

A new generation of heroes emerges as the North and South face off in a devastating civil war, bonded together by an extraordinary medallion forged by the legendary Paul Revere.

Blue Line to Richmond


By Thomas J. Berry

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BLUE
LINE
TO
RICHMOND

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THOMAS J. BERRY

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Print ISBN: 978-1-959620-04-4

Ebook ISBN: 979-8-88531-759-7

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Published by BookLocker.com, Inc., Trenton, Georgia.

This is a work of historical fiction, based on actual persons and events. The author has taken creative liberty with many details to enhance the reader's experience.

Booklocker.com, Inc.
2024

First Edition

Book of the Year 2020
Gifts of the Gods: Fire and Ash

“The bitter conflict of the Peloponnesian War between Athens and Sparta has been brought gloriously back to life between the pages of Berry’s remarkable series, Gifts of the Gods. Having enjoyed the first two books immensely, I could not wait to read the final installment in what can only be described as one of the most beguiling series set in the Ancient World that I have ever read. Thankfully, Fire and Ash did not disappoint. With battles aplenty, scheming politicians, and the desperate domestic struggles of those innocent citizens caught in the crossfire between two warring nations, Berry has penned a book that is next to impossible to put down.

One thing that I found endlessly fascinating was that not once did I choose a side in which to root for. There are characters that I liked and despised in both camps, which I thought made this story incredibly realistic. By telling this story from both sides, Berry has given his readers an intimate insight to not only the two very opposing camps but also how very differently they viewed the world.

Gifts of the Gods: Fire and Ash, Book 3 by Thomas J Berry is immensely readable. You do not have to know anything about the Peloponnesian War to enjoy it, for everything is explained and explored in explicit detail. The Gifts of the Gods is a fabulous trilogy in which you can travel to another time and another place, all from the comfort of your favorite comfy chair!”

**Winner - Book of the Year, Historical Fiction
Gold Award, 2020**

- Mary Anne Yarde. The Coffee Pot Book Club

Book of the Year 2019
Gifts of the Gods: Silver and Gold

“From the festival of Pyanepsion in Sicily to the utter defeat of the Athenian army under Nicias during the Siege of Syracuse, Gift of the Gods: Silver and Gold is in all ways a Historical Fiction triumph.

Told from the viewpoint of five very different people from opposing sides, the book is as rich and as potent as the wine once served in the dive bars in Syracuse, Sicily. This is a story that is not only tense, powerful and compulsive in the telling, but one that is also profoundly moving. The author has brought this time and place back to life in his crystalline prose and compelling narrative. His attention to the historical detailing is as staggering as it is accurate.

But this book is not for the faint-hearted. Berry does not gloss over the history, nor does he gloss over the reality of the battles and the appalling treatment and torture of the prisoners. This book is a realistic retelling of this period of history.

Berry is a master at his craft. His writing is as effortless to read as watching a Wolfgang Petersen's Troy, and it is just as rewarding. This skill is clearly demonstrated when he brings back to life the excitement, the danger, and the thrill of chariot racing at the Olympics. I could feel and see the enthusiasm of the crowd, the nervous agitation of the horses, and the determination of the competitors. Brilliantly written and wholly unforgettable.

There is enough adrenaline in this book to keep you reading all night. It is one of those stories that you simply cannot put down. Fans of battle-heavy historical fiction will fall in love with this book. There is no doubt in my mind that Thomas Berry has written a masterpiece.”

Winner - Book of the Year, Historical Fiction
Silver Award, 2019

- Mary Anne Yarde. The Coffee Pot Book Club

Book of the Year 2018

Gifts of the Gods: Iron and Bronze

“From the opening chapter, I was left in no doubt that Berry is a vivacious storyteller. He writes with both elegance and authority. I lost myself in this spell-binding epic retelling of the events that led up to the Peloponnesian War and the war itself.

Berry's lucid historical insight gave this book authenticity, and the fast-paced narrative kept me turning those pages. Gifts of the Gods: Iron and Bronze is an example of historical fiction at its very best. Filled with memorable characters, adventure, war, love, hate, retribution, and forgiveness, there is certainly something for everyone within this book's pages.

The battle scenes were skillfully done. As a reader, I experienced the anticipation, the fear, the horror as well as the exhaustion of those involved. The realities of what a soldier's life was like was not brushed over with fancy prose. It was gritty and harsh.

This book explores both the darkness and the lighter side of human nature. There are vile deeds but also brave endeavors.

Berry has to be commended for the amount of research he has done to bring this ancient world back to life. The story is vast and yet utterly dazzling. Gifts of the Gods: Iron and Bronze is a historical triumphant.”

**Winner - Book of the Year, Historical Fiction
Silver Award, 2018**

- Mary Anne Yarde. The Coffee Pot Book Club

High Praise for

Lewis and Clark: Murder on the Natchez Trace

"A skillfully interwoven saga of twin stories of discovery. Thomas Berry has shown a great respect for and understanding of history as he takes us through his tale of what may have been, which includes an engrossing description of the Battle of New Orleans; the culmination of America's second war for independence. This book is quite highly recommended..."

