

General Jonathan B. Moore

First Colonel of the Thirty-third Wisconsin Volunteers

Written by [Robert A. Braun](#)

Born on March 16, 1825, in Posey County, Indiana, young Jonathan Baker Moore came with his family to Muscoda, Wisconsin in 1837. As an adult, Moore entered politics and served a term as the constable of Platteville from 1849-52. After that, he served as Platteville's Town Clerk in 1853. Returning to Muscoda, he formed the Muscoda Lodge No. 58, Free and Accepted Masons. Through a charter granted on June 12, 1855, Moore served as "Worshipful Master" of the lodge. Moore was elected State Assemblyman from Muscoda in 1860, then later won election to County Sheriff in 1861. He was captain of the "Lancaster Union Guard," an infantry company organized on May 27, 1861. Despite early success and a twice-weekly drill schedule, Moore had second thoughts about his captaincy of the company. The June 27, 1861 edition of the *Grant County Herald* reported that "J. B. Moore having resigned as Captain, it was thought best for all the officers to resign and organize anew." Governor Edward Salomon appointed Moore as Colonel of the Thirty-third Regiment on August 30, 1862.

Governor Salomon's appointments of prominent Grant County citizens to field officer rank were sparse when compared to the large number of men sent by the county to support the Union war effort. Before August 30, 1862, only two officers from Grant County had received appointments above the grade of captain. The people of "Old Grant" received the commission of Jonathan Moore and Horatio Virgin to field-grade rank enthusiastically, as recognition of Grant County's services to the state.

The Moore family was heavily invested in the war. One brother, Captain William Moore of Company "G" (Jackson County Rifles), 10th Wisconsin, was killed by guerrillas near Larkinsville, Alabama, July 4, 1862. A second brother, Jeremiah C. Moore of Avoca, in Iowa County, eventually commanded Company "A" of the Thirty-third Wisconsin. Jeremiah edged out an aspiring officer with prior military service— George B. Carter of Platteville. Reportedly, a brother-in-law of Colonel Moore served as regimental sutler.

Moore actively organized the Thirty-third Regiment, via a series of general orders that lettered the companies, arranged for drill and general camp duties at Camp Utley, Racine, and ordered the color guard of the regiment. A bout of illness forced him to secure a short leave of absence, leaving the regiment to be further drilled by Lieutenant Colonel Frederick S. Lovell, and Major Virgin. Lovell was a prominent and well-known attorney from Kenosha and former Speaker of the House for the Wisconsin legislature, while Virgin was the son of the popular State Senator Noah Virgin of Platteville.

Upon arrival in Memphis, Moore accepted assignment as commander of the Sixth Brigade, which included the Thirty-third Regiment. Lieutenant Colonel Lovell assumed command of the regiment. Sixth Brigade reported to Brig. Gen. Jacob G. Lauman,

himself responsible to Gen. William T. Sherman. The Thirty-third's first active campaign opened as the boys took part in General U. S. Grant's "Yaona Campaign"—an overland march along the Mississippi Central Railroad to Jackson, Mississippi, and then a march west to capture Vicksburg, the ultimate goal. Problems developed from the start, and Grant switched to a water-borne assault on Vicksburg, to be commanded by General



Sherman. On December 9, Sherman reviewed his former command before departing for his new assignment, including a personal review of the Thirty-third Wisconsin. Regimental Quartermaster Sergeant Alfred McCarn recalled: "Gen. Sherman... complimented [the regiment] very highly, and expressed the wish that he could have it with him [during the coming advance to Vicksburg]. Col. Moore replied, saying he would rather be a private in the army that takes Vicksburg than a Brigadier General guarding railroads."

Accordingly, Grant ordered the regiments from Sherman's former command reassigned to other duties. On December 11, 1862, Brigadier General Lauman issued Special Orders No. 11, from his Third Division headquarters at the Hurricane Creek camp. These orders directed: "The Thirty-third Wisconsin Regiment, and [Henry A.] Roger's Battery ["D," 1st Light Illinois Artillery] will, under the command of Colonel Moore, of the Thirty- third Wisconsin

Regiment, move tomorrow, the 12th instant, to the town of Oxford, Miss., starting at the hour of 9 a.m. Arriving there, it will report to Brigadier-General Lauman, commanding Fourth Division."

