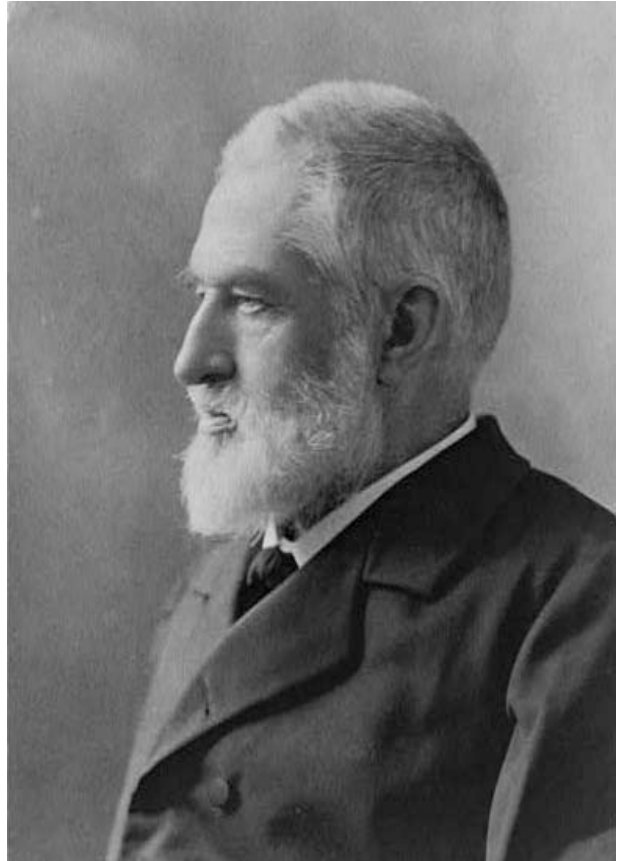


Jedediah Hotchkiss (November 30, 1828 – January 17, 1899), also known as **Jed**, was an educator and the most famous [cartographer](#) and [topographer](#) of the [American Civil War](#). His detailed and accurate maps of the [Shenandoah Valley](#) are credited by many as a principal factor in [Confederate](#) General [Stonewall Jackson](#)'s victories in the [Valley Campaign](#) of 1862.

Hotchkiss was born in [Windsor, New York](#). He graduated from the Windsor Academy and, by the age of 18, he was teaching school himself in [Lykens Valley, Pennsylvania](#). The following year he relocated to the Shenandoah Valley and opened the Mossy Creek Academy in [Augusta County](#). He supplemented his income as a schoolteacher by working as a mining geologist. As he explored the beautiful area around his new home he began his hobby (and minor business) of mapmaking that would dominate the rest of his life. In 1853 he married a woman from Pennsylvania named Sara Ann Comfort and together they had two daughters. In 1855 Hotchkiss and his brother Nelson founded the Loch Willow Academy school for boys in [Churchville, Virginia](#). His birthplace, known as the [Jedediah Hotchkiss House](#) was listed on the [National Register of Historic Places](#) in 1982.^[1]



Civil War

Near the end of June, 1861, Hotchkiss signed on as a Confederate teamster to take supplies to the Churchville Cavalry at [Rich Mountain, West Virginia](#). Hotchkiss offered his services as a mapmaker to [Brig. Gen. Richard B. Garnett](#), whose Confederate [brigade](#) was operating in western Virginia. Hotchkiss served at [Rich Mountain](#) and created maps for General [Robert E. Lee](#)'s planned campaign in the mountains. He took a brief medical leave after being stricken with [typhoid fever](#), but returned to duty in March 1862 as a [captain](#) and chief topographical engineer of the [Valley District](#), reporting to [Maj. Gen. Stonewall Jackson](#). On March 26, 1862, Jackson summoned Hotchkiss to his headquarters and directed him to "make me a map of the [Valley](#), from Harper's Ferry to Lexington, showing all the points of offence and defence [sic] in those places."

The Shenandoah Valley had never been mapped in detail before. Running 150 miles in length and 25 miles wide, it was a daunting task, but Hotchkiss accepted the assignment, and worked on the map for the remainder of the war. In order to accommodate his large scale of 6,666.67 feet per inch, he glued together three portions of tracing linen to form a large single map of 8.25 feet by 3.5 feet, with a three-quarter-inch grid.