- AllBooks Review

Critical Acclaim for

Texas Freedom: Last Stand at the Alamo

"Thomas Berry evinces a true love of history and a respect for accuracy that is quite rare. He exhibits a great ability to tell a good story. This book is highly recommended."

- AllBooks Review

Soaring Review for

Crosshairs

"Meticulously authenticated...a World War II saga that contains a vast amount of technical information, war strategies, experiments, failures, missions, losses, and weather-related catastrophes, all artfully intertwined into a compelling narrative."

- AllBooks Review

Chapter 1

May 3, 1861
Quincy, MA

The round disc felt warm to the touch as Paul gingerly removed it from the old wooden box. He was surprised for a split second and almost dropped the artifact on the table. “What in the blazes is this?” he asked.

“Your cousin sent it yesterday with a few other items,” Luci declared absently as she looked up from her sewing. His wife still possessed a striking figure at 29, with a lean frame and a smart but sensible taste in the latest fashion trends.

“Hmm,” he muttered as he turned the object over in his hands. It appeared to be a medallion of some kind, with images on both sides. A bell stood out clearly against the bronze medal with a year punctuated below in dots. 1792. Seven decades ago! On the reverse, he saw a large ‘R’ printed over the image of a church and steeple. A Latin phrase was etched underneath it and he suddenly smiled. Land of the Free. This could only be the fabled coin he had heard so much about from his father.

Paul Joseph Revere allowed his mind to drift back almost a decade ago, to Cambridge and his graduation with the Harvard class of ’52. It was an exciting time, filled with close friends, loud parties, and a limitless future that was his for the taking. His parents were in attendance of course, along with most of his six siblings, and many extended relations.

Paul remembered the lively conversation that was had in the smoking room following the ceremony, where family and close friends gathered to share stories and discourse. At one point during the evening, when brandy flowed like water, his father had made mention of a medallion that had been passed down through the years. Paul had never seen it before now and summarily dismissed the idea as another tall tale from the old man.

However, the object in his hand was proof there was more to the story than he had previously thought. Papa had once apprenticed in the family smithing business, founded by Paul’s grandfather and namesake. He often regaled them with anecdotes of the bygone years when they once made heavy cannons for the famous war with Britain, fine cutlery for the wealthy elite, and bells for the dozens of churches that sprang up around Boston’s busy

harbor. His cousin, Joseph Warren Revere, must have come into possession of his heirloom recently and sent it on to him.

Joe was 20 years Paul's senior and had spent the last several decades as an officer of the U.S. Navy. Despite their age difference, Paul felt a kindred spirit in this journeyman. After years of adventure on the high seas, however, Joe had finally settled down in Morristown, New Jersey, building a new life for himself with his wife and children. He had recently been appointed to the rank of brigadier general and oversaw the local militia in his county. A staunch Democrat, Joe saw the new Lincoln administration as just another group of inept politicians struggling to keep the country together. But while he had little use for the men in Washington, Paul knew he strongly supported the need to preserve the hard-won democratic Union.

Paul heard a sudden wail in the next room and looked up, startled. His wife remained busy with her stitching, ignoring the cries of the babe.

"Francis is up," he announced, hoping she'd take the hint.

"Lillian will attend him," his wife replied as she quickly glanced in his direction. "Remember? She arrived an hour ago so I could finish this before Joan's soiree tomorrow night. She's having six ladies over and her napkins were just dreadful. I offered to mend them for her. I don't know what she'd do without me!"

"Has his cough improved since Monday?" Paul had been so busy in the downtown import office that he had not seen his son in a few days.

"Don't you worry about Francis, Paul. He's a strong boy, just like his father." Luci smiled at him one last time before returning to her work.

He decided to go check on the lad himself since the crying had not abated. Paul placed the medallion in the breast pocket of his smartly tailored suit jacket and walked into the nursery located down the hall. Either Lillian had fallen asleep, or the elderly woman had lost her touch with the babes of this new generation.

Paul reproached himself when he saw the small woman fussing over the one-year-old while pacing back and forth across the floor of the nursery. She was doing her best, he knew. He hoped the boy was not running a fever. He snuck back out of the room without being noticed, grabbed his top hat, and slipped on his black overcoat before heading outside in the cool night air.

He always looked forward to his weekly retreats at the Golden Rooster, an upscale club a few blocks north of Burberry Avenue. While not entirely exclusive, it had a reputation for catering to the Ivy Leaguers who came to drink, play cards, and reminisce about their college days. It was a place where business deals were often made, small fortunes won, and larger ones lost.

Harvard's Terrapin Club was still very active, even a decade after graduation. Five close friends, Paul, Ellis, Palfrey, Tobias, and Louis had all managed their successful careers in the ensuing years and took pleasure from these social gatherings. Cigars and brandy were not just a hot commodity, they were a symbol of status and power in one of the most industrialized cities in the country.

"How is the little wife, Paul?" Tobias asked with a smirk when he entered the large smoke-filled room. His friend was a heavy-set man with a thin mustache. He stood next to the fireplace mantle sipping a cocktail. The flames were roaring tonight and kept the unseasonably cool winds at bay.

Paul nodded absently. "She's doing well, thank you. The boy is still fussing but it could be just congestion."

