

watched them go, baffled by what the soldiers wanted with a tombstone from the Methodist cemetery.<sup>5</sup>

Banks disliked the notion of establishing permanent headquarters in an isolated Virginia town with no bridge at his back. When the last of the ninety-day volunteers departed from the Ferry, he moved across the river and into the home of Jacob Miller, near Sandy Hook, leaving a small force in Harpers Ferry to picket the roads. His lack of a military education did not effect his powers of observation. In his first message to Scott he asked for twenty thousand troops, warning, "There are three points that must be held—Loudoun Heights, Maryland Heights, and the plateau beyond the village of Bolivar that commands the road to Winchester. If the enemy has possession of either one, it will command the town." Scott agreed to beef up Banks's division and suggested that the general fortify Maryland Heights. For the next several days, Banks imagined an overpowering force in his front and hurried a few batteries to the summits of Loudoun and Maryland Heights.<sup>6</sup>

For about eight weeks Banks's reinforced division camped in Pleasant Valley, near the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal on the Maryland shore, and provided nearby residents with the same kind of "felicity" felt by Harpers Ferrians during Jackson's visit. While at Sandy Hook, Banks earned the reputation for "being a thorough gentleman," a quality that complemented his decency but diluted his efficacy as a military commander.<sup>7</sup>

From 1853 to 1857 Banks had served as a prominent congressman from Massachusetts, and from 1858 to 1861 as governor. As a young adult, he rose from poverty to become a self-made man. By the age of forty-five he had developed exquisite social graces and wielded considerable political influence. Neither qualified him for command, but like so many Union generals, his political muscle netted him two stars. Unlike Patterson, Banks cut a fine figure with his boldly handsome features, his dark, abundant hair, and his taut, athletic physique. He displayed youthful energy on the fine horses he rode, and he always appeared in public dressed in a carefully brushed gold-braided uniform. But life on the shores of the Potomac, although picturesque, isolated him from easy ac-

5. Barry, *Harper's Ferry*, 110.

6. Banks to Army Headquarters, July 26, 29, and Scott to Banks, July 27, 1861, OR, II, 764, 767-68, 765.

7. Barry, *Harper's Ferry*, 110-11.