

# *Deadlands 1876*

## AMERICAN TIMELINE

### **Introduction**

This document represents a “broad-strokes” timeline for my campaign’s alternate history of the Civil War. Although the sharpest divergence from historical reality occurs in January 1862, the wider world of *Deadlands 1876* features a few important differences predating the Great Quake, most beginning around the Napoleonic Age and outlined in “*Deadlands Milieu—The World.*” When in doubt, assume that events folded historically, especially during the early years of the War. (This is why important events such as Fort Sumter or the Battle of Gettysburg do not appear on the timeline.) Because this document remains a work-in-progress, it will expand and evolve as the campaign progresses and more “history” requires retrofitting. Also, certain incidents and dates may also change as the author does more research, or decides to “retcon” something based on little more than personal whim!

### **Constitutional Note**

It may be helpful for modern readers to be reminded that the Constitutional rules of presidential succession were different in the nineteenth century. If a sitting president died, his vice president succeeded him, leaving the office of vice president vacant until the next election. This is why Andrew Johnson did not have a vice president. Additionally, the line of succession went: Vice President, President pro tempore of the Senate, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Secretary of State. After 1947, the President pro tem and Speaker positions were swapped.

## **North America & The Civil War**

### **1862 January 15**

#### *The Great Quake*

After weeks of terrible storms and mass flooding, the most violent earthquake of the modern era shattered the West Coast, exposing the first-known vein of ghost rock to the world. A watershed event which marks the most significant divergence of the *Deadlands* timeline from the historical, the Great Quake transformed the West Coast into the Great Maze, catalyzed the secession of California from the Union, precipitated the founding of the Second California Republic, delayed the start of the transcontinental railroad by a decade, and ultimately lead to the formation of the Union state of North California.

### **1862 January 16**

#### *Assassination of Ambassadors Mason & Slidell*

In September of 1861, the CSA sent two ambassadors to Europe in an attempt to gain political favor and eventual recognition: James Mason was assigned to London, and John Slidell to Paris. Successfully running the blockade of Charleston, the ambassadors transferred to the British steamer *Trent* in Havana. On November 8, the U.S.S. *San Jacinto* waylaid the *Trent* and placed

Mason and Slidell under arrest. The British reacted with outrage; they sent the Union an ultimatum, demanding the release of the prisoners. The British halted all shipments of saltpeter to the Union, ordered troops into Canada, and generally braced for war. President Abraham Lincoln and Secretary of State William S. Seward backed down, and in December they released Mason and Slidell, who historically arrived safely in England onboard the British mail packet *La Plata*. In the *Deadlands* timeline, on the day after the Great Quake—January 16, 1862—an unidentified sloop attacked and sunk *La Plata*, killing all aboard, including Mason and Slidell. Although the Union vehemently denied responsibility, relations with Great Britain deteriorated significantly, setting the stage for the escalation of British troops in the Dominion of Canada.

### **1862 March–April**

#### *The Capture of Fort Craig*

In the early part of 1862, General Horace Sibley of Texas mounted a campaign to march up the Rio Grande and secure the southern half of the New Mexico territory below the 34<sup>th</sup> Parallel as “Confederate Arizona.” After winning the Battle of Valverde above Fort Craig, a drunken General Sibley historically allowed his second, Colonel Thomas Green, to agree to a Union-proposed cease fire in order to tend the wounded and bury the dead. The bluecoats used this time to retreat back to Fort Craig; in the morning, Sibley decided to keep marching north rather than rout the surviving bluecoats. It was a bad decision, as the Union officer, Colonel Edward Canby, had dispatched couriers northward with orders to destroy all available provisions and to prepare the north for the Confederate invasion. After entering a territory more hostile than they expected it would be, the Confederates were eventually repulsed at the Battle of Glorieta Pass outside of Las Vegas. Rather than risk destruction, Sibley retreated, closely harried by Canby, who was now reinforced by troops from Fort Union, as well as a regiment of fierce Colorado volunteers lead by Major John Chivington, who had snuck around the Confederates and destroyed their supplies. Exhausted and near-starving, Sibley’s men made a nightmarish ten-day trek through the desert back to the Rio Grande and thence Texas. In the *Deadlands* timeline, a sober General Sibley remained in command during Valverde and rejected Canby’s cease-fire, forcing the surrender of Fort Craig and the removal of Colonel Canby from command. The resulting power vacuum created confusion among the Union forces, who nevertheless managed to prevail at Glorieta Pass. However, after their defeat at Glorieta, Sibley’s forces retreated south to Fort Craig, defeating the pursuing bluecoats in a pitched three-day battle. Although several more perilous skirmishes would occur, the Confederates held on, eventually securing the southern half of the territory as Confederate Arizona.

### **1863 May 2**

#### *Stonewall Jackson Survives*

On the night after the Battle of Chancellorsville, General Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson was accidentally shot by his own sentries. After losing his arm, he died of pneumonia on May 10. In the *Deadlands* timeline, Jackson survived the amputation of his left arm. Although his injury and subsequent illness removed him from the War for almost two years, his triumphant return at Spotsylvania helped turned the tide in 1864. Indeed, Stonewall Jackson will most likely replace the ailing Jefferson Davis as the second President of the CSA.

## **1864 May–June**

### *The Overland Campaign Falters*

Ulysses S. Grant's Overland campaign began much as it did historically, with a race through the Wilderness followed by a series of battles as Grant sidled past Robert E. Lee down toward Petersburg. However, the return of Stonewall Jackson at Spotsylvania changed the dynamic considerably, and allowed Lee's army to pursue more aggressive tactics than they did under his historical subordinates Richard Heron Anderson and Richard "Baldy" Ewell. In the *Deadlands* timeline, the Battle of North Anna was a resounding Confederate success. Under Jackson's leadership, Lee's "Inverted-V" trap was successfully sprung, resulting in the destruction of a significant portion of Winfield Scott Hancock's command. Thus demoralized, the Union army performed even more disastrously at Cold Harbor, and arrived at Petersburg a greatly diminished force. Of nearly equal importance was the survival of General J.E.B. "Jeb" Stuart. Because Grant needed Phil Sheridan and his cavalry to remain close, "Little Phil" never made his famous "Richmond Raid" that resulted in the death of Jeb Stuart, who continued to serve Lee in his usual dashing manner.

## **1864 May 13**

### *Polk Baptizes Hood; First Case of Blue Plague*

On Friday the Thirteenth of May 1864, Confederate General Leonidas "Bishop" Polk baptized General John Bell Hood outside of Dalton, Georgia. Meanwhile in New Orleans, Dr. Sheldon Adder admitted an unnamed brakeman from the Texas & New Orleans Railroad into Charity Hospital. Abandoned at the hospital doorstep without identification, the brakeman was clearly suffering from a terrible flu. Within twelve hours, he began manifesting anthrax-like symptoms, including a high fever, chest pains, and dark blue blisters appearing on his face and hands. Dr. Adder called in two experts, Dr. Ezra Coldfield and Dr. Trajan Caspar Lambshead, but no one could identify the malady. After a few days of physical distress, the brakeman started suffering from violent hallucinations and experienced rapid deterioration of his eyesight. He died a week later, raving mad and strapped to a hospital bed. Although it was not known at the time, this was the first case of the Blue Plague.

## **1864 June 14**

### *Leonidas Polk Survives*

Historically, while surveying the terrain from Pine Top, Georgia, General Leonidas Polk was torn in half by a 3-inch shell fired at long distance by the flamboyant German immigrant Hubert Anton Casimir Dilger, one of the Union's finest artillerymen. In the *Deadlands* milieu, a shift in the wind allowed Polk to survive the Parrott snipe, which took off his left arm and forced Polk to relinquish his command. Polk survived the War to become the Bishop of Confederate Louisiana.

## **1864 June–August**

### *New Orleans Fever*

During the summer of '64, the mysterious disease first treated by Dr. Adder swept through Crescent City and lower Louisiana, where it acquired various names, including "Brakeman's Flu," "Adder's Madness" and "New Orleans Fever." As the bodies piled up, the disease began manifesting new symptoms, such as a cyan discoloration of the whites of the eyes, the "bluing" of the patient's visual field, and increasingly more violent hallucinations before the final stages of blindness and death. Before departing to study in England, Dr. Trajan Caspar Lambshead named the disease "cyanthrax."

## **1864 July 30**

### *The Battle of the Crater*

During the long siege of Petersburg, mining engineer Lt. Colonel Henry Pleasants brought an interesting suggestion to General Ambrose Burnside. A sapper at heart, Pleasants believed the Confederate line could be broken by tunneling under Eliot's Salient, mining it with 8000 pounds of gunpowder, and blowing the fort sky-high. After consulting with General Meade, Burnside authorized the project. A division would be specially trained to exploit the sudden opening, navigate around the resulting crater, and wedge open the Confederate line. General Edward Ferrero and his United States Colored Troops were selected to lead the assault, and spent two weeks training for the complicated maneuvers it required. On the day before the attack, Meade decided that using Negro troops was too risky, especially if the plan should fail. Whether Meade would be criticized for committing "inferior" troops, or whether he'd be accused of treating Negro soldiers as expendable, the political fallout would be a nightmare. Instead, General James Ledlie was randomly selected to lead the assault using untrained—but white—soldiers. The charge was detonated at 4:44 am, creating an explosion of astonishing magnitude and utterly destroying the fort; but the follow-through was a disaster. Unwilling to lead the attack and having failed to adequately brief his men, Ledlie drank rum in a distant bunker while his panicked troops poured directly into the crater with little regard for the correct flanking procedure. Exposed to General William Mahone's troops along the rim, Ledlie's men were trapped in a "turkey shoot" as vengeful grayjackets fired down from above. To make matters worse, General Burnside then ordered Ferrero's USCT troops into the crater as well. Exposed to the same merciless slaughter as the white troops, many were subjected to further horror when Confederate soldiers accepted their surrender with a fatal bayonet. The "Battle of the Crater" was a fiasco, resulting in 3800 Union casualties and the resignation of General Ledlie. Although Meade escaped censure, the disgraced General Burnside was placed on "extended leave" and never recalled back to service.

### *Aftermath*

In *Deadlands 1876*, the Battle of the Crater is more publicly renown than its historical counterpart. One of the USCT casualties was noted intellectual Lucas Fox Winter, a black journalist from the *Cleveland Gazette*. The brother of Frederick Douglass associate and *South Star* founder Garnet Wolf Winter, Lucas was secretly married to Penelope Harrow, the daughter of Enoch Harrow, the Savant who developed the first procedure for making stable azrucite alloys. A radical Abolitionist unafraid of political controversy, Harrow honored his "martyred" son-in-law by establishing the Winter Scholarship for Negro Savants and Engineers, a program devoted to "Negro uplift" in the fields of math and science. Known as the "Crater Fund," Harrow's organization has done much to incentivize, develop, and reward the adoption of socially progressive programs by Northern academic institutions. In 1871 the Crater Fund began advocating for educational rights for women, and in 1875 they established the "Iroquois Assistance" program.

## **1864 August 28**

### *Founding of Lynchburg, California*

After years of political struggle between various armed factions, the town of Lynchburg was formally incorporated at the mouth of Tartarus Rift in California's Great Maze. Named after the Virginia hometown of ghost rock's discoverer Lazarus Bell, Lynchburg provided a centralized location to coordinate the development, extraction, and shipping of azrucite from the heart of the Great Maze. Within ten years, Lynchburg would rival the size of Los Angeles and San Francisco.

## **1864 September 2**

### *The Fall of Atlanta*

After President Jefferson Davis rashly replaced the cautious Joe Johnston with the brash John Bell Hood, General Hood failed to save Atlanta from William Tecumseh Sherman, who occupied the Georgia capital on September 2. While Sherman's Atlanta campaign played out historically, in the *Deadlands* timeline, Scarlet O'Hara was strangled to death by one of her slaves before she could escape the city. (Admit it, you're kind of relieved, aren't you?)

