

“I Could Tell You a Thousand Stories of Their Heroism...”¹

Voices of the Gettysburg Campaign and the First Day of Battle

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These letters were written when we were very young, but they breathe forth but one spirit, that of patriotic devotion to the cause in which we were engaged, under an ever-crushing pressure of danger, exposure, hardship, toil, and privation, unequalled or unsurpassed in the history of any country, and certainly worthy of preservation and recital for many generations to come.²

Robert G. Carter wrote these words 48 years after his service with the 22nd Massachusetts ended, in attempting to describe the importance of his and his brothers' wartime letters in completing his masterful classic, *Four Brothers in Blue*. Of all of the information available to the modern Civil War historian, the soldiers' letters, diaries, and other wartime writings are by far the most valuable. Ironically, they are often the most overlooked sources.

Why these writings have been underutilized will be discussed in more detail later. The intention of this paper, however, is to tell the story of the Gettysburg campaign and the first day of the battle (July 1, 1863) through the wartime writings created by both Union and Confederate soldiers. The reasons for taking this approach also help to explain the vast importance of these letters.

Primarily, these writings contain the words of the soldiers themselves, who were not just *eyewitnesses*, but also *participants* in the events which they described. Being created during or just after the Gettysburg campaign, these letters, preserving the original spellings and grammar, create a tangible sense of immediacy unmatched by post-war writings. By the 1880s, as the veterans began to pen their wartime memoirs, the drudgery and misery of the war had begun to

fade, and thus their writings were heavily laden with the romantic version of the war. By comparison, the wartime writings ring with truth and cover topics left out or conveniently forgotten in the post-war reminiscences.

The immediacy these letters is also evident in that they provide the modern reader with an unparalleled viewpoint of the soldiers' perspective of the events they describe by stripping away the hindsight or layering of history that naturally occurs over time. In other words, these writings contain information that the soldiers *believed* to be true, and not simply what *we know* to be true today. This is also one reason the letters are often dismissed, in that they are full of misstatements, wild exaggerations, and outright falsehoods that have been proven inaccurate by modern studies. It is easy to forget that what appears to us to be wholly unreliable, was in fact what the soldier thought was correct when he penned his letters.³

These writings also place the Gettysburg campaign in the context of the entire American Civil War. The campaign and battle obviously did not occur in a vacuum. Many other outside events and factors were constantly affecting the lives of these men. Thus, these writings also convey the "human side" of the war and place faces on the numbers or statistics that are so often used to describe Gettysburg.

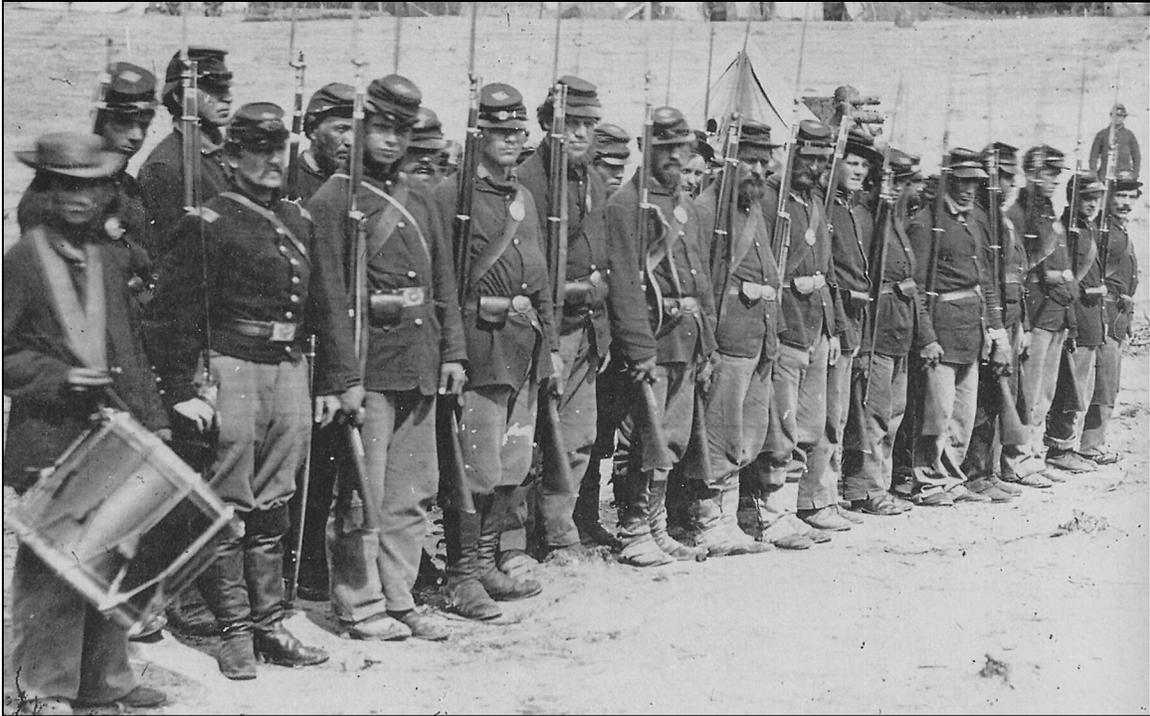
One of the most famous principles of war by military theorist Carl Von Clausewitz states, "War is Merely the Continuation of Policy by Other Means."⁴ If this is true, it follows that armies are an extension of the societies that created them. This would especially be true for volunteer armies, such as those formed by the Union and Confederate governments during the American Civil War. Thus men in the ranks of the Army of the Potomac and the Army of Northern Virginia represented the societies from which they came. Their letters therefore reveal much about the attitudes, goals, ideals, beliefs, politics, and countless other traits that defined their opposing cultures.

Thus the letters, diaries, newspaper articles, and other writings penned by the Union and Confederate soldiers during and immediately after the Gettysburg campaign provide us with the closest, most intimate vantage point of these critical events. They tell us much about who these men were, what they were fighting for, and what their opinions were on a wide variety of subjects (including their commanders and leadership, the conduct of the war, their enemy's political and military leaders, political events, and many others topics). These documents also illustrate the impact the war and the battle had upon themselves, their families, and the nation as a whole.

Robert Carter expressed this idea well when he wrote after the war:

The boys who served in the ranks during the Civil War, although perhaps obscure, in the sense that while carrying a rifle they wore no stars, bars nor eagles, were, nevertheless, the flower of the land. Bright, intelligent and right from the schools, colleges, stores, workshops and offices, they were very *close observers*, and what they saw and heard they jotted down in diaries and letters home. Many of these memorandums form to-day the ... most valuable of all data upon which to found the future historians' account of that war.⁵

In preparation for this paper hundreds of letters and other writings were reviewed, most of which were created within three months of the battle (or thus during a six-month period, April through September, 1863). While this sample admittedly represents a very small percentage of the nearly 170,000 men who participated in the campaign, the writings do provide a broad cross-section of both armies. Represented is every corps of each army, all branches of the service (infantry, artillery, cavalry), both officers and enlisted men, wealthy and poor, veteran and the untested soldier, and combat troops along with support units. Altogether, the material used certainly provides enough information to allow general conclusions to be drawn.



Company C, 110th Pennsylvania. The photo was taken shortly before the Chancellorsville Campaign, spring 1863. LC

The Armies

To provide a clearer insight of their writings a brief analysis of each army on the eve of the Gettysburg campaign will afford a better understanding of these Union and Confederate soldiers. **The Army of the Potomac** marched into battle at Gettysburg with an approximate strength of 90,000.⁶ Organized into seven corps of infantry, one cavalry corps and an artillery reserve, they were one of the last great volunteer armies. Nearly three quarters of the front line units (74 percent) had been recruited and mustered into service in 1861. By contrast a small percentage (less than 10 percent) of the units experienced their first combat during the Gettysburg campaign. The vast majority, acclimated to the routine of military regulation, seasoned by two years of constant marching, drilling, the fatigues and hardships of active campaigning, and hardened by numerous battlefield encounters were, by definition, experienced veterans.⁷

This experience had been purchased at an extremely high price, however. The average regiment, reduced by illness, desertion, and combat losses from its original strength of 1,000, could muster only slightly more than 300 men. The army as a whole represented this attrition. Previous campaign losses, along with the mustering out of nearly 23,000 men upon expiration of their enlistments, dwindled the army's ranks by nearly 20 percent in May and June 1863. The Army of the Potomac thus entered the Gettysburg campaign at nearly its lowest strength during the entire war.⁸

Being the principal Union army in the eastern theater of war, it is not surprising that the majority of the men were easterners, with New York and Pennsylvania providing the most soldiers. Only 14 percent of the units could be considered "western," hailing from Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, or Wisconsin. Every state that fought for the Union, save Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, and Missouri, was represented within its ranks. The vast majority were volunteers, only twelve percent of the units being United States Regulars.⁹

The high-level leadership of the army, however, was more professional. Of the 107 officers commanding at brigade-level or above (brigade, division, corps, army), nearly half (49) were either

graduates of the United States Military Academy at West Point or were in the regular army when the war began. Not surprisingly, most of these officers were commanding at the corps or division level, although 23 brigades were also led by professionals. The vast majority of non-professional high-level officers commanded brigades (48), though there were also nine divisions and one corps of the army that were led to Gettysburg by these "citizen-soldiers." Although the overwhelming majority of officers in lower-level command positions (regiment or below) were volunteers, there were 50 additional West Point graduates scattered throughout the army in various positions.¹⁰

As the **Army of Northern Virginia** broke its camps around Fredericksburg, Virginia and began its movement north it numbered approximately 75,000.¹¹ Being in the eastern theater and the principal defenders of Richmond, it is not surprising that Virginia troops comprised the largest proportion of the army; more than 25 percent. Nevertheless, all eleven Confederate states that made up the Confederacy, along with a contingent of nearly 1,000 soldiers from Maryland, were represented within its ranks. Although the Confederate government began conscription in April, 1862, the vast majority of the men were probably volunteers. Determining even an approximate number, however, is nearly impossible, for the Confederate armies integrated their new recruits into existing regiments (instead of creating new regiments as their Union counterparts did). This practice also makes it extremely difficult to state how many Southern soldiers saw their first combat during the Gettysburg campaign.¹²

An examination of the basic history of each unit, however, reveals that more than three quarters of the regiments and batteries were organized and mustered into service in 1861, before conscription was implemented. More importantly, nearly 94 percent of these units had seen action in previous battles.¹³ Conversely, only six units (less than 3 percent) could be identified as being created in 1863.¹⁴ Thus it is obvious that the vast majority of these men were seasoned veterans by the summer of 1863.

The advantage of placing recruits within existing units not only sped along the "seasoning" process of the men, but also increased the size of the respective units. On average, Confederate regiments at Gettysburg numbered slightly more than 330 officers and men, approximately 30 more than the average Northern regiment. As the Confederacy obviously did not have a standing army in 1861, nearly all of the rank and file were civilians before the war.

Despite this, the level of experience in the officer corps was very high. Of the 73 high-level commands (infantry brigades, artillery battalions, division, corps, army), nearly half (36) were commanded by either graduates of the West Point or were in the regular army in 1861. The proportion of professional leadership of these units rises dramatically to 77 percent when graduates of other military schools or academies (Virginia Military Institute, South Carolina Military Academy, Georgia Academy Military Institute, etc.), Mexican War veterans, pre-war militia officers, or those with other military experience are included. All of the corps and divisions were commanded by professionals, while only thirteen infantry brigades (less than 30 percent) and six artillery battalions (approximately 38 percent) were commanded by pre-war civilians. Although most lower-level command positions (regiment/battery or below) were held by volunteers, professional soldiers or those with other military experience commanded 56 regiments and at least six batteries.¹⁵

Although recently victorious at Chancellorsville (April 29 to May 4), the army had suffered approximately 12,800 casualties. One of the hardest blows of all, however, was the loss of the army's 2nd Corps commander, Lt. Gen. Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson. Gen. Robert E. Lee himself lamented in a May 11 letter to his wife "you will see that we have to mourn the loss of the great and good Jackson. Any victory would be dear at such a price.... I know not how to replace him." Lee's strong faith, something common among both Union and Confederate soldiers, as will be seen, gave him great comfort, for he added, "God's will be done! I trust He will raise up some one in his place. ..." On the same day, in a general order to his troops, Lee stated:

... while we mourn [Jackson's] death, we feel that his spirit still lives,

and will inspire the whole army with his indomitable courage and unshaken confidence in God as our hope and our strength.¹⁶

Jackson's death, however, led to a reorganization of the army, from two corps into three corps. Lee explained, in a May 20, 1863 letter to Confederate President Jefferson Davis, the reasons for this restructuring:

I have felt for the past year that the corps of this army were too large for one commander . . . The loss of Jackson from the command of one half the army seems to me a good opportunity to remedy this evil.¹⁷

Attached to each infantry division was a battalion of artillery, while each corps had an artillery reserve consisting of two battalions. Completing the army's order of battle was a division of cavalry, also with a battalion of artillery.¹⁸

The Men

A closer study of the men within the ranks of each army can also provide a better understanding of their writings. Not surprisingly, with nearly all of them being Americans, these Union and Confederate soldiers had much in common. Statistically, the "average" soldier at Gettysburg was 26 years old, stood five feet, eight and a quarter inches high, and weighed 143 pounds. The majority were white and native-born Americans, as were several generations of their ancestors. Still, a wide range of foreign nationalities were also represented within the ranks of each army, including among many others, German, Irish, French, Italian, British, Canadian, Portuguese, Norwegian, Polish, Sweden, Netherlands, and Swiss. The number of foreigners within the Army of the Potomac was a higher percentage when compared with the Army of Northern Virginia. This fact should not be surprising, as the vast majority of immigrants who came to the United States (especially during the wave of immigration that occurred between 1850 and 1860) settled in the North. Estimates for the number of foreign-born soldiers in the Union army widely varies, but the most reliable sources place the total number between 10 to 20 percent of all enlistments (approximately 520,000). While the exact number and percentage of foreigners in the Confederate service are unknown, and their numbers were substantial, they were considerable less than represented in the Northern army.¹⁹

The pre-war occupations of these soldiers also greatly varied. Although farming was the most common employment for the men in each army, it should not be surprising that the percentage was much higher in the Confederate army (approximately 60 percent of Southern soldiers versus approximately 40 percent of Union soldiers). Many other occupations were similar within each army, although the variety was much greater in the Army of the Potomac, reflecting the great social and economic changes that the North experienced during the decade leading up to the war, including the influx of immigration and the beginnings of the Industrial Revolution. For both armies these included, among others, laborers, mechanics, carpenters, merchants, clerks, blacksmiths, shoemakers, planters, lawyers, doctors, sailors, millers, machinists, engineers, clerks, teachers, students, tailors, masons, engineers, manufacturers, painters, teamsters, and miners.²⁰

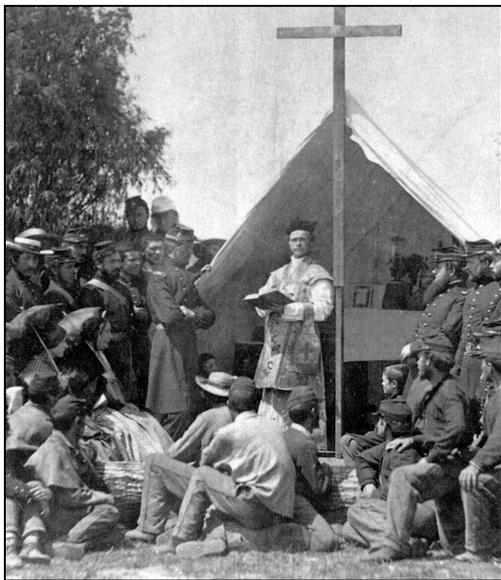
The wartime writings of these soldiers also make it clear that the majority held strong religious convictions. For those who did believe, they had three common beliefs. First, God controlled human events. It was He who decreed that the war would start and it would be He who decided when it would end. Edmund DeWitt Patterson, an Alabama soldier, recorded this attitude in his diary, concisely writing, "There is a God above us that holds the destinies of Nations in his hands. . . ."²¹

The second common belief was that God protected them in battle. Capt. David

Ballenger, of the 26th Alabama, strongly expressed this conviction in describing the numerous close calls he had during the battle:

During the three day's fight I was hit six times, but they did not draw blood. Two places were bruised on me till they were black. I was hit three times on one of my wrists. Four holes were shot in my coat but, God be praised, they did not hurt me much. I do believe that God did stand before me and behind me, and on either side. He was there. There was one man killed right before me with a bomb shell, and another's arm nearly torn off right by my side.²²

The third religious conviction held by many of the soldiers was that God was on *their* side. Two examples state this belief clearly. One was a Confederate private and the other a Union general. Both held the same opinion on God's favor. Early in the war Jonathan Holt, 56th Virginia, stated in a letter to his wife:



Sunday Mass for the 69th New York. LC

... I trust all into the hands of a kind & merciful God who will never leave nor forsake those who put their trust in him. I have no doubt he is on our side and if he is we have no cause to fear but that we shall ultimately triumph over all our enemies . . .²³

In an attempt to bolster his wife's flagging morale following the Army of the Potomac's recent defeats, Brig. Gen. John W. Geary, commanding a division in the 12th Corps, wrote to his wife on June 24:

Be of good cheer, my dear wife ... [we] must [not] lose confidence in God, and although the cloud hangs darkly around us, still the "pillar of cloud by day, and of fire by night" will guide us to the promised land of peace as potently as it did the children of Israel through the dark wilderness of Arabia.²⁴

For many, their religious faith gave them the strength, comfort, and hope to face the mortal dangers of war. Sgt. David Hunter, 2nd Virginia, described his beliefs to his mother, writing:

Although we may be victorious many must fall, and I may be among that number. If it is the Lord's will I am, I trust, prepared to go. He is able to save to the uttermost. I have prayed to Him and I hope and believe he will forgive all my sins. O how awful to die without this hope, but with it death is but a step from this world of trouble and sin to another bright and glorious.... I trust I may be spared to my country and my dear mother, but if not - Thy will be done O Lord I put my trust in Thee and am content.²⁵

These religious convictions were intertwined with nearly every aspect of the soldiers' lives. Consequently, they appear constantly in the wartime writings of these men and will be evident in the numerous accounts used throughout this paper.

Another common characteristic among these Union and Confederate soldiers was that

because nearly all of them had willingly volunteered, they saw themselves, not surprisingly, as citizens who were temporarily in uniform. Constantly throughout their letters the soldiers refer to the former mundane pursuits of civilian life. John Nelson Old, of the Charlottesville Artillery, wrote to his wife, "I want you to write to me and let me know ... whether your cow is giving Milk and whether your Pigs grow and how your crop look and Garden and etc." While many such remarks were made out of concern for their families' well-being, many felt the need to somehow stay connected to their former lives. Col. David Aiken, commanding the 7th South Carolina, remarked to his wife on June 28, 1863, "I've not heard from O'Neall.... I hope however he is still doing well on the plantation & that the harvests are yielding abundantly." Of course others also offered unsolicited advice about agricultural practices, monetary affairs, and countless other subjects.²⁶

The level of education, or lack thereof, was yet another similarity amongst the Southern and Northern soldiers. This category, more than any other, explains the primary reason why the letters of these men have been overlooked. By 21st-century standards, these men were poorly educated. This fact alone can often cast an unintentional bias on the author, thus degrading the value of his writings. Further strengthening this prejudice are the horrible misspellings, atrocious grammar, and non-existent punctuation that are so common in the majority of most 19th-century correspondence.

Obviously, the level of education varied greatly and on average was much lower than modern standards. Generally Northern soldiers, because the society in which they were raised supported public education, received more former schooling than their Southern counterparts. While some Southern soldiers from the upper classes of society were very well educated, many receiving what by modern standards would be considered a higher education (college level or above), the majority of Confederates fell well short of that mark. Bell Wiley, *the* historian of the common Civil War soldier, stated that "most of the Rebel rank and file ... were neither learned, nor illiterate, though it must be admitted that those who were barely literate were much more numerous than those of fair education."²⁷ Because of this lower standard of schooling, along with the obvious grammatical, spelling, and style errors previously mentioned, the value to history of these men's letters has been often overlooked.

What must not be forgotten, however, is that for their time period the level of education for most of these soldiers was on average fairly good. One of the strongest indicators of this was the literacy rate of the general population at that time. With volunteer "citizen-soldiers" constituting the vast majority of the men within each army, this factor would presumably be reflected within their ranks. One estimate places the literacy rate in 1850 at about 90 percent in the North, and at approximately 80 percent in the Southern states, thus making American citizens some of the best-educated populations in the world. Thus Civil War armies were the most literate in history up to that time.²⁸



WRITING HOME.



United States Mail Wagon, Army of the Potomac. LC

When one looks not at *how* the soldiers wrote, but instead at *what* they were writing, it becomes obvious that these men were extremely articulate. Despite their lack of higher education and refinement, and the resultant grammatical flaws contained within their writings, many of these soldiers were quite eloquent, and nearly all could express their thoughts and attitudes clearly and powerfully. And they did so in volumes, writing about everything that

could and did affect the life of a soldier. Furthermore, unlike other American soldiers who fought in later wars, Civil War soldiers faced no censorship, thus making their letters and diaries more truthful and revealing. The power of many of these letters makes clear that modern society in many ways has lost the “art” of writing. An excellent example comes from the pen of Alexander Barclay, 4th Virginia, who in a July 14, 1863 letter to his sister, described his strong religious convictions:

Now whatever awaits me, whether death upon the bloody battlefield or permitted to breath my last with kind friends around to attend to every want, I feel that I have a bright future before me. I would like to die amidst my friends, but if God has so willed it that I should lie upon the field with nothing to mark the spot where the soldier lies, I feel that when the cold waters of death are rippling around my feet I can, trusting to the merits of a redeeming Savior. I can launch my bark upon its dark unknown surface and at last anchor in the harbor of heaven.²⁹

Making all of these writings even more impressive were the conditions under which they were created. Robert Carter expressed this fact very well in the introduction to *Four Brothers in Blue*:

Written as they were on the march, upon the battlefield, under fire, in the rifle pits, in the sun, rain, snow, and mud, even in the presence of grim death, it is wonderful in our extreme youth that throughout all there should run such a firm resolve and strict adherence to duty when there was so much to discourage our youthful ardor, depress our spirits, and swerve us from the true course.³⁰

None of this should be too surprising considering the extreme importance that letters and the written word had in mid-nineteenth-century society, it being one of the only forms of communication available. This was especially true for men away from their homes, many for the first time, and facing the drudgery and danger of military life. Writing and receiving letters was really the *only* method these men had to both get and receive news from their families during their long separation. It was the only way for them to describe their experiences, fears, dangers, and thoughts to their loved ones. It was also the *only* connection they had to their former civilian life, to which they hoped someday to return.

Not surprisingly, letters provided the soldiers great pleasure, both in receiving and

writing them. Writing home on June 14, 1863, Henry McDaniel of the 11th Georgia, stated:

The mail is *the event* of the camp. Could our friends witness the crowding round the post-man — the beaming look of expectation on the swarthy, weather-beaten faces — the cloud of disappointment upon the brows of those who receive nothing ... they would never again imagine that it matters little with soldiers whether or not they receive frequent letters.³¹

In the 104th New York, Charles Barber described the pleasure writing gave him in an April 23, 1863 letter to his wife, "... you are mistaken if you think I do not like to write to you\ for it is the most agreeable to me of anything I have to do here[.]”³²

During the Gettysburg campaign Col. David Aiken, 7th South Carolina, described to his wife the effects that both receiving and writing letters had on him:

I have received four letters from you, & this is an answer to the fourth received only an hour ago. Oh how I wish you had written me one five times as long. It was an answer to the one I wrote after my arrival in Camp. I have written you three since then. I am by no means as blue now as then....³³

Because of these powerful effects that letters held, both Union and Confederate soldiers were seemingly consumed by mail delivery. Countless soldiers' letters are filled with pleas for their families to write more often and references to the men anxiously hoping for word from home. Both governments immediately realized how important mail was in order to maintain the morale of their men and each took the necessary measures to insure its dependable delivery. Throughout the war, while numerous problems were encountered to be sure, the respective armies made their postal facilities a high priority and went to great lengths to improve mail services. The system established by the North was especially efficient and in many cases, despite the difficulties and emergencies encountered in wartime, rivaled today's modern postal service. A civilian attached to the Army of the Potomac described this organization in 1864:

The Post-Office ... of the Army of the Potomac was a great institution. Thousands of letters passed through it every week, and ... its welfare was regarded as almost of as much importance as any other department. Each regiment had a post boy, who carried the letters of his command to brigade headquarters. There the mails ... were ... sent up to division headquarters, and thence to corps headquarters, where mail agents received them and delivered them at the principal depot of the army.... As the mails passed to and from the army daily, the work required a large number of men, nearly all of whom were private soldiers detailed for such duty. So systematically was this department conducted ... that a letter which left Boston on the morning of the first of the month ... would generally be delivered to the private soldier in the trenches at Petersburg on the night of the fourth.³⁴

One of the most important aspects of these wartime writings is that they humanize the soldiers. Obviously, these men were not automatons, and the Gettysburg campaign and battle were not fought in a vacuum. Yet it is easy for the modern student of the Civil War to unconsciously relegate these men to that state by overly concentrating on the battle itself. While Northern and Southern soldiers were always facing possible death (the ultimate sacrifice), they also were dealing with many other heavy burdens, which were numerous, constant, personal, and very emotional. One of their primary concerns, and one that caused great anxiety, was the welfare of their families. While the men were off to war, their loved ones at home were left

without support. This was especially true in the mid-nineteenth century when the man was normally the sole source of income for his family. "My poor Darling," wrote a Georgia cavalryman shortly after the battle, "you must not forget that I sympathize with you most deeply in all your troubles and remember that I am always thinking of you and our dear precious little children." Weston Gales, 30th North Carolina, expressed even more angst in a July 8, 1863 to his wife:

I can not, my precious wife, my heart's delight, begin to picture to you the anxiety I feel respecting you all, for I have not heard from my dear ones for over a month, but I have faith that God will preserve and watch over you all. Oh! the thought that a long time and may perils must intervene before I can see you, almost crazes me. I am so concerned about your pecuniary wants ... Oh! how I long for one line saying that you are all well. Oh! for a sight of my precious children.³⁵

Conversely, the families were constantly concerned over the safety of their loved ones in the army, something that the soldiers themselves were well aware of and which caused them further worry. Lt. William Calder of the 2nd North Carolina, attempted to ease his mother's burden during the campaign by writing, "I must try and write a few line to assuage the anxiety that I know is overflowing your heart. Thank God I am well and strong as usual notwithstanding the many severe hardships I have been through."³⁶

Separation from their loved ones was obviously emotionally difficult, especially considering that for most this was the first time they had been away from their homes. Charles Barber, 104th New York, left an especially poignant description of his private agony caused by the separation from his wife and children:

I think of you every day and nights when I am on picket watching and listening to every noise with loaded musket and fixed bayonet[.] I walk my lonely beat thinking of you and the children and little Charley curled down close to his ma in the warm bed all of you fast asleep. then I pray for us all and hope ... that we may all meet again[.] ah what feelings of intense satisfaction it would be to ... see my beloved family[.] sometimes when I get to thinking about it I can hardly control my feelings[.] ... ah I did not know how I loved you and our children till since we parted last my love and attachment to you grows stronger and longer I am absent and oh I pray that I may embrace you all again....³⁷

This situation for some Confederate soldiers was even worse, for while they were invading Pennsylvania in the summer of 1863, Union troops were invading their home states, among them Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, and Tennessee. Obviously these men were not only anxious over the wants and needs of their loved ones, but more importantly their very safety. Capt. John S. Lewis, 16th Mississippi, wrote to his mother on July 21, 1863 expressing these fears:

... I fear the Yankees are now in possession of our homes, and many sad thoughts does this fear bring with it. If it were possible, I sincerely wish that you could go to Alabama with such property, negroes, etc., as you could take along, as I know if their army takes possession of our country they will pillage and plunder, and will take all the negroes, besides laying all its inhabitants open to insult and oppression.³⁸

The anxiety of one, a combination, or all of the above stated burdens could tax even the strongest-willed soldier to his extreme limit. A perfect example of the impact of these tremendous

outside pressures is the most famous soldier at Gettysburg, Gen. Robert E. Lee. Obviously, the most admired and beloved Southern leader shouldered an overwhelming amount of duties and responsibilities. Among them was commander of the Army of Northern Virginia, the Confederacy's principal army, whose primary duty was the protection of the Southern capital, Richmond. Throughout the war his army faced heavy odds, as he not only constantly struggled to receive more men, but faced an enemy who was always larger and better equipped than his own. Along with this went the constant burden of seeking more food, clothing, supplies, equipment, arms, and nearly all other goods necessary for sustaining an army in the field of a fledgling government struggling to maintain its very existence. Lee's position made him responsible for the fate of tens of thousands of men. Thus he lived with the constant pressure that any combat decision he made could mean the death or maiming of thousands of soldiers. Commanding the most famous and recognized army of his country also literally, if unofficially, placed the fate of the young Confederacy on Lee's shoulders. All of these official duties took their toll. In response to his wife's apparent pleas to write more often Lee patiently responded on May 23, 1863:

... after any absence of some days, that matters accumulate formidably, & that my attention is entirely engrossed in public business. I am unable therefore even to write to you, though my thoughts are always with you. You must not therefore be always expecting letters from me, for I repeat that I am unable to write but seldom, & at long intervals.³⁹

In addition to the obvious pressures of his official duties, Lee, like all soldiers in wartime, faced numerous personal burdens and anxieties of his own. Some of those touched upon in his letters written during the Gettysburg campaign included sick family members, over whom he constantly fretted. One of his daughters, Agnes, suffered from "neuralgia," while Lee's wife, Mary, was constantly racked with arthritic pain and often bed-ridden. His correspondence contains constant references to her affliction and his anxiety over his failure to help her. "I hope dear Mary you are better," he wrote on June 9:

Rob [their son] says you are as well.... I trust that is better than when I was with you. I spend many anxious hour reflecting on your suffering condition & my inability to aid or tend you & my dear daughters. May God in His mercy take you all under His protection!⁴⁰

Also troubling was the wounding of his son, William ("Rooney") early in the campaign during the cavalry battle at Brandy Station (June 9, 1863), and his subsequent capture (June 26, 1863) and imprisonment at Fort Monroe. "I grieve much at his position," Lee wrote in August, "but know no way of mending it." The emotional toll was increased by his helplessness in obtaining his son's release. "Any expression on my part would injure matters," he explained to Mary, "I can therefore do nothing but sorrow." Adding to this burden was that Rooney's wife, Charlotte, whom Lee's "love for her was like that for his own children," soon fell ill and subsequently died on December 26, 1863. "Her death," remembered Lee's son, Robert Edward, Jr., "was a great blow to him."⁴¹

Other personal problems that Lee faced at this time included his constant concern over the safety of another son, George Washington Custis Lee, who was also serving in the army, financial problems (including being unable to pay back taxes resulting from the loss of nearly all of his monetary assets in 1861 and thus limiting his ability to properly support his family), and the deterioration of his own health. Principal among the latter was the apparent heart ailment, including the "attack I experienced the past spring [1863]." In a letter to President Davis following the Gettysburg campaign, Lee stated, "I sensibly feel the growing failure of my bodily strength ... [and] I am becoming more and more incapable of exertion, and am thus prevented from ... giving the

personal supervision to the operations in the field which I feel to be necessary.”⁴²

Finally, like all soldiers, Lee also grieved over the separation from his loved ones. To his daughter Agnes he wrote, “I sincerely join in your wish that the war was over & that we could all be once more united.” To his wife Lee added, “I grieve I fear too much over my separation from you, my children & friends.” In all of these troubles Lee saw the hand of God. To Mary, Lee wrote on July 26, 1863:

... I cannot express how I long & pray that God in His mercy may pardon my many & long standing sins & once more gather around me you & my dear children & grant me a little time with you all before I go hence & be no more... . How great is my remorse at having thrown away my time & abused the opportunities afforded me. Now I am ... receiving in this world the punishment due to my sins & follies.⁴³

Lee’s correspondence also points to another theme prevalent in these wartime writings: that the war demanded sacrifices from those on the Home Front, as well as the soldiers themselves. In the same June 11, 1863 letter in which he attempted to console his daughter-in-law after Rooney’s wounding, Lee expressed his vision of the total commitment of the Southern people to their cause:

I want all the husbands in the field, and their wives at home encouraging them, loving them, and praying for them. We have a great work to accomplish, which requires the cordial and united strength of all....⁴⁴

Many families, both Northern and Southern, understood this reality and did all within their power to assist the war effort. In a letter to his mother Capt. John S. Lewis, 16th Mississippi, stated his pride of the fortitude displayed by Southern women, who faced not only the possible loss of their husbands, fathers, and sons, but also the threat of invasion, writing, “The women of the South I have often thought, have proved themselves its bravest defenders and the firmest enemies of the enemy.” Robert E. Lee probably agreed with this sentiment, especially after meeting the determined wife whose husband was serving in the general’s army, the encounter of which he described in a November 1863 letter:

I had a visit from a soldier’s wife to-day, who was on a visit to her husband. She was from ... S.C. Said she had not seen her husband for more than two years, and, as he had written to her for clothes, she herself thought she would bring them on.... She brought an entire suit of her own manufacture.... She spun the yarn and made the clothes herself. She clad her three children in the same way, and had on a beautiful pair of gloves she had made for herself.... Her greatest difficulty was to procure shoes. She made them for herself and children of cloth with leather soles.... She ... was an admirable woman. Said she was willing to give up everything she had in the world to attain our independence....⁴⁵

Some at home, however, needed prodding to maintain their resolve. Lt. James M. Simpson, of the 13th Alabama, responded to his wife’s complaints by writing:

I am sorry indeed for you, and wish I could be there to take burden off your shoulders. But my Addie is a Soldier wife now and hard as it may seem to us both, we must bear it and your heart is stout enough to hold up under many things, that a good many would shrink from.⁴⁶

The Gettysburg campaign forced many in the North to deal with the actual threat of invasion

for the first time. Some Pennsylvania women wrote of their fears to the soldier-husbands. Addie McFarland, wife of Lt. Col. George McFarland, commander of the 151st Pennsylvania, penned her concerns to him on June 28, while still attempting to put on a brave front:

One thing discourages me ... is that it is reported the Rebles are in Perryville [about ten miles from her home], how true it is I do not know.... It makes me very sad to think of it. Suppose they were to come here. I all alone, and not a soul to care for me. What would I do? I know I should not write this to you. You have hardships and troubles enough to try you without my complaints. But indeed you do not know how bad I feel. These are truly times to try men's souls and women's too. I for one have endured more trouble ... since you are away than I did all my life time before. But let us hope for the best and trust in the Lord.⁴⁷

Starkly evident in these wartime writings is the fact that most soldiers clearly understood the larger issues involved in the war. Furthermore, these men not only stated those issues plainly in their letters, but also held very strong opinions about each, which they expressed and debated repeatedly throughout their correspondence. As an example, Confederate soldiers completely understood that their chances for gaining independence were directly tied to the Republican Party's ability to retain its hold on the presidential office. Thus the 1864 presidential election was seen by many as of extreme importance and was being discussed often, even in the summer of 1863. John Garibaldi, 27th Virginia, expressed this opinion in a mid-August 1863 letter to his wife:

... we have hard times and wars coming. Some thinks that we'll have peace before long, but I don't look for any peace during Lincoln administration and, if at the end of his term another president is elected belonging to the same party or he is reelected himself we may look for another four years of war.⁴⁸

Another oft-discussed subject were the other ongoing military operations against the South. By the spring of 1863 Maj. Gen. U. S. Grant's campaign against the Confederate stronghold at Vicksburg, Mississippi was obviously the most important and was being keenly watched by both soldiers on both sides. Franklin Gaillard, 2nd South Carolina, had relatives fighting for the Confederacy at both Vicksburg and Port Hudson (a smaller Southern outpost along the river located 240 miles to the south), and wrote on June 11, "... have not news from the boys at either Port Hudson or Vicksburg. I have been and am still exceedingly solicitous concerning these two points."⁴⁹

Many Confederates also pinned their hopes on a growing discontent in the North with the Lincoln Administration and its handling of the war. Leading this faction, and its most vocal element, were the "Copperheads," who consisted mainly of Northern Peace Democrats who stated flatly that the war effort was a failure and called for peace negotiations with the South. One of their most famous spokesmen was Clement L. Vallandigham, a former congressman from Ohio. In January 1863 he had been arrested, tried, and found guilty of expressing sympathy for the enemy and attempting to weaken the government's efforts "to suppress an unlawful rebellion." Vallandigham's sentence was imprisonment for the duration of the war. "I am fearfull from what little I saw in yesterdays paper – that we will be defeated at Vicksburg," wrote Dil Koiner, a member of the 52nd Virginia, to his sister on May 24, 1863. He continued:

... I think, if we whip them there, they will have a rebellion in the north. If the peace party in the north ever intends to do anything, now is the time, and I think they will kick up fuss if Vallandingham is not released.⁵⁰

... I feel that we are fighting for all that is worth living for & this braces me up to bear the hardships ...



