

Volume I, Issue 2 – February 2024

BRASS BUGLE



Spirit61.info



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THE DISPATCH

M.A. Kleen, Editor

Welcome to the second issue of the *Brass Bugle*, Spirit of '61's monthly newsletter. This newsletter will catalog all the website updates from the previous month, as well as feature some of our most interesting articles and contributions by you, the reader.

You may have noticed a redesign for this newsletter, and that was because we converted over to MS Publisher. I think the new program will allow us to create a more visually-appealing product and at the same time, it will make it easier to layout and organize without losing any of the essentials. It will remain with a horizontal layout to make it easier to read on a computer monitor.

We had a spell of pleasant weather in January, following a rare Virginia snowfall, so I was able to visit Tyndall's Point Park in Gloucester County along the York River. Tyndall's Point, later called Gloucester Point, played a pivotal role early in the Civil

War. The peninsula juts out into the river across from Yorktown, creating a choke-point ideal for controlling access to the river. So, when Virginia prepared to secede in April 1861, its militia quickly erected fortifications near an old Revolutionary War Era British fort. On May 7, 1861, the steam tugboat USS *Yankee* exchanged fire with a Virginia shore battery at the Point.

This brief encounter was the first hostile engagement between Virginia and the U.S. government in the Civil War, occurring a little less than two weeks before Virginia formally seceded from the United States.

Today, the Civil War and Colonial Era fortifications are preserved in Tyndall's Point Park, roughly 7.6 acres along U.S. Highway 17. More signage is devoted to its role in the Revolutionary War than the Civil War. There is a small parking lot and paved trail that weaves among the earthworks.

The Confederates abandoned Gloucester Point on May 4, 1862 in the face of George McClellan's invasion. If you are in the area, I highly recommend a visit. ❖

ENCYCLOPEDIA UPDATES IN JANUARY

Blog posts are only a small piece of what goes into our online Civil War encyclopedia, but new articles and updates may not be readily apparent. Here is just a small part of how Spirit61.info has grown over the past month:

- ◆ Published two articles on the fascinating story of nonwhite volunteers who fought on opposing sides during the first few months of the war.
- ◆ Published an article on the location of Hansbrough's Battalion during the battles of Laurel Hill and Rich Mountain.
- ◆ Visited and photographed Gloucester Point and Tyndall's Point Park (photos coming soon!).
- ◆ Extensive updates to our list of Virginia Volunteer Forces, including all infantry regiments and battalions and cavalry regiments, their commanders, date of formation, and area of operations.
- ◆ Added personality pages for Commander James Harmon Ward (1806–1861) and Brig. Gen. Philip St. George Cocke (1809–1861), two men who died early in the war, one by enemy fire and the other by his own hand.

ANCESTORS AMONG THE ALLEGHENIES

THE DOYLE BROTHERS SEE THE ELEPHANT IN 1861

Steve Litteral

If you have traveled through the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, then you know it is one of the most beautiful places in the country. The surrounding ancient rolling hills have seen men fighting men for countless years.

Most of my family came to Virginia through the Jamestown Colony in the 17th Century, and they remained in the Commonwealth for centuries. My direct ancestors eventually settled in Bath County, Virginia, which now sits on the border of West Virginia.

After Virginia seceded from the Union, four men in my family joined local Confederate units. The Summer of 1861 was a very contentious time in Virginia, and by the end of the year they had all “Seen the Elephant” during the battles of Laurel Hill and Cheat Mountain.

My direct ancestor named George W. Doyle (1830-1904), and his two brothers

(Eli and Jacob) left their family farm and joined the 31st Virginia Infantry in 1861. George Doyle lived in neighboring Highland County and joined the Highland County “Highlanders” led by Capt. Felix Hull. The company mustered in May 11, 1861 at Monterey and proceeded to Northwestern Virginia. After the retreat from Philippi, it was reorganized as Company E, 31st Virginia Infantry under Colonel William Lowther “Mudwall” Jackson, a lawyer, state legislator, and Virginia's third Lieutenant Governor.

The Doyle brothers did not have to wait long to see action at the Battle of Laurel Hill, where they served under Brigadier General Robert S. Garnett (1819-1861). It was the first time the young farmers saw combat. The 31st was the first regiment to reach Laurel Hill and cut down trees and erected breastworks, to be joined later by other units of Garnett’s small army. Union troops commanded by Brig. Gen. Thomas A. Morris advanced on Laurel Hill July 7th

and skirmished with Confederate forces for four days. Garnett was forced to abandon his fortifications on the night of the 11th when word reached him of the defeat at Rich Mountain.

