

The Last Battlefield of the Civil War and Its Preservation

By Richard Gardiner, Ph.D.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

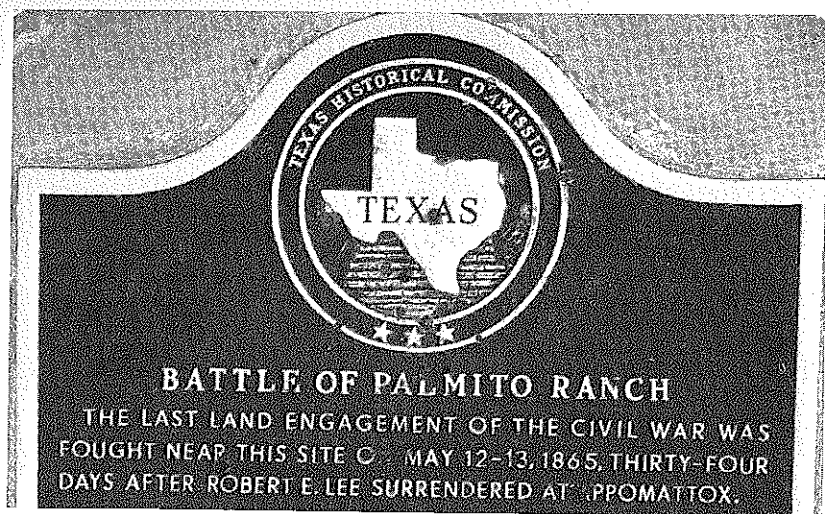
The author is Assistant Professor of History Education at Columbus State University in Columbus, Georgia.

The Civil War sesquicentennial has arrived. The approaching 150th anniversaries of significant events have already given rise to a large body of scholarly literature with fresh perspectives. The first commemoration was properly 12 April 2011 at Ft. Sumter in Charleston harbor, the site of the first battle. But one of the questions that remains cloudy is the identification of the "last battle" of the war. This is far more complicated than acknowledging the significance of Ft. Sumter. Wherever the location, the sesquicentennial of the last battle is on the horizon. It is an important piece of history to identify, preserve, and memorialize.

Texas or Georgia?

Though there are a few other candidates for the title of "Last Battle," over the years two leading contenders have emerged.¹ Palmetto Ranch in Texas is one. In 2002 the University of Texas Press published *The Last Battle of the Civil War: Palmetto Ranch*. This followed the publication of a book by a Texas Civil War historian entitled *The Final Fury: Palmito Ranch, The Last Battle of the Civil War*.² In 2003 *Civil War Times* published "The Last Battle. Period. Really."³ That article was about the battle of Columbus, Georgia. In 2010 the University of Alabama Press published *Columbus Georgia, 1865: The Last True Battle of the Civil War*.⁴ The battle of the presses reflects the lack of consensus among historians.

The chronology is not at issue. The Battle at Columbus took place on Easter Sunday, 16 April 1865. The Battle at Palmetto Ranch ended on 13 May 1865. In that respect the fighting in Texas seems to qualify for the title. But, according to James McPherson, the 2010 University



This marker in Texas identifies Palmito Ranch as the site of the last "land engagement" of the Civil War. *Author's Photo.*

of Alabama book "makes a plausible case that the cavalry battle at Columbus can be considered the last 'true battle' of the war."¹⁵

