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A House Divided: (88) Total War – I

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: War has never been pretty. Even when armies and nations attempted to regulate the conduct of warfare, for centuries non-combatants were inevitably drawn into the pain and suffering, their livelihoods, farms, homes, children, and the elderly. Long

before the 20th century perfection of total war when machines of destruction rained down their devastation on enemy soldiers and their home-bound families alike, a glimpse of such coming horror played itself out in the States of Georgia and South Carolina during the American Civil War. The artist who sketched this gruesome canvas was Major General William Tecumseh Sherman who, if not the author of total war, was certainly one of its most visible early practitioners.

In many ways Sherman by November 1864 was tired of this war which had stretched on with varying degrees of intensity for almost three and a half years. After a campaign

lasting months, Union forces had marched into Atlanta on September 2nd. The news electrified the North and sent Southerners into paroxysms of gloom. Diarist Mary Chestnut wrote, “We are going to be wiped off the earth.”

Despite his evacuation of Atlanta, Confederate General John Bell Hood wasn't in a giving mood. He set about trying to cut Sherman's supply line stretching back along a thin rail line into Tennessee. Sherman gave chase and ran Hood down into Alabama and then he did something remarkable. Next time: Making Georgia howl.

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

Resources

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