Following the retreat from Laurel Hill and disaster at Corrick’s Ford, the 31st was reorganized again. The Highland County “Highlanders” had over 200 men, so on July 27, 1861 it was split into two companies. George and Jacob Doyle left with 100 other men to form the “new” Company B, also known as the Highlanders or Corn Creek Guards, under Capt. Robert Bradshaw.

Another direct ancestor of mine, John Martin Thomas (1844-1924) was a young cooper living in Bath County, and he joined the Fluvanna Guards, Company K, 44th Virginia Infantry at Bledsoe's Church on June 11, 1861. The 44th rushed toward the fight at Rich Mountain but arrived too late to participate.

After the war, George Doyle and John Thomas would be related by marriage, but in September of 1861, they were both serving under the same leader, General Robert E. Lee.

Lee was selected to lead Confederate forces against the Union soldiers marching through Western Virginia. My ancestors were present at the first battle where General Lee fought as a Confederate commander at the Battle of Cheat Mountain in September 1861.

The 31st VA joined Henry R. Jackson's Brigade and the 44th VA joined Col. William B. Taliaferro's brigade. Lee ordered a complicated envelopment of the Union camp on Cheat Mountain but the isolated units could not coordinate in such hostile terrain, with poor roads, mountain crevasses, and thick forests preventing communication.

The result of the battle was somewhat unremarkable since both sides ended the battle in the same spots where they started, but I find it interesting that I had family who were present at a historic moment in American history.

Both men survived the war, although they were both wounded and ended the war in cavalry units. George Doyle had one brother, Jacob, captured at the Battle of the Wilderness, and he eventually died at the

POW camp in Elmira, NY. George and Eli Doyle went back to their family farm after the war.

John Martin Thomas was wounded in the hip at The Battle of Chancellorsville, and he later joined the 11th Virginia Cavalry once he was healed. He was eventually captured in March 1865, and he was imprisoned at the POW camp at Point Lookout, Maryland. He was eventually paroled in July 1865, and went back to being a cooper and he started a family.

I would encourage anyone who has the chance to investigate their own family history. You will never know where the road will lead you. I knew that I had ancestors who fought in the Civil War, but I had no idea when or where they served until I started to find gentlemen like George and John. I hope that you will find history in your own family tree. ❖

Steve Litteral is a U.S. Army veteran, and he has a B.A. in history and M.A. in military history. He lives in Tennessee with his wife and children.

VOLUNTEERS WANTED!



RESPOND TO YOUR COUNTRY'S CALL!

DO YOU HAVE A PASSION FOR AMERICAN HISTORY AND ENJOY DOING RESEARCH? WE ARE ACTIVELY SEEKING CONTRIBUTIONS TO THIS NEWSLETTER AS WELL AS OUR WEBSITE. UPDATING AND MAINTAINING A GROWING NUMBER OF PAGES (276 AS OF DEC. 24TH) IS A DAUNTING TASK AND WE NEED ALL THE HELP WE CAN GET. CONTACT US AT SPIRIT61.INFO OR EMAIL DISPATCHES@SPIRIT61.INFO

THE NON-COMBAT CASUALTIES AT LAUREL HILL

From June 16 to July 11, 1861, several regiments under the overall command of Confederate Brig. Gen. Robert S. Garnett fortified a camp at Laurel Hill southeast of Belington in what is today Barbour County, West Virginia.

Life in a military camp could be dangerous. Even without an enemy nearby, accidents and disease were ever-present threats.

There is a small Confederate cemetery at Laurel Hill where the bodies of deceased soldiers were interred. A few years ago, a granite marker was erected with the names of the soldiers, both Union and Confederate, who died at Laurel Hill. It doesn't distinguish between combat and non-combat casualties.

The Battle of Belington/Laurel Hill was fought there from Sunday, July 7 to Thursday, July 11, 1861. Casualties were light compared to later battles, but both armies had men killed and wounded. How can we sort this out?

