

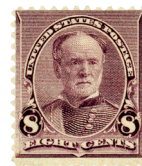
This Day in History... February 8, 1820

Birth of William T. Sherman

William Tecumseh Sherman was born February 8, 1820 in Lancaster, Ohio.

After the death of his father in 1829, nine-year-old Sherman went to live with a family friend, the prominent Whig politician Thomas Ewing. The Ohio senator – and later secretary of the Interior – steered young Sherman toward West Point, securing an appointment for him at the age of 16.

After graduating from West Point, Sherman served in the US Army as a second lieutenant, stationed in Florida during the Second Seminole War. Following assignments in Georgia and South Carolina, Sherman went to California during the Mexican-American War, where he performed administrative duties. He was present during the California Gold Rush, but didn't profit financially.



Sherman is often considered the "father of modern warfare."



Stamp pictures Sherman with Civil War generals Ulysses S. Grant and Philip Sheridan.

By 1850, Sherman had been promoted to captain and married his foster sister in a wedding attended by President Zachary Taylor. The couple would eventually have eight children. Sherman held various jobs before becoming the first superintendent of the Louisiana State Seminary of Learning and Military Academy (which would become Louisiana State University). While there, Sherman became attached to the South and the people who lived there. However, as the clouds of war gathered, he resigned his post and moved north to defend the Union cause. Sherman declined the offer of a job in the War Department, which the Lincoln administration intended as a stepping-stone to becoming assistant secretary of War.

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Sherman distinguished himself at the First Battle of Bull Run, which led to a promotion to brigadier general. He was assigned to serve in the Department



The M4 Sherman tank was named in his honor.

of the Cumberland in the border state of Kentucky, where he was soon given overall command. However, he was quickly replaced following what some historians believe was a nervous breakdown. When he returned to duty in December 1861, Sherman was again sent to Kentucky where he served under Ulysses S. Grant during his attempt to capture Fort Donelson.



The last of the Series of 1894 stamps to be issued. In fact, it wasn't released until 1895.

The two became friends and allies during the long siege of Vicksburg, leading one newspaper to comment, "the army was being ruined in mud-turtle expeditions, under the leadership of a drunkard (Grant), whose confidential adviser (Sherman) was a lunatic." Sherman would later recall, "[Grant] stood by me when I was crazy, and I stood by him when he was drunk; and now ... we stand by each other always."

At the Battle of Shiloh, Sherman's troops prevented a rout on the first day and staged a counterattack on the second. Sherman was wounded twice and earned a promotion to major general of volunteers. Though he continued to rise in the Union ranks, his overall performance was mixed. In the spring of 1864, Lincoln ordered Grant to take charge of all the Union armies. Grant then assigned Sherman to take his place as head of the Military Division of the Mississippi. This placed Sherman in charge of the entire Western Theater.

Sherman devised a strategy that called for Grant to beat Lee in the North while he divided the South by marching his troops through Georgia. Sherman gathered three armies with nearly 100,000 Union troops and set out for Atlanta. On September 2, 1864, he captured the city. Sherman was given permission to march south – after intentionally giving up his line of communication – so he could "make Georgia howl." As Union troops destroyed John Bell Hood's army at the battles of Franklin and Nashville, Sherman set off with 62,000 men on a march to Savannah, Georgia. Sherman's "scorched earth" policy was a severe blow to morale in the Confederacy, which was further damaged by his December 21, 1864, capture of Savannah, Georgia. The general then turned his men northward, again destroying everything in his path. Sherman's last significant battle was at Bentonville on March 19-21. A few weeks later, Lee surrendered at Appomattox and the Civil War came to a close.



Stamp printed on watermarked paper to prevent counterfeiting.

Four years later, Sherman succeeded General Grant as commanding general of the Army, a position he held for 14 years. In that role, Sherman oversaw the Army's involvement in the Indian Wars. He retired in 1884 and spent his last years in New York City enjoying theater, art, and delivering speeches before his death on February 14, 1891.

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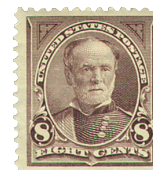


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