"Luci will make sure the lad is well cared for," Ellis commented as he patted Paul on the back. "Are you up for an evening of frolic and drink?"

"The country is going to hell, Tomlinson," Palfrey retorted. "And all you can think of is merriment."

"The South is more emboldened than ever, Counselor," Ellis replied evenly. "The surrender of Fort Sumter last month is only the beginning. War has been declared and armies are being recruited. No one fears a long conflict more than me! My holdings in Richmond's tobacco industry have already been put in jeopardy. We can't get ships into the harbors to take the cargo overseas these days. But I was only thinking of our friend. Paul looks as though he could use some entertainment. Am I right?"

Paul smiled. "I've been blessed with good health and a small fortune. I have nothing to complain about."

"We should all be so lucky!" Tobias declared as he raised his glass higher. He was already on his fourth drink of the night.

"To fond memories!" chuckled Louis from his seat on the divan. "And to the ladies who made them!"

Ellis laughed. "Which lady was that, pray tell? Ethel Cartwright or Angelina Morgan? It seems to me you were enamored with both of them." He rose from the long couch underneath the front window and approached his companion. All eyes turned in his direction.

"Angelina only loved to dance with Louis, remember?" Paul chimed in. He walked toward his friends and accepted a drink from Tobias. "She did enjoy a party and there were many on the Yard in the early days."

Louis smiled. "The Hasting Pudding Club did know how to put on a show!"

“I wasn’t speaking strictly of theatrics, my dear Louie,” Paul countered with a grin.

“Neither was I! There was more alcohol in those rooms than books, especially on cold wintry nights.”

“How else were you going to keep warm?” Ellis laughed. “No society girl would stoop so low as to be seen with the likes of you!”

“Now let’s not tease our brother too much,” Tobias said with a sly grin. “It wasn’t his fault he was a class behind us.”

Louis eyed them both with a mischievous smile. He was the smallest of the five but had learned to match size with wit from an early age. He closed his eyes for a moment and absently stroked his short brown beard as if deep in thought.

Paul looked at him questioningly but knew better than to press. Louis Westbrook was a lawyer these days, having taken over his late father’s practice last year. His recent inheritance allowed Louis to expand into some lucrative new markets and bilk new clients from their greenbacks up and down the east coast. Despite his great success with writs and contracts, his friend was a trial attorney at heart. Louis was a surgeon in the courtroom, slicing and dicing hapless witnesses with delicious aplomb. He was as smart as they come, even by Harvard’s lofty standards.

Louis suddenly smiled and looked around at his college friends. “You know the difference between us and this new crop of students coming out of Cambridge?”

“Besides a decade?” Palfrey offered. “And some life experience?”

“And gray hairs?” Ellis interjected.

“Speak for yourself, old man!” Tobias countered.

“Grit and fortitude!” Louis announced enthusiastically. “The boys going out into the world today are soft! A rebellion has arisen from this veritable union and who does Lincoln have to right the ship? Mamma’s boys who don’t know how to handle a sword let alone a pistol.”

“I agree,” Paul replied in earnest. “But unfortunately, the president has not requested your presence to discuss the matter.”

Palfrey laughed and Ellis smirked at the jibe. Suddenly Louis grew serious.

“How long do you think these Southern boys will last if they were faced with real adversity? A true military force, if you will.”

Paul thought about it for a moment. “One month,” he said evenly. “Three at the most. Many believe those redneck lads are all bark but no bite.”

“I can take a few months leave from the practice,” Louis said with a smile. “How many of you are willing to put your words into real action? Our country needs men to guide and shape these fresh boys coming out of school, men with the experience and maturity that Harvard provides.”

“I heard Massachusetts is already recruiting regiments for the war effort,” Palfrey said. “But do you really think we should volunteer, though? Think about our families and our careers.”

“What better way to give back to our families than to return as war heroes? Our country needs us now. I can tell you that Harvard officers would make the best leaders, and I’m not bluffing.”

“The rebs will be harder to shoot than the pigeons you love to hunt, Ellis,” Paul smirked.

“The country has given us so much,” Louis said sternly. “It’s time to repay our debts.”

“My debts are paid,” Tobias replied. “The government repossessed my boat this summer. I shouldn’t owe them a damn thing.”

“If that’s how you wrote it off on your taxes, fine. But the three of us know the feds didn’t take your boat, Mother Nature did,” Louis smirked. “If you want to get mad at someone, you can blame her. The storm sunk it, and the mast is still stickin’ out of the water a good foot in the air to prove it!”

“Or you can blame the fool who tried to sail around Deer Island,” remarked Paul, “while half-drunk on whiskey just daring the storm to strike him down!”

Tobias grew red in the face. “Well, I don’t remember it quite like that...”

“I don’t think you remember much of anything from that night, but the rest of us do,” Louis replied quietly, touching his friend gently on the shoulder.

Ellis cleared his throat. “I think we can agree that Tobias is a chowderhead, but that should not preclude his joining our new regiment.”

“Oh, is that what we are doing?” Paul asked. “I didn’t know it was official.”