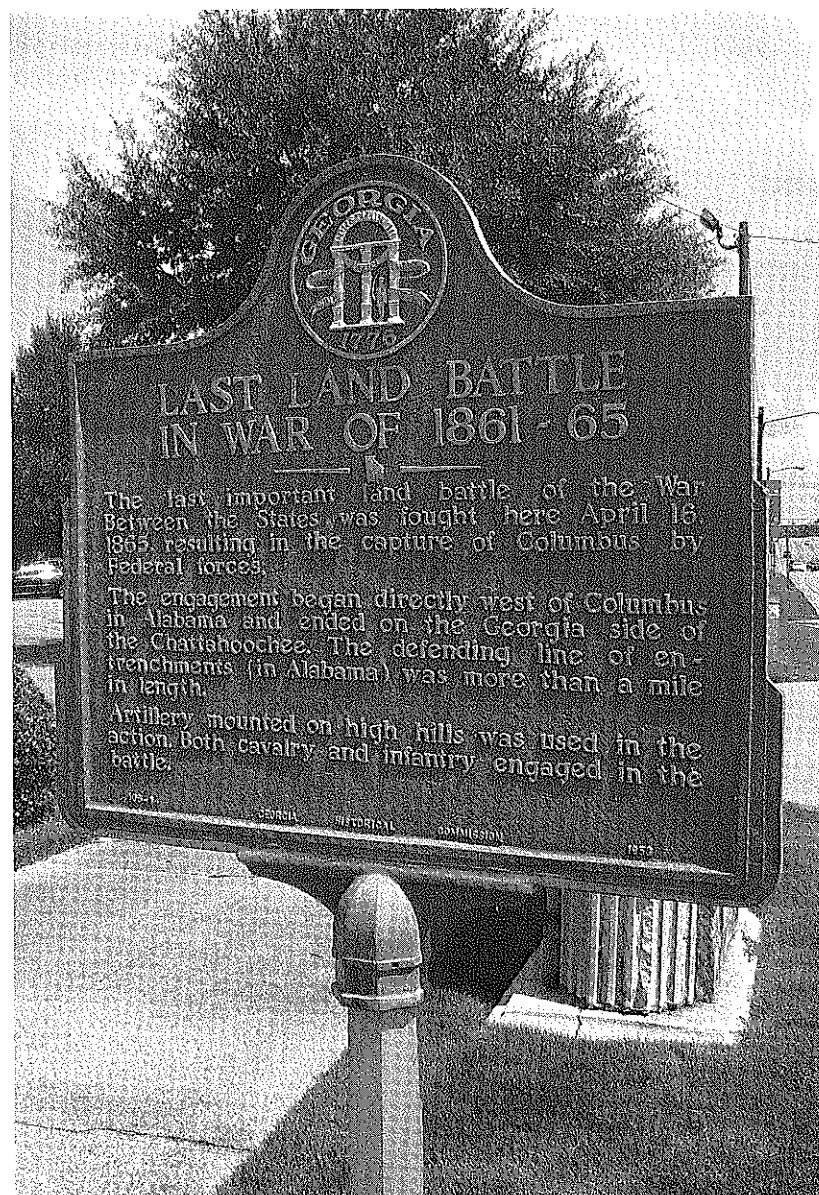
So the matter cannot be settled simply by the calendar. There are two crucial factors that have to be taken into account in order to answer the question accurately. First, when did the Civil War end? Second, what is a battle? After exploring these questions in detail, a decisive identification of the last battlefield of the Civil War may emerge.

I. When Did the War End?

If armed violence were to occur today between a group of people calling themselves Confederates and Federal troops, would that constitute the last battle of the Civil War? Hardly. Most of us would agree that that would be "post-war." Only the last battle before the end of the war may be accurately called the "last battle of the war." Therefore, the next step is to determine when the Civil War ended. This is not as simple as it might seem. The Civil War certainly ended at some point in 1865 or 1866.

There are reasonable cases for several different dates.

9 April 1865: This date is the popular and commonly held "end" of the war. It was the date when Robert E. Lee surrendered to U.S. Grant at Appomattox Courthouse, Virginia. Any student of history who



This marker in Columbus, Georgia identifies it as the location of the "last important land battle" of the Civil War. *Author's Photo.*



9 April 1865: The day General Lee surrendered to General Grant at Appomattox. *Library of Congress Photo.*

war after 9 April. Amazingly, after the war Davis wrote, "I did not think we should despair. We still had effective armies in the field."

26 April 1865: This is the date that General Johnston surrendered his men at Bennett Place, North Carolina to General Sherman. Sherman calculated this surrender to include 89,270 troops.⁸ This marks the date when most Confederate soldiers put down their arms. Southerners have traditionally cited this date as the end of the war, designating it in a half dozen of their states as "Confederate Memorial Day."⁹ A contemporaneous source, *The Baltimore Sun*, reported this as the "Final Surrender."¹⁰

5 May 1865: On this date, the Confederacy was forever dissolved by Jefferson Davis in an official meeting held at Washington, Georgia.¹¹ It seems that, almost by definition, the war had to have ended when the Confederacy ceased to exist. Any further fighting

remembers that the war started at Ft. Sumter and ended at Appomattox Courthouse has a reasonable grasp of history.

Although Lee's army was arguably the Confederate center of gravity, the fact remains that it was not the only part of the Confederate army.⁶ General Joseph E. Johnston's forces had yet to surrender. Moreover, when Lee surrendered, the Confederate government was still intact, even if on the run. President Davis and his aides were still meeting in formal sessions, making decisions, and intent on carrying on the

was nothing more than hopeless resistance by those fearing capture as war criminals.

