

## **First Bull Run Timetable**

**April 17, 1861** -- A special convention of Virginians votes in favor of accepting secession.

**April 21**– Thomas Jackson, then about to be dismissed as a faculty member at VMI, takes a battalion of cadets to Richmond where they will be employed as drillmasters. From Richmond, Jackson will be ordered to Harpers Ferry to organize a brigade.

**April 27**– The leaders of Virginia write to Jefferson Davis that they would welcome becoming home of the Confederate capital.

**May 16**– Irvin McDowell, 43, an Ohio officer stationed in Washington DC, delivers to Secretary of Treasury Salmon Chase a sketchy written plan for an advance into Virginia.

**May 23**– Virginia voters go to the polls to ratify the convention’s decision to secede. Late that night a Federal army crosses the Potomac from the District of Columbia.

Joseph E. Johnston arrives at Harpers Ferry to take command, superceding Jackson.

**May 24**– Before the sun has arisen, Federal troops have invaded and controlled parts of “the sacred soil” of Virginia along the Potomac.

**May 28** -- While en route to Richmond, Davis sends a wire to Pierre G. T. (“Old Bory”) Beauregard, still in Charleston, asking him to come to Richmond to confer about erecting a defense system around the naval yard at Norfolk.

Notwithstanding some reservations by Scott, McDowell is named commander of all Union forces south of the Potomac.

**May 29** – Davis arrives in Richmond where he is greeted by a cheering crowd.

**May 31** – Davis has his first official conference with Robert E. Lee, who may have opined that Manassas was probably in more immediate danger than either Harpers Ferry or the Gosport Naval Yard.

**Early June**– General Robert Patterson, 69, a veteran of the War of 1812 and a friend of Secretary of War Simon Cameron as well as Winfield Scott, is ordered to take his unit of Pennsylvania three-month volunteers into Virginia to attack Harpers Ferry.

**June 15** – After destroying bridges and burning B & O Railroad equipment, Johnston starts to abandon Harpers Ferry.

**June 16-17**– Scott sends three telegrams to Patterson ordering in shrill tones Patterson to send his best troops to the capital immediately. Upon compliance Patterson was left without any artillery and very little cavalry.

**June 29**– Lincoln and his cabinet meet to hear and consider McDowell’s plan of attack against Manassas Junction. McDowell wants more time because his troops are green but Lincoln observes: “You are green, it is true, but they are green also; you are all green alike.” Privately Scott had told McDowell that “General Joe Johnston ... has railroad at his command with which to move his troops. If your plan of battle depends upon General

Patterson holding Johnston in check, it is not worth the paper it is written on.” After the consultation Lincoln orders McDowell to attack at Bull Run on July 9.

**Tuesday, July 2** – With 14,000 infantry, Patterson, heading for the Shenandoah Valley where they intend to curtail Confederate movements toward Manassas, re-crosses the Potomac back into Virginia. At Falling Waters Jackson, with 400 men and one smoothbore cannon, has a brief engagement with Patterson before withdrawing.

**Wednesday, July 3** -- Patterson marches to Martinsburg, Virginia, causing Johnson to pull back.

**Thursday, July 11** – 15 Senators, including Lyman Trumbull of Illinois, introduce a resolution demanding an advance on Richmond – and its capture – by July 20. Although the resolution fails to pass, Lincoln can feel the pressure.

**Friday, July 12** – Patterson flatly warns Washington that the terms of his three-month volunteers will begin to expire on July 18, and that their discipline is rapidly declining.

**Monday, July 15** – Patterson has moved to the vicinity of Charlestown

**Tuesday, July 16** – Four Union divisions, under the overall command of Irvin McDowell, begin moving mid-afternoon south and west from Washington across a front ten miles wide, converging near Fairfax C. H., Virginia. McDowell presses on with no decent maps, no scouts, almost no cavalry, and almost no artillery.

The four divisions are led and tasked as follows:

1<sup>st</sup> Division – Led by Brig General Daniel Tyler and assigned to sweep around the Confederate base at Fairfax C.H.

2<sup>nd</sup> Division – Led by Col David Hunter and to advance in the middle.

3<sup>rd</sup> Division – Led by Samuel P. Heintzelman and expected to move toward Manassas Junction along southern roads.