John Lee Holt, 56th Virginia

A 32 year-old tobacco farmer and country schoolmaster, John Lee Holt enlisted in the 56th Virginia on July 18, 1861. He left behind a wife, Ellen Elizabeth, whom he had married in 1859, and a two-and-a-half-year-old son, Manly. Ellen was also pregnant at the time of her husband's enlistment. In most ways Holt was typical of the millions of Union and Confederate soldiers who left their families and loved ones behind as they marched willingly off to war. The following selected excerpts from his letters to Ellen, therefore, reveal much about some of the reasons these men enlisted, the causes for which they fought, the great sacrifices they willingly made for those causes, the personal hardships they endured due to separation from their families, and the strong beliefs that sustained them through their ordeals.

July 19th 1861

...we seem to have a great deal of hard fighting before us[,] but I trust all into the hands of a kind & merciful God who will never leave nor forsake those who put their trust in him. I have no doubt he is on our side and if he is we have no cause to fear but that we shall ultimately triumph over all our enemies & that peace independence & happiness will soon reign over our beautiful sunny hills. I may not live to enjoy it...but who is not willing to give up all[,] even their lives if necessary that our posterity may be freed from tyranny and oppression[.] I feel for one that I am.... Kiss Manly every day for me.... Write often I want to hear from you very much.... I commend you to the love & mercy of God & my daily prayer shall be that he will comfort & support you. I hope... that it will not be long before I shall be restored [to] the bosom of those I love....

Ellen gave birth to a daughter on October 3, 1861, an event of course which Holt missed. On October 13, Holt wrote to Ellen, "I want to hear all about the little stranger[,] how she is getting on[,] what you have named her & all & ... how you are getting on & how Manly is...." They named their daughter Bessie Viola. When rumors that Holt's regiment would be sent to Kentucky that fall, many of his comrades were upset over the prospect of leaving their native state. Holt explained his stoic acceptance of this possible movement.

Nov 12th 1861

We ought to be willing to go any where to meet the invaders of our soil who would crush & bind us to the earth & take from us all that is worth living for & I would fight as freely to free Kentucky from the galling yoke under which she is groaning as for my own native Virginia[.] God grant that not only Kentucky but also Abolition ridden Maryland may be gathered to the galaxy of stars upon our Southern flag under which we intend to be free or fall with it[.]

Dec 6th 1861

If I could just be permitted to see you all once in a while I would be very well satisfied. But, Oh, I do want to see you so much & I want also to see my dear boy & girl very much indeed. ...the next time you write tell me all the particulars about them[.] I want to know how Manly looks if he grows or alters any[.] how he gets on talking[.] what he says[.] if he ever says any thing about me & I also want to hear how my darling baby gets on.... Oh how I wish I could see her & I do hope & trust it wont be long before I can enjoy that privledge....

December 29th 1861

...I trust I have given myself to him & to the cause of my country[.] I now that my life is in his hands[.] He can protect me on the long march & in the battlefield as well as at home with my loved ones

around me & Oh if I have any one desire above all others it is that I may be spared to return to you all again.

May 2d 1862

...I do hope & trust that this unholy & unjust war waged upon us by Northern Vandals may soon be brought to a speedy termination.... But what would be the consequences if we should suffer ourselves to be subjugated by the tyrannical government of the North[.] Our property would all be confiscated & ... our people reduced to the most abject bondage & utter degradation[.] I think that every Southern heart should now respond to language of our great Patrick Henry in the days of 76 & say give me Liberty or give me death[.] ...I feel that we are fighting for all that is worth living for & this braces me up to bear the hardships...the greatest of which is my separation from you & my dear little babes[.]

Just prior to the beginning of the Seven Days, outside of Richmond, Holt received the sad news of his mother's death, of which he wrote to Ellen.

June 20th 1862

I received your precious letter...stating that Ma was dead[.] I should have been glad to have seen her again in the flesh but that I can never do now but I hope to meet her in heaven for I have no doubt she is there now basking in the sunshine of a Saviours love.... I have no doubt but this war & her separation from us has helped to shorten her days in a great measure for she took such things so much to heart[.]

Holt eventually fought and survived the battles of the Seven Days, Second Manassas, and Antietam. Just as the Gettysburg campaign got underway, Holt wrote to Ellen, describing these movements and also his hopes for their future.

My Dearly beloved wife

June 10th 1863

...I do not know the object of our move whether Gen Lee is expecting the enemy to advance or wheather he intends a forward movement himself.... God grant the time may not be long when the Angel of Peace may spread his beautiful wings over us & war & bloodshed may cease in our midst & all be permitted to return to their loved families friends & homes[.] Oh happy day would thou wert but today[.] Hasten thy speedy flight & come quickly.

Just over three weeks later, on July 3, 1863, as his regiment advanced toward Cemetery Ridge during Pickett's Charge, Holt was struck down and killed, most likely by Union artillery fire. Family history states that two of his brothers saw John fall, but he waved them on and was never seen again.

Sources:

James A. Mumper, ed., *I Wrote You Word, The Poignant Letters of Private Holt* (Lynchburg, Virginia: H. E. Howard, Inc., 1993).

An overwhelming number of men in the Army of the Potomac despised the Copperheads, for they stood in direct opposition to almost everything which these Union soldiers had been fighting and dying for since 1861. Some went to great lengths to publicly express their disgust with the peace movement and to restate their devotion to the Union. Members of Battery I, 1st Ohio Light Artillery went so far as to write and sign a petition that was published in the Portage County *Democrat*. It read in part:

We the undersigned citizens of Ohio-members of Dilger's Battery are deeply interested in all that concerns the honor and welfare of our State and country.... WHEREAS, The same earnest and devoted patriotism that first brought us ... to the fore front of danger ... still actuates us, and fires us with stern indignation against armed traitors in front, and more so against the cowardly sympathy in the rear: and WHEREAS, There are enough of her sons found upon the soil of our

Ohio ... to call and hold a convention for the purpose of nominating Copperhead candidates for the sufferages of the people, and too heartily and cordially endorse the nomination of the “the pettifogging traitor, C. L. Vallandigham.” — This too, after that two years of the most determined, foot to foot battling with this monstrous rebellion, against the very life of Liberty, have passed away....
Resolved, That we do now, and always will hold in as profound contempt ... all those persons who take part as above specified, and who ... are known as copperheads ...*Resolved That no duty would be more acceptable to us than that of punishing these cowardly enemies in our rear.* But, as this privilege is denied to us, we demand as part fulfillment of the promise of sympathy and succor made to us by the home stayers that these traitors be summarily quenched, and our attention left undivided to their brethren in our front.⁵¹

This controversial subject and others, led many of these men to state the various “causes” for which they fought, even two years after their initial enlistments. By this time these seasoned veterans realized fully the dangers and hardships of war. What were they fighting for? What motivated them to risk their lives time and time again?

Despite the great differences between the North and South, disputes so great that they tore the nation apart, many of the “causes” these men espoused in their writings were very similar, if not exactly the same. A perfect example of this, and one of the commonly stated “causes,” were the ideals of the Revolution or the legacy of 1776. This belief, held by both Union and Confederate soldiers, was that they were the custodians of the liberty won by the founding fathers. This attitude was prevalent among both the soldiers and civilians from the earliest moments of the war. As the 4th Michigan prepared to march off to war in June 1861, it was presented a flag, made by the women of Detroit (a common practice of the time). The presenter, Mrs. Josephine Wilcox, touched on this idea in her remarks made during the ceremony:

When you follow this standard in your line of march or on the field of battle, and you see it waving in lines of beauty and gleams of brightness, remember the trust we have placed in your hands.... You are the sons of brave men, who under this banner achieved the glorious victory of our national independence.... We are the daughters of the brave women of '76.... Our trail has come, our spirits waken and we feel the blood of heros stirring in our veins.⁵²

At first glance this attitude seems much harder to fathom for Confederate soldiers, for if they gained their independence they would be breaking up the very nation the founding fathers had established. From the Confederate perspective, however, it was Southern culture that best represented the government created by the Revolutionary leaders. It was radical changes in the Northern states, caused by immigration, industrialization, and Northern radicals that had corrupted the ideal society formed by the country’s original leaders. Edmund DeWitt Patterson, 9th Alabama, described this idea in his journal shortly after the battle:

July 4th 1863. Eighty Seven years ago today, our forefathers declared that henceforth and forever they were and of right ought to be free. ‘Twas a noble sentiment and nobly did they conquer. Today the South contends for the same principles which fired the hearts of our ancestors in the revolutionary struggle, and as sure as right and justice prevail, so surely will we finally triumph.⁵³

Men in both armies also referred to duty as their main motivation for fighting on. New Yorker Charles Barber discussed this idea with his wife:

... I consider it my duty to be here; but there is not a man in the army that would be more delighted or overjoyed to go home than I should but I shall try to be patient and stay till the time comes.... I am not sorry I enlisted ... nor never expect to be[.] I believe in doing my duty in all places and under all circumstances even if death is staring us in the face ... the whole country is sick and tired of war but now is the time that tries mens souls and tries their principles to[o.] now is the dark days of our country and I shall stand by her with musket in hand till I am disabled or the crisis is passed.⁵⁴

Cpl. Augustus Hesse, a gunner in the 9th Massachusetts Battery, expressed his strong sense of duty while attempting to explain to his wife and neighbor why he enlisted in the "disheartening" summer of 1862:

... I have taken up Arms to defennt the wright of the U.S. of America Will do their best for you[.] Now my dear Almira ... I know you love me and I know that you dit cry for me ... it is every boys duty to go and put [down] the Rebels.... I shall do my wright[.] I am ready to give my life away for liberty for ... [that] I was going. I dit not go all togheter for myself- No I dit go for them which like to go but can not ... I go for Weymouth [Massachusetts] for all inhabitents Man-Women- & Children.⁵⁵

For many Northern soldiers one of the strongest motivations was defense of the Union. John Chase, in the 1st Massachusetts Battery, stated bluntly in a January 11, 1863 letter to his brother, "I am a strong union man. That is what I enlisted for was to restore the union...." This had been one of the principal reasons the majority of Union soldiers had enlisted for in 1861, and was also the stated war aim for Abraham Lincoln and his administration following the first shots at Fort Sumter.⁵⁶

By 1863, however, the scope of the war had grown, and the president's war policies had also expanded. No single event more clearly demonstrated this than Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation (a preliminary version of which he issued on September 22, 1862 and which became law when he signed the final version on January 1, 1863). Not surprisingly, this act brought immediate reaction from within the ranks of the Army of the Potomac. Predictably, many Union soldiers, like John Chase, who believed they were fighting to save the Union, were opposed to this new policy. Writing to his brother in early December, 1862, Chase stated:

... a good many ... poor fellows ... have left good comfortable home to come out here and fight for we dont know what. If I could make myself believe that it was for upholding the supremacy of the union and the old Flag I could do it without a murmur.... But this fighting for the benefit of niggers ... is something I never enlisted for and I can truly say I take no pleasure in....⁵⁷

Morale in the Army of the Potomac was at low ebb during the winter of 1862-1863, following the removal of Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan, their much-beloved commander, and the useless slaughter of Fredericksburg (December 13, 1862) that followed. Support for Lincoln and his new policy correspondingly dropped during this time. Chase, who previously supported the president, wrote, "Speaking of Abe I have gone clean back on him. He may be a very good rail splitter but a rather poor President I reckon." He vented even more when the new emancipation policy became law at the beginning of the new year. "... I am not willing to shed one drop of blood to fight Slavery up or down," he wrote, "Let the niggers go to hell for all [of] me and If a man wants to preach Abolition Emancipation or any other ism he must find somebody besides me to preach it too." Attitudes like those expressed by George Partridge, 7th Wisconsin, were common, "... I only wish I was a Commissioned Officer," he wrote to his sister, "so that I could resine ... I dont want

to fight for the Gentleman Negro any longer.”⁵⁸

“We expect every hour to be called into action. Pray for me Sarah to God to spare my life and Permit me to return to my loved ones at home”



John Pardington, 24th Michigan

The letters of John and Sarah Pardington provide an excellent insight into some of the personal impacts the Civil War had on the millions of soldiers, their families, and loved ones throughout the seemingly countless villages, towns, and cities throughout the North and South. The extra burdens resulting from separation from families, the endless anxiety over their safety and well being are evident throughout the sampling of John’s and Sarah’s writings provided here.

The Pardingtons represented the typical American couple living in the thriving United States of the mid-19th-century. Both were in their early twenties when they married on December 29, 1860 in Trenton, Michigan. They were living a happy, comfortably life, with good

prospects for a prosperous future. John and Sarah’s joy only improved when they were blessed with a daughter on June 11, 1862, whom they named Maria, after John’s sister. Two and a half months later, on August 6, 1862, John enlisted in the 24th Michigan Infantry. Their lives would be forever changed.

In a letter to his sister-in-law, Mary Knapp Noble, a week following his daughter’s birth, John described his seemingly idyllic life that early summer of 1862.

Mary Dear Sister

June 18/62

It is with Pleasure I take up my Pen to inform you that [we have] ... a little daughter. It is a week old to day... and is well.... We are living Happy and comfortably and I hope we always will be so. I am making a good living clearing....

Shortly before John’s departure, Sarah began a letter to her sister in hopes of finding comfort. In this, Sarah expressed her greatest fear: the possibility of John’s death, a subject Mary Noble could easily understand, for her own husband, David Noble, had been very recently killed in the war. The second part of the letter and the subsequent ones that follow make clear the difficulties faced by John and Sarah during their separation.



Dear Sister Mary

August 17/62

...I am in trouble Mary for John is going to the war.... O Mary what a cruel war this is. May we all mourn your great loss, little did I think we would be called to mourn Daveds [loss] so soon. John is going and God only knows how soon I may be called to mourn like you but I will try and hope for the best.... O Mary I have got a sweet little girl. How I wish you could see her. I wish you could come home this fall. It must be so lonesom and we all want to see you so bad to....

Sep the 14 1862

Well Sister it has been a gret while since I commenced this.... O how lonely I am... it nearly drives me crazy. I dont dare to think any more than I can help. O Mary I have got a sweet baby and she is a great comfirt to me and I hope she will all ways prove a comfirt to her Mother. O it is so hard to part with our Husbands in this way. If we could be with them in theyr sickness and know that they wer well taken care of we could be more reconedsiled to our lot. O it makes my hart ake to think....

John to Sarah

Sep 21 [1862]

*...Dear Sarah you say you was lonesom. What do you think of me away from friends and **one** that is so near and dear to me? You have got friends around you. But dear I hope the day will not be far distant when we shall clasp each others neck and Print a warm kiss of love on each other lips. Keep up spirits dear for my sake and that dear little Angel.... if [I] was at home I think I should stay there for I know now how to appreciate your company and if ever I come [home] the Lord Willing I think I shall not give you any cause again to set up for me...like you used to.... But you will forgive me wont you dear and I make a faithful Promise to God if ever I get back to you I will live a different life. Sarah I am trying to live a different one here and I hope the Lord Helping me I shall return a Christian. Pray for me Sarah that I may....*

Dear Wife

Sep 24 1862

...Kiss little Maria for me. How I would like to see her. When I think of her and you dear it often brings tears into my eyes wich I cannot stop. I let them come for it relieves me much. Except a sweet Kiss. P.S. Write soon and Write often.....

My dear Wife

Feb 23, 1863

...The 29 of this month will be six months since I last kissed your lips on the dock in detroit. Sarah will you ever forget that time. I often think of it and think how foolish I was to leave you and sacrifice all the comforts of life besides the company of a loveing Wife and child.... Sarah will you Please me and learn our little girl to say father instead of Papa....

Having survived the horrors of Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville, John's yearnings for family and home were overwhelming. Grasping for something to sustain him, John began to plan for their future together following his return.

Dear Wife and Daughter

June 3 1863

...I dont think I can improve my time any Better than by writing to you. Dear Sarah I love to write to you and to receive letters from you.... Sarah do you remember one year ago the 11th of this month. I do. Our little Darling will be one year old. God Bless her. Oh how I would love to see her But not worse than I want to see you dear.... I hope the time is not far distant when I shall once more feel your warm and living kiss on my lips and your arms around me. Wont we be Happy and appreciate each other love.... God Hasten the time is the Prayer of your John. Well dear Sarah I think we will Buy that house. It will be a nice little home for us wont it. It will be near a good school for our little one to go to school....

In early June, 1863 the Army of Northern Virginia was again on the move. John sensed the importance of this and postulated on the possible implications, both for himself, his family and his country.

My dear Wife

June 5/63

*Sarah there is a good deal of talk that we are going to fall Back on Washington again. I suppose till our army gets bigger. ... I think the Rebels are trying to get between us and Washington.... God Prosper Our arms if we do for we are on the Right Side and (Right is might).... Sarah I wish you would send me Maria likeness when she is a year old. For I dont think it is hardly Possible for me to come home this summer for they need every man they got and I dont think its my duty to leave now when we are needed the most. Although dear Sarah I want to see you very much. My...country needs me more. Not as I love you less than the good old flag But I love that next to you and will stick by it as long as she waves for it is the only flag of the free and will yet triumph over all other **rags** that are afloat against us now and ever.*

My dearest Wife

June 9, 1863

We expect every hour to be called into action. Pray for me Sarah to God to spare my life and Permit me to return to my loved ones at home and there to spend the rest of my life in happyness and contentment with you and my dear Daughter. Wont we be happy when we are together again.

John Pardington's dreams of a peaceful future ended on July 1, 1863 when he was killed sometime during the fighting west of Gettysburg. His name, however, was not among the first listings of casualties of the regiment. Facing a void of information, Sarah's initial anxiety turned to dread when his letters stopped

arriving after the battle. Pardington's death was never officially confirmed, and his body was never identified. His remains probably rest today as an "Unknown" in the Soldiers' National Cemetery at Gettysburg.

Sources:

Coralou Peel Lassen, ed., *Dear Sarah, Letters Home From a Soldier of the Iron Brigade* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999).

Certainly, this new policy was viewed by Confederate soldiers with shock and outrage, for the Proclamation not only called for the freeing of the slaves, but also for enlisting them into the Union armies to conquer the South. Armed blacks truly represented the darkest of all Southern nightmares. Jefferson Davis, in his January 12, 1863 message to Congress, declared the proclamation "the most execrable measure in the history of guilty man." This, more than any other factor, led to the eventual breakdown of prisoner of war exchanges. The Lincoln administration insisted that captured black soldiers be treated equally, something the South would never agree to. Confederate soldiers in the front ranks, therefore, reacted with indignation, and some experienced a renewed determination to win the war. A typical reaction is given by John K. Beaton, 9th Virginia, who wrote, "The cessation of the exchange of prisoners proves to us how deep they have sunk below the scale of nations, and what we may expect at their hands. I would rather be dead a thousand times than under their controls so would the major portions of this Confederacy."⁵⁹

While fewer in numbers, some Union soldiers saw the proclamation as a positive, or even necessary step. Charles Wellington Reed, bugler of the 9th Massachusetts Battery, wrote simply, "... the prospect of our ultimate success seems better than ever. we now know what we are fighting for, and that's what half did'nt or would'nt know before." Others had felt that slavery was a central issue even before Emancipation Proclamation was released. In August, 1862, Cpl. Augustus Hesse touched on this point while explaining why he had enlisted that summer:

I was ready to respond to the call for 300,000 Men, I was happy that there was giving me a oppurtunity ... to put down the Rebellion fighting for Liberty which I do love and to fight ... against Slavery which I hate[.] ... when ... I come back ... O! I can say that I was one of them that fought for Liberty - and not for Slavery!⁶⁰

Sentiments like those expressed by Hesse are not surprising, considering that he had recently migrated from Germany. To most Northern immigrants, their new country represented a type of government unique in modern world history: a democracy. Abraham Lincoln had earlier called it "the last best hope of Earth" and at the dedication of the Gettysburg National Cemetery four and a half months after the battle, briefly defined it as "a government of the people, by the people, and for the people." Being the only true democratic government in the world at that time, it is obvious why people such as Hesse, and other immigrants, realized that the opportunity which the United States offered them was nonexistent in their home lands. Many Northerners, including Lincoln, also saw the Civil War as the great test of democracy. These attitudes are clearly revealed in many soldiers' letters as a strong motivation for fighting. Peter Welsh, 28th Massachusetts of the famous Irish Brigade, explained his reasons for enlisting and fighting on:

this is my country as much as the man that was born on the soil and so it is with every man who comes to this country and becomes a citizen.... i have as much interest in the maintenance of the goverment and laws and the integrity of the nation as any other man[.] ... in this war the integrity of this nation is a matter of the greatest importance[.] this war ...is the first test of a modern free government in the act of sustaining itself against internal enemys and matured



Sgt. Peter Welch. Lawrence F. Kohl and Margaret C. Richard, eds., Irish Green and Union Blue

rebellion[.] all men who love free government and equal laws are watching this crisis to see if a republic can sustain itself in such a case[.] if it fail then the hopes of millions fall and the desighns and wishes of all tyrants will succeed[.] the old cry will be sent forth from the aristocrats of europe that such is the comon end of all republics[.] the blatent croakers of the devine right of kings will shout forth their joy the giant republic has fellen[.] ... how many thousands are there in this country who saw nothing but oppression and misery at home who are now in comfort ... what would be the condition to day of hundreds of thousands of the sons and daughters of poor opressed old erin if they had not a free land like this to emigrate to.... the same may be said of thousands from other lands and especially of the opressed states of jermamy.... Contrast the condition of the masses of this with any other country in the

world and the advantages we enjoy will stand out boldly so that the blindest can see them[.] ... it is our duty to do our share for the common welfare not only of the present generation but of future generations[.] such being the case it becomes the duty of everone no matter what his position to do all in his power to sustain for the present and to perpetuate for the benefit future generations a government and a national asylum which is superior to any the world has yet known[.]⁶¹

Many native-born Northerners agreed with this sentiment and stated it as a cause for which they willingly risked their lives. In the same anti-Copperhead petition quoted from earlier, the members of Battery I, 1st Ohio Light Artillery touched upon these ideals for which they fought:

That the American system of Government was not to be a failure still actuates us, and fires us with stern indignation against armed traitors in front, and more so against the cowardly sympathy in the rear ...⁶²

From the beginning some Union soldiers had understood the impact the war would have throughout the world and listed this as a reason for their very enlistment. Philip Hamlin, a serious and devout 23-year-old in the 1st Minnesota, was one such soldier who touched upon this theme, while also invoking duty and patriotism, as causes for which he fought in an eloquent August 1861 letter to family:

I have an intelligent understanding of the character of the struggle and of the principles which are at issue between the contending parties and in devoting my all to my country I believe that I am only acting in accordance with the dictates of duty, patriotism and Affection.... I believe that God has a mission for our nation to fulfill grander and more glorious by far than anything which any other nation has ever performed. Already we have done an immense work – the beacon fire kindled by our fathers has flashed backward upon the nations of the old world and waked them to new life.⁶³

For the majority of Confederate soldiers the main motivation that carried them onward was a much simpler and more basic: defense of loved ones and native soil. Unlike the other somewhat abstract “causes” such as those listed above, this concrete motivation was derived from the basic human instinct to protect hearth and home. It became obvious early in the war that the principal military policy of the Lincoln Administration was to force the seceded Southern states back into the Union. This impetus not only resulted in Southern men eagerly enlisting, but also resulted in their steadfast devotion for their cause. L. S. Knowles, 15th Alabama, expressed this attitude in an August 17, 1863 letter to his father, writing:

... our company is ... ready to respond to any call that is made by our beloved country to drive back the hords of vandals that are invading our country, and carrying with them horrors, carnage and destruction ... [and] that this company is possessed of a spirit that is as humble and thankful to their Creator for his kind protection, as they are brave and patriotic in defending their country and homes.⁶⁴

The idea of Northern invasion also provided another motivation: hatred of their enemy. William Miller, 18th Virginia, touched upon both of these ideas in a July 1, 1863 letter to his sister, writing, “If the good Lord Sees fit to spare my life, I intend to fight the despicable yankee until the last one killed if they will not keep off our Soil. I could rather fight them a hundred years than to be Subjugated by Such a worthless race.”⁶⁵

The “causes” which steeled these men to combat, insured that the war would be an obstinate and bloody one. After two years of war the casualty lists seemed unending and the suffering unfathomable. The wartime writings of these men clearly reveal that they understood the tremendous cost of the war, not only to their particular units but to the entire nation as well. Walter Carter, brother of Robert and also in the 22nd Massachusetts, expressed this idea perfectly in a June 11, 1863 letter to his mother:

It would have pained you, mother, to have seen the scattered graves of soldiers ...yesterday; as I thought of the poor fellows who lay beneath the mound and head board, there seemed to be a tear ready for every one; each told of a saddened home, and really, are not these names, humble though they may be, worthy of being remembered as household treasures? Heaven bless the poor mourning families that this war occasions, and would that I could shout to them the grand future day, which shall be sanctified to them by the blood of their loved ones, and the tears they may shed over their memory.⁶⁶

The determined and idealistic Philip Hamlin, 1st Minnesota, also described this idea, while also revealing how the war had changed him:

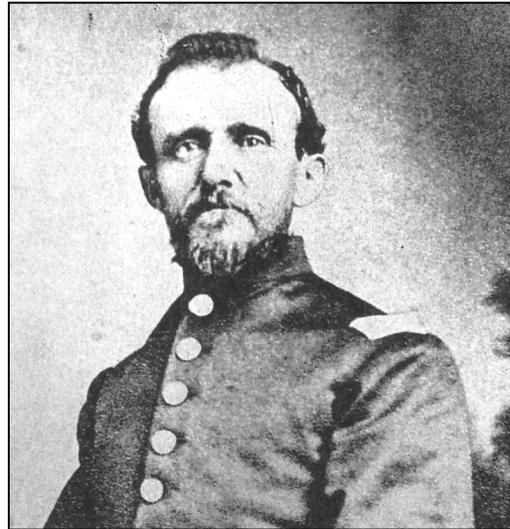
... Gov. [Alexander] Ramsey was down here some days since bringing with him a flag from civilians of Minnesota.... The time for exciting me by flag presentations and the like has passed. They only sadden me by recalling the memories of some of my comrades than whom braver, truer men never lived but who labored, sacrificed and died unrewarded and now (if buried at all) sleep in unmarked graves, their resting place unknown to friend or foe.⁶⁷

William Miller, 18th Virginia, was more concise when he wrote to his sister, “Oh’ was a great pity this war does not end. it makes my heart Shudder to think about it. thousand upon thousands of lives lost & for what purpose.... I fear many months & even years will pass away before its termination.”⁶⁸

Miller's comments also point to another theme that appeared regularly in nearly all of the soldiers' writings. The men on both sides were universally tired of the war. Miller wrote of this in a letter written nearly two months after the Battle of Gettysburg. "Oh; that this unmerciful and relentless war would come to an end," he penned, "I would rejoice to hear the glad tidings of a Speedy and permanent peace in our unhappy land...." Of course, in spite of these hopes for an early end to hostilities, nearly all the men realized that peace would probably be a long time in coming. By the spring of 1863 the war was more than two years old and yet despite the tremendous bloodshed and suffering, there seemed to be no end in sight.⁶⁹

For the soldiers of the Army of Northern Virginia, however, there seemed to be at least some hope for a quick end to the war. This attitude was the result of the incredible series of spectacular, if not unbelievable, victories they had achieved throughout 1861 and 1862. Considering that these successes were won despite the astonishing odds against them, it is not surprising that confidence within the ranks of the Army of Northern Virginia was extremely high. This was especially true following the Battle of Chancellorsville, which is still considered by many today to have been Robert E. Lee's greatest victory. The soldiers' writings of this time period reflect this attitude. Col. Burgwyn, commander of the 26th North Carolina, in a May 21, 1863 letter to his mother, wrote, "When the achievements of our Army ... are written by an impartial historian I believe they will compare favorably with those of the Romans or of Napoleon's Old Guard ... The army ... can not be whipped by anything in Yankeedom...."⁷⁰

Much of this high morale stemmed from their commander, Gen. Robert E. Lee, who was the mastermind behind most of these victories. The rank and file venerated their commander and expressed these feelings in their writings. In early June, just as the campaign commenced, Lt. William Bloun, 47th North Carolina, wrote home, "Lee is a general & you may expect to hear of brilliant achievements by his invincilbe army. We are all in fine spirits, and confident of victory...." "Genl Lee is ... adored ... by this troops," wrote Col. David Aiken around this same time, "which I believe would follow him to Boston. His army is in fine spirits, well armed, horses & mules fat, & everything ready to try to whip out Yankeedom."⁷¹



Col. David W. Aiken, 7th South Carolina. Augustus Dickert, History of Kershaw's Brigade

Respect ran both ways, as Lee himself had supreme confidence in his troops. In a famous letter to Maj. Gen. John B. Hood, one of the army's best divisional commanders, Lee wrote, "I agree with you in believing that our army would be invincible if it could be properly organized and officered. There never were such men in an army before. They will go anywhere and do anything if properly led." As far as being outnumbered, Lee was never concerned, and his confidence seemed unbounded. On the very eve of the campaign Lee wrote to his wife, "... I pray that our merciful Father in Heaven may protect and direct us! In that case I fear no odds and no numbers."⁷²

Always bold, the recent victories instilled into Lee an overwhelming confidence in his officers and men. Hoping to take advantage of the indomitable spirit that pervaded his ranks, and the growing discontent in the North against the war, Lee lobbied the Confederate government for permission to launch an invasion into Maryland and Pennsylvania. The general explained his reasons for this bold maneuver in a June 8, 1863 letter to Secretary of War James Seddon:

There is always hazard in military movements, but we must decide between the positive loss of in activity and the risk of action.... As far as I can judge there is nothing to be gained by this army remaining quietly on the defensive.... I am aware that there is difficulty & hazard in taking the aggressive with so large an army in its front, entrenched behind a river where it cannot be advantageously attacked. Unless it can be drawn out in a position to be assailed, it will take its own time to prepare and strengthen itself to renew its advance upon Richmond, and force this army back within the intrenchments of that city. This may be the result in any event, still I think it is worth a trial to prevent such a catastrophe.... This would give us an active force in the field with which we might hope to make some impression on the enemy, both on our northern & western frontiers. Unless this can be done, I see little hope of accomplishing anything of importance. All our military preparations and organizations should now be pressed forward with the greatest vigor, and every exertion made to obtain some material advantages in this campaign.⁷³

During this time, and in anticipation of receiving permission to march north, Lee began to ready his army. In addition to the reorganization discussed earlier, other improvements included the arrival of reinforcements through the reassignment of various units from other theaters; the equipping of many regiments and batteries with new uniforms, equipment, and arms; the stockpiling of supplies; and the securing of horses for the cavalry, artillery, and supply trains. All of these efforts paid dividends, for never again would the Army of Northern Virginia be in such good condition to achieve the successful military and political results Lee sought. The letters of the officers and men within the army's ranks certainly bear out this fact. An excellent description of the appearance and morale of these Confederate soldiers comes from the diary of Lt. Col. Arthur Freemantle, of the British Coldstream Guards, who traveled with the army that summer as foreign military observer:

22d June (Monday) ... The soldiers ... are a remarkably fine body of men, and look quite seasoned and ready for any work. Their clothing is serviceable, so also are their boots; but there is the usual utter absence of uniformity as to color and shape of their garments and hats: gray of all shades, and brown clothing, with felt hats, predominate. The Confederate troops are now entirely armed with excellent rifles, mostly Enfields.⁷⁴

Furthermore, two Confederate officers gave Freemantle "an animated account of the spirits and feeling of the army," stating "At no period of the war, they say, have the men been so well equipped, so well clothed, so eager for a fight, or so confident of success."⁷⁵

Two weeks into the campaign, but still in Virginia, Col. David Aiken wrote to his wife:

Our army is very large ... and in the finest trim you ever saw. Horses, mules & wagons in good order, men well clad & fed, and everything full of life.... We will doubtless have fighting to do, but all hands seem willing & anxious to meet the foe.⁷⁶

Harris T. Lewis, in the 16th Mississippi, also touched upon the idea of the awareness of veteran soldiers, along with his strong beliefs in both God and Gen. Lee:

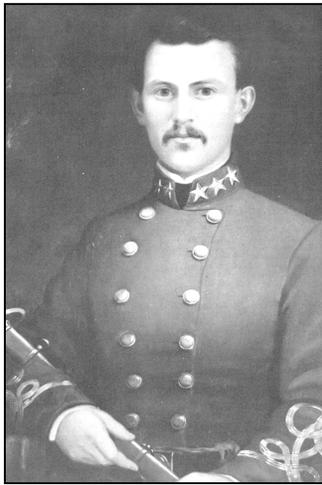
We are in the best possible health and spirits. we have the prestage a late crushing defeat in our favor.... I cannot say we are eager for a fight, but as

veterans of many pitched battles we are willing at least, trusting in God and the justice of our cause, to again give battle to our foes when Lee gives the word. That the Lord has been manifestly in our favor heretofore I doubt not, and I shall pray that he may continue to favor us, and preserve us.⁷⁷

This confidence, however, spawned another dangerous attitude: lack of respect for the enemy. This belief was especially prevalent following Chancellorsville. After conversing with Union pickets across the Rappahannock River, Capt. Benjamin F. Little, 52nd North Carolina, remarked in a June 9 letter, "I think Gen Lee will wake them up pretty soon ..." He went on to write, "... I don't think hardly a single [Union]soldier ... had a doubt of our whipping them.... They talk of that as being a matter of course."⁷⁸

"The army that he has can not be whipped by anything in Yankeedom...."