“If we don’t act soon, the war will be over before we know it,” Ellis remarked. “I, for one, second Louis’ proposal and vote to put the fear of God into the rebel hearts!”

“Palfrey?” Louis asked as he turned toward the young magistrate. Dr. Palfrey Barklon was a quiet man by nature, thin and well-groomed, with a large handlebar mustache that curled upward at the edges. He was a fastidious dresser and did not venture outside without matching his top hat to his leather shoes.

“Since we agree that the conflict with the South will be brief and our services required for the security of the Union, I am inclined to vote that we volunteer as well.”

“Well said, Palfrey,” Paul remarked with a smile.

Tobias stood up and lifted his drink to the sky once more. “To Harvard!”

Ellis touched glasses with him. “To our country!”

“To Boston and her beloved people!” Louis agreed.

Palfrey smiled. “To the president and his administration!”

Paul walked over, his face flush with excitement. “To the end of the damn rebellion!”

Chapter 2

July 29, 1861
Readville, MA

Paul dropped from the coach onto the dusty road and looked around. Gray birch trees dotted the landscape to his left and a lone farmhouse sat perched on a low-rise half a mile distant. His attention, however, was drawn almost immediately to the rough plains east of the small white-painted station house. He smiled. This is my home, at least for the near future.

Ten long wooden barracks had been constructed in the last two months in preparation for the newly formed 20th Massachusetts regiment. One thousand men were expected, with some already on site. There were still over one hundred positions open on the roster and it would be up to Paul and his small team to recruit them in the coming days.

A young man approached and saluted sharply. Like Paul, he was dressed in the colors of the Union blue, with a crisp dark wool jacket and pants of a lighter shade. A sword was fastened at his hip and a kepi sat upon his closely cropped hair. Paul noticed the two stripes on his shoulder.

“Welcome, Major,” the corporal announced formally.

Paul simply nodded. “Where can I find Colonel Lee?”

“The colonel is in his quarters at present, sir.” The young officer pointed out a small house at the edge of the plains close to the barracks. A flagpole had been erected in front and the Union flag was flapping lazily in the warm air.

As he walked across the field carrying a duffle bag, the long grass slapped at his leather boots and mosquitos buzzed around his face. The ground was wet from the recent rains but there was more water than he expected. As he grew closer to the barracks, he spied the culprit, a river running along toward the wide ocean ten miles away. This had to be the Neponset, he thought, one of three rivers that fed into the city proper.

He had never visited Readville before, for in truth there was not much in this part of the state to see but farmland. It lay on the southwestern border between Boston and Dedham and was convenient for those in the area preparing to ship out. He wondered how long it would take before the regiment was sent to quell the Southern rebels.

Lincoln’s initial assessment of a short war was quickly dispelled by the aggressive stance taken by the wealthy plantation owners in Virginia and

points south. As a result, volunteer regiments were signing up across the Union for three-year stints. Paul knew the 18th regiment of Massachusetts was also in the area and more were planned. Initial reports did not put much faith in the rebels' chances, however. He shook his head as he recalled a news account in *The Boston Tribune* just last month. The intrepid reporter felt the redneck boys were not expected to match the size or power of the federal army. Even his cynical friend, Tobias, figured the Union Blue would all be home in a few months. How quickly things have changed, he thought grimly.

Two privates stood sentry outside the colonel's door, each holding a Springfield rifle against his shoulder. They looked at the major as he approached. Paul stopped a few feet away and stated his purpose.

Without a word, the man on the left knocked twice on the colonel's door. Upon hearing a response, he opened it and announced the visitor.

The man behind the desk looked up as Paul entered. Colonel William Raymond Lee was in his mid-fifties, with a short brown beard that had only recently started to show his age. His hat sat on a hook nearby and his heavy wool coat was draped over a chair in the corner. Lee didn't seem the type to stand on formalities. Another officer with the golden shoulder board of a lieutenant stood to his right.

Paul gave his commanding officer a sharp salute. "Major Paul Revere reporting for duty, sir."

"At ease," Lee replied. "Have a seat." He indicated the wooden chair opposite his desk. "Care for a sniff of brandy?"

Without waiting for Paul to respond, the colonel removed a bottle from a desk drawer, set up three glasses, and began to pour. He handed one to the startled major and another to the lieutenant. He pointed toward the front door. "This is Camp Massasoit, one of the first training facilities the military has established. We have the honor of breaking it in, so to speak."

Paul nodded. He had heard as much. "I'm glad to be of service."

"This man's army needs good officers," the colonel remarked. "This civil strife has caught the federal government a bit off guard. We are raising volunteer regiments and calling in local militias, but our regulars are spread thin and wide across the country. It will take time to train the new men."

The lieutenant nodded in agreement. "As you know, the United States does not have a standing army of its own. The people are a bit leery of a strong government, especially on the heels of the war with Britain. Many fear democracies will suffer if a large armed force is left to its own devices."

“Quite right, Monroe,” the colonel replied. “But the nation needs an army if we are to keep the Union whole. The rebs have demonstrated they will not go quietly. The disaster at Manassas gave us proof of that.”

