1 Lawrence M. Denton, for example, errs in writing that in late April 1861 U.S. volunteers were "fanning out into Maryland," and that the Maryland General Assembly "could not peacefully take action on secession – they were surrounded by federal troops." He further incorrectly writes that when, on May 1, the Potomac Flotilla was established to patrol the Potomac River and Chesapeake Bay, this "permanently cut off Maryland from Virginia and the Confederacy." In fact, except along the troop route between Baltimore and Washington, Federal troops did not spread out into Maryland until June 1861. Additionally, the Potomac Flotilla only patrolled the lower Potomac below Washington and could not pass the fall line above Washington. Furthermore, the Potomac is not fully navigable above Washington, hence the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, which was not patrolled by federal gunboats during the war. See Denton, *A Southern Star for Maryland: Maryland and the Secession Crisis* (Baltimore: Publishing Concepts, 1995), 94-95, 120.

2 Mark Mayo Boatner III, *Civil War Dictionary*, rev. ed. (New York: David McKay Co., 1988), 800; Charles P. Stone, "Washington on the Eve of the War," in *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, vol. 1, eds. Robert U. Johnson and Clarence C. Buel (New York: Century Publishing, 1884), 7-25; Charles P. Stone, "Washington in March and April, 1861," in *Magazine of American History, with Notes and Queries*, vol. 14, no. 1 (July 1885): 1-24; Charles P. Stone, "A Dinner with General Scott in 1861," in *Magazine of American History, with Notes and Queries*, vol. 11, no. 6 (June 1884): 528-832; *Report of the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War*, vol. 2 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1863), 427, 429; U. S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, series I, vol. 2: 40 (hereinafter referred to as *O. R.*; all references are to series 1); *War History of the "National Rifles," Company A, Third Battalion, District of Columbia Volunteers, of 1861* (Wilmington: Ferris Bros., printers and binders, 1887), 11-17, 19-22, 26-31.

3 *O. R.*, 2: 104-105. Although it is unknown if Stone named the movement "Rockville Expedition," he made the first known reference to it in a dispatch on June 11, 1861 to an assistant adjutant general in Washington; Ibid, 106.

4 Ibid, 607, 671.

5 Ibid, 106; *Washington Evening Star*, Washington, D.C., June 10, 1861; Janet B. Hewett, et. al., eds., *Supplement to the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies,* pt. 2. vol. 5, serial no. 17: 26-27, 77-82, 82-87, 91-95, 103-107; Ibid, vol. 39, serial no. 51: 90-98; ibid, vol. 45, serial no. 57: 214-229; ibid, vol. 58, serial no. 70: 778-788. The first time that the D.C. troops had agreed to serve outside of the District of Columbia occurred in late April when the volunteers took possession of Annapolis Junction, which allowed Maj. Gen. Benjamin Butler's troops a secure rail route to D.C. The second took place on May 24 when the D.C. troops, led by Stone, were among those who had invaded Virginia and occupied Arlington and Alexandria, Virginia; see *War History*, 19-22, 26-31.

6 *O. R.*, 2: 106-107; John W. Jaques, *Three Years' Campaign of the Ninth, N. Y. S. M., During the Southern Rebellion* (New York: Hilton & Co., 1865), 16; George A. Hussey, *History of the Ninth Regiment N. Y. S. M. - - - N. G. S. N. Y. (Eighty-third N. Y . Volunteers, 1845-1888)* (New York: Veterans of the Regiment, 1889), 44-45; Hewett, vol. 58. serial no. 70, 780; *War History*, 32-33; *Washington Evening Star*, June 10, 12, & 13, 1861. Smead was on duty in Washington with the U.S. Coast Survey office when Stone got the War Department to transfer him to a field command. He was killed August 30, 1862, during the Second Battle of Bull Run, commanding Battery K, Fifth U.S. Artillery; see Stone, "Washington on the Eve of the War," 17; *War History*, 11, 12, 33, 40, 40n; *O. R.*, 2: 106; ibid, 25, part 2: 141.

7 *O. R.*, 2: 106-107; Jaques, 17-19; Hussey, 49-50; *Washington Evening Star*, June 12 & 13, 1861.

8 *O. R.*, 2: 107; Ibid, 51, part 1: 400.

9 Ibid, 2:106, 915, 917.

10 *O. R.*, 2: 108; Hewett, vol. 58, serial no. 70: 781.

11 *O. R.*, 2: 108-112; Eppa Hunton, *Autobiography of Eppa Hunton* (Richmond: William Byrd Press, 1933), 27-28; Hewett, vol. 58, serial no. 70: 781; *Washington Evening Star*, June 18, 1861; *War History*, 34-35.

12 *O. R.*, 2: 110-113; *War History* 35; Jaques, 19-21; Hussey, 50-52.

13 *O. R.*, 2: 115, 117; *Washington Evening Star*, June 28 & 29, 1861 and July 1 & 5, 1861.

14 *O. R.*, 2: 115-116, 118-119; *Washington Evening Star*, June 25, 1861.

15 *O. R.*, 2: 116-119; Hewett, vol. 59, serial no. 71: 86-95.

16 Ibid, 51, part 1: 401. 1860 U.S. Census data was obtained from the University of Virginia Geospatial and Statistical Data Center, *United States Historical Census Data Browser,* 1998, University of Virginia, available: http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/census/ [accessed November 22, 2004]; *The Debates of the Constitutional Convention of the State of Maryland, Assembled at the City of Annapolis, Wednesday, April 27, 1864* (Annapolis: Richard P. Bayly, 1864), 1926.

17 *O. R.*, 2: 106, 107; Jaques, 16-17; Hussey, 45; *War History*, 33; *Washington Evening Star*, June 15, 1861.

18 *Montgomery County Sentinel*, Rockville, MD, June 21, 1861.

19 *O. R.*, 2: 113; *Washington Evening Star*, June 29, 1861.

20 *O. R.*, 2: 114.

21 Ibid, 115-116, 117.

22 Ibid, 51, part 1: 400, 401; Ibid, 2: 110, 112.

23 Ibid, 113; *Montgomery County Sentinel*, July 12, 1861; *Washington Evening Star*, July 9, 1861. There is record of only one discipline problem during the expedition. On June 21 Stone wrote that the officers of the Second Battalion D.C. Volunteers had allowed their men to become "demoralized," and that he had ordered the battalion back to Washington, recommending to authorities that they muster the men out of service. The next day Stone wrote that the officers of the battalion had made such "urgent appeals" to him that he rescinded the order and permitted the command to remain on duty at Seneca Mills. No further difficulty with the battalion was noted; see *O. R.*, 2: 113-114.