One of Hotchkiss's maps: Valley Campaign of 1864 for Jubal Early

Captain Hotchkiss served under Jackson for the rest of the general's life. Producing large volumes of accurate, detailed, and even beautiful maps, he also aided the general by personally directing troop movements across the terrain with which he had become so familiar. Jackson's reputation for lightning movements and surprise attacks, befuddling his enemies, owes much to Hotchkiss's cartography. Together they served in the [Valley Campaign](#), the [Northern Virginia Campaign](#) (including [Cedar Mountain](#), the [Second Battle of Bull Run](#), and [Chantilly](#)), the [Maryland Campaign](#) (including [Harpers Ferry](#) and [Antietam](#)), and the [Battle of Fredericksburg](#). At the [Battle of Chancellorsville](#) in May 1863, Hotchkiss discovered the route that Jackson took in his famous flanking march against the [Union](#) army. That night, Jackson was mortally wounded and died less than two weeks later.

After his general's death, Hotchkiss continued to be assigned to the staff of the Corps commanders who succeeded Jackson (Generals [Richard S. Ewell](#) and [Jubal A. Early](#)), but he was frequently called upon to work directly for General Robert E. Lee at the headquarters of the [Army of Northern Virginia](#). Balancing these dual responsibilities, he served through the [Gettysburg Campaign](#), the [Mine Run Campaign](#), and the [Overland Campaign](#). In June 1864 he accompanied General Early on his raid through the Shenandoah Valley toward [Washington, D.C.](#), and one of his maps contributed to Early's successful surprise attack against General [Philip Sheridan](#) at the [Battle of Cedar Creek](#) (although the map was not able to prevent Early's decisive defeat by the end of the battle). He then returned to the [Siege of Petersburg](#) with the remnants of Early's defeated army for the remainder of the war.

After General Lee's surrender at [Appomattox Court House](#) in April 1865, Hotchkiss, now a [Major](#), surrendered to the Union Army. General [Ulysses S. Grant](#) had Hotchkiss released from custody and returned his maps to him. Grant paid Hotchkiss for permission to use some of his maps in his reports and almost all of the Confederate maps in the *Official Records* produced by the U.S. War Department were those drawn by him.

Postbellum career

As a civilian again, Hotchkiss returned to [Staunton, Virginia](#), reopened his school, and was involved in economic activities designed to promote the recovery of the war-ravaged Shenandoah Valley and in veterans' affairs. After teaching school, he opened an office as a civil and mining consulting engineer and, being so familiar with the geography of the state, was able to steer lucrative foreign and Northern investments to the most appropriate places.

In October, 1865, a Federal detective confronted Hotchkiss with a military order to confiscate his map collection. Hotchkiss refused to obey the order, and instead took some maps to Richmond for examination by army engineers. Despite Federal pressure, he was able to retain ownership of all his maps, while preparing maps of Virginia counties for the United States Army.

Hotchkiss collaborated in the writing of the 12-volume [*Confederate Military History*](#), writing the 1,295-page Virginia volume himself. His journals were edited in 1973 by Archie P. MacDonald and published under the title *Make Me a Map of the Valley: The Civil War Journal of Stonewall Jackson's Cartographer*. Hotchkiss's sketchbooks, diaries, and maps are available at the [Library of Congress](#) in Washington, D.C.

Jedediah Hotchkiss died at his home in Staunton at age 71. He is buried there in Thornrose Cemetery. The small town of [Hotchkiss, West Virginia](#), in [Raleigh County](#) was named for him. The magnificent Queen Anne and Eastlake style mansion Hotchkiss built in 1888 at 437 East Beverley Street, Staunton, Virginia, still stands and is on the National Register of Historic Places and a Virginia Landmark. It is currently (2010) offered for sale by the family that purchased it from the Hotchkiss heirs in 1948.

The Hotchkiss map collection

The Hotchkiss collection contains over 600 maps primarily relating to the Virginias between 1861 and 1865. Some of the maps are from his post-war work, some are of individual estates, and some are source maps made by others. The map collection was retained by his family following his death and refusal of the Federal confiscation order. C. Vernon Eddy, librarian of the Handley Regional Library in Winchester, Virginia made arrangements for the listing and safe-keeping of the maps in specially made aluminum tubes, before they were finally give to the Library of Congress in 1948, who then published the maps in 1951. Three of the original maps were donated by the Hotchkiss family to the Handley Library: a *Route Map of Gettysburg Campaign*, a *Sketch of the Battle of Winchester* [First], and a *Sketch of the Second Battle of Winchester*. The Jedediah Hotchkiss Papers are available in the Stewart Bell Jr. Archives Room through the Winchester-Frederick County Historical Society at Handley Regional Library in Winchester, Virginia.