Henry King Burgwyn, Jr, 26th North Carolina



Born in 1841 outside of Boston, Henry King Burgwyn, Jr. ("Harry" to his family and friends) belonged to a family greatly impacted by the sectional differences that eventually caused the war. His father, Henry, Sr., a native North Carolinian, had married his mother, Anna Greenough, a native of New England, in 1838. They lived on the Thornbury Plantation situated on the Roanoke River, North Carolina. Their second child and eldest son, Harry was an intelligent student with a promising future. Educated both at home and later in New Jersey, he was at the age of fifteen sent to West Point where he was privately tutored. Harry then attended the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, from which he graduated with highest honors. Harry then entered the Virginia Military Institute, where he became Captain of the Cadet Corps and was chosen to be a guard at the execution of John Brown in 1859. Graduating in April 1861, Henry King Burgwyn was commissioned a major in the 26th North Carolina. By August 1862, Burgwyn was promoted to colonel and placed in command of the regiment. At the age of 20 he was one of the youngest colonels in Confederate service. Burgwyn and the 26th North Carolina saw action along the North

Carolina coast and near Richmond at the end of the Seven Days (June 25-July 1, 1862), before they were assigned to the Army of Northern Virginia on May 1, 1863. With an approximate strength of 800, the 26th was the largest regiment in the Army of Northern Virginia during the Gettysburg campaign. The excerpts of Burgwyn's letters below, written on the eve of the campaign, touch upon many subjects and attitudes, including the overwhelming confidence that pervaded the Confederate ranks and the total trust they placed in General Lee as they prepared for the upcoming campaign. The young colonel also wrote of the contempt they held for the Army of the Potomac, his awareness of other important military campaigns, the longing for peace, and returning to his home.

May 21, 1863 to his mother

I can not say that there is any news, but I can mention the prevailing opinion that Gen. Lee is upon the point of advancing to attack Hooker. He is gathering his forces & everybody believes with an eye single to whipping Hooker. That he will do this I have no doubt in the world.... Hookers army will not in as good a condition as it was before [Chancellorsville].... In the first place he is losing a great many men, all veterans, by the expiration of their term of enlistments, & an army so, terribly defeated as his was must be demoralized to a very serious extent.... Taken all these things into consideration my opinion is that 6 weeks will find Gen Lee's army in Maryland. I must confess it seems to me that it would be quite as well, if we are going to lose Vicksburg, to concentrate everything in the valley of Va & advanced upon Philadelphia.... The army that he[Lee] has can not be whipped by anything in Yankeedom....

May 28, 1863 to his mother

The attention of everybody seems to be concentrated upon Vicksburg.... The despondent...believe it will

fall & credit the Yankee telegrams published in this mornings paper. The sanguine believe that [Lt. Gen. Joe] Johnston will get in Grant's rear & wear him completely out. While the moderate believe we will eventually save the place & drive Grant off without however any very decisive victory. I am very glad to hear that you are enjoying yourself so much. The greatest charm must be the peaceful aspect of the plantation. God alone knows how tired I am of this war, & he alone knows when it will end. I am sure that no day in my life will be hailed by me with the same degree of delight as that in which I hear the blessed tidings of peace....

Journal entry [written sometime around May 28, 1863]

Our affairs are everywhere in the East in the most prosperous condition. In the South West they appear to be less satisfactory.... The Pa. Inquirer received in Richmond yesterday says that Vicksburg has been taken & blazes the announcement in the most terrifically huge type. Aint it a wonder we dont give right up before such huge capitals. No one here gives the least credit to what it says & an abiding faith is felt that the Lord will give our leaders the skill & our men the courage to weather this storm also. We look upon the situation as critical in the extreme but are hopeful of the final result.

June 5, 1863 to his mother

Some think Gen Lee is going to threaten Washington & draw Hooker's force away from Fredericksburg.... [Lee] has received very considerable reinforcements since the late battle & his whole army is in most excellent condition.... I will write as soon as any thing turns up.... How much wheat does father expect to make this year? In the bustle turmoil & excitement of war it is astonishing how much refreshed the mind is when reflecting on the peaceful pursuits of [home].

June 15, 1863 to his mother

"...We are ordered to have 3 days cooked rations in haversacks & 3 days more in the wagons.... All this preparation means in my opinion a movement upon the largest scale.... The bulk of our army is... either [in the Shenandoah Valley] or preparing... to cross into Maryland Of course we know & hear nothing here. ...no Yankee army can whip [our army] when handled by Lee. He has completely deceived Hooker thus far. Lee is certainly making a very bold movement, but I think he will strike a tremendous & a successful blow.... I think [Gen. Lee] will essay Pennsylvania. His army is admirably organized & officered & has the most implicit confidence in him. The men are all in good spirits & the whole army expects to go into Pennsylvania.... What will be the result of the movement now on foot God alone can tell. I hope to be able to do my duty to the best of my ability & leave the result to His infinite wisdom & justice. What ever may be my own fate I hope to be able to feel & believe that all will turn out for the best. With my love to all I am Ever your Most Affectionate Son.

*H. K. Burgwyn
Col. 26th NC*

Sources: Archie Davis, *Boy Colonel of the Confederacy, The Life and Times of Henry King Burgwyn, Jr.* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985).

H. K. Burgwyn Letters, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill.

Naturally some Union soldiers were discouraged, having suffered repeated defeats by Lee and his seemingly invincible Army of Northern Virginia. While Chancellorsville raised confidence in the Southern ranks, it pushed the Army of the Potomac to the depths of discouragement. A week after the campaign Walter Carter provided an excellent summary of the general attitude within the rank and file, writing home:

I have spent the most lonesome day of my army life. Every breath of air has seemed a moan over our great misfortune. Every bird song has been a wail for the unburied dead at Chancellorsville, and all things have spoken to us in

disheartening whispers, until, at the close of the day, we sit in the weather-beaten camp tent, well-nigh demoralized soldiers. No rebel shells or bullets have caused this reaction in a loyal heart.... Love of country and cause have not been wanting. Patriotism is not on the wane, but we feel as if we had wasted our strength on long, weary marches, kept tedious watch by night and day, passed sleepless nights, been wet, cold and hungry, and fought all in vain. Nothing seems to have been gained but everything lost.... it is enough to quench all hopes of victory in the mind of a poor recruit, the hero of continual defeats. Call it what you please, demoralization or discouragement, we care not to ford rivers, sleep standing and fight running, when sure defeat always awaits such a *doomed army*.⁷⁹

Many Union soldiers, including high-ranking officers, blamed their leadership, particularly the army's commander, Maj. Gen. Joseph Hooker. One of the more scathing comments found in these wartime writings comes from Brig. Gen. Alpheus Williams, commanding a division in the 12th Corps, in a letter to his daughters:

I cannot conceive of greater imbecility and weakness than characterized that campaign from the moment Hooker reached Chancellorsville and took command.... All we are suffering now in shame and mortification and in the great risk of losing the whole fortunes of the war is the legitimate result of the weakness which characterized that campaign.⁸⁰

Hooker, however, was just the latest in a long string of commanders to suffer defeat at the hands of the Army of Northern Virginia. Two years of war, and seemingly endless failures, had made many of the men cynical. They had served under a parade of commanders: McDowell, McClellan, Pope, McClellan again, Burnside, and now Hooker, none of whom had brought the success the men felt they deserved and had earned. Despite the courage and devotion shown by the rank and file, the victory the army so desperately sought remained elusive. Defeats at First Manassas, the Seven Days, Second Manassas, Fredericksburg, and Chancellorsville followed each other in rapid succession. Even Antietam in many ways was a shallow victory.

By the spring of 1863 many were despondent over their prospects for ultimate success. Sgt. Charles Bowen of the 12th United States Regulars probably best summed up the attitude of the enlisted man when he wrote home in early June:

There is no use in disguising the truth, the south has better Generals than we have & the war is ended by fighting, tis easy for a blind men to see, that with all our superior numbers & strength, we shall be the whiped party.... We havent the Generals to whip him (so we think) & have made up our minds that we shall get confoundly whiped ourselves.⁸¹

Justus M. Sillimar, a private in the 17th Connecticut, agreed that poor leadership was a problem, but also pointed a finger at another cause for their lack of success: the proximity of the nation's capitol to the army:

It is true the A.P. [Army of the Potomac] accomplished but little since its organization though I think it is composed of better drilled and as good fighting men as can be found. The reasons for its failure I think are as follows. The incompetency and treachery of some of its commanding generals; the continual interference of politicians at W[ashington] ...⁸²

Henry Clare, in the 83rd New York, was even blunter in his criticism of the national leadership:

... I tell you Wm ... I sincerely pray to God that Jeff Davis enters Washington hangs Lincoln and all his damnable associates proclaiming himself President -- ... and I would willingly give one month's pay to see Washington sacked & the present clique chased like bayed foxes with bloodhounds after them — they brought this trouble on our once happy country forsaking it in the time of trouble. I have no words to express my indignation at such miserable actions as practiced in [on?] our army of late. We who have offered our lives for the cause — to be fooled by a damnable set of politicians....⁸³

Making matters worse, and as mentioned earlier, the army lost approximately 23,000 men around this time as the terms of many nine-month and two-year regiments expired. The men remaining in the ranks realized the implication of these losses, and looked with grave apprehension to their military and political leaders for signs of hope. During the early stages of the Gettysburg campaign soldier-correspondent Lt. George Breck, Battery L, 1st New York Artillery, discussed this while writing to his hometown paper:

The term of service of two New Jersey regiments expired Friday afternoon [June 12], they being nine months' men.... Three more regiments will start for home to-morrow, their time of enlistment expiring then. This will reduce the first corps very much.... The ... corps was once the largest ... of any corps in the army. Now, perhaps, it is the smallest. Hurry along the conscription act, or its operation, Mr. President, or we shall be sadly deficient of troops. Is not Gen. Lee fully cognizant of this fact, and is he not taking advantage of it by his now assuming offensive operations?⁸⁴

Further weakening the Army of the Potomac were the approximately 17,300 casualties suffered at Chancellorsville.⁸⁵

Despite these problems, many Northern soldiers were not demoralized. Most still believed in one thing —themselves — and were determined to fight on. Col. Lucius Fairchild, commanding the 2nd Wisconsin, remarked in a June 1, 1863 letter to his sister, “What an unfortunate set of fellows we are, and have been ...” The soldiers were not to blame for the army's “reverses, its repulses its defeats ...” On the contrary, Fairchild claimed the Army of the Potomac was “better disciplined, better equipped, better behaved” than any “army in the world.... when it has a fair fight you will hear a good account of it.”⁸⁶

Lt. Frank Haskell, on Brig. Gen. John Gibbon's staff, agreed with this assessment, writing to his brother after the campaign:

... the Army of the Potomac was no band of schoolgirls. They were not the men likely to be crushed or utterly discouraged by any mere circumstance in which they might find themselves placed. They had lost some battles; they had gained some. They knew what defeat was, and what



Lt. Frank Haskell. State Historical Society of Wisconsin

was victory. But here is the greatest praise that I can bestow upon them or upon any army: with the elation of victory, or the depression of defeat, amidst the hardest toils of the campaign, under unwelcome leadership — at all times, and under all circumstances, they were a reliable army still. The Army of the Potomac would do as it was told, always.⁸⁷

Even more pointed was Lt. Thomas Lucas, 1st Pennsylvania Cavalry, who wrote:

... let me assure the people at home that it will take harder fighting to whip the noble Army of the Potomac by far than ever. Bully for the grand old Army of the Potomac. There is yet victory and glory in store for us, and I am more confident than ever that our army will be the principal in crushing and rooting out this unholyest of unholy rebellions and in planting the glorious old banner of liberty farther and firmer in the soil of freedom than ever.⁸⁸

Although writing about his troops after the campaign had ended, Gen. Williams' description below is probably the best summation of the Army of the Potomac as it existed in mid-June, 1863:

There was never a better army, because from long service and few recruits we are hardened down to the very sublimation of muscle, health, and endurance. The men can march twenty-five to thirty miles a day with sixty pounds -- if necessary. They seldom grumble, and come to camp after a hard day's march with jokes and songs. There are absolutely without fear.... Such an army can only be made by long service and exposure in the field and at a great loss of original numbers.⁸⁹

Almost prophetically, 5th Corps commander Maj. Gen. George Gordon Meade wrote to his wife on June 11 and gave not only an excellent summary of the condition and morale of the opposing armies, but also the ideal conditions under which the Army of the Potomac might be victorious. Little could he have realized that his scenario foresaw the events that shortly played out at Gettysburg:

This army is weakened, and its morale not so good as at the last battle, and the enemy are undoubtedly stronger and in better morale. Still, I do not despair, but that if they assume the offensive and force us into a defensive attitude, that our morale will be raised, and with a moderate degree of good luck and good management, we will give them better than they can send. War is very uncertain in its results, and often when affairs look the most desperate they suddenly assume a more hopeful.... This makes me hope that it will be our turn next time.⁹⁰

Thus, in early June 1863 these two armies, for nearly two years deadly opponents on numerous battlefields throughout Virginia and Maryland, faced each other on the eve of the Gettysburg campaign. Nearly all volunteers, the officers and men in the ranks of both the Army of the Potomac and the Army of Northern Virginia, now veterans seasoned by two years of war, were well led and highly motivated. They realized that this next battle promised not only to be bloody, but also was likely to be very decisive. Thus, the majority of these Northern and Southern soldiers were prepared to face the dangers of the battlefield and uphold the causes and beliefs for which they fought.

The Campaign

The Army of Northern Virginia began to break its camps around Fredericksburg, Virginia on June 3, 1863. It moved northwest and toward the Shenandoah Valley beyond, which Lee then intended to use as a natural avenue of invasion into Maryland and Pennsylvania. Leading the way was the bulk of the Southern cavalry, led by Maj. Gen. J.E.B. Stuart, which had bivouacked near Brandy Station.⁹¹

Not fully comprehending these movements, Gen. Hooker vacillated on possible countermoves and did not begin to move his infantry north until June 13. Little could these Union and Confederate soldiers realize at the time that they were beginning one of the most important campaigns of the war. In fact, being active in the field left them completely out of touch with the events transpiring around them. "You probably know by this time much more than we do about the general aspect of military affairs as we hardly know what we are doing & much less about the other Corps," wrote Robert Hubbard, surgeon of the 17th Connecticut, to his wife on June 15.⁹²

The soldiers, much like the civilians, relied heavily on newspapers to keep abreast of daily occurrences and events of national significance as such journals were the *only* form of mass communication of that era. They not only kept the masses informed of major events, both at home and abroad, but during wartime were the only way that both soldiers, their families, and friends could keep abreast of the latest military news. This of course was especially true after battles, as newspapers carried casualty lists and thus gave soldiers' families the first indication if their loved ones had survived. As such, newspapers had a tremendous impact on the everyday lives of people. Yet the soldiers also realized the papers could be a curse as well as a blessing. Many of the news stories were fairly accurate, some surprisingly so, and the soldiers relied on the press to keep their families informed of the movements of the army.

Other newspaper reports, however, were based completely on rumor or outright lies. One Union soldier, before the campaign, expressed his opinion on newspaper coverage of the war in general:

You have undoubtedly read in the Chronicle of yesterday the account of our fight with the rebs. Don't believe the half of it. I for one will never believe newspaper accounts for they are all stating falsehoods either directly or indirectly.⁹³

Either way, once the campaign was underway, mail service was drastically reduced, thus leaving the men grasping at any means, including the unreliable and rampant rumors, to stay abreast of the latest events. On June 17, John Willboughby, 5th Pennsylvania Reserves, wrote:

... we have been somewhat excited, owing to the rumors of the invasion of Maryland and Pennsylvania. ... I am afraid that the invading force consist only of cavalry and flying artillery ... on a foraging expedition similar to that of last fall... Where the main force of both armies are it can only be conjectured at.⁹⁴

Even if newspapers could be obtained, many soldiers readily admitted the shortcomings inherent in these publications. David Brett, in the 9th Massachusetts Battery and assigned to the defenses of Washington, wrote to his wife on May 24, stating, "thire is no news here[.] you get the news before we do[.] there are papers for sale every day but they lie so on one knows what to believe." Southern papers suffered from the same fault, or so Confederate soldiers believed. A wounded John McDonald, a member of the 13th Mississippi who was convalescing in a military hospital in Lynchburg during the Gettysburg campaign, wrote to his wife on June 22, and reported that, "our army has gone in Maryland again the papers say and scareing the Yankees into fits[.] all the news we get these days are good if it is only true[.] but the [newspapers] is as great a lier as the Yankees." If it was difficult for Brett and McDonald, both of whom were stationed

in rear areas, to receive accurate news, soldiers in active field maneuvers found it nearly impossible.⁹⁵

An excellent example of this was the Battle of Brandy Station, fought on June 9, 1863. In an attempt to learn more about the Confederate northward movement, Union cavalry launched a surprise attack upon Stuart's forces located there. The resulting twelve-hour battle became the largest cavalry engagement of the war. Stationed only several miles from the battlefield, Col. Aiken wrote to his wife the next day describing his frustration on getting accurate news:

Rumor here says that our Cavalry, two Brigds were surprised & surrounded by the Yankees & had to be captured, wounded or killed, or cut there way out. How strange that even here where the firing was distinctly heard you can get no news definitely from anybody.... But I can't get any definite & correct news here any more than you can at home, perhaps not as much, for it surpressed her[e], & newspapers writers will find out & sent it to their readers.⁹⁶

Other Confederate infantry was closer and apparently got a much better idea of what had happened. A fairly accurate account comes from soldier-correspondent Capt. John C. Gorman, 2nd North Carolina, who wrote to his hometown paper on June 22:

Our cavalry forces were taken by surprise, and for a while the enemy had it all their own way, and pushed their columns as far as Brandy Station, but the gallant [Brig. Gen.] Fitzhugh Lee, and other forces led by [Maj.Gen. J.E.B.] Stuart himself, came to the rescue, and the enemy was forced to fall back to the river. We ... were close enough to hear the rattle of the pistols and carbines, but got to the battle ground too late to participate in it. It is said they enemy ascertained that infantry was close by, and that army of the enemies service has a mortal dread of our foot soldiers. The fight is described as the severest cavalry engagement of the war, being for the most part a hand to hand affair.⁹⁷

Capt. Gorman's account is substantially correct, although his bias towards the cavalry branch was obviously less than favorable. Other Southern infantrymen were even more frank in their low assessment of their fellow troopers. Frank Gaillard, of the 2nd South Carolina, wrote bluntly about the battle on June 11:

The fight lasted all day but as usual with Cavalry they charged and counter charged doing very little damage to each other.... The whole affair was more like a sham battle and has rendered cavalry in my opinion more contemptible than ever when it comes to services upon the field of battle. If I were in that service I would quit it. I could not stand the contemptuous jeers the infantry give them when they come about.⁹⁸

While Gaillard's scathing attitude toward cavalry clearly predated Brandy Station, the light casualties of the battle lend some truth to his statement. Despite the battle's size and intensity, total casualties numbered less than 1,400.⁹⁹

Somewhat disappointingly, there are few accounts of this battle, or the subsequent cavalry actions of the Gettysburg campaign, from either Union or Confederate troopers. This probably should not be too surprising, however, as these men were constantly on the move, were involved in numerous skirmishes and other actions, and had very little time to rest (let alone write letters). An excellent summary of the life and hardships of the typical cavalryman that summer, which obviously was contrary to the view of their fellow infantryman, is given by Stephens Smith, 5th Virginia Cavalry, who wrote his parents near the end of the campaign:

... we have been fighting almost every day, our Cavalry having been in ten hard fights. We have lost more men and suffered more hardships than in the past two years put together.... Yesterday was the first time that the Cavalry have had any rest; since I wrote you, we have been continually fighting by day and marching by night. We have broken down over two thousand horses.¹⁰⁰

Undaunted by these aggressive Union counter movements, Lee continued to push his infantry onward. The further they moved northward, the harder it became to receive news and the more isolated the men became. A soldier in the 4th Virginia commented on June 19, "What will be the next move I do not know. Our camp is full of rumors today from the out side world.... I would give most any thing for a Richmond paper this morning." Northern soldiers found themselves just as much in the dark as they also began to march from Fredericksburg. Surgeon Hubbard complained that, "I have never been so completely shut out from all communication with the world.... We hear all sorts of rumors ..."¹⁰¹

Another excellent example of the scanty knowledge available to soldiers at this time, and one that is often overlooked in general histories of the campaign, concerned the size of the opposing armies. While the modern historian or reader has at least a sound approximation of the relative strengths of each army,¹⁰² and takes for granted that the Army of the Potomac was larger, the average officer or enlisted man could only guess at the size of his own army, and had heard any number of, and at times completely unbelievable, estimates of the enemy's strength. As an example, during the campaign both of the Union army's commanders, Hooker and Meade, estimated that Lee's army was larger than their own.¹⁰³

Leading the Confederate advance was Lt. Gen. Richard S. Ewell's 2nd Corps, which crossed the Blue Ridge Mountains and entered the Shenandoah Valley on June 12. In order to use this valley as a highway to the North, Lee realized that he first had to clear out the Union troops located there that blocked his line of advance. The largest of these was a substantial force of approximately 7,000 located in Winchester and under the command of Maj. Gen. Robert Milroy. A smaller Union outpost was also located at Berryville, eight miles to the east.¹⁰⁴

Disposing of Milroy's forces would not only open the route for invasion, but would rid the valley of this despised Union officer. Taking command of the Union force at Winchester in January 1863, Milroy, an ardent abolitionist, immediately instituted a harsh subjugation of the central Shenandoah Valley. His heavy hand and severe measures soon made him the most hated man in the valley. Soldier-correspondent Capt. John Gorman wrote:

Winchester was Milroy's headquarters; here he had extensive fortifications on almost impregnable hills, and there he issued his orders of oppression, while his minions permeated the valley, seizing, confiscating and destroying all they could lay their rife hands on. But a little longer procrastination on our part, and this prolific valley, whose whole surfaces was made glad with teeming fields, would have been a desert. Its proud people are as true as steel to the Confederacy and they have suffered immeasurably.¹⁰⁵

Milroy, overconfident and unaware that an enormous force of battle-hardened Southern veterans was bearing down upon his command, perceived the great danger too late. While the bulk of Ewell's corps assaulted Milroy on June 14 and 15, Maj. Gen. Robert Rodes' division moved on the force at Berryville on June 13. Capt. Gorman provided the most detailed account of these actions:

We took the enemy by surprise ... and our coming was as a thunderbolt from a cloudless sky. ... they had erected fortifications, and, as they thought, were

prepared to resist any force we might send against them. Our division took the road to Berryville, while [Maj. Gen. Edward] Johnston and [Maj. Gen. Jubal] Early's took the road to Winchester. Without fires on the night of the [12th], we encamped in 4 miles of the place and took the enemy by surprise in the morning.... We marched in the place ... in ... line of battle and the four regiments [of Union troops] ... had hardly got a glimpse of our battle flags across the open fields before they fled in confusion. Not a gun was fired by us, and only some half dozen discharges from a piece of artillery by them. We hurried into the place and succeeded in capturing some 300 prisoners, all their stores, camp and garrison equipage, a good many horses, mules, wagons, etc. They left their tents ... standing — their clothes and private effects intact, and their dinners cooked ready for eating. Our whole brigade partook of a hot dinner of beans and pork, baked beef and fresh loaf bread furnished ready for eating by our accommodating Yankee friends, while every soldier filled his haversack with the pure bean coffee, sugar and other camp delicacies.... [W]e followed our cavalry ... [toward] Martinsburg [The next day, June 14, we arrived at Martinsburg and found the enemy] had their infantry and cavalry drawn up on a high hill in front of the city behind stone fences, and with eight pieces of artillery in position seemed disposed to put an estoppe to our further advance. We arrived just before nightfall, quickly formed a line of battle, and moved on. ... their artillery opened on us ... [but w]ith a cheer we attacked the hill, and after a few random shots the enemy broke and fled through town, and those that succeeded in escaping never stopped till they had placed the Potomac between us and them. We captured about 500 prisoners, all their artillery and a few wagons and teams. They burned what we did not capture before they got to the river.

While we were chasing the enemy from Berryville and Martinsburg, Johnston and Early invested Winchester, and notwithstanding its boasted impregnability succeeded in capturing the entire garrison, its artillery, supplies and everything else, with the exception of some 800 cavalry with Milroy at their head, who succeeded in escaping. It is a matter of regret that Milroy escaped. His acts had been so oppressive and outrageous, that if caught, he would probably have met his just fate as a felon and outlaw. In the operations by which we cleared the valley of the enemy, our loss ... was less than 300 killed, wounded and missing, while we captured 5,000 Yankees, with a loss of about 1,000 killed and wounded, together with their entire equipage, artillery and every thing else that renders an army effective.¹⁰⁶

While Milroy himself managed to escape, his command was shattered and the Shenandoah Valley was swept clean of the reviled "Yankees." The journal kept by Adj. Isaac Seymour, a staff officer to Brig. Gen. Harry Hays, summed up this Confederate victory:

... we halted ... within three miles of Winchester. At that place Gen Milroy had [his] ... Yankees behind very strong fortifications, and had sent word to Gen. Ewell that he intended defending the town until (to use his classical language,) "Hell froze over." The sequel will show that he did not tarry there long enough to learn whether any such extraordinary signs of frigidity had been observed in the infernal regions.¹⁰⁷

The already high morale in the Confederate 2nd Corps soared following this overwhelming success. J. F. Shaffner, 4th North Carolina, wrote on June 23:

During these three weeks this section of the Army has marched more rapidly, done more fighting, and accomplished more than any other army of the Confederacy.... This Corps captured four thousand prisoners, 30 pieces Artillery, 150 wagons, 500 horses, and large quantities of Commissary and Q. Master Stores, completely cleaning out the Valley of hostile troops and laying open a road for an Army of invasion.¹⁰⁸

Because this was General Ewell's first true test as a corps commander, and because the majority of his troops had formerly been commanded by the now lamented Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson, comparisons between the two were natural. Comments concerning this are prevalent in Southern writings, including such statements as "I think we have a very good successor to Gen Jackson" and "Ewell seems to be following in the foot steps of the great and good Jackson." Lieutenant Colonel Freemantle, the British military observer, spoke to two Confederate officers wounded at Winchester, who told them that:

They served under "Stonewall" Jackson until his death, and they venerate his name, though they both agree that he has got an efficient successor in Ewell, his former companion in arms; and they confirmed a great deal of what General Johnston had told me as to Jackson having been so much indebted to Ewell for several of his victories.¹⁰⁹

Obviously, the Southern civilians of the valley greeted Ewell's men as saviors. Captain Gorman described the reception they received shortly after crossing the Blue Ridge and the impact it had on the men:

The people of this teeming valley were fairly mad with joy at our coming. They had been oppressed almost beyond belief by the tyrant Milroy, and they thanked God the "Gray Backs were come, and they were free once more," as a gray haired sire, with tears of joy in his eyes, expressed himself as we passed his cottage door. Maidens fairly paved our pathway with flowers, bright eyes beamed with unalloyed pleasure and delight on our tattered, dusty garments, matrons stood at the gates with pitchers and buckets of cool water and milk, offering freely to our thirsty soldiery whilst even the little children were happy in the general joy. I never felt so proud as a soldier before. I felt I was no bare hireling in a doubtful cause, but as a hero who was battling for truth, justice and right, and could I feel always as I then felt, the trials, vicissitudes and dangers of the soldier life would be nothing, and I would be content to remain one for life.¹¹⁰

Surgeon Spencer G. Welch, of the 13th South Carolina, wrote to his wife on June 21:

You cannot imagine how delighted the Valley people are at our appearance. the ladies wave their handkerchiefs from every little farmhouse we pass and cheer us onward. Such sights are enough to make anyone feel enthusiastic. As we marched through Front Royal this morning the people were in ecstasies and our bands played lively airs for them, although it is Sunday.¹¹¹

Now unopposed, and with Ewell's men still in the vanguard, the Army of Northern Virginia marched rapidly northward and soon reached the Potomac River. Following the 2nd Corps was Lt. Gen. James Longstreet's 1st Corps, with Lt. Gen. A. P. Hill's 3rd Corps strung out south of Culpeper and bringing up the rear. On June 15 Maj. Gen. Robert Rodes's division, followed a few days later by Maj. Gen. Edward Johnson's division, became the first Southern

infantry to ford the Potomac River. This was a noteworthy event that many soldiers devoted space to in their writings. Johnson's division contained nearly all of the Maryland regiments in the army. Naturally for these men to return to their native state was a powerful and emotional moment. James William Thomas, of the 1st Maryland, recorded it in his diary, writing:

... at 4 P. M. crossed the Potomac and bivouaced for the first time on Md. soil. We led the brigade. When we caught sight of the river, a shout arose. On this side we gave three rousing cheers. Then the brigade having halted we gathered round our standard and sang appropriate songs.¹¹²

The crossing of Brig. Gen. George Stewart, a Maryland native, sparked another emotional moment. John Stone, in the 2nd Maryland Battalion, wrote home, "Forded the Potomac River.... When we crossed ... General Stewart dismounted & kissed the ground, at sight of which the men sent up one long & loud shout for 'My Maryland.'"¹¹³

As the rest of the army came up in the following days, soldiers from the other eleven Confederate states enjoyed entering "My Maryland." Adj. Isaac Seymour wrote in his journal on June 23, 1863:

June 23d. On the move at daylight ... & forded the Potomac. The (water) was very high, and it was amusing to see the long lines of naked men fording it -- their clothing and accoutrements slung to their guns, and carried above their heads, to keep them dry. The water was very cold, and the men, as they entered it, would scream and shout most boisterously.¹¹⁴

The march through Maryland was an enjoyable one. Apparently, much of the section through which they passed was pro-Confederate, especially around Hagerstown. Capt. Gorman wrote:

Our passage through Maryland was as peaceable and as quiet as a Quaker could desire. Not a gun has been fired by us.... One word about Maryland ... I have had ... opportunities of finding out the sentiments of the people of Hagerstown and vicinity, and I feel sure if a guarantee was given that they would be supported, nine-tenths of the people would go with the Confederacy.... They love to see us, and they say they hope we will never leave them until Maryland's fetters are broken. I give a hearty Amen.¹¹⁵

Many noted the change in attitude of Marylanders toward them from their last trip through the state during the Maryland campaign in September 1862. J. F. Shaffner, 4th North Carolina, described this, along with his theory concerning this change of sentiment, in a June 23 letter:

Our reception in Maryland was more cordial than last year, many people being really glad to see us. As we entered Hagerstown the men cheered, the ladies waved handkerchief, and showered bouquets upon our men.... There are many good Southern people who really wish us success, some of whom have served months in Yankee bastilles, rather than take Lincoln's oath of allegiance.... The change of sentiment in Maryland can be accounted for easily. The abolition proclamation effected something -- but the Yankee Conscription Bill much more. These together have made many seccsh sympathizers.¹¹⁶

The men were also impressed by the wonderful landscape, which Samuel W. Eaton, 57th

North Carolina, described in his diary:

Tuesday 23rd ... That part of Md through which we traveled is a very fine country for wheat, corn clover, grass and cattle. The country is thickly settled.... People are nearer on an equality here, than in many other sections of the country, few are very poor and few are very rich, but most all live in neat, comfortable houses, built of brick and stone, log and weather boarded houses are whitewashed. They have beautiful farms and cultivate them well.¹¹⁷

One minor problem noted by Gen. Ewell concerned the Maryland troops under his command. The 2nd Corps commander wrote light-heartily to his wife on June 24:

It is wonderful how well our hungry, foot sore, ragged men behave in this land of plenty – better than at home.... The worst behaved men I have are the Marylanders who seem wild with the excitement of getting near home. – One of them just returned from a scout told me the ladies all send me word that if I go where they are they will give me no quarter in their delight at meeting me. – What a pity a Bachelor could not have such an offer.¹¹⁸

To this point, Robert E. Lee's bold invasion of the North had gone extremely well. He had effectively side-stepped the Army of the Potomac and masked his army's movements to the northwest, blunted a strong Union cavalry probe at Brandy Station, crushed a significant enemy outpost and thus cleared the Shenandoah Valley of Union troops (capturing thousands of prisoners and valuable material in the process) and had crossed the Potomac River without interference. In addition, the rank-in-file were in excellent fighting trim, possessed extremely high morale and for the most part were enjoying the campaign immensely.

This early and easy success, combined with the knowledge of subsequent events, however, has resulted in a somewhat distorted and idyllic view of this part of the campaign in later years. What was conveniently forgotten were numerous hardships that all combat soldiers on active campaign have faced throughout history. In a June 29 letter to "My Precious Wife," John West, 4th Texas, summed up the ordeals he and his comrades had encountered up to that point of the campaign:

We have marched in great heat until stalwart men, apparently much stronger than myself, have fallen dead by the roadside. We have crossed and recrossed streams, waist deep, with water cold and chilling. We have passed four or five nights and days without changing clothes, which were soaking wet ... the entire time. [Three of us] slept one night together on the very top of the Blue Ridge Mountains under a single blanket. It rained and blew furiously during the whole night.... On several occasions we have waded streams just at sundown and slept in wet clothes, or sit up naked while our clothes were drying, with a prospect of being ordered to march between midnight and day. A soldiers' motto is to sleep at all hazards whenever he has a chance, for it never comes amiss.¹¹⁹

West also gave an excellent synopsis of a typical march, which he faced in a blithe and stoic manner:

This marching and countermarching is what they call "Demonstrations," and if they accomplish the objects for which I left my friends I am perfectly satisfied. This marching is no great trouble to me, but twenty or thirty pounds of baggage gets heavy before night, especially in wet weather, on slippery hillside — when

one is so much fatigued that to sneeze or blow his nose jostles him from one side of the road to the other.¹²⁰

“Our marches...have been long and tiresome”

Lt. Col. Rufus Dawes, 6th Wisconsin



Rufus Dawes was born in Morgan County, Ohio on Independence Day, 1838. The great-grandson of William Dawes, Jr., Paul Revere's companion during his fateful April 1775 ride on the eve of Lexington and Concord, Rufus appropriately grew up in Constitution, Ohio. In business with his father in Juneau County, Wisconsin at the outbreak of the war, Dawes immediately raised a company of soldiers and was commissioned a captain in the 6th Wisconsin in April, 1861 at the age of 23. He served with the regiment throughout its distinguished service as part of the famed "Iron Brigade" throughout its many actions the first two years of the war. By 1863 Dawes was a lieutenant colonel and commanding the regiment.