24 *O. R.*, 2: 119, 725, 727, 729-730, 734; Ibid, 51, part 1: 407; *War History*, 36-37; Stone, "Washington on the Eve of the War," 20.

25 *O. R.*, 2: 119, 120.

26 Ibid, 120-121; Ibid, 51, part 1: 7, 8, 411; Jaques, 21-26; Hussey, 52-55. Joseph Barry, *The Strange Story of Harper's Ferry, with Legends of the Surrounding Country* (Martinsburg, WV: Thompson Brothers, 1903; reprint, Shepherdstown, WV: Woman's Club of Harpers Ferry District, 1994), 106-107.

27 *O. R.*, 2: 122; Ibid, 51, part 1: 410-411; Jaques, 26-28; Hussey, 55-56; *War History*, 38-40.

28 *O. R.*, 2: 123; *Washington Evening Star*, July 8 & 10, 1861; November 5, 1861; December 11, 1861.

29 *O. R.*, 2: 162.

30 Ibid, 545; Hunton, 32.

31 *O. R.*, 2: 105-106.

32 The best and most recent account of the fighting at Ball's Bluff and the related skirmishing at Edward's Ferry is James A. Morgan III, *A Little Short of Boats: The Fights at Ball's Bluff and Edwards Ferry*, Discovering Civil War America Series, vol. 2 (Ft. Mitchell, KY: Ironclad Publishing, 2004). The best account of the impact of the Battle of Ball's Bluff on Stone's career is Byron Farwell, *Ball's Bluff: A Small Battle and its Long Shadow* (McLean, VA: EPM Publications, 1990).

33 Stone to Spates, November 10, 1861, Alfred Spates Papers Concerning the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, Accession 554, Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Va.; Stone to Banks, July 8 & 10, 1861; November 5, 1861; December 11, 1861, Nathaniel Prentiss Banks Papers, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

34 Spates to McClellan, November 24, 1861, Letters Sent by the President and Directors, M, 14-15, Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Papers, Record Group 79, Records of the National Park Service, National Archives and Records Administration II, College Park, MD; Special Order No. 322, December 6, 1861, Spates Papers; Stone to Spates, 11 December 1861, Spates Papers; General Orders No. 33, December 12, 1861, Spates Papers; *O. R.*, 5: 685.

35 *Report of the Joint Committee*, vol. 2, 504-505, 510.

36 Spates to Stanton, March 27, 1862, in *Executive Documents Printed by Order of the House of Representatives During the Second Session of the Thirty-Seventh Congress*, vol. 8, Exe. Doc. No. 102, (Washington: G. P. O., 1862), 6-8; *O. R.*, 12, pt. 3: 97.

37 *Report of the Joint Committee*, vol. 2., 430-431; Stone to McClellan, December 23, 1861, reel 14, document 7254, George Brinton McClellan, Sr. Papers, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; *O. R.*, 5: 1035.

38 *Report of the Joint Committee*, vol. 2, 328, 395, 510; Hunton, 26; *O. R.*, 5: 1035.

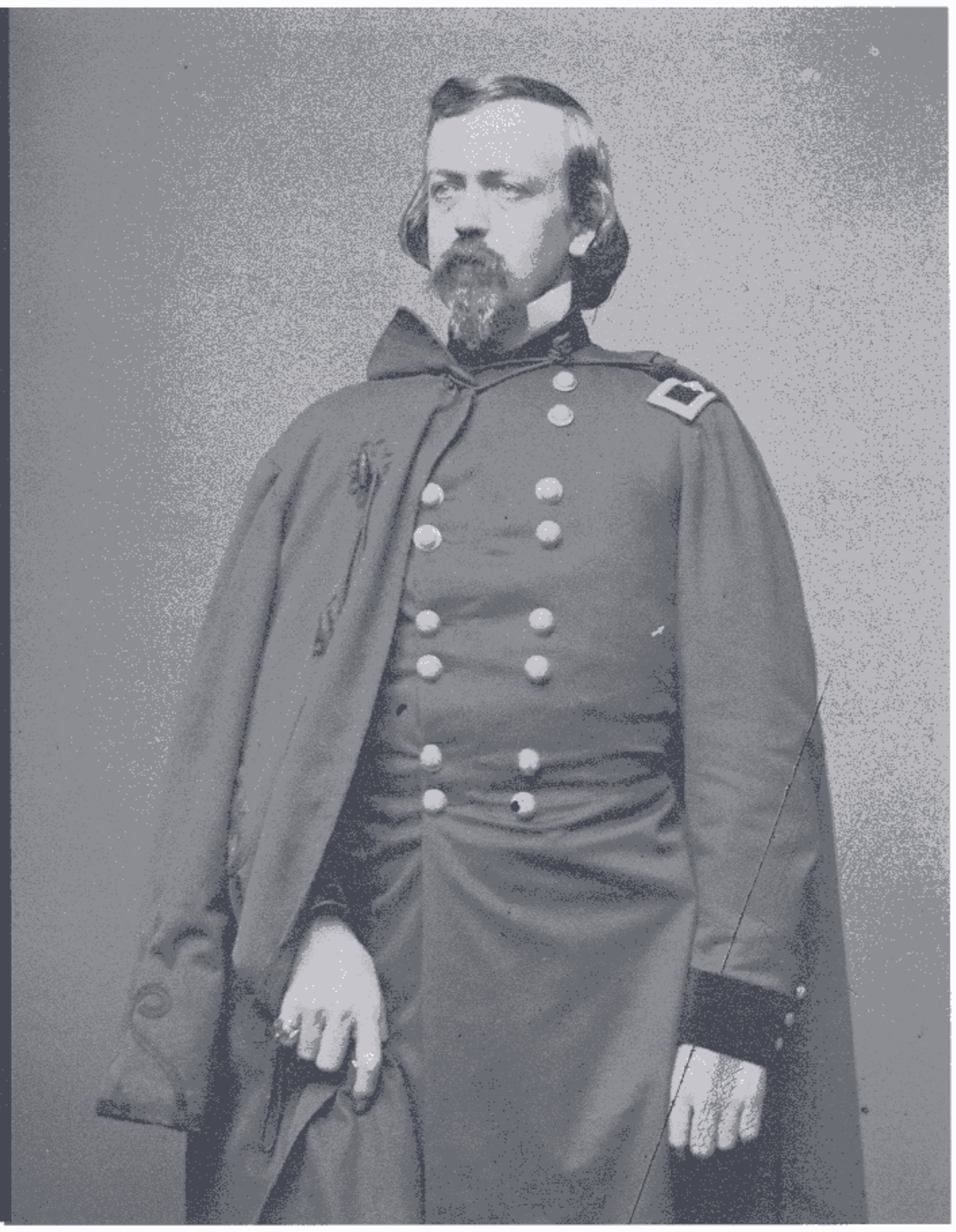
39 *Report of the Joint Committee*, vol. 2, 296, 328, 350, 363.

