

WANTED:

by Susan Kegel

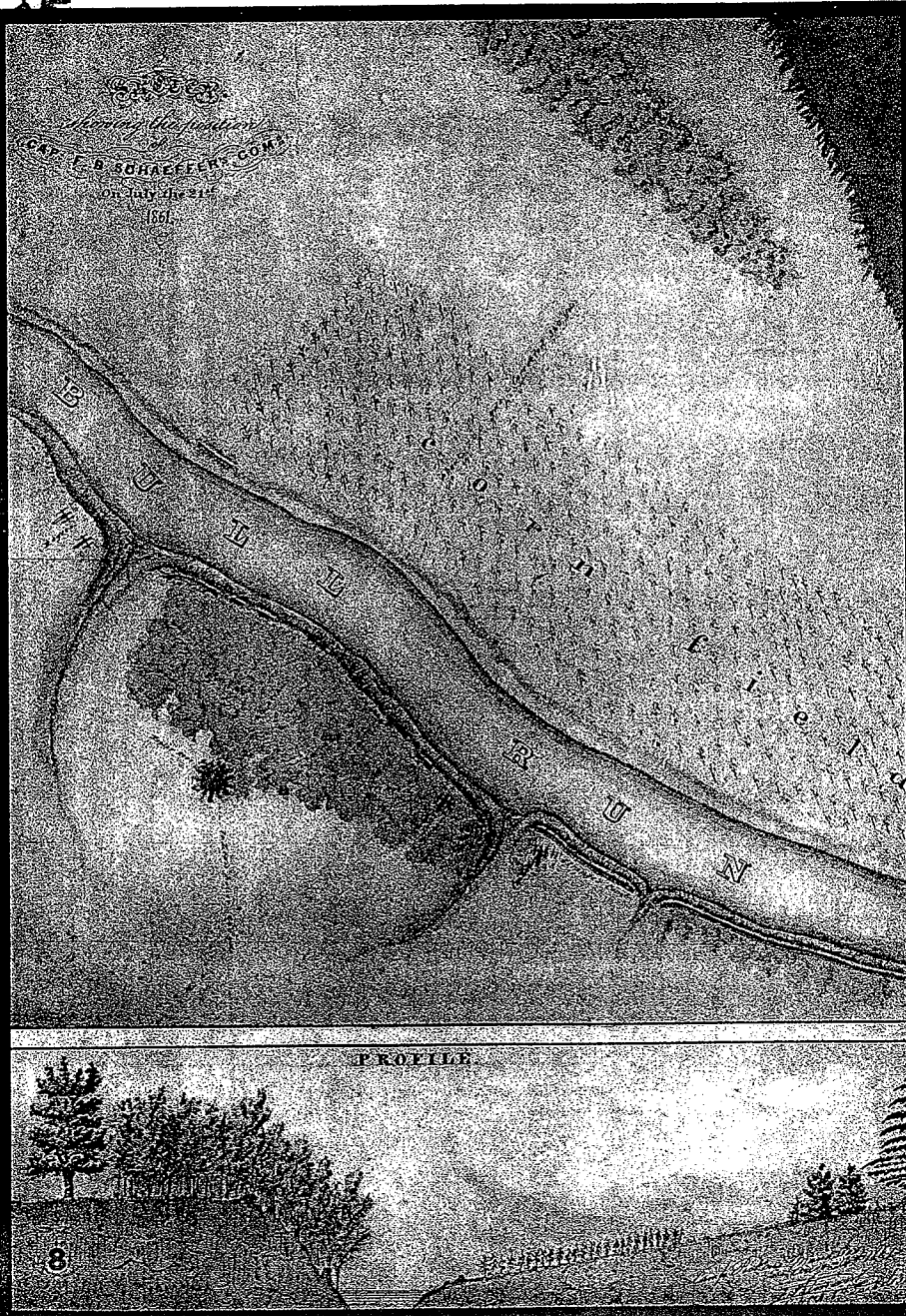
When the Union army reached Bull Run, a creek in Virginia, in July 1861, the Confederates were waiting on the other side. The problem was how to get at them. Bull Run had steep banks. It would be difficult to get an entire army down and up them again. So, the Union army wasted two days searching for a place to cross. The delay allowed the Confederate army to bring up reinforcements.

During the Civil War, most of the battles took place in the South, so the Confederate armies usually benefited from fighting on home turf and familiar terrain. The Union armies, meanwhile, often found themselves in unfamiliar territory. What they really needed were some good maps.

Thanks to Leon Fremaux, the Confederates had one at Bull Run. An artist and Confederate soldier, Fremaux had been assigned to survey the countryside. The beautiful watercolor map he produced indicated troop positions, distances, artillery placements, and the heights of the Bull Run banks in both bird's-eye and profile views.