The veteran "Fighting Fourth" Division had an enviable reputation, having acquitted itself with considerable distinction in the battles of Shiloh and Corinth. In compliance with Grant's orders, Lauman broke up the two brigades of his division and transferred most to guard duty along the rail lines that served the Federal Army. He re-assigned only one regiment from the defunct Third Division to his new command—the Thirty-third Wisconsin. The Badgers were placed in First Brigade, commanded by Colonel Isaac Pugh. Four regiments comprised First Brigade: 41st Illinois; 53d Illinois; 3d Iowa; and the Thirty-third Wisconsin, with Colonel Moore returned to active command of the regiment.

As time went on, Colonel Moore's ambition for personal advancement and power caused friction within the regiment, particularly among some of the officers. He had a falling out with Surgeon Joseph B. Whiting over the latter's failure to rapidly select a replacement hospital steward when that position became vacant. Moore subsequently placed Whiting under arrest, possibly for a verbal altercation with Moore stemming from the lack of a hospital steward appointment. Enlisted men likewise had their concerns. Private John Wray of Company F had performed picket duty well in Moore's presence at the regiment's Waterford Camp during the Yaona Campaign, but Moore neglected to

compliment the new soldier. Wray noted: "I have always thought I was at least entitled to the Colonel's thanks but Colonel J. B. Moore was too selfish a man for that, thinking more of his interest than that of his men."

There appears to be a divergence of opinion regarding Colonel Moore between soldiers in the regiment who hailed from the western counties, verses those that came from elsewhere. Whiting resided in Janesville, while Wray enlisted in Evansville—both in Rock County. In contrast, Sergeant Major Alfred Fitch from Tafton, Grant County noted the following in a February 17, 1863 letter: "The high military ability exhibited by Col. Moore, together with his knowing integrity and decision of character, his deep evident interest in and faithfulness [sic] to the cause to which he has given himself, have won him the respect and high esteem of his superior and associate officers, and have proved him to be possessed of the elements of a first rate commander. Grant County may well be proud of him..."

When Captain Willaim Earnhart of Company D received a medical discharge for disability resulting in a spine injury incurred well before the regiment's muster-in, Earnhart's tearful farewell touched a general chord among the men. Private William Holford of "D," a fellow from the "Blakes Prairie" region of Grant County wrote: "Col. Moore parted with him with sincere regret; said he to me, 'there is not a man in this regiment that I should be more sorry to lose than Capt. Earnhart, but it was best that he should go.'"

Moore's general congeniality towards Grant County men apparently was not reflected in the regiment as a whole. Captain Joseph Linsley of Company "H" from Kenosha County vented his frustrations regarding what he called the regiment's "Grant County element": "It's enough to make a preacher inclined to profanity to see how this reg. is conducted. A man has got to be a 'Free Mason' and be forever telling what he will do and never do it and hang around the Col[onel's] tent and drink whiskey (a variety of qualifications your husband happens not to have and doesn't propose to make any great efforts to possess them) to be what some would wish to be, 'A favorite.' Thank God! I stand on my own shoes and as long as I remain in this reg. I intend to stand there."

He continued: "I will tell you a little of where the 'curse' to this reg. is. The Col. has two brothers in the reg. as Capts. Most of the officers are from Grant Co. and men also. The Sutler is brother-in-law to the Col. and most if not all of the officers from Grant Co. are 'Free Masons' and the influence and ties of brotherhood are carried into the army by them. They say he [Colonel Moore] is in partnership with the Sutler. He professes to be no drinking man, but a 'sly glass' sometimes gets turned upside down in the neighborhood of his tent and most all the officers indulge to their satisfaction."