40 Boatner, 800; Farwell, *Ball's Bluff*, 225-226.

Securing the Potomac:

Colonel Charles P. Stone and the Rockville Expedition, June-July 1861

Timothy R. Snyder



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▲ Charles P. Stone, c. 1860.

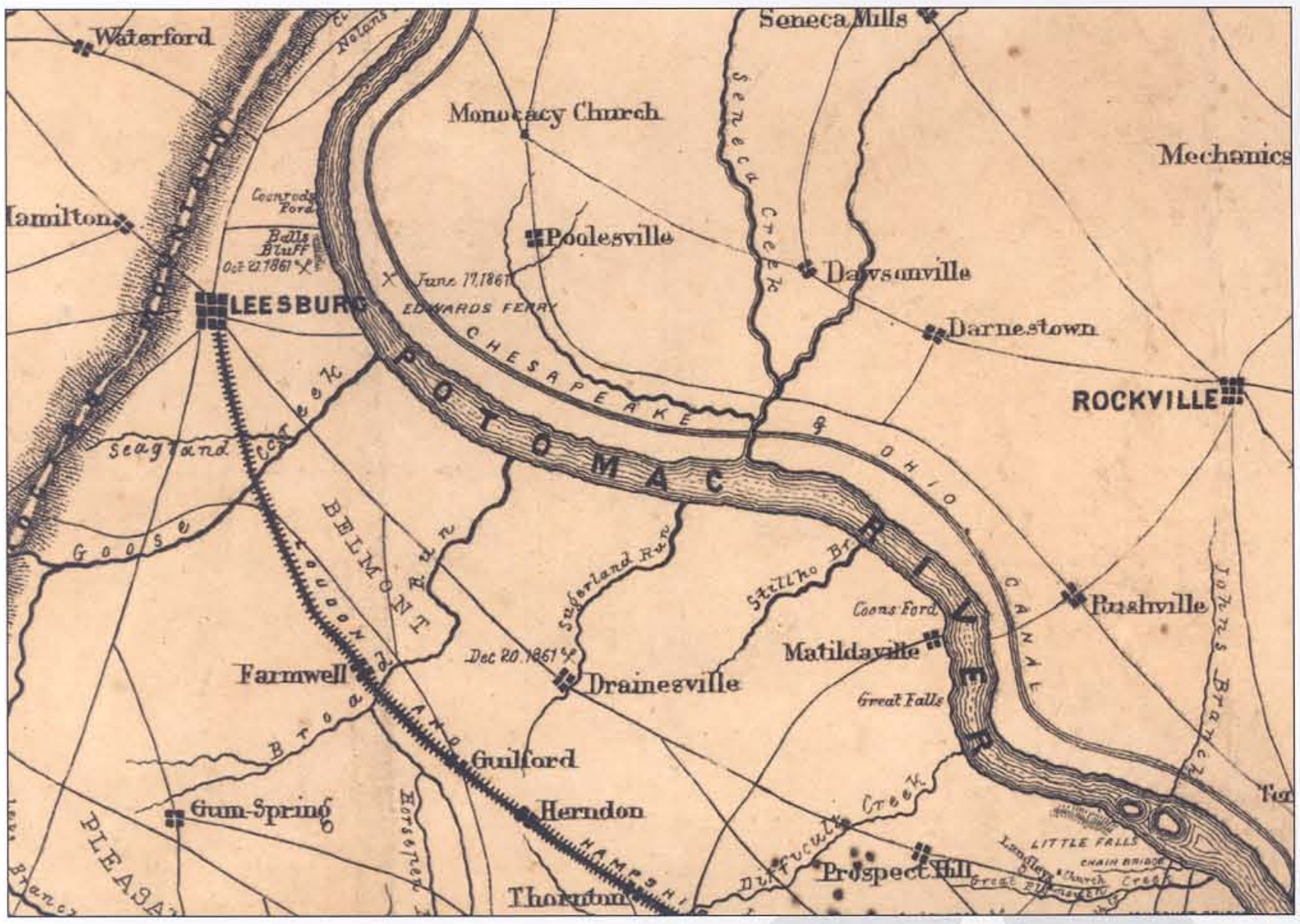
Some authors who have written on the first weeks of the Civil War have assumed that the U. S. volunteers who came to defend Washington, D.C. were extended quickly along the Potomac northwest of the city. In fact, the national government was burdened by other priorities, such as establishing and defending a transportation link with the North, securing the bridges linking Washington with Virginia, the pacification of Baltimore, and the occupation of Arlington and Alexandria, Virginia. As a result, the Union army made no attempt to place pickets along the Potomac above Washington until almost eight weeks after the outbreak of hostilities. The defense of the border with Virginia was an important objective, however, as period records show that supplies and volunteers for the Confederate army crossed the Potomac at two prominent points below Harpers Ferry: Point of Rocks in Frederick County and Edward's Ferry in Montgomery County. Colonel Charles P. Stone's expedition to Edward's Ferry, which began on June 10, 1861, was the first effort by the Union army to seize control of the Potomac above Washington.[1]

Colonel Charles P. Stone

Charles Pomeroy Stone was a graduate of West Point, class of 1845, where he finished seventh out of forty-one cadets. After graduation he served in the ordnance and infantry branches of the army, taught at West Point, and served in the Mexican War, where he earned two brevet promotions. He resigned from the army in 1856 and pursued business opportunities in San Francisco and Mexico. He was living in Washington, D.C. during the "Secession Winter" and, at the request of U.S. Army General-in-Chief Winfield Scott, became colonel and inspector general of the District of Columbia Militia. Stone reorganized the militia, purged it of disloyal men, and expanded the force until it reached thirty-three companies of loyal soldiers, a total of about 3,500 men. The D.C. Militia defended the nation's capital during the uncertain months before the outbreak of hostilities, including during Abraham Lincoln's inauguration as president, for which Stone was in charge of security. After the outbreak of hostilities at Fort Sumter, the D.C. Militia was the first to enroll for Federal service and Stone was placed in direct command of the new volunteers. These troops subsequently helped to defend the nation's capital until northern volunteers arrived to aid them. A month later Stone was given a command in the regular army, colonel of the Fourteenth Infantry. On May 24, 1861, at the head of the D.C. volunteers, he helped lead the Federal advance into Virginia that resulted in the occupation of Arlington and Alexandria. At the outbreak of the Civil War Stone was thirty-six years old.[2]

The Expedition

On June 8, 1861, General-in-Chief Scott ordered Stone to lead an expedition to "seize and hold" Edward's Ferry and intercept supplies sent to Virginia from Confederate



▲ Area of the Rockville Expedition. *Maps of the Seat of War in Virginia, Dec. 1, 1861*, Published by B. Duncan, Columbia, SC.