## **1864 October 19**

### *Sheridan's Ride*

Throughout the Autumn of 1864, Confederate and Union armies clashed up and down the Shenandoah Valley. After Lee reinforced Jubal Early with an infantry division and a cavalry brigade, General Sheridan departed for Washington for additional instructions. Upon hearing that Early made a successful surprise attack the night of October 18–19, "Little Phil" hurried back and rallied his men to a daring counter-attack and won a decisive victory. Historically this was known as "Sheridan's Ride," and it secured the Shenandoah Valley for the Union; in *Deadlands*, Sheridan was shot down and captured during his heroic charge, and the resulting confusion resulted in a Confederate victory, which kept the War in the Shenandoah Valley alive until the arrival of the Blue Plague and the subsequent Gray Revival. Although the Union still commemorates Sheridan's Ride, it's more of a valediction than a celebration.

## **1864 November 8**

### *Lincoln's Reëlection*

Despite Grant's lack of progress on the peninsula, Sherman's victory in Atlanta provided Lincoln with enough popular goodwill to defeat Democratic candidate George B. McClellan, and Lincoln was reëlected as President of the United States. In the *Deadlands* timeline, Lincoln's reëlection was less certain, and the vote was much closer than the historical tally. McClellan would eventually go on to preside over Union Blue Railroad.

## **1864 November**

### *Cleburne Attacks Schofield and Saves Hood's Army*

After the fall of Atlanta, General Hood moved his 40,000 Confederate troops into Tennessee, where he expected to drive through to Kentucky and split the Union forces that were in danger of moving eastward to join Sherman and Grant. Among his officers was Irish general Patrick Ronayne Cleburne, known as the "Stonewall of the West" on account of his ability to stand firm during pressure. (Cleburne was also infamous for suggesting that the South should emancipate its slaves and allow its Negroes to fight.) Hood's campaign proceeded historically until the Battle of Spring Hill below Franklin, Tennessee. Having successfully sidled around John M. Schofield's forces in Columbia, General Hood's troops placed themselves in a position to divide Schofield from Franklin and therefore isolate them from General George Henry Thomas' forces in Nashville. Historically, a mixture of timidity and late arrivals caused Confederate general and Nashville native Benjamin Cheatham to delay Cleburne's sunset attack on Spring Hill, which allowed Schofield to evacuate his Union troops north to Franklin during a harrowing nighttime escape. Growing increasingly more desperate, Hood led his forces in a foolhardy attack on Franklin that resulted in Cleburne's tragic death and the decimation of his army. Hood's defeat at Franklin set the stage for his eventual humiliation at Nashville and the loss of the Confederate West. In the *Deadlands* timeline, a convalescing Leonidas Polk encouraged the Irishman to

disobey orders, and the “Stonewall of the West” launched a successful evening attack. This action precipitated the Battle of Spring Hill, a Confederate victory that resulted in the destruction of Schofield’s army. Schofield and his remaining troops escaped to Atlanta, leaving the “Rock of Chickamauga” unsupported in Nashville. Because of this, the Battle of Franklin was never fought, Cleburne was not killed, and Hood’s army remained intact and re-energized.

### **1865 January 13, “Black Friday”**

#### *Spread of the Blue Plague*

On Friday the Thirteenth, seventeen cases of “New Orleans Fever” were reported in Mississippi and Tennessee. All the victims were Union soldiers, and only one survived his illness. Within weeks the disease was spreading uncontrollably, and had claimed over a thousand deaths—95% of them white males, and 85% of these Federal troops! Because of this uncanny focus on Union soldiers as well as the distinct “bluing” of vision reported by its victims, Lamshead’s “cyanthrax” acquired its most enduring name as it traveled up the Mississippi—The Blue Plague. A week after Black Friday, Dr. Sheldon Adder himself succumbed to the malady, and murdered eight patients before committing suicide.

### **1865 December 17**

#### *The Blue Plague Arrives in Savannah*

The first cases of Blue Plague among Sherman’s Army were reported in mid-December, during his occupation of Savannah. What seemed at first to be a limited outbreak would soon spell doom for the Army of the Tennessee, and result in Sherman’s defeat two months later.

### **1865 January 13–15**

#### *Fort Fisher Survives*

Historically, the fall of Fort Fisher signaled the nearly complete Union domination of the Confederacy. After he failed to take the Fort, General Benjamin “The Beast” Butler was relieved of his command by General Grant, and the young General Alfred Terry carried the day in a brave assault. In the *Deadlands* timeline, Fort Fisher fended off its attackers, and remained in Confederate hands. Despite this loss, General Terry acquitted himself well, and earned Grant’s approval—a factor that would later play into the Battle of Little Bighorn.

### **1865 February 2–3**

#### *Battle of Salkehatchie*

After his astonishing “March to the Sea” from Atlanta to Savannah, General William Tecumseh Sherman and his conquering Army turned northwards, laying waste to South Carolina on their way to Columbia. Historically, Sherman’s crossing of the swamps around the Salkehatchie River was a feat that drew favorable comparisons to Caesar’s accomplishments, and his slash-and-burn campaign utterly demoralized an already failing South. However, in the *Deadlands* timeline, things happened quite differently. Shortly after entering the swamps, an outbreak of Blue Plague ravaged Sherman’s men, decimating their ranks during a week-long quagmire of mud, rain, and death. Attempting to cross the Salkehatchie River with a feverish army of the sick and dying, Sherman was blocked by the forces of General Lafayette McLaws on February 2, 1865. After a punishing battle in the swamps, McLaws soundly defeated Sherman’s weakened army, and took the great Union general as his prisoner. The remnants of Sherman’s troops escaped into the wilderness, many of whom eventually rejoined Thomas’ forces in Tennessee.

## **1865 February 28**

### *Hood Liberates Atlanta*

With Thomas trapped in Nashville and Sherman's army defeated in Georgia, Hood easily ousted Schofield from Atlanta and "liberated" Georgia's capital on the final day of February.

## **1865 March 15**

### *Lynching of General Sherman*

Shortly after the Battle of Salkehatchie, General McLaws transported Sherman to Atlanta, where the "Great Invader" was publicly tried and sentenced to be hanged for his "war crimes." The next day, as Sherman was being prepared for delivery to Richmond, an angry mob "overcame" the Confederate troops and took possession of their prisoner. They proceeded to drag Sherman behind a horse, retracing his famous march from Atlanta to Savannah. Attracting thousands of angry southerners, Confederate soldiers managed to restrain them from killing Sherman outright, but permitted all manner of refuse to be thrown at his trailing body. Battered, broken, and bleeding, William Tecumseh Sherman died somewhere outside of Forsyth. By the time his corpse was dragged into Savannah, there was little left that was recognizable. He remains were crated up and shipped to Lincoln, who ordered a state funeral and publicly excoriated Jefferson Davis for allowing such a barbaric act to occur "on American soil." As appalled as his northern counterpart, President Davis formally apologized for the "unspeakable travesty." He ordered the soldiers responsible for the lynching court-martialed, arrested the postal clerks who handled the crate, and unilaterally released two thousand prisoners, including the ailing Phil Sheridan.

### *Aftermath*

Although Davis' gestures of contrition were widely regarded as authentic, the "Lynching of Uncle Billy" remains a deeply sensitive wound for many Northerners, an essential moral fracture that resists healing. Indeed, a recent production of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* in New York cast a bearded redhead in the title role, with Caesar's forces dressed in Union Blue and Mark Antony bearing a resemblance to a certain stocky president. On the other hand, many Southerners believe that the "barbaric" Sherman received his just desserts, and have artistically replied with a sold-out production of *Titus Andronicus* set in the smoking ruins of Atlanta.

## **1865 April 14, Good Friday**

### *Assassination of President Lincoln, Stabbing of William S. Seward*

While attending a performance of *Our American Cousin* at Ford's Theatre, President Abraham Lincoln was confronted in his box by John Wilkes Booth. Shouting, "Sic semper tyrannis!" the actor fired his derringer into Lincoln's head, mortally wounding the president before escaping from the theater. Meanwhile, Booth's co-conspirator Lewis Powell attempted to assassinate Secretary of State William S. Seward. Still recuperating from a serious carriage injury, Seward's neck-splint prevented Powell's blade from severing his jugular, and a gravely injured Seward survived the assassination attempt.

## **1865 April 15**

### *Andrew Johnson Becomes President*

President Abraham Lincoln died at 7:22 am the morning after the attack. Vice President Andrew Johnson was sworn in by Chief Justice Salmon P. Chase and became the seventeenth President of the United States, inheriting the War from his more capable predecessor. In *Deadlands* as well as actual history, the Union reacted to Lincoln's death with shock, anger, and heartfelt grief.

## **1865 April 26**

### *John Wilkes Booth Is Killed*

After escaping through Maryland into Federal-occupied Virginia, John Wilkes Booth was cornered at Garrett's Farm and shot in the back of the neck by Sergeant Boston Corbett. Gazing at his own paralyzed hands, Booth's last words were, "Useless, useless." His body was placed onboard the ironclad USS *Montauk* and taken to the Washington Naval Yard for an autopsy.

## **1865 June 21**

### *Florida's Solstice Earthquake*

Halfway through the longest day of the year, southern Florida was rocked by a tremendous earthquake; an event preceded by two nights of spectacular meteor showers. The quake destroyed entire sections of the Keys, permanently altered the landscape of the Everglades, and thrust up a new chain of islands along Florida's southwest coastline. A few weeks after the quake, a survey team dispatched by Confederate Governor John Milton discovered an "ostensibly endless" supply of ghost rock deep within the scrambled wilderness of the post-quake Everglades. Their discovery was classified at the highest levels of Richmond security, and the existence of a Confederate source of blue coal would remain secret until the following year.

## **1865–1869**

### *The Gray Revival*

Wracked by the spreading horror of the Blue Plague, deprived of Lincoln and Sherman, threatened by British imperialism, coping with the endless political entanglements of California, navigating a Mormon insurrection, and hobbled by the inept presidency of Andrew Johnson...throughout the late 1860s the Union suffered a series of political, military, and moral reversals. Contemporary historians refer to this era as the "Gray Revival," a period of time beginning with Lincoln's assassination and ending with the fall of Washington D.C. During these four years the South discovered and mined ghost rock, launched a series of military campaigns that won back lost territory, and finally gained diplomatic recognition from England and France. The Gray Revival also witnessed the "False Peace," a lull in hostilities that nearly resulted in a permanent cease-fire.

## **1865 July 3–5**

### *Second Battle of Nashville*

As the Blue Plague spread through the Army of the Cumberland, General Thomas found his hold on Nashville and the surrounding area growing increasingly more tenuous. On June 1, Hood and Cleburne began a siege of Nashville that culminated in a two-day engagement known as "Second Nashville." A resounding Confederate success, Hood routed Thomas and his depleted army all the way back to Union-controlled Knoxville. To a Union still grieving over the deaths of Sherman and Lincoln, the loss of Nashville was a staggering blow—especially falling on Independence Day—and a clear sign that the War was far from over.

## **1865 July 4 to 1866 October 31**

### *Second Utah War*

In the wake of Lincoln's assassination, the Mormons declared their independence on July 4, 1865. Hard-pressed for troops, after a series of brief but bloody skirmishes in Utah, President Johnson tabled the issue of Mormon secession until "victory against the southern secessionists was secure."