10 May 1865: Two very important events occurred on this day: Jefferson Davis was captured and incarcerated;¹² and U. S. President Andrew Johnson declared "armed resistance ... virtually at an end."¹³ With the Confederate government disbanded and the President declaring hostilities at an end, it seems clear that any fighting after this point were "post-war" in nature. Though not an official source, the famous song, "The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down," was perhaps on the mark by citing "May the tenth" as the end of the war.

13 May 1865: A confrontation took place at Palmetto Ranch. There was no Confederacy in existence when the "battle" occurred. The ex-Confederates at Palmetto Ranch were aware that Lee had surrendered and that the war was over.¹⁴ What happened in Texas can only be understood as a "post-war" encounter between Federals and ex-Confederate "outlaws."

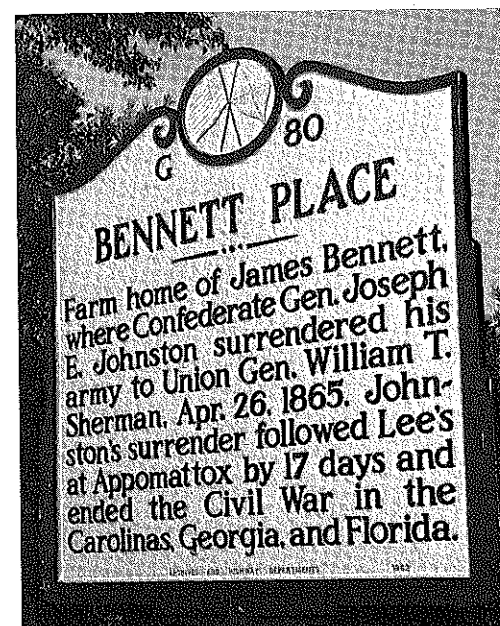
Southerners like Jefferson Davis liked to refer to this combat in Texas as the "last battle" because the Federals were, in fact, humiliated there. By calling it the last battle, Davis could proudly

say that "the long struggle [ended] as it opened—with a Confederate victory."¹⁵ Davis was hardly an objective observer, but many have cited Davis as an authority on this matter and the "last battle" at Palmetto Ranch has kept its luster for 150 years.

26 May 1865: Gen. Kirby Smith surrendered a small contingent of ex-Confederate soldiers.¹⁶

May - June 1865: Several skirmishes were reported in the trans-Mississippi theater.¹⁷

23 June 1865: Stand Watie, a native American ex-Confederate general surrendered.¹⁸



Author's Photo.



This memorial marks the location where Jefferson Davis was captured on 10 May 1865. Author's Photo.

County, Missouri. Most would consider that an act of "outlawry" by "ex-Confederates." But if the war was still on, why should they be called ex-Confederates? If the answer is that the Confederacy was dissolved on 5 May, then the men at Palmetto Ranch must also be called "ex-Confederates."

Conclusion

The date that most appropriately designates the termination of the Confederate war effort was, as many state governments have declared, 26 April 1865, or at the very latest, 10 May 1865. Given that conclusion, the last battlefield of the Civil War was at Columbus, Georgia. Since there was no Confederacy in existence at the time of the fight at Palmetto Ranch, that is simply a place where Union soldiers and ex-Confederates clashed.

II. Skirmish vs. Battle

In military science, vocabulary can be rather precise. There are different definitions for different levels of combat. During the Civil War, the words "affair," "skirmish," "action," "engagement," and "battle" were used in ascending order based on the size of the encounter. Military personnel were largely inclined to simplify the

November, 1865: The CSS *Shenandoah* surrenders to the British at Liverpool harbor.

20 August 1866: President Johnson proclaimed that "the said insurrection is at an end and that peace, order, tranquility, and civil authority now exist in and throughout the whole United States of America."¹⁹ If this is taken as the last official day of the war, several violent encounters could qualify as the last combat even after Palmetto Ranch. For example, on

13 June 1866, members of Quantrill's guerrilla band had a shootout with authorities in Jackson

division between skirmishes and battles. Skirmishes were isolated conflicts between small numbers of combatants. Battles were encounters between larger bodies of belligerents.