After in-depth research, We've been able to determine which soldiers died of

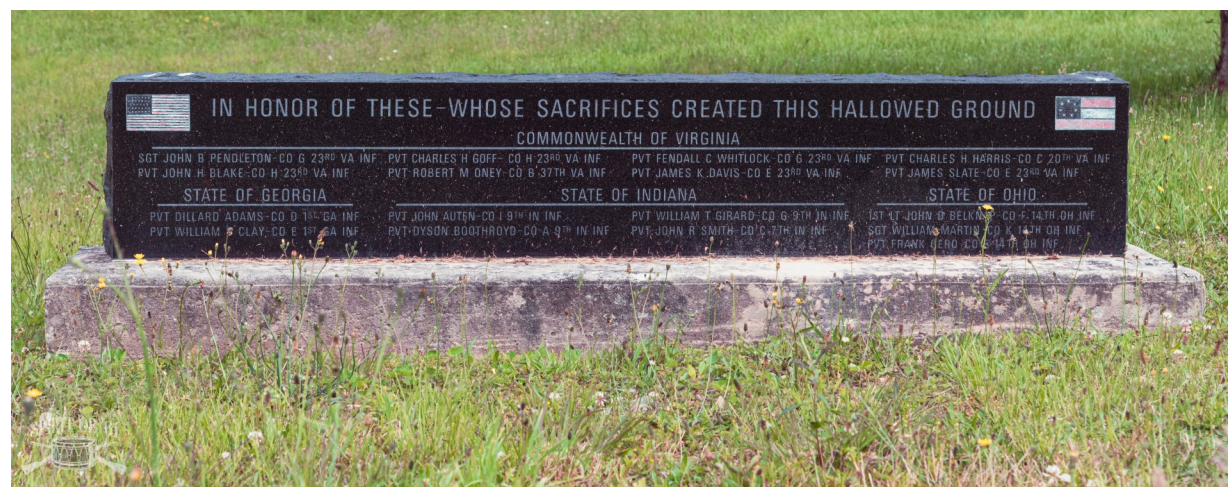
non-combat related events:

- ◆ Pvt. Fendall C. Whitlock (23rd VA, Co. G) d. June 21, 1861 – Measles/"brain fever" (exact date of death is unknown, but it's mentioned in a letter dated June 22).
- ◆ Pvt. James K. Davis (23rd VA, Co. E) d. July 9, 1861 – Unspecified illness (probably measles).
- ◆ Pvt. Charles H. Harris (20th VA, Co. C) d. June 28, 1861 – Friendly fire (accidentally shot by a sentry).
- ◆ Pvt. James Slate (23rd VA, Co. E) d. July 15, 1861 – Measles. Left behind during retreat.
- ◆ Pvt. William S. Clay (1st GA, Co. E) d. July 7, 1861 – Accidental discharge of his musket.

Additionally, the 1st Georgia (Ramsey's) roster lists 1st Lieutenant W.H. Wheeler, Company I, as "died at Laurel Hill" in 1861. This may be incorrect. Lt. William Hull Wheeler's grave marker states that he died on December 26, 1861.

These deaths tell us that a deadly outbreak of measles killed at least three men (others may have died and been buried elsewhere, or re-interred at a later date). For every death, likely hundreds were sick. Inexperienced volunteer soldiers were also accident prone.

It's important to identify these casualties by name so we can make an accurate accounting of how many men were present for duty during these early battles and skirmishes. ❖



ARTIFACT: TRAITORS IN WHEELING

The town of Wheeling, located along the Ohio River in what was then the Virginia panhandle (today, West Virginia), was Virginia's fourth largest city in 1860. Sandwiched between the free states of Ohio and Pennsylvania, it was largely populated by German immigrants with no affinity for Virginia's Anglo-American planter class.

When the Secession Convention in Richmond voted in favor of secession in April, Robert E. Lee directed Maj. Alonzo Loring to raise volunteer companies in Wheeling and the surrounding counties. Loring, a New Yorker by birth, was a Mexican War veteran and businessman with an interest in the local ironworks. He evidently chose to either ignore the order or realized the futility of following it.

A secession referendum was held on May 23rd, and Union partisans in Wheeling were eager to name and shame their opponents, as this broadside shows.

The Shriver Grays was the only Confederate company raised in Wheeling. It was led by Capt. Daniel Shriver and lieutenants John W. Mitchell, John B. Leadley, and Pryor Boyd. Mitchell's is the only name that appears on this list. If these men were willing to give their lives for their cause, why don't their names appear? Well, the Shriver Grays' 80 men formed in secret and slipped away days before the secession referendum to join other pro-secession militia gathered at Harpers Ferry, so they would not have been present to vote. ❖

TRAITORS IN WHEELING.

