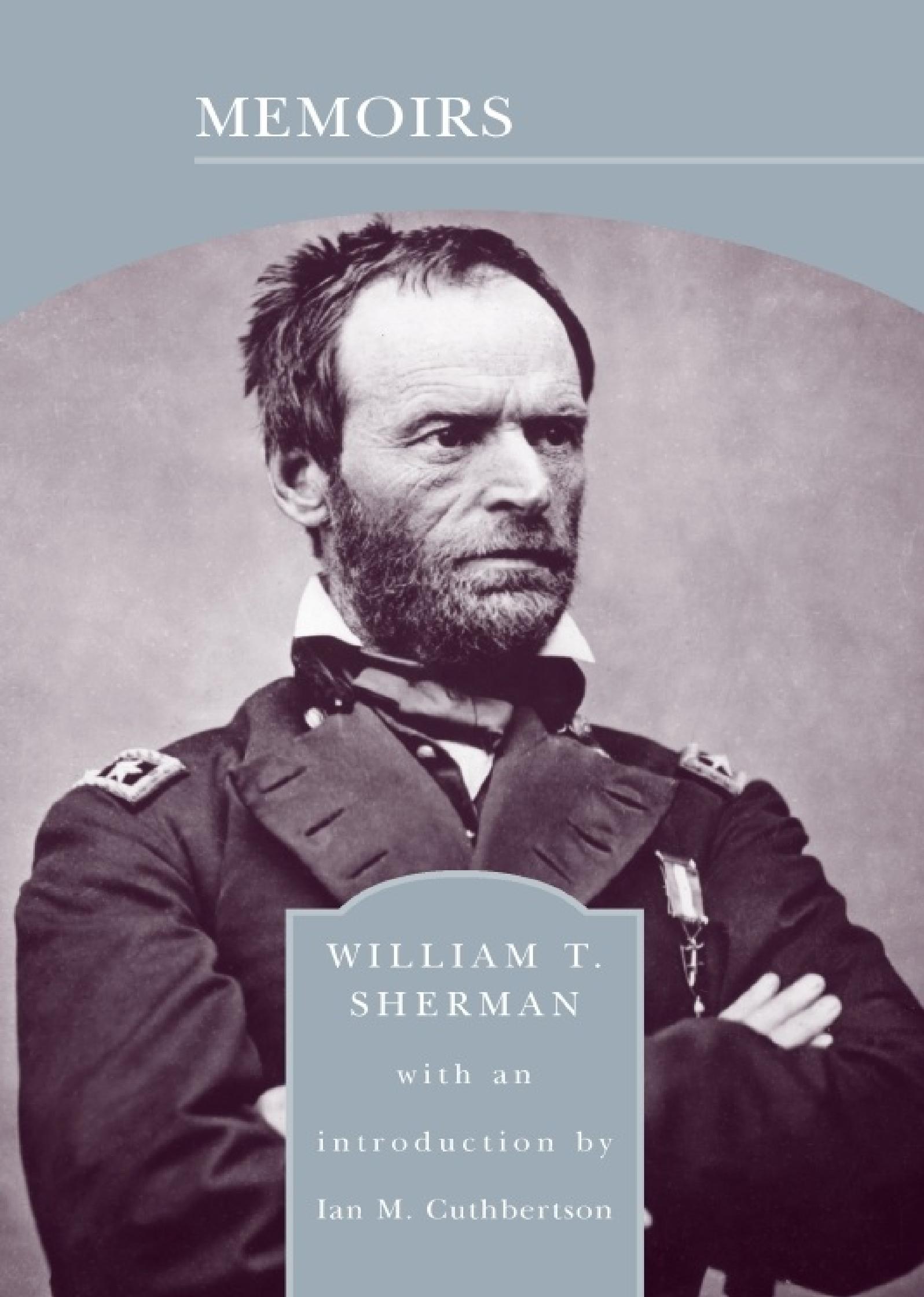


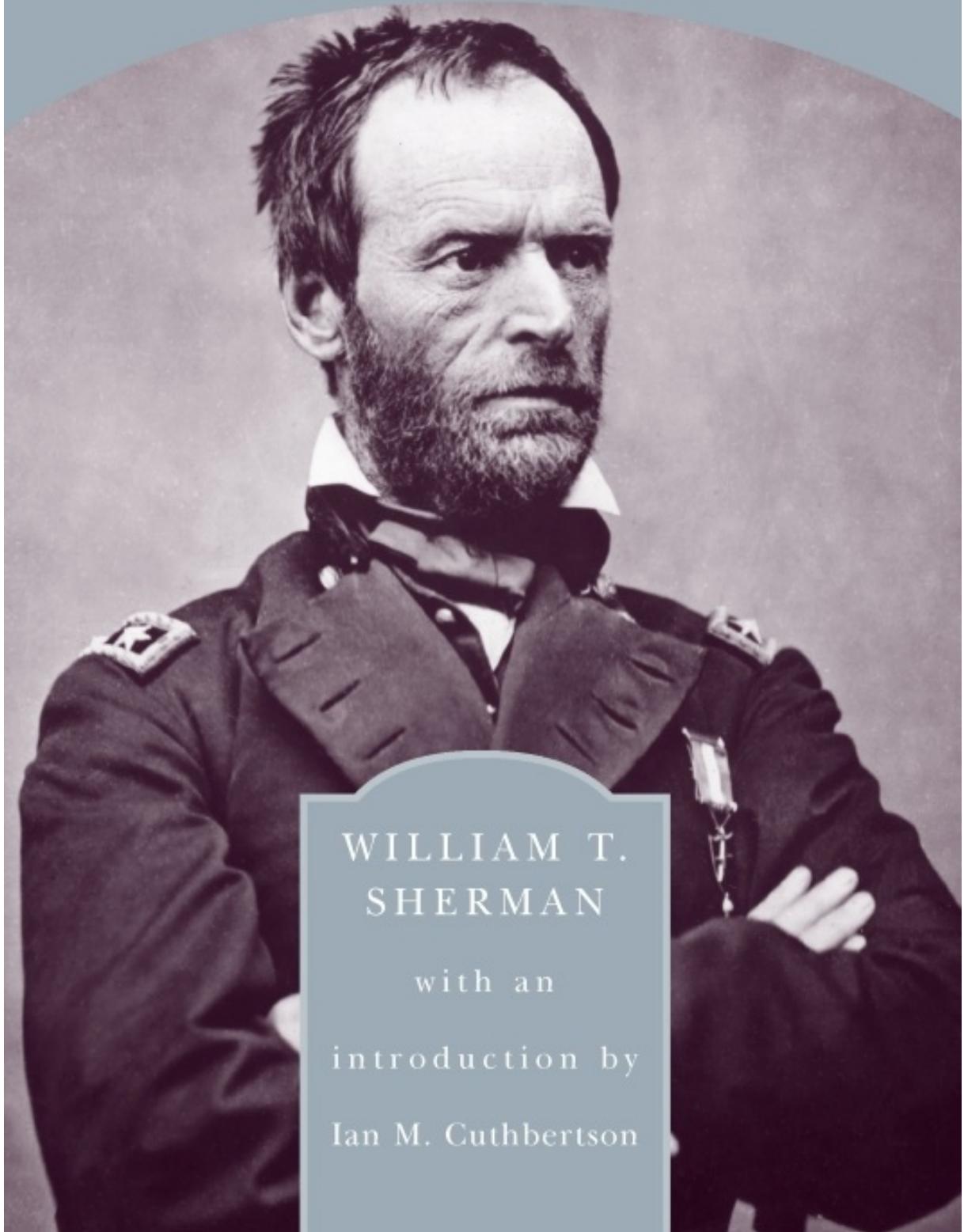
MEMOIRS



WILLIAM T.
SHERMAN

with an
introduction by
Ian M. Cuthbertson

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MEMOIRS

William T. Sherman

Introduction by Ian M. Cuthbertson

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INTRODUCTION

IN a bloody Civil War chiefly remembered for battles in which each side tried too often to simply pummel the other into submission by sheer weight of numbers and volume of fire, General William Tecumseh Sherman stood out as a master of maneuver warfare. In what can be properly described as the world's first war of the machine age, a conflict in which railways, aerial observation, and the machine gun all made their real military debut, its two most famous and talented commanders, Robert E. Lee and Ulysses S. Grant, frequently launched frontal attacks on prepared positions, a type of massed infantry advance more suited to an earlier era of military technology. Both generals ordered attacks -- in Lee's case, Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, and for Grant, the assault of the 50,000 troops of the II, VI, and XVIII Corps at Cold Harbor -- that failed miserably and proved to be close to suicidal for the soldiers ordered to go forward across open ground into the maws of the rifled muskets and cannon of a well-trenched enemy. In contrast, Sherman did all in his considerable power to keep casualties low, both among his own troops and, perhaps equally significant, among those of his Confederate enemy. And yet Sherman is most famous for a brutal campaign of burning, pillaging, and wanton looting that saw the devastation of the city of Atlanta and a long and destructive trek through the heart of the Confederacy, an invasion that came to take on the aura of a crusade, where the stated objective of Sherman and his soldiers was to lay waste to the heartland of the South. Sherman's "March to the Sea" and his subsequent Savannah and Carolinas campaigns have been described as the first application of total war, in which civilians as well as soldiers were deliberately targeted to ensure that they felt the full brunt of the horrors of war. Other Union commanders emulated Sherman, in particular, General Philip Sheridan, who took up Sherman's lessons and amplified them in his scorched earth campaign down the Shenandoah Valley. They were also applied, in slightly modified form, in the later genocidal wars the United States waged against Native Americans on the western plains, campaigns conducted while Sherman was the head of the U.S. Army. In his fascinating, compelling, and detailed account of his life, Sherman lays out how, step by step, this almost gentle and most compassionate of soldiers came to embrace a brutal and inhumane approach to war, one that has been the mark of every major conflict since his time.