Right from the start, witnesses of the activity at Palmetto Ranch denied that an actual "battle" took place there. According to the local press at the time, "It was not a battle."²⁰ In contrast, the press in Columbus, Georgia was clear in reporting the event there on 16 April as a "battle."²¹

In the official report by Union Col. David Branson, one of the officers at Palmetto Ranch, the term "skirmish" is exclusively used.²² This is in contrast to the official report of Col. John Noble, one of the Union officers who led the attack on Columbus. Whereas Col. Branson was careful not to refer to the combat in Texas as a "battle," Col. Noble, who filed his report seven days after the event, identified the engagement at Columbus as a "battle."²³

Union Maj. Gen. James H. Wilson who led the attack on Columbus was certain that he had fought at the last battle of the war. When he was apprised of additional instances of fighting that occurred after 16 April, such as the encounter at Palmetto Ranch, Wilson responded by writing "they do not in any way, according to my judgment, constitute a battle."²⁴ Sgt Maj. William Forse Scott, a regimental adjutant during the battle of Columbus, considered "it [Columbus] was the last battle of the war." Aware of the fighting in Texas, Scott added, "There were several minor conflicts later than this, but none upon any plan or of any importance."²⁵

Subsequent military historians have concurred with this distinction. Robert Hunter, editor of *Sketches of War History, 1861-1865* wrote that what happened at Palmetto Ranch could hardly be cast as "rising above the dignity of a skirmish."²⁶ Civil War scholar Anne J. Bailey wrote that the event at Palmetto Ranch "was nothing more than a skirmish."²⁷ The case was recently articulated fully by Charles Misulia, who explained that what happened in Texas was but a skirmish, "not a battle."²⁸

III. A Chronicle of Opinion about the Last Battle

April - May, 1865: According to reports of Col. John Noble and Gen. Emory Upton in the *Official Records of the War of the Rebellion*, what occurred at Columbus Georgia on 16 April 1865, was both "battle" and the "closing conflict of the war."²⁹

27 June 1865: *The Columbus Enquirer* described the event as the "last battle of the war."³⁰

31 December 1865: The Adjutant General of Iowa included the following in his report: "At 10 P.M., April the 16th, six companies

were dismounted within 300 yards of the works surrounding Columbus, Georgia, defended by 2,500 Georgia Reserves, commanded by General Howell Cobb, with orders to charge and take them, which we did in a gallant manner, bringing on and ending the last general engagement of the war."³¹

18 June 1866: General Cobb was interviewed for *The New York Herald*. When identifying the termination of the war, Cobb used the phrase "right down to the battle of Columbus."³²

1872: As histories of the Civil War and soldiers began to proliferate in the 1870s, historians wrote that the last battle had occurred at Columbus. For example, an 1872 history of Alabama described the Columbus event as both "the last fighting of the great war between the states" and "the last combat of a great war."³³

1874: Napier Bartlett, a Confederate soldier from Louisiana wrote *A Soldier's Story of the War*. The author declared, "The very last battle fought, or regular engagement during the war, took place on the night of the 16th of April, at Columbus, Ga." Bartlett was not only a soldier, but also a teacher, lawyer, and journalist. He served as editor of *The Claiborne Advocate* in Homer, Louisiana, until his death in 1876.³⁴

20 April 1875: An article in *The Macon Telegraph and Messenger* on asserted that "the battle at Columbus was the last one of the war."³⁵

1878: A biography of a soldier, Robert Wilson, from Illinois identified the Battle of Columbus as "the last battle of the rebellion."³⁶

1879: Historian John Campbell Butler wrote a *Historical Record of Macon and Central Georgia*. This history declares, "We chronicle the battle at Columbus as the last one of the war."³⁷

1881: A regimental history of the Seventh Ohio Cavalry made the unequivocal assertion: "Columbus, Ga. may be set down as the last battle of the war for the preservation of the Union." Another 1881 historian in Iowa wrote that "the last battle of the war was fought in front of Columbus, Georgia."³⁸

1882: Gen. Edward F. Winslow wrote his *Memoirs of the Civil War*. One episode of his memoirs is dedicated to the Battle of Columbus. General Winslow titled the chapter, "Columbus, the Final Battle of the War."³⁹

26 April 1885: On the twentieth anniversary of Johnston's surrender, which many regard the end of the war, *The New York Sun* published an article titled "When did the War End?" This article was reprinted in other papers spreading to the Pacific Ocean. The article acknowledged the skirmish in Texas that took place on 13 May 1865, hence the Battle of Columbus was "the last combat east of the Mississippi." For the next fifteen years this became the widespread label for the Battle of Columbus.⁴⁰

1886: Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman made the statement that Col. Charles A. L. Lamar was "the last Confederate killed in the late war."⁴¹ Insofar as Lamar was killed during the Battle of Columbus, Georgia, it follows that General Sherman held the view that that was the last deadly battle of the war. Of course, other Confederates were killed after Lamar, but this evidence shows Sherman's understanding that Columbus was where the last Confederate died in battle.