Had it been only a week ago, Paul wondered, since the upstart Confederates had dashed the hopes of this patriotic Union corps? They had skirmished near the little river called Bull Run 25 miles south of the nation’s capital, the first clash of armies since the war began last April with the surrender of Fort Sumter.

This small conflict on the Bull Run River was supposed to bring the rebellion to a quick and decisive end, but the bloody aftermath left the nation reeling. There was no longer any talk of a swift victory. This civil war, the first on American soil, was looking to be a long, drawn-out fight.

“The only good that arose from it, perhaps,” Paul said softly, “was to bring about new leadership for the Army of the Potomac. I feel General McClellan is a much better fit than McDowell, don’t you? At least McClellan has field experience.”

“Irwin McDowell was a political pawn,” Lee remarked cynically. “He owed his appointment to his good drinking buddy, Salmon Chase. Secretary of War, and all,” he added with a dismissive wave. “With that being said, however, his troops were too green to chase after a frightened hare, let alone armed defenders. The rebs knew every hill and valley in the area as well as which river crossings could be defended and how. They picked their battles and handed us a tough defeat. Lincoln was as much to blame for pressuring McDowell to move forward when the troops clearly were not ready. Maybe next time our new general will take a more cautious approach.”

“George McClellan fought the rebs in western Virginia and won,” Paul remarked. “And before that, he was with the army corps of engineers down in Mexico, from what I have heard. He has more battle experience than most men in the Federal army.”

“We need fighting men, aye,” Lee grumbled, “but the president needs officers who can command a field as well. It is not a well-known fact, Revere, but the Confederacy absconded with most of our senior leadership. Cooper, Johnston, and Twiggs all took posts in Richmond and anyone who remained was too old to do more than shake a finger at the rebels. Hell, General Scott even wanted that cavalry officer, Robert Lee, to succeed him as commander of the Union army when he retired, but he vowed to defend his home state of Virginia instead. It is an unfortunate fact that Lincoln had no qualified generals to launch a large-scale assault against the South. The men need strong leadership if we are to take them into battle. Bull Run was just the first

clash, I'm afraid. There will be more to follow, and unless the troops learn to work together, this war will not end anytime soon."

"The name rings a bell," Paul stated matter-of-factly. "Wasn't Robert E. Lee the superintendent at West Point for a few years?"

"Yes, he was. We attended the academy at the same time, in fact, and our surnames often confused people. There is no relation between us, however. Robert graduated in '29 and received a commission while I, regrettably, did not. I left a few months shy to take an engineering position on the railroad. After the war in Mexico, he took the vacancy leading the academy and then joined the cavalry as a full colonel. He is a good officer, but it seems his loyalties lie with his home state instead of his country. In that, at least, we differ to a marked degree."

Paul cleared his throat. There was something he had been holding on to for a long time and he felt the colonel was ready to hear it. "If we are to win this war, we need more men to fill the ranks, no matter what lies ahead. It is my belief there is a higher purpose here. It is not enough to say, we fight for our country. No, we are called by God to fight for free institutions everywhere! And the more a man sacrifices, the more rights and power he has to influence others. I, for one, refuse to sit by while lesser men take up the sword to safeguard my own liberties. I can carry others with me, and together we must all struggle for the freedom and principles that have built up this nation."

"I can see why you have over thirty recruits to your name," Lee said with admiration. "And I hope there is more to come. It's actually in large part why I offered you this rank. Others sign on for vanity, some for glory, but you serve a nobler purpose and are not shy about it. This regiment would do well with more officers like you!"

"Thank you, sir," Paul replied.

"As majors, you and Dr. Barklon will aid in all aspects of the regiment, and report directly to me. You will also have the authority to lead battalions in the field as I see fit. The rest of the officers will look to you for guidance. Deal them a firm hand. I've seen too many officers lose the respect of the men by being soft, and you can never regain it once it's gone."

"Where else have you served, sir?" Paul inquired.

Colonel Lee smiled. "I've spent several decades in this man's army, mostly on the frontier. I was also in Veracruz in '47 under General Scott. We really came together in Mexico."

"Scott has quite the history," Paul commented. "He's the army's top general right now and the president's right-hand man."

“Hmm,” Lee replied. “Winifred Scott is around 75 years old, give or take. Many don’t feel he’s up to the job of building this new army. Very old school. What do you think of him?”

“That may be,” Paul hedged, “but he has a world of experience. General Scott still commands a lot of respect among the officers, at least from what I’ve read.”

“Well said. To the 20th!” Lee replied with a smile. He drained the liquor and Paul did the same.

His throat burned for a second, but he welcomed the warm sensation. He felt like he was back with his college friends at the Rooster. “To the Union,” Paul chimed in.

“I’ve read your file, Revere. Quite impressive. Harvard College, ‘52. A nice import business and a fine pedigree. Your father was Joseph, correct? And your grandfather? Was he the one that Longfellow chap wrote about last year? I believe I read it in the *Boston Evening Transcript*.”

Paul smiled. “Yes, my grandfather served his time fighting in the War of Revolution against the British. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow felt his midnight ride to warn the colonists against the invasion was worth commemorating in a poem. It circulated pretty quickly, and he rose from a local icon to a national hero in just a few months. I think the story hit America at the right time. With so much turmoil these days, the people need something positive to latch on to.”

