving us a personal view of Jeb and his companions. From The Scrapbook of John Esten Cooke Chester B. Goolrick, Jr.

1862 July Philip was detailed to preside over a board for the retirement of disabled officers.

1862 Aug Philip was ill.

1862 Aug 23 Death of Isaac Williams Brewer, Charles Brewer's younger brother by 3 years. "He took part in the battles of Bull Run and Manassas, being especially mentioned by his Lieutenant, J.J. Garnett, for 'coolness and gallantry on the field under the fire of the enemy's guns.' ... "On May 5, 1861 he was promoted to the rank of 2nd lieutenant in the CSA artillery. He was mortally wounded by a shell at the close of a severe artillery duel at the Ford of Rappahannock." 1896 Biographical Review for Cumberland Co. NJ

1862 Sept 17 Jacob Sharpe was commissioned lieutenant colonel of the 156 th NY Volunteers organized in Kingston New York.

1862 Sept 17 Antietam/Sharpsburg Jeb Stuart and John Esten Cooke were in this battle. John Rogers Cooke led the 27th North Carolina Regiment in Walker's Brigade in Walker's Division. At one critical juncture during the battle, ...he held their position for two-and-a-half hours without a single cartridge. At one point, Longstreet sent Moxley Sorrell to remind Col Cooke that his men must hold their position at all costs. Cooke replied, "Major, thank General Longstreet for his good words, but say, by God Almighty, he needn't doubt me! We will stay here, by J.C., if we must go to hell together!" [He was wounded in this battle.]

Brian Downey's Antietam on the Web <http://aotw.org/>

During the war John Esten Cooke, as a war correspondent, wrote articles for The Southern Illustrated News to boost Southern morale.

Sept 24 1862 -Sept 1863 The Cookes were in St. Louis Missouri where Philip served on court martial boards. On Oct 21 Rachel's location is listed in nearby Collinsville, Illinois according to the disbursement list of her mother's estate. Philip was also briefly in Wilmington Delaware on another retiring board during this period.

Oct 11 1862 "Among the captures of the rebel Col. Stewart, in his recent raid, was the baggage of his father-in-law, Gen. Philip St. George Cooke, commanding a Federal brigade of cavalry. His valise contained a box of silver, worth \$25. The General, referring to his loss, said he would cut off his vagrant son-in-law with a shilling. A wicked wit replied that he was "afraid he never would cut him off with cavalry."

"*Odds and Ends*," The Christian Recorder, October 11, 1862.

1862 Nov 2 After receiving a disturbing letter from Dr. Charles Brewer that young Flora was ill - perhaps critically, Jeb wrote to Flora: "Dr. Brewer's first dispatch was received yesterday, and I answered it at once. The second came today, saying our darling's case was doubtful, and urges me in your name to come. I received it on the field of battle. I was at no loss to decide that it was my duty to you and to Flora to remain here. I am entrusted with the conduct of affairs, the issue of which will affect you, her, and the mothers and children of our whole country much more seriously than we can believe. If my darling's case is hopeless there are ten chances to one that I will get to Lynchburg too late; if she is convalescent why should my presence be necessary? She was sick nine days before I knew it. Let us trust in the good God, who has blessed us so much, that he will spare our child to us, but if it should please Him to take her from us, let us bear it with Christian fortitude and resignation." Burke Davis Jeb Stuart

The Last Cavalier

p. 242

1862 Nov 3 Death Young Flora died in Lynchburg VA. She was buried in Hollywood Cemetery in Richmond. Jeb was in the middle of fighting when he received news of his daughter's death. On the 6th he wrote to Flora: "The intelligence reached me this morning. I was somewhat expecting it, and yet it grieves me more the more I think of it. When I remember her sweet voice, her gentle ways, and affection for 'Papa,' and then think that she is gone, my heart is ready to burst. I want to see you so much. I know she is better off, but it is such a hard blow to us...I have been harassing and checking a heavy force, believed to be McClellan's. God has shielded me thus far from bodily harm, but I feel perfect resignation to go at his bidding to join my little Flora."

... "But there was no question of Stuart's grief - and no question of his being able to leave the front to attend Flora's funeral. The enemy pressed him relentlessly."

Burke Davis Jeb Stuart *The Last Cavalier* pp. 245, 246

"Flora arrived [on the 8th] at 'Camp No Rest'. As Jeb wrote a friend, 'she is not herself since the loss of her little companion.' Von Borcke was impressed by the courage of the Stuarts in their grief, but wrote: 'Her manner was composed, but her eyes betrayed their frequent overflow of tears; and the warm pressure of the hand she silently gave me upon our meeting, indicated that words could not describe the agony she had endured.'" Flora brought 3 year old Jimmy with her, who helped to enliven the grieving family. Von Borcke thought the infant much like his father; at every opportunity the child wandered among the cavalry horses and the German aide took him on many gallops around the camp. General Lee came as soon as he heard of Flora's visit. Von Borcke wrote: "I was touched by the gentle sympathizing way in which he talked with Mrs. Stuart." Burke Davis Jeb Stuart *The Last Cavalier* p. 247. Of Jeb von Borcke wrote: "I have not found a soldier who loved his family more than Jeb Stuart, or one whose sense of duty burned with a clearer flame." John Thomason

Jeb

Stuart

p. 333.

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