Linsley made his feelings known in no uncertain terms: "The Col. don't know his 'behind from a two-dollar hat,' as to military matters..."

In mid April 1863, Moore re-ordered his command prior to an expected campaign against the Confederates. This shuffling of officers brought renewed angst from Captain Linsley.

In what probably became his final letter to his wife Bessie, Linsley poured out his dissatisfaction: "The Adjutant [William Warner] has been promoted Captain of Company 'D' and the Sergeant Major [Alfred H. Fitch] to the Adjutancy. It has created a good deal of talk, as the Adjutant is not considered in the line of promotion among the line officers, and the Sergeant Major's promotion has jumped every 2nd Lieut. in the reg., among whom the Adjt. should have come from. The Adjt. ranks as 1st Lieut. with the pay of [a] Captain. But as I have told you, Grant County runs this 'machine' and that's the way this came about."

By all accounts, Moore exhibited coolness and bravery under fire. The Thirty-third Wisconsin saw its first action on April 19, 1863 on the banks of the Coldwater River at Perry's Ferry, Mississippi. A former Racine resident, Lt. Daniel Shea of Company "K" recalled seeing Moore standing on the banks of the Coldwater, firing a musket as an example to his Wisconsin boys. Unfortunately, the overall commander of the Federal forces ordered Moore to break off the action, much to the disappointment of the soldiers. Lieutenant George Carter of Company "A", former Grant County under-sheriff under Moore, observed: "If our Col. had been in command the attempt would have been made [to cross the Coldwater River in force] and the enemy gloriously whipped."

On April 24, 1863, on the occasion of the regiment's return to Memphis after its "baptism of fire" at Perry's Ferry, Colonel Moore issued a congratulatory order to the regiment. Written in the third person, it was both typical of Colonel Moore's style, and the flowery prose of the age:

The Colonel commanding takes this opportunity of expressing his grateful acknowledgments to the officers and men of his command, for their very satisfactory conduct in the engagement at Coldwater, Miss. on the 19th inst. The conduct of both officers and men was above the praise of all, and any particularizing of individual instances of bravery would be out of place. All exhibited the coolness and courage of veterans, and every order was promptly and cheerfully executed.

The Col. is proud of his command, feels that he can trust them anywhere, where courage, valor, and patriotism are needed. Of these qualities the officers and men of the 33d Wisconsin have proved themselves possessed beyond a shadow of doubt.

But while the Colonel congratulates his command upon their valiant conduct, he would also express his sorrowing sympathy with the many friends of those who have fallen, and especially with those companies of his command who have lost brave, generous and noble commanders. Theirs was the first blood shed in our Regiment in defense of the country we love. We shall never cease to admire them for their nobleness of character and their heroic virtues.

But though dead, they yet speak to us. Their blood, shed in defense of Right and Truth, cries to us for like deeds of noble daring. Let us follow the dying words of the lamented Lieut. Henry Swift, Jr. : "Close up boys!" Let us "close up" the gaps in our ranks, made

by the bullets of our murderous foe, and strike with earnest purpose, till the last enemy of the Stars and Stripes has perished or laid down his arms.'

Moore, as conscious of good public relations as were most leaders of his rank and reputation, immediately released his April 24 order to the hometown newspapers. The *Grant County Herald* carried a reprint in its May 12, 1863 edition.

Colonel Moore conducted his regiment efficiently in action against the Confederates manning defensive positions along the Hall's Ferry Road at Vicksburg Mississippi. Several successful counter-attacks against Confederate sorties, and an important dusk action that captured a new line of Confederate works thrust the Thirty-third Regiment into the First Brigade's limelight. General Lauman eventually ordered half the regiment on duty at all times in the trenches, in recognition of their quality and dependability.

Likewise, Moore capably handled the regiment during the mid-July actions around Jackson, Mississippi. Tearing up rail lines and maneuvering in the face of determined Confederate defenders, Moore saved his regiment from certain annihilation by obeying General Lauman's orders to scout the Pearl River south of the city. In the meantime, Lauman ordered the remainder of First Brigade to charge the Confederate works—with predictable and disastrous result.