Lee chuckled. “Well, remember, this is an infantry unit, not cavalry. Don’t get any grand ideas about jumping on horseback and riding down the rebs.”

“I will do my best,” Paul replied. “May I ask if any of my friends arrived yet? Tomlinson, Westbrook, Church, or Dr. Barklon?”

The colonel sat back in his chair. “You know, there are so many Ivy Leaguers registered in the 20th, this place should be called the Harvard Regiment.”

Paul nodded. “Yes, I’ve been busy recruiting many of my college classmates, and reaching out to others I know. I’ve always felt educated men make the best officers.”

“I agree, Revere, but let’s see how they take drilling and discipline. It’s not always easy to go from books to rifles. Will your friends stand up to the task? Can they whip boys into shape quickly?”

“There is only one way to find out, Colonel. Where might I find them now?”

“The venerated judge arrived an hour ago. You will be lodging with him in the major’s hut. At present, you two will be assigned to help fill out the roster and recruit more men. The other three have already been sequestered with another captain, a man from Andover. Lieutenant Monroe will show you to your quarters.”

As Paul followed the officer out of the building, he couldn’t help but feel positive about the regiment he had been assigned to. He met his college mates a short time later in a small building on the other side of the field. There were about ten such structures, all designated to house four officers according to rank. They were each whitewashed with only a small sign above the door to distinguish a second lieutenant’s quarters from those of a two-star general.

“Well, if it isn’t Ol’ Rowdy Revere himself!” Tobias declared as he entered the captains’ hut.

“Majors aren’t allowed in here with us peons,” Ellis interjected good-naturedly.

“If you find one, be sure to let me know,” Paul ribbed him.

“There are more officers in these parts than enlisted,” Louis grouched. “I joined Lincoln’s army to do some fightin’. How soon until they let us at the rebs, do you wonder?”

“Calm yourself, Westbrook,” Paul laughed. “You may be a captain, but you still don’t know the first thing about military life. I met Colonel Lee this morning. He expects a lot from the 20th and so do I. It will do us all good to try to act the part.”

“We have all been given companies to lead,” Ellis commented. “One hundred young men, greener than my mama’s garden in April. I haven’t had to manage that many since...well, I don’t know when.”

“You never have,” Tobias chuckled but then his voice grew serious. “Just know you are not doing this yourself. You have lieutenants to help, but it’s up to you to appoint good officers whom the rank-and-file will listen to.”

“We only have a few weeks at most to get them ready for battle,” Paul remarked. “We don’t have time for games anymore, gentlemen. You are the teacher now. The *Matin Bell* has rung and it’s time to get to class.”

Chapter 3

September 17, 1861
Poolesville, MD

Company C marched across the cultivated plains in smart rows of twelve, their proud bannerman leading the way with his flag of yellow and green. Each man held his new rifle across his shoulder as he tried to keep in step with those in front and to his left. Mud from the brief rainstorm last night pooled in rivulets across the soil and spattered on the new uniform trousers of the Federal troops. As each line of men neared the old farmhouse sitting atop a small hill to their left, they turned their heads and gave a crisp salute to the officers watching them.

The major scrutinized the men as they passed, keeping his eye on those he found particularly compelling. As the weeks of training progressed, the number of slackers and undesirables in his regiment was shrinking considerably.

“Well, Paul, how do they look?”

The major remained silent for several minutes as the last row saluted and turned north toward the camp. The next company was now making its slow way toward him and he allowed himself a brief smile.

“Not bad, Louis,” he replied. “Livingston still has a long way to go, and I find McCaveran a bit of a coot.”

“McCaveran may be a big, dumb Irish bloke but he can shoot a rabbit at 50 feet with both eyes closed, Paul. He’s stayin’.”

Paul turned toward his friend and laughed. “You’ve made up your mind on the lad, that’s good. Remember half of this regiment is German and the other half Irish, or at least they tell me. We’ll have a lot of rowdy boys to deal with in the coming months if we don’t show them discipline now. I don’t want any plug-uglies on my hands. Make sure he can handle himself when the real shooting starts.”

“Here comes Ellis,” Louis responded as the men of Company A marched toward them. The mud at least kept the dust from rising all around the parade field.

The local farmer, an older man named Loggins, had managed to get almost his entire crop of tobacco leaves harvested before the Federal army commandeered his 700-acre property last month. Its position just five miles north of the Upper Potomac gave Lincoln an eye on the Virginia rebels just

across the shallow waters. If the newly installed Confederate cabinet wanted to launch a quick assault against the nation's capital only 30 miles away, this would be one of the few crossings open to them. Paul knew the key role his men played in guarding Washington and the thought kept him up most nights.

After the parade concluded an hour later, Paul reported his findings to Colonel Lee over a light lunch of pork and coffee. Palfrey was also in attendance, having recently returned from Boston. They found the regimental commander in a pensive mood. Discussions around politics and the Federal government's efforts to end the rebellion soon took an unexpected turn.

"Major," Lee said as he was finishing his meal, "I have it on good authority Lincoln may get his wish after all."

