

“MAKE GEORGIA HOWL”:
GEORGIA, OCTOBER 1864

William T. Sherman to Ulysses S. Grant

During his visit to Georgia in late September, Jefferson Davis had approved Lieutenant General John B. Hood’s plan to force Sherman to retreat from Atlanta by cutting his railroad supply line. Hood crossed the Chattahoochee River southwest of Atlanta, September 28–29, and began advancing toward the Chattanooga–Atlanta railroad. Leaving one corps to guard the city, Sherman set off in pursuit of Hood with the remainder of his troops on October 3. After destroying eight miles of track between Big Shanty and Acworth, Confederate forces were repulsed when they tried to capture the Union supply depot at Allatoona on October 5. When Sherman telegraphed Grant from Allatoona on October 9, Hood was twenty miles to the southwest preparing to advance on Resaca. Sherman previously proposed a march on Savannah in a telegram sent to Grant on October 1.

Allatoona 7.30 P.M.
Oct. 9th 1864

Lt. Gen. Grant
City Point

It will be a physical impossibility to protect this road now that Hood, Forrest, Wheeler and the whole batch of Devils are turned loose without home or habitation. I think Hoods movements indicate a direction to the end of the Selma and Talladega road to Blue Mountain about sixty miles south west of Rome from which he will threaten Kingston, Bridgeport and Decatur and I propose we break up the road from Chattanooga and strike out with wagons for Milledgeville Millen and Savannah.

Until we can repopulate Georgia it is useless to occupy it, but the utter destruction of its roads, houses, and people will cripple their military resources. By attempting to hold the roads we will lose a thousand men monthly and will gain no result. I can make the march and make Georgia howl. We have

over 8000 cattle and 3,000,000 pounds of bread but no corn,
but we can forage in the interior of the state.

W. T. Sherman

M. Genl.