

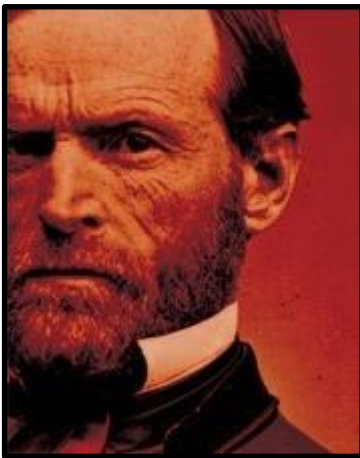
General William T. Sherman's Scorched Earth Warfare Tactics

A glance into the life of one of the most controversial, and legendary, people in American history.

Presented by Randy Jaye

“The [Confederate] people cannot be made to love us, but may be made to fear us, and dread the passage of [Union] troops through their country.” – Sherman’s letter to General U.S. Grant (October 4, 1862).

The mere mention of General Sherman’s name conjures up visions of fire, smoke, destruction, desolation, Atlanta in flames, plantations and farms destroyed and railroad cars and tracks smashed beyond recognition.



This program discusses William T. Sherman’s personal life, education, participation in the Second Seminole War, and his turbulent American Civil War service where he rose to the rank of Major General.

In November of 1861, Sherman was placed in command of the Department of the Cumberland in Kentucky. He began suffering from delusions and believed that President Lincoln broke his promise by giving him such a prominent position this early in the Civil War. He was relieved of command due to what was most likely a ‘nervous breakdown’. By mid-December 1861, he recovered sufficiently and returned to service. The *Cincinnati Commercial* (a newspaper in Sherman’s home state) described him as “insane.” A label that followed him for much of his life.

The Battle of Shiloh (April 6-7, 1862) reinforced Sherman’s self-confidence after he rebounded from a disastrous mistake by dismissing intelligence reports and was promoted to Major General of volunteers. Sherman’s role in the Vicksburg campaign (Dec. 26, 1862 to July 4, 1863) helped ensure a major Confederate surrender and he was awarded the rank of Brigadier General in the regular army, in addition to his rank of Major General of volunteers. The punishment that the city of Atlanta received in the Summer of 1864 was almost unprecedented in the history of the U.S. Army. Sherman forced the citizens from their homes and businesses and consequently destroyed 11/12th of the entire city. Then came the brutal and infamous “March to the Sea” from Atlanta to Savannah, Georgia where Sherman used scorched earth warfare tactics to practically destroy the Confederate States of America’s ability to engage in warfare.



Also discussed is his negotiation of Confederate General Joseph E. Johnston’s surrender (where Sherman was actually accused of being too lenient). After the Civil War he became the Commander of the Department of the Missouri (1866-1869), “Acting” Secretary of War

of the United States (served approximately six weeks in 1869), Commanding General of the United States Army (1869-1884), and then he became an author and speaker in civilian life (1884-1891). Sherman died on February 14, 1891 in New York City, NY at the age of 71.



Randy Jaye has recently researched and nominated 5 properties that have been successfully added onto the National Register of Historic Places. He is the author of several recent books including: *Flagler County, Florida: A Centennial History* (2017); *Perseverance: Episodes of Black History from the Rural South* (2020); *Jim Crow Era Propaganda, Artifacts and Upheavals in Florida* (2022); and *Florida Prohibition: Corruption, Defiance and Tragedy* (2024). He also writes articles for historical journals, local newspapers, magazines, online publications, and has appeared on several radio shows and PBS documentaries. He earned both a Master’s degree and a Bachelor’s degree from California State University.