"Maryland will not secede? That was a close call, I must admit."

"There are only four slave-holding states left in the Union," Lee reminded him. "Kentucky and Missouri are key to holding the west but if we had lost Maryland or Delaware, our capital would be completely surrounded. I'm not sure what kind of pressure the president put on them to remain, but it seems to have worked."

Paul was thoughtful as he drained the last of the coffee. Despite the recent disaster at Bull Run in July, the rebellion had so far been primarily confined to the western states, with Missouri and Kentucky becoming hotbeds of discontent. Thousands of Confederate troops had massed against the smaller Union forces there but neither side had made any important gains. That might change soon as more government regiments transfer south to fight.

The 20th Massachusetts had been assigned to a brigade commanded by General Frederick Lander, a personal friend and former aide-de-camp to McClellan himself. Lander's Brigade also brought in the 19th Massachusetts and the 7th Michigan, currently camped in fields east. Their position at Camp Benton, located between Edward's Ferry and Conrad's Ferry, gave the Union excellent sight of the rebels across the waters and kept them at bay, at least for the time being.

Recent reports show the noose slowly closing on the Confederates in Richmond as Union gunboats began to blockade key coastal ports and recapture Union fortifications. With the cold winter only a few months away, Paul wondered how long the rebels actually expected to keep up this illegal action against their own government. He hoped this entire affair would end soon so things could return to normal.

Palfrey walked with him back to the major's tent, a canvas A-frame style with a seven-foot pole running along the center supported by a pair of six-footers on each end. It did not have the same level of comfort as their wooden barracks back in Readville, but it more than suited Paul's needs in the field. Despite his wealthy trappings at home, he felt himself adapt very quickly to outdoor living. His friends, however, had to make do with twice the number in the same size tent. The four captains were not always conciliatory towards each other on rainy nights. Fortunately, these had been mercifully few so far.

A small group of officers walked toward him from the direction of the mess tent and Paul stopped dead in his tracks. He wasn't sure if his eyes were playing tricks on him.

"Brother!" one of them called out suddenly. He was a man of medium height with a short brown beard, round spectacles, and a small scar across his right cheek. His new uniform didn't seem to fill out his lean frame as it hung loosely across the shoulders. The officer smiled and ran up to Paul.

"Ed, is it really you? The last I heard you were assigned to the Navy."

"I asked to be transferred here instead," the man replied earnestly. "If I'm going to war, I'd rather spend it with my own family."

"And our regiment needs a surgeon," Paul laughed gamely. "I'm sure it didn't take much convincing on your part."

"I do what I can to help. I'm sure my patients back home will be alright without me for a little while. Besides, the soldiers will need someone to look after them when the lead starts flying," Ed replied.

"When did you arrive? The colonel didn't mention anything to me about it."

"Blame that on me," Palfrey interjected. "Ed wanted to surprise you. I asked the colonel to keep the news quiet."

Paul turned to the major with an incredulous look. "I can't believe you kept this from me. I thought a judge was supposed to be unbiased and..."

Ed laughed. "It's my fault, Paul. I put him up to it. I loved the look on your face when you noticed your own brother. Priceless!"

Paul looked at his older sibling with annoyance. Edward was five years his senior, another product of Boston's Ivy League, Harvard Medical, Class of '49. He was in private practice now, married, with a young daughter of his own. He was the antithesis of Paul in many respects, more refined and thoughtful perhaps, but he loved a good game of cards or chess with friends, particularly after a long day tending to patients.

The two officers with Ed joined in the merriment, much to Paul's chagrin. The 20th Massachusetts was his domain, and he felt irritated at being

the butt of someone's joke. He cut them off with a stern look and the pair slunk away towards the barracks, still grinning from ear to ear.

"I think that's enough for now," Paul sighed. "Come, walk with me, Ed. We have some catching up to do."

They left Palfrey and headed up the hill behind the major's quarters. The landscape stretched for miles across rolling prairies, interspersed with colorful groves of red cedars, yellow buckeye, strong oak, and majestic sweet gum trees. The mighty Potomac lurked just over the next ridge. It ran deep and swift south of the capital but narrowed at this juncture with gradual banks that almost invited a crossing. Paul pointed it out to his brother.

"That's the key to Confederate victory," he declared, "and we're here to ensure they stay on that side of the water. If you get close enough, you can even see them watching us, biding their time."

"I'm not here to hold a rifle, Paul. I hold no animosity toward the South. But if they cross here or elsewhere, you're going to need me to stitch the boys back together."

Paul turned to the west and pointed along the northern shoreline. The regiment had encamped along a 20-acre plot of land, with white A-frame tents dotting the prairie in straight, narrow rows. The senior officers, including Colonel Lee and the two majors, had their own quarters opposite the general mess, while the captains bunked closer to their units.

Standing at the far east end was a lone white tent, inconspicuous among the multitude of soldiers nearby. "That's the brigade hospital," Paul declared. "You'll be serving as assistant surgeon of the regiment, under the supervision of Dr. Nathan Hayward. Dr. Henry Bryant is the Brigade Surgeon, and he oversees all the regiments."