Below will be found a complete list of the Traitors and Rebels of Wheeling, Va., who voted May 23, 1861, for the infamous Ordinance of Secession, adopted by the usurpers in the Richmond, Va., Convention.

John Hunter, formerly of Steubenville, Ohio.
 Nicholas Crawley, Grocer, Market Square.
 J. W. Mitchell, Lawyer.
 George Wheller, clerk under John McCollo, of Co. Court.
 Eugene Zane, son of Ebenezer Zane, deceased.
 R. A. Stansbury, son of Job Stansbury.
 John H. Towers, clerk with Thomas Hughes.
 Aaron Kelly, Nail Factory, Benwood.
 John Knote, Saddler, Main street.
 Edmund P. Zane, Lawyer.
 Aber Keyes, clerk with Thomas Hughes.
 Dr. Alfred Hughes, brother of Thomas Hughes.
 Coorod Goldsborough.
 A. F. Hullahen, Dentist.
 T. E. Askew, Confectioner.
 James M. Bulger, Coffee House.
 Thomas Hughes, Clothing House.
 Charles W. Seabright, clerk with T. Hughes.
 Rodolph Over.
 Wm. Wharton.
 Michael Riley, Grocer and Liquors, Market & Monroe sts.
 J. B. Riley, clerk with M. Riley.
 John W. Orr, shoemaker, from Washington, Pa.
 J. Updegraff, Steamboat man.
 John Freeze, Steamboat Captain.
 J. L. Faunce, from Smithfield, Ohio.
 John L. Maxwell, clerk.
 Ira Sanger, a New Yorker.
 Ebenezer McCoy, botanic doctor.
 Walter G. Scott, carpenter.
 Wm. Miller, foundry, near creek bridge.
 Robert Ibertson, Grocer, corner Market and Union sts.
 John Bulger, Saddler.
 W. B. Miller, foundry, creek bridge.
 John Webb.
 Wm. Goudy, sr., carpenter.
 James Sweeney, sr., brick maker.
 Joseph Caulwell.
 William C. Phillips.
 Phillip W. Moore, Editor Union.
 Tom Strain.

Jerome Pool, coffee house, Washington Hall.
 J. H. McNash, formerly of Bosley & McNash.
 Thomas M. Riley, (M. Riley's son).
 Phil Riley, do do
 John L. Bonham, firm of Matthews & Bonham.
 James Hanlin, South Wheeling.
 Dr. James W. Clemens.
 Miles Riley, drayman.
 Andrew White, clerk North-Western Bank.
 Peter Letcher, Catholic Bookseller, Washington Hall.
 Henry Dunlap.
 Henry Moore, from Washington, Pa.
 George Henry, cigar maker.
 Jobe Stansbury, sexton East Wheeling graveyard.
 Andy A. Gillespy.
 A. M. Phillips, Jr.
 Harrison Saylards.
 Thos. J. Gardner, lumber merchant, North Wheeling.
 H. W. Phillips, Machinist and Foundry, North Wheeling.
 C. W. McKinstry.
 A. M. Phillips, Sr.
 A. J. Pannell, Lumber Merchant, near Custom House.
 W. G. Goshorn.
 Alexander Pannell, carpenter.
 Daniel Steenrod, Esq.
 Hon. Lewis Steenrod.
 Wm. P. Wilson, boat builder, firm Wilson, Dunlevy & Co.
 John W. Betz.
 William Stewart, foundry.
 Maddis Ruse.
 Dan Dunbar, Engineer.
 Wm. McCoy, Cashier of Savings Institute.
 Daniel Zane, (Island).
 John L. Fry, son of J. L. Fry.
 D. J. Dores.
 Peter Francis.
 S. D. Woodrow.
 William Switzer.
 William Purrell.
 William Otterson, Railroad stone mason.

"Traitors in Wheeling. [Virginia, 1861]," *University of Virginia Library Online Exhibits*,
<https://explore.lib.virginia.edu/items/show/5860>.

PHILIPPI ORDER OF BATTLE

Among the first land actions of the Civil War, the brief fight at Philippi, (West) Virginia on June 3, 1861 kicked off the Tygart Valley Campaign and resulted in a humiliating defeat for the fledgling Confederacy.