Not surprisingly, many artists such as Fremaux who enlisted were assigned to *topographical* units. Six of the 15 artists who fought for the Confederacy became cartographers. Both illustrator David Strother and painter James Hope made names for themselves as mapmakers for the Union. These army cartographers used artist's techniques, including

Leon Fremaux's 1861 map of Bull Run



Good Maps

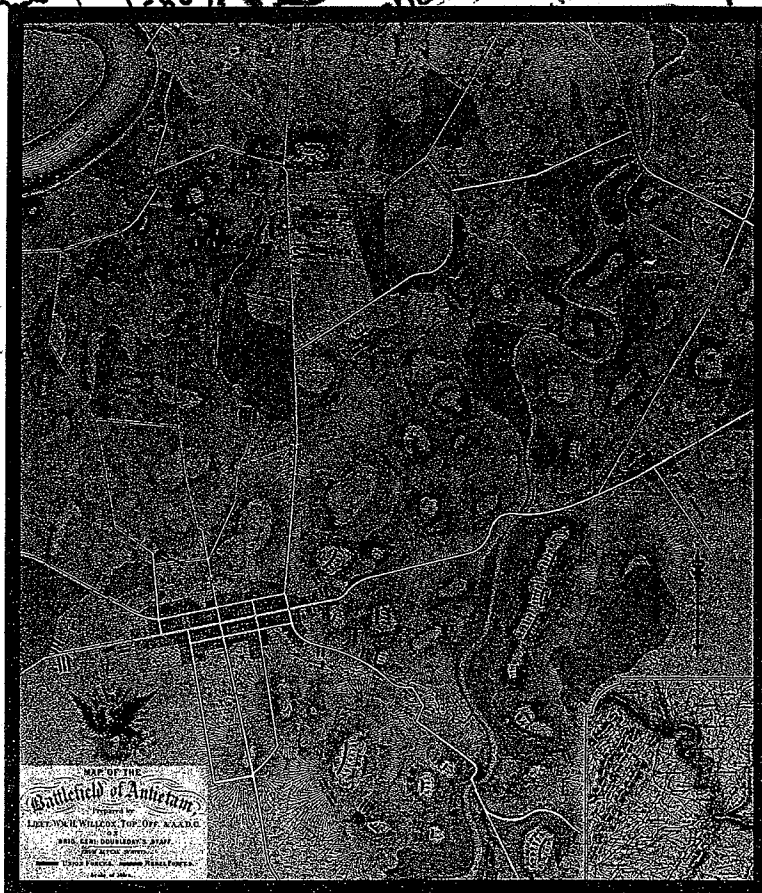
pictures and watercolors, to make maps easy to read for officers, who often studied them by flickering candlelight or while on the move.

In general, existing maps didn't show features that armies cared about. The armies' new maps had to indicate fords over rivers, and details of road widths, surfaces, and grades — all crucial information for marching armies with supply wagons. Any change in grade, for example, could stall an army for hours while horses pulling cannon struggled uphill. An uncrossable river meant enormous delays for a 50,000-man army.

Besides good fords and roads, the armies needed to understand the terrain, especially hills and mountain passes or gaps. Confederate general Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson's cartographer, Jed Hotchkiss, mapped every gap bordering the Shenandoah Valley in 1862. He used *hachure* marks — short parallel lines that follow a slope — instead of contour lines to show elevations, because they made the terrain clear at a glance. Hotchkiss's detailed maps allowed Jackson's army to move quickly. Because of this, Jackson's men earned the nickname "foot cavalry."

Armies also needed access to food and water — in large quantities. Union general William T. Sherman's army included more than 100,000 men, 20,000 horses, and 5,000 wagons pulled by 32,000 mules. They ate 600 tons of food and water every day, much of which they foraged from the countryside. One participant said, "Whenever we stop for twenty-four hours every corn field and orchard within two or three miles is completely stripped." For General George McClellan's army, William Willcox's beautiful Antietam map includes the details officers cared about in easy-to-read pictures — orchards, cornfields, farmhouses, and pastures, as well as churches, mills, and other buildings.

Civil War maps were created to serve practical purposes, but they can be viewed today as beautiful works of art and craftsmanship. You can zoom in on the details of many maps at the Library of Congress's Web site, memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/civil_war_maps/.



William Willcox's 1862 map of Antietam

Topographical means showing surface features on a map.

Susan Kegel lives in Redmond, Washington, and loves maps, art, and writing.

Kegel, Susan. "Wanted: Good Maps." *Cobblestone* Feb. 2008: 8-9

Name _____ Date _____ Period _____

Wanted: Good Maps

Directions: Use the article "Wanted: Good Maps" to answer the following questions in complete sentences.

1. Which side, Union or Confederate, was more in need of good maps during the Civil War? Why?
2. What kinds of things did Leon Fremaux show on his map of Bull Run?
3. Why did mapmakers use lots of pictures and watercolors on their maps during the Civil War?

4. Describe how Jed Hotchkiss's map of the Shenandoah Valley helped "Stonewall" Jackson and his troops.

5. What kinds of features did officers and armies care the most about when looking at a map? Why?