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sympathizers in Baltimore. The general also authorized him to cross the river and seize Leesburg "if practicable," but left other decisions to the colonel's discretion as he passed up the river. The movement would come to be known as the "Rockville Expedition," a misnomer that was likely attributed to the undertaking because its main column was to proceed to Edward's Ferry by way of Rockville, which was also the first destination for the expedition outside of Washington.[3]

On the same day he gave Stone his orders, Scott informed Major General Robert Patterson of the expedition. Patterson, a Mexican War veteran, was commander of the Department of Pennsylvania, which gave him military responsibility for the states of Pennsylvania, Delaware, and most of Maryland, including that portion in which Stone would lead his men. By late May Patterson's soldiers, Pennsylvanians who had enrolled in response to Lincoln's call for 75,000 volunteers, were concentrating at Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, for an offensive against the Confederates at Harpers Ferry. In his letter, Scott advised Patterson that Stone's expedition "may be but a diversion in your favor, but possibly it may be turned into an effective co-operation."[4]

Stone's 2,500-man force departed Washington on June 10. It consisted of the Second, Third, Fifth, and Eighth Battalions, District of Columbia Volunteers, and the President's Mounted Guard, a District of Columbia cavalry troop created to escort and protect the president and president-elect during the inauguration. These were some of the same soldiers Stone had recruited and trained to defend the capital over the winter and spring. The D.C. troops had enrolled for service exclusively within the District of Columbia, but for the third time had agreed to serve under Stone outside of the District. Other units in the expedition included the Ninth New York State Militia (designated the Eighty-third New York Infantry); the First New Hampshire Infantry; the First Pennsylvania Artillery (which would serve exclusively as an infantry regiment, designated the Seventeenth Pennsylvania Infantry); a troop of horsemen from Company H, Second U.S. Cavalry; and two guns from Battery D, Fifth U.S. Artillery (which had been in service at the U.S. Military Academy and in period records was referred to as the West Point Battery). Except for the New York regiment and the regular U.S. troops, Stone's command consisted of ninety-day volunteers.[5]

Stone planned to advance up the Potomac along three approximately parallel routes, (south to north) the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, the river road, and the road that ran between Rockville and Conrad's Ferry, all of which were bisected by perpendicular roads that would allow support to be forwarded if any of the units were threatened. On June 10 the U.S. cavalry and artillery were sent ahead to Rockville, followed by the New York, New Hampshire, and Pennsylvania regiments. Stone and the D.C. troops made camp in Tennallytown (Tenleytown), still within the boundary of the District of Columbia. Two provisioned canal boats were readied at the Chain Bridge above Georgetown for the command that would move up the canal. The following day the President's Mounted Guard and the Third Battalion D.C. Volunteers advanced to Rockville. The latter unit was commanded by Captain John R. Smead, a West Point-trained artillery officer who Stone had handpicked to lead the Third Battalion. Smead also served as the expedition's assistant quartermaster and commissary of subsistence.[6]

On June 12 Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Everett and the Fifth Battalion D.C. Volunteers boarded the waiting canal boats at the Chain Bridge. At Great Falls, Everett left one company to guard the fords and ferries in that vicinity. The remainder of the battalion advanced to Seneca Creek and established a camp along the canal near the mouth of the creek. Second Battalion D.C. Volunteers departed Tennallytown along the river road and established camp at Seneca Mills, about a half-mile north of Everett. The Ninth New York State Militia left Rockville and occupied Darnestown, three miles above Jewell. The Eighth D.C. Battalion, largely German, stayed behind at Tennallytown to keep open the lines of communication with Washington. The rest of Stone's force remained at Rockville, with the U.S. cavalry and artillery stationed one mile out along the road toward Darnestown.[7]

Stone was soon forced to accelerate the pace of his advance. On June 13 he learned from a scout that on the previous day a party of Confederates had crossed the Potomac near Edward's Ferry and had drained the water from the canal. He had also received a report that about three hundred Confederates were still on the Maryland side of the river.[8]

The Confederates were well aware of the Union expedition. Stone learned that when his troops first reached Rockville, couriers were sent across the river to inform the Southern outpost at Harpers Ferry. Additionally, the day before Stone's command departed Washington, Confederate Colonel Eppa Hunton, who commanded the Eighth Virginia Infantry and other forces in Loudoun County, Virginia, wrote that an informant had told him that the Union army was loading canal boats with provisions and ammunition. He had asked for additional men to enable him to "cut to pieces" any force that passed up the canal. General Robert E. Lee responded the next day, suggesting that Hunton destroy the canal's dams in the Potomac or the Monocacy Aqueduct, hence the Confederate raid on the canal near Edward's Ferry.[9]

In response to reports that the Confederates were north of the Potomac, on June 14 Stone sent the Pennsylvania regiment, commanded by General Patterson's son, Colonel Francis E. Patterson, and the artillery toward Dawsonville. He also forwarded the New Hampshire regiment to Poolesville. Stone then accompanied the cavalry on a scouting expedition toward Edward's and Conrad's (White's) Ferries. Finding no enemy north of the river, the following day a portion of the Pennsylvania troops, a piece of artillery, and twenty cavalrymen occupied Edward's Ferry, and a part of the New Hampshire regiment took possession of Conrad's Ferry. By occupying Edward's Ferry, Stone had accomplished one of his primary objectives five days after beginning the expedition.[10]