1889: An historian in Iowa recounted the services of the 15th and 16th Army Corps including "the last battle of the war, which they fought at Columbus, Ga. on April 16, 1865."⁴²

1892: G. P. Putnam published William Forse Scott's *The Story of a Cavalry Regiment* in which he labeled a chapter about the Columbus fight, "The Last Battle of the War."⁴³

IV. A Chronicle of the Last Battlefield Preservation Efforts

1895: The Knights Templar held a meeting at Columbus, Georgia. In the opening address, it was proclaimed that "it was in this city of Columbus on the 16th day in April, 1865, that was fought the last battle of the war between the states.... The hero, who on that day offered himself as the last sacrifice on his country's altar, was Charles A. L. Lamar, who was shot down on the river bridge in the supreme effort to stem the tide of hostile invasion. Therefore, if you would mark the spot in our great and now united country, where war and peace last met and parted, where could be more fitly reared the monument than where you now assemble, in the city of Columbus?" This was the first recorded suggestion to erect a monument commemorating the last battle.⁴⁴

1901: A prominent Columbus attorney and local historian named Charles Jewett Swift, whose home was taken over by the Yankees during the battle of Columbus, published an article in *The Columbus Enquirer* that argued that any combat occurring after 5 May 1865 "with no remnant of the Confederate civil or military establishment left to sustain or sanction it" could only be regarded as "post-war" activity. The battles in Texas in May occurred after the Confederate government was officially dissolved at Washington, Georgia, and its former president put in prison. Hence, according to Swift the Battle of Columbus was not only the last battle of the Civil War east of the Mississippi—it was the last battle of the war, period.⁴⁵

29 October 1901: Maj. Sidney Herbert, a Union veteran, Southern military historian, and journalist, drew special attention to the Columbus battle in an article:

The claim that [Columbus] was the last real, legitimate battle of the war before the Confederacy collapsed at Washington, GA

[on 5 May 1865], followed in a few days by the capture of President Davis, seems to be well founded and affords a good reason for making the event one of more than ordinary prominence.⁴⁶

21 February 1904: *The Columbus Enquirer* ran a story entitled "National Park a Possibility of the Future." *The Enquirer* reported that the Mayor of Columbus had been in communication with the local Federal representatives in order to set the wheels in motion to preserve a portion of the Columbus battlefield. The report ends, "It would not only be a point of great historic interest, but an attractive resort which would advertise Columbus and its Alabama suburbs."⁴⁷

26 February 1904: An editor of the *Official Records of the War of the Rebellion*, F. C. Ainsworth, wrote a letter to Representative H. D. Clayton of Georgia, explaining that by his definition, what occurred at Columbus in 1865 was not a "battle." The letter was printed in *The Columbus Enquirer*.

12 November 1907: Military historian, Union veteran, and journalist Maj. Sidney Herbert wrote a response in *The Savannah Morning News* to Ainsworth's judgment: "I have the highest respect for Maj. Gen. Fred C. Ainsworth ... but he made a serious blunder when he officially stated that West Point, Ga. and Columbus, Ga. did not on the same day witness the last important battles of the war...."⁴⁸



Major General James H. Wilson became an active advocate for memorializing the battlefield at Columbus as the site of the "last battle." *Library of Congress Photo.*

12 February 1908: On this date, Major General Wilson, who led the assault on Columbus in 1865, took offense at Ainsworth's implication that he, Wilson, did not understand the "proper standards" for what defines a battle. Wilson wrote to Charles J. Swift that,

[m]easured by all proper standards the Girard-Columbus battle was the last battle of the civil war, its consequences and importance, as well as to the number engaged.⁴⁹

In his letter, Wilson listed the names of several other military officers and experts who were in full concurrence: e.g., a Col. Beaumont and Col. Theodore Allen. Wilson told Swift that Colonels Beaumont and Allen would "go down to Columbus and carefully go over the whole subject." As predicted, Wilson's men corroborated his judgment.⁵⁰ A certain Captain Seavey offered his amen, writing that "an effort is being made commemorative [sic] of the last battle of the Civil War.... I wish to aid in the noble work."⁵¹

1908: Col. Allen published a brief article in *The Journal of the United States Cavalry Association* entitled "The Last Battle of the Civil War." The same article appeared in *The Journal of the U.S. Army Armor School*. A similar article appeared in *The Washington Post*.⁵²

1912: Wilson published his own memoirs of the civil war entitled *Under the Old Flag*, which included the comment that Columbus "was the last real battle of the war."⁵³