The letter below, written to his fiancée, Mary Beman Gates of Marietta, Ohio, provides an excellent description of the many trials and hardships encountered by Civil War soldiers on active campaign, along with

giving the reader a clear insight into Dawes' personality and the impact the war had upon him and his loved ones at home.

*Bivouac near Middleton Maryland
June 27th, 1863*

My dear Mary

Once more at the old South Mountain battle ground, but this time we are not to fight here.... Marched hard all day, crossing the Potomac at Edward's Ferry, and proceeding on...encamped for night near Barnesville. Marched next morning at daylight, and through deep mud, and a miserable drizzling rain all day.... This morning we started early and reached this point at 2.P.M. Our marches...have been long and tiresome. What do you think of trudging along all day in a soaking rain, getting just as wet as a drowned rat, taking supper on hard tack and salt pork...and the wrapping up in a wet woolen blanket in a wedge tent that only makes the rain more tantalizing but [turns] it to a fine soaking mist, being waked up three or four times to attend to orders, and turning out finally at three in the morning to get the "command ready to move". Well, that's soldiering. And its a great deal more comfortable soldiering, too, than to have suffocating clouds of dust, and oppressive heat.

The Campaign has been fairly inaugurated on Northern Soil. The Rebels are fairly in our clutches, if we are able to clutch them. God grant this may be the closing of the War.

I rode this evening over our battle field on South Mountain. The grass has grown green over the graves of our brave boys who lie there. The inscriptions on the head boards of some are already scarcely visible, and with their destruction seems to go the last, poor, chance that anyone shall remember the sacrifice these men have made for their country. I rode up with Gen. Meredith who pointed out to me the grave of a private in the 19th Ind. who had been a professor in a western college and distinguished for scholarship, and refinement. What could be more unselfish and noble then the sacrifice of this man.

I dont know but you'll think, Mary, I am disposed to grumble a little tonight from the way I comment, but I feel quite cheerful to night. But there is a very[little] margin for my happiness to be increased if I could have a letter from you to night telling me you are well. I cant say I think you are sick, but I've been thinking too much I guess of how I should feel to realize that you were in danger. I feel just as though I could be the worst coward in the world in the presence of such peril, and not to be able to come to you. I shall show you my weakness if I keep on, and that is a side I ought to keep concealed, for I know a true woman loves a man for his strength, self reliance, force of character, more than for anything else. And it is no small part of my happiness to feel that I am to be you protector & defender. Eph says "I always knew you have a weakness for her". That weakness of loving you I dont care how much, and how often you know of....

Now, Mary, try to be brave, cheerful and happy and I'll try and fight my way along up in the world so that our position will be comfortable, respectable and independent.... All the love I can send to my dear, dear Mary. Rufe

Dawes would continue to command the regiment throughout 1863. In January 1864, while on furlough, he married his fiancée. Promoted to full colonel on July 5, 1864, Dawes and his regiment saw action at the Wilderness, Spotsylvania Court House, Cold Harbor, and through the early stages of the Petersburg campaign, before he returned home at the end of his enlistment in August 1864. Settling in Ohio, he and Mary eventually had six children, one of whom became vice-president under Calvin Coolidge. Dawes himself served one term as a Republican congressman and was involved in numerous businesses and public service before his death in 1899. He also wrote *Service with the Sixth Wisconsin* (published in 1890), which is widely considered today one of the best Civil War regimental histories ever written.

Sources: Rufus R. Dawes Papers, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison
Rufus R. Dawes, *Service with the Sixth Wisconsin Volunteers* (Madison: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1962).

Other hardships the men endured included cold, scarce or dirty water, lack of sleep, scant rations, long marches, little or no shelter, living in constant filth, lice, and the “hurry up and wait” aspect of campaigning, among others. Most Southern soldiers, however, were stoic like John West, who wrote on June 8, “I did not suffer when I called to mind that these hardships were for the good of my country and the cause of liberty.”¹²¹

As this seemingly invincible Confederate army approached Pennsylvania, its opponent, the Army of the Potomac, trudged through northern Virginia in a desperate effort to catch up. Having fallen behind, these Union troops were forced to march more rapidly during some of the worst weather conditions the men had ever experienced. This combination resulted in severe suffering for the men in the ranks. “The weather has been very warm during the march, and consequently the boys have suffered a great deal,” related Capt. David Acheson, 140th Pennsylvania, in a June 20 letter. He even admitted, “I can hardly bear the heat... I threw away everything but my haversack and canteen, and would have dropped them if I could not have kept up the regt.”¹²²

Soldier-correspondent Lt. George Breck, in Battery L, 1st New York Artillery, wrote on June 15:

Our march Friday ... was a long one, eighteen miles, and quite a severe one ... for it was very hot and very dusty. We were envolved in clouds of dust nearly all day.... The weather has been intensely hot ... No rain of any consequence has fallen for a month. The roads are dry and dusty....¹²³

The marches from June 14 to 17 were by far the most difficult, being made in excessive heat and humidity. In the 12th United States Infantry, Sgt. Charles Bowen's diary entries give a good account of these hardships:

June 15, 1863 ... The heat was intense all day & the dust in such clouds that we could scarcely draw breath.... I know of 7 men that fell dead & a great part of the men were unable to keep up with their Companies....

June 17, 1863 ... Men fell by the dozens from the excessive heat.... I stood it very well until within 2 miles of camp & then my sight began to fail & my head swim & I had to drop under a shade tree.¹²⁴

Another common problem during this trying time period was the scarcity of water. John Pardington, 24th Michigan, wrote to his wife on June 16:

We get very hard up for water in this Part of the country. We suffered some on this last march Drinking water that would turn the stomach any other time. But a soldier has to drink anything. Sara I have drank water out of a ditch when there [h]as been a Dead horse laying a few rods above in the same Water and glad to get it.... It is [a] wonder more soldiers dont die than do just through drinking such water.¹²⁵

Making matters worse was the rain that soon followed, turning the dirt roads into rivers of mud. In Battery G, 1st New York Artillery, Charles Sheldon wrote in his diary, "... the roads are very bad -- it has rained just enough to make them bad.... we have marched 65 miles in two days and over the worst kind of mountain roads -- the horses and men are used up." Sgt. Maj. A. P. Morrison, 9th Pennsylvania Reserves, recorded in his diary, "It rained on us very hard ... the roads exceedingly heavy & slippery -- rather trying ..." R. S. Robertson, 93rd New York, best summed up the effects of these numerous hardships in a letter to his parents:

Weak, sore and worn out after a long and weary march, I take the opportunity of sending you a few lines ... You may imagine how little I feel like writing when you know what I have gone through for a few days past ... This is the hardest marching on record since the war began and we are completely used up. The sides of my feet are covered with large blisters and the soles are so sore, I can scarcely bear my weight ... and cannot get my boots on at all, my feet are swelled to such a size... 54 miles in two days would be an extraordinary march on the best roads, but in the mud it was more than any army did before.¹²⁶

Captain Acheson simply wrote, "Our marches are very fatiguing indeed and several times when it was raining the men at end of a day's march would lie down in the water and sleep soundly. I never knew what a man was able to endure before." Despite these fatigues most of the men bore the hardships well. "Our men have stood this forced march nobly thru," wrote Surgeon Robert Hubbard, "heat & dust with blistered feet & under no little privation."¹²⁷

All soldiers learned quickly that two of the most important aspects of enduring the difficulties of campaigns were getting adequate rest and proper foot care. Although writing of his experiences during the Chancellorsville campaign, Robert Carter's description of, and his methods of coping with, these two points apply equally to Gettysburg:

When a soldier gets into camp or bivouac, he is generally so tired and hungry that he first cooks his supper, clears a place for bed, rolls himself up in his blankets, and loses himself in sleep, for he knows not how soon he may be called upon, sometimes at midnight, and sometimes before dawn, and sleep is necessary to him. Yet, many a time have I, when we camped, struck off for a brook, and cooled my burning, blistered feet in the cool, running water. A soldier knows how to take care of his feet if he has time. **** I knew, before, the recipe for keeping the feet in good order by rubbing the stockings with bar soap; have tried it a great many times; it is a great thing. I tried in on our late march, and it helped me a great deal.¹²⁸

Adding to the Northern soldiers' miseries was, again, the feeling of being physically out of touch due to the nearly complete lack of information they received from the outside world and the wild rumors which swirled through their camps. Writing to his hometown paper, the *Rochester Union and Advertiser*, soldier-correspondent Lt. George Breck, Battery L, 1st New York Artillery, stated:

... we find ourselves ... almost back to Washington ... acting on the defensive – the rebels threatening to capture our ... Capital ... and invading the peaceful homes of the North, and menacing towns and cities with destruction.... But is there a rebel invasion North? Has Lee with his large army really planted the Confederate flag on the soil of the loyal States, and is he marching towards the great and patriotic city of Philadelphia or trying to capture Baltimore? Or is it an extensive raid only and a feint to get the Army of the Potomac as far north as possible, break up its "base" of operations on the Rappahannock....? We are all in the dark concerning war matters outside of our brigade, and have been most ever since we abandoned the Rappahannock. For several days we have not seen a newspaper, and no mail.... Plenty of rumors are in circulation about us but nothing reliable can be learned. We feel shut out from intercourse with the world....¹²⁹

This void of news and flood of wild negative rumors naturally increased the tension. Although the men of the Army of the Potomac attempted to cover this with stoicism and forced humor, a strong sense of foreboding and veiled pessimism was clearly evident. Lieutenant Breck described this in a June 15 letter to the *Union*:



Lt. George Breck. Rochester Historical Society

In one of my recent letters I mentioned the probability of such a rebel movement and speculated on the prospect of our falling back.... Sure enough, the army of the Potomac is northward bound ... and ... hurrying in the direction of Washington as speedily as possible by every available route. ... Lee mustn't be permitted to get the start of Hooker and be allowed to flank us, for in that case serious consequences might be the result. The soldiers seemed to be in good spirits, and cracked many jokes about our falling back to Washington again. A grand game of tag, one would say. Two magnificent armies, the Federal and Confederate of Virginia, another would remark -- magnificent for advances, retreats, covering their respective capitals and the

accomplishment of nothing decisive. Another change of "base" only, that's all would say a third. Another skedaddle, say a fourth.... No sight of the enemy yet, but we shall run across him in a few days unquestionably, when look out for a desperate battle. Where will it take place, we wonder.¹³⁰

The men of the Army of Northern Virginia faced this same sense of isolation. "Where we are going, or what is our General's intentions, I cannot even guess," wrote Capt. John Gorman on June 22, "Since we left Virginia, all news is contraband; and we have not the slightest idea what is going on outside of our own department." Despite this, the Confederate rank-and-file displayed little apprehension, instead finding solace in their near total trust of their commander, General Lee. "Our destination we know nothing of, but are willing to trust to the sagacity of our

leader,” penned North Carolinian J. F. Shaffner on June 23, “Our men are in most excellent health and spirits, and when the hour of strife comes will make the enemy feel the effects of strong arms and a righteous cause.”¹³¹

Indeed, most even considered the scarcity of reliable information to be a great advantage for their army. John West, 4th Texas, wrote to wife in early June:

All of our movements are inexplicable to me. We never know anything. Even a colonel cannot tell until he starts from camp in which direction he is going, whether North or South. This secrecy is the secret of the success of this army.¹³²

Maj. Eugene Blackford, 5th Alabama, explained the reasoning behind this belief to his father later that same month:

The secrecy with wh. Our movements are conducted is wonderful.... Of course the enemy must be in the dark themselves. For 3 weeks we have heard nothing of our other divisions and have entirely outgeneralled Hooker so far.¹³³

This scarcity of information ran both ways, for another aspect the wartime writings of both Union and Confederate reveal is the perception (real or imagined) of the general public’s total inability to understand or comprehend the privations and hardships experienced by these soldiers. Shortly after Chancellorsville Robert Carter detailed this attitude very well:

It is well enough for the rich merchant to sit down and read that such a body of troops have marched so far, or fought such a battle; does it every enter his mind how much the private soldiers suffered in doing it? Does he ever see the soldier by the bivouac fire with the bright canopy above him for a roof, or the rain pouring down and drenching him as he sleeps? No! not he. As long as everything goes well, so that he can make money out of it what does he care? ... Never refuse a soldier anything that lies in your power! Think of your brothers and act accordingly.¹³⁴

Later that same month, Carter wrote:

How often have I wished that you could follow us along on a march, see us cook our coffee in our old black dippers, eat our common ‘army pies,’ clear away the brush, sticks and stones, and then have Walt [his brother], you and I, lie down together, roll up in our army blankets, and sleep until the bugler blows reveille; not that I wish the fatigue attending said march, but that you could be with us, and see us as soldiers.¹³⁵

Others attempted to describe their hardships by comparing them to experiences their loved ones could understand. Steuben H. Coon of the 60th New York used this method to explain the fatigues of marching:

To give you a fair idea of what marching in this country is just imagine a day about 20 degrees hotter than the hottest you ever see ... then consider our soldiers are clothed in the thickest kind of woolen with coats which must be buttoned from top to bottom, tight. Then imagine how he is harnessed with straps and belts in every direction. A knapsack weighing ... from 15 to 20 pounds... Cartridge box, and 60 rounds of cartridges, 12 to the pound, and a rifle and a sabre bayonet and a capbox. Put a man into a hayfield dressed and belted and loaded in such a way ... and how

much work would you expect he would do?¹³⁶

Texan John West touched upon the shortcomings of the press when he wrote to his wife on June 9:

“... I have endured and passed through a great deal which no one can dream of, or picture, except those who have passed through the same trials. Newspaper writers and correspondents cannot convey any idea of the hardships of a soldier’s life when on a march.¹³⁷

To West this was just as well, for after detailing the horrible conditions he had encountered during the campaign he wrote about his wife in a letter to a friend “I am glad she does not know of the privations I am suffering for it would give her more pain than I have felt in enduring them.”¹³⁸



“Old Braves.” A sketch by 9th Massachusetts Battery bugler Charles Reed of infantry on the march on June 20. LC

Another group of people who had a difficulty understanding the rigors of active campaigning were most of the Union soldiers assigned to the defenses of Washington. The Army of the Potomac’s route of march took them past the outer defenses of the capitol from June 15 to 24. Most of these troops had never seen combat or even participated in a campaign. A typical reaction to the sight of just parts the largest Union army passing by was given by David Brett, 9th Massachusetts Battery, when he wrote to his wife, “Joe Hookers troops have all come or are coming here. It seems as though there was no end to them we could hear the wagons all night.”

He also added, “the troops look as though they had seen hard times.... we could see a cloud of Dust ... for miles just as far as we could see.” Bugler Charles Reed, of the same battery, wrote to his sister:

We have been having stirring times within the last week[.] the army of Potomac and Lee's army have been having as sort of foot race on this way, and what was our surprise day before yesterday to a stream [of] troops pouring in here all begrimed with dirt and dust[.]....¹³⁹

Although Reed, Brett and their fellow battery mates had been in the army for nearly a year, this sight was so impressive that the bugler simply wrote, “you can form no idea what soldiering is unless you have seen the Army of the Potomac[.]” Shortly after Reed and Brett’s battery, along with approximately five brigades of infantry, one brigade of cavalry, and four batteries of artillery (totaling approximately 14,750 men) from the Washington defenses, or adjoining commands, were attached to this army and were soon joining its northward march.¹⁴⁰

As the third week of June passed, each army crossed physical and/or symbolic thresholds that signaled a significant shift in the campaign. For the Army of the Potomac this was their namesake river, which they began crossing on June 25. Just a few days before, on June 22, the infantry of the Army of Northern Virginia crossed the Mason-Dixon Line, taking them for the first time onto Northern soil. Each of these events brought immediate positive reactions, raising the men’s morale, instilling in them an increased determination and steeling them for the mortal dangers of the battlefield.¹⁴¹

Lt. Col. George Fisher McFarland, commanding the 151st Pennsylvania, captured the initial reaction of most Northern soldiers when he penned in his journal, “June 25 ... we left the sacred soil of poverty stricken Virginia about noon. The moment we landed on the Maryland shore, all seemed different. Wealth, comfort, enterprise and improvement met us on every hand.” In his June 27 letter to the *Rochester Union*, soldier-correspondent Lt. George Breck, described this striking difference between the two states in more detail:

... A change of camp, not only, you perceive, since the date of my last, but a change from one state into another, a transition from “Old Virginia” to “My Maryland.” ... The contrast between the two sections of country, Virginia and Maryland was immediately perceptible. The former had presented to us a wasted, desolated look, an abandoned, unhomelike appearance, the houses ... unworthy of the name, and almost everything told of the ravages of war. The latter presented thrift, plenty, beautiful homes, cultivated farms, fields of “waving grain” fast ripening for the sickle, and everything denoted peace and abundance. The lines of fences running along fields and road in Maryland, added much to the contrast – poor Virginia having been completely stripped of these old land marks, wherever the army has been quartered.... The soldiers seem fully sensible of the difference between a loyal and disloyal State.... The country through which we passed ... is very rolling, the land is of the very richest kind, and on every side, almost, there met our gaze the most extensive fields of wheat, with large, full and heavy “heads,” ... The country about, here excels in richness, the Sheanandoah Valley in Virginia which is ... hard to be excelled in fertility and prolificness.”¹⁴²

In the same letter Lieutenant Breck described another reason that he and his comrades were glad to leave Virginia:

Need I assure you how much we like the change, and that we have no wish to

change back again? ... We are not at all anxious to “invade” the homes of the F. F. V. [First Families of Virginia] again, not because we regard it a sacrilege or desecration to touch them ... but because we have met with such ill success in the State, that we are tired of trying to accomplish anything further in it in the way of ending the war. ... we most devoutly hope that if obliged to cross to the other side of the Potomac for the third time ... we may do so ... having emphatically, decisively defeated the foe on our soil, which he is now invading, [and] we may reenter Virginia, a conquered province in advance. But shall we confess that the hope is a very faint one?¹⁴³

Another factor that lifted the men’s spirits was the reaction they received from the local citizens. Lt. Col. George McFarland, 151st Pennsylvania, noted in his diary that, “People were well clad, and seemed cheerful and sympathizing. Every family along the route was busy baking bread + cakes for the soldiers + selling eatables.” This type of reception obviously stood in complete contrast to the reaction they had received from Virginia civilians. For many Union soldiers this was the first time that they were seen as saviors or defenders, instead of being the invader.¹⁴⁴

This outpouring of support, McFarland later wrote to his wife, “produced such an exhilarating effect upon the boys that cheer after cheer went up along the whole line and route...” He continued:

Here the people did not sell but gave every thing they had to the soldiers, with assurances of their sympathy and wishes for their success.... A little girl at her house expressed her willingness to give her dinner ... to a soldier if he could go and get it. Such kindness and sympathy are worth a great deal to an army, especially when wearied and exhausted by laborous marches. ... sympathy met us on every hand. One little girl had an apron on made out of the American Flag. This called forth three hearty cheers.¹⁴⁵

At this same time, or slightly before, the soldiers of the Army of Northern Virginia reached Pennsylvania. This momentous event was described in numerous Confederate writings. “[On the] the 23d we ... at ½ past 3 struck the Penna line,” wrote Second Lt. J. Warren Jackson to his brother, “We shook Md dust off of our feet and marched into the union to the tune of “Dixie.” The men were quite lively & joked the cits by telling them ... that we were going back into the Union at last.” Maj. Eugene Blackford, 5th Alabama, took a more vengeful attitude when he wrote to his father on June 22 from Greencastle:

... I hail it as the proudest day of my life — the day for which I have been looking so long, when Confederate infantry would invade this State. As we approached the line the band prepared to play, and just as the head of the column reached it, they struck up the “bonnie blue flag” most cheerily.¹⁴⁶

Blackford also noted the symbolic shift that occurred by crossing the Mason-Dixon Line when he closed the same letter, writing, “Give my best love to all at home. It seems that a great ocean separates us now, that we are in this [foreign] country.”¹⁴⁷

Like their Union counterparts who had entered Maryland, innumerable Confederate letters and other writings commented on the wonderful Northern landscape which, up to that time, had been untouched by the war. Dr. Spencer G. Welch, surgeon of the 13th South Carolina, wrote to his wife in late June, “We are in Yankeedom this time, for certain, and a beautiful country it is too.... I have never yet seen any country in such a high state of cultivation. Such wheat I never dreamed of and so much of it.” In his journal on June 28 Adj. Isaac Seymour wrote about the

landscape and also the families who worked this soil:

The surrounding country was in a high state of cultivation, and ... presented a beautiful appearance, with its immense fields of golden grain that flashed in the sunlight -- dotted here and there with neat little cottages, and large, substantially built barns which are literally bursting with wheat, oats & corn. Most of the barns in this section of Pennsylvania are larger and more finely built than the dwellings of the farmers; the Dutch lords of the soil invariably bestow more care and attention on their crops and stock than they do on their families.¹⁴⁸

Most Confederates probably would have agreed with Maj. Eugene Blackford's negative assessment of these Northern farmers when he wrote:

This valley thro' which we have moved is densely populated, being quite unlike in our own country -- but what a population! almost entirely Dutchmen, with immense barns, and small inconvenient dwelling houses. All drink 'larger' & eat 'sauer-kroust,' from one year's end to the other....¹⁴⁹

Southern letters of this time period are also filled with accounts of the reaction these civilians had to the invading Confederate armies. For those unaccustomed to war, the sheer size of the Army of Northern Virginia was overwhelming. John Stone, 2nd Maryland Battalion, wrote to his sister, "At each place the inhabitants seemed most astonished at seeing so many soldiers, some expressed the belief that nearly the entire world had turned out to pay them a visit." Others were surprised at the condition of the Southern soldiers. Lt. William Calder, in the 2nd North Carolina, wrote to his mother on June 28:

The citizens all express great astonishment at seeing us and our horses looking so sleek [and] fat. They thought to see us all of ragged & dirty skeletons. When our one division marched through Chambersburg a citizen said to me "Why, my lord, Mister I did know there were so many men in the whole South; I thought we had killed them all." I told him "That that wasn't a drop in the bucket...."¹⁵⁰

The numerous and wild rumors that had preceded the Confederate army put many Pennsylvania civilians on the verge of hysteria. In a June 28 letter to his mother, Maj. Eugene Blackford, whose division was leading the Southern advance, provided a vivid depiction of one episode caused by these falsehoods:

The inhabitants were more terrible scared as we advanced than I could ever have imagined. Their own troops knowing the outrages they were in the habit of committing in Va. Had told them that we were coming up the valley, burning, plundering, laying waste, & committing every species of outrage. Our Division has been far in advance.... In many places where we would [go] up to a house asking civilly for butter eggs &c, the women of the house would rush out screaming, [at] us to take every thing but not to murder the children. Think of a great Dutch women, large enough to whip me in a moment, begging your son not to murder the child she has at her breast and actually in her gratitude refusing to take any compensation for butter and eggs! All we leave behind have a very different idea of the rebels from that entertained by them before.¹⁵¹

Playing off these rumors, General Ewell teased his wife, whose mother was a native of

York, Pennsylvania, by writing from Chambersburg on June 24:

It is like renewal of Mexican times to enter a captured town. The people look as sour as vinegar, and I have no doubt would gladly send us all to kingdom Come if they could. I don't know if we will go to York – yet – anyhow we will be tolerably close to it. I will let your relations off tolerably easy, on your account – probably not taking more than a few forks and spoons and trifles of that sort – No houseburning or anything of that sort.¹⁵²

Another very common subject found within numerous Southern writings concerned Northern women. Some soldiers were quite complimentary toward the “fairer sex” from Pennsylvania. Such was the case of Lt. J. Warren Jackson, 8th Louisiana, who described his visit into York:

[June] 29th [Lt. William C.] McGimsey and self took french leave and went into town. Had lots of fun, saw some pretty girls and amused ourselves extensively until 10 P. M. Got back to camp ... found that we would have to march before day.... The people are mostly Dutch and were very friendly. Confederate money was taken *at par* and I shall ever remember York with pleasure.¹⁵³

Jackson's opinion of the ladies of York aside, the consensus among the writings of his fellow soldiers was close to that given by Maj. Eugene Blackford, who wrote home:

... I have [yet] to see the first pretty refined looking woman. I begin to believe that she is none north of Mason's & Dixon's line. All we have seen, and they never fail to exhibit themselves, have been extremely coarse, with hands and feet larger than the men's.¹⁵⁴

A South Carolina soldier only known as “Bud” gave the best and most concise summary concerning both the wonderment of the Pennsylvania landscape and Northern women by writing to his sister, “We passed through the prettist country that I ever saw in my life. It has [some] of the finest land in the world and some of the ugliest women that I every saw ...”¹⁵⁵

Adding to the enjoyment the Confederate soldiers derived from this campaign was the opportunity to fill their haversacks by scavenging through the abundant countryside, as will be seen later. General Lee issued his now famous General Order No. 72 on June 21, which restricted the procuring of supplies and other material to designated “chiefs of commissary, quartermaster's, ordnance and medical departments” of the army. Many studies of the Gettysburg campaign, as well as those on other aspects of the Civil War, use this order as an example of Lee's benevolence, both as a Christian soldier and gentlemen. In that light, this directive was obviously issued in hopes of preventing wanton plundering and destruction to private property. While this was certainly a factor in Lee's thinking, the Southern correspondence makes it clear that he had other motives.¹⁵⁶

Primarily, General Order No. 72 created a method which allowed the Army of Northern Virginia to systemically scour the rich landscape and seize any and all materials, goods, livestock, and other items deemed beneficial to the army's needs. As such, the order worked extremely well. Samuel Pickens, 5th Alabama, wrote in his diary on June 22, “... We are taking all the horses & cattle that can be found, & have already got hundreds of horses & droves of beeves.” “Our orders are very strict here. Nothing is wantonly destroyed, no private seizures are allowed, and nothing taken without due orders and authority,” wrote soldier-correspondent Capt. John C. Gorman shortly after entering Pennsylvania. He continued:

Large numbers of horses and cattle, and much bacon and flour have been seized,

as well as dry goods, by our authorities, but even in these cases receipts are given that they may recover damages, after peace is made, if such terms are agreed on.¹⁵⁷

The results were immediately obvious to those Southern troops following the vanguard. Dr. Spencer G. Welch, 13th South Carolina, touched upon this in a June 28 letter to his wife:

We are taking everything we need -- horses, cattle, sheep, flour, groceries and goods of all kinds, and making as clean a sweep as possible.... I noticed yesterday that scarcely a horse or cow was to be seen. the free negroes are all gone, as well as thousands of the white people. My servant, Wilson says he "don't like Pennsylvania at all," because he "sees no black folks...."¹⁵⁸

A secondary benefit of General Order No. 72 was its use as a tool to maintain discipline. Many clearly understood this, officers especially so, and strongly supported the directive. Dr. Welch, in a June 28 letter to his wife, explained this belief, "The reason houses are guarded is to prevent our troops plundering and robbing, which would demoralize them, thereby rendering them unfit for soldiers. Soldiers must have a strict and severe rein held over them; if not, they are worthless."¹⁵⁹

Because of this, and other reasons, most of the officers and men agreed with their commander's sentiment and attempted to abide by the order. This fact is especially revealing considering the treatment Southern communities received at the hands of invading Union armies. Captain Gorman expressed this opinion, which was also held by many of his comrades, "I feel sometimes, when I think how our country has been desolated, that the *les talioats* should be applied, but in the language of our soldiery, "our Generals know best." As the Army of Northern Virginia entered Pennsylvania it was only natural for many of its soldiers to see this campaign as a chance for retribution. Dr. Spencer Welch expressed this attitude in a June 21 letter to his wife, writing, "I am willing to endure almost anything, or to be deprived of almost everything, if we can have the pleasure of getting into Pennsylvania and letting the Yankees feel what it is to be invaded."¹⁶⁰

Despite this, however, the majority of the men respected General Lee's order and for the most part abided by its spirit, though not always by its exact wording. Maj. Eugene Blackford, of the 5th Alabama, whose hatred of "yankees" was seemingly unsurpassed, detailed how most Confederates treated this order:

... there is no end of milk and butter, which our soldiers enjoy hugely, besides these there are an immeasurable number of fowls which our men have stolen at some times with which exception, our Army has behaved with much more propriety than I have ever observed in Virginia. This I mention because I know it will please you, you know my sentiments already, I have seen too much misery entailed upon my own dear old state by these miscreants, not to wish for a more vigorous policy.¹⁶¹

Some writings of this period claim that General Order No. 72 was strictly adhered to. An excellent example is the journal of Adj. Isaac Seymour, a staff officer for Brig. Gen. Harry Hays. While admitting some indiscretions, Seymour placed the behavior of his comrades in the best possible light in contrast with the previous behavior of invading Union armies:

June 28th. ... During our march the inhabitants were treated with the greatest kindness and consideration, Gen Lee having issued the most stringent orders against the molestation of their persons or property. Everything that was taken

for the use of the Army was paid for except in some cases where the tender of the money was refused. Stragglers would sometimes make predatory excursions into barnyards and dairies belonging to persons who were disposed to be inimical and unaccommodating -- this was unavoidable; but I did not hear of a single instance of a citizen being insulted or his property damaged. The forbearance of our troops in this respect, showed the admirable discipline they were under; hundreds of them from the far South had had their own houses and farms destroyed or despoiled by the Northern Vandals, and their families turned out of doors to starve, or live on the charity of their more fortunate neighbors.¹⁶²

Other orders issued by Lee did allow for authorized destruction of property for the direct purpose of impeding the Union war effort. These efforts were mostly directed at railroads, including the destruction of rails, ties, rolling stock, water tanks and bridges, among others. Telegraph lines were also targeted.¹⁶³

One of the most famous incidents concerning the destruction of commercial property was actually in direct violation of Lee's instructions. This involved the ransacking and burning of the Caledonia Iron Works. Located approximately fifteen miles west of Gettysburg, the iron works were owned by Congressman Thaddeus Stevens, the famous Radical Republican, whose outspoken views against the Confederacy and its leaders had made him one of the most hated men in the South. As his division passed by the works on the June 24 and June 26, Maj. Gen. Jubal Early ordered his men to confiscate the company's goods and then burn all of the buildings. Altogether, in addition to the destruction of the furnace, saw mill, two forges, and a rolling mill, the Confederates seized approximately \$10,000 worth of provisions and stores, large amounts of grain, bar iron valued at \$4,000; destroyed nearly all of the fence rails; used 80 tons of grass and smashed all the windows of the employees houses. The majority of the Confederates who commented on this episode reacted positively. In Brig. Gen. Harry Hays' brigade, Adj. Isaac Seymour's description was typical of most:

June 24th. ... stopped at the extensive iron mills of Thaddeus Stevens, one of the vilest, most unprincipled, & most fanatical of the Yankee Abolition Congressmen. Permission having been granted, our men took pleasure in helping themselves most bountifully to the products of his broad and fertile acres....
June 26th. ... a rainy & most disagreeable day. By orders of Gen Early, our pioneers set fire to, and destroyed, the two large iron mills of Stevens, together with the adjoining storehouses. This was the only occasion during the Pennsylvania Campaign, when private property was destroyed by our troops.¹⁶⁴

Although Early's aim was to punish Stevens, other Southern soldiers described the real victims impacted by the iron works demise. "On the morning of the ... [30th] ... we passed where a splendid iron factory had been burned by General Early," wrote Dr. Spencer Welch to his wife, "It belonged to a very celebrated lawyer and politician of Pennsylvania by the name of Thaddeus Stevens, who is noted for his extreme abolition views and his intense hatred for slaveholders. The works are said to have been worth more than one hundred thousand dollars. The burning had thrown a great many operative out of employment and they seemed to be much distressed."¹⁶⁵

There were also, of course, many more numerous cases of unauthorized seizure of private property and foraging by individuals throughout the army. The direct contrast between the two sections of the country by 1863, to say nothing of the actions of Union soldiers, was simply too much for many Southern soldiers who had lived on reduced rations for months. With a touch of envy and resentment Lt. William Calder, of the 2nd North Carolina, described the Pennsylvania farmers and the unspoiled, bountiful landscape they tilled:

All openly avow their devotion to “the Union,” and we are very willing to allow them full sway to their sentiments while we impress all the horses and wagons and subsistence in the country. The people here have felt nothing of the war and have never in their lives known what it was to want. The country is rich in every thing necessary to man. It is literally a land flowing with milk and honey. We get abundance of everything good to eat such as chickens ... eggs, beef, fresh pork, milk & etc. I know this would be a treat even to the folks at home....¹⁶⁶

In some cases there were incidents of outright looting. Second Lt. Iowa Michigan Royster, in the 37th North Carolina, was quite unrepentant when he described the actions of fellow soldiers, “Yesterday ... our soldiers plundered far and wide -- taking butter, milk, applebutter, fruit, chicken, pigs and horses ... everything they could lay their hands on. The people are frightened out of their senses 'take anything you want but don't hur[t] us' is thie cry.”¹⁶⁷

Apparently the behavior of the majority of the Confederate soldiers was in between these two extremes. Joseph Joyner, 7th North Carolina, gave the best summary of how Order No. 72 was actually carried out in a June 29 letter to his mother:

Genl Lees orders are that private property must be respected. During the day while we are marching every man remains at his post, but where we camp for the night there is not much that the soldiers call “luxuries” such as butter chickens, eggs, milk & honey left as a genuine thing[.] they pay what they get in Confederate money, which the citizens take in preference to nothing although they consider it valueless as they say the Confederacy will never be established.¹⁶⁸

Whether they lost property, possessions, and livestock through authorized (and partially compensated) methods or through unauthorized (individual looting and/or uncompensated) seizures, the citizens of south-central Pennsylvania were all victims in the end. As the news of the Confederate invasion spread, these civilians were well aware of the danger threatening them, their livelihood, and in some cases their very freedom. Therefore, many farmers and other citizens took great measures to protect their property. Staff officer Adj. Isaac Seymour recorded in his journal several methods employed by locals to hide their valuables, especially livestock, with their varying degrees of success:

June 28th. ... The Pennsylvania farmers had sent most of their horses and mules to the other side of the Susquehannah River, to prevent their falling into our hands. As our army was in great need of animals for transportation purposes, the Quartermasters were ordered to scour the country in quest of them.... Horses were found in bedrooms, parlours, lofts of barns, and other out of the way places. Major Campbell, Acting Quartermaster of our Brigade, called at large, finely furnished house, the owner of which he had learned, was possessed of a splendid horse. The proprietor stoutly denied that he had such an animal, but, unfortunately for him, a neigh from an adjoining room, gave the nay to his assertion, and revealed the hiding place of the much desired quadreped. The Major quietly opened the door, and there in an elegant parlour, comfortable stalled in close proximity to a costly rosewood piano, stood a noble looking horse ... one of the best specimens of the Pennsylvania “Conestoga.” With some difficulty the Major led his prize forth from its novel stable, and paid him in the current funds of the Confederate realm.¹⁶⁹

Overall, for many of the reasons listed above, the majority of men of the Army of

Northern Virginia seemed to thoroughly enjoy their march through Pennsylvania. Georgian William D. Lyon in a letter to his brother after the campaign stated with satisfaction:

I never enjoyed myself more than I did on that march.... The people, who were all Dutch, were very much frightened of our appearance & fully expected to be the victims of the most horrible atrocities. They brought out in the greatest abundance everything they had to eat or drink & would not prevailed upon to take any pay for it. I don't think any men in the brigade ever lived as well before. They certainly make the most delicious bread that I ever tasted. They furnished us milk, butter & cheese in the greatest abundance.... The people were certainly the most cowardly wretches I ever saw.¹⁷⁰

The invasion not only gave these Confederates a chance to literally live off "the fat of the land," but it also provided two additional benefits, both of which afforded them immense satisfaction. On the most basic level, the advance of the Confederate army moved the theater of operations out of Virginia, thus giving that war-torn state a much-needed respite. Although an Alabamian, Maj. Eugene Blackford described in a letter to his mother the tremendous relief that the freedom enjoyed by a Southern sister state brought him:

Here we are away up in Central Pennsylvania, how strange it seems! I can scarcely realize that a rebel army has actually left poor old Virginia for a season at least and is now living upon the substance of its enemies.... Tis an unfailling source of comfort to me to reflect that Old Virginia is almost entirely free from the Yankees, long may she so remain.¹⁷¹

Not surprisingly, the most-often expressed emotional benefit wrought by their invasion, found within their writings, was that of revenge. With the South, especially Virginia, having suffered untold hardships and deprivations for over two years, many Confederates held no sympathy for the Northern civilians who, up until this point, had been relatively unaffected by the war. "This has been called a land of milk and honey and it is indeed such compaired with our disolated country pillaged and burned by the plundering Yankees," wrote Joseph Joyner to his mother on June 29, "They have as last found out that the war has commenced & that war is a terrible calamity at best." Just before entering Pennsylvania Dr. Spencer Welch wrote on June 21, "I am willing to endure almost anything, or to be deprived of almost everything, if we can have the pleasure of getting into Pennsylvania and letting the Yankees feel what it is to be invaded."¹⁷²

Lt. William Bloun, 47th North Carolina, not only bluntly stated his belief that the North should suffer, but also the possible advantages that might result from such a policy:

Genl Lee is determind to carry on an aggressive war, and this is the only way that we can put a stop to hostilities, carry the war to them and let them taste its fruits. Let their homes be laid waste -- Their lands destroyed -- Their towns laid in ashes, and then they will be disposed to make terms of peace. Now is the golden opportunity! The enemy is weaker now than he has been in one year. Now is the time to strike. If we but act promptly our country can be saved, our independence achieved. Lee is a general & you may expect to hear of brilliant achievements by his invincilbe army. We are all in fine spirits and confident of victory....¹⁷³

The extreme confidence the permeated through every level of this army is easy to understand. Not only had they won a series of spectacular victories from 1861 to 1863, but their

current bold, but risky, invasion of the North had also experienced nothing but success. By late June 1863, the entire Army of Northern Virginia had crossed the Mason-Dixon Line and had fanned out over the south-central Pennsylvania. Its vanguard, Ewell's corps, was spreading panic before it as its unchecked advance threatened the state's capitol at Harrisburg and reached the Susquehanna River at Wrightsville, twenty-three miles to the southeast. At the same time the army had garnered a wealth of much-needed goods, livestock, equipment, and other goods from this bountiful and untouched agricultural region. The physical condition of the men was also superb, when compared to previous campaigns. Spearheading the advance toward the state capitol was Maj. Gen. Robert Rodes' division. A member of that division, Lt. William Calder in the 2nd North Carolina, penned to his mother on June 28:

Our army is in fine condition and ready for any emergency. Our generals ... have husbanded all the strength of the men and not broken them down before the campaign commenced by hard marching and harder fare. We have marched over two hundred miles but it has been conducted very judiciously, and we are now in better marching trim than when we left Fredericksburg. We ... are as strong in numbers & spirit as when we started. Our march this far into the enemies country has been entirely unopposed, and I doubt very much if we meet with any resistance before reaching Harrisburg.¹⁷⁴

The writings of these Confederate soldiers make it clear that the majority had an unbelievable confidence in themselves, their officers, and their commander, Gen. Robert E. Lee. Conversely, many of these same men had only contempt for the opposing commander, Maj. Gen. Joseph Hooker. Certainly, it seemed, nothing but total victory awaited them. In a letter written on June 21, Dr. Spencer Welch, surgeon of the 13th South Carolina, detailed his belief of an impending Confederate victory:

Our army is very large now, and if ... Hooker engages us you may be certain that he will be severely whipped. General Lee and his army are bent on it. Our troops are in fine health and I have never before seen them get along half so well on a march.... I believe they will fight better than they have ever done, if such a thing could be possible.