It's surprisingly difficult to find an accurate account of the units involved, especially on the Confederate side. The following is our best reconstruction of the order of battle, largely based on the work of Fritz Heselberger, who meticulously researched the campaign for his 1976 book *Yanks from the South!*

ARMY OF THE WEST

KELLY'S COLUMN

Col. Benjamin Franklin Kelley

1st Virginia Infantry (Union); 6 Cos.

Col. Benjamin Franklin Kelley

9th Indiana Infantry; 9 Cos.

Col. Robert H. Milroy

16th Ohio Infantry; 6 Cos.

Col. James Irvine

DUMONT'S COLUMN

Col. Ebenezer Dumont

6th Indiana Infantry

Cos. B, C, E, F, G, I

Col. Thomas Turpin Crittenden

7th Indiana Infantry; 8 Cos.

Col. Ebenezer Dumont

14th Ohio Infantry; 5 Cos.

Col. James B. Steedman

15th Ohio Infantry; 3 Cos.

Col. George W. Andrews

1st Ohio Light Artillery

Lt. Col. Stephen B. Sturges

VIRGINIA PROVISIONAL ARMY

ARMY OF THE NORTHWEST

Col. George A. Porterfield

Letcher Guard

Capt. John A. Robinson

Pocahontas Rescues

Capt. Daniel A. Stofer

Upshur Grays

Capt. John C. Higginbotham

Franklin Guards

Capt. John B. Moomau

Marion Guards

Capt. William P. Thompson

Pendleton Minutemen

Capt. David C. Anderson

Harrison Rifles

Capt. Uriel M. Turner

Highland County Highlanders

Capt. Felix H. Hull

Barbour Grays

Capt. Albert G. Reger

Potomac Guards or Barbour Mountain Guards

Capt. Henry Sturm

Churchville Cavalry

Capt. Francis F. Sterrett

Second Rockbridge Dragoons

Capt. John R. McNutt

Barbour Lighthorse Cavalry

Capt. William K. Jenkins

The Bath Grays

Capt. Archibald T. Richards



VIRGINIA IN 1861

THE OLD DOMINION PLAYED A PRINCIPAL ROLE IN AMERICA'S INDEPENDENCE FROM ENGLAND AND HAD A REPUTATION AS THE "BIRTHPLACE OF PRESIDENTS." AS 1861 DAWNED, HOWEVER, WOULD IT TURN ITS BACK ON THE COUNTRY IT HELPED CREATE?

At the dawn of 1861, war clouds gathered over the United States. Before president-elect Abraham Lincoln was inaugurated on March 4th, seven slaveholding states voted to secede from the Union, which the incoming Lincoln Administration and others saw as an illegal act of rebellion.

South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas formed the Confederate States of America on February 4, 1861 and elected former United States Senator and Secretary of War Jefferson Davis as their president.

It was not a forgone conclusion that Virginia would join this fledgling Confederacy. In the presidential election of 1860, Constitutional Union candidate John Bell received 44.63 percent of the popular vote, securing all 15 of Virginia's delegates. John

C. Breckinridge, the Southern Democratic candidate favored by secessionists, came in second with 44.54 percent. Abraham Lincoln received a scant 1,887 votes.

Virginia Governor John Letcher (1813-1884) was a former U.S. Representative who, while not outspoken against seces-

If the Confederacy was to have a fighting chance, it needed Virginia.

sion, did not favor the idea. Former President John Tyler and he organized a peace conference in Washington, DC in February 1861, which failed to achieve its goals.

If the Confederacy was to have a fighting chance, it needed Virginia. The Old Dominion was, at the time, over 61,000 square miles with a total population of 1,596,318 (31 percent of which were slaves). There were 58,042 free people of color living in Virginia. If a war was to break out, Virginia could draw on over 206,170 white men between the ages of 15 and 40, who would do the bulk of the fighting.

Raw manpower wasn't the only martial asset Virginia brought to the table. It produced some of the finest officers in America. Robert E. Lee, Joseph E. Johnston, Thomas J. Jackson, Robert S. Garnett, Richard S. Ewell, and George H. Thomas all graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and fought in the Mexican-American War. Most would side with the Confederacy. The Virginia Military Institute in Lexington also educated a generation of young officers.