William Tecumseh Sherman emerged from the Civil War as one of its greatest heroes, if you were a Union supporter, and perhaps its greatest villain to those who had fought and sacrificed for the South. Sherman was born on May 8, 1820, in Lancaster, Ohio, the son of one of the state's Supreme Court justices. William was the sixth of eleven children, but misfortune befell him at the age of nine when he and his many siblings were effectively orphaned by his father's death. His widowed mother, feeling unable to proficiently care for her numerous children, chose instead to scatter them among relatives and friends. Sherman was fortunate to be adopted and raised by a wealthy friend of his father's, Thomas Ewing, Sr., a U.S. senator. His younger brother, John, was also adopted by the same family and followed in his adoptive father's

footsteps and also became a U.S. senator. John proved to be an important political supporter during Sherman's later career. Sherman attended school in Ohio until 1836, when he entered West Point Military Academy. At West Point he had a reputation as an honorable individual with a forceful and high-spirited personality who took his studies seriously. In 1840, he graduated sixth in a class of forty-two cadets.

Sherman was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Third Artillery and posted to garrison duty in Florida, where the resentments caused by the brutal Seminole War continued to fester. In 1842, Sherman was sent to Fort Morgan in Alabama, and later to Fort Moultrie in Charleston harbor. In 1843, he began to study for a law degree largely as a distraction from the tedious routines of his military duties and garrison life. As the Mexican War began in 1846 he was sent, along with a contingent of troops, around Cape Horn to San Francisco, from where he took part in some small-scale operations. At the same time, Sherman was enjoying the natural beauty of the still unspoiled countryside and he was present to witness the upheavals caused by the start of the California Gold Rush. Returning to the East in 1850, Sherman married his adoptive parents' daughter, Ellen and was promoted to captain and posted first to St. Louis and then to New Orleans. Increasingly disillusioned with life in the peacetime U.S. Army, and realistically assessing that there was little immediate prospect for further promotion, Sherman determined that it was time to take advantage of the fact that the well-educated graduates of West Point were in considerable demand in the civilian economy. In 1853, he resigned his commission and, anxious to again experience the great natural beauty he had enjoyed in the far west during his tour of duty in California, he returned to San Francisco to become a banker. The bank, however, failed, and Sherman turned to the practice of law, only to lose the single case he took to court.

Sherman again left San Francisco, living first in St. Louis and then in New York and finally in Leavenworth, Kansas, but he continued to struggle to make a success in civilian life. It was thanks to several old Army friends, among them P. G. T. Beauregard and Braxton Bragg, who would later fight opposite him as Confederate generals, that in 1859 he was appointed superintendent of the newly established Louisiana Military Academy (now Louisiana State University). Sherman's was a popular and successful tenure, but it was cut short as the secession movement in the South gathered momentum and civil war became inevitable. Sherman was quick to reject any notions that he would accept a Confederate commission, and instead returned to St. Louis when Louisiana seceded from the Union. When war broke out, he rejoined the U.S. Army as the colonel of the 13th Infantry Regiment, with instructions to report to Washington, D.C.

From the outset, Sherman believed it was going to be a long and hard war. He thought that President Lincoln's April 1861 call for only 75,000 volunteers to serve for a mere three months was a serious misreading of the danger the new Confederate Army represented. Sherman's experiences in New Orleans had shown him just how committed Southerners were to their cause and he firmly believed that the United States was going to need to raise a large and well-trained army to defeat them. At the war's first major battle, at Bull Run, the correctness of his assessment was borne out. Sherman led one of the few Union brigades that performed relatively well during a

long, hard day of fighting that ended in a stunning Confederate victory.

As one of the North's few even moderately successful commanders that day, Sherman was promoted to brigadier general and placed in charge of Union forces in Kentucky. Here he set about recruiting volunteers, a difficult task because allegiances in this border state were split between North and South. Anxious to see action, Sherman somewhat recklessly boasted that with 60,000 men, he could drive the Confederates out of Kentucky, despite the fact that he was conspicuously nervous about his and his armies prospects because he consistently overestimated the strength and offensive capabilities of the Southern forces deployed in the area. His concern about enemy intentions and capabilities led him to increase the size of the force he said he would need to secure first Kentucky and then the entire region, until the newspapers in Washington were reporting that he had asked for 200,000 men to be placed under his command. At a time when Washington itself seemed in imminent danger of capture by Confederate forces, there was indignation among the public that Sherman was apparently demanding such a large force and rumors began to circulate that he was "crazy."