Headquarters ordered the exhausted Thirty-third Wisconsin to garrison duty in Natchez Mississippi, where regimental politics again surfaced during the waning days of October. Colonel Moore, in charge of the Federal post at Natchez, again attempted to position himself for a brigadier general's commission. George Carter, now captain of Company "A," penned a letter to his brother. He thought "Colonel Moore's chances tip top for a Brig[adier General]ship if they are all not full. Genl. Crocker, Lauman, Gresham, [Brigadier General Thomas Kilby] Smith (our new Brig. Commander formerly Col. of the 54th Ohio) have joined in a recommendation to Genl. Grant asking for his promotion. The Col.'s reputation is A No. 1 here, I assure you."

Indeed, an inspection of the regiment at Natchez returned a very favorable result for Moore and his men. On October 14, 1863, Adjutant Alfred H. Fitch released a letter from regimental headquarters to Mr. Cover of the *Grant County Herald*: "The 'Old Fighting 4th' [Division] has just undergone a minute and rigid examination by Lieut. Col. Strong, Inspector General of the 17th Army Corps. In his report to the Commanding General, Col. Strong stated that he was very much pleased with the Division, and that the 33d Wisconsin, in point of neatness of camp and quarters, condition of arms and accouterments, and general appearance was not only the best regiment in the Division but the very best he had ever seen in the country. This is a well-merited compliment to the excellent ability and military discipline of Col. J. B. Moore, of Grant county [sic]. Honor to whom honor is due. ...The 33d is in excellent health and spirits, and never was in better fighting trim than now." The next day, George Carter mentioned Lieut. Col. Strong's inspection in a letter to his brother Bill: "He gave us great credit. Says we have the cleanest camp and the best quarters of any Regt. in the Corps. This of course can't hurt the Col.'s chances with his rep[utation]."

From Natchez, the Thirty-third embarked on a Vicksburg-bound steamer, and encamped with XVII Corps east of the city at Hebron Plantation. There, friction between Moore and his officers again erupted, On December, 3, 1863 Carter proceeded to shed some light on



recent events: "There is unfortunately some misunderstanding between Col. Moore and Lt. Col. Lovell, that I cannot account for, other than on ambition and jealous grounds. Of course it is my duty and interest to keep out of any faction or party on the subject. [... It deeply affected the Thirty-third's officers] to see matters so uncomfortable between two excellent officers. The Col. makes the Lt. Col. a mere cipher in the govt. and administration of the Regt. [sic] Col. Moore is Col. and he will be Col. and the Lt. Col. is not the man to be a cipher any where [sic]. Of course I have nothing to say. Military men, as all other men, have their ambitions and jealousies, which in this case is the [illegible] to be lamented as they could by working together mutually help each other greatly. Whereas the Lt. Col.['s] influence for the Col. is dormant, and his influence is not small, Senators Dolittle and Howe being his

intimate personal friend[s]. I have said more on the subject than I intended, but I am at it. I might as well say that if the Col. don't succeed we shall undoubtedly lose Lt. Col. Lovell." Indeed, Lovell submitted an application to be assigned to recruiting duty for the regiment the very next day. Brigade headquarters approved Lovell's application on December 6, 1863. Shortly thereafter, Moore himself went home on furlough.

In February 1864, Moore commanded the regiment during the Meridian Expedition. The troops slogged nearly unopposed through hundreds of miles of Mississippi countryside in wintry weather to destroy the vital rail junction at Meridian. Along the way, Union men tore up track and laid waste to military and support targets in what would become a testing ground for the Sherman's "March to the Sea" some seven months hence. On the return leg of the campaign, General McPherson detached Col. Moore's Thirty-third Wisconsin for a mission to destroy a pontoon bridge across the Pearl River at Madisonville. Along with the destruction of the bridge, Moore wrecked several mills and machinery in the area, which exceeded his orders. As it turned out, General Marcellus Crocker, Moore's immediate superior, covered for him in a subsequent report. It would be the last time Colonel Moore led the Thirty-third Wisconsin in direct field operations as its commanding officer.