With the occupation of the Maryland side of Edward's Ferry, the Confederates became concerned that Stone was preparing to cross the river in force. Soon after, they burned the railroad bridge over Goose Creek and destroyed rolling stock. Eppa Hunton later wrote that he ordered the destruction after a false and hysterical report by Captain George R. Gaither, a Marylander who commanded a company on the Virginia side of Edward's Ferry. The Confederates also began to defend prominent crossing points opposite the positions held by Stone's men. On June 15 Colonel Everett reported that the Confederates were erecting earthworks opposite his position at Seneca Creek. The following day the Confederates appeared in force on the Virginia side of the two ferries and placed a battery on the road leading from Edward's Ferry to Leesburg. On June 17 the Southerners fired about twenty artillery rounds at the New Hampshire troops holding Conrad's Ferry. On June 18, when Stone's men discovered a large body of Confederates opposite Edward's Ferry trying to cross Goose Creek in a ferryboat, skirmishing ensued and a Union artilleryman used a howitzer to disperse them.[11]

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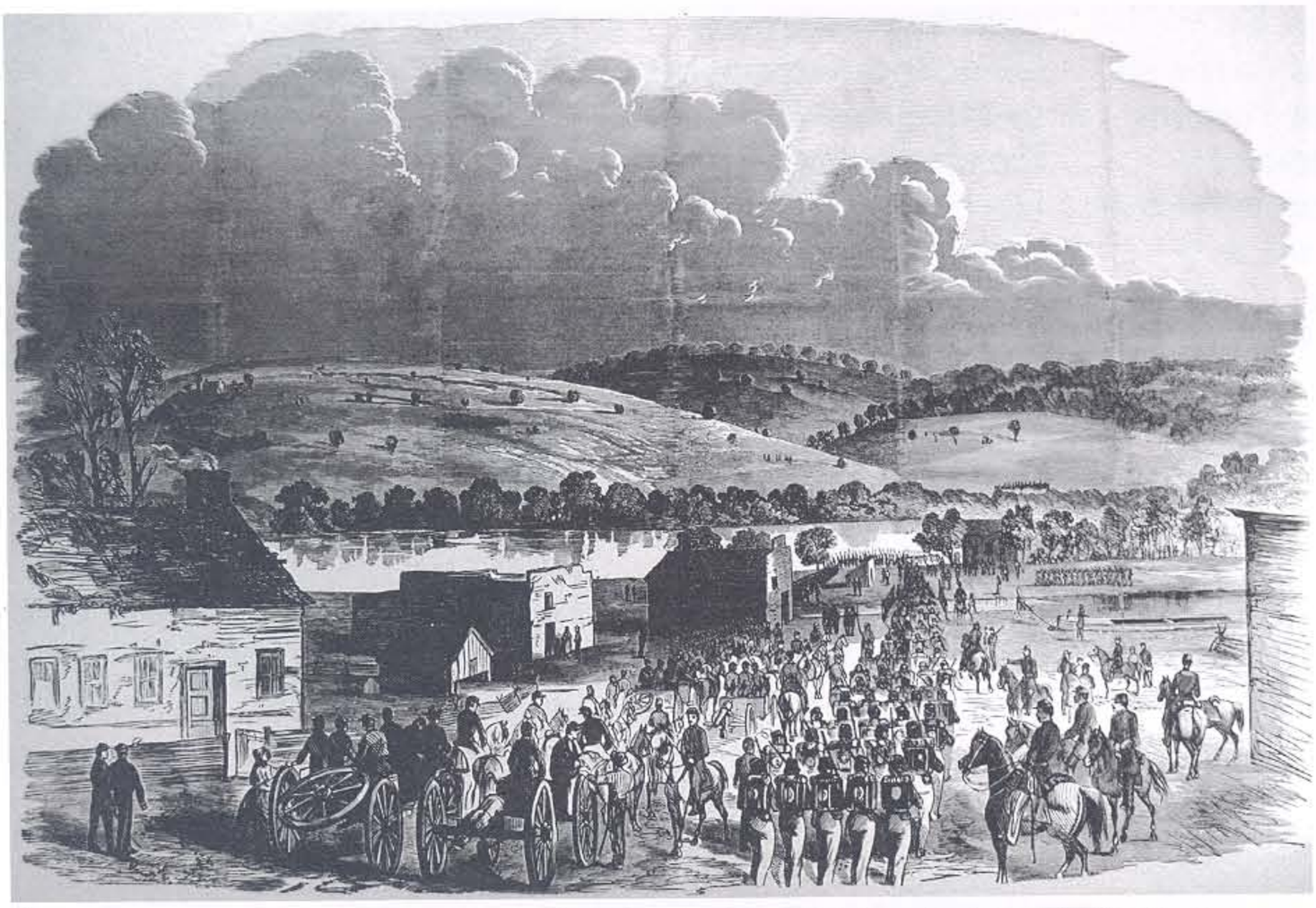
▲ Eppa Hunton, c. 1880.

In response to the Confederates fortifying positions south of the river, Stone sent two companies from the New York regiment to strengthen the outpost at Seneca, and sent the remainder of the New Yorkers to Dawsonville to defend against any Confederate attempt to cross the fords near the Monocacy River or Point of Rocks, locations that were still not picketed. Conrad's Ferry was strengthened by twenty Pennsylvania sharpshooters, and the Third D.C. Battalion moved from Rockville to Darnestown for four days, and then to Poolesville. On June 19 Stone sent a scout as far up the river as Harpers Ferry, which the Confederates had deserted in mid-June. On June 21, after the colonel learned that Confederates opposite the Monocacy River were attempting to raise a sunken ferryboat, he moved the New Yorkers from Dawsonville to the Monocacy, and this unit subsequently extended its pickets two miles farther to Noland's Ferry.[12]

Within days after the June 18 skirmish at Edward's Ferry, a state of calm settled along the river. On June 22 pickets from both armies met in the middle of the Potomac at Conrad's Ferry, shaking hands and drinking to each other's health. The peace lasted about a week, until the Confederates placed recently arrived South Carolina troops on picket duty at the ferries. Stone wrote that the new sentries resumed the "unsoldierlike" practice of firing on opposing pickets. During the last week of June the two sides engaged in an almost daily skirmish at Seneca Creek.[13]

Stone was convinced that the occupation of Point of Rocks was essential to the defense of the border. In the early spring the Confederates had maintained armed occupation of the turnpike bridge that spanned the river there, but the Southern troops had burned it on June 9 prior to deserting Harpers Ferry. The fords in the vicinity were still used by sympathizers, however, and Confederate pickets were nonetheless guarding the Virginia end of the burned bridge. On June 24 Stone accompanied the cavalry on a scouting expedition up the Potomac and later wrote, "I deem it highly important to occupy the Point of Rocks, and guard the ferries and fords there, a little above and below. Communication is constantly going on there, and the enemy can at any time cross and destroy the canal and railway track." The pickets of the Ninth New York were within four miles of the small village, but with Stone's 2,500 men and two artillery pieces extended over the thirty miles between Great Falls and Noland's Ferry – and having made dispositions in his rear to defend against an attack by any force that might cross the river at a higher ford – Stone did