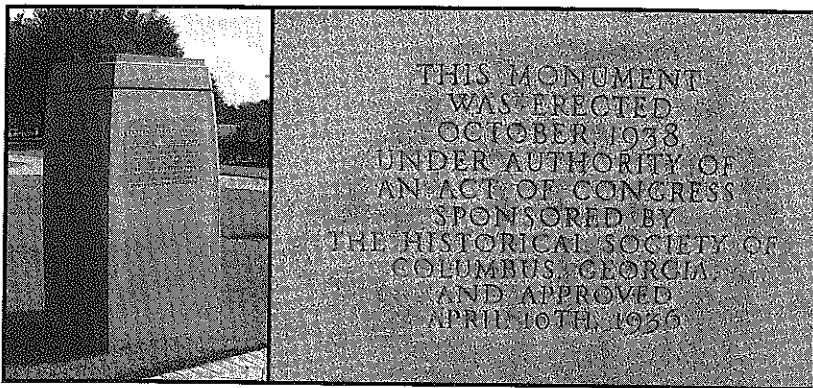
10 February 1915: Armed with support from numerous military experts and eyewitnesses, Swift authored an article entitled "The Last Battle of the Civil War." He opened the inaugural meeting of the Columbus Historical Society with his paper.⁵⁴

March 1915: Nearly 4000 citizens of Columbus were on hand for the filming by the Paragon Film Company of a motion picture about the Battle of Columbus. According to a newspaper article,

[I]n the presence of several thousand spectators, the **last battle of the civil war** which took place in Columbus fifty years ago was fought over on North Highlands this afternoon, the scene to be incorporated in a motion picture.⁵⁵

March 1915: *The Columbus Ledger* ran the headline "Last Battle Claims Settled for All Time." Swift sent his paper off for publication by the most highly respected and peer-reviewed military journal in the United States at the time.⁵⁶

23 October 1915: Swift died from a stroke. The great champion of the "Last Battle" commemoration was gone. The mantle was transmitted to a member of the newly-formed Columbus Historical Society named Alva C. Smith.⁵⁷



The United States Congress authorized this monument to be erected in commemoration of the Battle of Columbus, Georgia. Author's Photo.

May 1916: *The Journal of the Franklin Institute* included a claim that the last battle of the Civil War "was marked by the burning of Columbus."⁵⁸

1916-1934: Alva C. Smith revived a petition for the National Park Service (NPS) to memorialize Columbus as the site of the last battle of the Civil War. Smith's appeal relied heavily on the Swift's work. The Federal officials harkened back to the judgment of F. C. Ainsworth. Swift argued to NPS Director Arno Cammerer that if the event at Columbus was not a "battle," then neither was what happened at Lexington and Concord!

14 May 1934: Cammerer wrote a 45-page "rebuttal" to Swift's research.⁵⁹ In it, Cammerer echoed Ainsworth's 1904 contention that what happened at Columbus was not a "battle" and not the "last" combat. Cammerer's rebuttal was fraught with errors, oddities, and outright nonsense. For example, Cammerer claimed that "Lee surrendered on April 10."⁶⁰ The surrender of Lee at Appomattox Courthouse the previous day is one of the most high profile dates of the war. To a Civil War historian, Cammerer's mistake is like writing that the Declaration of Independence was published on 3 July 1776. Cammerer goes on to write that the skirmishes fought in Missouri were fought by [sic] "gorillas."⁶¹ There has been no official adherence to Cammerer's unorthodox reckoning.⁶²

28 March 1935: The General Assembly of Georgia declared "the last battle of the war between the States was fought on the hills overlooking the Chattahoochee River" and resolved to petition the U.S. Congress to establish a national park on the site of the Battle of Columbus.⁶³

10 April 1936: In spite of Cammerer's assessment, the U.S. Congress approved the erection of a stone memorial near the battlefield. The story of the combat is inscribed on the stone, but the claim that it was "The Last Battle" is not.⁶⁴

1953: The Georgia Historical Commission erected a marker on the corner of 14th and Veterans Streets in Columbus that reads: "Last Land Battle in the War Between the States."⁶⁵

2000: The University of Kentucky published a book about Wilson's 1865 raid by James Pickett Jones. Jones states the case as follows: "Some have called the fight for Columbus the Civil War's last battle. Others have found subsequent actions in the West and qualify the claim. To those writers Columbus is the war's last battle east of the Mississippi."⁶⁶

April 2003: Daniel Bellware, a native of Detroit, wrote an article entitled, "The Last Battle. Period. Really." about the Battle of Columbus.⁶⁷ It was published in *Civil War Times*.

2007: A documentary titled "The Last Ditch" aired on public television. This hour-long movie detailed the Battle of Columbus. It was nominated for five Southeast Regional EMMY awards. It won two.

