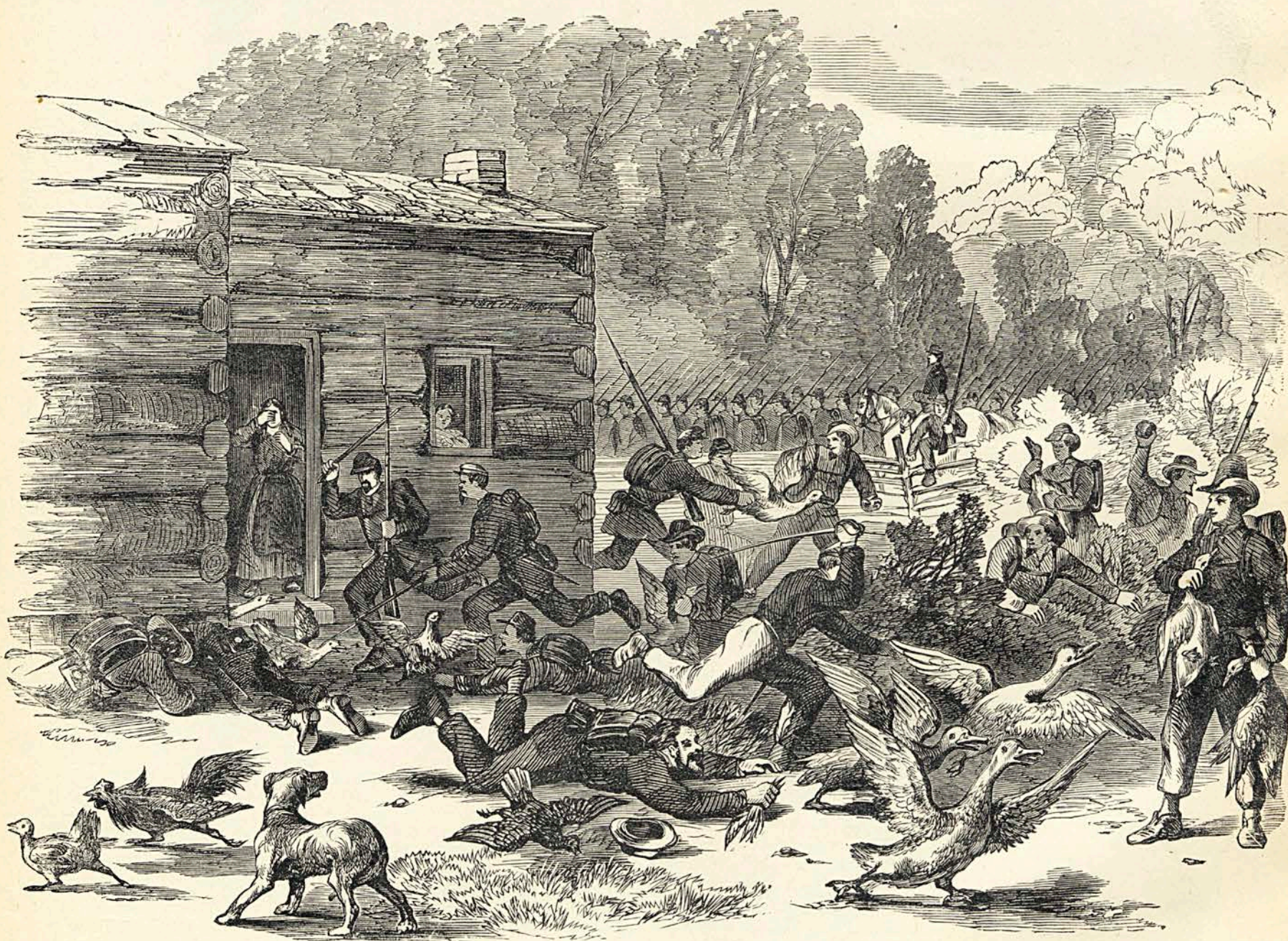




VIRGINIA FARMERS' FAMILIES ON THEIR WAY TO THE FEDERAL COMMISSARY FOR PROVISIONS.—FROM A SKETCH BY EDWIN FORBES.



FEDERAL TROOPS FORAGING.

Promiscuous foraging, even in the enemy's country, was not generally permitted during the war, the commissary officials reserving to themselves the control of such subsistence as the country supplied, and the opportunity of the private soldier to help himself to stray chickens and pigs was rigorously circumscribed. This rule was less stringently enforced on the march than in camp, and early in the war it was hardly enforced at all. During Sheridan's Shenandoah raid the fullest scope was given to the predatory inclinations of the army, since its purpose was to clean out of that region every sort of sustenance for the enemy in whose possession the valley was to be left. So, everything the soldiers could eat they were welcome to take, and all the rest was destroyed. In the life of the soldier, which was half tragedy and half sky-larking, the chance for indiscriminate foraging was great fun, and no school-boy in a snow-ball fight ever enjoyed a recess better than did the participants in these way-side grab-games among the live-stock.