Braxton Bragg: Man of Controversy

By J. P. Ackerly

By January 2, 1863, the Battle of Murfreeboro or Stones River had entered its third day. The first day, the Confederates had successfully outflanked and smashed Rosecrans' right flank, completely rolling up McCook's corps, so that it had been bent at right angles to its starting position. Only the timely arrival of Van Cleve's division saved the day. New Year's Day, which followed, saw only minor action. Now, the third day, it was determined that the Federal's left should likewise be dislodged. There was much disagreement on the part of the Confederates as to the wisdom of this plan. Nevertheless, at four o'clock the attack started. General John Breckenridge, formerly Vice-President of the United States and one of the most highly esteemed men in the Confederacy, led the assault. As he passed the positions of Brigadier General Preston, Breckenridge beckoned the latter aside and said, "General Preston, this attack is made against my judgment, and by the special order of General Bragg. . . . . If it should result in disaster, and I be among the slain, I want you to do justice to my memory, and tell the people that I believed this attack to be very unwise and tried to prevent it."[1]

Such was the prevalent feeling of many capable generals who were subordinate to Braxton Bragg while he was Commander of the Army of Tennessee from June 1862 to November 1863. The aforementioned prediction of General Breckenridge proved to be correct (although he was not slain) as the Confederate charge was shattered, the latter leaving 1800 dead and wounded on the banks of Stones River within an hours time.

Braxton Bragg's controversial life began in Warrenton, North Carolina, March 22, 1817. His father, Thomas Bragg, was a well-to-do contractor who rebuilt the State Capitol at Raleigh when it was destroyed by fire in 1830. Braxton was the third of six sons. He also had six sisters. His oldest brother, John, became head of the Bar in Alabama, and went on to become a member of Congress and the Supreme Court. The second oldest brother, Thomas, also followed

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the law, and reached the head of his profession in North Carolina. He was Governor of that state and United States Senator, later to become Attorney General of the Confederacy.[2] Perhaps having two such eminent older brothers was partially responsible for the cold, defiant and jealous attitude often exhibited in later years by Braxton.

In 1833 Braxton Bragg entered West Point at the age of sixteen. In 1837 he finished fifth, which was considered noteworthy because of his youth and lack of preparation.* He served in the Seminole War of 1837-39, and again in 1841-42. During the Mexican War he particularly distinguished himself as an artillery captain, and at the Battle of Buena Vista saved the day when he plugged a gap in the American lines with cannon (minus infantry support), and broke a superior Mexican attack.[3] Soon promoted to lieutenant colonel, he was on duty at various garrisons until January 1859 when he resigned from the army.** From 1854 to 1861 he was commissioner of the Louisiana Board of Public Works, and while in office he developed the system of drainage and levees which did much to make the lower part of the state more fertile and valuable.

He joined the Confederate Army on the outbreak of the Civil War, and in 1861 was made a Brigadier General, and soon afterward was placed in command at Pensacola, Florida, in charge of the territory between Pensacola and Mobile. Upon his arrival there a letter to his wife gives us a sample of his attiude, often more prevalent in later years. "According to my notions things here are in a most deplorable condition, and that was the reason for sending me; you know it has been my fate all through life to build up for somebody else."[4] However, Bragg's approach and handling of the Union garrison at Fort Pickens, and his subsequent training and augmentation of his own forces were highly commendable.[5]

In February, 1862, Bragg was promoted to Major General. He proposed to the Secretary of War that part of his command be sent to Kentucky where he thought that important events would take place. Accordingly, this advice was accepted, and he was sent to Corinth, Mississippi, where he was placed in command of the Second Corps of General Albert Sydney Johnston's army and helped organize this force for battle.[6]

Bragg was privileged in having a major role in the drama of Shiloh, first great battle of the Civil War. Bragg was Chief-of-Staff

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*Some other eminent classmates of Bragg were Hooker, Pemberton, Sedgwick, and Early.