Immediately after the Meridian Campaign, headquarters elevated Col. Moore to brigade command, in a division-sized detachment from XVII Corps under General T. K. Smith bound for the Red River country of Louisiana. Aided by able staff officers detached from the Thirty-third Wisconsin like Captain William Warner and Quartermaster John Nichols, Moore competently directed the brigade throughout the operation. Major Horatio Virgin commanded the Thirty-third Wisconsin.

After the return of the Thirty-third Regiment to Memphis, Colonel Moore assumed temporary division command in "Detachment, XVII Corps," while Colonel Lyman Ward commanded a newly created brigade, and Lovell returned to direct the regiment. Moore

stayed in his Memphis headquarters while the Thirty-third Wisconsin participated in General A.J. Smith's July, 1864 campaign against Confederate forces in northern Mississippi, commonly referred to as the "Tupelo Campaign."

In August, Col. Moore took over command of a 1,500-man brigade (which included Col. Ward's brigade and the Thirty-third Wisconsin) from "Detachment XVII Corps" sent to relieve Federal troops at St. Charles, Arkansas, on the White River. He again had competent officers from the Thirty-third assigned to his staff: Capt. William Warner, Co. "D", as Acting Assist. Adjutant General; Capt. William L. Scott, Co. "F" as Acting Assistant Inspector General, and Lieut. John W. Nichols, Regimental Quartermaster, as Acting Assistant Quartermaster. For several weeks, Moore directed the construction of formidable fortifications in the St. Charles area, to protect Union shipping and supply up the river. Incursions into the region by Confederate troops led by General Sterling Price caused Union commanders at Little Rock and Devall's Bluff no little consternation.

Then, in a strange and uncharacteristic change of nature, Moore began ignoring the orders of superior officers in the district. Maybe he didn't wish to leave the stout works around St. Charles, or perhaps he believed himself still under the direction of General Washburn in Memphis. Whatever the reason, Moore disregarded several directives from superiors at both Little Rock and Devall's Bluff to send his troops from St. Charles to Devall's—each time excusing his actions due to insufficient troops, want of transport, or both. Finally, General Steele in Little Rock peremptorily ordered Moore north to Devall's, using terse language and Moore's position, but not his name, on the telegram. A steamer did arrive at Devall's Bluff...bearing only Captain Warner of Moore's staff!

Warner indicated that Moore would transport his troops once he could do in all in one movement, and not split the command. Headquarters howled and telegraph lines hummed as General Steele again ordered Moore to Devall's Bluff. Moore finally issued the orders for the movement up the White River. In a communication to General Washburn, he confided his concerns: "We abandon this place, which in my opinion should not be done, as the fortifications are quite formidable and should the enemy occupy them the gun-boats would be unable to dislodge them without the assistance of a land force, and so Steele's communication would be cut off. I have represented these facts to General Andrews and through him to General Steele. I shall not be sorry when the order comes for us to return to your command." Shortly thereafter, Captain William Warner, Moore's vade mecum, resigned his captaincy and accepted promotion to Major of the Forty-fourth Wisconsin Infantry.

Col. Moore directed the movements of his brigade on subsequent marches from Devall's Bluff and Brownsville, Arkansas into Missouri. On October 18, Special Orders No 129 from General A. J. Smith headquarters temporarily attached Moore's brigade to the First Division, XVI Army Corps. Moore eventually set up headquarters in Warrensburg, Missouri.

With the destruction of Sterling Price's forces, Moore and his brigade were reassigned to "Detachment XVII Corps," and Moore himself placed in command of a provisional

division in the new organization. In the meantime, General George H. Thomas scoured the West for troops with which to defend Nashville from a certain attack by General John B. Hood's "Army of the Tennessee." Moore, along with the Thirty-third Wisconsin, was caught in Thomas' "dragnet" and ordered to Tennessee. Moore's newly named "Division, XVII Corps" boarded steamers bound for Nashville, as headquarters again assigned his division to General A. J. Smith.

