

ESSENTIAL CIVIL WAR CURRICULUM

The Kilpatrick Dahlgren Raid

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Resources

If you can read only one book

Author	<i>Title</i> . City: Publisher, Year.
Schulz, Duane	<i>The Dahlgren Affair: Terror and Conspiracy in the Civil War</i> . New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1998.

Books and Articles

Author	<i>Title</i> . City: Publisher, Year. “Title,” in <i>Journal</i> ##, no. # (Date): #.
Daniel, Larry J.	<i>Days of Glory: The Army of the Cumberland, 1861-1865</i> . Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2004.
Martin, Samuel J.	“Kill-Cavalry” <i>Sherman's Merchant of Terror: The Life of Union General Hugh Judson Kilpatrick</i> . Madison, NJ and Vancouver, BC: Farleigh Dickinson University Press: 1996.
Moore, James	<i>Kilpatrick and Our Cavalry: Comprising a Sketch of the Life of General Kilpatrick</i> . New York: W. J. Widdleton, Publisher, 1865.
United States War Department	<i>The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies</i> , 70 vols. in 128 parts. Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), Series I, volume 33, p. 170-180.

Organizations

Web Resources

Other Sources

Name	Description, Contact information including address, email
<p>The New York Times, March 7, 1864. https://www.nytimes.com/1864/03/07/archives/the-richmond-raid-our-forces-enter-the-fortifications-a-fight-there.html</p>	<p>The Richmond Raid; our forces enter the fortifications a fight there with a rebel battery. The spires of the city in view. railroads, canals, telegraphs, bridges, mills and supplies destroyed. Colonel Dahlgren's expedition led astray by a guide and the guide hanged. Sublime audacity of Kilpatrick, he fights all day inside the rebel works. He camps at night just outside the city. astonishment of the fair sex at the boldness of the Yankees. highly interesting details from our special correspondent with the expedition. the expedition. details of the movement. The approach to Richmond. col. Dahlgren's expedition.</p> <p>This article is available behind a paywall.</p>

Scholars

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Topic Précis

The failed Kilpatrick Dahlgren Raid, February 28 – March 3, 1864, led by Union Cavalry officers Major General Hugh Judson Kilpatrick and Colonel Ulric Dahlgren, was an attempt to free Union prisoners from Belle Isle and Libby Prison in Richmond. Papers found on the body of Ulric Dahlgren, who did not survive the assault, made this a controversial episode from the late Civil War. While some scholars question the authenticity of the papers, they appear to show that raid architects had additional goals of laying waste to Richmond and assassinating Confederate President Jefferson Davis. When Confederate forces discovered these papers, Union officials protested having any knowledge of those secondary objectives, much less ordering them. On the evening of February 28, Kilpatrick's cavalry division of 4,000 men left Stevensburg, Virginia, and headed for Richmond.¹ Dahlgren and around 500 men, were to rendezvous with Kilpatrick later. However, both groups encountered more significant difficulties than they had anticipated. Arriving at Richmond on March 1, Kilpatrick's force was confronted by Confederate troops tasked with defense of the city who drove the Federals off. Dahlgren attempted to enter Richmond from the south and was also driven off by Confederate cavalry. Dahlgren then attempted to enter the city again, from the north, on March 2. Separated from his main body Dahlgren was ambushed and killed, with ninety of his men taken prisoner. When the controversy over the captured papers was reported in Confederate newspapers, Lincoln Meade and Kilpatrick all denied that any such orders had been given, Meade went so far as to write directly to Lee. Lee's response appeared to indicate he did not believe the papers were authentic and further stated that the captured Federals should not suffer just because they had followed unjust orders. To this day the controversy over the authenticity of the papers found on Colonel Dahlgren remains unresolved.

¹ "Battle Detail" National Parks Service, <https://www.nps.gov/civilwar/search-battles-detail.htm?battleCode=va125>, accessed January 21, 2025.