COURTESY OF DAVID NATHANSON



▲ "General Stone's Division at Edward's Ferry October 20, 1861" from the *Harper's Weekly* of November 9, 1861.

not think his command strong enough to occupy any more ground. He was also perplexed that Patterson had not yet occupied Harpers Ferry, especially since the Confederates had abandoned the town. The next day he wrote, "With Harper's Ferry unoccupied, the disaffected in Maryland have free communication with Virginia across the Potomac above Point of Rocks, and information and supplies go daily to the enemy."[14]

Stone asked for an additional regiment of infantry, along with more artillery and cavalry, so that he could occupy Point of Rocks and either Knoxville or Sandy Hook, both of which were located just below Harpers Ferry. He believed that more troops would not only allow him to cut off communication across the river below Harpers Ferry, but also help sustain Union sentiment in Frederick County, Maryland, and in Loudoun and Berkeley Counties in Virginia. In response, on June 28 Brigadier General Joseph K. F. Mansfield, head of the Department of Washington and nominally Stone's commanding officer, gave the colonel command of five companies from the Twenty-fifth Pennsylvania Infantry, then in Washington. The companies reported to Stone at Poolesville on July 1.[15]

Local Reception

On June 16 General Mansfield had directed Stone to sustain the Union sentiment on both sides of the river. Most of Stone's expedition was conducted in Montgomery County, Maryland, a county that likely was of strong pro-Southern sentiment. In 1860 thirty percent of the county's population were slaves, the sixth highest percentage of slaves in Maryland's twenty-one counties and Baltimore City. In addition, in the state's 1864 constitutional referendum, only twenty-four percent of Montgomery County voters would cast their ballots in support of a new constitution that outlawed slavery and denied political rights to former Confederate soldiers and their supporters. In contrast, neighboring Frederick County would vote sixty percent in favor of the constitution.[16]

Nonetheless, despite having received a report that Rockville's citizens were "one-half rabid secessionists," Stone's expedition was met with goodwill from local inhabitants. After his men reached Rockville, the colonel wrote that "the soldiers are most kindly received and are very popular with the people." The authors of three unit histories also wrote that the citizens of Rockville had showed them many kindnesses and that nearly the entire town turned out to watch the dress parade.[17]

Despite the pleasant reception that most locals gave the men, not all Rockville residents were pleased to see the soldiers. On June 21 the pro-Southern *Montgomery County Sentinel* asserted, "Whilst some of our citizens hail with joy the armed forces which have been concentrated here, many turn in disgust from them, as they hasten on to imbrue their hands in the blood of our brothers." As period records show that the troops only received a positive reception, those who opposed their presence apparently stayed behind closed doors or kept their opinions to themselves. The *Montgomery County Sentinel* also claimed that some of Stone's men made threats against the newspaper, although none were carried out.[18]

As Stone's command advanced up the river, some local citizens were initially suspicious of them and their intentions. Usually after a brief period, however, the soldiers gained the trust of the locals. On June 20 Stone wrote from Poolesville, "The people in the neighborhood seem to gain confidence in the Government day by day, and the troops, especially the Pennsylvania First, are very popular with them. . . . The troops are now looked to for protection." Stone also reported that secessionists had warned local women and children to expect "outrage and horror" at the hands of the U.S. troops, and the soldiers had to overcome such fears before gaining the trust of the citizens. A soldier in the expedition wrote from Poolesville on June 27, "Many of the farmers who had left here have returned to their farms, and are now quietly conducting their affairs, having recovered from their apprehension of danger from the occupation of this section by a large body of troops."[19]

During the expedition Stone learned that a number of Unionists lived across the river in Loudoun County, Virginia, one of whom had appealed to him to provide protection while he harvested his grain. Stone urged the government to send him additional troops so that he could occupy the county and defend the loyal citizens living south of the Potomac. He also expected the grain harvest there to be very abundant and feared that the Confederates might seize

the crop. Stone would soon receive new orders, however, and was unable to cross the river and aid the Unionists who lived there.[20]

After the June 24 scouting expedition to Harpers Ferry, the colonel learned that strong Union sentiment existed along the river to the west, especially in Sandy Hook, located in the southeastern corner of Washington County. In April the townsfolk had endured armed searches of their homes at the hands of the Confederates from Harpers Ferry. Stone again requested an additional regiment to stop the flow of supplies and intelligence to Virginia between Point of Rocks and Harpers Ferry and to support the residents of Sandy Hook. He believed that it was the "right of those loyal citizens who have faithfully stood by the flag under circumstances of difficulty and danger to protection at the first moment possible."[21]

Stone's guardianship of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal also helped him gain the support of local inhabitants. After the Confederates drew the water from the canal at Edward's Ferry, General Mansfield had ordered Stone to protect the waterway and restore navigation. Although in doing so the colonel was insuring the operation of what would become an important coal carrier and military supply line, it also aided local inhabitants by reopening an avenue to markets for their goods. Stone wrote from Poolesville on June 17, "the canal is absolutely necessary to the well-being of this neighbor-hood – one of the best small-grain districts in the state. It is now suffering for want of means of transportation, and the appearance of troops here has had an excellent effect." Although artillery opposite Edward's Ferry prevented Stone from restoring the canal at that point, he did protect the waterway to Seneca Creek – where a large mill complex was located – and received supplies via the canal.[22]

During the expedition only one incident occurred that created animosity toward Stone's men. On June 21 the colonel ordered the German battalion, the Eighth D.C. Volunteers, from Tennallytown to Great Falls. On June 24 a party of about twenty-five soldiers from the battalion searched a number of private homes for arms. The *Montgomery County Sentinel* reported that no weapons were found, but that the soldiers took eggs and poultry before departing. On June 27 the local States' Attorney for Montgomery County, W. Veirs Bouic, complained to the colonel about the conduct of the troops. Stone promised to investigate the matter and bring charges against any soldier who had engaged in wrongdoing, which helped to diffuse the matter. The *Washington Evening Star* later reported that Stone had determined that the men had searched the homes "with all propriety" and in obedience to orders.[23]

The End of the Expedition

In late June General-in-Chief Scott ordered General Patterson to cross the Potomac at Williamsport and engage Brigadier General's Joseph E. Johnston's army. Patterson, who had also been ordered to return some of his best troops to Washington, complained loudly and persistently about his lack of cavalry, artillery, and experienced troops, and as a result on June 30 Scott issued Special Orders No. 109, which directed Stone to report to Patterson with his command after returning his own artillery and cavalry to Washington. The colonel was also ordered to send back any of the D.C. volunteers who desired to return to the capital, as these troops were nearing the end of their ninety-day enlistment period and maintained the right to decline service outside of the District. Most of the D.C. soldiers took the opportunity to return to the capital. Of the duty performed by the D.C. troops, particularly in securing Washington after the outbreak of hostilities, Stone would later write, "I think that the country has never properly appreciated the services of those District of Columbia volunteers."[24]

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Of the duty performed by the D.C. troops, particularly in securing Washington after the outbreak of hostilities, Stone would later write, "I think that the country has never properly appreciated the services of those District of Columbia volunteers."