Upon arrival at Nashville, orders once again re-organized the command structure of the western troops. XVI Corps was broken up, and the men assigned with Division, XVII Corps, and the whole known as "Detachment Army of the Tennessee." Moore accepted command of the newly formed Third Division. Lieut. Col. Lovell commanded the Thirty-third Wisconsin, which remained in Moore's division, as part of First Division's First Brigade, led by Col. Lyman Ward.

During General Thomas' attacks on Hood's exposed left on December 15, 1864, Moore's troops spent most of the day in a support role for other brigades and divisions of "Detachment Army of Tennessee." As the afternoon wore on, Moore spotted the remnants of Manigault's Brigade, a thin line of tattered Confederates barely 800 strong, crouched behind a wall that bordered the Hillsborough Turnpike. Inspiration sparked in Moore's brain and, without pausing to inform his superiors, he personally directed Colonel Ward's brigade to attack. Ward obeyed, and the ensuing raucous charge smashed the Confederate line. Ward's troops breathlessly reported capturing some 600 prisoners and two cannon! Subsequent reports downgraded the victory to 248 prisoners and one cannon captured by the Thirty-third Regiment alone, but the men in later years always claimed the higher figures were closer to the truth. In a strange twist, Moore's division was kept in reserve during the next day's fighting, and therefore missed participating in the general route of Hood's army. Doubtless Moore thought his initiative might at last gain for him the brigadier's star he so earnestly coveted.

But it was not to be. Moore's division pursued the fleeing Army of Tennessee south until the Union men reached Columbia, Tennessee. There, orders halted the chase, and directed Moore, now returned to brigade command, to assemble transportation to place his regiments in winter quarters at Eastport, Mississippi. It became the grimy, mud-spattered task of the Thirty-third Wisconsin to escort the division wagon trains over miles of mired and rutted roads to steamer transports bound for Eastport. By January 15, 1865, the regiment finally disembarked at the winter camp.

On January 17, 1865, the regimental parade of the Thirty-third Wisconsin saw the departure of Lieut. Col. Fed Lovell, who had resigned his position in the Thirty-third in order to accept the Colonelcy of the new Forty-sixth Wisconsin regiment. George Carter's prediction that Lovell would eventually leave the regiment had come to pass. Major Horatio Virgin took charge of the men.

The very same day, General Thomas K. Smith was relieved of duty as division commander, and Col. Moore restored to the top division spot. With this command came an assignment for Moore to conduct a reconnaissance-in-force to Corinth, Mississippi.

Orders indicated the route to take, amounts of food and ordnance for the men, and directions on halts and so forth. The directive also allowed approximately six days to accomplish the reconnaissance.

Moore drove his men mercilessly on the road to and from Corinth. He completed the essential objectives of his orders in slightly more than three days—and earned the scorn of his men. Corporal Andrew Parsons of “F” Company remembered that: “There was more cursing & swearing about it I guess than any other act occasioned before even the officers joined in “Col. Moore commanding the Division was at fault.” All kinds of imprecations and bad wishes were indulged in against him. ...I presume the papers will give him a great puff for accomplishing in three days & a half what he was allowed 6 days to do it in.”

Perhaps it was this ire that caused Moore to seek temporary respite for his military duties. Moore, by his own account, noticed the depleted nature of his regiment. He formally requested “to be ordered to Madison Wis. to make the necessary arrangements to fill up my regiment.” Both Brig. Gen. Thomas Kilby Smith and Maj. Gen. A. J. Smith endorsed Moore’s request. Eventually, Headquarters, Department of the Cumberland issued Special Field Orders No. 21 dated January 24, 1865, which authorized Col. Moore a thirty-day leave of absence.