By June 28 his confidence had risen even further, as he wrote:

We are in Yankeedom this time, for certain.... We hear nothing of Hooker's army at all, but General Lee knows what he is about. This is certainly a grand move of his, and if any man can carry it out successfully he can, for he is cautious as well as bold.... I have never seen our army so healthy and in such gay spirits. How can they be whipped?¹⁷⁵

Riding this wave of confidence and success many of these Confederates, including Lee himself, probably assumed that their opponent was demoralized, or at least discouraged. Certainly their constant reverses and defeats gave the veterans of the Army of the Potomac every reason to be disheartened. And if those reasons were not enough, news of a startling change in the army's leadership on June 28 stunned many of these men. Having tired of Hooker's histrionics, and having lost confidence in him following Chancellorsville, Abraham Lincoln made the bold and risky decision to replace the obstinate commander in mid-campaign. The man Lincoln tapped for this unenviable and crucial assignment was Maj. Gen. George G. Meade, who became the Army of the Potomac's fourth commander in the previous eight months.¹⁷⁶

Despite this momentous event, reaction to this change in command varied. Most felt no

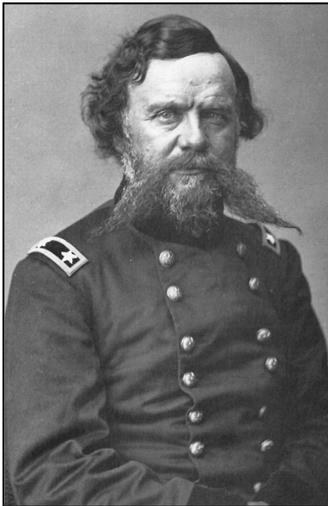
special loyalty to Hooker and did not really know much about Meade. The trend within the writings seems to indicate that the rank and file were skeptical or indifferent, while general officers were more supportive. What surprised and even bewildered many of the men was the timing of this decision. A typical reaction from the enlisted ranks comes from Sgt. Maj. A. P. Morrison, 9th Pennsylvania Reserves:

... we learned of the removal of Gen. Hooker, & appointment of Gen. Meade.... I was taken by surprise at this announcement & was ... filled with forbodings for the future. It did seem so strange that now for the 3rd or 4th time the General, commanding, should be suddenly relieved ... in the very midst of most important operations.¹⁷⁷

One of the first enlisted men to know of the change was R. S. Robertson, 93rd New York, then serving as guard to army headquarters. His comments, written within hours of Hooker's removal, were filled with even more concern:

This morning Hooker was relieved from command, a Gen. Meade appointed to fill his place. Once more has the army of the Potomac changed commanders on the eve of an important campaign, and God only knows that this change will lead to. Although I never had the greatest confidence in Hooker, I think it is a bad policy to remove him now and I am afraid we will be sorry enough for the change.¹⁷⁸

Robertson's use of "a" instead of "the" in describing Meade speaks volumes as to how unknown the general was, even within his own army. It is no wonder that many of the men exhibited casual indifference upon learning they had a new commander. Captain Acheson, 140th Pennsylvania, wrote later that same day, "It is rumored ... that Hooker has been superseded by Meade. I do not [k]now how this will please the army but it seems to me that the Government is at a loss to know who is fitted for the command."¹⁷⁹



Brigadier General Alpheus Williams, 12th Corps. LC

For the most part the general officers, who worked in close contact with each other, knew Meade on a personal level and generally were pleased with his selection. General Williams wrote, "For myself, I am rejoiced at the change of commanders. ... now with a gentleman and a soldier in command I have renewed confidence that we shall at least do enough to preserve our honor and the safety of the Republic."¹⁸⁰

Interestingly, a significant portion of the writings did not even mention this important episode. Several possible explanations for this oversight might be the soldiers' acceptance of this constant change in the army's high command, or the physical and mental state of these men, having faced the ordeals described above. A more likely reason, however, might be the men's stoic acceptance of their situation and the unwavering belief they held in themselves. The awareness of the tremendous importance of the campaign they were then participating in further steadied the men's resolve.

Even without the concrete knowledge available to us today, the writings of these soldiers reveal they clearly understood the significance of their movements and the possible consequences of an impending battle. On June 28, Henry Clare, 83rd New York, wrote, "My opinion is that 90 days will decide the fate of this country — for ... if ... defeat should be our lot then farewell Washington Administration Country & all — but I have better hopes than this...." Brig. Gen.

Alpheus Williams also reflected this in a letter to his daughters:

You see we have a great task before us to preserve the Republic.... we run a fearful risk, because upon this small army everything depends. If we are badly defeated the Capital is gone and all our principal cities and our national honor.¹⁸¹

John Willoughby, 5th Pennsylvania Reserves, summed up this attitude by writing, "The next month is to tell greatly for or against our cause." In a letter to his mother, Capt. David Acheson, 140th Pennsylvania wrote simply, "I believe this to be the campaign of the war, and the rebs have staked their all upon it."¹⁸²

This fact, of course, was just as prevalent within the ranks of the invading Confederate army. "That we cannot remain long without fighting is evident," wrote Capt. John C. Gorman, on June 22:

We are doubtless on the eve of the most decisive period of the war. The troops of our corps are in good condition, and as confident as when old Jackson infused us with his own ardor. Trusting in the justice of our cause, in the wisdom of our leaders, and the help of the Omnipotent Being ... we calmly await the issue, and whatever fate befalls us individually, we have an abiding faith that victory and triumph awards us in the end.¹⁸³

North Carolinian William Calder stated concisely on June 26 what he believed would hang in the balance, writing:

We are in the dark as to Old Bob's plans, but are willing to go blindly wherever he directs. I trust & believe this campaign will do much towards ending the war. The people up here are getting very much disgusted with the war since we came amongst them, and are willing to cry peace on almost any terms.¹⁸⁴

As the month of June drew to a close the probability of a battle loomed large, a fact that soldiers on both sides were well aware. Writing to the Rochester *Union* soldier-correspondent Lt. George Breck, Battery L, 1st New York Artillery predicted, "Events are fast shaping themselves ... and before this reaches you we may have fought the most desperate and bloody battle of the war.... The two armies must inevitably come in collision before many days longer...." Louisianan Lt. Isaac Seymour penned in his journal on June 30, "it was evident to the dullest comprehension, that a battle was imminent...."¹⁸⁵ The critical question of course was, how did the men react to this ominous knowledge?

In spite of the obvious peril this involved, the writings of the majority of the rank and file in both armies, indicate a calm acceptance of, or even a willingness to face, the dangers of the battlefield. Surprising, a few even expressed an eagerness for combat. John Follmer, in the 16th Pennsylvania Cavalry, remarked, "Most of our men seem anxious to have a fight. If the field is open we think we are sure of victory."¹⁸⁶ There were many motivations or factors that prepared these men to risk life and limb so readily.

Some were spurred on by their hatred of the enemy, who could be easily blamed for the numerous hardships the soldiers endured. Robert Carter, 22nd Massachusetts, expressed this conviction, writing:

We went into the bloody battle of Gettysburg feeling that we had suffered too much for the wretches, not to give them a licking, and we fought like devils. I almost prayed on the road that they would not 'skedaddle,' so that we might get at them; every step that I took with my raw feet made me savage and ugly.¹⁸⁷

Maj. Eugene Blackford, 5th Alabama, expressed his abhorrence of Northerners after the campaign, writing:

I have ceased to ... recognize the yankees as Christian enemies, and tho I do not advocate any such course as the raising or fighting under the black flag ... in every case where my sentiments can be shown I do so.... I would have their bones to lie bleaching in the sun, to be undisturbed by our posterity even.....¹⁸⁸

Others used the hardships themselves to steel themselves for the approaching conflict. "I have suffered many privations the last few days," wrote Henry Clare, of the 83rd New York. He continued:

— riding day and night being 36 hours without a morsel of food and resting one hour and a half while my clothes were completely drenched – Yet I don't complain – If we are only commanded by victorious generals to encourage us in our exertions –¹⁸⁹

Many Northern soldiers, especially Pennsylvanians, had the additional motivation of defending their home soil. Lt. Col. George Fisher McFarland, commanding the 151st Pennsylvania, wrote to his wife from Emmitsburg, Maryland, just south of the state line, on June 29:

This evening finds us only two miles from the southern boundary of the old Keystone State! I expected ere long cross that boundary with my regiment, but on the home road, and not following up the rebels. Who would have thought it! But it is nevertheless true that we are approaching the State of our birth, not to enjoy peace and comfort there, but to drive out an invading foe.¹⁹⁰

Private E.D. Benedict, 12th Pennsylvania Reserves, probably expressed this attitude best when he penned this July 1 entry into his diary:

... crossed the Penna line about M= The col Halted us at the line and the boys gave 3 cheers for old Pa and we vowed never to leave the state until we had driven the rebels out....¹⁹¹

Many of the officers and men in both armies also saw the Confederate invasion as an opportunity. Certainly results of a Confederate victory were obvious to Southern soldiers. On the eve of the battle, Lt. Isaac Seymour penned this entry into his journal:

June 30th. ... and it was inspiring to see the spirits of our men rise at the prospect of a fight. We all knew, that were Meade's Army to be defeated, the roads to Washington, Baltimore & Philadelphia would be open to us.¹⁹²

The rank and file of the Army of the Potomac also sensed the prospect of great success. Cpl. Horatio Dana Chapman, 20th Connecticut Regiment, expressed this idea in his diary:

June 30: ... It is ... reported that Lees Army is north of us and have entered the state of Penna and that the advance of our Army is very near the confederate army and that before long the two armies will meet and in all probability a terrible battle will ensue and I am willing with thousands and tens of thousands of others of my fellow

soldiers to do dare sacrifice and suffer if by any means this war will be brought to a termination.

We hope to capture or so cripple the confederate army here on northern soil that the south will give up the contest and an honorable peace restored. But time will determine¹⁹³

Lt. George Breck felt that:

Lee is playing a bold and desperate game surely, but we hope ... [to] be able to "checkmate" him. [The] military skill and ability ... of all our generals, will be put to the greatest test now. Heaven grant that Lee's advance northward, may prove the advance of his army to capture or destruction.¹⁹⁴

Another sentiment found in many of the soldiers' writings was their willingness and determination to fight to the bitter end. Maj. Eugene Blackford, made his attitude clear when he wrote:

I know that I at least can never be subdued, & that I have a soldier's honorable death always as a [last] resort- which I would hail with pleasure were I prepared for it, rather than see this state overrun. But I hope to live to take vengeance for years to come, for as surely as my eye continues true, I intend to use my rifle upon the miserable wretches. I think it not at all improbable that they may run over the whole State of Va, in which case I shall take to the guerrilla warfare.¹⁹⁵

Even more unwavering in his resolve was Frank Wootan, who served with the Jeff Davis Artillery:

As for me, I have ever felt that I was placed between my kindred and their enemies, to die or avert the misfortunes & misery that now threateningly over hangs them. The thought of the loved ones at home often nerves my arm for the contest & makes me a giant in the hour of danger. I am not the material that would bow to the tyrants yoke, or give up a cause for which the best blood of our land has been spilled. Never until the hot blood of my heart gushes into the face of my enemy will I cry enough. Never can I dishonor the graves of brave kindred & friends by crying peace on terms other than honorable. Our cause is now a desperate one and we need to meet it's exigencies must need become desperate men. My God spare my life to see the ultimate triumph of our arms, the success of our cause, the freedom & prosperity of our now unhappy country. Should we fail in accomplishing these designs, then surely life would not be worth the having.¹⁹⁶

Although not as descriptively vocal, many Union soldiers expressed unyielding attitudes in their letters. E.D. Benedict, 12th Pennsylvania Reserves, wrote the following passage in his diary just prior to the battle:

There is no nonsense about us.... We have been in the service long enough to know that fighting is no Childs play but we want to be led against the Enemy now because we are determined to drive him out of our state or perish in the attempt.¹⁹⁷

Lt. Frank Haskell, on Brig. Gen. John Gibbon's staff, probably gave the summary of the mind-set of most Union soldiers at this time:

... a mighty work was before them. Onward they moved, night and day were blended, over many a weary mile, through dust and through mud, in broiling sunshine, in the flooding rain, over steeps, through defiles, across rivers, over last year's battlefields, where the skeletons of our dead brethren by hundreds lay bare and bleaching, weary, without sleep for days, tormented with the newspapers and their rumors that the enemy was in Philadelphia, in Baltimore, in all places where he was not; yet these men could still be relied upon, I believed, when the day of conflict should come.¹⁹⁸

This then was the condition of the Army of the Potomac on the eve of one of the most crucial battles of the war. Although pushed to near physical and mental limits, they were well aware that success in the approaching conflict would require their maximum effort. Despite their fatigues, the constant changes in high command, and lack of public support, the confidence and morale of the officers and men remained high. Most, it would appear from their writings, were ready for the difficult task ahead of them. Surgeon Hubbard probably summed up the attitude of the entire army when he wrote on June 30, "I hope we shall be able to celebrate the 4th of July by a glorious victory over the enemies of our government."¹⁹⁹

The enemy mentioned by Hubbard was, of course, the seemingly invincible Army of Northern Virginia. Supremely confident in themselves and their commanders, large in numbers, well equipped, in excellent health, and with an extraordinary history of victories achieved against tremendous odds, the battle-hardened veterans of General Lee's army firmly believed that another certain triumph awaited them. A victory, many hoped, that might even end the war. Harris T. Lewis, of the 16th Mississippi, summed up the typical attitude within the Confederate ranks in a June 23 letter to his mother. He not only touched upon many of these factors, but also felt that there was another, higher reason, for this hope -- the divine blessing of their cause:

We are in the best possible health and spirits. We have the prestige a late crushing defeat in our favor.... I cannot say we are eager for a fight, but as veterans of many pitched battles we are willing at least, trusting in God and the justice of our cause, to again give battle to our foes when Lee gives the word. That the Lord has been manifestly in our favor heretofore I doubt not, and I shall pray that He may continue to favor us and preserve us.²⁰⁰

The Battle –The First Day, July 1, 1863

It is not the intention of this paper to cover the fighting of July 1, 1863 in detail through the soldiers' correspondence. Instead their writings will be used to convey the character of the combat, to explain how the soldiers perceived the fighting and to better understand what they thought the events of the first day meant. This approach is used primarily because most of the letters written at that time contain very little detailed information concerning the tactics and battle maneuvers of the various troops or particular scenes of action. There are several reasons for this tendency.

Primarily, soldiers on campaign had very little time to write, especially detailed accounts of their experiences in battle. Because of this, many of these Union and Confederate soldiers relied on the press to keep their families informed of the movements of the army. "By this time," wrote John Burrill of the 2nd New Hampshire, "you have seen accounts of the battle better than I could write." Such statements were fairly common in the letters of these men, and thus many saw little reason to elaborate on the battle in their writings. Many combat-hardened veterans also felt it was useless to attempt to describe a battle to those who had never experienced one. Thus some soldiers devoted little space in their letters describing the combat they had survived.²⁰¹

With perfect hindsight the modern student of the Battle of Gettysburg understands that the

fighting on July 1, 1863 was very bloody and tenacious. Despite the slaughter this fighting produced, it is obvious that the first day of the battle has been overshadowed during the preceding decades by more famous areas of fighting, such as the July 2 actions at Little Round Top, Devil's Den, and the Wheatfield, or even more so by Pickett's Charge on July 3. The Union and Confederate soldiers who struggled on July 1, however, recognized *instantly* the overwhelming severity of the combat they had survived and the tremendous cost associated with that fighting. These same men also understood, with very little hindsight or reflection, the importance of the final results of the fighting that day.²⁰²

The Battle of Gettysburg began in the early morning hours of July 1, 1863, west of town as the Confederates of Maj. Gen. Harry Heth's division skirmished with Union cavalry under Brig. Gen. John Buford. This initial holding action by the Northern troopers was successful, delaying the Confederate advance long enough for the first Union infantry to reach the field at approximately 10:30 A.M. These Union troops were the leading elements of the 1st Corps, commanded by Maj. Gen. John F. Reynolds. One of these men was Sgt. Edgar D. Haviland, of the 76th New York, belonging to Brig. Gen. Lysander Culter's brigade. Haviland's description of this initial clash places the reader in the middle of the rapidly escalating battle and details the decimation of Culter's brigade:

We arrived at Gettysburg on the first day of July and we had a grand Celebration of fireworks[.] We was on the head of the column that day and our Regiment was on the lead of all of the troops, which caused us to get in the Battle the first day[.] We had a great many killed and wounded from the Cannons before we got into the Muskertry[.] [After] we got into the Musketry the men fell like Sheep on all sides of me[.] When we first came into line, there was a Corporal hit with a cannon Ball and fell right back into my arms[.] In such times a man don't have much time to take care of the men so I threw him down[.] No sooner had I done that then there was another one fell by my side which was a Dundee boy whose name was James B. Bush.... I was sorry the bullet hit him fore he was my tent mate[.] He was a fine fellow...[.] In a few minutes our Captain was killed and then the Lieutenant was in command of the Company[.] It was not long before he received a wound that will make him loose his leg[.] Than we was with no Commissioned officers and then I took the Company in hand myself and maid it go first best. Just as I took command of the Company Sergeant Walter B. Wood of Barrington was killed ...and [in] a few minutes I heard some one say that B. F. Carpenter was Killed[.] That made me feel like as if I would like to speak a word to him before he was gone fore good so I went down the line to speak a word to him but he was dead....the next Regiment [56th Pennsylvania] was Ordered to move back to the Woods which was about ten rods distant[.] I saw they was going and I new we would go to for the Rebs had us flanked on three sides.²⁰³

At the same time that Culter's regiments fell back in confusion, Reynolds ordered a counterattack through a woodlot owned by a local farmer named John Herbst. Made famous by this fighting, the woodlot is known today as Reynolds Woods. The troops making this attack belonged to the famed "Iron Brigade." Cornelius Wheeler, in the 2nd Wisconsin, recounted this critical moment in a July 11 letter to his parents:

We were engaged on that day, our Regt. Opening the battle. It was somewhat unexpected to us from the manner in which we went into it. We marched early that morning from our camp which was some six miles from Gettysburg & ... [when] within about a mile of that place were we filed from the

road to the left passing the city. When about a mile from the other side [west] of the city, we came upon our cavalry with a battery of flying artillery which was skirmishing with the enemy. We were immediately thrown forward into line and at a double quick advanced upon them, loading our guns as we went. We ascended a slight elevation entering a piece of woods and when on the top received a full volley from the Rebl Infantry which at the same time was advancing towards us ... we did not stop but gave them our salute and battle yell. Soon had them skedaddling. We followed them as far as prudent, capturing Brig. Genl [John] Archer & upwards of a hundred fifty prisoners. The fight lasted, I suppose, about half an hour. Our Regt being in advance ... of the Brigade received the heaviest part of the fire & we lost in this one hundred & sixteen men killed & wounded out of two hundred & seventy six taken into the fight.²⁰⁴

Near the beginning of this action Reynolds was killed. Charles Veil, on the general's staff, recalled the general's last moments:

As he rode along he saw the enemy advancing through the woods.... The General saw at a glance that something desperate must be done.... He ordered ... "Forward into line" at a double quick & ordered them to charge into the woods, leading the charge in person.... Minnie Balls were flying thick. The General turned to look towards the Seminary (I suppose to see if the other troops were coming on.) As he did so, a Minnie Ball struck him in the back of the neck, & he fell from his horse dead. He never spoke a word, or moved a muscle after he was struck. I have seen many men killed in action, but never saw a ball do its work so instantly as did the ball which struck General Reynolds.²⁰⁵

News of Reynolds' death spread quickly through the ranks of the Army of the Potomac. Numerous letters written by Union soldiers marching toward Gettysburg later that day recounted seeing the wagon containing the general's remains moving in the opposite direction. Typical was the account from Charles Reed, 9th Massachusetts Battery, then encamped near Taneytown, who wrote "the body of Gen Reynolds and a large number of prisoners passed" on the afternoon of July 1.²⁰⁶

This news also sparked rumors, many of which continue to persist even to this day. One such story was repeated by Henry Clare, 83rd New York, in a July 5 letter to a friend:

Maj-Gen Reynolds ... hearing the firing, hastened to the front, knowing it was the forces of General [Buford's] command that were engaged. He wished to take a survey of the field of battle, and riding at the head of his men was shot through the head by a sharpshooter at a distance of 1000 yards. He lived an hour afterwards.²⁰⁷

While wrong on both the cause of Reynolds' death and how long he lived, Clare was certainly correct in the next statement of the same letter, writing;

... his loss will be hard to replace. He was brave to a fault, a thorough soldier and a perfect gentleman. I speak from experience having served as his A.D.C. and on occasion taking orders from one end of a line of skirmishers to the other, which were displayed under supervision.²⁰⁸

Shortly after, another desperate counterattack saved the Union line. Leading this assault was the 6th Wisconsin commanded by Lt. Col. Rufus Dawes. Three days shy of his 25th birthday,

Dawes described his regiment's attack against the Railroad Cut in a July 4 letter to his fiancée:

On July 1st our Corps was thrown in front unsupported and almost annihilated. My regiment was detached from the brigade, and we charged upon and captured entire the 2nd Mississippi, 230. Their battle flag is now at Gen. Meade's Head Quarters, inscribed "Captured by the Sixth Wisconsin together with the entire regiment."²⁰⁹

The action at the Railroad Cut, along with counterattack made by the Iron Brigade, turned back the initial Confederate thrust toward Gettysburg. Even still the battle continued to grow as more troops from both armies arrived upon the battlefield. Correspondingly the opposing battle lines lengthened and the area of fighting spread. Around noon the focus of the action shifted north with the arrival of the large Confederate division under Maj. Gen. Robert Rodes. A member of this division was Samuel Pickens of the 5th Alabama, who penned the following passage into his diary, which explained the numerous difficulties in reaching the field:

Wed. July 1st. ... As we approached the town we heard the cannonading & formed a line of battle about 2 miles off & advanced upon the Yankees. Our Regt ... moved forward ... at a quick & double quick march all the time; & as it was an excessively hot day & we were going through wheat fields & ploughed ground & over fences, it almost killed us. I was perfectly exhausted & never suffered so from heat & fatigue in my life. A good many fell out of ranks being completely broken down & some fainted.²¹⁰

Rodes quickly occupied Oak Hill, a prominent elevation that dominated both the rolling fields west of Gettysburg (then held by the Union 1st Corps) and the nearly level plain north of the town (soon to be occupied by the 11th Corps). Seeing this advantage Rodes immediately ordered his artillery to deploy and open fire. Taking position to the rear of some of these batteries, Rodes' infantry brigades prepared to advance. Pickens described the sharp artillery exchange that ensued while he and his comrades awaited orders:

We halted & lay down for some time at a fence & witnessed an artillery duel between one of our batteries stationed about 150 yds. in front of us & a Yankee battery away to our left. 5 or 6 dead horses & 1 or 2 broken caissons or gun carriages were left by our battery when it moved off.²¹¹

Facing a portion of this Confederate fire were Union batteries of the 1st Corps, commanded by Col. Charles Wainwright, who described this hot fight in his journal:

[We were] engaged ... with a rebel battery on the next ridge [Herr's] to the west ... when the enemy opened from another 6 gun Battery at easy range due north. Both of their Batt's fired well, & had us so completely at the angle of a cross fire that we were obliged to withdraw. I moved ... both across the Cashtown road ... to the south where they would be sheltered by the wood from the rebel Batt'y [to the west], & engaged the new one to the north.... The changing front had been hot work, several men & horses were knocked over in both Batt's ... & I came very near loosing a leg ... the shot going through my pants, & grazing the outer ankle of



*Col. Charles Wainwright,
1st Corps Artillery Brigade.*

my left foot but not breaking my boot.²¹²

“...We saw the rebs advance in four lines of battle with their mean treasonable howl, and colors flying.”

Sgt. Augustus Ziegler, 24th Michigan



Courtesy of Don Osborne,
descendant of Ziegler.

An 18-year-old clerk from Detroit, Augustus Ziegler enlisted in the 24th Michigan on August 13, 1862. He had entered the service with his older brother, William, in that “disheartening” summer. The war was already 17 months old, thousands of Northern and Southern boys had been killed or maimed, the Union war effort had ground to a halt and there seemed to be no end in sight. Nearly eleven months later, on the morning of July 1, 1863, the Ziegler brothers, and the rest of their comrades, marched into an 18-acre woodlot owned by a Pennsylvania farmer named John Herbst. These woods soon witnessed unimaginable carnage on a nearly unparalleled scale. The following excerpt of a letter written by Augustus on July 21, 1863 provides one of the most detailed accounts of the role played by the 24th Michigan during that bloody summer day, from their mid-morning arrival on McPherson’s Ridge, through the final chaotic withdrawal that afternoon to Cemetery Hill.

In Camp near Middleburg, Va, July 21, 1863

.....On the 1st Early in the morning while on the march, we saw in the distance small clouds of white smoke appear, we knew right off what the order of the day was.... Pretty soon we heard the cannon roar. On we pushed to the rescue of the advanced Cavalry.... Our Corps formed in the line of battle in double quick time. It was in forming a line of battle that we lost Our Brave and Gallant leader Gen. [John] Reynold[s.] Foremost in Battle always sharing our hardships with us. Always ready to rush to the rescue, when aid was needed, we lost one of the Bravest and most Gallant Officers in the Army. The only fault that could be found with him is that he was too rash, he exposed himself too much. Had he lived till night many a man that is now dead & wounded would be with us yet.... While on the road yet Gen. [O. O.] Howard galoped passed us to see what was up, we advanced...in line of Battle double quick, fixing our bayonets and loading our pieces as we went. On we went across corn and wheat fields, down a hollow where lay concealed quite a force of Barbarians. Most of them skedaddled at our approach. We took quite a number of prisoners, we jumped and waded across a small stream, and up the hill on the other side.... We faced about and retired in line of battle on to the safe side of the stream, it was in this advance that our Color Sergt. was killed.... Col. [Henry A.] Morrow[then mounted his horse]. The boys all called off to him to get off. He wouldnt do it...[saying] that it was...impossible for him...on foot to handle as large a regt as ours was.... The boys didnt care for that, they would save their Colonel, they told him at the same time raising their pieces that they would kill his horse under him if he didnt get off. They would rather shoot him themselves, and wound him slightly, than give the rebels the satisfaction of killing him. The rebels commenced shelling the woods quite lively. We lost only a few from those nasty rotten th[ings].... It seems to me one of the great wonders of the world that we didnt lose one half the regt from the grape that came in there to pay us their respects. You never saw any of them, but I tell you they aint the kind of grapes I like to eat. We lay there about an hour I would judge, when an order came. Co. A forward as skirmishers.... We then advanced to the front.... We were skirmishing about half an hour when we saw the rebs advance in four lines of battle with their mean treasonable howl, and colors flying. We retired on their advance double quick.... We hardly got formed on the right of the regiment before the fight commenced in earnest. Our men through the whole of it, stood up to it, as though they were statues, not a man flinching. I tell you it would have done you good to have seen the conduct of our regt and the marks they were making on the rebellion. Our small single line, held that heavily Massed Column in check for over an hour untill there line closed in on our left,...overlapping ours a mile on each flank. They were fast closing in on rear which compelled us to fall back, fighting the same as we went. [The color-bearer] was shot in the head who got the Colors after that I could [not] find out. Bill Kelly of Co. E I know...had them, he was shot through the heart. It was on the retreat that we lost so

fearfully. Major [E. B.] Wight was shot before we commenced to fall back. I wasnt more than twenty feet from him, when he dropped shot in the eye. I dont believe he had been on the field more than half an hour before he was numbered with the wounded.... It was after we got out of the woods into the wheat field that we lost the heaviest. The regt on our left the 19th [Indiana] was so overpowered that they wouldnt rally any more.... That wouldnt do for our brave Col., some of our men started to follow their example. The Col. caught the colors as they were dropping, he only knows how many times he had them before that, he was standing alone, no one nearer than 30 feet, he stood there waving them saying will you desert your Colors boys, rally to your flag. I thought on the instant you cant see your Col. shot, and started to take the colors. Just then he saw Co. D color corporal...and gave them to him.... [Near the] seminary the 3rd division threw piled up some rails hastily, as a protection for them, we made 3 or 4 good stands before we got to them. I saw Col. M. had the colors again, he called Capt. [Albert] Edwards to take them, while he got the regt behind the rails safe. The brave little Capt. [Malachi] O'Donnel & Lt. [Lucius] Shattuck were shot dead one each side of me. The Col. was shot while getting over the rails I was not more than ten paces from him at the time, he merely staggered, his bravery held him up. He didnt want to have his wound dressed. He wasnt going to leave the boys.... They took him off, that was no place for him. Captain Edwards then took command of the regt he also brought off the colors. It was a splendid sight to see how the canisterr mowed them down. You could see avenues cut right through the rebel column, the cool and deliberate fire from the Infantry behind the rails, and the compliments (double charges of cannister, cannons filled to the brim) from the short range, - Napolian Bool Dog's, cut through them four lines of battle up so that they couldnt form only one single, from the scattered fragments left. It was the flank that overpowered us. They were closing in around the City and would have taken us all prisoners if we hadnt retired. Coming through the City... there wasnt a house or a cellar that wasnt filled with men from the 11th Corps.... We had to come out of that town pretty lively. I thought to myself there goes another Bull Run..... We formed a line of battle on the crest of the hills...and for the first time since morning took time to sit down and eat a hard tack. You cant blame me for feeling downhearted. I was the only Sergt. that came out with the company, and no commish.... I thought I was the only one left, I looked around and couldnt see but five of the company with me, and the best boys gone into the bargain. Capt Edwards said to me Ziegler you take command of the Co. I told him I couldnt see the Co., I asked him where they were, he merely hung down and shook his head....