**Bragg married Miss Elisa Brooks Ellis in June 1849 but little is ever mentioned about their relationship. In the many letters written to her, a devoted love is expressed on Bragg's part, but they are mainly filled with descriptions of the locality in which he at the time might happen to be located. (See page 58).

and Corps Commander; Beauregard had immediate command of the army for the battle, yet Johnston was Commander-in-Chief. Grant had moved up the Tennessee River and taken position on the left bank at Pittsburgh Landing. Grant was landing by divisions and Bragg "proposed to Beauregard to attack Grant before he assembled his whole force. Beauregard forbade this preferring to attack Grant away from his base if possible."[7]

Early Sunday morning, April 6, the attack began, Bragg's corps forming the second line. The Federals were caught completely surprised. The Confederates rushed forward exultantly, overrunning first the camp of Sherman, and then capturing the troops of Prentiss. "The Hornets Nest" was a Union strong point holding up Bragg's section of attack. Several times Bragg ordered Gibson's brigade to assault and each time he was devastatingly repulsed.[8] Finally this position was flanked and surrounded. Bragg's ordering the costly assaults had been necessary to keep the advance rolling. Time saved at the Hornet's Nest plus the forethought of a Colonel Webster of Grant's staff who had placed a great battery along the curving ridge of Pittsburgh Landing, made possible the last defensive stand of the day.

At the close of the day the vanguard of Buell's army of 20,000 was arriving at the Landing. At the same time the brigade of Chalmers and Jackson were ordered by Bragg across the ravine in front of the last Union position to drive the Federals into the River. Darkness was near and Beauregard* ordered the men withdrawn. Bragg "who surely was no rash and headlong fighter,"[9] asked the staff officer from Beauregard if the order to withdraw the last attack had been given to the command. Told that it had, he answered, "If not I would not obey it. The battle is lost.[9]

In this first day's battle Bragg had shown the mettle and intelligence of an excellent general. With great energy he had assaulted the Federal lines and captured thousands of prisoners and guns. Much of the success of this day was due to Bragg.[10] He had shown the ability to follow through and pursue his advantage. This characteristic was later often missing when Bragg was commander of the Army of Tennessee.

The next day, there was nothing for the Confederates to do but retreat. Buell's entire army had crossed the river the night before, and they were more than a match for the exhausted Confederates. Nevertheless, Beauregard's army made an orderly retreat, never breaking their line as they retired.

On April 12 Bragg was promoted to full general, and on June

20, 1862, after the evacuation of Corinth, he replaced Beauregard as commander of the Western Department. In August, at the head of some 45,000 troops.* Bragg invaded Kentucky with the intention of winning that state over to the Confederate cause.[11] Bragg's army was organized into two wings under Generals Polk and Hardee, two highly esteemed leaders, "but who were never able to please entirely the exacting and critical Bragg."[12]

By September 17th Bragg had reached Munfordville, Kentucky, where he surrounded and received the surrender of the strong garrison there, some 4000 men. Bragg was in a powerful position. He was between Buell's army** and Louisville. Furthermore, Kirby Smith was at Lexington some 100 miles from Munfordville, and due east from Louisville. Bragg's entire campaign had shown exceptional ability on his part, and now he was in position to do any number of things. He could move directly against or flank Buell as he was cut off from his base. He could have left a force to keep Buell checked and marched the less than 100 miles to Louisville. The latter, as well as Cincinnati, was panic stricken. Both were lightly defended. Kirby Smith had won a creditable victory at Richmond (Kentucky) and was at Lexington ready to help Bragg. They could have easily combined and defeated Buell. Kentucky and Louisville would have been Bragg's How long they could have held on was another question. The political and material significance, however, would have been great. November elections in the North, control of the Ohio River, the rich supplies of Kentucky, would all have been effected had Bragg gained a substantial victory. Instead, Bragg marched off to Frankfort, and spent a week arranging the inauguration of a Confederate Governor on October fourth. "Granting its influence on public opinion, one may still think that Bragg gave this matter too much attention, to the point of preoccupation, at a time when his army was face to face with the enemy and he should have been on hand."[13]

Buell's entry into Louisville had greatly relieved its people, and he took the occasion to substantially increase the numbers of his ranks. On the first of October he marched out of Louisville toward Bragg's army at Bardstown. General Sill's division reinforced by Dumont marched directly and boldly on Frankfort as a feint. Both Smith and Bragg thought it was the main attack. Bragg even

*Johnston had been mortally wounded at 2:30 p.m.