However, Moore’s leave was probably cut short, as orders directed the division to embark steamers for New Orleans and the coming Spring campaign. While encamped on the Plains of Chalmette, the site of the famed War of 1812 battle, orders recreating XVI Corps arrived—with Colonel Moore directed to retain command of Third Division. Unfortunately, the mischief of his men, including the Thirty-third Regiment, prompted an embarrassing order from General A. J. Smith:

‘Headquarters, 16th Army Corps
Chalmette, La. Feb. 23, 1865

Col. J. B. Moore
Comdg. 3d Division, 16th Army Corps

Colonel—

The Maj. Gen. Comdg. directs me to say that he learns with much regret that the pillaging and plundering has been commenced here by your command. The sugar house of Mr. A. W. Walker, a loyal Planter just below your camp was broken open and plundered. this must cease. The Major General Commanding will hold you personally responsible for the acts of your command. Take any means you please to restore order and discipline. Drill your men from morning till night and from night until morning but stop this discharge to your command.

I am Colonel Respectfully,

Your Obedient Servant
(signed) J. Hough A. A. G.’

Moore immediately implemented a solution: “In compliance with the instructions contained in the above, there will be five (5) roll calls a day and absentees will be reported by name to these Head Qrs. and will be summarily punished. No soldier will be permitted to pass outside of the camp Guard without a pass approved by his Brigade Commander. A copy of these orders will be read to each Regiment at the first Roll Call after its reception.” Despite the wet and miserable physical conditions in the Chalmette camp, order and discipline was soon restored to the command.

On March 3, word arrived at Chalmette that Col. Moore was to be promoted to brigadier general by brevet for gallantry at Nashville. Confirming orders had not yet arrived, so Moore continued to command at the grade of colonel. By mid-March, the Thirty-third Wisconsin landed at Dauphin Island, in Mobile Bay. There, orders directed Moore to take command of First Brigade, in Third Division, XVI Corps. This brigade included the Thirty-third Wisconsin, directed by newly promoted Lieut. Col. Horatio Virgin. From Dauphin Island, Federal forces under the command of Major-General Edward R. S. Canby readied for a campaign to capture the important city of Mobile, Alabama.

Canby planned to ferry the bulk of his force to the eastern side of the bay, and assault the main strongpoints protecting the eastern approach to Mobile: Fort Blakely and Spanish Fort. In order to throw off the defenders as to his true intentions, Canby needed a feint on the western shores of Mobile Bay, closer to the city. For this task, he turned to Colonel Moore and First Brigade. Orders directed Moore “to make as much display of his force as he can without neglecting any precautions for security, and by the construction of roads, bridges, &c., convey the impression that his command is only the advance guard of a much larger force.”

On March 18, amid great show and a brief cannonade, Moore’s troops disembarked on an ancient pier and marched north from Cedar Point in the general direction of Mobile. Moore’s regiments made a grand show of it, maneuvering and sounding multiple renditions of “Reveille” and “Tattoo” to continue the illusion of a larger force. Minor scrapes with the enemy fuelled the deception, but the Federals pressed their advance only to the Fowl River Bridge. On March 22, under cover of darkness, Moore’s brigade re-embarked on steamers and rejoined the balance of the Federal Army on the eastern side of Mobile Bay.

By the end of March, the Thirty-third Wisconsin engaged in active siege operations at Spanish Fort. For thirteen days, Moore’s men methodically dug and sniped at their Confederate antagonists in a veritable replay of the Vicksburg siege almost two years previous. On April 8, Lieutenant Daniel Shea of “K” penned a letter to the Racine Weekly Advocate newspaper: “The Colonel, (J. B. Moore) a true soldier, has been entrusted not only with the command of a Brigade, but of a Division. This latter

command he has successfully led through four different engagements. He has during most of his time of service, when not leading a division, been commanding a brigade.”