The 24th Michigan suffered the greatest number of casualties (363 out of 496) of any Union regiment at Gettysburg. Augustus's brother William was one of them. Originally listed as missing after the fighting of July 1, Williams' fate was unknown. Although he searched strenuously, in the end Augustus' efforts were fruitless. More than likely William had been killed and was one of the dead, as Augustus wrote, "left on the field stark naked" and unrecognizable after being exposed to the elements for over three days before receiving a crude battlefield grave.

Despite his loss, Augustus Ziegler soldiered on, eventually being promoted to lieutenant and acting regimental adjutant by the end of the war. He was wounded and briefly captured at the Wilderness in May 1864 and wounded again at Dabney's Mill in February 1865. Following the war, Augustus moved briefly to Nebraska Territory, but returned to Detroit in 1869 in anticipation of marrying his fiancée. He died unexpectedly, however, on January 2, 1870. The cause of death was listed as pneumonia, possibly the result of his impaired health brought on by his wartime service and imprisonment. He was 26 years old.

[Courtesy of his descendant, Don Osborn.]

Sources: 24th Michigan web site: <http://24th-michigan.org>

John Busey and David Martin, *Regimental Strengths and Losses at Gettysburg* (Hightstown, New Jersey: Longstreet House, 1986).

Sensing an opportunity to turn the right flank of the 1st Corps line on Oak Ridge, Rodes ordered an assault by three of his five brigades around 2:00 P.M. An Alabama soldier in Brig. Gen. Edward O'Neal's Brigade described the sights, sounds and fury of battle, along with the severity of the fighting that followed:

“DEAR MA—I know you are very anxious to hear from me since the battles. Well, I am still unhurt.... We ... met the enemy ... in a large open field. It was a very warm, sultry day.... It was grand sight to see the line advancing, with the Stars and Stripes and State banners floating over the green fields. Our General ... immediately gave the command, “forward.” The music struck up at once, but I tell you we had to fight hard — the 1st Corps is composed of Western men, and they will fight.... A great many men fainted that day from exhaustion, having been obliged to go into battle without water.... I was struck by a spent ball on the left arm; it just broke the skin and blacken my arm — another cut my head so close as to burn it and raises a lump.²¹³

Defending this area was Brig. Gen. Henry Baxter’s brigade, composed of Massachusetts, New York, and Pennsylvania regiments. Four days later Henry Clare, in the 83rd New York, described this struggle to a friend:

The portion of this ground allotted to the “bloody 9th”[83rd New York] to hold at all hazard, was in a corner of the wood fronting a deep ravine in which was concealed a brigade of the “Stonewall Troop” who charge our regiment with great fury. Every man stood his ground as though he was a statue, within thirty yards then delivering their murderous volley with perfect accuracy, which drove the “chivalry” with panic-stricken confusion. Similar charges were made all along the line but to no effect — the old First Corps could not be broken.²¹⁴

Rodes’ other two brigades were also repulsed. One of these was a North Carolina brigade under Brig. Gen. Alfred Iverson. Concealed by a low stone wall, Baxter’s men lay in wait as the poorly executed Confederate advance marched blindly forward. Waiting until they were within close range, the Union line delivered a withering fire that decimated the Southern ranks. John Coghill, in the 23rd North Carolina, survived the slaughter, which he described in two letters to home:

wee went to the horrible place of Gettysburg and ... formed a line of battle and soon the ball opened and our Brigade made the attacked wee charged an the yankes through a open field and the yankes behind a rock fence and it was the hardest fighting I ever saw.... then some of our men surrendered and the yankes rose up and captured very near all of them at the same timeour loss was awful[.] ... I could write a good deal more about that better [but] time will not admit of it and touns can not tell the horrors of that day....²¹⁵

George Cramer, 11th Pennsylvania, recounted the final moments of this action in a letter to his wife:

In front of our Regiment they advanced in four lines deep. But our men fought like Tigers and* never flinched. ... we fixed Bayonets and made a charge, at which time* a whole Regiment of Rebels surrendered. This scene rather affected me when I saw theym using white Henderchif & Towls for Flags on theyre Guns* for the Signal for surrender.²¹⁶

The next morning, Henry Robinson Berkeley, with the Amherst (Virginia) Artillery, vividly described the scene of Iverson’s repulse in his diary:

July 2. This morning on getting up, I saw a sight which was perfectly sickening and heart-rending in the extreme. It would have satiated the most blood-thirsty and cruel man on God's earth. There were, [with]in a few feet of us, by actual count, seventy-nine (79) North Carolinians laying dead in a straight line. I stood on their right and looked down their line. It was perfectly dressed. Three had fallen to the front, the rest had fallen backward; yet the feet of all these dead men were in a perfectly straight line. Great God! When will this horrid war stop? This regiment belonged to [Brig. Gen. Alfred] Iverson's Brigade, and had been pushed forward between two stone fences, behind which the Yankees were laying concealed. They had all evidently been killed by one volley of musketry and they had fallen in their tracks without a single struggle.²¹⁷

Although Rodes' initial thrust had been blunted, the general was able to rally his defeated brigades, bring up his reserves and within a short time renew his attack. By this time, what had begun as a mere skirmish west of Gettysburg had now grown into a substantial battle both west and northwest of the town. It would continue to escalate as more troops, both Union and Confederate, arrived throughout the morning and into the early afternoon. As these men approached the battlefield, it was obvious that they were nearing a serious fight. Several provided vivid descriptions of the sights and sounds of a distant battle and the effect on the troops moving towards it. Marching along the Chambersburg pike, west of Gettysburg, and just behind Heth's troops was Maj. Gen. Dorsey Pender's division. Dr. Spencer G. Welch, surgeon of the 13th South Carolina, recalled the reaction of the men around him:

Next morning [July 1] about 5 o'clock we began moving. We had not gone more than a mile and a half before ... [we heard] the booming of cannon ahead of us in the direction of Gettysburg. Upon looking around I at once noticed in the countenance of all an expression of intense seriousness and solemnity, which I have always perceived in the faces of men who are about to face death and the awful shock of battle.²¹⁸

Further to the west, and thus approaching Gettysburg later that day, were the troops of Maj. Gen. James Longstreet's 1st Corps. Traveling with these men was Lt. Col. Arthur Freemantle, the British military observer who vividly recorded in his diary the scenes that greeted them. Freemantle not only depicted the various elements that make up the "back wash of battle," but also the reaction of the Longstreet's soldiers, which differed slightly from Dr. Welch's earlier observations:

At 2 P.M. firing became distinctly audible in our front ... [and] increased as we progressed.... At 3 P.M. we began to meet wounded men coming to the rear, and the number of these soon increased most rapidly, some bobbling alone, others on stretchers carried by the ambulance corps, and others in the ambulance wagons. Many of the latter were stripped nearly naked, and displayed very bad wounds. This spectacle, so revolting to a person unaccustomed to such sights, produced no impression whatever upon the advancing troops, who certainly go under fire with the most perfect nonchalance. They show no enthusiasm or excitement, but the most complete indifference. This is the effect of two years' almost uninterrupted fighting.²¹⁹

By approximately 1:00 P.M. the battle had spread across the rolling fields and pastures north of the town. This resulted from the arrival of the Union 11th Corps, who provided much needed assistance to the beleaguered 1st Corps. Maj. Gen. Oliver Otis Howard, the 11th Corps

commander, had arrived ahead of his troops and upon learning of Reynolds' death suddenly found himself the senior officer on the field. In an attempt to counter Rodes' movement, Howard ordered two thirds of the 11th Corps to deploy north of Gettysburg.²²⁰

Thus after a long and grueling march just to reach the scene of action these men, instead of enjoying a short respite, found themselves moving quickly through the town. Justus Silliman, in the 17th Connecticut, described their passage through Gettysburg's streets on their way to the front, "The citizens lined the streets holding cups of water for the thirsty, but we had no time to stop but pushed through almost on the double quick and took position on the right of the town." In the same regiment William Warren recalled in his journal "the citizens stood in their doorways handing us eatables & water but we went through in such a hurry, we could [not] stop ... we were on business & we soon had all we wanted."²²¹

Immediately upon leaving the outskirts of Gettysburg these men found themselves subject to a killing artillery fire from Rodes' batteries on Oak Hill. The relatively flat plain north of Gettysburg provided very little cover for these Union troops, and thus some Northern regiments suffered severely as they patiently deployed and then waited for the Confederate assault, all the while under fire. Lt. Col. David Thomson, commanding the 82nd Ohio, vividly recalled the horrendous conditions they were forced to endure:

... I was command and selected an adjutant ... who was sitting with me at the head of our regiment when he was killed by a 12 lb. shot.... Several of our poor boys were torn to tatters, their blood and flesh scattered over their comrades. Yet these brave boys stood still and awaited for their turn patiently.... It was an awful battle.²²²

Lt. William Wheeler, commanding the 13th New York Battery, recalled the effects of one particular round, writing, "While waiting here I saw an infantry man's leg taken off by a shot, and whirled like a stone through the air, until it came against a caisson with a loud whack."²²³

As bad as this situation was, it quickly deteriorated further with the arrival of another Confederate force from the northeast. Maj. Gen. Jubal Early's division reached the field via the Harrisburg road around this same time. Halting beyond (or north) of Rock Creek, Early immediately ordered up his batteries as he began to assess the rapidly changing situation. One of Early's gunners was John Nelson Old, of the Charlottesville Artillery, who recounted their difficult approach march that day in an August 11 letter to his wife:

when we got order to March thare Double quick we ware about 7 Miles from the place all the Men ware ordered to mount on the guns and the horses ware put out in a Gallop the hole way thare when we got in Sight the Smoke ware rising like Mountains from the cannon[.]²²⁴

Within minutes these batteries opened fire on 11th Corps troops to their immediate front. The Southern batteries' principal targets were the Union artillery and infantry positioned on or near Blocher's Knoll, which anchored the right flank of the 11th Corps line. These Union troops, still attempting to recover from their trying march, were immediately thrown into the battle. One of these regiments was the 17th Connecticut, commanded by Lt. Col. Douglass Fowler. James Montgomery Bailey, a soldier-correspondent for the *Danbury Times*, remembered:

I was ... so exhausted I could hardly move ... when we were ordered to advance, and the next moment ... crossed the road and double quicked through the wheat under a galling fire from a Secesh battery, posted beyond the right.... At the close of this ... move Colonel Fowler bid us rest all we could, for we would need

all our strength, adding with a laugh, "Beware of the big ones, boys, the little ones will take care of themselves," referring to the shell flying over us, and the forthcoming bullets. The rebel battery on our right plied its calling industriously....²²⁵

"While laying on the ground, flat on our stomachs, to avoid all we could the enemys fire," recalled William Warren, also of the 17th, "a solid shot I think it was, struck about 10 ft in fro[nt] of us, digging a hole in the ground, throwing the dirt all around, then bounded over the regt burying itself in the ground in the next lot." Early's batteries, combined with the Southern artillery on Oak Hill, put these 11th Corps troops under a deadly cross-fire. Lt. Alfred Lee, 82nd Ohio, recalled these horrific moments in a letter written months later:

The shells and shot howled, shrieked and plunged through the air like infuriated demons. There was no shelter, not even a stump or tree. Now a huge iron nugget plowed its way through the living mass, leaving in its track eight poor fellows torn and bleeding. The deadly "thug," and a submissive groan or two is all that is heard. Again and again the jagged fragments of iron sweep destructively through the ranks, but there is no wavering....²²⁶

Early's division reached the field just as Rodes' first assault against the Union 1st Corps along Oak Ridge was repulsed. Even still, his arrival was fortuitous as it placed Early directly on the right flank of the entire Union line. Sensing this opportunity, while at the same time attempting to relieve the pressure on Rodes, Early ordered an immediate advance. Leading this attack was Brig. Gen. John B. Gordon's Georgia Brigade. In a letter to his wife written six days later Gordon described this action with obvious pride:

Early's Div came up about the middle of the day & found Hill & Rodes almost overwhelmed. I was ordered forward immediately with my Brig -- We charged the heavy lines of the Enemy & had a desperate fight. I consider the action of the Brigade as brilliant as any charge of the war — and it is so regarded by the officers of the army -- I lost about 350 men; but we killed & wounded I think ... twelve or fifteen hundred yankees -- You cant concieve of the destruction in their ranks -- It was surpassed anything I have seen during the war -- We captured a great many prisoners also & routed the Enemy in our front -- We drove them before us in perfect confusion....²²⁷

From Gordon's perspective this account was the truth and it, along with other versions of similar nature, has lead to the common belief that the 11th Corps put up very little resistance before essentially collapsing, en masse, in the face of this Southern attack. Correspondence from these Union soldiers, however, makes it clear that while some regiments broke early, others fought stubbornly. Many, attempting to redeem their blemished reputation, fought bitterly despite the heavy odds. "We were overpowered by numbers," wrote Sgt. Alphonso Davis of the 75th Ohio. "Since the battle of Chancellorsville a great many of our boys has sworn never to run again, and the consequence was that nearly all that were not killed or wounded were taken prisoners."²²⁸

When the front line began to falter, the few reserves available were ordered to advance as a support. This included the 17th Connecticut. Soldier-correspondent James Bailey described this chaotic action:

The crack of rifles in the woods brought us to our feet. Another rattle followed, and then a continual roar.... It was then that the first Brigade gave way, and

simultaneous with the order to deploy and charge, the Germans struck us. All was confusion immediately.... The Dutch fumed, crowded, and swore, and our boys, determined to follow the brave [Lt. Col. Douglass] Fowler, yelled defiantly, and forced their way through.... The fire had now grown terrific on both sides, but the decidedly superior advantage of the enemy, both in numbers and position, told heavy on us. Although a man is not apt to notice what occurs about him in the midst of leaden hail, yet I could not help but be aware that a fearful avalanche of death was sweeping through my Regiment. It was one continual *hiss* about my ears, and the boys dropped in rapid succession on both sides of me.... The enemy continued to move slowly up, firing rapidly. The din had reached the standard of a hell, and then the order to retreat was given. Colonel Fowler shouted the command to us, and the next instant he reeled from the saddle, his brains striking the Adjutant, who was by his side. The 17th fell slowly back from that fatal ridge, with the victorious but desperately contested enemy within but a few feet of us....²²⁹

Backing up Bailey's description was the testimony of Jacob Zorn, a 1st Corps soldier who was captured on July 1 and recorded in his diary the sights he encountered that same evening north of town:

Wed. July 1 ... our Dead and wounded were Scattered over the field where the Eleventh Corps fought. they must have fought manfully as I was taken back over that part of the battle field there was no question as to their having offered Stern resistance to the overwhelming forces that were thrown against him.²³⁰

At first the Union officers were able to stem the retreat and hold their lines intact. In the end, however, these efforts were in vain, as Pvt. Bailey conveyed in his same account:

While the battle was raging so hotly ... the officers of the 1st Brigade were endeavoring to rally and form their panic stricken crowd in our rear. By dint of sword, revolver and a moderate dose of Teutonic brimstone, they succeeded in keeping them all together.... But a sight of the gray Sardines as they emerged... in addition to a heavy volley, operated similar to an emetic, and they threw themselves away in a decidedly loose manner. Affairs took a Chancellorsville hue at this period, every man for himself.²³¹

The withdrawal quickly became disorganized as the majority of the 11th Corps regiments lost their cohesion. William H. Warren, also of the 17th Connecticut, left a vivid account of these moments, writing in his journal:

The whole regt was then falling back & how many more regt I do not know.... the regt or corps commenced to run ... so of course I followed. We had not gone but a little ways before I saw Rufus Warren ... fall & ... throwed up his hands hollowing, O Dear, Help Me, Help Me, but how could I help him[?] We were all on the move to the rear, with the rebs close to our heels.... Bullets were coming in a shower & there I was running over a large open lot with nothing to shield me ... so I was in the greatest danger possible. ... I went only a little ways father when I was hit in the right shoulder blade ... [by] a piece of spent shell which almost knocked me over.... While crossing the field, everything before me looked white.²³²

As the 11th Corps struggled valiantly, but ultimately in vain, north of Gettysburg, the remainder of the Union line, both west and northwest of the town, also came under attack. By this point Robert E. Lee had arrived on the field, and he was immediately confronted by an alarming lack of vital information concerning the situation before him. He had no idea of the strength of the Union forces at Gettysburg. Nor did he know the proximity of the remainder of the Army of the Potomac to Gettysburg. Despite this, Lee felt that a significant victory was possible, if he could somehow coordinate the assaults of his converging units. To these ends, Lee attempted to bring overwhelming pressure against the entire Union line by ordering the divisions of Heth and Rodes to advance, at the same time Early's division struck from the north.²³³

Watching this renewed Southern attack from the west was Col. Charles Wainwright, commanding the 1st Corps artillery. As the colonel looked on, two Confederate divisions, first Heth's who was followed by Maj. Gen. Dorsey Pender's in support, boldly deployed along Herr Ridge in preparation for their advance. Wainwright's journal entry conveyed the sense of dismay that must have permeated the men of the 1st Corps as they watched this impressive display:

... a long column of rebels came out of the wood a mile or so in our front, and off to our left. This was soon joined by another column, which when they faced into line formed a second line.... They marched quietly and with confidence, but swiftly. I watched them ... and am confident that when they advanced they outflanked us at least by half a mile to our left. So soon as they were within easy range I opened on them.... The rebel lines advanced rapidly. There was not the shadow of a chance of our holding this ridge....²³⁴

The Confederate troops, unimpeded by the fire of Wainwright's guns, continued their steady advance until they splashed across Willoughby Run and then struck the 1st Corps's battle line. Some of the most famous and sharply contested fighting of the entire battle took place in Herbst's Woods, the scene of John Reynolds death earlier that day. Initially this struggle pitted the Iron Brigade against the attacking columns of Brig. Gen. J. J. Pettigrew's North Carolina Brigade. Lt. W. B. Taylor, of the 11th North Carolina, attested to the fierceness of this clash when he wrote to his mother:

... you ought to have seen our brigade when it charged[.] ... it was at an awful cost but we paid it to them two fold[.] the Iron Brigade Yankeys tried to stand but it was know use[.] we stood within 20 yards of each other for about 15 moments but they had to give way and when they [did] we just mowed them down[.]²³⁵

While Taylor's account conveyed the irresistible determination exhibited by these Union and Confederate soldiers, and the excessively heavy casualties that resulted, his description of eventual success of Pettigrew's brigade leaves the mistaken impression that the fight for John Herbst's woods was rather short. Facing this onslaught was Cornelius Wheeler, of the 2nd Wisconsin, who recounted not only the nearly unshakeable fortitude exhibited by himself and that of his comrades, but also the slow withdrawal they conducted in the face of overpowering odds:

... we ... formed a line on the brow of a hill in the woods & then awaited the approach of the Rebs. We lay there ... skirmishing being kept up lively in our front all the while when the Rebs came upon us.... They pressed upon us with three lines of battle and we being unsupported were forced to fall back which we did in as good style as was possible under the circumstances, fighting and contesting every foot of ground as we went.... the old "Iron Brig" stood up [to] its work as its [losses] will testify. The ground was literally covered with dead &

wounded.²³⁶

Decimated, the remnants of the Iron Brigade eventually fell back to Seminary Ridge for a final stand. During this same time the left of the 1st Corps line, positioned in the open along the southern extension of McPherson's Ridge, also came under assault. These Union soldiers were not only outnumbered, but also soon outflanked to their left by the longer Confederate line. Nonetheless, they stood their ground against Heth's initial advance. Capt. J.F. Sterling, 121st Pennsylvania, provided a riveting account of this action, in which he received a gunshot wound in his thigh, in a letter written to his father the next day:

Although the Infantry fire was sever at Fredericksburg yet that of yesterday far exceeded it. Whole regiments were mowed down at single vollies as the fight was in an open field and the two armies within one hundred and fifty yards of each other. At one time it appeared to me the majority of our regiment was on the ground. I feel thankful to God I got off so well[.] The way the bullets and pieces of shells whistled past me digging up the earth on all sides was not I can assure you particularly healthy. It was indeed a beautifull sight to see the rebels advancing from the woods in line of battle with their battle flags flying as they marched steadily on until they were within the range of Musquetry firing when our men opened upon them causing those in front to come to a halt and return the fire. As the reble line about a half mile in length and exceeded greatly that of ours they advanced on our flanks as we were only able to keep in check those in front. When they had advanced to a position opposite to our flanks, they immediately wheeled and poured their fire into us. If we had remained for minutes longer in our position I dont believe there would have been a single man of our regiment unwounded. It was at this time while I was trying to get the men to rally around the collors that I received my [injury]. ... the remainder of the regiment had fallen back in accordance with orders so to do.²³⁷

An obstinate struggle also occurred north of Herbst's woodlot, around the Edward McPherson buildings and along the Chambersburg pike. This area was defended Brig. Gen. Roy Stone's brigade of Pennsylvanians. Under attack from both west and north, the scene was one of nearly total chaos. "We were first attacted on our right and we drive the enemy back with a glalling fire," wrote William Perry, 150th Pennsylvania, to his friends the next day:

Here our Major was wounded; and just before our Brigadier General (General Stone) was wounded our Colonel called to take his place. We were then attacted in front, and the enemy fared the same fate as before. About this time our Colone[l] was wounded and taken prisoner. But the work was not ended yet: a strong force attacted ... and with a murderous fire drove us back.... Our Flag bearer was Shot in the head as we were falling back and fell dead. I was Right at his side as he fell; for that was near my place. There was six or eight fell at my side during the engagement. Lieutenant Perkins of company B was wounded just back of me as he was urging and cheering on his men....²³⁸

Col. John Musser, commanding the 143rd Pennsylvania, recalled months later the horrific nature of this fight, writing:

... the advancing Rebels ... were now seen coming in force on the right of the road, briskly looding and firing as they came. The [Confederate] Battery was thundering shell and shot among us, some bursting over our heads others among

the trees cutting them off then as if not satisfied, bursting and scattering the pieces in every direction killing and wounding as they went. Others came ploughing through under our feet lifting men up in the air... Still the 143 stood up to the work in hand, rapidly loading and firing. The enemy halted; a few volleys, and they turned and fled. We charged after them a short distance, keeping up a continual fire....²³⁹

The situation began to quickly deteriorate as Musser remembered:

It was apparent to all now that we were out numbered at least two to one ... our lines on the right and left had been driven in, and we had no choice but fall back or be surrounded. I reluctantly gave the order, which was as reluctantly executed.... Nothing now remained but to follow after as rapidly as possible. I saw all of them followed, we could only give a parting glance of sympathy to the wounded, and cast a sad look, as we left, upon the dead heroes who lay thick around us.²⁴⁰

Overpowered and outflanked, the Union defenders of McPherson Ridge fell back for a final stand on Seminary Ridge. Nearly simultaneously, the 1st Corps soldiers defending Oak Ridge were struck by Rodes' second assault. In a letter to his wife, written ten days later, George Cramer, of the 11th Pennsylvania, conveyed the severity of this combat:

[On] the 1st day fight at Gettysburg ... I surly had the protection of the Almighty.... I was not alltogether ... untouched but not wounded wich only makes me more thankfull to God. For a Shell exploded in front of us. A piece of it struck a rock in front of me, glanced off and struck me in the right arm above the Elbow merely bruising the arm for it had lost it[s] power. Had it not lost its power before it struck me, there would have no knife been required [to remove my arm].²⁴¹

These Union soldiers were well aware of their situation and that they were being asked to hold the ground as long as possible, against heavy odds, in order to buy time and save the high ground south of Gettysburg. "The style of fighting continued for several hours when the enemy reinforcements were known to be coming and ours not yet having made their appearance," wrote Henry Clare of the 83rd New York in a letter to a friend. Sensing the end was near, Clare continued:

... the commanding general deemed it expedient to retire to a stronger position to await the arrival of our entire army which was marching on three different roads to our support. This was accomplished ... though the enemy followed closely administering shot and shell in great profusion. Here we lost many of our men.²⁴²

It was the arrival and deployment of Brig. Gen. Stephen Ramseur's North Carolina Brigade, the last of Rodes' division to reach the field, that turned the tide in the Confederates' favor. Lt. William Calder, 2nd North Carolina, recounted this in a letter to his mother on July 8:

We had proceeded but four miles when the distant boom of cannon announced the proximity of the scene of battle. ... the troops hurried forward. We reached the field ... and advanced immediately on the enemy.... The gallant and skillful Ramseur ... by a brilliant flank movement drove the enemy from their position. The battle was fought mostly in an open field and then when we appeared on

their flank the dark mass of the enemy could be plainly seen to waver, break and finally fly headlong toward the town. On we rushed after them pouring a deadly hail of balls into their confused columns.... We captured one of their colors but lost our gallant commander Lt. Harney of the 14th who fell mortally wounded....²⁴³

As the Oak Ridge and the 11th Corps lines collapsed, the final Confederate assault west of town smashed into the Union troops on Seminary Ridge. This attack was conducted by Maj. Gen. Dorsey Pender's fresh division, which had relieved Heth's division, bloodied and fought out from its fierce struggle for McPherson's Ridge. Sweeping over the open ground between the ridges, Pender's men were met by a wall of artillery and small-arms fire delivered by the battered 1st Corps. Watching at a distance to the rear, Dr. Spencer G. Welch, 13th South Carolina, provided not only an excellent account of the Union resistance, but also how Pender's troops eventually overcame it:

After Heth had driven the enemy some distance it became necessary for our division to go to his support. [Col. Abner Perrin's] South Carolina and [Brig. Gen. A. M.] Scales North Carolina Brigades were the first to relieve Heth.... Then such a rattle of musketry I never heard surpassed ... and how many brave fellows went down in death in this short period of time! Officers who have been in all the fights tell me that they never saw our brigade act so gallantly before. When the order was given to charge upon the enemy, who were laying behind some stone fences and other places of concealment, our men rushed forward with a perfect fury, yelling and driving them, though with great slaughter to themselves as well as to the Yankees.... As the enemy were concealed they killed a great many of our men before we could get at them.²⁴⁴

Capt. Washington Shooter, 1st South Carolina of Perrin's brigade, had a much better view, being at the front during this assault. Shooter's account, in a letter to a friend, provides a glimpse of the nature of Civil War combat:

We were deployed in line of battle. [Heth's] Division forming the 1st line and our division the second.... We then advanced. Pettigrew's Brigade in our front. The front line advanced about 3 hundred yards and fire and smoke and dust and noise and confusion and disorder of battle had begun. [Heth's] Division drove the enemy about half a mile. ... our Division was [then] ordered ... forward.... Our line passed over [Heth's].... The [ground] was clear and open, a succession of wheat and clover fields with any number of fences. ... we ascended a hill where we saw their batteries and their last line of entrenchments – a stone wall. When we rose the hill their batteries opened with shells in earnest and made wide gaps in our ranks. We passed over the hill into the bottom and before the ascent of the second hill when their batteries opened ... at easy range. Scales Brigade faltered then stopped.... Our Brigade halted for a moment. The old 1st sprang forward with a yell — the 12th and 13th moved rapidly forward. Our regiment cleared its front then wheeled to the left and poured a flank [fire] into the enemy. They left the woods and we followed them running them through town. ... Now for our company — it behaved well as usual. Poor Charlie Reeves was killed just after we passed the bottom and were making a dash at the enemy's works. He was hit just above the right hip and died almost instantly. A better braver boy never died on the field. The regiment as I have mentioned waived for a

moment. Albert Owens and Larkin pushed forward, waved their colors and called to the Regiment to “Come on.” Larkin was shot down. Albert picked up his flag and with both colors moved on. He was directly shot down. the ball passing through his right thigh breaking the bone. I fear his wound is mortal. The Surgeon would not amputate. He behaved gloriously. Angus Lewis got flesh wound in thigh. Pink J. Roberts a middle finger shot off. Edwards hit in the heel. H. Barfield flesh wound in leg ... and Hodges, who was not hurt but frightened to death and has not yet recovered.²⁴⁵

Although he was primarily recording the actions of his 1st Corps batteries, the fastidious Col. Wainwright displayed admiration of this Southern attack:

... the rebs were coming steadily on down the ridge in front only some five hundred yards off, and all the guns were blazing away at them as lively as possible...Lieutenant Davison hand thrown his half of Battery “B” [1st Pennsylvania Artillery] around so as to get an oblique, almost enfilading fire on the rebel lines. His round shot, together with the canister poured in from all the other guns, was cutting great gaps in the front line of the enemy. But still they came on, the gaps being closed by regiments from the second line, and again filled up by a third column which was coming over the hill. Never have I seen such a charge. Not a man seemed to falter. Lee may well be proud of his infantry....²⁴⁶

With the final collapse of this Union line on Seminary Ridge, the entire Northern defense beyond the town disintegrated. At this point the 1st and 11th corps survivors scrambled back toward the town in an attempt to reach the safety of Cemetery Hill beyond. Not surprisingly, chaos resulted as these disorganized regiments and batteries were funneled by the roads into the same narrow streets of Gettysburg. Lt. W. B. Judd, who fought along Oak Ridge in the 97th New York, described his harrowing escape that afternoon:

... the order was given to fall back.... We found that ... our only escape was to follow the [unfinished] Railroad into town. Our regiment was the last to leave and the last into town. Col Spofford, Capt Eggleston and myself were at the rear of the column, and when we were out of the wood on the Railroad, the rebels were twenty rods nearer the town then we were. ... I beg leave to state that it was running the gauntlet in the strict sense of the word. The bullets were flying from each side in a perfect shower. The air seemed so filled that it seemed almost impossible to breathe without inhaling them. Some one fell beside me almost every step. It was here that Sgt Fred Munson fell mortally wounded, and Lieut James Stiles was killed. The Inspector General of General Baxter’s Staff had his head shot entirely off by a cannon shot just as we entered town.²⁴⁷

Even after reaching the “safety” of town, these Union soldiers realized quickly that their ordeal was far from over. “Men and officers of a dozen different commands were flocking up the street, shrieking out names of regiments, commanding and countermanding,” wrote soldier-correspondent James Montgomery Bailey, 17th Connecticut: “Frightened horses, swearing drivers, ambitious patriots, crazy citizens and the deuce only knows what, a conglomeration of all that was devilish, Babelish, and skittish.” On the very heels of this retreating mass were the victorious Confederates, pushing hard to complete their success. Capt. John C. Gorman, 2nd North Carolina, wrote:

... hither they fled 20 deep, we all the while popping it to them as fast we could load and fire, and into town we rushed pell-mell after them, our brigade in the advance. I was with my company in the skirmish line, in front, and when the Yankees got into town, they hid by hundreds in houses and barns, and I had the felicity of capturing any number. I got three swords and two pistols from officers who surrendered to me. — We captured 7,600 prisoners during the fight, while the enemy left the fields covered with the dead and wounded.²⁴⁸

One of these unfortunate Northerners was Jacob Zorn, 142nd Pennsylvania, wrote of his capture in his diary:

Wed. July 1 ... unfortunately for us the Rebels come in on our left flank which forced our line back. back back until at last the Whole Column broke to the Rear in confusion many going right for the City. and the Eleventh Corps retreating through the Streets caused the Streets to be Jamed full of Retreating Soldiers and Artillery and as soon as the Rebels got their Artillery in position they threw Greap and canister through the Streets Just Raking them from one end to the other the men broke out in evry direction through houses and any thing that come in the way. C. P. HFFFLEY & I Scurried up Main St to the upper end of town where we were cut off and had to Surrender and taken down the Street and to the Rebels Rear as prisoners of war. where we found many traveling the Same direction who were captured. Oh the Idea as to where the Disaster of today will end, we know not how far our army will be Driven its heart rending to think of it.²⁴⁹

While approximately 3,600 Union soldiers were captured during this hellish retreat, the 1st and 11th corps survivors found haven as they reached Cemetery Hill, directly south of the town. One of these was Lt. Jacob F. Slagle, an aide on Gen. Abner Doubleday's staff. Although written fourteen and a half months later, Slagle's recollection of these events was amazingly detailed:

... I then followed the crowd, and went up to the cemetery. — When we got there, it was a pitiable sight; the tired, worn out remnants of our fine regiments, who had gone so proudly into the field in the morning, were collecting together, and when all was told, -- what a miserable sight. One regiment was a sample of all the rest, they went in with companies having from thirty-five to fifty-five men and not one had more than a dozen men and only five officers to the whole regiment. We got to the cemetary between four and five o'clock and were buy getting the men together and taking new positions. There was a battery just at the top of the hill in the cemetery and we rallied around that.... We were of course very tired. We had marched and fought all day, the hardest fought battle of the war. — I know there has never been more desperate fighting for it is acknowledged by the rebs themselves and the reports show it. Our division went into the fight with 2600 men and the reports showed a loss of killed and wounded, and missing 1787 and the other division fared about as badly. We had nothing to eat that day. About dark I ate some pieces of cracker and went to sleep on the ground.²⁵⁰

Although defeated, these Union soldiers still retained their fighting spirit, which they quickly presented to the advancing Confederates. Lt. J. Warren Jackson, on Brig. Gen. Harry Hays' staff, attested to this, writing:

We formed line of battle in town & Co. I had to go out as skirmishers – the enemy were posted on Cemetery Hill ... & had command of every place near town or around it – our position was a poor one and as we deployed we were subjected to a galling fire from their sharpshooters. Nobody hurt and we soon laid low in the grass but their position was such a good one that they could see us and they kept up their firing and I spent about 2 hours as miserably as I ever did in my life ... we lay out there all night.²⁵¹

This rapid Union response resulted from the work of Maj. Gen. O. O. Howard and Maj. Gen. Winfield Hancock. Hancock, the 2nd Corps commander, had been sent to Gettysburg by General Meade to take command of all of the Union forces there and assess the overall situation. He arrived during the Union withdrawal, and then worked with Howard to rally their defeated forces and establish a new line south of the town. Col. Wainwright recalled his first moments upon reaching Cemetery Hill:

I reached the top of the hill almost as soon as my first battery. Here I found General Howard, who expressed pleasure at seeing me, and desired me to take charge of all of the artillery, and make the best disposition I could of it.... The General pointed out to me how he should form the two corps; stating that this spot must be held until the rest of the army came up.... On the ridge General Howard had placed ... [a] division and three of his batteries.... Four of [Lt. James] Stewart's guns I planted to fire directly down the road [Baltimore Pike]....²⁵²

After placing his remaining batteries on the north and east slopes of the hill, Wainwright felt that he “could give [the Confederates] a hot reception” and hold the hill. Although he also wrote, “I felt quite comfortable,” Wainwright was still concerned, stating, “We still had near an hour of daylight, and the moon was near its full, so that there was a good chance for the enemy to attack if they felt like it.”²⁵³

Fully aware of this, and flushed by another success, the confidence of the Confederate troops occupying Gettysburg rose sharply and they fully expected to receive orders to continue the attack. Those orders never came and the remaining hours of daylight slipped away. This was one of the most critical moments of the entire battle, and even today is one of the most controversial and hotly debated topics concerning Gettysburg. More than 140 years later the modern student of the battle has the great advantage of hindsight. We have the luxury of decades of research and analysis and can study events such as this one from many different angles. All of this leads to one of the most oft-asked questions, “Why didn't the Confederates follow up their victory by attacking Cemetery Hill?” Many of the Confederate soldiers who fought that very day wondered the same thing. Most felt as did Lt. William Calder, 2nd North Carolina, who explained:

The enemy fled to a commanding hill that overlooked the town and all the surrounding country and these rallied and formed their shattered ranks. Our troops were formed in line of battle along the edge of town with the capture of which the battle seemed to have ended. It was here that the great mistake was made which lost us all the advantage we had gained.... Our generals should have advanced immediately on that hill. It could have been taken then with comparatively little loss....²⁵⁴

Capt. John C. Gorman, in the same regiment was even more adamant, writing:

The enemy had fled south of the town, and had taken position on the ridge that caused us all our after loss. Instead of following the enemy up, and continuing the fight ... the pursuit was carried no farther than the base of the enemy's new position, when our line were halted for the day, and new lines of battle were formed.... *That delay was fatal to us....* It is the opinion of many that we lost the golden opportunity in not keeping up the attack that evening, and I concur in that opinion. The ... [enemy's] reinforcement had not come up; they had been badly whipped and demoralized, and it is believed that we could have taken their position that evening with the loss of less than 500.²⁵⁵

More importantly to Captain Gorman, Lieutenant Calder, and many others, was the price the men of the Army of Northern Virginia would pay for this lapse in opportunity. Calder felt this mistake later "caused the subsequent death of so many gallant men." A follow-up attack, the lieutenant went on to write, "would have deprived the enemy of that immense advantage of position which was afterward the cause of all his success. Instead of making that advance we remained inactive all that day and night allowing the enemy time to reinforce and night closed in quietly and we slept on our arms...." Captain Gorman recalled that "all night long the busy axes from tens of thousands of busy hands on that crest, rang out clearly on the night air, and bespoke the preparation's the enemy were making for the morrow...." When "the sun of the 2d of July rose," the North Carolina captain later wrote, the "embrazured eminences and frowning cannon arose from [Cemetery Hill], as if by magic, in our front." Nearly two months after the battle Capt. James I. Harris, 30th North Carolina, expressed his opinion to a friend and fellow officer:

Alas! alas that our Generals should have ever decided on attempting to wrest that stronghold from them [on July 2nd and 3rd]. Before that hill thousands of the bravest youths that our Confederacy had to boast of. They were glorious boys, but now "They sleep, the sleep of death and hear of wars no more."²⁵⁶

Many of these Southern soldiers were not only upset by the seemingly unnecessary deaths of their comrades, but also the lost chance to achieve the monumental victory that they had envisioned and expected. Adj. Isaac Seymour, on Brig. Gen. Harry Hays' staff, expressed his opinion in his journal, "July 1st. ... Had it not been for the delay ... 'Cemetery Hill' would undoubtedly have been assaulted and taken, and the great battle of Gettysburg never been fought." Captain Gorman was even more out-spoken, speculating that:

Had we taken [Cemetery Hill] that evening it is hardly possible to say, how great our victory would have been. Washington would have been evacuated, Baltimore would have been free, Maryland unfettered, the enemy discomfitted, and our victorious banner flaunting defiantly, before the panic-stricken North.²⁵⁷

One of the most popular "What if?" questions of the battle resulted from this famous incident. "What if 'Stonewall' Jackson had been at Gettysburg?" Somewhat surprisingly, many of the writings created by Confederates within *days* of the event expressed the same sentiment. Adjutant Seymour's account is probably the most eloquent, as he wrote in his journal:

Here we all felt the loss of Gen Jackson most sensibly; had he been alive and in command when we charged through the town, I am sure that he would have give us usual order under like circumstance, "push on the infantry" --- and time would not have been afforded the enemy to make their position impregnable. On this occasion I heard many officers and men exclaim, "would that Jackson were

here.”²⁵⁸

There were also opinions expressed as to who was to blame for this grievous error. The most common was the man who took over most of Jackson’s 2nd Corps, Lt. Gen. Richard Ewell. “There we missed the genius of Jackson,” wrote Captain Gorman. “The simplest soldier in the ranks felt it, and results have proven it. But, timidity in the commander that stepped into the shoes of the fearless Jackson, prompted delay....” Less than three weeks before, after his victory at Winchester, Ewell was being praised by these same troops as an equal successor to Jackson. Thus is the fickle nature of rank-and-file of any army throughout history.²⁵⁹

In the end, the Army of the Potomac had achieved its main objective that day. It had saved the high ground south of Gettysburg and had gained the precious time needed to fully concentrate its scattered forces. The cost of this success, however, was extremely high. Writing to his fiancée on July 4, his 25th birthday, Lt. Col. Rufus Dawes remarked “What a solemn birthday I have had....” He continued on July 6:

The experiences of the past few days seem more like a fearful, horrible dream than reality. May God save me and my men from any more such trials. Our bravest and best are cold in the ground or suffering on beds of anguish. I could tell you a thousand stories of their heroism. One young man, Corporal James Kelly ... was shot through the breast came tottering up to me before he fell and opening his shirt to show me the wound, said “Colonel wont you write to my folks that I died a soldier.”²⁶⁰

Indeed, the losses suffered by the opposing elements of each army that were engaged on July 1 were extremely heavy. The best estimates available place the total casualties of the first day of the battle at approximately 15,500.²⁶¹ Although overshadowed by the more famous fighting that occurred the next two days, July 1, 1863 ranks as one of the bloodiest days of the entire American Civil War.²⁶² As staggering as that statement is, the truth of the enormity of bloodshed produced by this one day of fighting is nearly overwhelming when one remembers that behind every one of those numbers was an individual, now a victim of the war. Further escalating this tragedy were the soldiers’ families: their wives, children, mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, and countless others who became the unseen victims of Gettysburg. The news of this fighting, conveyed by the soldiers’ letters and newspapers, carried the sad tidings of the battle throughout the land, North and South, making the resultant suffering nearly unimaginable.

The writings of these soldiers, however, clearly reveal that they understood the widespread affliction that would soon grip the nation. George Cramer, of the 11th Pennsylvania Volunteers, expressed sympathy for the families of such men, writing, “It is certainly hard to die away from home.... But, still I think it is equally as hard for those at home, for a father, a mother, an affectionate wife or Sister, yes, more to hear of the death of a beloved one.” Another survivor of July 1, William Calder, 2nd North Carolina, touched on this idea when he wrote to his mother on July 8:

... No doubt the news of the great ... battle of Gettysburg has resounded throughout the land and filled many a heart with mourning. How many widows and orphans were made by that battle God only knows. It was without doubt the bloodiest and most terrific battle of the war....²⁶³

They also spoke of personal grief, brought on by the loss of close friends and comrades. One of the greatest impacts of the battle, and the most obvious to the soldiers, was the overwhelming losses their individual units had suffered. Outside of their families, the strongest bonds that most of these men had ever formed were with their fellow soldiers in the regiments and batteries in which

they served. The common practice in the Civil War of forming a company that contained men all from the same community, meant that these soldiers knew each other very well before the war. Two years of war and all its hardships, including the risk of death, had made loyalty and friendship with their comrades an extremely important part of their existence.

Because of this, many of the letters immediately following the battle are filled with names of comrades and friends, men who were well known to their families and others in their town, listing the fate of these men. James L. Clark, of the 149th Pennsylvania, wrote a letter to a friend on July 9 that contained just such a list:

I am well and I think my Self quite lucky that I am yet a live, while the grater part of my companey fell by my side on the Bloody field at Gettysburg. ... I will give as near as I can an account of the Boys [who] are lost from that place.... Joseph berk ... Jacob Lion [and] Wm. Lewis are missing[.] We do not know but they mite of bin takeing prisonor yet we think they are wounded or kiled. Wm. Flemming was kiled dead with a Shell and Ellis Lewis was kiled while on our retreat.... Moris farley was wounded ... our compiney went in with 47 men and but 7 came out[.] Some was taking prisnor but the grater part killed and wounded[.] There was a Shell burned in our Co. it kiled 8 dead and wounded 8 more. 2 of them mortaley. We hav had a hard through of it[.]²⁶⁴

Charles Barber, from Java, New York, wrote to his wife and children on July 8 and detailed the fate of some of his fellow comrades in the 104th New York:

We know of over half our company being killed or wounded beside eight or nine that we have not heard from that we expect are prisoners.... All of our regiment color guards were killed or wounded. Every field officer of our regiment was wounded or taken except the Colonel and Major.... Our Java boys were very lucky. Edgar got his fore finger shot off George Thomas was struck on the thigh by a piece of spent shell doing him but little harm. A cannon ball struck a tree just over my head and a sliver struck my hand.²⁶⁵

Making this worse is the fact that the casualties among some of the regiments engaged on July 1 were uncommonly high. This was especially true for the 1st Corps regiments in the Army of the Potomac. Amazingly, more than 75 percent of these regiments suffered losses of 50 percent or greater. Six suffered more than 70 percent casualties. The 11th Corps experienced only slightly less, with nearly 50 percent of its regiments losing half or more of their men. Several Southern regiments also suffered severely, such as the 26th North Carolina (nearly 75 percent) and most of Iverson's brigade (approximately 65 percent).²⁶⁶ The casualties sustained during this fighting, therefore, must have shocked the men tremendously. This was especially true for the officers, who felt somewhat responsible for the welfare of their men. Lieutenant Colonel Dawes captured both the anguish and pride that he felt for his regiment, the 6th Wisconsin, which had lost nearly half of its men:

Oh Mary its awful to look now at my shattered band of devoted men.... This had been the most terrible ordeal of all. My loss is 30 killed outright, 116 wounded ... and 23 missing, all out of 340 men in the fight.... The experiences of the past few days seem more like a fearful, horrible dream than reality.... Our bravest and best are cold in the ground or suffering on beds of anguish.²⁶⁷

The survivors of Col. John Musser's 143rd Pennsylvania, after suffering nearly 55 percent casualties in its first battle, gathered on Cemetery Hill in the growing twilight of July 1. It was at this moment that Musser clearly understood the disaster that had befallen his regiment. Months

later, the colonel described the mixed emotions felt by the survivors:

We sat down to rest, but could not sit still. Officers and men shook hands in silence great tear drops standing in their undaunted eyes, as they thought of the dead and wounded left in the hands of the cursed Rebels. We were afraid to ask each other where the rest of our regt. were, we knew most of them were either killed or wounded. If I had been called upon to point out any deserving of promotion or gallantry, I would have pointed to them all. All are worthy of the highest praise.²⁶⁸

For some units which had marched off to war 1,000 strong in 1861, two years of fighting and its inherent hardships, combined with their Gettysburg casualties, reduced their ranks to a mere shadow of their former strength. A month after the battle Charles Barber discussed the effects of this on his regiment, the 104th New York:

Death is constantly busy in our thinned ranks.... We have now 60 men left which is all there is left of the shattered 104 regiment that a year ago had near a thousand men. They are now sleeping in death on the bloody battle fields of Maryland Virginia and Pennsylvania.²⁶⁹

The death of a particular individual, especially that of a loved one, had the same terrible impact. John F. Coghill, of the 23rd North Carolina, described the death of close comrade, J. R. Stewart, during the final stages of the slaughter of Iverson's brigade:

... it was the hardest fighting I ever saw.... I regret to tell you that Rial Stewart was killed ... a ball hit Rial in the side the ball went in one side and came out the other he did lived some 4 or 5 hours after he was struck he was in his right mind untill he died some of our boys stayed with him untill he died.... Brother barried him he was killed in the battle of gettysburg adams Co. PA[.] I loved Rial as a Brother and I would do any thing that I could for him he was a brave and knoble young man but alas he has fallen in the cause of he beloved Country....²⁷⁰

Another excellent example is given in the letters of Lt. Col. David Thomson of the 82nd Ohio Infantry. Thomson's tent mate and close companion was the regiment's adjutant, 24-year old Lt. Stowell L. Burnham, who was mortally wounded during the fighting north of town on July 1. In several letters written during the six-week period following the battle, Thomson describes the effect Burnham's death had on him. On July 16 he wrote, "Oh! how I miss Burnham. I went with him and took dinner just before his death. He was brave and a good officer above all, good and honest." On August 11 he lamented, "How much I miss Burnham. Glorious good fellow was he, and most generously did he live." Although Thompson remarked in August 19, "A death in the army is not thought of hardly," he continued in the same letter:

I miss Burnham more and more. It was too bad that he was killed. Yet he died nobly and bravely. He and I were companions. I had none more so. Now I am alone.²⁷¹

Even for those not directly impacted by the fighting, the aftermath of the first day's struggle was quite depressing. Thousands of wounded required treatment, thus the surgeons in both armies were nearly overwhelmed. "When arrived at the hospital my ears were greeted, as usual at such times, with the moans and cries of the wounded," wrote Dr. Spencer G. Welch, the regimental surgeon for the 13th South Carolina, "I went to work and did not pretend to rest until

the next morning after daylight....”²⁷²

There were so many wounded that many were left in the fields or woodlots where they had fallen. This was especially true for Union wounded, whose hospitals had been overrun and who were now lying behind enemy lines. William Perry, 150th Pennsylvania, was one such unfortunate. Wounded during the struggle near the McPherson farm buildings, he crawled to safety along a fence line near the Chambersburg pike, and recounted his experiences the next day after being taken to a Confederate hospital:

The soldiers of the enemy are treating us very kindly; they are doing all they can for us. Yesterday as I was lying by the roadside I had a plenty of company. The men were very sociable and I laid there and argued with them until 10 o'clock at night. And it all passed off with the best of feelings. The men are mostly from north carolina.²⁷³

As the remainder of the Army of Northern Virginia arrived throughout that night and into the next day, many units were forced to bivouac in the fields that had witnessed fighting on July 1. As Henry Robinson Berkeley, of the Amherst (Virginia) Artillery, awoke the next morning to a scene around them that was “sickening and heart-rending in the extreme.” They were just west of Oak Ridge along the Mummasburg road, where Berkeley noted the many “dead on this hill” along with “others ... scattered around, and in [a] wheat field at the foot of this hill were many dead blue coats.” He continued:

I turned from this sight with a sickened heart and tried to eat my breakfast, but had to return it to my haversack untouched.... In one place, I saw a body of a Yankee, which had been cut in two. The head, arms and about one-half of his ribs had been thrown against a fence, and remained with his heart and entrails sticking to the top rail, while some 10 feet off the lower part of the body had been thrown into a mud hole in the road. It was very near a house, and there were three young men in the house. I asked these men why they did not bury this body ... and they would give me no answer.²⁷⁴

Despite the losses suffered by the Union forces that day, as darkness set in many Northern soldiers, though defeated, were not demoralized. Lt. Jacob Slagle, an aide to General Doubleday, summed up this attitude in a letter to his brother two months later:

So ended the first days fight, a fight of which little has been said in the papers but which I consider the most import part of the battle. For our stubbornness in holding the ground in front of the Seminary enabled the Army to position at the cemetery. Nine thousand men fought thirty thousand all day and only gave up when not more than three thousand remained. – During the evening and night all our forces got into position.²⁷⁵

They also realized that they had accomplished something important. They had earned the right to fight another day, a day that could be critically important. Lt. George Breck, now commanding Battery L, 1st New York Light Artillery, concisely conveyed this idea in a letter to his wife written early the next morning:

Our army is now concentrating here, and I think the great battle, if not the decisive battle of the war, will be fought here. We are pretty tired, as you can imagine. But I presume we shall be kept engaged, till the battle is decided, one way or the other. Appearances look as if the issue of the war, the success or downfall of the rebellion,

would be determined in this state.²⁷⁶

The Southern soldiers who were now gathering from the west and north also realized the battle was far from over. Like their Northern counterparts, these Confederates also sensed the immense importance of this battle. Sgt. David Hunter, 2nd Virginia, spoke of this in a letter to his mother the next morning:

We are in all probability on eve of a terrible battle. The two contending armies lie close together and at any moment may commence the work of death. Great results hang upon the issue of this battle. If we are victorious peace may follow if not we may look for a long and fierce war. We trust in the wisdom of our Gens. And the goodness of our Father in Heaven who doeth all things well. He has time and again vouchsafed to give us victory and I know He wil not forsake us in the hour of trial.²⁷⁷

Hunter's unquestioning belief that God would bless them with further success is easy to understand. Although they had failed to follow up their triumph on July 1, the men of the Army of Northern Virginia once more achieved a significant victory. Even more, they accomplished this after literally stumbling into an unplanned battle on ground chosen by the enemy.

Their success, however, came at a high price, for the Union defenders had fought extremely well, a fact acknowledged within the Confederate ranks. After speaking to Lt. Gen. A. P. Hill, Lt. Col. Arthur Freemantle, the British military observer, remarked, "He said ... that the Yankees had fought with a determination unusual to them." Little could Hill, or other Southern officers, realize at the time that this simple statement was an ominous warning of the fighting that loomed ahead. Instead, this omen went unheeded, for the Confederate victory that day spawned a dangerous side effect. Lieutenant Colonel Freemantle touched on this idea that very evening of July 1 as he rode with General Longstreet and his staff back to Cashtown:

At that time troops were pouring along the road, and were being marched towards the position they are to occupy tomorrow. In the fight today nearly 6,000 prisoners had been taken, and 10 guns. About 20,000 men must have been on the field on the Confederate side. The enemy had two corps d'armee engaged.... This day's work is called a "brisk little scurry," and all anticipate a "big battle" tomorrow.... The staff officers spoke of the battle as a certainty, and the universal feeling in the army was one of profound contempt for an enemy whom they have beaten so constantly, and under so many disadvantages.²⁷⁸

As we know today with perfect hindsight, that overconfidence, combined with the lack of respect for the enemy and the strength of the Union position south of Gettysburg, would spell doom for the Army of Northern Virginia during the fighting on July 2 and 3, 1863. On the evening of July 1, however, the troops in both armies who had struggled in the fields and woodlots west and north of town that day did not have the luxury of looking ahead. Stunned by the slaughter that they had survived and realizing that more, possibly worse fighting would follow the next day, most simply felt lucky to be alive. In taking in their surroundings, however, it was almost impossible for them to escape the destruction wrought by that day's conflict. Even the Evergreen Cemetery, the local burial grounds on Cemetery Hill, was not exempt. In detailing its condition Lt. George Breck probably captured the emotions of most of the soldiers on both sides that evening:

...the Cemetery Heights of Gettysburg, a beautiful cemetery it was, but now how trodden down, laid a waste, desecrated. The fences are all down, the many graves have been run over, beautiful lots with iron fences and splendid

monuments have been destroyed or soiled, and our infantry and artillery occupy these sacred grounds, where the dead are sleeping, engaged in the death dealing occupation of warfare. It is enough to make one mourn.²⁷⁹



IN HEAVY MARCHING ORDER.

The author wishes to thank Don Osborne, Bob Richardson, David Finney and Phil Leahak. Without their assistance this essay would not have been possible.

Notes

¹ Lt. Col. Rufus Dawes to Mary (his fiancée), July 6, 1863, Rufus Dawes Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society Manuscripts [hereafter cited as WHS], copy of typed transcript in Gettysburg National Military Park Library [hereafter cited as GNMP].

² Robert G. Carter, *Four Brothers in Blue or Sunshine and Shadows of the War of the Rebellion, A Story of the Great Civil War from Bull Run to Appomattox* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1978), 1.

³ Fred A. Shannon, "The Life of the Common Soldier in the Union Army," in Michael Barton and Larry M. Logue, eds., *The Civil War Soldier, A Historical Reader*, (New York: New York University Press, 2002), 103; Richard A. Baumgartner, *Buckeye Blood, Ohio at Gettysburg* (Huntingdon, WV: Blue Acorn Press, 2003), 10.

⁴ Michael Howard and Peter Paret, eds., *Carl Von Clausewitz: On War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 87. Von Clausewitz further defined this principle, writing, "When whole communities go to war — whole peoples, and especially civilized peoples — the reason always lies in some political situation, and the occasion is always due to some political object. War, therefore, is an act of policy."

⁵ Carter, 272-273.

⁶ U.S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion, the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), Series 1, 27(1):151. [Hereafter cited as *OR*.] Over the years a wide range of strength estimates has been given. The number used in this study is considered a safe approximation.

⁷ *OR*, Series 1, 27(1):155-169. Other sources consulted for this breakdown include Edmund Raus, Jr., *A Generation on the March: The Union Army at Gettysburg* (Lynchburg, Virginia: H. E. Howard, 1987) and Frederick Dyer, *A Compendium of the War of the Rebellion* (Dayton, Ohio: Morningside House, Inc., 1979). The number of units that saw their first combat during the Gettysburg campaign was approximately seventeen, as follows: 2nd Connecticut Battery; 9th Massachusetts Battery; 5th and 6th Michigan Cavalry; 9th Michigan Battery; 150th New York Infantry; 143rd, 149th, 150th and 151st Pennsylvania Infantry; 17th and 18th Pennsylvania Cavalry; 3rd Pennsylvania Heavy Artillery; and the 13th, 14th, 15th, and 16th Vermont Infantry.

⁸ John W. Busey and David G. Martin, *Regimental Strengths and Losses at Gettysburg* (Hightstown, New Jersey: Longstreet House, 1994), 230; Edwin B. Coddington, *The Gettysburg Campaign, A Study in Command* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1968), 38-39. Although the army was actually weaker in the fall of 1863, this occurred during less important movements, such as the Bristoe Station and Mine Run campaigns.

⁹ *OR*, Series 1, 27(1):155-168. Not surprisingly, most of the regular units (74 percent) were artillery batteries. As a technical branch of the service, these units required more training and skill for proper use.

¹⁰ Sources consulted for this breakdown include: Stewart Sifakis, *Who was Who in the Union* (New York: Facts on File, 1988); Roger Hunt and Jack Brown, *Brevet Brigadier Generals in Blue* (Gaithersburg, Maryland: Olde Soldier Books Inc., 1990); Harry Pfanz, *Gettysburg, The Second Day* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987); Harry Pfanz, *Gettysburg, Culp's Hill and Cemetery Hill* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993); Jesse Bowman Young, *The Battle of Gettysburg, A Comprehensive Narrative*

(Dayton, Ohio: Morningside Press, 1976), 335-336, 358-361; and Raus, Jr., *A Generation on the March*. The lone civilian corps commander was Maj. Gen. Daniel Sickles, 3rd Corps, while the non-professional divisional commanders were Brig. Gen. Thomas Rowley, Brig. Gen. George Stannard, Brig. Gen. John Caldwell, Maj. Gen. David Birney, Brig. Gen. Francis Barlow, Brig. Gen. Adolph von Steinwehr, Maj. Gen. Carl Schurz, Brig. Gen. Alpheus Williams, and Brig. Gen. John Geary.

¹¹ Coddington, 249. As with the numerous and various estimates for the strength of their counterparts, the same is true for the Army of Northern Virginia. The most scientific study on this subject, John Busey and David Martin, *Regimental Strengths and Losses at Gettysburg*, lists the Confederate strength at 70,136 (p. 129). Coddington provides an excellent analysis of this question (pp. 242-250) and appears to be the most accurate. The Army of Northern Virginia was stronger only one other time during the war (during the Seven Days, June 25-July 1, 1862, when it numbered approximately 90,000) and never again reached its strength during the Gettysburg campaign throughout the remainder of the war. See Thomas L. Livermore, *Numbers and Losses in the Civil War in America, 1861-65* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1901), 77-145; and Jams E. and Dean S. Thomas, *The American Civil War* (Gettysburg: Thomas Publications, 1996), 22, 24, 26, 30, 34, 42, 58, 60.

¹² *OR*, 27(2):283-291; E. B. Long, *The Civil War Day by Day, An Almanac 1861-1865* (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1971), 197, 200.

¹³ Joseph H. Crute, Jr., *Units of the Confederate States* (Gaithersburg, Maryland: Olde Soldier Books, Inc., 1987). There were twelve regiments or batteries that had never experienced combat before the Gettysburg campaign. These were the 59th Georgia, 42nd Mississippi, 4th North Carolina, 32nd North Carolina, 53rd North Carolina, 11th Virginia Cavalry, 17th Virginia Cavalry, 18th Virginia Cavalry, 36th Virginia Cavalry Battalion, Madison (Mississippi) Light Artillery, Jackson's (Virginia) Battery, and Capt. John J. H. McClanahan's Virginia Battery.

¹⁴ *OR*, 27(2):283-291; Crute, *Units*. The percentages stated here are very approximate, as determining the exact date of creation and level of combat experience for many of these Confederate units was extremely difficult or even impossible. This results from an incompleteness, and in some cases a total void, of information concerning many units. This is especially true for Confederate artillery batteries, as searches for eleven batteries produced no information. The six units that could be positively identified as being mustered into service in 1863 were the 11th Virginia Cavalry, 16th Virginia Cavalry, 17th Virginia Cavalry, 36th Virginia Battalion Cavalry, Jackson's (Virginia) Battery, and Capt. J. H. McClanahan's Virginia Battery.

¹⁵ *OR*, (27)2:1283-291; "West Point Graduates In The Army of Northern Virginia At the BATTLE OF GETTYSBURG," GNMP. Other sources consulted include Crute, *Units*; Robert K. Krick, *Lee's Colonels* (Dayton, Ohio: Morningside House, 1979); and Ezra Warner, *Generals in Gray* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1959). These numbers might be somewhat skewed, as there is a great dearth of information on the background for the vast majority of battery commanders. For this study, of the 68 officers commanding batteries, the military experience could only be determined for 21 (approximately 30 percent). The only divisional commander who did not attend West Point was Maj. Gen. Robert Rodes, who graduated from the Virginia Military Institute in 1848. The brigade commanders who were previously civilians with no military experience were Brig. Gen. Henry Benning, Brig. Gen. Joseph Davis, Brig. Gen. John B. Gordon, Brig. Gen. Wade Hampton, Brig. Gen. James H. Lane, Brig. Gen. J. J. Pettigrew, Brig. Gen. A. M. Scales, Brig. Gen. William Smith, Brig. Gen. James Walker, Brig. Gen. Ambrose R. Wright, Col. Isaac Avery, Col. E. A. O'Neal, and Col. J. M. Williams. The six men who were pre-war civilians and had risen to command artillery battalions were Col. H. C. Cabell (McLaw's division), Lt. Col. H. P. Jones (Early's division), Capt. Willis Dance and Lt. Col. William Nelson (both 2nd Corps Reserve), Maj. William Poague (Pender's division), and Maj. D. G. McIntosh (3rd Corps Reserve). In addition, Col. J. Thompson Brown (commanding the 2nd Corps Artillery Reserve) had no pre-war military experience. The six battery commanders, identified for this study, with prior military experience were Capt. Joseph G. Blount (Virginia Battery), Capt. James Reilly (Rowan's [North Carolina] artillery), Capt. T. A. Brander (Letcher's [Virginia] artillery), Capt. R. P. Chew (Chew's [Virginia] battery), Capt. J. F. Hart (Hart's [South Carolina] battery) and Capt. M. N. Moorman (Moorman's [Virginia] battery). The type and source of military experience for some Confederate officers was wide and varied. It included two who had previously served in the British army (Col. Collett Leventhorpe, 11th North Carolina and Lt. Col. G. T. Gordon, 34th North Carolina), two who fought in the Texas War for Independence (Brig. Gen. J. B. Robertson and Lt. Col. K. Bryan, 5th Texas), two Indian fighters (Brig. Gen. J. B. Robertson and Col. V. D. Groner, 61st Virginia), and a

graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy (Col. J. K. Connally, 55th North Carolina). In addition, four other officers were graduates of West Point and served in various staff capacities. These included Brig. Gen. William Pendleton (Chief of Artillery), Col. Robert G. Cole (Chief of Commissary), Col. James L. Corely (Chief Quartermaster), Col. Proctor Smith (Chief Engineer), and Col. Abner Smead (2nd Corps staff).

¹⁶ John Bigelow, Jr., *The Campaign of Chancellorsville, A Strategic and Tactical Study* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1910), 475; Capt. Robert E. Lee, *Recollections and Letters of General Robert E. Lee* (New York: Garden City Publishing Co., 1926), 94. Clifford Dowdey, ed., *The Wartime Papers of R. E. Lee* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1965), 485.

¹⁷ Dowdey, ed., 488. When completed, this reorganization assigned three divisions to each of the three corps. Lt. Gen. James Longstreet continued to command the 1st Corps, while Lee promoted his two senior divisional commanders, Richard S. Ewell and A. P. Hill, to lieutenant general for corps command. Ewell took over the 2nd Corps and Hill was assigned the newly created 3rd Corps.

¹⁸ *OR*, (27)2:283-291. Typically artillery battalions attached to divisions had four batteries each, while the battalions constituting the corps reserves had between three to six batteries each. Six batteries were assigned to Stuart's division of cavalry.

¹⁹ Bell Irvin Wiley, *The Life of Billy Yank, The Common Soldier of the Union* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1952), 303, 306-311; Bell Irvin Wiley, *The Life of Johnny Reb, The Common Soldier of the Confederacy* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1943), 322-324; Gregory Coco, *The Civil War Infantryman, In Camp, on the March, and in Battle* (Gettysburg: Thomas Publications, 1996), 7; Ella Lonn, *Foreigners in Union Army and Navy* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1951), 1-2, 146-173, 580-583. In 1860 there were approximately 4.1 million non-native inhabitants living in the United States. Over half of these had immigrated to America between 1850 and 1860. Of the total foreign-born persons (4.1 million), nearly 87 percent lived in the free states. The percentage estimate for foreigners serving in the Union ranks is for *all* Northern armies. Germans were the largest non-native group fighting for the North as approximately 200,000 enlisted, followed by the Irish — approximately 150,000; Canadian — 50,000; and British — 40,000. In the Southern ranks German and Irish were the most prevalent foreign-born nationalities.

²⁰ Wiley, *Billy Yank*, 303-304; Wiley, *Johnny Reb*, 330, Coco, 8.

²¹ John G. Barrett, ed., *Yankee Rebel, The Civil War Journal of Edmund DeWitt Patterson* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1966), 119.

²² Ballenger to "Dear Nancy," July 5, 1863, University of South Carolina, South Carolina Library [hereafter cited as SCL].

²³ James A. Mumper, ed., *I Wrote You Word, The Poignant Letters of Private Holt*, (Lynchburg, Virginia: H.E. Howard, Inc, 1993), 2.

²⁴ William Alan Blair, ed., *A Politician Goes to War, The Civil War Letters of John White Geary* (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 96.

²⁵ Hunter to his mother, July 2, 1863, typed transcript in GNMP. The faith of Hunter's mother was later tested, for he was killed 15 months later on the morning of October 19, 1864 during the early stages of the Battle of Cedar Creek.

²⁶ Old to his wife, July 16, 1863, typed transcript in Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park [hereafter cited as FSNMP]; Aiken letter, June 28, 1863, Aiken Letters, SCL, copy of typed transcript in GNMP.

²⁷ Edward McPherson, *The Battle Cry of Freedom, The Civil War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 19-20; Wiley, *Billy Yank*, 304-306; Wiley, *Johnny Reb*, 336-337.

²⁸ McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 19-20; Edward McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War* (New York: The Free Press, 1987), 11.

²⁹ McPherson, *Cause and Comrades*, 12; Alexander T. Barclay letters, Washington and Lee University [hereafter cited as W&L], copy of typed transcript in GNMP. McPherson best describes the importance of the absence of censorship, "... in contrast with twentieth-century wars, Civil War armies did not subject soldiers' letters to censorship or discourage the keeping of diaries. Soldiers' letters were therefore uniquely blunt and detailed about important matters that probably would not pass a censor: morale, relations between officers and men, details of marches and battles, politics and ideology and war aims, and other matters. This candor enables the historian to peer further into the minds and souls of Civil War soldiers than of those in any other war." (See McPherson, *Cause and Comrades*, 12).

³⁰ Carter, 1-2.

³¹ McPherson, *Cause and Comrades*, 132.

- ³² Raymond G. Barber and Gary E. Swinson, eds., *The Civil War Letters of Charles Barber, Private, 104th New York Volunteer Infantry* (Torrance, California: Gary E. Swinson, 1991), 125.
- ³³ Aiken to wife, June 28, 1863, Aiken Letters, SCL.
- ³⁴ *OR*, Series I, 11(3): 104-105; Series II, 3: 723; Series III, 1: 383; 2: 315, 334; Series IV, 1:, 267, 734, 1081; 2:349; Alexander Gardner, *Gardner's Photographic Sketch Book of the Civil War* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1959), text opposite plate 49. So important was the postal service that the Confederate Congress, upon passing the Conscription Act of 1862 exempted "all engaged in carrying the mails; all ferrymen on post routes" amongst others (See *OR*, Series IV, 1:1081). The Federal government took similar measures (See *OR*, Series III, 2: 334).
- ³⁵ Will Delony, July 7, 1863 to "dear Rosa," University of Georgia [hereafter cited as UG], copy of typed transcript in GNMP; Gales to his wife, July 8, 1863, handwritten transcription, Brake Collection, United States Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, Carlisle, Pennsylvania [hereafter cited as USAMHI]. Delony was a member of Cobb's Legion, Georgia Cavalry.
- ³⁶ Calder to his mother, June 26, 1863, William Calder Papers, Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill [hereafter cited as UNC], copy of letter in GNMP.
- ³⁷ Barber to his wife, April 23, 1863 in Barber and Swinson, eds., 125-126.
- ³⁸ Lewis to his mother, July 21, 1863 in, "The Battle of Gettysburg" *Woodville Republican*, July 19, 1924, Lewis Papers, SHC, copy in GNMP.
- ³⁹ Dowdey, ed., *Wartime Papers of R. E. Lee*, 491.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 486, 487, 491, 492, 498, 507, 511, 536, 559, 562, 566, 593, 598; Clifford Dowdey, *Lee* (New York: Bonanza Books, 1965), 669-670.
- ⁴¹ Dowdey, ed., *Wartime Papers of R. E. Lee*, 509, 542, 559, 560, 566-567; Lee, 100, 117-118; Douglas Southall Freeman, *R. E. Lee*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935), 3: 32, 139, 216-217.
- ⁴² Dowdey, ed., *Wartime Papers of R. E. Lee*, 589, 592, 595, 598. Lee's description of his health problems was included in the August 8, 1863 letter offering his resignation to President Davis.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*, 560.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 512.
- ⁴⁵ Lee to wife, November 1, 1863 in, Lee, 113.
- ⁴⁶ Simpson to wife, July 16, 1863, Allen-Simpson Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina [hereafter cited as SHC], transcript in GNMP.
- ⁴⁷ Michael A. Dreese, ed., *An Imperishable Fame, The Civil War Experiences of George Fisher McFarland* (Mifflintown, Pennsylvania: Juniata County Historical Society, 1997), 122.
- ⁴⁸ John Garibaldi Letters, Virginia Military Institute Archives [hereafter cited as VMI], transcript copy in GNMP.
- ⁴⁹ Gaillard to "Dear Maria," June 11, 1863, Gaillard Papers, SHC, typed transcript in FSNMP.
- ⁵⁰ Bruce Catton, *Never Call Retreat* (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1965), 102-106, 172-173; John F. Leonard, "David Erza and the War, A Biographical Sketch of the Life of David Ezra Leonard," copy FSNMP. Vallandigham was then currently running for the governorship of Ohio. Abraham Lincoln later commuted the Democrat's sentence to banishment and Vallandigham was sent to the Confederacy. He eventually made his way to Canada where he ran his gubernatorial campaign in exile. He lost by a landslide that fall. (See Catton, *Never Call Retreat*, 173-174, 280-281.) Koener was captured at Williamsport on July 8, 1863 and eventually died of chronic diarrhea at Point Lookout prison on October 29, 1863 (See Robert J. Driver, Jr., *52nd Virginia Infantry* [Lynchburg: H. E. Howard, Inc., 1986], 128.)
- ⁵¹ Petition to the Editor of the Portage County *Democrat*, August 27, 1863, typed transcript in GNMP.
- ⁵² Wiley, *Billy Yank*, 29.
- ⁵³ Barrett, ed., *Yankee Rebel*, 119.
- ⁵⁴ Barber to his wife, March 13, 1863 in, Barber and Swinson, eds., 121.
- ⁵⁵ Augustus Hesse to Almira (his wife), August 10, 1862, Deborah Weston Manuscripts, Department of Rare Books & Manuscripts, Boston Public Library [hereafter cited as BPL].
- ⁵⁶ John S. Collier and Bonnie B. Collier, eds., *Yours for the Union, The Civil War Letters of John W. Chase* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2004), 189; McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 309.
- ⁵⁷ Collier and Collier, eds., 177.
- ⁵⁸ Collier and Collier, eds., 189; Hugh Whitehouse, ed., *Letters from the Iron Brigade, George Washington Partridge, Jr., 1839-1863* (Indianapolis: Guild Press of Indiana, 1994), 72. Partridge was killed during the fighting in Herbst's Woods on July 1, 1863.