## **1865 July 7 to August 12**

### *Fourth Seminole War*

In a series of clandestine military engagements that remain classified to this day, General Braxton Bragg and Colonel George Washington Scott launched a suppression campaign against the Indians of southern Florida, establishing eight new forts in the Everglades and defeating the Seminole war chiefs known as the “Twin Thunders,” General “Billy Wind” Chokfee and Second Alligator Chief. Despite occasional clashes between Seminole guerillas and the Florida 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry, the Everglades were now secured for Confederate exploitation.

## **1865 August 4 to 1866 December 15**

### *Last Shenandoah Campaign*

In what would later be called the “Last Shenandoah Campaign,” Jubal Early and Fitzhugh Lee vied with David Hunter, Wesley Merritt, and George Stoneman for ascendancy in the Shenandoah Valley. The first year of the campaign was a give-and-take stalemate, with neither side gaining the upper hand; but in mid-1866 Early began accumulating successes, finally defeating Hunter at the Final Battle of Winchester during the Blizzard of December 15. General Hunter was taken prisoner, and the Valley was in Confederate hands for once and for all.

## **1865 August 31**

### *The Chester Todd Crisis*

On August 31, 1865, the Union blockade ship *Liberty* waylaid the *Chester Todd*, a Canadian vessel surreptitiously transporting British diplomat Sir Variety Pierce-Loving to Charleston. Amidst Pierce-Loving’s personal effects, Federal agents discovered a series of encrypted letters between Whitehall and Ottawa. Union cryptographers successfully decoded the letters, and discovered that the British were planning to raise 100,000 new Canadian troops. The “smoking gun” was a memorandum entitled, “Thoughts on the Unpredictability of Blue Coal Futures in Light of Current Political Exigencies.” In the elliptical style typical of British diplomacy, Sir Variety suggested that the azrucite mines of the Great Maze might fall prey to Union adventurism, and believed that a stronger British presence was required along the Dominion’s southern border. Furthermore, a separate letter addressed to Jefferson Davis signaled keen British interest in Richmond’s “thoughts on trading arrangements” if “certain mineral rights” were to come into Confederate possession. Eventually leaked to the Northern press, the *Chester Todd* documents sparked a major political crisis, with some believing the South had discovered ghost rock and was planning to negotiate with Britain for diplomatic recognition. The British took a hard line, demanding the return of Sir Variety and resurrecting the specter of Mason and Slidell. In the end, the Johnson Administration caved under pressure, and gave into British demands rather than risk embroiling the Union in a second unwinnable war. It was to no avail, as the British began mobilizing troops in Canada shortly thereafter.

## **1865 September 3 to October 7**

### *Tennessee Campaign: Liberation of Knoxville*

As the Union was distracted by the *Chester Todd* Crisis, Pat Cleburne and Nathan Bedford Forrest waged a campaign to clear the Union out of eastern Tennessee. In a month-long series of engagements, the Confederates were able to dislodge General Thomas’ Army of the Cumberland from Knoxville and chase them all the way to Charleston, West Virginia.

## **1865 September 10 to September 28**

### *Tennessee Campaign: Liberation of Chattanooga*

As Cleburne and Forrest pushed Union forces out of Knoxville, Confederate generals John Bell Hood, Alexander P. Stewart, and Stephen D. Lee rolled them back from Chattanooga and northwest Georgia as well. Less a full-scale battle than a series of running skirmishes, the “Liberation of Chattanooga” drove the depleted forces of General Joseph Hooker into Kentucky, where they were eventually dispatched to join General Thomas in West Virginia. Having finally had enough of “Fighting Joe” Hooker’s inability to live up to his nickname, Grant reassigned him to Cincinnati and placed him in charge of the “Northern Department,” a *de facto* demotion that left Hooker defending the northern border against imaginary redcoats rather than fighting Southern grayjackets where it actually mattered.

## **1865 October 2**

### *Restitution of the Republic of Texas*

In early July, Texas Governor Francis Lubbock received troubling news from his spies in Richmond—it seemed that Jefferson Davis had discovered a source of ghost rock, and was keeping it secret from several Southern states, including Texas. Two weeks later, the same source produced a copy of a stolen document, what appeared to be a series of political proposals designed to subordinate the states closer to Richmond. (Known as the “Richmond Papers,” it was actually an early draft of the Emergency Powers Act of 1866.) Having had enough of Richmond’s mendacity, Lubbock confronted President Davis, but only succeeded in causing further damage to their already-deteriorating relationship. Fortunately, a separate round of secret negotiations with California was bearing fruit, and Texas was promised lucrative blue coal contracts if they could establish a railroad across the Territorial deserts. In late August, Governor Lubbock convened the “Lone Star Assembly,” a key group of Texan legislators, industrialists, ranchers, and military leaders. After revealing the Richmond Papers and outlining his summer of negotiations, Lubbock charged the LSA with gathering immediate support for an independent Texas. Granted additional political capital from the *Chester Todd* crisis—along with the rumor of ghost rock being discovered beneath the sulfur springs at Spindletop Hill—the LSA carried a popular vote for secession on September 29. The next day, the rumor of Beaumont ghost rock proved to be false, but the die was cast. On October 2, 1865, “President” Francis Lubbock withdrew Texas from the Confederacy and declared the “restitution” of the Republic of Texas. The act startled both parties to some extent, and a surprisingly accommodating Austin quickly reached out to a suddenly frightened Richmond. Within weeks, a peaceful accord known as the “Grand Old Alliance” was established. All Texans would possess dual citizenship in the CSA, in return for “continued and unwavering support” for winning the Civil War and gaining diplomatic recognition from Washington. Additionally, the Republic of Texas agreed to partner with the Confederate States of America to construct a “southern transcontinental” that would link Charleston with Los Angeles.

### *Aftermath*

On paper, the Grand Old Alliance appears quite sound; but in practice, it has evolved into a brittle relationship. The main point of contention is naturally the ghost rock trade, as constructing a railroad across Confederate Arizona has proven more difficult than first supposed, and Richmond refuses to permit Austin a charter to transport ghost rock across Confederate territory. More details on this conflict may be found in “Deadlands Milieu—The Rail Wars.”

## **1865 October 8**

### *Grant Retreats from Petersburg*

The Overland Campaign came to an end on October 8, 1865. With his army wasted by the Blue Plague, General Sherman dead and his troops dispersed, “Little Phil” recuperating in a Union hospital, and the Johnson Administration second-guessing his every decision, Ulysses S. Grant realized that it was only a matter of time before Hood’s forces arrived from the south and helped Lee crush the Army of the Potomac in a pincer move, finally granting Robert E. Lee the Cannae he was so desperately praying for. There was also the increasing threat to Washington D.C. itself, as Jubal Early was once again threatening the capital from the Shenandoah Valley. After a round of deceptions intended to mislead Lee, Grant withdrew his forces from the miserable trenches around Petersburg and began the long march to Chantilly. Although Grant’s men were harassed all the way to the Rappahannock, he managed to successfully evacuate his dejected army and ensure they’d at least have proper medical attention and warm winter quarters.

## **1865 October to 1868 May**

### *The False Peace*

In the period between Grant’s withdrawal from Petersburg and his nomination as the Republican presidential candidate, the only significant battle between the North and the South was Final Winchester. The North was busy coping with the terrifying pandemic, while the South was occupied with developing ghost rock technologies, dealing with Texas sovereignty, and building upon their western military successes. During this “False Peace,” a sober Grant acted cautiously but wisely, consolidating the Union’s shattered armies and maintaining Federal positions against tentative Southern probes. Virginia above the Rappahannock remained in Federal possession, as did the Mississippi River and her vital port cities. Grant used the Army to bring order to regions devastated by the Plague, maintained security along the Canadian border, and perhaps most importantly, kept the denizens of Washington D.C. feeling safe and sound. In time, people on both sides of the border began wondering if the War was essentially over, but few Northerners were prepared to concede that the Confederates had won, and the Confederacy would never give up the Mississippi and northwest Virginia. Additionally, Grant and the Republicans insisted that the South remained in a state of rebellion. Most contemporary historians view the False Peace as a rehearsal for the so-called “Cold War” of 1871–1873.

## **1866 April 14**

### *Assassination of President Johnson*

Exactly one year after John Wilkes Booth pulled the trigger on Abraham Lincoln, President Johnson, President pro tempore of the Senate Lafayette S. Foster, and several of Johnson’s cabinet members were traveling from Washington to Chicago on an unmarked train. At precisely noon, the train crossed the Rock Island Bridge, which had been secretly rigged with explosives. The sudden detonation collapsed a portion of the celebrated bridge and sent the train crashing into the Mississippi River, killing most of its passengers, including President Johnson and Senator Foster. The significance of the date was widely remarked, along with Lincoln’s connection to the Rock Island Bridge, but no individual or organization claimed credit for the terrorist act. Despite a lack of evidence, it was widely believed that the Order of the American Knights was behind the plot, and the witch hunt that followed was a perfect model of hysteria and scapegoating, resulting in the execution of seventeen “conspirators” and the imprisonment of dozens more.

## **1866 April 14 to 1868 November 5**

### *The Colfax Presidency*

Because Johnson had no vice president and the next in line for succession was Lafayette Foster, it fell on the Speaker of the House to assume the “supreme burden.” As soon as news of the disaster reached Washington D.C., Republican representative Schuyler Colfax was sworn into office as the eighteenth president of the United States. This act also inaugurated one of the most fractious periods of Union history. From the beginning, Colfax was doomed by impossible political pressures, caught between bitterly divisive forces and placed in charge of a rapidly unraveling Union. Tainted by charges of financial scandal and suffering from bouts of “nervous exhaustion,” the beleaguered president allowed General Grant to make all military decisions while he scrambled to stay afloat amidst a tempestuous sea of partisan rivalries.

## **1866 May 2**

### *Reconstitution of the Department of the West*

Urged by Grant to take more assertive action on the frontier, Colfax re-established the Department of the West, now solely dedicated to Indian and Mormon affairs. The Department of the Missouri and the Department of Kansas remained intact, but were dedicated to waging the Civil War. President Colfax appointed General Winfield Scott Hancock to lead the Department of the West, giving him orders to “pacify” the Territories.

## **1866 June 1**

### *Announcement of the Confederate Strike*

On the First of June 1866, President Jefferson Davis finally gave truth to the rumors circulating since the *Chester Todd* crisis and the Texan secession, and announced that the CSA had discovered a “ready supply” of blue coal. Although its exact location was a closely guarded secret, the previous year’s earthquake in south-central Florida led many Union engineers to speculate the Everglades as a potential location. Liberated from the considerable logistical and political inconveniences of dealing with California’s Great Maze, the South was free to take full advantage of the “Confederate Strike,” and bent their technological ingenuity to the mining, refining, and weaponizing of ghost rock from this new “Southern Vein.”

## **1866 June 29**

### *Emergency Powers Act of 1866*

A month after announcing the Confederate Strike, President Davis authorized the Emergency Powers Act of 1866. Unquestionably the most controversial act of the Davis Administration, EPA66 centralized Confederate authority in Richmond and finally reined in the southern governors. Among its many measures, EPA66 organized and regulated the nascent ghost rock trade, introduced widespread agricultural reform, standardized southern railroads and established Dixie Steam & Rail, and chartered three new educational institutions: Robert E. Lee University, the Caloosahatchee College of Engineering, and the Whelk Institute of Confederated Science. Perhaps less popularly, EPA66 also established the Richmond Secret Police. Although Davis’ detractors claim that the Emergency Powers Act represented the “death knell of states’ rights,” his supporters contend that the gains made during the Gray Revival would have been lost without it.

### **1866 July 8**

#### *Assassination of Horace Greeley*

On the morning of July 8, 1866, President Colfax's friend Horace Greeley was shot and killed while stepping from his coach in New York City. The assassin was a Negro radical named Elijah Grovel, a Salkehatchie veteran who fiercely opposed Greeley's increasingly strident calls for peace. The incident triggered race riots in New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, mostly marked by angry vigilantes beating and lynching Negro veterans.

