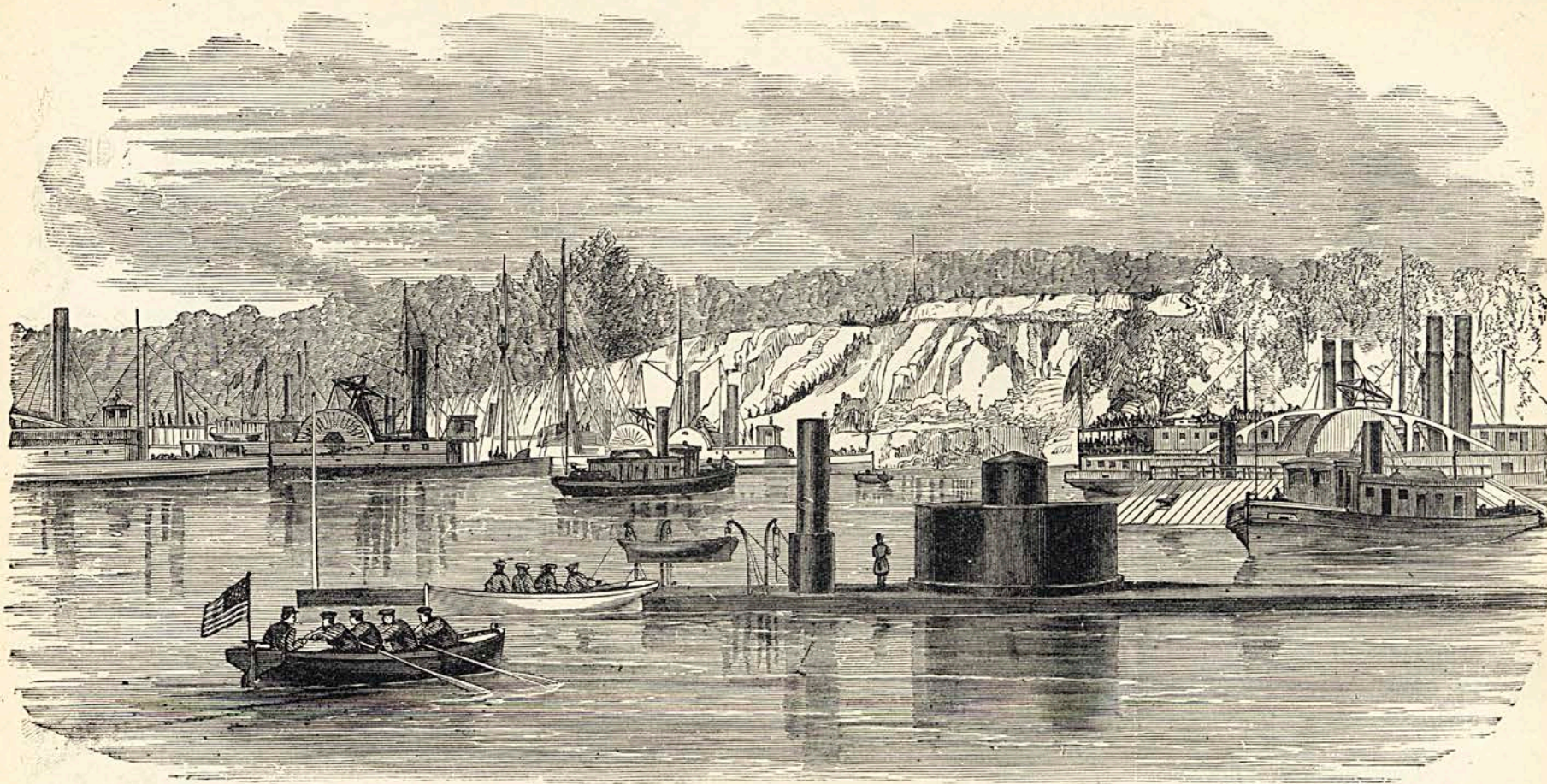
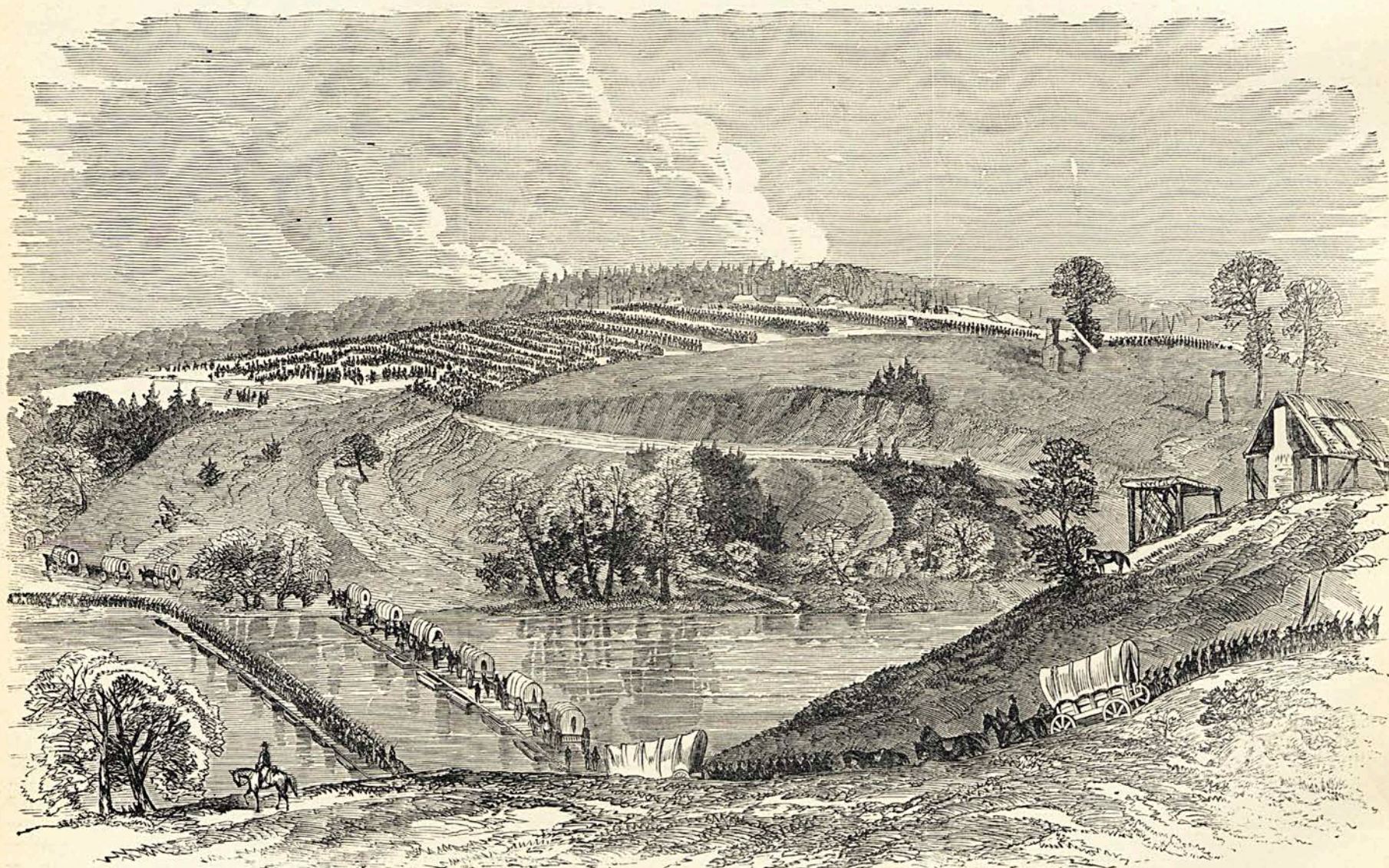