5<sup>th</sup> Division – Led by Dixon S. Miles and to follow Hunter and serve as a mobile reserve.

**Wednesday, July 17** – With mid-morning temperatures in the mid 90s, and high humidity, McDowell sends three of his divisions to Fairfax C.H.

**Thursday, July 18** – Scott and Patterson exchange telegrams, Scott saying that he expects Patterson to engage the enemy and Patterson claiming the “enemy has stolen no march on me.”

McDowell, encamped at Centerville, 20 miles from the start of the march, sends a small party forward to Blackford’s Ford where heavy skirmishing ensues with CSA forces under the command of James Longstreet.

Davis orders Johnston to Manassas. Jackson, with his brigade of 2,600 men, leaves Winchester at noon to march 17 miles to Paris where they rest before marching another six miles to Piedmont.

**Friday, July 19** – McDowell scouts his front.

Jackson boards trains on the Manassas Gap Railroad for a 34-mile trip to Manassas Gap where they arrive at 1:00 pm

**Saturday, July 20** – Johnston continues to arrive at Manassas with 12,000 reinforcements.

McDowell continues to scout his front.

**Sunday, July 21** –

**2:00 am** -- Intending to turn the Confederate left, McDowell advances 10,000 men, with Hunter in the lead, from Centerville to the west and south.

**5:30 am** – Beauregard orders an advance along his right front.

**8:30 am** – Confederates defending Stone Bridge (along the Warrenton Pike) learn that the Federals under Hunter are crossing Bull Run at Sudley Ford, to the north or the Confederate left. Brig Gen Evans moves a portion of his command to meet the Federal threat. Being outnumbered, Evans' force eventually retreats, in somewhat of a rout, to the Henry House Hill, approximately 2 miles to the south, where they make a stand. Upon hearing of the Union movement, Beauregard abandons his notion of attacking on his right, and starts shifting available troops toward his left.

**9:30 am** – Col W.T. Sherman, leading a brigade in Tyler's division, attacks the Confederate left approximately ½ mile north of the Stone Bridge.

**11:30 pm** – Surrounded on three sides by advancing Union soldiers, badly battered Confederates retreat from Matthew's Hill to a new line along Henry Hill. Jackson arrives at the battlefield and immediately deploys his men up the back slope of Henry House Hill.

**1:00 pm** -- Most of Beauregard's reinforcements, together with 13 additional cannon, are now in place

**2:00 pm** – McDowell launches an attack up the Henry House Hill, the attack being led by two artillery batteries in advance of infantry. The ensuing battle rages back and forth until one of Jackson's regiments, the 33<sup>rd</sup> Virginia (wearing blue uniforms) surprises Union artillery, killing its gunners, its horses, and its supporting infantry.

**3:00 pm** – Jackson, seeing the success of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Virginia, leads a new Confederate charge on Henry House Hill.

**4:00 pm** – After Gens Jubal Early and Kirby Smith arrive on the battlefield, McDowell's Union troops begin to wilt resulting in a rout including 2,950 casualties out of approximately 20,000 engaged troops vs 2,000 casualties out of 17,000 engaged for the Confederates.

Upon returning to Centerville, McDowell finds Miles to be drunk and orders that he be immediately relieved of command.

When Union troops come tumbling, scrambling, and fleeing – “a confused mob, entirely demoralized” – back into Washington, Lincoln for the first time confronts the grim

news of battlefield defeat, which is “inexpressibly bitter” because it is the first “recognition of even the possibility of defeat.”

The disorganized and exhausted Confederates can pursue no further than Centerville where they establish a fortified camp.

**Monday, July 22** – “Black Monday.” Lincoln signs legislation that creates “the largest citizens’ army yet known to history.” Lincoln is heard to comment that: “... if hell is not any more than this, it has no terror for me.”

**Tuesday, July 23** – Lincoln begins to compose a memorandum of a list of steps to be taken by Federal forces.

**Saturday, July 27** – Following the debacle at 1<sup>st</sup> Bull Run Lincoln hands over the command of the Army of the Potomac to George McClellan replacing McDowell who remains in command of a division.

Patterson is mustered out of the Army.

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