### **1866 July 20 to 1868 April 29**

#### *Red Cloud's War*

Following escalating red/white tensions in Montana territory, an Indian attack directed by Sioux Chief Red Cloud touched off a bloody conflict pitting Plains Indians against Union forces intent on opening the Montana gold fields. As a result of his mishandling the early phases of the conflict, Hancock was transferred to the Department of the Missouri and the recovered Phil Sheridan was placed in command of the Department of the West.

### **1866 November 12**

#### *President Colfax Is Hospitalized*

After experiencing an episode of "nervous exhaustion," Schuyler Colfax was privately hospitalized for the length of a fortnight. Republicans were successful in attributing the president's absence to a severe bout of pneumonia, despite whispered rumors about the Blue Plague finally reaching the White House. During Colfax's convalescence, a deeply troubled Secretary of State William S. Seward appointed Massachusetts senator Henry Wilson as "Special Counsel to the President." Wilson effectively fulfilled the role of vice president and provided the Republicans with an additional measure of control over the ailing Colfax.

### **1867 April 22**

#### *Lake St. Clair Mystery*

On April 4, the Union launched two new Huron-class ironclads into Lake Erie, the *William Henry Harrison* and the *William Whitley*. Intended to bolster the defenses of the Great Lakes region, both ironclads were mysteriously lost somewhere over Lake St. Clair while steaming towards Lake Huron. In the investigation that followed, the Navy explored the meteorological possibility of a freak storm, examined an inexplicable wave of dead fish that washed onshore, and interviewed a dozen people who heard distant explosions over the lake; they even entertained fishermen spinning tall tales about "Old Froggy," the local lake monster. However, the most intriguing report came from the captain of an Ohio rumrunner, who claimed to have sighted a "colossal balloon" over Lake Huron shortly before the disappearance of the ironclads. In the end, the Colfax administration privately blamed the British, despite finding no trace of the ironclads and no evidence of foul play. After an internal report containing such allegations was leaked to the *Daily National Intelligencer*, the Dominion of Canada shifted additional redcoats to Toronto and stationed a full regiment in London, Ontario. A few weeks later, a "colossal balloon" was again sighted above Lake Huron, and proved to be the Dominion's first airship, HMS *Oliver Cromwell*.

## **1867 August 27**

### *The Nonsuch Incident*

On August 18, Union spies in Canada reported the launching of two British ironclads, provocatively named the *Isaac Brock* and the *John Macdonell*. A few weeks later, the USS *Sandusky*, an American gunboat on patrol off the coast of Cleveland, was swept deeper into Lake Erie by a sudden squall. During the height of the storm she discovered a strange ironclad within American waters. The vessels exchanged fire and the *Sandusky* was sunk, with five survivors escaping to shore in a life boat. All agreed that the smaller *Sandusky* had—shockingly—sunk the ironclad as well, having witnessed it “slowly submerge” beneath the waves after the engagement. The British denied involvement, and after some diplomatic pressure, revealed the locations of the *Isaac Brock* and the *John Macdonell*—both safely in Lake Huron, far away from the alleged battle! Already the object of distinct Union enmity, the British diplomat serving as unofficial ambassador to the CSA, Sir Variety Pierce-Loving, famously quipped, “Ah, yes. It seems the Yanks have sunk the HMS *Nonsuch*.” To make matters worse, Southern newspapers publicly wondered whether the mysterious British vessel might have actually been one of the lost Union ironclads! Fearing the British were militarizing the Great Lakes, Union Republicans pressed the president to do some Yankee saber rattling of his own, but Colfax responded with another episode of “nerves.”

## **1868 May 2–10**

### *The Blue Plague Arrives in Washington D.C.*

Although no Eastern city was without isolated cases of the Blue Plague, the disease was mostly found in the South, the West, or constrained to large concentrations of soldiers. On May 2, hospitals in Washington began admitting more cases, and within a week it was obvious the disease had arrived in the capital. Even worse, an increasing number of women and children were becoming infected.

## **1868 May 20**

### *Nomination of Ulysses S. Grant*

As the Blue Plague spread northward, politicians began vacating Washington D.C. for the safer havens of Philadelphia, New York, and Boston. Disgusted by Colfax and concerned about British aggression, the Republicans nominated Ulysses S. Grant as their presidential candidate during a hotly contested convention in Chicago. (Radical Republican Benjamin “Bluff” Wade was the other serious contestant.) Although Grant had not yet won the War, he was widely admired for his pragmatic solutions to the pandemic, and was seen as a strong presence who would maintain American interests against Britain and the rebellious South. When Grant claimed that he was needed on the front lines near Washington, the Republicans promised him *carte blanche*, and he accepted the nomination on May 21, with Henry Wilson as his running mate.

## **1868 May 23**

### *The Washington Campaign Begins*

With the Republicans nominating the bellicose Ulysses S. Grant as their candidate, the CSA realized that diplomatic recognition might not be so imminent after all. Equipped with new Macon P67 “Dixie” rifles and using artillery patterned after British Whitworths, the Army of Northern Virginia marched north with the intention of laying siege to Washington D.C. The False Peace was officially over; but if the South captured Washington, Richmond was convinced they could finally end the War. After Grant thwarted Robert E. Lee at the “Third Battle of Bull Run,” Uncle Bobby regrouped his forces and began the long process of leapfrogging and out-

maneuvering Grant until he could reach the doorstep of the Union's capital city. On June 1, the Union "temporarily" relocated the United States government to Boston's State-House, a harrowing operation that was skillfully executed by General Joshua Chamberlain. Ulysses S. Grant and General George Meade continued to stave off Lee's advances, and soon the campaign settled into grim period of trench warfare, all-too-reminiscent of the horrors of Petersburg.

### **1868 June 6**

#### *The Colfax Scandal*

On the morning of June 6, the Union awoke to shocking news: President Colfax had been secretly negotiating with the British to broker a peace treaty with the South. As part of this tentative arrangement, Colfax was willing to cede the northwest portion of Washington Territory to Canada, and allow Kentucky to join the Confederacy. Vilified by his fellow Republicans and even reproached by Democrats, impeachment procedures were initiated immediately. It was all academic, however—within three weeks, twenty-six senators, representatives, and cabinet members would be dead, and Colfax would be raving mad. The Plague had come to Boston.

### **1868 June to 1869 August**

#### *The Plague Year*

Carried to Boston by politicians fleeing the capital, the Blue Plague worked its way south along the eastern seaboard, while simultaneously spreading to Maryland and Pennsylvania from Washington D.C. The virulent rampage finally converged on New York City, the last Union city to fall. As cyanthrax evolved, it developed an increased capacity to infect women, children, and even displaced Southerners. The Plague created a panic unlike anything ever experienced by Americans, and the "Plague Year" is universally considered to be the most terrible period in Union history. Even Richmond extended its condolences, offering aid if the North would simply call a cease-fire. The Plague fueled all manner of religious mania—Millerite Adventists, mass Mormon conversions, white adoption of black churches, circles of Catholic flagellants, and more than a few death cults and strange doings at Innsmouth. Séances and spiritualist groups became widespread, and many began wondering if the Judgment Day was at hand. A few wild-haired preachers accused the South of witchcraft, while all species of quacks made a fortune selling fake cures. The fact that the Blue Plague spared Negroes was widely and contentiously debated. More than a few black commentators naturally saw the Plague as divine punishment for slavery. Some radical Abolitionists saw God's judgement on a wicked Union that failed to win the War, while Southern fire-breathers pointed out that God was sparing slaves and slaveholders alike, therefore the only punishment being meted out was on Northern aggression. Suicide was common, and murder; but so were countless selfless acts of grace and charity. Borrowing a page from the Union army, many hospitals began seeking out and training Negro nurses.

### **1868 June 16**

#### *Seward and Wilson Assume Control*

With President Colfax incapacitated and the Federal government crippled by the Blue Plague, Secretary of State William S. Seward declined to be sworn in as nineteenth President of the United States, sensibly pointing to the fact that Colfax might possibly recover, and Grant was the people's choice for Republican candidate. Reaching an extraordinary compromise with the Democrats that prefigured the 25<sup>th</sup> Amendment, Seward was appointed "Acting President" until one of three conditions were met: Colfax fully recovered his health, he was legally impeached by a reconstituted U.S. government, or the November elections produced a genuine president-elect.

## **1868 July 4–9**

### *Democratic Convention*

The 1868 Democratic convention was held at Tammany Hall, and even though New York was still relatively free of the Plague, the convention was marked by low attendance and bitter infighting. After nearly electing Horatio Seymour, the delegates bucked Tammany's wishes and nominated Chief Justice Salmon P. Chase, with General Winfield S. Hancock as running mate.

## **1868 July 18**

### *The Fall of Washington D.C.*

On July 18, General Ulysses S. Grant informed Secretary of State and Acting President William S. Seward that Washington D.C. had become indefensible. Bombed into ruins by Confederate artillery, there didn't seem much to defend, anyway, and Grant made a late-night evacuation to Baltimore. In the morning, General Robert E. Lee entered the devastated capital and made his famous pronouncement, "We have occupied a tomb." Grant formally relinquished control of the Army of the Potomac to General Meade and traveled to Boston to once again assist the overwhelmed Seward.

## **1868 July 22**

### *British Recognition of the CSA*

On July 22, one of the Union's most dreaded fears was finally realized. Sir Variety Pierce-Loving announced that the United Kingdom was prepared to formally recognize the Confederate States of America. Sir Variety himself was to serve as official Ambassador. By sheer coincidence, the ghost rock trade began shortly after.

## **1868 August 2**

### *Death of President Colfax*

After his long and terrible illness, President Schuyler Colfax finally succumbed to the Blue Plague on the morning of August 2. Gaining a few final moments of lucidity, Colfax called for Seward and asked to be escorted to the terrace of the Boston State-House. After gazing across Beacon Hill with sightless eyes, Colfax remarked, "Do you think they'll remember who cast that final vote?" When Seward reassured him that his role in passing the Thirteenth Amendment was secure, Colfax sighed. Gathering himself up, he made a cryptic reference to Oliver Wendell Holmes and uttered his final words: "The hub of the solar system has untethered its planets. Will Ulysses be our shining Apollo, or the dark-faced Nemesis? There's another planet, you know, I can see it...just there..." After pointing blindly into the sun, Colfax collapsed dead to the floor.

## **1868 August 5**

### *Salmon Chase Commits Suicide*

Shortly after attending Colfax's funeral, Democratic nominee Chief Justice Salmon P. Chase realized that his fever was not merely the flu. After discovering a dark blue lesion on his inner thigh, Chase loaded his revolver and shot himself in the head. In a suicide note penned on the back of his Bible, he urged his fellow Democrats to work with Seward to preserve the faltering Union. Appealing to his "brothers" in the name of God and Freemasonry, his letter ended on the enigmatic note, "To Plato, it was only natural that tyranny's seeds fall from the corrupted bloom of democracy; yet sometimes the flower of democracy must be preserved by a tyrant. Lincoln understood that, so should we. So *must* we. The sheep need a shepherd. O Lord, my God, is there no help for the widow's son?"