*This figure apparently includes Kirby Smith's eastern column, as Henry and other sources only give Bragg 27,000.

**Buell had left Tennessee at the same time as Bragg, pursuing the Confederates by a parallel route. Bragg had reached Munfordville first.

ordered General Polk to move the entire army from Bardstown toward Frankfort to smash Sill's flank.[14] This showed that Bragg was rather ignorant of the military situation in front. Polk, instead, fell back southeastwardly toward Perryville.

Shortly after noon the two armies ran into each other. About 2 p.m. the Confederates fiercely assaulted the Union left, and forced McCook's corps back in disorder. Sheridan appeared on the scene and in a fierce struggle drove the Confederates back toward Perryville. By this time darkness had descended and the battle was over. The action was bloody for its duration, the Confederates losing around 3400 men to the Federals 4200. The Confederates achieved a tactical success against the Union left, but for all practical purposes the battle was a draw. That night the Confederates retired.[15] Divided and weakened, they could no longer hold their positions in Kentucky. Bragg and Smith united about Harrodsburg, and after waiting two days for an attack, they withdrew towards East Tennessee. The Unionists failed to crush Bragg; but the Confederates now abandoned Kentucky, whose people had given an indifferent response to the Confederate "liberation."[16]

An interesting account of the above campaign is related by General Richard Taylor. Bragg had requested the War Department that Taylor become his chief of staff, and the latter was sent from Virginia, the two meeting in Chattanooga. "In the two days passed at Chattanooga, General Bragg communicated to me his plan of campaign into Kentucky, which was excellent, giving promise of large results if vigorously executed; and I think that its failures may be ascribed to the infirmities of the commander."[17]

Bragg possessed much experience in, and talent for, war. He was the most laborious of commanders, devoting every minute to the discharge of his duties. As a disciplinarian he far surpassed any of the senior Confederate generals; "but his method and manner were harsh, and he could have won the affections of his troops only by leading them to victory."[18] His harshnes can be attributed in part to a chronic ailment, migraine or sick headache, and he was often ill from other causes during his campaigning.[19] "He was frequently in the saddle when the more appropriate place for him would have been in bed. This infirmity caused him to be irritable, often harsh, and this alienated from him the affection and enthusiasm of his troops, and he was never without friction with some, and at times all, of his corps commanders."[20] At dinner with General Bragg and his staff, while General Taylor was in Chattanooga, the latter inquired about one of his division commanders, a man

widely known and respected, to which Bragg responded; "General ———————— is an old woman, utterly worthless." Later, in private, Taylor asked him who would relieve General ————————. Bragg replied, "Oh by no one. I have but one or two fitted for high command, and have in vain asked the War Department for capable people."[21]

After his unsuccessful invasion of Kentucky, Braxton Bragg moved to Murfreesboro, Tennessee to await further developments. The Union Army, now under Rosecrans, was gathered at Nashville, thirty-two miles to the Northwest. On December 26, 1862 Rosecrans moved out of Nashville towards Bragg. The latter's troops were disposed on both sides of Stones River, a small stream two miles northwest of the city. On the 31st, the Confederates attacked, Hardee's corp rolling up the Federal's right flank. Sheridan however held the ground, and reformed on a new line at right angles to the old one. Sheridan ran out of ammunition, and the forces of Cleburne, Cheatham, and McCown charged fiercely, causing Rosecrans troops to fall back and form on a line with the Nashville Turnpike parallel to their backs. Now was the time for Bragg to commit his reserve. Breckenridge's division was across the river, and if it were used against the angle in the Union line, the battle could be finished. "So it could have been but for two factors. Breckenridge was slow in moving, and Polk, to whom the attack was entrusted, committed the brigades piecemeal as they arrived."[22] The Union line held, the Confederates suffering heavy losses.