Three important federal facilities were within its borders: the Harper's Ferry Arsenal, Gosport Navy Yard, and Fort Monroe. Washington, DC also sat directly across the Potomac River. Robert E. Lee could look out across the Potomac from his home on Arlington Heights and see the U.S. Capitol in the distance.

Though Virginia remained predominantly rural, the City of Richmond had a population of nearly 38,000, with the Tredegar Iron Works, the third largest iron works in the United States at that time. Western Virginia produced much needed salt.

The Shenandoah Valley not only provided large quantities of grain and food-

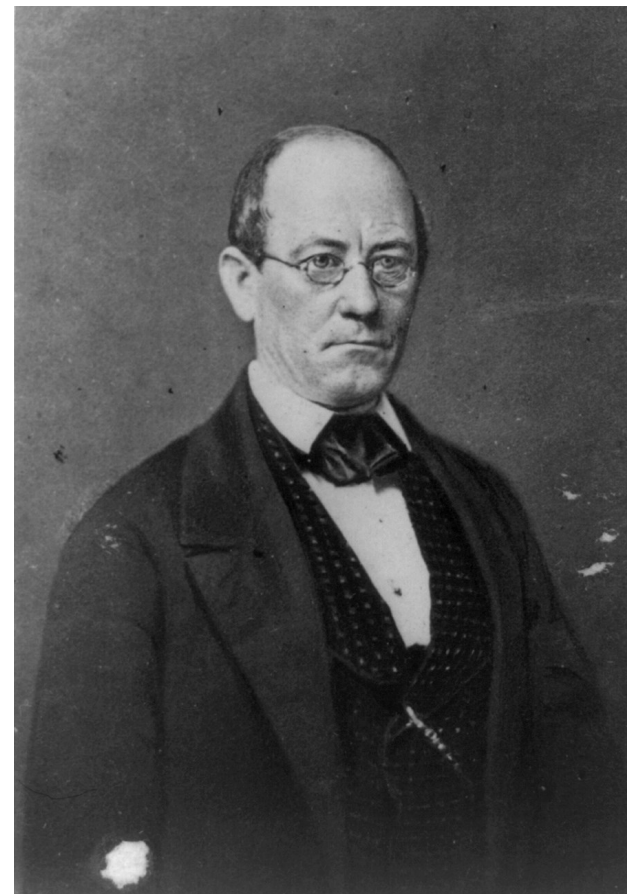
stuffs, but pig iron as well. Virginia also had 1,673 miles of railroad tracks, including sections of the vital Baltimore & Ohio Railroad.

As America was divided over the issue of slavery, however, so was Virginia. Most Virginians living west of the Allegheny Mountains and along the Ohio River had strong economic ties to Northern states like Ohio and Pennsylvania, and slavery was uncommon. In the western Virginia panhandle, less than half a percent of the population were enslaved. Wheeling, Virginia's fourth largest city, was populated by German immigrants with no affinity for Virginia's Anglo-American planter class. It was unclear how these Virginians would respond if the state seceded.

Delegates to Virginia's Secession Convention initially voted against secession, hoping that a compromise could be reached and war avoided. Then came the Confederate bombardment of Fort Sumter off the coast of South Carolina on April 12th and President Abraham Lincoln's call for 75,000 volunteers to "suppress the rebellion" in the Deep South. Virginia was called upon to furnish troops to invade its sister states in the South. How would she respond? ♦

DISCUSSION

- ⇒ Examine the initial resistance to secession at the Virginia Secession Convention. What factors influenced the delegates' initial vote against secession?
- ⇒ How did the differing economic and social landscapes within Virginia influence its stance on secession? Consider the contrast between the eastern and western parts of the state.
- ⇒ Discuss the impact that Virginia-born military officers like Robert E. Lee had on the state's decision to secede. What role did their allegiance play in shaping the course of the state and the war?
- ⇒ Explore the strategic importance of Virginia's location and infrastructure, such as its proximity to Washington D.C., its railroads, and military facilities. How did these factors make Virginia a significant player in the Civil War?



JOHN LETCHER, GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA IN 1861 | Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division.



VIRGINIA
JANUARY 1861

PERCENTAGE
ENSLAVED

0-10%
11-25%
26-45%
46-60%
61-75%

FEDERAL
FACILITIES

- HARPER'S FERRY ARSENAL
- FORT MONROE
- GOSPORT NAVY YARD
- RAILROAD