### **1868 August 16 to 1 November 1870**

#### *The Suspension—General Grant Declares Martial Law*

On August 14, surviving remnants of the Republican and Democratic parties met in New York to discuss the future of the Union. In a stunning decision, they voted to grant Seward and Grant “Emergency Power.” Although the vote was certainly not unanimous, Chase’s letter played a key role in overcoming party affiliation, and more than a few critics saw the group as little more than a Masonic cabal. On August 16, General Ulysses S. Grant and Secretary of State William S. Seward postponed the imminent election and declared martial law for the first time in American history. The Constitution was suspended for one year; national elections were rescheduled for November 8, 1870. Troops were recalled from the Canadian border and the West, and dispatched to the cities to control the spread of the Plague and re-establish civic order. Over the course of 1869, Grant and Seward introduced a series of shocking “General Orders” designed to safeguard and preserve the Union. They re-organized the military, established numerous extralegal agencies, conducted clandestine courts-martial, rewrote existing drafting legislation, imposed strict curfews and health-related quarantines, and silenced dissident newspapers. They pushed through a series of unconstitutional measures that would be later referred to as “The Nationalization.” Needless to say, “The Suspension” was tremendously controversial, and “that time”—to use the common euphemism—is still hotly debated. Republicans argue vociferously that Grant’s actions saved the Union from complete dissolution, while his more strident opponents went from referring to Grant as “The Butcher” to naming him “The Tyrant.” The most organized resistance came from Tammany Hall and Cleveland, whose Democratic machines were always deeply suspicious of Republican motives and somewhat hostile to the War, being traditionally more interested in economic opportunism than radical abolitionism.

### **1868 September to 1870 June**

#### *Peace Overtures*

The CSA sent out several peace feelers during the Suspension, most offering to return Washington D.C. in exchange for diplomatic recognition. Preoccupied with preserving the Union and loathe to renew armed hostilities, Grant and Seward used these overtures to engage in diplomatic stalling, but eventually every negotiation collapsed under Union intransigence. As a result, both sides continued to strengthen their armies and prepare for an uncertain future.

### **1868 October 17**

#### *Second California Republic*

After a half-decade of functioning like a collective of autonomous city-states, San Diego, Los Angeles, Lynchburg and San Francisco officially declared the Second California Republic, with the Unionist town of Sacramento dissenting.

### **1868 November**

#### *Treaty of Fort Laramie*

Ending Red Cloud’s War, the Treaty of Fort Laramie established the Great Sioux Reservation and gave the Sioux ownership of the Black Hills. Weakened by the resumption of hostilities with the Confederacy and the ravages of the Plague, Grant ceded more land than granted under the historical treaty, thereby establishing the outlines of the future Sioux Nation.

## **1869 July 15**

### *Powell Discovers Labyrinth Canyon*

On the morning of March 21, 1869, a rare earthquake sundered the Utah badlands just north of the confluence of the Grand River and the Green River. The quake toppled several rock formations in today's Monument Basin, and opened a two-mile long rift in the earth near White Rim. On July 15, John Wesley Powell's expedition discovered the rift, but failed to adequately explore its interior.

## **1870 July 4–7**

### *The Battle of Baltimore*

In the summer of 1870, Confederate spies intercepted a Federal communiqué revealing that Grant was planning to retake Washington D.C. In response to this threat, Confederate General-In-Chief Robert E. Lee returned to the Army of North Virginia and launched the Maryland Campaign, designed to drive the Army of the Potomac out of Baltimore and secure the Confederate border. General Meade's army made a valiant stand against Lee's forces, eventually evacuating Baltimore after suffering 18,000 Union casualties. Vowing to defend the Mason-Dixon Line at all costs, Grant reinforced the Pennsylvania border, but Lee seemed contented to remain in Maryland.

## **1870 November 2**

### *Election of Ulysses S. Grant*

Although the Union was weary of perpetual war, they were not prepared to accept the loss of Washington D.C. and Baltimore. The "Tyrant" Grant defeated Democratic candidate "Gentleman George" Pendleton by a comfortable majority, becoming the nineteenth President of the United States of America. He was inaugurated immediately. In good-faith recognition of the two years he'd already been in power, Grant agreed to serve an abbreviated term, resuming the usual election cycle in 1872.

## **1870 December 18**

### *Last Case of the Blue Plague Diagnosed*

Later hailed as the "Christmas Miracle," the last reported case of cyanthrax was recorded in Brooklyn on December 18, 1870. Some saw it as a vindication of Grant; others believed that God had simply grown weary of toying with his servants. However, God was not quite finished.

## **1870 December to 1871 March**

### *Winter of '71*

Beginning with a series of blizzards along the east coast in mid-December, the so-called "Winter of '71" was among the most severe winters experienced in American history. Rivers froze over, snowbound cities were paralyzed, and mountain passes became unpassable. The harsh weather affected all of North America, freezing Niagara Falls, triggering avalanches in the Rockies, and bringing record amounts of snowfall to Salt Lake City, Atlanta, and New Orleans. The Winter of '71 claimed hundreds of lives, from Plains Indians to outdoorsmen trapped in cabins, from homeless veterans to foolish pleasure-seekers. North and South alike suffered millions of dollars in damage. There was only one silver lining: the frigid conditions forestalled military engagements between the two belligerents, locking both armies in place until the Spring. Additionally, some Savants theorized that the frigid temperatures played a role in ending the Blue Plague. (Though certain "burnt-over" types just added it to the list of Apocalyptic signs!)

## **1871 January 1**

### *Passage of the Federal Conscription Act*

One of Grant's first—and least popular—acts as president was to pass the Federal Conscription Act of 1871, a sweeping draft bill intended to replenish Union forces reduced by the Blue Plague. Further adding to its unpopularity, the Act guaranteed Negro volunteers the right to vote while wearing a Union blue uniform, and opened several supporting roles to female noncombatants.

## **1871 January to 1871 March**

### *The Great Unrest*

After the passage of the Federal Conscription Act, almost every Northern city was convulsed by rioting. Beginning as a spontaneous series of draft riots and general labor disputes, the Great Unrest quickly spread across the Union like wildfire, adding increased hardship to a country already winnowed by the Plague and beset by a cruel winter. Fueled by a host of sources ranging from frustrated veterans to Luddite revolutionaries, the Unrest brought paralyzing strikes, episodes of mass looting, and even genuine calls for insurrection, particularly in Cleveland and New York. By March, the greatly-reduced Union Army finally brought order to the land, but the overall message was clear: Win back Maryland and Washington D.C., then make an honorable peace. With her factories in flames and five thousand more civilians dead, the former United States of America was shattered and beyond resurrection.

## **1871 February 4 to 1871 May 1**

### *Establishment of the Algonquin Commune*

As the Great Unrest plunged New York City into chaos, Tammany Hall sought help from the so-called “Harlem Commune”—a wealthy collective of artists, free-thinkers, and inventors who had been developing the northern end of Manhattan since the height of the Blue Plague. Using their connections to labor unions and muscle supplied by their “New Citizen Militia,” the Communards helped defuse the riots, thereby keeping Tammany Hall from being overthrown. In return, Boss Tweed allowed the collective to exist as a “semi-autonomous entity,” providing, of course, they'd continue to vote Democratic. On May 1, the collective changed their name to the Algonquin Commune, with Victoria Woodhull presiding as First Citizen.

### *Aftermath*

Although its existence remains under constant political threat, by 1876 the Algonquin Commune has grown into a thriving state-within-a-state, and remains dedicated to its founding principles of egalitarianism, meritocracy, and hard work. Among those who call themselves citizens are Victoria Woodhull, General Joshua Chamberlain, Walt Whitman, Henry David Thoreau, and Garnet Wolf Winter. Strict Abolitionists and supporters of the Crater Fund, the Commune nevertheless honors its “distasteful” arrangement with Tammany Hall and votes as a Democratic bloc. More can be found in “*Deadlands Organizations—Algonquin Commune.*”

## **1871 March 30**

### *Battle of Two Waterfalls*

After one-too-many encroachments into Union territory by Confederate-backed Indians, General George Armstrong Custer broke the Cherokee Alliance with Richmond by defeating General “Stand Firm” Watie at the Battle of Two Waterfalls in the Indian Territory. General Watie was captured and detained at Rock Island prison for two years before being exchanged in 1873, after which he became a leading figure in the Coyote Confederation.

## **1871 April 1 to 1871 April 30**

### *The April Offensive*

The Blue Plague having run its course and the riots pacified, President Grant turned his attention to the stalled War, and ordered General Meade's replenished Army of the Potomac to take back Maryland. Within three weeks, all the "April Offensive" accomplished was adding 20,000 more Union soldiers to the casualty rolls. The South tenaciously maintained its occupation, and after Union defeats at Warren and Gunpowder Falls, even the most bellicose Republican newspapers ran editorials suggesting "peaceful resolution," "honorable victory," and other euphemisms for calling it quits. Privately, even Grant no longer believed the War was winnable.

## **1871 April 6**

### *April Offensive: Battle of Warren*

What started as an unexpected skirmish around the small Maryland town of Warren quickly developed into a full-scale battle, with a Confederate victory tarnished only by the loss of General Robert S. Ewell, who was assassinated by Union partisans connected to John Brown's Army. The Battle of Warren is also notable for the presence of Josiah Pickman, a war correspondent for the *Arkham Gazette* who went on to earn fame for his surreal paintings of the battle, many of which bizarrely depict the town of Warren as being submerged underwater. (Pickman's 1875 exhibition "Visions of Warren" at the Maze Gallery in San Francisco is generally cited as the beginning of the "Lynchburg School" of art.)

## **1871 April 15**

### *April Offensive: Battle of Windsor Mill*

The only Union success of the April Offensive, General Edwin H. Stoughton led Federal forces to victory in a heroic defense of Windsor Mill, protecting a vital Union supply line.

## **1871 April 29 to 1871 April 30**

### *April Offensive: Battle of Gunpowder Falls*

Because of a breakdown in communication that resulted in a critical misunderstanding of General Lee's plans, along with additional misinformation regarding the location of the Union Navy, Meade moved his army into a precarious position near the Chesapeake Bay. Unfortunately, a week of torrential rains stranded his men in a sodden quagmire between the rivers known locally as Big Gunpowder Falls and Little Gunpowder Falls. Unable to evacuate to the Bay, Meade was boxed in by Lee's forces; and after the Union lost the Chesapeake naval battle, Meade was forced to either attempt a northern breakout or risk being pushed into the Bay. Consisting of two horrific days fighting in the pouring rain, the Battle of Gunpowder Falls is considered one of the most hellish engagements of the late War. Like Spotsylvania's Bloody Angle or the Slaughter Pen at Stones River, the Battle Gunpowder Falls produced no less than three infamous incidents deserving grim commemoration: Butcher's Dam, an arena of intense hand-to-hand fighting that piled enough bodies in the Little Gunpowder Falls to dam the river into a bloody swamp; the Flooded Field, where four hundred wounded men drowned in the swollen marsh before they could be rescued; and the Bloody Falls, where Jeb Stuart outmaneuvered General Thomas Devin's cavalry and slaughtered them as they tried to cross the Little Gunpowder Falls. After being thoroughly whipped, the remnants of Meade's army escaped into Pennsylvania. Fortunately for the Union, the South suffered devastating casualties as well, and the heavy rains prohibited pursuit. The April Offensive was over, and Maryland remained firmly in the hands of the Confederacy.

## **1871 May to 1873 June**

### *The Cold War*

After a decade of bloodshed, the Civil War appeared on the verge of exhaustion. Skirmishes continued in Missouri, Kansas, and Kentucky; but for the most part, both sides focused on rebuilding their exhausted forces. While the Union retained the upper Mississippi and half-heartedly maintained the Blockade, depressed troop numbers and a general feeling of malaise sapped her people's will to fight. Stripped of the popular mandate to commit more blood and treasure to the Cause, President Grant attempted to gain back Maryland and Washington through diplomacy, but balked at formal recognition, and so made little progress. Recovering and rebuilding in the aftermath of the Blue Plague, the Union faced numerous political challenges—seemingly unaware of Manifest Destiny, hostile Sioux were resisting western expansion; the British continued to rattle sabers along the Canadian border; and Utah and Colorado were acting like sovereign nations rather than territorial possessions. As the Union took time to strengthen her presence in the North and West, the CSA lent aid to Walker's Nicaragua and assisted Cuban rebels against Spanish forces. Citizens on both sides of the Mason-Dixon Line began to consider the War as effectively over—it was just a matter of finding a way to save face. Although this period passed without particular nomenclature at the time, an 1874 *New York Times* editorial dubbed it “The Cold War,” and the name quickly gained currency.