The next day no decisive action took place. The third day resulted in General Breckenridge's disastrous charge against the Union left. (See page 51.) The next night Bragg retreated southward.

Why, after the morning of December 31, didn't General Bragg follow up his victory? A crushing blow by Breckenridge when Rosecrans' back was against the Nashville Turnpike, would have pushed the Federals off the field. Or an organized attack on the morning of January 1 by Breckenridge's fresh division would likewise have shown good results. Instead Bragg waited, thinking that Rosecrans would withdraw.[23] Rosecrans believed Bragg would attack, and indeed it seems that the former had prepared for a probable retreat to Nashville.[24] The second day gave Rosecrans time to reorganize his forces and strenthen himself, while Bragg was waiting for him to withdraw. Bragg determined to renew the action when it was apparent the Federals were not retreating. Breckenridge was ordered to attack a hill on the extreme right of the Confederate

lines at 4 p.m. There would be just enough time before darkness to take the hill and then entrench. There was too much disagreement concerning this course of action. (See page 51.) The attack failed "from too much success." The orders had been merely to capture the hill. However, the brigadiers could not control their men, and they rushed beyond the hill to be slaughtered by fifty guns massed on the west bank of the river.*[25]

Bragg's failure did not lie in the failure of the above (4 p.m.) attack *per se*. His fault lies in not attacking sooner by using his reserve at critical moments, and in not following through when his attacks had gained initial success. It is much easier, however, to criticize a commander than to command an army."[26] Yet, it is apparent that this attack was a day and a half late.

Cheatham, Withers, Polk and Hardee combined to persuade Bragg not to renew the attack on the fourth day. This pressure plus the information that the Federals were receiving reinforcements, influenced Bragg into withdrawing on the fourth night.[27]

After this battle, General Bragg invited his subordinates to express their opinions of him in writing, and he received frank statements that he was not wanted.[28] This was done with the purpose of clearing his name because of the vast censure against him after the battles of Perryville and Murfreesboro.

On January 22, 1863, General J. E. Johnston, while inspecting the defenses of Mobile, was ordered to Bragg's headquarters by President Davis. The purpose of this visit was to ascertain the feeling toward the general as entertained by the army, and to see if Bragg "had so far lost the confidence of his men as to impair his usefulness in his present position."[29] Davis had heard of the aforementioned criticisms on the part of Bragg's own lieutenants, and wondered if the General should be removed from command. Davis in his order to Johnston, however, remarked that his own confidence in Bragg was unshaken.[30] Davis' favoritism toward General Bragg has often been mentioned and criticized.[31] Indeed it seems ironical that Davis, who often meddled with the affairs of his generals, never interfered with the plans of Bragg.*

Johnston devoted three weeks to the investigation of Bragg's command. In a letter to Davis he advised against the removal of General Bragg, "because the field officers of the army represented that their men were in high spirits, and as ready as ever for fight;

*Major Mendenhall, responsible for the collection and emplacement of this artillery, is given much credit for saving the battle for the Union.

*Davis, however, did remove Longstreet and Wheeler from Bragg's army, when the latter faced Chattanooga. (See page 62.)

such a condition seeming to me incompatible with the alleged want of confidence in their general's ability."[32]

Supposing things settled Johnston went back to Mobile. On March 9, however, a telegram was received ordering Bragg to Richmond, and Johnston to Tullahoma to assume command of the army. Upon arrival, Bragg was found so much concerned over the critical illness of his wife, that Johnston considerately did not mention the order. Johnston assumed temporary command, but by the time Mrs. Bragg had recovered, Johnston was himself so ill that by April 10 he declared himself unfit for duty. Bragg was thereby restored to command by default, so to say.[33]

