

150 year ago during the Civil War March, 1864

As part of General Grant's overall strategy to win the war, General Sherman finalized his plan to march on Atlanta. The main armies remained in winter quarters.

March 1st: The Union cavalry raid on Richmond started to go badly wrong. Having ridden for 36 hours, both men and horses were exhausted. The Confederate defenders had known about the raid and had prepared accordingly. An experienced cavalry unit from Lee's Army of Northern Virginia was brought in to Richmond and chased the Union cavalry force out of the city. By the time the raid formally ended the Union had lost 340 men and 500 horses. It was a propaganda coup for the South and should have been a disaster for the North but the raid was sold as a success as it concentrated on the dilapidated state of the Confederate capital – as witnessed by those on the raid.

March 2nd: Grant was formally promoted to lieutenant general and assumed the title General-in-Chief of the Army of the United States.

March 9th: Grant received his new command in a ceremony attended by the whole Cabinet. Many politicians expected him to work out of Washington. Therefore, there was much surprise when Grant announced that he was going to set up his command in the field with the Army of the Potomac. While a number of politicians in Washington had tried to get Lincoln to dismiss Meade, commander of the Army of the Potomac, Grant expressed his full confidence in his leadership.

March 17th: Grant, observing a request from Halleck, relieved the general of his command and appointed him chief-of-staff. Grant made the destruction of the Army of Northern Virginia his primary aim.

March 18th: Sherman was given formal command of the Military Division of the Mississippi. This Division included command of all Union forces west of the Appalachian Mountains and east of the Mississippi River.

March 27th: Sherman, in Vicksburg, was making hard and fast plans for his campaign against Atlanta. This included concentrating his forces in Chattanooga.

Source: History Learning Site