Sherman was not crazy, but he does seem to have been subject to unpredictable mood swings that carried him, willy-nilly, between great enthusiasm and deep depression. Some modern commentators have gone so far as to suggest that his symptoms and behavior suggest that he was a manic-depressive, at a time when neither the diagnosis nor appropriate medication was available to treat the problem. His erratic behavior was certainly noticed and widely commented on by his contemporaries. Apart from what were seen as his wild demands for more troops, it was also claimed that after preparing his command for what was to be a major offensive, the occupation of East Tennessee, Sherman lost his nerve in carrying through the operation. Under a cloud, he resigned his command in Kentucky in November 1861 and set off for St. Louis, where he placed himself at the disposal of General Halleck, commander of the Department of the West. Today it seems obvious that the strains of command caused Sherman to suffer a nervous breakdown. He was very depressed and briefly considered suicide, but rejected the idea because of his wife and children.

In February 1862, after Sherman had taken some leave and a period of recuperation spent drilling recruits, Halleck judged his health and mind sufficiently robust to take command of a division in the Army of the Tennessee, where for the first time Sherman found himself serving under General Ulysses S. Grant. Grant quickly became Sherman's best friend and his most loyal and ardent supporter. Although both men had flaws, Grant helped stabilize the brilliant but erratic Sherman, while Sherman stood firmly beside Grant through the heavy criticisms that were all too often heaped upon him, including repeated charges that he was a drunkard and careless with the lives of the soldiers under his command. Together, they would forge the Army of the Tennessee into the North's most consistently successful command.

Their relationship, however, got off to a somewhat rocky start. The Army of the Tennessee saw its first major battle on April 6, 1862, at Shiloh. As a result of poor intelligence on the whereabouts of the Confederate forces as well as careless troop

dispositions based in no small part on overconfidence on the part of Grant and Sherman, the Union forces were nearly overwhelmed in a series of frontal assaults launched throughout the day by General Albert S. Johnston and his powerful Army of the Mississippi. The Army of the Tennessee was badly mauled on the first day of the battle, being forced to retreat along nearly the entire length of its battleline, and finally forming a last line of defense, backed by mass cannons, with its back hard against the Tennessee River. The heavy cannonade, coupled with the exhaustion of the Southern troops, enabled the line to hold, with the Confederates suffering heavy casualties in their attempts to breach it. Fortune smiled on the weary Union army, and during the night, reinforcements from the Army of the Cumberland under General Buell arrived to reinforce the Union line. With fresh troops, Grant went on the offensive and the Confederates were driven from the field on the second day. Sherman's division was in the thick of the fighting, defending the key pivot of the Union line at the Shiloh Church. Although severely wounded in the hand, he refused to relinquish command of his troops, and by his steadfast behavior, he fully deserved the praise that General Grant gave him in his official report: "I feel it a duty to a gallant and able officer, Brigadier-General W. T. Sherman, to make mention. He was not only with his command during the entire two days of the action, but displayed great judgment and skill in the management of his men. . . . To his individual efforts I am indebted for the success of that battle." But it was a costly victory. At the time, Shiloh was the bloodiest battle of the war. The final number of dead or missing was 13,000 Union and 10,500 Confederate soldiers, more American casualties than had been suffered during the entire Revolutionary War.

Shiloh was a grim foretaste of the enormous bloodletting that was to come. The battles and skirmishes of the Civil War, along with the sickness and disease that haunted the ranks of both sides' armies, killed more American soldiers than any other war in the nation's history. At least 618,000 Americans died in the Civil War, and though some historians believe that the toll may have reached as high as 700,000, the number that is most often cited is 620,000. Whatever the exact figure, the enormous casualty rolls of the Civil War exceed the United States' combined losses in all of its other wars, from the War of Independence through to the current wars and insurgencies in Afghanistan and Iraq. The Civil War's terrible bloodletting left a heritage of grief and bitterness between North and South that has still not entirely healed.

After Shiloh, Sherman was promoted to Major-General of Volunteers and in July 1862, he was assigned to command the District of Memphis. In late December of that year Sherman led a force of 32,000 men in what amounted to a frontal assault on the Chickasaw Bluffs as part of Grant's two-pronged plan to seize the Confederate stronghold of Vicksburg. Sherman's attack failed, and with Grant's lines of communications wrecked by Confederate raiders led by General Nathan Bedford Forrest, the whole offensive was abandoned. Undeterred, Grant returned to plotting the city's capture, a feat he finally accomplished in July 1863. Sherman, who had played an important role in the siege, was again promoted, this time to Brigadier-General in the regular army. He was given command of the Army of the Tennessee in the fall of 1863, in which capacity he played a key part in Grant's last victory in the West at the

Battle of Chattanooga. After Grant was promoted to Lieutenant General and given overall command of the entire Union Army, he headed off to the Eastern Theater to test his metal against Robert E. Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia. As part of his new command responsibilities, Grant promoted Sherman first to command of the Western Theater and later to overall command of the armies in the West. In February 1864, Sherman received the Thanks of Congress for his services in the Chattanooga campaign. As Sherman's performance during the campaign had been workman-like rather than inspired, it may be that this accolade owed more to the machinations his brother, Senator John Sherman, than it did to his own brilliance on the battlefield.