Although the relations between Bragg and his staff were strained, the army showed no falling off in its efficiency and morale during its six months encampment at Tullahoma. Bragg was at his best in such circumstances where there was no need for maneuvering troops against the enemy. Here, during these months of inactivity, he had an opportunity to exercize those talents for organization which everybody admitted he possessed, "and there was not in the whole Confederacy at that time a more excellently drilled and disciplined body than the Army of Tennessee."[34]

In June of 1863 Bragg was called on at Tullahoma to send troops to Johnston to help relieve Pemberton at Vicksburg. Thus Bragg was weakened and Rosecrans knew his opportunity had come. On June 23 he started his Tullahoma campaign "brief, almost bloodless, brilliant in its conception, execution and result."[35] By a series of feints and flanking movements, Rosecrans forced Bragg out of Tullahoma, and the latter retreated the eighty miles to Chattanooga. They reached the city on July third, the day of Lee's loss at Gettysburg and Pemberton's surrender of Vicksburg.

On August 16, 1863 Rosecrans moved toward the Tennessee River and soon was on the north bank near Stevenson, Alabama. The Federals were across the river and marching northeastwardly toward Chattanooga. By their getting behind the Confederates, Bragg's supply route would be cut, and the Confederates would be bottled up in the city.

Accurately discerning what was happening, Bragg evacuated Chattanooga and moved southward to await Rosecrans' advance. Rosecrans misinterpreted this move as a retreat, and separated his army with three widely dispersed columns in order to push them ahead faster.[36] Bragg concentrated his forces at LaFayette, Georgia, and was three times as strong as any one of the Union columns. Bragg's information as to Rosecrans' strength and whereabouts

was rather vague, and he believed the Federals were in only two columns. He planned to flank the Union left, thus cutting off their supply route, but the attack was not launched. "General Bragg was having the usual difficulty with his subordinates. The mutual trust and confidence, so necessary to military operations, were almost non-existent."[37]

Meanwhile, Rosecrans awoke to the situation, and desperately hastened to unite his army. Bragg at this time should have attacked, but did not.

> There were two reasons for delay; 'first, by waiting, his cavalry could attack the Federal's rear, which might cause the Federals to move against Bragg's position. (His army "was twice as power-for defence as for offence".) Second, Bragg was receiving reinforcements daily,' nearly a brigade a day.[38]

Thus, the longer he waited, the more troops he had. Also, Bragg still did not realize the divided and unorganized nature of Rosecrans' army. This was primarily the fault of his intelligence sources. Anyhow, these reasons in themselves were enough to make Bragg think it more advantageous to wait.

Bragg waited until the 18th when three brigades of Longstreet had arrived. Then the army moved north to get between Rosecrans and Chattanooga. During the night the Confederates got nearly three-fourths their army across Chickamauga Creek in preparation for the assault the following day on what Bragg expected to be Rosecrans' exposed left flank. This expectation was destroyed by Thomas' solid corps which had marched all night to situate themselves exactly where Bragg planned to attack.

In many ways the Battle of Chickamauga was like Shiloh, a soldier's battle, fought over small clearings, woods, and rolling terrain; not the sort of ground on which grand attacks could be organized. It featured headlong assaults, and isolated short range battles. But this time the enemy was dug in behind solid protection.[39]

Bragg's basic plan was good; to outflank the Union left, and place himself solidly between Chattanooga and Rosecrans. Thomas' unexpected stout defence, plus the piecemeal attacks of Bragg's forces, prevented this goal. Longstreet, however, arrived during the night with two more Virginia brigades. The plan of battle was organized for the coming day.