## **1871 July 9**

### *Discovery of Ghost Rock in Labyrinth Canyon*

Sponsored by Brigham Young, the Second Powell Expedition discovered ghost rock in two separate locations in Labyrinth Canyon—an ancient source buried under “Upheaval Dome,” and a more recent and larger vein in “Monument Basin,” recently exposed by the 1869 quake. Although it would take some ingenuity to extract, and was kept secret until three years later, the world's third source of ghost rock had been discovered. It was quickly secured by Young's industrious Mormons, and became known among the Saints as the “Promise of Labyrinth Canyon,” usually shortened to “The Promise.”

## **1871 September 20 to October 7**

### *Founding of the United States Aëroforce*

Amidst great hoopla, the Union launched its first military airship on September 20, the USAF *George Washington*. An exorbitantly expensive “dreadnought” based on designs by the young French expatriate Charles Renaud and the brilliant Philadelphia brothers Buell and Crake Weldon, the *George Washington* was kept aloft by a network of hydrogen cells fixed within a ridged structure of ghost-steel alloy. Three weeks later a second airship was christened, the USAF *Marquis de Lafayette*, a smaller vessel based on Renaud's “destroyer” model.

## **1872 March 4**

### *Prometheus Disaster*

The Union's first passenger airship, the *Prometheus*, exploded over the Yates Airfield near Chicago, killing forty-five people and wounding a hundred more. To this day, the cause of the accident has never been discovered. The source of numerous conspiracy theories, the *Prometheus* Disaster emerged in the public's imagination as a powerful symbol of a once-mighty Union going down in flames. Indeed, the term “Promethean hubris” quickly entered the vocabulary, usually in Democratic newspaper editorials attaching it to Ulysses S. Grant.

### **1872 November 5**

#### *President Grant Reëlected*

Having served a two-year term as promised, Ulysses S. Grant and Henry Wilson won reëlection amidst a chaotic campaign marked by scandal and allegations of election fraud. Campaigning on the promise of “Peace with Dignity,” Grant only narrowly defeated Democratic challenger Winfield Scott Hancock, whose campaign was seriously damaged by the last-minute bombshell that Hancock had been keeping a Sioux mistress, the mother of two bastard sons.

### **1873 May 6**

#### *The Ghost Boom*

On May 6, the Second California Republic announced that the price of ghost rock would increase incrementally over six months in order to meet the demand of skyrocketing European markets. The Federal Treasury tried to negotiate various reduced rates and special partnerships, but to no avail, and the Union steeled itself for an inevitable economic downturn.

### **1873 September 21**

#### *Discovery of the Kentucky Vein*

During the autumnal equinox of 1873, residents of central Kentucky were startled by a series of minor tremors. The epicenter was quite surprising—the reliably stable Mammoth Cave, currently in Confederate-occupied territory. Within two days, workers clearing the rubble uncovered a new rift deep in the caverns, a passage that gave access to a rich vein of blue coal. The world’s fourth source of ghost rock was discovered—and it was in Richmond’s possession.

### **1873 October 2–3**

#### *Battle of Leitchfield*

On October 2, 1873, George Thomas’ Army of the Tennessee fired the first barrage of Union artillery in two years. The goal was simple: seize the newly-discovered Kentucky Vein at all costs. It was inconceivable that the South should possess two sources of ghost rock, especially when one was in a nominally pro-Union state! Lasting two long and brutal days, the Battle of Leitchfield was a Federal success, though a bloody one, resulting in 12,000 Union casualties. It was especially notable for the performance of the *George Washington*, which marked the first use of an airship in an American battle. Two days after Leitchfield, Mammoth Cave was occupied, and the so-called “Battle for Kentucky” was under way. Lasting until the following spring, the savage campaign resulted in several large-scale conflicts, numerous guerrilla activities, and the loss and subsequent recapture of Mammoth Cave in December 1873.

### **1873 October 3**

#### *Attack on Lynchburg*

On the morning of October 3, an unidentified ironclad appeared off the coast of Lynchburg and attacked a small convoy of ghost rock transports on their way to New Westminster. After sinking the convoy’s armed British escorts, the pirates were thwarted by Republican forces, who arrived in time to sink the ironclad and rescue the transports. The surviving attackers proved to be a mix of soldiers-of-fortune and Mexican mercenaries; all claimed to have been in the pay of a Mexican pirate captain named Tycho Miranda. The Californians salvaged the ironclad and discovered it was of Union design, possibly originating in Mexico but following the “Huron” model and utilizing numerous northern components. The mysterious Captain Miranda was nowhere to be found. In the international outrage that followed, Boston protested its innocence with great

vehemence, pointing to the short-sightedness of the attempt and the strategic ineptitude of the operation. After a tense investigation, the Second California Republic agreed to absolve the Grant Administration of all blame, and began searching for other sources of culpability.

### **1873 October 10**

#### *British Seize Seattle*

On October 10, British expeditionary forces occupied the lumber town of Seattle in the Union's Washington Territory. Blandly explaining that the recent influx of Canadian pioneers into the region required protection from the sudden renewal of Union aggression, Ottawa produced a "decoded correspondence" between unnamed Federal paymasters and one "Colonel Miranda." The Union scoffed at the document as an obvious fraud, but came short of accusing Ottawa of masterminding the act of piracy itself. Denouncing the invasion of Washington as an unprovoked act of aggression, Grant immediately dispatched troops to strengthen Fort Cape Disappointment and Fort Stevens. Unwilling and unprepared to declare war against Great Britain, the Grant Administration dispatched William S. Seward to Ottawa in an attempt to reclaim the lost territory through diplomacy.

### **1874 February 20 to 1874 September 11**

#### *The Hammer of '74*

On February 20, 1874, the Union discovered that the South had been quite industrious during the Cold War. In a coordinated wave of assaults directed by General-in-Chief Robert E. Lee, the CSA revealed the fruits of their British alliance and the benefits of a steady supply of ghost rock. Dubbed the "Hammer" by Stonewall Jackson, the strategy involved a four-stage assault on the Union: the Reclamation of the Mississippi, the Kentucky Push, the Bombardment of the East Coast, and the Second Invasion of Pennsylvania. It was the single most successful operation of the Confederacy, and finally earned them the victory they'd been seeking since 1861.

### **1874 February 20 to August 12**

#### *The Hammer: Reclamation of the Mississippi*

Utilizing a small squadron of airships armed with Counterfly "aërial torpedoes," Captain Jonathan Carter's Airborne Cavalry helped General P.G.T. Beauregard and General Kirby Smith take back the Mississippi River, bombing Union gunboats from the sky and rolling them up with Stephen Mallory's new Yazoo-class ironclads. Depleted of troops and lacking effective defensive measures against aerial bombardment, the port cities of the Mississippi slowly fell to the Confederate advance: Baton Rouge, Natchez, Vicksburg, Memphis, Cape Girardeau, and finally St. Louis. The Union destroyer *Marquis de Lafayette* distinguished herself heroically during the Second Battle of Memphis, but was brought down in flames during the Battle of St. Louis, which marked the end of the campaign in mid-August.

### **1874 March 15 to April 15**

#### *The Hammer: The Kentucky Push*

The only blow of the Hammer to miss its mark, the Kentucky Push was General John Bell Hood's ill-fated attempt to recapture Mammoth Cave and expel the Union from Kentucky once and for all. It was also a tragic waste of life, as the Kentucky Vein had just run dry on March 1, and the Union was defending the region only in the vain hope of finding more azrucite as they patiently blasted away ton after ton of subterranean rock. The Kentucky Push began with the Battle of Bowling Green, a successful engagement that forced Thomas back into the Green River

Valley to defend the barren mines. After Confederate engineers dynamited several new openings into the underground labyrinth, a nightmarish series of battles occurred below the surface of the earth, including the poetically-named Battle of the Styx, which unfolded in total darkness across an underground river; and the infamous Cascade Massacre, where Union forces crushed hundreds of Confederates by triggering a massive cave-in. Thwarted from reaching the mines from below, Hood foolishly ignored the advice of his subordinates and launched a suicidal overland assault on the main Federal position. After sacrificing a quarter of his troops, Hood finally learned that the vein had run dry. He resigned his commission on April 15, 1874, and returned to Richmond for judgment. General Patrick Cleburne was placed in charge of the Army of Tennessee, which fought off the Rock of Chickamauga's counter-offensive and retreated safely back to Nashville, leaving the exhausted mines in the hands of Thomas' bluecoats. Sensing a golden opportunity to achieve more than a defensive victory, General Thomas and the Army of the Cumberland re-occupied northeastern Tennessee all the way to Knoxville.

### **1874 July 1 to 1874 August 30**

#### *The Black Hills Expedition*

With the Kentucky Vein a bust and Southern technology dominating the Mississippi, Grant turned to the recent rumor that the Sioux had discovered ghost rock in the Black Hills, and ordered the Department of the West to investigate. Sheridan dispatched Lieutenant Colonel George Armstrong Custer and the 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry to scout territory inside the Great Sioux Reservation. Instead of ghost rock, they found gold. This triggered an influx of white prospectors that violated the already-imperiled Treaty of Fort Laramie and further destabilized the relationship between the Union and the "rebellious" Sioux.

### **1874 July 28 to September 11**

#### *The Hammer: Second Invasion of Pennsylvania*

Crossing the border from Occupied Maryland, General Robert E. Lee marched the Army of Northern Virginia towards Harrisburg in an attempt to cut the rail lines connecting the rest of the Union from Philadelphia. Because the battles that occurred during the Second Invasion are of critical importance, they are described in more detail below.

### **1874 July 30**

#### *Assassination of Ambrose Burnside*

On the tenth anniversary of the Battle of the Crater, Ambrose Burnside was found murdered in Rhode Island by an unknown assassin. The disgraced general was wrapped head to toe in a black shroud and abandoned in a sinkhole located in a former plantation. Although many USCT veterans pointed out that Ledlie's white soldiers had equal cause to despise Burnside, the incident provoked a spate of anti-Negro demonstrations, virulently racist editorials, and acts of "retributive" white-on-black violence within the increasingly mixed ranks of the Union army. Burnside's assassination also drew unwarranted criticism toward the Winter Scholarship for Negro Savants and Engineers. In response to the controversy, some university students and professors adopted the matte black armbands previously worn by Crater veterans and widows. Initially worn to show solidarity with the Crater Fund, the movement has curiously led to a vogue in "Crater Black" among east coast intellectuals and trendy *Fin de la guerre* fashionistas.



## 1876 August 20-12

### *The Hammer: The Battle of Lancaster*

On their way towards Harrisburg, the forces of Robert E. Lee were countered outside of York, Pennsylvania by General George Meade and the Army of the Potomac. In what would soon be called the Battle of Lancaster, the three bloodiest days of the War were fought under conditions of scorching August heat, dense morning fogbanks, and furious evening thunderstorms. Resulting in a resounding Union defeat, the Battle of Lancaster is considered by most historians as the “final” turning point of the War.

