

Robert E. Lee's draft message to the Army of Northern Virginia during the Battle of Spotsylvania

Spotsylvania, Virginia, 15 - 18 May 1864.

Autograph manuscript, 4 leaves + envelope.

The Command^g Gen [struck: is gratified] takes pleasure in announcing to the Army the series of successes which by the blessing of God, have recently been achieved by our arms. A part of the enemy's force [struck: that was] threatening the [Valley] of Virginia [struck: has been intercepted and] [inserted: has been] [illegible] by Gen Imboden's [struck: command, with the loss of its] and driven [struck: into Maryland] [inserted: back by the Potomac], with the loss of their wagon train and a number of prisoners.

Another body of the enemy under Gen Averill penetrated to the Va and Tennessee RailRoad at Dublin's Depot, A portion of this force has been [struck: dispersed] [inserted: defeated] by Gen¹ [inserted: Morgan &] WE Jones, [struck: who when and] [inserted: who are in pursuit of] the remainder [struck: is slowly retreating before Him.]

The [struck: T illegible] Army of Gen Banks which invaded western La, [struck: has] sustained a severe defeat at the hands of Gen Kirby Smith, and retreated to Alexandria with the loss of several thousand prisoners, [2] thirty five pieces of artillery and a large number of wagons. [struck: Several] & some of the most formidable gunboats that accompanied the expedition [struck: have] and many transports have been destroyed by the enemy to [struck: present] [inserted: save] them from [struck: further] capture, and [struck: our forces are reported in] Northern papers. I [struck: have] report that our troops have interrupted the navigation of Red River below Alexandria, [struck: thereby undergoing the saf safety of the remainder of the Army of Gen Banks].

The expedition of Gen Steele into Western Arkansas has been driven back by Gen Price [inserted: with the loss of his] who captured all [struck: the enemy's] [inserted: his] wagons and artillery. [struck: A remnant But], Only a small part of Gen Steele's army has succeeded in reaching Little Rock.

The cavalry force sent by Gen Grant to attack Richmond has been repulsed and retreated towards [struck: York R] the Peninsula and every demonstration of the enemy south of James River [inserted: so far] successfully repelled.

[3] The [*inserted: heroic*] valor [*struck: and*] of this Army, under the blessing of Almighty God has thus far [*struck: off*] checked the progress of the principal Army of the enemy towards Richmond, and inflicted [*inserted: upon it*] heavy loss [*struck: upon it*]. [*struck: The eyes of*] Your country [*struck: illegible are turns*] looks to you in your [*struck: noble*] gallant struggle with confidence and hope. Encouraged by the successes that have been vouchsafed to us, stimulated by the great interests that depend upon the issue, and sustained by prayers of [*struck: the dear ones*] [*inserted: those*] in whose defence you fight, let every man resolve to put forth his utmost efforts, to endure all and brave all, until by the assistance of a just and merciful God [*struck: A as success shall crown*] the enemy shall be driven back and [*struck: a speedy*] peace [*struck: be*] secured to our country.

[*struck: Some of our bravist [sic] officers & men* Many of your brave comrades] have fallen, [*struck: but they have left [inserted: a durable]* the example of their glorious sacrifice to]

[4] Some of our bravest officers and men have fallen, [*struck: Let their ex*] but their [*inserted: surviving*] comrades not less brave will emulate their glorious examples, and Continue to emulate the valor of your brave comrades who have fallen [*illegible phrase*] that it [*struck: rests with the*] [*inserted: depends on*] you to see that they [*struck: shall not*] [*inserted: shall not*] have died in vain. With the blessing of God, it is in your power to defeat the last great effort of the enemy, secure [*struck: safety and*] independence to your native land, and earn for yourselves the [*inserted: lasting*] love and gratitude of your country men and the admiration of [*struck: the world*] [*inserted: mankind.*] [*struck: Let your effects be worthy of*]

[*envelope*]

Sharpsburg

letter 18 Sept.

& other valuable

papers,

[*struck: M illegible*],

[Bristerd Station]

Telegrams of

Bragg Beauregard

at Petersburg

Letter of Hampton

May 18/63

Notes: Written on verso of an unrelated telegram on stationery of the Southern Telegraph Companies.