For the attack of September 20, Polk was placed in charge of the Confederate right and ordered to continue the previous day's attack on Thomas. Longstreet was placed in command of the left

and told to follow up Polk's assault. The idea was to envelope the Union left and roll the whole army back up into the mountains to the South.[40] The Federals, however, had moved to the rear slightly to a position more suited for defense, shortened their lines, and once more had concerted their forces at the point where the Confederates were attacking. Also, Bragg had ordered the attack for earliest "day dawn", but because of mismanagement and confusion, the battle did not get started until midmorning.*

The Confederate charges continued throughout the day with a terrible pillage and slaughter on both sides. During the course of the afternoon Longstreet found a gap in the Union lines, and thrust Stewart's division through. This surprise onslaught rolled the Federals back, but Wilder's Indiana brigade armed with repeating rifles checked Stewart long enough for the Federal right to fall back. The entire right flank had been driven from the field including Rosecrans and two corps commanders. Only Thomas remained in position. This stout leader gathered his force in a horseshoe on Snodgrass Hill, and with a determined resistance, saved the Union Army.

The Army of Tennessee had one more chance. At dawn of the twenty-first, Bedford Forrest was on Missionary Ridge viewing Rosecrans' retreating army in the valley below. He reported this in a note to Polk and Bragg, urging pursuit as quickly as possible.[41] Longstreet in the meantime had conferred with Bragg, and suggested that "we cross the Tennessee River north of Chattanooga and march against the line of the enemy's rear,"[42] falling upon Burnside; then cross the river and force Rosecrans to retreat. All that day, Forrest's cavalry force held the Ridge awaiting the army, but it never came.

Most authorities agree that Bragg should have pursued Rosecrans. Forrest was no exception. After waiting all day for Bragg, he headed for Bragg's headquarters that night, awakening the general. Forrest attempted to impress on him the helpless condition of the enemy. Forrest said that if they pursued at once, Rosecrans' capture was certain. Bragg said that he could not move without supplies. Forrest replied that there were supplies in Chattanooga. Bragg made no answer, nor did his subordinate argue further. Forrest turned and left. "There was more insolence and contempt in

*Everybody blamed everybody else for this delay. Bragg said that D. H. Hill and Polk were primarily to blame. They in turn said that they never received Bragg's orders. Apparently the main fault was the fact that many of the Commanders' headquarters had been moved the previous night, and these could not be found in the woods. See Henry, p. 311 and p. 314; Horn 263-270; and *Battles and Leaders*, vol. III, 650-665.

this silent departure than he could have put in a studied invective."[43]

Others agreed with Forrest. Longstreet wrote a letter to Seddon, blasting Bragg, for wasting two and a half days after Rosecrans' retreat.[44] Polk urged a pursuit,[45] and being the commander of the Confederate right wing, well knew the condition of the troops. Indeed it seems ironical that Bragg in his official report as a corps commander at the Battle of Shiloh should say,

> We have a valuable lesson by which we should profit—never on a battlefield to lose a moment's time; but, leaving the killed, wounded, and spoils to those whose special business it is to care for them, to press on with every available man, giving a panic stricken and retreating foe no time to rally, and reaping all the benefits of a success never complete until every enemy is killed, wounded or captured.[46]

Does not this short lecture on military principles apply to the Battle of Chickamauga? Apparently being the commander of an army instead of a corps commands, puts the shoe on a different foot. In this writer's estimation, this was the second main blunder in Bragg's career.* A pursuit of Rosecrans would probably have meant the capture or destruction of the Federal army. The least success gained by Bragg would have been the capture of equipment and supplies which Rosecrans by necessity would have left behind in order to maintain the speed needed to prevent being caught. According to his subordinates the army was in shape to offer pursuit; certainly the conquering force is in better condition to march than the vanquished.

