

**Volume 18**

**Number 050**

**A House Divided: (98) Fall of Atlanta –**

**II**

**Lead: One hundred and fifty years ago the Republic was facing its greatest crisis. This continuing series examines the American Civil War. It is "A House Divided."**

**Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.**

**Content: Having pushed Confederate armies under Joseph Johnston back from the suburbs of Chattanooga to within 20 miles of his goal, the vital railroad and manufacturing hub of Atlanta, William Sherman was briefly stymied**

**in late June at Kennesaw Mountain with heavy losses. Summer rains had turned the Georgia clay to muck in June, but by early July these roads had begun to dry. Sherman's maneuver machine was back in business. He crossed the Chattahoochee River on July 9<sup>th</sup> and was at Peachtree Creek, four miles from the City, the next day. Panic struck the civilian population as Sherman's relentless campaign seemed on the verge of success.**

**An equal level of panic gripped the Confederate high command in Richmond. President Davis cast about for a way of preventing disaster and turned to his military advisor, General Braxton Bragg, the victor of**

**Chickamauga, who had resigned after his defeat and disgrace after losing Chattanooga. Bragg suggested he replace Johnston, who Davis never particularly admired anyway, with the 33-year-old John Bell Hood, and did so on July 16<sup>th</sup>. In this he rejected the, as it turned out, very wise advice of Robert E. Lee, who thought Hood much too rash. The choice was a disaster.**

**When Sherman heard that he now faced Hood he considered it a gift. Instead of the cautious Johnston, the rebels would now have a bold leader fully willing to break out of his entrenchments and fight in the open. He did so at Peachtree Creek, Ezra's Church, and finally at Jonesborough**

**at the end of August. At each encounter, the Yankees gave better than they got, and Hood lost ground and an enormous number of casualties. It was clear as September approached that Atlanta was lost. Hood set its vital military infrastructure ablaze and evacuated the city lest he be trapped. Sherman entered Atlanta on September 1<sup>st</sup>.**

**Just a month before, the morale in the South was on the upswing and President Lincoln thought he was going to be defeated in the November elections. Atlanta's collapse sent a clear signal to the North that Union strategy, however slow, was ultimately going to crush the Confederacy. South Carolina diarist Mary Boykin**

**Chestnut spoke for many Southern partisans, “Since Atlanta I have felt as if all were dead within me, forever, we are going to be wiped off the earth.”**

**At the University of Richmond’s School of Professional and Continuing Studies, I’m Dan Roberts.**

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