### *Day 1: Battle of York*

The hostilities opened with a massive battle that reminded many veterans of the early days of the War, with Lee’s forces assaulting Meade’s positions south of York. The rumor of a new Federal anti-airship howitzer kept the skies clear, but the Confederates made effective use of their new Tredegar-Whitworth railway guns, the *Edmund Ruffin* and the *George S. James*, which bombarded Federal positions from three miles away. Prevented from escaping north to Harrisburg by Stonewall Jackson, the Federals were driven east from York towards Wrightsville. Under cover of a nighttime downpour and receiving support from Federal gunboats, Meade retreated his forces over the Susquehanna River across the Columbia-Wrightsville Bridge. The first divisions over the bridge were ordered to Lancaster to establish a defensive fallback position, while the latter troops fortified Columbia and prepared to destroy the bridge.

### *The Mt. Joy Raid*

During the nocturnal downpour, Virginia cavalry officer Colonel Thomas Leroy III led a daring midnight raid across the Susquehanna River to Mount Joy, where Richmond Intelligence had placed the location of the new Federal anti-airship guns. Catching the artillery crews by complete surprise, Leroy’s men sabotaged the surface-to-air battery and successfully escaped with only thirteen casualties. After the battle, Col. Leroy was promoted to general, and his company was given the colorful name of “Joy Raiders.”

### *Rebels Capture the Columbia-Wrightsville Bridge*

Unfortunately, Meade’s plan to destroy the bridge was spoiled by a combination of sodden dynamite, malfunctioning detonators, and a grave miscommunication with his mining engineers. By the time the panicked Federals got around to making a second attempt, the arrival of the Confederate aerial-destroyers *Sidney Johnson* and *Benjamin McCulloch* drove the Federal gunboats back and enabled Richard Heron Anderson to secure the bridge for Robert E. Lee. Fearing that Lee would cross the Susquehanna and threaten Philadelphia, Grant ordered Lt. General Oliver Howard and two divisions of VI Corps to split from Meade and bolster the defenses of Philadelphia, currently under the command of Maj. General Charles Griffin.

### *Day 2: Battle of the Susquehanna*

The second day of the battle opened with the first and last aerial engagement of the Civil War. As dawn broke over the swollen river, the clearing skies revealed seven airships squaring off in the morning haze. From the east came the Union dreadnought *George Washington* and two new Federal destroyers, the *James B. McPherson* and the newly-christened *Ambrose Burnside*. From the west came the Confederate dreadnought *Yellowhammer* with a third Confederate destroyer, the *Robert S. Ewell*. Pitting Counterfly aerial torpedoes against Weldon “Shrike” missiles, the airships battled for aerial supremacy above the Susquehanna as stunned bluecoats and grayjackets alike

watched in awe and scrambled for cover. The first casualty was the *Robert S. Ewell*, which was brought down by the *Beowulf*, a Federal gunboat equipped with a new battery of anti-airship howitzers. The ill-named *Ambrose Burnside* was the next to perish, taken out by a broadside of torpedoes after its mobility was impaired by malfunctioning screws. Finally, the wounded *George Washington* was struck by a torpedo in its boiler, with the resulting explosion igniting its remaining hydrogen cells. The flaming dreadnought drifted westward and collapsed over Franklin & Marshall College. As the outmatched *James B. McPherson* retreated and the severely-damaged *Yellowhammer* limped home, the *Sidney Johnson* and the *Benjamin McCulloch* cleared the river of Federal gunboats and began bombarding Union artillery positions. After four spectacular hours, the airborne engagement was over, and the land battle unfolded in earnest under the blazing sun. Intent on smashing the Federals once and for all, Robert E. Lee ordered his troops across the river. After a grueling battle at the eastern bridgehead, the victorious Confederates occupied Columbia and pushed Meade's troops all the way to their defensive positions around Lancaster.

### *Day 3: Battle of Lancaster*

After a sleepless, sweltering night marked by mutual shelling, the Confederates were startled by an uncharacteristic pre-dawn attack from Meade, who led the Army of the Potomac in a desperate onslaught to trap Lee against the Susquehanna River. Fighting within a dense shroud of morning fog, the Confederates repulsed the attack, pushing the bluecoats back to Lancaster as the fog transformed into a gentle morning rain. The Battle of Lancaster had begun. The bloodiest single day of the War since Antietam, the battle involved several major engagements spread across a five-mile front, from the "Drunken Barndance" at Hershey's Distillery to "Satan's Acre" surrounding the Old Mennonite Meeting House. The most famous engagement was known as the "Siege of Franklin & Marshall," during which Joshua Chamberlain and cavalry general Ranald "Bad Hand" Slidell Mackenzie defended College Hill to prevent the remains of the *George Washington* from falling into Confederate hands. General Chamberlain was successful, buying the time needed to destroy the wreckage and evacuate the college's collection of rare books; but his victory came at the cost of his left hand, which was shot from his wrist by a Confederate sharpshooter. (Wielding a brand-new Sharps 1874, this sniper would soon earn the nickname "Dixiebird" while terrorizing Union lines at Philadelphia.) The day culminated in a tremendous thunderstorm around 4:00 pm, during which Henry Heth's division wedged open the Union line at "Lock. No. 2" along the Conestoga Creek. Within an hour, James Longstreet rolled up Robert Nugent's forces south along the Willow Street Turnpike, while Stonewall Jackson and Thomas Leroy III pushed down the Manor Turnpike into Lancaster itself. After Meade ordered a general retreat east, the final engagement of the day was fought at Prison Reservoir, a rearguard action which resulted in the death of Custer's hand-picked replacement, Pennsylvania's dashing native son Henry Capehart. As night fell and the storm continued unabated, Meade allowed his exhausted men a few hours of rest outside of Ressler's Mill east of Lancaster. At midnight, General Meade ordered another nighttime retreat, marching the tattered remains of his forces northwest towards Harrisburg.

### **1876 August 14**

#### *Battle of Union Deposit*

At the small town of Union Deposit southeast of Harrisburg, Lee and Jackson surrounded Meade and his shattered army. After a brief battle marked by the gallant restraint of General Robert E. Lee, General George Meade finally raised the white flag and surrendered the Army of the Potomac to his longtime rival.

## **1876 August 15**

### *Sacking of Harrisburg*

On the morning of August 15, Robert E. Lee's forces entered Harrisburg with intentions to commandeer the rail lines. Falling unexpectedly ill, Lee let his usual control slip, and some of his troops took it upon themselves to wreak vengeance upon the Union. Despite the best efforts of Lee's generals to reign in their men, Confederate soldiers looted, burned, and plundered much of the Pennsylvania capital.

## **1873 August 16**

### *British Invasion of Detroit*

After several months of continual troop buildup, the British finally made their move, marching across the Canadian border and seizing the city of Detroit. As a rationale, they claimed that Detroit had legally been a British territory since its surrender during the War of 1812; indeed, sixty-one years ago to the date. The British offered the citizens of Detroit a choice: free passage into the Union, or citizenship in the Dominion of Canada. Isolated from the heart of the Union and sick of endless War, a surprising amount of Detroit residents chose the latter option. A desperate Grant again sought a political solution, but took no chances on further British aggression. He mobilized some of Hooker's northern forces under General Orlando B. Wilcox and stationed them in Michigan to form the "Wolverine Line." Grant's plan was to first stabilize the situation on Pennsylvania, then push the British out of Detroit—using force, if necessary.

## **1874 August 19 to September 11**

### *The Hammer: Bombardment of the East Coast*

Revealing the existence of submarine technology, Confederate forces mounted surprise naval attacks on Philadelphia, New York, and Boston, sinking over fifty Union vessels with their new fleet of Vicksburg-class "submersible ironclads." Equipped with British-designed "Vulcan howitzers," Confederate gunboats began raining down fire on the east coast on the first of September. Triggering a mass exodus inland, the citizens of New York were particularly infuriated, and called upon Grant to make immediate peace.

## **1876 September 11**

### *Fall of Philadelphia*

With Meade's Army surrendered, Thomas defending Tennessee and Kentucky, and every available reserve protecting Boston or the Great Lakes, Philadelphia could not hold out. After a week-long siege marked by constant bombardment and long-range sniping, General Oliver Otis Howard surrendered the United States' first capital to Robert E. Lee on September 11, 1874. As the Stars and Bars were being hoisted over Independence Hall, President Davis sent a telegraph to President Grant, proposing a "lasting cease-fire" and offering to initiate "negotiations for a permanent armistice, including a peaceful exchange of prisoners, officers, and captured territories." Davis made his telegram public, and the outcry was immediate. Democratic newspapers began calling Grant the "President who lost three Washingtons," while Republicans openly feared for the safety of Boston. Worried that the Union stood more to lose than her southern states, the government met in Boston to discuss Davis' offer. After a few days of heated deliberation during which Seward resigned as Secretary of State, the Grant Administration accepted the Confederate terms, and the American Civil War was finally over.

## **1874 September 13 to December 24**

### *The Cease-Fire*

During this three-month period, a shocked Union did its best to pick up the pieces shattered by the Hammer and accept that it had actually lost the War. Skirmishes still flared up in border states, and a few “misunderstandings” spilled blood where the two armies remained in contact, but the Cease-Fire held firm. The city of St. Louis was selected as the “Armistice capital,” hosting delegations from Boston, Richmond, Austin, Lynchburg, and Ottawa as the former belligerents worked to establish a lasting peace.

## **1874 September 15**

### *Announcement of the Promise of Labyrinth Canyon*

Encouraged by the Union defeat and attempting to preempt Confederate spies, President Brigham Young formally announced the existence of the “Promise” mines of Labyrinth Canyon.

## **1874 December 24**

### *The Armistice Is Signed*

On December 24, the “Mutually Agreed Terms of Armistice Between States In Armed Conflict” transformed the Cease-Fire into a more permanent state of peace, officially suspending armed hostilities and pledging to find diplomatic solutions for all existing problems. Shaping the political landscape for the coming century, the Armistice is a very complex and challenging agreement, and is detailed separately in its own section, “*Deadlands* Milieu—The Armistice.”

## **1875 January 12**

### *The Union-British Détente*

After three months of tense negotiations, the United States of America and Great Britain finally came to a political arrangement known as the Détente. The Union agreed to sell the northwest portion of Washington to the British for a handsome price, turning over a swath of land defined by the Olympic Peninsula and Puget Sound, and including the frontier towns of Seattle and Tacoma. In return, the British would assist in the creation of the Northwestern Pacific, with a future possibility of linking it to a burgeoning Canadian railway system. Detroit was a stickier matter, but the Grant Administration allowed it to be annexed to Canada for an astronomical sum, along with advantageous trading agreements that granted the Union access to British patents on submersible ironclads, Vulcan howitzers, and Analytical Engines. Additionally, the Union agreed to pre-arranged trading stipulations if they ever discovered another source of ghost rock. Needless to say, many Northerners were dissatisfied by the terms of the Détente, but nobody wanted another war. (As an interesting side note, the actual treaty was signed on the deck of the HMS *Ottawa*, a British submersible floating on Lake Erie. As the American delegates stepped onto the deck, her Captain saluted and remarked, “Welcome onboard the HMS *Nonsuch*.”)

## **1875 June 21**

### *Appomattox Is Published*

Written by an anonymous author and published somewhere west of the Mississippi, the novel *Appomattox* is a work of “alternate history,” and describes a fictional world in which the Great Quake and the Blue Plague ever occurred. In this world, Stonewall Jackson was killed at Chancellorsville, Sherman passed safely through Salkehatchie to burn down Columbia, and Robert E. Lee was defeated at the end of the Overland Campaign, surrendering to Grant at a place called Appomattox Courthouse in 1865. Written in a vaguely surreal style and sparkling

with wit, the novel is curiously compelling, and some claim to have experienced “life-changing revelations” after reading the book, while others have become unhealthily obsessed by its alternate world. *Appomattox* was immediately banned by Confederate authorities, who convinced the Union to forbid publishing or re-printing the book as an addendum to the Armistice. (In return, the Confederacy agreed to extradite several Northern “traitors” who were being sheltered under diplomatic asylum.) Despite this ban, handmade samizdat copies of *Appomattox* circulate on both sides of the Mason-Dixon Line, and the underground popularity of the work is growing.