Bragg said that he did not pursue Rosecrans because of the weak condition of his infantry and artillery.[47] General Gordon, although not present at the battle, but after "patient study", backed Bragg up on this, also noting the layers of wire the Federals spread to obstruct a pursuit.[48] Likewise, it has been said that some of Bragg's failure to achieve greater success was the fault of his subordinates.[49] Indeed, after the battle, Bragg relieved Hindman, D. H. Hill, and Polk of their commands at once.[50]

After the Federals reached Chattanooga, Bragg advanced to the heights around it. Grant became supreme commander of Union operations in the West, and had relieved Rosecrans. As Grant was strengthening his forces in Chattanooga in preparation to move against Bragg, the latter's army was weakened by President Davis

*The other being Bragg's decision, after having captured Munfordville, to march to Frankfort in order to inaugurate a "governor" instead of capturing Louisville. (See page 54.)

who "ordered General Longstreet with 15,000 men and Wheeler's cavalry to East Tennessee to drive Burnside out of Knoxville. Grant, learning that Bragg's force had been thus depleted, determined to strike it as soon as possible."[51]* The principle success was on November 25 when Thomas' divisions drove the main Confederate force off Missionary Ridge. The outcome was the flight of Bragg's shattered army to Georgia.[52]

The result of this battle was a serious reverse to the Confederate arms as well as an unmendable blow to Bragg's personal pride and prestige. The battle lasted for nearly a week and had many different phases, so it would be difficult to solely criticize one commander for the Confederate loss. Towards the end Cleburne and Hardee had performed well on the flanks, but Breckenridge's ground in the middle had collapsed before Thomas's troops. Bragg blamed Breckenridge for this, but mainly laid the fault on the soldiers themselves for running. Most authorities agree that Bragg had long since lost the confidence of his men, and that he was outmaneuvered by the superior generalship of Grant.

Bragg's retreat ended at Dalton, Georgia, and for all practical purposes, his service (or disservice) to the Confederacy. J. E. Johnston relieved him of command, and in 1864, Bragg was made Davis' military adviser.[53] In the autumn of 1864 he led a small force from North Carolina to operate against Sherman, but without success.[54] But in February 1865, under Johnston in North Carolina, Bragg won a notable victory at Kinston.[55] For four years after the war, he was chief engineer for Alabama but as the condition of his health, never good, grew worse, he generally retired, dying in 1876.

Thousands upon thousands of words have been written about Braxton Bragg; by his contemporaries and associates, as well as historians and authorities many years later. Much has been written in his defence, a great deal more in the form of criticism. Yet most authors have attempted to survey his good and bad qualities. After having sifted through the volumes of material, the following opinions are apparent to this observer.

Bragg was devoted to Confederate success, and very exacting of the fullest duty of himself.[56] He was an educated and experienced soldier, always willing to sacrifice his personal interests for what he thought was best for the army. His plans for battle were resourceful, and well thought out. Initially he was agressive, and always a hard fighter and brave. As an organizer, however, he was at his

*This marked one of the few times that Davis ever interferred with Bragg (as noted on p. 57.)

best, and his work in this respect at Pensacola, Corinth, and Tullahoma is unsurpassed.

Bragg, it can also be said, was a victim of circumstances. In most cases he was greatly outnumbered and towards the end of the war, the numbers of the Federals were increasing, as a rule, while that of the Confederates were decreasing. Much of the territory Bragg had to operate in was hostile to the South, making campaigns difficult. Bragg suffered the usual hardships of most commanders; desertions, shortage of food, lack of arms, bad weather, etc.[57] In some instances he was unable to exploit initial success because of the exhaustion of his troops.[58] Often his subordinates were at fault for not carrying out his instructions, and at Chattanooga he was hampered by Davis's removal of Longstreet and Wheeler.

Had Bragg possessed two characteristics and used them to their best advantage, then, in this observer's estimation, he would have been one of the most successful generals in the Civil War. The first of these would have been a tactful, more attractive, and more open-minded personality; the second would be the ability to follow-through. Had he had the former characteristic he would have gained the respect and support of his subordinate commanders as well as his troops, which in most cases he never had. The latter characteristic would have enabled Bragg to attack as aggressively on the second day as he always did on the first. "Unfortunately for the South and for General Bragg, he was the victim of a number of *near-misses*—"[59] a little more follow-through at Perryville, Murfreeboro, and Chickamauga could have resulted in an entirely different outcome in the fortunes of the Confederacy.