With Sherman in the West and Grant in the East, the days of disjointed Union offensives in widely separate theaters of operations came to an end. Grant, the first general to truly grasp the potentials of industrialized warfare, determined that the Confederacy would be simultaneously pummeled by superior Union forces on every front. Its armies would be bled to death on the battlefield, while the South's industrial base, food supply, and transport infrastructure buckled and ultimately collapsed trying simultaneously to meet too many dangers in too many places. Grant intended to seize the initiative, and once he had it, not relent until the Confederacy was defeated and destroyed. While Grant stayed in Virginia with the Army of the Potomac, Sherman was placed in command of the Union's second largest group of forces, the military division of the Mississippi, or the entire southwestern region comprising of the Departments of the Ohio, the Tennessee, the Cumberland, and the Arkansas. Launching his assault into the heartland of the Confederacy, in a series of clashes, Sherman pushed back the Confederates under Generals Joseph Johnston and John Bell Hood, who were desperately trying to protect the critical railway hub that the city of Atlanta represented for the South. The Atlanta Campaign can be best characterized as a war of maneuver, an uneven struggle between Sherman and his well-equipped army and an increasingly ragged Confederate force that consistently found itself outmaneuvered, out-fought, and out-generaled. Despite the bravery of the South's soldiers, the outcome was never really in doubt and the campaign ended with the destruction and capture of Atlanta on September 2, 1864.

Sherman now embarked on his most famous and controversial campaign. The core of the three separate Union armies he commanded, 60,000 mainly young and fit combat soldiers, abandoned much of its slow-moving, horse-drawn supply train and set out on a rampage across the countryside that was to become known as the "March to the Sea." Sherman wrote Grant at the start of the trek, "I can make Georgia howl," and he and his men did just that. Against weak and disorganized Confederate opposition, they tore the heart out of the Confederacy in a swift and brutal campaign that cut a swath of devastation across Georgia and carried the Union Army from Atlanta to Savannah. Under Sherman's orders to destroy anything of military or industrial value to the Confederacy and to bring the war home to ordinary Georgians in the harshest of manners so as to undermine civilian morale, Sherman's soldiers lived off the land during the month-long march, seizing at gunpoint what they needed and frequently looting what they wanted. Sherman's "bummers" left a sixty-mile trail of destruction and ruin across the Georgia landscape and became famous for ferreting out any object of value. If thwarted in their search for loot, they frequently took their

frustration out on the countryside itself. Arson became common and the army could be tracked by the pillars of smoke it left in its wake. Sherman summed up his view of the march by saying: “This may seem a hard species of warfare, but it brings the sad realities of war home to those who have been directly or indirectly instrumental in involving us in its attendant calamities.”

When Sherman and his men reached Savannah, the Federal Navy resupplied it from the sea and the army began a six-week refit to prepare for its next campaign, a march up through the Carolinas to support Grant in his fight against Lee in Virginia. Sherman was even more ruthless and his soldiers more destructive during the Carolinas Campaign because they believed that they were now among the people who had been the most zealous advocates of secession. In Georgia the destruction can perhaps be described as the first manifestation of an army waging total war, where little or no distinction was made between civilian, government, and military property. All was fair game if it would shorten the war by breaking both the capacity and will of the enemy to fight. But if Georgia was business, the Carolinas were personal. These Northern soldiers, so far from home for so long, who had witnessed at first hand the appalling state of the large number of freed slaves who had attached themselves to the Union Army for protection, vented their frustrations and anger on the people and property of North and South Carolina, the states they held responsible for starting the war in the first place. Sherman, mindful of the many soldiers from these two states serving in Lee’s army facing Grant in the trenches at Petersburg, Virginia, let them. His reasoning was that if their actions caused Lee’s troops from the Carolinas to desert and rush south to protect their families and homes, Grant’s victory over the last and only really effective major Confederate formation left in the field would be that much easier.

Sherman’s plan worked, at least to some extent, as desertions from the Army of Northern Virginia rose precipitously. Lee, unable to hold his trenches with his hollowed-out army, abandoned Petersburg and began to march south, hoping to shake off Grant and join forces with Johnston’s troops fighting Sherman. Run to ground and unwilling to destroy what was left of his army in an open-field battle, Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox Courthouse on April 9, 1865. On April 26, 1865, at Durham Station, North Carolina, Sherman accepted the surrender of the Confederate Army of the Tennessee from his longtime adversary, General Johnston, an act that effectively ended the war. However, the lenient terms Sherman gave to the surrendering Confederates, even more generous than those given by Grant to Lee, outraged a number of Federal officials and politicians, who complained bitterly about his usurpation of government prerogatives. But Sherman took it all in stride and settled down to occupation duty and peacetime soldiering.