GENERAL BUTLER LANDING AT FORT POWHATAN, ON THE JAMES RIVER, VA.

A part of General Grant's plan for the reduction of Richmond was the command of the James River, a task entrusted to General Butler. He embarked 30,000 men at Fortress Monroe, on May 6, 1864, and, pretending to go up York River, turned in the night, and, defended by monitors, steamed up the James to the bluff banks at the mouth of the Appomattox. This place was seized and fortified by earthworks, suitably named Fort Powhatan; and it formed the base of immediate warfare there not only, but became afterward, as City Point, the great supply depot and headquarters of all the operations about Petersburg and Richmond. Within a short time thereafter all the Army of the Potomac was in that neighborhood, fighting Beauregard night and day; but they were easily supplied and communicated with, because they owned a navigable river to the very heart of their theatre of operations.



GENERAL MEADE CROSSING THE RAPIDAN, MAY 4, 1864.—FROM A SKETCH BY EDWIN FORBES.

Meade's greater half of the Army of the Potomac had been living in winter quarters north of the Rapidan from December, 1863, until May, 1864, when Grant's great forward movement was to begin, all the armies of the country, except Banks' Gulf-State's force, concentrating on Richmond. Meade had at this time three full corps, and Grant's additions brought the number up to about 116,000 men. The Rapidan there is about 200 feet wide, and five pontoon bridges were laid between Germania and Ely's fords. About 36 hours from midnight of May 3 were required for this host with its artillery and wagon-trains to cross, and then it plunged into the dreadful battle-jungle of The Wilderness.