2010: Charles Misulia, a recent history graduate of Columbus State University, endeavored a fresh, scholarly look at the "Last Battle" thesis.⁶⁸ After years of painstaking research, Misulia's manuscript was presented for publication by the University of Alabama Press. His research was peer-reviewed and accepted for publication in 2010. The title of the book is *Columbus, Georgia 1865: The Last True Battle of the Civil War*.

2011: Dr. James McPherson of Princeton University, Pulitzer prize Civil War historian and one of the living legends of Civil War scholarship, considered Misulia's book and wrote, "the author makes a plausible case that the cavalry battle at Columbus [is] ... the last 'true battle' of the war."⁶⁹

Conclusion

With the sesquicentennial of the end of the Civil War on the horizon, this is the right time to accomplish that which has been overlooked for 100 years. Sound scholarship calls for Columbus, Georgia to be identified as the site of the last battle of the Civil War. It deserves the recognition that it has not received in full measure since 1895. What better time than the 150th anniversary to rectify this troubling oversight?

ENDNOTES

1. E.g., Appomattox, Bentonville, Munford Station, AL and Anderson, SC are examples of other locations that are sometimes identified as the "last battlefield" of the Civil War. The naval attacks by the CSS *Shenandoah* on several U.S. whaling vessels in late June 1865 have occasionally been seen as the last assaults by the Confederates. Donald Cartmell, *The Civil War Book of Lists* (Pompton Plains, NJ: New Page Books, 2001), p. 176. Representative of the traditional lists is L. P. McCarty, *Annual Statistician* (New York: Nabu, 2012, reprint of 1876 original), pp. 117-118.
2. Jeffrey William Hunt, *The Last Battle of the Civil War: Palmetto Ranch* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002); Philip Thomas Tucker, *Palmito Ranch: The Final Fury* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole, 2001).
3. Daniel Bellware, "The Last Battle. Period. Really," *Civil War Times*, April 2003.
4. Charles Misulia, *Columbus, Georgia, 1865: The Last True Battle of the Civil War* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010).
5. James McPherson to Richard Gardiner, 3 Feb 2011.
6. The contemporaneous report of *The New York Times* was that 18,000 to 20,000 men surrendered with Lee (*New York Times*, 14 Apr 1865). At that time there were still three significant Confederate armies that had not surrendered: Joseph E. Johnston's army in North Carolina, Richard H. Taylor's army in Alabama, and Edmund Kirby-Smith's army in the Trans-Mississippi. According to General Sherman, General Johnston surrendered 89,270 men on 26 April 1865. W.T. Sherman, *The Memoirs of General W. T. Sherman* (New York: Webster, 1890), Vol. 2, p. 370.
7. Jefferson Davis, *The Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government* (New York: Appleton, 1881), Vol. II, p. 679.
8. Sherman, *Memoirs*, Vol. 2, p. 370.
9. W. Stuart Towns, *Enduring Legacy: Rhetoric and Ritual of the Lost Cause* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2012), p. 140.
10. *Baltimore Sun*, 29 Apr 1865.
11. David A. Aretha, *Jefferson Davis* (New York: Chelsea House, 2009), p. 84.
12. General J.H. Wilson to E.M. Stanton, Secretary of War, 13 May 1865 in U.S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 1st Ser., Vol. XLIX, Pt. 2 (Washington, DC: GPO, 1880-1901), p. 743 (hereinafter cited as *Official Records*).
13. President Andrew Johnson, "A Proclamation," 10 May 1865 in *The Statutes at Large, Treaties, and Proclamations of the United States of America*