"Yes, and from what Colonel Lee informed me, there is quite a lot to do, starting with the outbreak of measles going around. If the men aren't getting shot, they are guaranteed to be sick at some point."

Paul nodded. "You've already made quite an impact, and you just arrived! The seminars you gave on Military Surgery in Boston were well received, and your influence helped establish the state medical commission. What will you do for an encore, brother?"

"I didn't do anything special, believe me. I just felt it important that the state appoint qualified surgeons for the military posts. The boys in blue deserve the best we have, am I right?"

"Well said," Paul replied as he chuckled at his brother's modesty. He knew the troops Massachusetts was sending south would soon benefit from Ed's wisdom and experience. There was little in the way of uniform code or

oversight guiding the war department when casualties were brought in. Young men arrive with arms and legs mangled by shrapnel or lead bullets. He closed his eyes and envisioned them lying on stretchers with gaping chest wounds and heads bleeding from ripped scalps and torn faces.

Who was going to care for them all? Did Lincoln really want a shyster or carnival hustler treating his troops, or real doctors who knew how to handle a scalpel? The new medical board would vet these appointees and make sure the doctors had the proper credentials before sending them to the front.

“You still have that old souvenir Joe sent you?” Ed remarked, hoping to change the subject. “I saw Luci and Francis before I came down. She said you brought it with you.”

Paul smiled before fishing his grandfather’s medallion from his jacket pocket. He held it up for inspection, allowing the sun to shine off the polished bronze.

“Yep, I hold on to it for good luck. Our cousin wasn’t much of a sentimental sort, but I like to think Poppy is looking down on us and keepin’ us safe.”

“You cleaned it up. I can see from here,” Ed said admiringly.

“Of course, a thing like this deserves to shine.” Paul replaced it in his pocket. “And I’ll take it all the way to Richmond!”

Ed just nodded. He knew storming the Confederate capital was still a long way off, if it ever came to that.

“Luci sends her best, Paul,” he said with a quick smile. “She looks forward to your next furlough. Your little boy was running about the house and the nanny seemed hard-pressed to catch up.”

“Francis is only a year and a half, brother. Wait till he gets stronger legs under him! The poor lady won’t know what to do!”

“My little Mary...well, I guess I can’t say ‘little’ anymore! She is eight already. The girl has a fine head for numbers and the tutor feels she might have had a good career in business if she was a boy. She has not taken kindly to the feminine arts, alas. I don’t see a husband marrying her for her sewing or cooking skills quite yet.”

Paul laughed. He knew his niece had never taken to playing with china dolls or wearing fancy dresses like other girls in Boston’s well-to-do social families, but he hoped Ed and Laura would still find her a suitable match when she came of age. She was still only eight. They had a few years left.

“Well, she could always follow her father in the family business,” he replied encouragingly.

Ed looked at him with a smirk. “A woman doctor? In Boston? Sounds like you’ve been sipping too much of your brandy.”

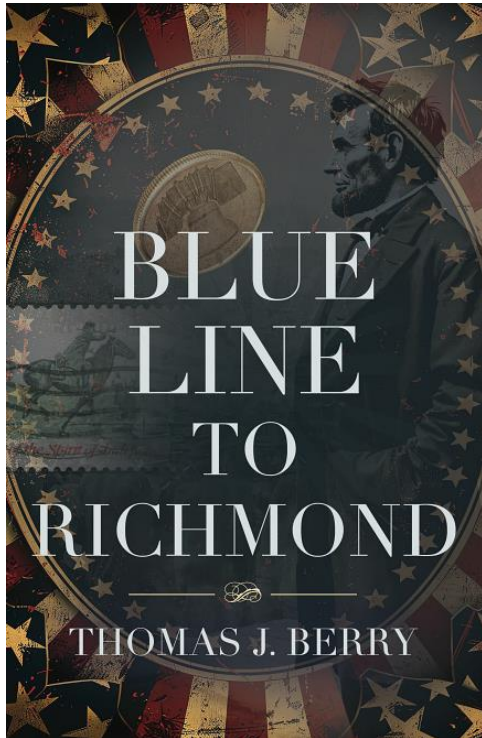
“No, of course not. But have you heard of that woman in Britain who created the nursing school last year? I think it was St. Thomas Hospital in London. The curriculum was supposedly based on science, not folklore. Nightingale was her name, I believe. Flora?”

“Yes, Florence Nightingale,” his brother replied, snapping his fingers as the name suddenly came to him. “But the United States has no precedence here.”

“By the time she is old enough, there might be one,” Paul replied gamely. “Medicine must keep up with the times.”

“There was a woman in the States who earned a medical degree,” Ed remembered. “Blackwell was her name, and this was about a decade ago. Perhaps there is a precedent after all! At least it gives me hope that Mary might have a future where she can use her intelligence. Sadly, most women are destined to be only mothers and housewives. They raise strong, confident sons but at what cost to themselves?”

“When this war is over, I’m sure you’ll find a lot of changes in this country, no matter which side wins out in the end.”



A new generation of heroes emerges as the North and South face off in a devastating civil war, bonded together by an extraordinary medallion forged by the legendary Paul Revere.

Blue Line to Richmond

By Thomas J. Berry

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