Stone received Scott's orders on July 1 and immediately made preparations to comply; nevertheless, he was concerned about leaving Edward's Ferry without troops. On the same day he wrote Scott's adjutant, "It will be with serious misgivings that I leave this horseshoe of the river unguarded, for I shall expect to learn that the enemy have crossed immediately on my leaving, and doubtless the canal will be destroyed, as well as large amounts of grain. . . . I greatly regret the necessity which exists for leaving this village [Poolesville] and vicinity without troops." To protect the river crossings as long as possible, Stone sent one hundred returning D.C. soldiers to Edward's Ferry with rations for two days. When their provisions were exhausted, the men were ordered to fall back to Seneca, which was held entirely by D.C. troops, and all of them would then return to Washington along with the artillery and the President's Mounted Guard. The U.S. cavalry proceeded to Washington immediately.[25]

The day he received the orders, Stone sent six New York companies to Point of Rocks, the crossing point that had previously caused him so much concern. Over the next several days Stone moved most of his troops ahead to Sandy Hook where he intended to ford the river, while the New Hampshire regiment remained in the rear at Point of Rocks. On July 4 Stone reported, "The people received the troops at Berlin, Knoxville, and Sandy Hook with the greatest demonstration of joy and relief." On the same day a handful of Confederate soldiers at Harpers Ferry opened fire

COURTESY OF DAVID NATHANSON

▲ "Sandy Hook, Head-Quarters of Colonel Stone, on the Upper Potomac" from the *Harper's Weekly* of August 10, 1861.

on Stone's men at Sandy Hook. In the half-hour skirmish, the New York regiment suffered one soldier killed and two wounded.[26]

On July 5 Patterson directed Stone to instead cross the river at Williamsport and join him at Martinsburg. The next day the colonel sent the New York and the two Pennsylvania regiments ahead, while he moved the New Hampshire regiment to Sandy Hook. The New Yorkers were heartened when they reached Sharpsburg on July 6. One soldier wrote, "This was to be a thoroughly loyal town, the first the Ninth had entered, whose people boldly flung to the breeze the American Flag. Cheering and shouts of delight were heard on each side as the regiment gallantly marched through the main street." A small contingent of from fifty to sixty D.C. volunteers who had agreed to accompany the expedition brought up the rear of the column, escorting the wagon train of baggage and provisions. On July 7 and July 8 the units that comprised Stone's command crossed the Potomac between Falling Waters and Williamsport and proceeded to Martinsburg.[27]

In the meantime, the Eighth D.C. Battalion, which had declined to return to D.C., remained on duty at Great Falls. On July 7 the battalion engaged the Confederates across the river in a sharp skirmish and suffered two killed. They remained at their post until July 10 when they were relieved by Massachusetts troops.[28]

When Stone reached Martinsburg on July 8 and reported to Patterson, his expedition had come to an end.[29]

Although Stone's departure from the river between Great Falls and Noland's Ferry appeared to abandon the Potomac to the Confederates, no such thing occurred. The colonel's decision to post the returning D.C. volunteers on the river until their supplies ran out seems to have discouraged any raids. In any event, there was never a strong likelihood of any Confederate advance across the Potomac because of the activity of Union forces west and east of Leesburg. Some thirty-five miles to the northwest, Patterson's force was in Martinsburg, Virginia. About twenty-five miles to the southeast, the Union army was concentrating resources in northern Virginia for its pending offensive against the

▲ "The Civil War in America: Retreat of the Federalists After the Fight at Ball's Bluff, Upper Potomac, Virginia" from the *Illustrated London News* of November 23, 1861.

Confederates at Manassas Junction. In fact, on July 18 Hunton's Eighth Virginia Infantry and any remaining cavalry and artillery left Leesburg for Manassas and participated in the subsequent battle.[30]

Although Stone's expedition was involved in only minor skirmishes, he accomplished a number of important objectives: 1) he had placed the first Federal pickets at the vulnerable fords and ferry crossings above Washington; 2) he had prevented further Confederate raids and scouts onto Maryland soil within his jurisdiction; 3) he had prevented the passage of recruits and supplies to Virginia from Confederate sympathizers in Maryland within the region under his control; 4) he had helped sustain and strengthen the Union sentiment along the border, while not unnecessarily antagonizing those of uncertain loyalty; and, 5) he had allowed for the resumption of navigation on the lower portion of the C&O Canal.

On July 6 Stone received a letter from Winfield Scott's adjutant: "The General-in-Chief has been highly pleased with the whole conduct of your expedition, and only regrets that it has not been in his power to furnish you additional cavalry and artillery and to permit you to carry out the plans suggested by you."[31]

Post-Expedition

During the late summer of the same year Stone was promoted to brigadier general and was commanding a Corps of Observation in Major General George B. McClellan's Army of the Potomac. He again made his headquarters at Poolesville and was ordered to watch the river crossings between Seneca and Point of Rocks, the same region in which he had served while leading the Rockville Expedition. By October he was assigned additional units and was designated a division commander. It was during the third week in October that the disastrous Battle of Ball's Bluff occurred on the Virginia heights that overlooked the Potomac. Over two hundred Union soldiers died and more than five hundred were captured during the battle. The commanding officer on the bluff was Col. Edward D. Baker, a U.S. Senator from Oregon and a personal friend of President Lincoln, who suffered a fatal wound there. Stone had remained at his headquarters in Poolesville during the battle.[32]

In the weeks after Ball's Bluff, conditions along the river returned to a relative calm. Stone continued to see the C&O Canal as an asset to the army and the local economy, especially since it had resumed navigation over its entire 184.5-mile length in August. During a period of sustained heavy rain in early November, for example, Stone's men repaired three breaches in the canal above Edward's Ferry that were caused by high water, and he informed Major General Nathaniel P. Banks of two breaks near Seneca, which were subsequently repaired by Banks's men.[33]