In 1869, Sherman was made commander-in-chief of the U.S. Army. In this position he oversaw the completion of the transcontinental railroad and the war of attrition that all but wiped out the Native America Plains tribes. By dint of his “achievement” in opening up the Western plains for mass white settler migration, and his well-established reputation from the Civil War, Sherman remained the most popular man in the country after Grant, and attempts were made to persuade him to run for president. But Sherman hated both politics and politicians, and he flatly rejected all attempts to draft him as a candidate for president by the Republican Party in 1884. In typical style,

Sherman delivered what has become the Gold Standard for refusal to seek office: “If nominated, I will not accept. If elected, I will not serve.” In 1891, he died of pneumonia at the age of seventy-one. His old adversary, Joe Johnston, who was one of his pallbearers, also died of pneumonia not long afterward because he had stood bareheaded in the freezing rain beside Sherman’s coffin. When upbraided at the funeral by a friend for showing this risky mark of respect, Johnston simply said: “If I were in [Sherman’s] place, and he were standing in mine, he would not put on his hat.”

It is rare for a great soldier to also show real skill as a writer, especially when the subject is his own life and campaigns. A few, such as Xenophon, Julius Caesar, and Marcus Aurelius, have produced great literature and philosophy, as well as enthralling history. But they have tended to be the exception rather than the rule when generals put down the sword and take up the pen. In Sherman, perhaps the most innovative and successful commander in the Union Army, we find another general who could write almost as well as he could fight. As he says in the opening pages of the book, he undertook the writing of his memoirs ten years after the end of the Civil War in part to dispel popular misconceptions about his behavior and his character, but also to give future historians a useful primary resource on his thinking and actions when they embarked upon any assessment of his conduct in the war. This book is the result of these twin objectives. In 1875, General William T. Sherman published the first edition of his *Memoirs*. As might be expected, given the wide divergence of views on the character and military skills of the author, the story he told and the opinions he shared were controversial. Eleven years later, in 1886, Sherman published a second, expanded edition of the book, with two new chapters and a large number of appendixes. He had pulled some punches in his opinions of some of his fellow officers in the first edition since he was still serving as commander-in-chief of the U.S. Army when it was published. But he showed no such restraint in this, the second edition, and his additions merely served to make the memoirs even more controversial. It is a controversy that has never abated.

Sherman was up against strong competition as a Civil War memoir writer. In 1885, after serving two terms as president of the United States and as he was dying of throat cancer, Ulysses S. Grant published his *Personal Memoirs*. This is a book that both at the moment of its appearance and since has been hailed as a masterpiece for the liveliness, strength, and precision of its writing. While Sherman’s writing skills are not quite in the same league as Grant’s, his formidable intelligence, self-awareness, and considerable powers of observation enable his memoirs to present a striking and highly detailed picture of not only his own actions but also the actions of those around him. It all goes to make Sherman’s *Memoirs* a well-written and engaging narrative. Much of the book is a collection of his major wartime correspondence, with people such as President Lincoln and Generals Grant and Halleck, which Sherman links together with his own commentary. This combination of primary source material and Sherman’s frank and perceptive analysis gives the reader real insight into not only the course of Sherman’s career but also the thinking and motivations that governed his actions.

In his writing, Sherman is clearly determined to give the reader a detailed and accurate account of the events he describes, be they conversations with fellow officers

or his memories and impressions of the great campaigns he undertook. As he relates his difficult journey through life and how he persevered in the face of repeated failures and disappointments, Sherman also strives, in a way that was highly unusual at the time, to be objective in his evaluations of personalities and events. While it is true that one can find obviously biased opinions and negative comments in Sherman's writings, when compared with the slash-and-burn memoirs of other Civil War generals from both armies, who were all too often conducting virulent and highly personal campaigns of vilification against officers who had been their comrades-in-arms, Sherman appears moderate in his assessments. His writings neither obviously seek to boost his own reputation nor shred the character of others, be they his military superiors, peers, or subordinates, or even his former adversaries. And while he is forthcoming, even if in somewhat restrained language, in detailing what he perceived to be the shortcomings and failures of those around him, Sherman is equally swift to give praise and share the glory for successes. He is also self-critical, willingly and insightfully drawing attention to incidents when his own plans or performance fell short, and he faithfully catalogs and embraces his own mistakes and the reasons for them.

Sherman remains the most controversial Union general of the Civil War. He continues to be widely acknowledged as being the first commander to truly grasp the meaning and operational imperatives of "total war" as we now understand the term. But he and his soldiers are also regularly compared to a barbarian horde because of the harsh, destructive, and sometimes wantonly cruel behavior they displayed toward soldier and civilian alike to make total war a reality to a society whose view of warfare still basked in the afterglow of the imagined chivalry of the half-forgotten formalized battles of eighteenth-century Europe.