### **1875 December 1**

*Grant's Ultimatum to the Sioux*

With the Civil War already a year in the past and tensions between the Sioux and the Union reaching new heights, President Grant issued an order that all Sioux and their allies living outside of the borders of the Great Sioux Reservation had to return by January 31, 1876. After much internal debate, many Sioux leaders, including Sitting Bull, refused to obey Grant's ultimatum.

### **1876 February 8**

*The Sheridan Telegraph*

As soon as Grant's ultimatum expired, Sheridan telegraphed Alfred Terry to “commence winter campaigns against the hostiles.” This telegraph marked the beginning of the Black Hills War against the Sioux and Northern Cheyenne, sometimes referred to as the Plains Confederation.

### **1876 June 27-29**

*Democratic Convention*

Held in New York City, the Democrats quickly nominated New York Governor Horatio Seymour as their presidential candidate, with General Dan Sickles as his running mate. With President Grant having “lost the War,” most Democrats felt hopeful for the first time in decades.

### **1876 July 1 to December 1**

*Centennial Exposition*

On July 4, 1876, President Grant officially opened the Centennial Exposition in New York City. Officially known as the “International Exhibition of Arts, Manufactures and Products of the Soil and Mine,” the sprawling affair occupies much of Central Park, and utilizes the New York Crystal Palace and Latting Observatory originally constructed for the 1853 Exhibition of the Industry of All Nations. A blatant attempt to rejuvenate the Union and restore Northern pride, the exorbitant Expo features two hundred new buildings, including Petit & Wilson's enormous Machinery Hall, the Moorish-styled Horticultural Hall, the first-ever Woman's Pavilion, and the Memorial Hall, a lovely beaux-arts arts gallery showcasing French impressionism, Venetian *L'Art Nouveau*, and the surreal “Lynchburg school.” The Expo also boasts the tallest structure in the world, Clarke & Reeves' thousand-foot Centennial Tower. Each Northern state boasts its own building, and international pavilions feature exhibits by seventeen countries, including England, Ireland, France, Spain, Catalonia, Portugal, Italy, Venezia, Germany, Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, China, and Japan. Three of the more controversial pavilions include the Deseret Pavilion, which features exhibits on Mormonism and a somewhat intimidating display of Nauvoo firearms; the Theater of the Algonquin Commune, which performs Marxist dance routines and scandalous “free love” operas; and the Lone Star Pavilion, which presents “Wild West” shows portraying a larger-than-life Republic of Texas eager to differentiate itself from Richmond.

## **1876 July 4**

### *Deseret Recognition*

During his July 4<sup>th</sup> address at the Centennial Exposition, President Grant announced formal U.S. recognition of Deseret as an independent and sovereign republic. The product of year-long secret negotiations, diplomatic recognition came in exchange for exclusive trading rights to the ghost rock of Promise mines.

## **1876 August 19**

### *Assassination of Horatio Seymour*

While giving a speech at the Centennial Exposition, Democratic presidential candidate Horatio Seymour was assassinated by a lone gunman who fired an old Whitworth rifle from the top of the Centennial Tower. Shot down by Pinkerton agents as he tried to escape, the assassin was identified as a recent Venetian immigrant named Paladin Spira. At the time of this *Deadlands 1876* campaign, Spira's motivations are not yet known.

## **1876 August 20–31?**

### *Battle of Little Bighorn*

In the timeline of *Deadlands 1876*, the Battle of Little Bighorn is slated to occur almost three months after its historical date of June 25<sup>th</sup>. Because this important battle is one of my playable campaign scenarios, its outcome is entirely dependent on player actions. If Sitting Bull is victorious, the Sioux and their allies will march on the Black Hills, and the establishment of an independent and sovereign Sioux Nation is quite likely. However, if Custer and the 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry defeat the Plains Confederation, Sitting Bull will be imprisoned, the "Sioux Nation" will remain a Federal reservation, and General Custer will be tapped to replace Horatio Seymour as the Democrat's presidential candidate.

## **1876 November 7**

### *Presidential Elections*

On November 7, citizens on both sides of the Mason-Dixon Line head to the polls to elect their next leaders. In the North, the contest is between Ulysses S. Grant and Admiral Thomas Tingey Craven on the Republican ticket, with the Democratic ticket to be resolved by gameplay interactions. If Custer wins Little Bighorn, he will become the Democratic nominee, and will certainly win the election to become the twentieth president of the United States. If Custer loses, the Democratic nominee may be Thomas A. Hendricks, Dan Sickles, or possibly George McClellan; however, a combination of Mormon ghost rock, Centennial fever, Democratic chaos, and national anger at the Sioux is likely to get Grant reelected. Down south, the clear favorite is Stonewall Jackson and John Breckenridge on the Confederate ticket, with Jubal Early and Benjamin Judah taking a longshot with the Southern Whig party. Few expect much support for General William Mahone's "Readjuster" party, which advocates for the gradual emancipation of southern slaves and the more equitable distribution of wealth.

## **Sources & Notes**

There are numerous fictional works featuring alternate Civil War histories, but I made an effort to avoid reading any of them while I was developing my own timeline. Having said that, there are three "foundational texts" that inspired my entire campaign, and their influence is felt throughout the setting: Thomas Pynchon's [\*Against the Day\*](#), William Gibson and Bruce Sterling's

[The Difference Engine](#), and Alan Moore’s “[League of Extraordinarily Gentlemen](#).” Aside from the [Deadlands](#) rulebook, the other main resource I used when designing this timeline was entirely factual: Shelby Foote’s epic [Narrative History of the Civil War](#). As I read through Foote’s masterpiece, I kept asking myself two important questions: *How could the North actually lose this thing?* And, *How would the existence of ghost rock impact events?*

*How could the North actually lose this thing?*

Most historians agree that the only realistic way the North could have lost the Civil War was by losing the will to keep fighting it. Of course, Confederate victories at Gettysburg and Chattanooga would have been important, but the North had significantly more resources, manpower, and geopolitical capital. If they had wanted to keep fighting, they could have kept fighting; so the only realistic path to Confederate victory was an exhausted Union calling it quits. This almost happened in 1864. With Grant stalled outside of Richmond and the body count climbing higher, President Lincoln was in danger of losing the November election and being replaced by a so-called “Peace Democrat.” He was even under threat from his own Republican party, elements of which wanted to “primary” their own incumbent, to use the modern parlance. Fortunately for Lincoln, Sherman’s September victory in Atlanta provided the nation with indisputable evidence that the War was still winnable, and Lincoln was handily reelected.

Most alternative Civil War fictions focus on Gettysburg—and indeed, a Confederate victory would have certainly altered the course of events—but I wanted a *prolonged* Civil War, not a shorter one. The official *Deadlands Reloaded* scenario projects an endless cycle of battles being fought and re-fought with increasing levels of technology: First Gettysburg, Second Gettysburg, Third Gettysburg, etc. I rejected this template for two reasons. First, the South lacked the resources to endlessly flail against the North, and was in danger of political exhaustion itself. Second, with the exception of geographical bottlenecks like Manassas and the Wilderness, or strategic essentials like Nashville or Chattanooga, many battles erupted near locations made significant only by the whimsy of time and place. For instance, the milestone we now sanctify as Gettysburg was largely accidental, the result of an army in need of shoes. There’s no reason the Battle of Gettysburg should be repeated, as opposed to a similar clash occurring in York, Chambersburg, or Harrisburg. As a game designer, it was more fun to re-imagine the evolving geopolitical landscape and say, “What if *this* happened...”

In order keep the Civil War a going concern and ensure a Confederate victory, I was forced to “make shit up”—to use the technical term—so I cheerfully invented the Blue Plague, the *Deus ex McGuffin* of *Deadlands 1876*. By inflicting a curiously selective and vaguely eldritch disease on the North, I was able to lay waste to its powerful armies, enfeeble its great cities, and create a social horror more threatening than a victorious Richmond. The Blue Plague allowed Sherman, Thomas, and eventually Grant to lose critical engagements, thus weakening the North and setting the stage for the Gray Revival and the Cold War. Of course, ghost rock was also useful, and armed with the stick of pandemic and the carrot of limited resources, I was able to coax history in the direction I wanted.

Finally, I should mention that tactical deployment of the Grim Reaper was also useful in leveling the playing field between North and South. Keeping Stonewall Jackson, Jeb Stuart, and Pat Cleburne alive while killing off Sherman and tossing Sheridan in prison certainly helped reconfigure historical battles!

*How would ghost rock realistically impact events?*

This second question opened the door to significant political alterations, allowing Britain to overcome its distaste for slavery and setting the stage for Mormon independence. Even a cursory glance at history reveals how destructive and selfish nations become when they want someone else's resources, from opium to petroleum, from trade routes to water rights. The desire for ghost rock also provided a compelling reason for the North to resume the War long after plague and exhaustion would have driven them to the peace table. For instance, after the failure of the Union's April Offensive to reclaim Maryland, the most likely outcome would have been an extended Cold war that eventually transformed into a tacit Confederate victory, followed by a round of diplomatic exchanges and political formalities. However, once ghost rock was discovered on the Union's Kentucky doorstep, the North had little choice but to dust off their artillery and plunge once more unto the breach.

### **The Twists and Turns of Alternate History**

Many of the historical divergences of this campaign setting have origins in actual events. The Mormons sought an independent Deseret, while states like Kentucky, Kansas, and Missouri remained internally divided long after the War. For a short while, [Confederate Arizona](#) existed as described above, and the South entertained numerous pipe-dreams about occupying Cuba. Nicaragua was briefly ruled by an [American filibuster](#) named William Walker. George Armstrong Custer flirted with presidential ambitions before Little Bighorn. Leonidas Polk wanted to resume his religious calling, and [Clark & Reeves](#) almost beat the Eiffel Tower. The twisted warp and weft of my historical basket also contains a few fictional Easter eggs, so if you think I'm stealing something from a favorite [book](#) or [movie](#), I probably am.

### **Useful Links**

Besides the ubiquitous and priceless [Wikipedia](#), a few online resources I found helpful were the Latin Library's [Civil War Timeline](#), [Historic Map Works](#), and Hal Jespersen's [Civil War Maps](#). For those interested in exploring more about Walker and Nicaragua, I suggest the psychedelic Alex Cox movie [Walker](#), now available through the Criterion Collection.

### **Final Word**

I make no claims of being a military strategist, and some of my fictional battles are based on little more than the desire to capitalize on interesting geographical terrain (Mammoth Cave) or exploit cool place names (The Battle of Gunpowder Falls). Also, there are certainly a few points in my alternate history that threaten the willing suspension of disbelief. Because my personal *Deadlands* campaign involves the Sioux Wars and the Battle of Little Bighorn, I needed a timeline that closely followed actual history in this area, especially regarding Sheridan, Terry, Crook, Custer, and the 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry. Realistically speaking, the ongoing Civil War would have altered Western history more significantly than my setting suggests, and it's unlikely that an embattled Union would have committed so many resources to pacifying the West. I therefore placed the rumor of ghost rock in the Black Hills, inflicted injuries upon Sheridan and Custer, and made the overall assumption that the Union would spare boots and brass to keep their pathway to California free from indigenous interference. If any military historian wants to argue that Sheridan was too valuable to move West, or that Custer never would have abandoned a theater of conflict more advantageous to his career, all I have to say is, "Ghost rock and magic blimps, man."



**Author:** A. Buell Ruch

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**Email:** quail (at) shipwrecklibrary (dot) com