- from *December 1863 to December 1865*, Vol. 13 (Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1866), p. 757.
14. George Robertson, quoted in Hunt, *Last Battle*, pp. 48-49.
15. Jefferson Davis, *Rise and Fall*, Vol. II, p. 699.
16. Joseph Howard Parks, *General Edmund Kirby Smith* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1992), p. 477.
17. *Official Records*, 1st Ser., Vol. XLVIII, Pt. 60, p. 9.
18. Frank Cunningham, *General Stand Watie's Confederate Indians* (Tulsa: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), p. 197.
19. Andrew Johnson, "Proclamation re: End of Insurrection," 20 Aug 1866, in *Andrew Johnson, The Papers of Andrew Johnson* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1994), Volume 11, pp. 100-103.
20. *New Orleans Picayune*, 10 Jun 1865.
21. *Columbus Enquirer*, 27 Jun 1865.
22. *Official Records*, 1st Ser., Vol. XLVIII, Pt. 1, pp. 267-269.
23. *Official Records*, 1st Ser., Vol. XLIX, Pt. 1, p. 493.
24. General James H. Wilson to Charles Swift, in the *Columbus, GA Enquirer*, 13 Feb 1908.
25. William Forse Scott, *The Story of a Cavalry Regiment* (New York: Putnam, 1892), p. 499.
26. Robert Hunter, ed., *Sketches of War History* (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke, 1890), Vol. III, p. 16.
27. Anne J. Bailey, *Encyclopedia of the Civil War* (New York: Norton, 2000), p. 1936.
28. Misulia, *Columbus, Georgia 1865*.
29. Col. John Noble, Report of 23 Apr 1865 and Maj. Gen. Emory Upton, Report of 30 May 1865, in *Official Records*, 1st Ser., Vol. I, Part 1, pp. 475, 493. Upton was a graduate of West Point and had a strong reputation as a military scholar. He served as a professor of military tactics and his book, *The Military Policy of the United States*, was the standard text in its time. Historian Stephen E. Ambrose wrote his doctoral dissertation on Upton's military genius.
30. *Columbus Enquirer*, 27 Jun 1865.
31. *Report of the Adjutant General and acting Quartermaster General of the State of Iowa* (Des Moines: Palmer, 1866), p. 117.
32. General Howell Cobb, *New York Herald*, 18 Jun 1866.

33. Willis Brewer, *Alabama: Her History* (Tuscaloosa: Barrett, Brown, & Steam, 1872), p. 512.
34. Napier Bartlett, *A Soldier's Story of the War* (New Orleans: Clark and Hofeline, 1874), p. 235.
35. "The Surrender of Macon," *Macon Telegraph and Messenger*, 20 Apr 1875.
36. H. F. Kett, "Robert M. Wilson," *The History of Jo Daviess County, Illinois* (Chicago: H. F. Kett, 1878), p. 684.
37. John Campbell Butler, *Historical Record of Macon and Central Georgia* (Macon: Burke & Co., 1879), p. 283.
38. Richard C. Rankin, *History of the Seventh Ohio Volunteer Cavalry* (J. C. Newcomb, 1881), p. 28. See also *The History of Mills County, Iowa* (Des Moines, 1881), p. 685.
39. Gen. Edward F. Winslow, *Memoirs of the Civil War, Part II*, Episode 8, "Columbus, the Final Battle," Manuscript at the University of Iowa, Iowa City, Special Collections Department.
40. "When did the War End?" *New York Sun*, 26 April 1885. See also Albert Lawson, *War Anecdotes and Incidents of Army Life* (Cincinnati: Unknown, 1888) p. 4; Lewis E. Daniell, *Types of Successful Men of Texas* (Austin: Unknown, 1890), p. 297; John Howard Brown, *Lamb's Biographical Dictionary of the United States* (Boston: Lamb, 1899-1900), Volume II, p. 88.
41. Gen. William T. Sherman, *North American Review*, Vol. 143, Jul-Dec 1886, p. 647.
42. Anon., *Portrait and Biographical Album of Louisa County, Iowa* (Chicago: Unknown, 1889)
43. Scott, *The Story of a Cavalry Regiment*, p. 499.
44. *Knights Templar Proceedings*, 1895.
45. Charles J. Swift, Esq., "At Alabama End of New Bridge," *Columbus Enquirer*, 17 Oct 1901. See also "Last Battle of the Civil War," *Atlanta Constitution*, 18 Oct 1901.
46. *Savannah Morning News*, 29 Oct 1901.
47. *Columbus Enquirer*, 21 Feb 1904.
48. *Savannah Morning News*, 12 Nov 1907.
49. Maj. Gen. James H. Wilson to Charles Jewett Swift, 12 Feb 1908. Swift determined that Ainsworth's narrow definition of a "battle" ran counter to the views of dozens of professional military personnel and historians who had written on the subject since the war. Even the original reports from the *Official Records* had identified the engagement at Columbus as

- a "battle" (e.g., the 23 Apr 1865 report of Col. John W. Noble). As a result, Swift solicited opinions from a multitude of Civil War generals and officers still living who could speak to the question. Many of the leading officers who were present at the Battle of Columbus responded to Swift. This letter is among them.
50. Col. Theodore F. Allen to Charles Jewett Swift, 8 Feb 1908.
 51. Capt. W.S. Seavey to the Columbus Chief of Police, 14 Feb 1908.
 52. Col. Theodore F. Allen, "The Last Battle of the Civil War," *Journal of the United States Cavalry Association*, Vol. 18 (1908), p. 785. See also "Last Battle of the Rebellion," *Washington Post*, 1 Jan 1908.
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