That night, a two-company Federal patrol effected a lodgment in the Confederate works. Calls for help brought up the Eighth Iowa, of Third Brigade, who, in turn requested reinforcements in order to hold their position. Moore received orders to turn out First Brigade to support Third Brigade’s lodgment. Unfortunately, the division commander seemed satisfied with holding onto a scrap of the Confederate works, instead of pressing home a decisive attack. Col. Moore arrived on the field and immediately assessed the situation. He directed two staff officers— Captain George Carter and Captain William Stark— to form First Brigade and order it forward into the Confederate works. Calling to nearby men from Companies “A” and “F”, Thirty-third Wisconsin, Moore announced “I will lead you,” and personally conducted the two companies forward through a path made in the enemy abatis. The companies captured the Confederate skirmish line entire, then pressed south along the inside of the works, to the ancient earthen work known as “Old Spanish Fort.” There, Moore and soldiers from the Thirty-third Wisconsin captured the fort and some twenty-two guns, along with those artillerymen that had not escaped the fort over a concealed path that led north to Fort Blakely.

By morning of April 9, stunned Federals held in their possession the entire Spanish Fort line. Private John Wray of “F” noted proudly that Colonel Moore was indeed the first Federal soldier to penetrate the works and lead the charge into the Confederate lines.

With the fall of Spanish Fort, the Thirty-third Wisconsin marched north on April 9, to be held in reserve during an all-out attack on Fort Blakely that evening. The fort surrendered, and the amazing events of April 9 near Mobile were dramatically overshadowed by events in a small country crossroads known as Appomattox Court House, Virginia.

General Robert E. Lee’s surrender did not immediately end the Civil War, however. Colonel Moore’s brigade marched through Alabama, to take up garrison duty at Montgomery, and later Tuskegee, Alabama. Colonel Moore finally received his long-awaited promotion to brigadier general, with rank from April 7, 1865, for gallantry at Nashville. He was ever after known as “General Moore.”

On August 3, 1865, General Moore, accompanied by Captain George Carter, departed Vicksburg on a leave of absence. The Thirty-third Wisconsin was mustered out at Vicksburg a few days later, and the men themselves began the trip home. General Moore was mustered out shortly thereafter. Back home in Muscoda, Wisconsin, General Moore accepted a second brevet dated April 9, 1866, marking the one-year anniversary of his personal heroism at Spanish Fort, Alabama. General Moore ranks as one of the few Civil War officers to be bestowed two brigadier general brevets for personal gallantry.

The war over, General Moore turned to civilian pursuits including land acquisition and engineering projects. Among the latter was a bridge into Muscoda that spanned the Wisconsin River. Completed in the autumn of 1868, the bridge cost some \$24,000 to



build. While some farmers complained about the tolls charged to use the span, historians have credited Moore's bridge with revitalizing Muscoda, and contributing to the future prosperity of what had been a dying community. Moore continued in real estate ventures in and around Muscoda, and maintained an interest in politics and veteran's affairs. Moore was an active member of the "Soldiers and Sailors Association of Grant County," although it is unclear whether he personally attended the gatherings of this veteran's organization.

By the 1880's reversal in economic fortunes forced Moore to sell his Muscoda bridge for \$10,000. By 1886 Moore suffered from insomnia and resulting "nervous diseases," for which he sought treatment in the Muirdale Sanitorium in Wauwatosa. There, on February 8, 1889, Jonathan Baker Moore passed away after a sudden stroke. Interestingly, General Moore's body was transported from Wauwatosa to Lancaster, not Muscoda, for burial in the soil of the county he loved—"Old Grant." His widow Christiana and friends laid him to rest at Hillside Cemetery outside Lancaster, in Lot 199. General Moore's will, drafted in 1859, left his entire estate to his wife Christiana. The Moores had no children.

Long-time associate George B. Carter, then serving as Grant County Judge, personally signed the "Order of Proof of Last Will and Testament" on May 14, 1889. According to probate and estate records, Moore's memorial headstone cost his estate \$90. The records do not elaborate on Christiana's decision to bury General Moore in Lancaster, and not Muscoda.

To the present day, the memory of General Moore is fondly recalled by the people of Muscoda, who credit Moore with the restoration of their community, and with building projects that enhanced the downtown district.

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