1. Don C. Seitz, *Braxton Bragg, General of the Confederacy,* (Columbia, S.C., 1924), p.p. 246-247.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 1.
3. *Dictionary American Biography,* (New York, 1929). Vol. II, p. 506.
4. Seitz, *op. cit.*, p. 41.
5. Robert Selph Henry, *The Story of the Confederacy,* (Garden City, N. Y., 1931), p. 76.
6. *Dictionary of American Biography, op. cit., p.* 586.
7. *Battles and Leaders,* Vol. I, (*Albert Sydney Jornston at Shiloh* by William Preston Johnston), (New York 1884), p. 551.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 553.
9. Henry, *op. cit.*, p. 122.
10. *Dictionary of American Biography, op. cit.*, p. 586.
11. *The New International Encyclopedia,* Vol. III, (New York 1925), p. 649.
12. Henry, *op. cit.*, p. 195.
13. Stanley F. Horn, *The Army of Tennessee,* (New York 1941), p. 177.
14. *Battles and Leaders,* Vol. III, (*Bragg's Invasion of Kentucky* by Lt. Gen. Joseph Wheeler), (New York 1884) p. 14.
15. John Codman Ropes, *The Story of the Civil War,* (New York 1898), Part II, p. 409.
16. James G. Randall, *The Civil War and Reconstruction,* (New York 1937), p. 527.
17. Lt. Gen. Richard Taylor, *Destruction and Reconstruction,* (New York 1879), p. 99.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 100.
19. Horn, *op. cit.*, p. 114.
20. Irving A. Buch, *Cleburne and His Command,* (New York 1908), p. 209.
21. Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

22. Lt. Col. Joseph B. Mitchell, *Decisive Battles of The Civil War*, (New York 1955), p. 115.
23. Seitz, *op. cit.*, p. 245.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 245.
25. Andrew Nelson Lytle, *Bedford Forrest*, (New York 1931), p. 140.
26. General John B. Gordon, *Reminiscences of the Civil War*, (New York 1904), p. 194.
27. Seitz, *op. cit.*, p. 249.
28. *Dictionary of American Biogarphy*, *op. cit.*, p. 586.
29. General J. E. Johnston, *Narrative of Military Operations*, (New York 1874), p. 162.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 162.
31. Horn, *op. cit.*, p. 225.
32. Johnston, *op. cit.*, p. 162.
33. Horn, *op. cit.*, p. 228.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 228.
35. Henry, *op. cit.*, p. 292.
36. Mitchell, *op. cit.* p. 165.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 166.
38. E. P. Alexander, *Military Memoirs of a Confederate*, (New York 1908), p. 455.
39. Henry, *op. cit.*, p. 310.
40. Mitchell, *op. cit.*, p. 170.
41. Lytle, *op. cit.*, p. 232.
42. Lt. Gen. James S. Longstreet, *From Manassas to Appomattox*, (Philadelphia 1903), p. 461.
43. Lytle, *op. cit.*, p. 233.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 234.
45. Horn, *op. cit.*, p. 272.
46. *Official Reports of Battles, Southern History of the War*, (New York 1863), p.p. 233-234.
47. Horn, *op. cit.*, p. 275.
48. Gordon, *op. cit.*, p. 214.
49. Major William W. Ackerly, Letter to nephew concerning Bragg, (The Plains, Virginia 1956), p. 5.
50. Henry, *op. cit.*, p. 314. (See * p. 60.)
51. Ackerly, *op. cit.*, p. 5.
52. Randall, op. cit., p. 538.
53. Dictionary of American Biography, *op. cit.*, p. 586.
54. *The American Encylopaedia*, (New York 1883), Vol. III, p. 183.
55. Johnston, *op. cit.*, p. 381.
56. Henry, *op. cit.*, p. 323.
57. Ackerly, *op. cit.*, p. 4.
58. Lee, *History*, pp. 468-489.
59. Ackerly, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

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