

Lee Moves Against Pope and the Sioux Rise Up in Minnesota

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During mid-August 1862 skirmishing took place at various locations throughout the south, including Confederate cavalryman John Hunt Morgan's capture of Gallatin, Tennessee; the disgraceful surrender of Clarksville, Tennessee by Union forces to a small band of Confederates; the defeat of the Federals near Lone Jack, Missouri; and a Union naval expedition along the Mississippi. General Grant near Corinth, Mississippi ordered that fugitive slaves entering his lines be employed in various departments for service. Later in the week the Confederate Congress met to discuss the progress of the war. In a message, President Jefferson Davis assured "the friends of constitutional liberty of our final triumph in the pending struggle," while accusing the north of atrocities and calling for an increase in the size of the Confederate military. The most significant activity, however, came in Virginia with the opening of a new campaign, and in Minnesota with the beginning of a bloody Indian uprising.

This saw preliminary movements of both Union and Confederate forces in what would become known as the Second Manassas campaign. Convinced that the Federals presented no further threat to Richmond, Robert E. Lee began to move his Army of Northern Virginia from the Peninsula towards Gordonsville, Virginia. He would join forces with Stonewall Jackson's command, which had previously been sent northward to deal with the approach of a portion of John Pope's Army of Virginia and which had fought a bloody engagement at Cedar Mountain the previous week. As Lee moved his army northward to meet this new threat, two corps of Union General George McClellan's Army of the Potomac moved by water from Harrison's Landing to Aquia Creek, Virginia. The rest of McClellan's force shifted from Harrison's Landing to Williamsburg, in preparation for a similar movement, which would be completed

within the next week. These movements marked the official end of the ill-fated Peninsula Campaign, and a shift in focus by the Lincoln administration to operations under General Pope in northern Virginia

As the armies maneuvered in Virginia, the U.S. government faced a crisis to the northwest in Minnesota as a large-scale uprising by the Sioux, or Dakota, Indians began which would ravage the area until late September, resulting in the deaths of more than 500 whites and 150 Indians. Over the previous decade relations with Indians in the region became tense as settlers continued to move into the territory and as the Federal government forced the natives onto a smaller reservation. Promised food shipments arrived late or not at all, and a crop failure and the scarcity of wild game had reduced many Indians to near-starvation. On August 17 four Indian youths raided a white farmer's henhouse and then attacked and killed five settlers. Realizing that the murders would result in white retaliation, several Indian bands determined to launch a preemptive strike against both the Lower and Upper Agencies, killing more than twenty whites. The following day a group of Dakota warriors ambushed a company of troops from the Fifth Minnesota, killing twenty-four of forty-six men, and by August 19 the garrison of Fort Ridgely faced an assault by 400 Sioux. Soon the town of New Ulm was also besieged. Attacks continued throughout the month and well into September, when the Sioux were defeated at Wood Lake by troops under Colonel Henry Hastings Sibley. At the conclusion of the uprising over 2,000 Indians were incarcerated, and a trial condemned more than 300 to death. Ultimately thirty-eight were hanged in the largest mass execution in the nation's history. Thus the Civil War represented another tragic episode in the relationship between whites and American Indians.