Sherman summed up his own opinions on the conduct of his campaigns in two of his most famous quotes. He wrote to the Confederate mayor of Atlanta, who was pleading that his city and its citizens be spared further destruction: "War is cruelty, you cannot refine it." Then the town was put to torch. And as he later told the cadets of the Michigan Military Academy, "War is at best barbarism. . . . Its glory is all moonshine. . . . War is hell."

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GENERAL W. T. SHERMAN TO HIS COMRADES IN ARMS, VOLUNTEERS AND REGULARS.

NEARLY ten years have passed since the close of the civil war in America, and yet no satisfactory history thereof is accessible to the public; nor should any be attempted until the Government has published, and placed within the reach of students, the abundant materials that are buried in the War Department at Washington. These are in process of compilation; but, at the rate of progress for the past ten years, it is probable that a new century will come before they are published and circulated, with full indexes to enable the historian to make a judicious selection of materials.

What is now offered is not designed as a history of the war, or even as a complete account of all the incidents in which the writer bore a part, but merely his recollection of events, corrected by a reference to his own memoranda, which may assist the future historian when he comes to describe the whole, and account for the motives and reasons which influenced some of the actors in the grand drama of war.

I trust a perusal of these pages will prove interesting to the survivors, who have manifested so often their intense love of the "cause" which moved a nation to vindicate its own authority; and, equally so, to the rising generation, who therefrom may learn that a country and government such as ours are worth fighting for, and dying for, if need be. If successful in this, I shall feel amply repaid for departing from the usage of military men, who seldom attempt to publish their own deeds, but rest content with simply contributing by their acts to the honor and glory of their country.

WILLIAM T. SHERMAN,

General.

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI, *January 21, 1875.*

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

ANOTHER ten years have passed since I ventured to publish my Memoirs, and, being once more at leisure, I have revised them in the light of the many criticisms public and private.

My habit has been to note in pencil the suggestions of critics, and to examine the substance of their differences; for critics must differ from the author, to manifest their superiority.

Where I have found material error I have corrected; and I have added two chapters, one at the beginning, another at the end, both of the most general character, and an appendix.

I wish my friends and enemies to understand that I disclaim the character of historian, but assume to be a witness on the stand before the great tribunal of history, to assist some future Napier, Alison, or Hume to comprehend the feelings and thoughts of the actors in the grand conflicts of the recent past, and thereby to lessen his labors in the compilation necessary for the future benefit of mankind.

In this free country every man is at perfect liberty to publish his own thoughts and impressions, and any witness who may differ from me should publish his own version of facts in the truthful narration of which he is interested. I am publishing my own memoirs, not *theirs*, and we all know that no three honest witnesses of a simple brawl can agree on all the details. How much more likely will be the difference in a great battle covering a vast space of broken ground, when each division, brigade, regiment, and even company, naturally and honestly believes that it was the focus of the whole affair! Each of them won the battle. None ever lost. That was the fate of the old man who unhappily commanded.

In this edition I give the best maps which I believe have ever been prepared, compiled by General O. M. Poe, from personal knowledge and official surveys, and what I chiefly aim to establish is the true *cause* of the *results* which are already known to the whole world; and it may be a relief to many to know that I shall publish no other, but, like the player at cards, will “stand;” not that I have accomplished perfection, but because I can do no better with the cards in hand. Of omissions there are plenty, but of wilful perversion of facts, none.

In the preface to the first edition, in 1875, I used these words: “Nearly ten years have passed since the close of the civil war in America, and yet no satisfactory history thereof is accessible to the public; nor should any be attempted until the Government has published, and placed within the reach of students, the abundant materials that are buried in the War Department at Washington. These are in process of compilation; but, at the rate of progress for the past ten years, it is probable that a new century will come before they are published and circulated, with full indexes to enable the historian to make a judicious selection of materials.”

Another decade is past, and I am in possession of all these publications, my last

being Volume XI, Part 3, Series I, the last date in which is August 30, 1862. I am afraid that if I assume again the character of prophet, I must extend the time deep into the next century, and pray meanwhile that the official records of the war, "Union and Confederate," may approach completion before the "next war," or rather that we, as a people, may be spared another war until the last one is officially recorded. Meantime the rising generation must be content with memoirs and histories compiled from the best sources available.

In this sense I offer mine as to the events of which I was an eye-witness and participant, or for which I was responsible.

W. T. SHERMAN,
General (retired).

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI, *March 30, 1885.*

CHAPTER I

FROM 1820 TO THE MEXICAN WAR 1820-1846

ACCORDING to Cothren, in his "History of Ancient Woodbury, Connecticut," the Sherman family came from Dedham, Essex County, England. The first recorded name is of Edmond Sherman, with his three sons, Edmond, Samuel, and John, who were at Boston before 1636; and further it is distinctly recorded that Hon. Samuel Sherman, *Rev. John*, his brother, and Captain John, his first cousin, arrived from Dedham, Essex County, England, in 1634. Samuel afterward married Sarah Mitchell, who had come (in the same ship) from England, and finally settled at Stratford, Connecticut. The other two (Johns) located at Watertown, Massachusetts.