Canal navigation was nonetheless hindered by restrictions that the army had placed on boating, regulations that doubled the time required for a boat to travel from Cumberland to Georgetown. These included forbidding navigation at night and prohibiting the discharge of cargo at any point except in Georgetown. Military officers had gotten into the habit of stopping boats and seizing company property at will. In late November canal company president Alfred Spates complained to McClellan about the army's conduct and asked for increased protection from Confederate raids. In response, on December 6, McClellan appointed Stone military supervisor of the canal. Stone immediately sought to remove restrictions on navigation and ordered officers under his command to help keep the waterway in order.[34]

Meanwhile, repercussions from the Battle of Ball's Bluff were beginning to catch up to Stone. When Congress reconvened on December 2 there was much grumbling about the war and calls for an investigation to determine why the Union military effort was languishing. This displeasure gave rise to the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War. The Joint Committee, led by Republicans Benjamin F. Wade and Zachariah Chandler, began meeting in December. With regard to the Battle of Ball's Bluff, members turned their suspicions toward Stone, a Democrat. Soldiers who had served under Stone, some of whom held grudges against him, testified in the case. When a refugee from Virginia testified that Stone was held in high regard by the Confederates serving opposite him, Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton ordered Stone's arrest, which occurred on February 8, 1862.[35]

For Union citizens who resided north of the Potomac, Stone's arrest was a significant loss. Stone had spent about eight months in service along the Potomac and at the time of his detention was the most experienced officer serving along the river. He had proven that he could lead a command in a region of divided sympathies without unnecessarily antagonizing those who favored the South. He had also quickly recognized that the C&O Canal provided a significant advantage to the Union side, not only as a coal carrier and Federal supply line, but as a means to sustain

and build Union sentiment among those who were economically dependent upon the waterway.

The significance of Stone's role in keeping the canal open is suggested by the fact that less than two months after his arrest navigation on the canal came to a standstill. Although the canal was typically closed for two to three months during the winter, as spring 1862 approached the resumption of navigation was in jeopardy. A significant winter flood had occurred in late January and the army had seized about 150 canal boats in February and March. Additionally, military officers stationed along the waterway interfered persistently in canal company affairs. The company president was so exasperated by military interference that on March 27, 1862, he wrote directly to Secretary Stanton: "Between Washington and Cumberland . . . all officers assume to have power to give orders on the canal, (while no two orders agree,) ignoring all other orders heretofore given. . . . The conflict is so great that even now, in many places, the canal is not navigable, neither will permission be given by the officers for the proper repairs to be made." Navigation was fully resumed only after the personal intervention of the secretary of war.[36]

One piece of evidence used against Stone by the Committee on the Conduct of the War actually demonstrated that rather than engaging in disloyal conduct, he was indeed doing his duty – in particular, defending the canal. The testimony of witnesses indicated that Stone did not contest the construction of Confederate earthworks opposite his position. Stone explained that most of the works were out of the range of his guns and that it was pointless and expensive to bombard unmanned earthworks. Records show, however, that Confederate Brigadier General Daniel H. Hill had threatened to fire on passing canal boats if Stone's men hit private homes while bombarding earthworks. Stone testified that he always intended to bombard the fortifications once they were manned, but in holding his fire he insured that barges of coal, supplies, and local goods continued to move on the waterway.[37]

Witnesses further testified that Stone was respected by Confederates on the other side of the Potomac. He was indeed polite and professional with the officers who served opposite him, some of whom had been his classmates at West Point. After the war, former Confederate officer Eppa Hunton wrote in his autobiography, "General Stone was a very superior man – a man of fine intelligence and military attainments. He was a gentleman, and conducted the war in the most gentlemanly manner." Yet conducting himself in a "gentlemanly manner" did not make Stone derelict in his duty to the Union. A letter from General Hill, written three weeks before Stone was arrested, confirms Stone's diligence in carrying out his orders: "I can perceive no diminution of Stone's force. He has at least 1,700 men on post every moment from Point of Rocks to Edward's Ferry, or 5,100 on sentry duty. Colonel Radford thinks this is a low estimate. I have never in my life seen such a chain of sentinels. They are evidently very solicitous about the canal."[38]

A number of witnesses testified that Stone was also highly regarded by the pro-Southern citizens in Maryland, who very likely comprised a majority of the population in the region in which he served. Stone certainly took great care to be respectful and judicious toward them, which helped ensure that they did not become enemies and made it less likely that he would have to deal with spies and plots behind his lines. In addition, Stone correctly perceived that uncommitted citizens were more likely to support the Union if treated well, especially since the Confederates used sabotage against local transportation lines, like the canal, upon which many citizens were dependent.[39]

After his arrest, Stone was held for 189 days in a military prison at Fort Lafayette in New York Harbor. Military officials never brought him to trial, lodged no charges against him, nor ever provided him with an official explanation for his detainment. After his release, he waited nine months for orders, served in the Department of the Gulf for about a year, and then briefly commanded a brigade in the Army of the Potomac during the siege of Petersburg. With rumor and suspicion from the Ball's Bluff debacle still swirling about him – and under constant surveillance – he resigned his commission in the regular army on September 13, 1864. Following the war, he worked in Virginia for four years as superintendent of the Dover Mining Company. With the failure of the company, he fell into heavy debt. In 1870 he moved to Egypt where he lived for thirteen years, becoming lieutenant general and chief of staff to the Egyptian khedive. In 1883, after the British conquest of Egypt in the previous year, he returned to America. He resumed work as an engineer, his last position being that of chief engineer for the construction of the foundation and pedestal of the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor, ironically the same harbor where Stone was denied his liberty without ever having been provided an official reason for his detention. He died on January 24, 1887.[40]

Because of the controversy that arose in the aftermath of the Battle of Ball's Bluff, Stone's Civil War service was stunted and his record clouded in suspicion. Yet every modern historian has placed primary blame for the defeat at Ball's Bluff on the battlefield commander, Col. Edward D. Baker, rather than on Stone. Despite the uncertainty that existed in his time, Stone's legacy during the war is secure: he reshaped the D.C. militia into a loyal force that provided security during Lincoln's inauguration and which helped defend Washington until other troops arrived; he commanded a column that occupied northern Virginia, territory that the Union army would never relinquish during the war; and leading the D.C. troops and other units in the Rockville Expedition, he helped provide further security to the capital and to the border between the North and South.

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