From Captain John Sherman are descended Roger Sherman, the signer of the Declaration of Independence, Hon. William M. Evarts, the Messrs. Hoar, of Massachusetts, and many others of national fame. Our own family are descended from the Hon. Samuel Sherman and his son, the Rev. John, who was born in 1650-'51; then another John, born in 1687; then Judge Daniel, born in 1721; then Taylor Sherman, our grandfather, who was born in 1758. Taylor Sherman was a lawyer and judge in Norwalk, Connecticut, where he resided until his death, May 4, 1815; leaving a widow, Betsey Stoddard Sherman, and three children, Charles R. (our father), Daniel, and Betsey.

When the State of Connecticut, in 1786, ceded to the United States her claim to the western part of her public domain, as defined by her Royal Charter, she reserved a large district in what is now northern Ohio, a portion of which (five hundred thousand acres) composed the "Fire-Land District," which was set apart to indemnify the parties who had lost property in Connecticut by the raids of Generals Arnold, Tryon, and others during the latter part of the Revolutionary War.

Our grandfather, Judge Taylor Sherman, was one of the commissioners appointed by the State of Connecticut to quiet the Indian title, and to survey and subdivide this Fire-Land District, which includes the present counties of Huron and Erie. In his capacity as commissioner he made several trips to Ohio in the early part of this century, and it is supposed that he then contracted the disease which proved fatal. For his labor and losses he received a title to two sections of land, which fact was probably the prime cause of the migration of our family to the West. My father received a good education, and was admitted to the bar at Norwalk, Connecticut, where, in 1810, he, at twenty years of age, married Mary Hoyt, also of Norwalk, and at once migrated to Ohio, leaving his wife (my mother) for a time. His first purpose was to settle at Zanesville, Ohio, but he finally chose Lancaster, Fairfield County, where he at once engaged in the practice of his profession. In 1811 he returned to Norwalk, where, meantime, was born Charles Taylor Sherman, the eldest of the family, who with his mother was carried to Ohio on horseback.

Judge Taylor Sherman's family remained in Norwalk till 1815, when his death led to the emigration of the remainder of the family, viz., of Uncle Daniel Sherman, who settled at Monroeville, Ohio, as a farmer, where he lived and died quite recently, leaving children and grandchildren; and an aunt Betsey, who married Judge Parker, of Mansfield, and died in 1851, leaving children and grandchildren; also Grandmother Elizabeth Stoddard Sherman, who resided with her daughter, Mrs. Betsey Parker, in Mansfield until her death, August 1, 1848.

Thus my father, Charles R. Sherman, became finally established at Lancaster, Ohio, as a lawyer, with his own family in the year 1811, and continued there till the time of his death, in 1829. I have no doubt that he was in the first instance attracted to Lancaster by the natural beauty of its scenery, and the charms of its already established society. He continued in the practice of his profession, which in those days was no sinecure, for the ordinary circuit was made on horseback, and embraced Marietta, Cincinnati, and Detroit. Hardly was the family established there when the War of 1812 caused great alarm and distress in all Ohio. The English captured Detroit and the shores of Lake Erie down to the Maumee River; while the Indians still occupied the greater part of the State. Nearly every man had to be somewhat of a soldier, but I think my father was only a commissary; still, he seems to have caught a fancy for the great chief of the Shawnees, "Tecumseh."

Perry's victory on Lake Erie was the turning-point of the Western campaign, and General Harrison's victory over the British and Indians at the river Thames in Canada ended the war in the West, and restored peace and tranquillity to the exposed settlers of Ohio. My father at once resumed his practice at the bar, and was soon recognized as an able and successful lawyer. When, in 1816, my brother James was born, he insisted on engrafting the Indian name "Tecumseh" on the usual family list. My mother had already named her first son after her own brother *Charles*; and insisted on the second son taking the name of her other brother James, and when I came along, on the 8th of February, 1820, mother having no more brothers, my father succeeded in his original purpose, and named me *William Tecumseh*.

The family rapidly increased till it embraced six boys and five girls, all of whom attained maturity and married; of these six are still living.

In the year 1821 a vacancy occurred in the Supreme Court of Ohio, and I find this petition:

SOMERSET, OHIO, *July 6, 1821.*

May it please your Excellency:

We ask leave to recommend to your Excellency's favorable notice Charles R. Sherman, Esq., of Lancaster, as a man possessing in an eminent degree those qualifications so much to be desired in a Judge of the Supreme Court.

From a long acquaintance with Mr. Sherman, we are happy to be able to state to your Excellency that our minds are led to the conclusion that that gentleman possesses a disposition noble and generous, a mind discriminating, comprehensive, and combining a heart pure, benevolent and humane. Manners dignified, mild, and complaisant, and a firmness not to be shaken and of unquestioned integrity.