- ⁵⁹ William J. Cooper, Jr., *Jefferson Davis, American* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 2000), 408; McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 566-567; Beaton to "Ma & Sister," August 2, 1863, private collection, typed transcript in GNMP.
- ⁶⁰ Eric A. Campbell, ed., "A Grand Terrible Drama," *From Gettysburg to Petersburg, The Civil War Letters of Charles Wellington Reed* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), 68; Hesse to wife, August 10, 1862 and to "Miss Deborah Weston" August 10, 1862, BPL.
- ⁶¹ Roy Basler, ed., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, Brunswick, New Jersey, 1953), 5:537 and 7:23; Lawrence Frederick Kohl, ed., *Irish Green and Union Blue, The Civil War Letters of Peter Welsh* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1986), 65-67.
- ⁶² Petition to the Editor of the Portage County *Democrat*, August 27, 1863, GNMP.
- ⁶³ Hamlin to "Dear Friends," August 8, 1861, Philip Hamlin Letters, Minnesota Historical Society [hereafter cited as MHS], copy of typed transcript in GNMP.
- ⁶⁴ Knowles letter in October 14, 1863 edition of *Southern Advertiser*, copy of typed transcript in GNMP.
- ⁶⁵ Miller letter, typed transcript, FSNMP.
- ⁶⁶ Carter, 280.
- ⁶⁷ Hamlin to "Dear Friends," April 10, 1863, Philip Hamlin Letters, MHS. Hamlin was killed during the repulse of "Pickett's Charge" on July 3, 1863.
- ⁶⁸ Miller to sister, July 1, 1863, FSNMP.
- ⁶⁹ Miller to sister, August 29, 1863, FSNMP.
- ⁷⁰ Burgwyn letter, May 21, 1863, H. K. Burgwyn Letters, SHC.
- ⁷¹ Bloun to "dear friends," Steed and Phipps Family Papers, SHC, copy of letter in GNMP; Aiken to his wife, June 28, 1863, Aiken Letters, SCL.
- ⁷² , Dowdey, ed., *War Time Papers of R. E. Lee*, 490; Lee, 95.
- ⁷³ Dowdey, ed., *War Time Papers of R. E. Lee*, 504-5.
- ⁷⁴ Walter Lord, ed., *The Freemantle Diary* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1954), 180.
- ⁷⁵ Lord, ed., 185.
- ⁷⁶ Aiken to wife, June 25, 1863, Aiken Letters, SCL.
- ⁷⁷ Lewis to his mother, June 22, 1863, Lewis Papers, SHC, copy of letter in GNMP.
- ⁷⁸ Little to "Dear Flax," June 9, 1863, Benjamin F. Little Papers, SHC, typewritten transcription in GNMP. In the same letter Little described his socialization with Union soldiers, "... it really ... seems singular to me that we should be comforting each other so friendly yet at the same time each army or the leaders of the same were plotting each others destruction."
- ⁷⁹ Carter, 264.
- ⁸⁰ M. Quaife, ed., *From the Cannon's Mouth, The Civil War Letters of General Alpheus S. Williams* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press & Detroit Historical Society, 1959), 221.
- ⁸¹ Edward K. Cassidy, ed., *Dear friends at home, The Civil War Letters and Diaries of Sergeant Charles T. Bowen, Twelfth United States Infantry, First Battalion, 1861-1864* (Baltimore: Butternut and Blue, 2001), 278, 279.
- ⁸² Edward Marcus, ed., *A New Canaan Private in the Civil War: Letters of Justus M. Sillimar, 17th Connecticut Volunteers* (New Canaan, Connecticut: New Canaan Historical Society, 1984), 38.
- ⁸³ Clare to "dear Wm," June 30, 1863, William Keating Clare Papers, Special Collections Library, Duke University [hereafter cited as DU].
- ⁸⁴ Breck to *Rochester Union and Advertiser*, June 15, 1863 (June 19, 1863 edition), typed transcription by John Henessey, copy in GNMP.
- ⁸⁵ Bigelow, Jr., 473.
- ⁸⁶ Coddington, 35.
- ⁸⁷ Frank A. Haskell, *The Battle of Gettysburg* (Boston: Commandery of the State of Massachusetts, Military Order of the Loyal Legion, The Mudge Press, 1908), iii, 2-3.
- ⁸⁸ Dona Bayard Sauerburger and Thomas Bayard, eds., "I Seat Myself to Write You a Few Lines:" *Civil War and Homestead Letters from Thomas Lucus and Family* (Bowie, Maryland: Heritage Books, Inc., 2002), 148.
- ⁸⁹ Quaife, ed., 239.
- ⁹⁰ George G. Meade, Jr., *The Life and Letters of George Gordon Meade* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913), 1:383.

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- ⁹¹ E. B. Long, 361; Kathleen Georg Harrison, "A Day Book of the Gettysburg Campaign, 3 June 1863 – 1 August 1863" unpublished study, 1988, GNMP, June 3, 1863 entry .
- ⁹² Coddington,; Long, 365; Harrison, "Day Book," June 13, 1863 entry; Robert Hubbard to Nellie (his wife), June 15, 1863, Robert Hubbard Letters, Yale University Library [hereafter cited as YUL].
- ⁹³ James W. Milgram, "The Libby Prison Correspondence of Tattall Paulding," *The American Philatelist*, December 1975, 89(12). Paulding and Balder were members of the 6th United States Cavalry.
- ⁹⁴ Willoughby to James Simpson, June 17, 1863, James Randolph Simpson Letters, Civil War Miscellaneous Collection, USAMHI, typed transcript in GNMP. The "foraging expedition" which Willoughby referred to was a cavalry raid made by Gen. J.E.B. Stuart in October 1862. The 5th Pennsylvania Reserves was, at the time of this writing, part of the Washington defenses. If Willoughby was unable to get reliable information on the movements of the opposing armies, it must have been even more difficult for the soldiers of the Army of the Potomac who were active in the field.
- ⁹⁵ Frank Putman Deane, II, ed., "My Dear Wife..." *The Civil War Letters of David Brett, 9th Massachusetts Battery, Union Cannoneer* (Little Rock, Arkansas: Pioneer, 1964), 51; McDonald letter, June 22, 1863, John McDonald Letters, typed transcript in FSNMP.
- ⁹⁶ Coddington, 56-58; Champ Clark, *Gettysburg, The Confederate High Tide* (Alexandria, Virginia: Time-Life Books, 1985), 16, 18, 20-22; Aiken to his wife, June 10, 1863, Aiken Letters, SCL.
- ⁹⁷ Gorman to "Friend Holden," June 22, 1863, "Our Army Correspondence," unknown newspaper, unknown date, North Carolina State Archives [hereafter cited as NCSA], copy in GNMP. Gorman had been a journalist for the *Raleigh Register* before the war, so it is likely that this paper carried his correspondence. He was captured at Spotsylvania Court House in May 1864 and was later one of the "Immortal 600" held outside of Charleston Harbor. Gorman survived the war and returned to work in the publishing business.
- ⁹⁸ Gaillard to "Dear Maria," June 11, 1863, Gaillard Papers, SHC.
- ⁹⁹ Clark, *Gettysburg, The Confederate High Tide*, 16, 22.
- ¹⁰⁰ Smith to parents, July 12, 1863, Stephens Calhoun Smith Papers, Special Collections Library, DU, copy of typed transcript in GNMP.
- ¹⁰¹ Alexander T. Barclay to his sister, June 19, 1863, W & L; Hubbard to Nellie (his wife), July 9, 1863, YUL.
- ¹⁰² Even today, with a plethora of sources available, it is impossible to state with any exactness the strengths of each army at Gettysburg. The most exhaustive study to date is John Busey's and David Martin's *Regimental Strengths and Losses at Gettysburg*, and even they state in the book's introduction, "It is admittedly a difficult, and at times risky, job to make educated guesses for large numbers of units for which no reliable figures are available."
- ¹⁰³ Report of the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War, 1863-1866, as published in *Army of the Potomac*, Part 2, (Millwood, New York: Kraus Reprint Co., 1977), 173, 373. Hooker thought the Confederates had 103,000 of all arms, while Meade's estimate was slightly higher at 109,000. As discussed earlier (see endnote 11) the most reliable estimates today put the strength of the Army of Northern Virginia at 75,000 during the Gettysburg campaign.
- ¹⁰⁴ Long, 364; Harrison, "Day Book," June 12, 1863 entry; Coddington, 86.
- ¹⁰⁵ Larry B. Maier, *Gateway to Gettysburg* (Shippensburg, Pennsylvania: Burd Street Press 2002), 59-100; Gorman to "Friend Holden" June 22, 1863, NCSA.
- ¹⁰⁶ *OR*, 27(2):44-442, 546-550; Coddington, 86-90; Gorman to "Friend Holden," June 22, 1863, NCSA.
- ¹⁰⁷ Isaac Seymour Journal, James Schoff Collection, William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan [hereafter cited as UM], typed transcript in GNMP.
- ¹⁰⁸ Shaffner to "My Dearest Friend," June 23, 1863, Fried-Shaffner Papers, SHC, copy of typed transcript in GNMP. Milroy lost approximately 4,400 officers and men, four 20-lb. Parrotts, seventeen 3-inch Rifles, two 24-lb. howitzers, 200,000 rounds of small-arms ammunition, nearly 300 loaded wagons, 300 horses and a large store of commissary and quartermaster supplies. See Coddington, 89, 624.
- ¹⁰⁹ Barclay to his sister, June 19, 1863, W & L; Lt. Col. Powhatan Bolling Whittle to his brother, June 23, 1863, FSNMP, copy of typewritten transcript in GNMP; Freemantle diary entry for June 23, 1863 in Lord, ed., *Diary*, 184-185.
- ¹¹⁰ Gorman to "Friend Holden," June 22, 1863, NCSA.
- ¹¹¹ Welch to his wife, June 21, 1863, Joyner Library, East Carolina University [hereafter cited as ECU].
- ¹¹² Coddington, 103; William Thomas Diary, June 18, 1863 entry, typed transcript in FSNMP.

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- ¹¹³ Stone to his sister, June 16, 1863, copy of letter in GNMP.
- ¹¹⁴ Lt. Seymour Journal, June 23, 1863 entry, Schoff Collection, UM.
- ¹¹⁵ Gorman to "Friend Holden," June 22, 1863, NCSA.
- ¹¹⁶ Shaffner to "My Dearest Friend," June 23, 1863, Fries-Shaffner Papers, SHC.
- ¹¹⁷ Samuel W. Eaton Diary, #1807, SHC.
- ¹¹⁸ Ewell to "Lizzie," June 24, 1863, Richard S. Ewell Papers, Library of Congress [hereafter cited as LC], copy of typed transcript in GNMP.
- ¹¹⁹ John C. West, *A Texan in Search of a Fight, Being the Diary and Letters of a Private Soldier in Hood's Texas Brigade* (Waco, Texas: Press of J. S. Hill & Co., 1901), 80-81. The "streams" West mentioned actually included the Shenandoah River which they crossed three times (See West, 76-77.).
- ¹²⁰ West to his wife, June 8, 1863 in West, 72.
- ¹²¹ West to his wife, June 8, 1863 in West, 70, 71, 72, 73; Surgeon Charles Lippett Diary, diary entries from June 8-July 11, 1863, copy of diary and typed transcript in GNMP; William Cocke letter of July 11, 1863 to unknown, typed transcript, Virginia Historical Society [hereafter cited as VHS]. Dr. Lippett was surgeon for the 57th Virginia. Cocke was an assistant surgeon for the 14th Virginia. He served with the regiment until he was wounded and captured at Hatcher's Run on April 1, 1865 and died of pneumonia in a Washington, D.C. military hospital on April 25, 1865.
- ¹²² Acheson to mother, June 20, 1863 in Sara Gould Walters, ed., *Inscription at Gettysburg* (Gettysburg: Thomas Publications, 1991), 98.
- ¹²³ Breck to *Rochester Union and Advertiser*, June 15, 1863 (June 19, 1863 edition).
- ¹²⁴ Sgt. Charles Bowen Diary entries for June 15 and 17, 1863 in, Cassedy, ed., 283, 284.
- ¹²⁵ Coralou Peel Lassen, ed., *Dear Sarah, Letters Home from a Soldier in the Iron Brigade* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 131.
- ¹²⁶ Morrison diary entries contained in July 21, 1863 letter to "Will," typed transcript in FSNMP; Robertson to parents, June 28, 1863, transcription in FSNMP.
- ¹²⁷ Acheson to mother, June 28, 1863 in, Walters, ed., 100; Hubbard to Nellie (his wife), June 18, 1863, YUL.
- ¹²⁸ Carter, 267.
- ¹²⁹ Breck to *Rochester Union and Advertiser*, June 20, 1863 (June 26, 1863 edition).
- ¹³⁰ Breck to *Rochester Union and Advertiser*, June 15, 1863 (June 19, 1863 edition).
- ¹³¹ Gorman to "Friend Holden," June 22, 1863, NCSA; Shaffner to "My Dearest Friend," June 23, 1863, Fries-Shaffner Papers, SHC.
- ¹³² West, 72.
- ¹³³ Blackford to his father, June 21, 1863, Lewis Leigh Collection, Box 33, USAMHI, copy of typed transcript in GNMP.
- ¹³⁴ Carter, 262.
- ¹³⁵ Carter, 267.
- ¹³⁶ Coon to his father, August 14, 1863, private collection (Robert Coon, Huber Heights, Ohio), copy of typed transcript in GNMP.
- ¹³⁷ West, , 80.
- ¹³⁸ West, 78.
- ¹³⁹ Harrison, "Day Book," entries from June 15-24, 1863; Deane, ed., 55; Campbell, ed., 107-108.
- ¹⁴⁰ Campbell, ed.,; Coddington, 97-99. The reinforcements included Brig. Gen. George Stannard's Vermont brigade (3rd Brigade/2nd Division/1st Corps), Brig. Gen. Alexander Hays' brigade (3rd Brigade/3rd Division/2nd Corps — commanded by Col. George L. Willard), and the two brigades of Brig. Gen. Samuel Crawford's Pennsylvania Reserve division (3rd Division/5th Corps), Brig. Gen. Elon Fransworth's cavalry brigade (1st Brigade/3rd Division/Cavalry Corps), Brig. Gen. George Custer's cavalry brigade (2nd Brigade/3rd Division/Cavalry Corps), Capt. John Bigelow's 9th Massachusetts Battery (1st Vol. Brigade/Artillery Reserve), and Capt. John Sterling's 2nd Connecticut Battery (2nd Vol. Brigade/Artillery Reserve), all of whom played a significant role in the battle.
- ¹⁴¹ Harrison, "A Day Book," entries for June 22, 1863 and June 25, 1863, GNMP.
- ¹⁴² Dreese, ed., 121; Breck to *Rochester Union and Advertiser*, June 27, 1863 (July 3, 1863 edition).
- ¹⁴³ Ibid.
- ¹⁴⁴ Dreese ed., 121.
- ¹⁴⁵ Dreese, ed., 123.
- ¹⁴⁶ Terry L. Jones, "Going Back into the Union At Last," *Civil War Times Illustrated*, Jan./Feb. 1991

[hereafter cited as *CWTJ*], 56; Blackford letter, June 22, 1863, Lewis Leigh Collection, Box 33, USAMHI. R. Stark was at home recuperating from a previous wound. Lt. Jackson was a member of the 8th Louisiana Infantry.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Welch to his wife, June 28, 1863, ECU; Seymour Journal, Schoff Collection, UM.

¹⁴⁹ Blackford to his mother, June 28, 1863, Lewis Leigh Collection, Box 33, USAMHI.

¹⁵⁰ Stone to his sister, June 16, 1863, GNMP; Calder letter, June 28, 1863 to "Dearest Mother," William Calder Papers, UNC.

¹⁵¹ Blackford letter, June 28, 1863, Lewis Leigh Collection, Box 33, USAMHI.

¹⁵² Ewell letter, June 24, 1863, Richard S. Ewell Papers, LC.

¹⁵³ Jones, "Going Back into the Union..." *CWTJ*, Jan/Feb. 1991, 56. Jackson paid dearly, however, for his illegal foray as detailed by his journal entry the next day, "30th ... I rode all day in an ambulance [possibly from a hangover?]... [Col. Trevanion D.] Lewis put Mc and I under arrest for our trip to York."

¹⁵⁴ Blackford to his father, June 28, 1863, Lewis Leigh Collection, Box 33, USAMHI.

¹⁵⁵ "Bud" to his sister, July 18, 1863, Michael Musick Collection, USAMHI, copy of typed transcript in GNMP. "Bud" was a member of the 2nd South Carolina.

¹⁵⁶ *OR*, Series 1, 27(3):912-913.

¹⁵⁷ *OR*, Series 1, 27(3):912-913; Pickens Diary, June 22, 1863 entry, copy of typed transcript in GNMP; Gorman to "Friend Holden," June 22, 1863, NCSA. One estimate of the amount of livestock confiscated by the Army of Northern Virginia listed 26,000 cattle and 22,000 sheep (See Coddington, 175, 649, n 81).

¹⁵⁸ Welch letter, June 28, 1863, Joyner Library, ECU. Along with livestock and other goods, some Confederates also abducted blacks who, whether free-born or former slave, were all shipped down South and sold into slavery. The sources on the total number of blacks captured are very vague, although one account states that at least 50 were sent south. (See Coddington, 161 and Ted Alexander, "A Regular Slave Hunt," *North and South*, September 2001, 82-89).

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Gorman to "Friend Holden," June 22, 1863, NCSA; Welch letter, June 21, 1863, Joyner Library, ECU.

¹⁶¹ Blackford to his mother, June 28, 1863, Lewis Leigh Collection, Box 33, USAMHI.

¹⁶² Seymour Journal, Schoff Collection, UM.

¹⁶³ Coddington, 171-172; *OR*, Series 1, 27(3): 905-906, 924.

¹⁶⁴ Coddington, 166; Seymour Journal, Schoff Collection, UM. Coddington opines that "In view of Lee's occupation policies so clearly set out in General Orders No. 72, Early's conduct ... was rank insubordination." (See Coddington, 166.) Early later claimed "This I did on my own responsibility, as neither General Lee nor General Ewell knew I would encounter these works." See Douglas Southall Freeman, *Lee's Lieutenants, A Study in Command*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1944), 31.

¹⁶⁵ U. R. Brooks, ed., *Stories of the Confederacy* (Columbia, South Carolina: The State Company, 1912), 35-36. Welch was the surgeon of the 13th South Carolina.

¹⁶⁶ Calder to his mother, June 26, 1863, William Calder Papers, UNC. Lee was apparently upset when he saw the burned works three days later and allowed the families of those affected to draw supplies from the army's quartermaster (See Coddington, 646 n 40).

¹⁶⁷ Royster to his mother, Royster Family Papers, SHC, copy of typed transcript in GNMP. Royster was badly wounded on July 3, 1863 during "Pickett's Charge," and died on July 15, 1863.

¹⁶⁸ Joyner letter, June 29, 1863, Joyner Family Papers #4428, SHC, typed transcription in GNMP.

¹⁶⁹ Seymour Journal, Schoff Collection, UM.

¹⁷⁰ Lyon to his brother, July 18, 1863, in "Gettysburg Campaign Letter by an Alabama Officer," Horse Soldier Shop, Catalog #20, unknown date, copy in GNMP. Lyon served in Brig. Gen. John Gordon's Brigade, although the specific regiment is not known.

¹⁷¹ Blackford to his mother, June 28, 1863, Lewis Leigh Collection, Box 33, USAMHI.

¹⁷² Joyner letter, June 29, 1863, Joyner Family Papers #4428, SHC; Welch to his wife, June 21, 1863, Joyner Library, ECU.

¹⁷³ Blon to "My dear friend," June 23, 1863, Steed & Phipps Family Papers #3960, SHC, copy of letter in GNMP.

¹⁷⁴ Calder letter, June 28, 1863, William Calder Papers, UNC.

¹⁷⁵ Welch to his wife, June 21, 1863 and June 28, 1863 to his wife, Joyner Library, ECU.

¹⁷⁶ Coddington, 94-102, 130-133, 209-214.

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- ¹⁷⁷ A.P. Morrison to "Will," July 21, 1863, transcript in FSNMP.
- ¹⁷⁸ R.S. Robertson to parents, June 28, 1863, transcript in FSNMP.
- ¹⁷⁹ Walters, ed., 100.
- ¹⁸⁰ Quaife, ed., *From the Cannon's Mouth*, 220-221.
- ¹⁸¹ Clare to "William," June 28, 1863, William Keating Clare Papers, DU; Quaife, ed., 221.
- ¹⁸² John Willoughby letter to James Randolph Simpson, June 17, 1863, James Randolph Simpson Letters, USAMHI; Acheson to mother, June 28, 1863, as quoted in, Walters, ed., 100. Capt. Acheson would lose his life during this "campaign of the war," being mortally wounded during the fighting around the Wheatfield on July 2, 1863.
- ¹⁸³ Gorman to "Friend Holden," June 22, 1863, NCSA.
- ¹⁸⁴ Calder to his mother, June 26, 1863, William Calder Papers, UNC. Calder was a member of the 2nd North Carolina.
- ¹⁸⁵ Breck to *Rochester Union and Advertiser*, June 27, 1863 (July 3, 1863 edition); Seymour Journal, Schoff Collection, UM.
- ¹⁸⁶ John Follmer diary entry for June 28, 1863, John Follmer Diary, Michigan Historical Collection, Bentley Historical Library, UM, typed transcript in GNMP.
- ¹⁸⁷ Carter, 334.
- ¹⁸⁸ Blackford to "Mary," August 4, 1863, copy of letter in FSNMP.
- ¹⁸⁹ Clare to "William," June 28, 1863, William Keating Clare Papers, DU.
- ¹⁹⁰ Dreese, ed., 123.
- ¹⁹¹ E.D. Benedict diary entry for July 1, 1863, E.D. Benedict Diary, Chicago Historical Society [hereafter cited as CHS], copy in GNMP.
- ¹⁹² Seymour Journal, Schoff Collection, UM.
- ¹⁹³ Horatio Dana Chapman Diary, Connecticut State Library [hereafter cited as CSL], copy of hand-written transcription in GNMP.
- ¹⁹⁴ Breck to *Rochester Union and Advertiser*, June 28, 1863 (July 3, 1863 edition).
- ¹⁹⁵ Blackford to "Mary," August 4, 1863, FSNMP.
- ¹⁹⁶ Wootan to unknown, July 19, 1863, "Gettysburg Campaign Letter" advertisement in unknown collector's catalogue, copy in GNMP. The Jeff Davis Artillery was commanded by Capt. W. J. Reese and belonged to Lt. Col. Thomas Carter's battalion, Rodes' division.
- ¹⁹⁷ E.D. Benedict diary entry for July 1, 1863, Benedict Diary, CHS.
- ¹⁹⁸ Haskell, 145.
- ¹⁹⁹ Hubbard to his wife, June 30, 1863, Hubbard Letters, YUL.
- ²⁰⁰ Harris letter, June 23, 1863, Harris Papers, SHC.
- ²⁰¹ Burrill to parents, July 13, 1863, Civil Wartimes Illustrated Collection, USAMHI, copy of transcript in GNMP.
- ²⁰² "Gettysburg National Military Park Bibliography," compiled by Karlton Smith, Winter 2002, 8-10. This bibliography lists twelve books devoted to July 2, ten to July 3, and 32 titles that cover the entire battle (most of which concentrate on the actions of July 2 and 3). Only six books are dedicated to events on July 1, 1863, and five of those were written after 1990. The six are William Beaudot and Lance Herdegen, *In the Bloody Railroad Cut at Gettysburg* (Dayton, OH: Morningside Press, 1990), Gary Gallagher, ed., *The First Day at Gettysburg: Essays on Confederate and Union Leadership* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1992), Warren Hassler, *Crisis at the Crossroad: The First Day at Gettysburg* (University of Alabama Press, 1970), James McLean, *Cutler's Brigade at Gettysburg* (Baltimore, MD: Butternut and Blue, 1994), David Martin, *Gettysburg, July 1* (Conshohocken, PA: Combined Books, 1995), Harry Pfanz, *Gettysburg: The First Day* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), and Richard Shue, *Morning at Willoughby Run, July 1, 1863* (Gettysburg, PA: Thomas Publications, 1994).
- ²⁰³ Coddington, 263-270; Haviland to his mother, August 11, 1863, in John F. Krumwiede, "Sergeant Edgar D. Haviland.... the horrors of Chancellorsville and Gettysburg to his mother," *America's Civil War*, November 2000, 80. Haviland was, for unexplained reasons, demoted to private in November 1863. Later promoted to corporal, he was killed instantly during the fighting on May 5, 1864 at the Wilderness.
- ²⁰⁴ Wheeler to his parents, July 11, 1863, Area Research Center, University of Wisconsin (hereafter cited as UW), copy of letter and transcription in GNMP.
- ²⁰⁵ Veil to David McConaughy, April 7, 1864, Civil War Institute, Gettysburg College, copy of typed transcript in GNMP.

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- ²⁰⁶ Reed to his mother and sister, July 6, 1863 in, Campbell, ed., 114.
- ²⁰⁷ Clare to "William," July 5, 1863, William Keating Clare Papers, DU.
- ²⁰⁸ Ibid.
- ²⁰⁹ Dawes to Mary (his fiancée), July 4, 1863, Dawes Papers, WHS.
- ²¹⁰ Coddington, 270-280, 286-287; Samuel Pickens Diary, entry of July 1, 1863, GNMP.
- ²¹¹ Coddington, 286; Samuel Pickens Diary, entry of July 1, 1863, GNMP. The Union artillery that Pickens referred to here probably belonged to the Union 11th Corps who were deploying in the fields north of town, or to the Confederates' left. This action will be described in more detail later in the text.
- ²¹² "... of Wainwright Journal, The three missing paragraphs you requested," copy of undated letter, Blake Collection, USAMHI, copy in GNMP.
- ²¹³ Coddington, 288-289; Unknown soldier, 12th Alabama, July 8, 1863 letter to his mother printed in the *Mobile Evening News*, July 24, 1863, typed transcript in GNMP.
- ²¹⁴ Clare to "William," July 5, 1863, William Keating Clare Papers, DU.
- ²¹⁵ Coddington, 289-290; Coghill to "Pappy Ma and Mit," July 9 and July 17, 1863, John F. Coghill Papers, #1724, SHC, typed transcript in GNMP.
- ²¹⁶ Cramer to his wife, July 8, 1863, private collection (Martin Gehring, Knoxville, Tennessee), copy of typed transcript in GNMP. Although wounded at the North Anna River on May 24, 1864, Cramer reenlisted that fall and was eventually discharged as a Veteran Volunteer in March, 1865. See Samuel Bates, *History of the Pennsylvania Volunteers* (Harrisburg: B. Singerly, State Printer, 1869), 1:269.
- ²¹⁷ William Runge, ed., *Four Years in the Confederate Artillery, The Diary of Private Henry Robinson Berkeley, 1861-5* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1961), 50. The Amherst Artillery was commanded by Capt. T. J. Kirkpatrick.
- ²¹⁸ Coddington, 290; Welch to his wife, August 2, 1863, Brooks, ed., 36-37.
- ²¹⁹ Lord, ed., 202-203.
- ²²⁰ Coddington, 278-280.
- ²²¹ Silliman to his mother, July 3, 1863 in, Marcus, ed., 39, 41; William H. Warren Journal, entry for July 1, 1863, YUL, transcribed copy in GNMP. Both Silliman and Warren were later captured that day. Before reaching Gettysburg the 11th Corps had marched thirteen miles, some of it at the double quick, at first over slippery roads caused by rain showers, and then under hot and humid conditions.
- ²²² Coddington, 287-288; David G. Thomson, ed., "Civil War Letters by Brig. Gen. David Thomson, 82nd Regiment, Ohio Volunteer Infantry" unpublished work, copy of typed transcript in GNMP.
- ²²³ Baumgartner, 44.
- ²²⁴ Old letter, August 11, 1863, FSNMP.
- ²²⁵ "Monton" to the *Danbury Times*, sometime in the fall, 1863, "The Seventeenth Connecticut Volunteer Infantry website (<http://home.att.net/~DogSgt/Seventeenth.html>). Baily's pen name was "Monton."
- ²²⁶ Warren Journal, entry for July 1, 1863, YUL, 54.
- ²²⁷ Coddington, 291; Gordon letter, July 7, 1863, Gordon Family Papers, UG.
- ²²⁸ Baumgartner, 52.
- ²²⁹ Baily letter, *Danbury Times*. Col. Fowler was killed by either a fragment of shell or a glancing blow from a solid shot. Lt. Henry W. Chatfield was the adjutant. Chatfield was later killed at the Battle of Volusia, Florida, February 2, 1865.
- ²³⁰ Barbara Croner, ed., *A Sergeant's Story, The Civil War Diary of Jacob J. Zorn, 1862-1865* (Apollo, Pennsylvania: Closson Press, 1999), 67. Zorn was a member of the 142nd Pennsylvania and was assigned to the pioneers of the 1st Corps.
- ²³¹ Baily letter, *Danbury Times*.
- ²³² Warren Journal, entry for July 1, 1863, YUL.
- ²³³ Coddington, 280-281, 309-310.
- ²³⁴ Allan Nevins, ed., *Diary of Battle, The Personal Journals of Colonel Charles S. Wainwright, 1861-1865* (Gettysburg: Stan Clark Military Books, 1962), 235.
- ²³⁵ Taylor letter, July 29, 1863, William B. Floyd Collection, typed transcript in GNMP. There is a scarcity of accounts from the members of Heth's division concerning the fighting on July 1. This is probably the result of the division's role in "Pickett's Charge" and the survivors focus on the horrific events of July 3, thus overshadowing the action they participated in two days earlier.
- ²³⁶ Wheeler letter to his parents, July 11, 1863, Wheeler Papers, UW.
- ²³⁷ Coddington, 293-294; Sterling to his father, July 2, 1863, Letter of Captain J. Frank Sterling, State

University of New Jersey, Rutgers Special Collections and Archives, Rutgers University Library [hereafter cited as RUL], transcription in GNMP. Though Sterling did not at first believe his wound to be serious, he died as a result of it just four months later on November 6, 1863.

²³⁸ Perry to his friends, July 2, 1863, copy of typed transcript in GNMP.

²³⁹ Musser to Mr. D. Ribu, December 10, 1863, John D. Musser Papers, USAMHI, copy of typed transcript in GNMP.

²⁴⁰ Musser to unknown, September 15, 1863 and December 10, 1863 to Mr. D. Ribu, John D. Musser Papers, USAMHI.

²⁴¹ Coddington, 292-294; Cramer letter, July 11, 1863, private collection (Martin Gehring, Knoxville, Tennessee).

²⁴² Clare to "William," July 5, 1863, William Keating Clare Papers, DU.

²⁴³ Calder to his mother, July 8, 1863, William Calder Papers, UNC.

²⁴⁴ Coddington, 293-294; Brooks, ed., 37.

²⁴⁵ Shooter to "dear McIntyre," July 20, 1863, Charleston CWRT newsletter "Drumbeat" June 1993, photocopy in GNMP.

²⁴⁶ Nevins, ed., 235-236.

²⁴⁷ Coddington, 295-296; Judd to unknown, unknown date, extracts of letter published in the *Herkimer County Journal*, July 25, 1863, typed transcript in GNMP.

²⁴⁸ Baily letter, *Danbury Times*; Gorman to mother, unknown date, NCSA. Gorman's estimate of prisoners was overly optimistic or exaggerated. The most reliable sources place the Union captured on July 1, 1863 at approximately 3,600. See Coddington, 309.

²⁴⁹ Croner, ed., 67.

²⁵⁰ Coddington, 309; Slagle to his brother, September 13, 1864, in "Letter of First Lieut. Jacob F. Slagle, Co. D, 149th Penna. Vols.," Eastern Pennsylvania Civil War Round Table [hereafter cited as EPCWRT], typed transcription in GNMP.

²⁵¹ Jackson to his brother, July 20, 1863, in Jones, "Going Back into the Union ..." *CWTI*, Jan/Feb. 1991, 56-57.

²⁵² Coddington, 284-285, 297-298; Nevins, ed., 237. A small controversy developed after the battle between the Hancock and Howard factions over who was more responsible for recognizing the importance of Cemetery Hill. The most reliable sources indicate that Howard realized the hill's importance first (as he was at Gettysburg before Hancock) and that both worked together to rally the 1st and 11th Corps troops on the hill that afternoon. See Harry Pfanz, *Gettysburg—The First Day* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2001), 136-138, 338-339.

²⁵³ Nevins, ed., 238.

²⁵⁴ Capt. R. J. Hancock to Maj. John W. Daniel, January 27, 1904, John W. Daniel Papers, University of Virginia [hereafter cited as UV], typed transcript in GNMP; Capt. Neill W. Ray, "The Sixth Regiment" in Walter Clark, ed., *Histories of the Several Regiments and Battalions from North Carolina in the Great War, 1861-'65* (Raleigh, North Carolina: E. M. Uzzell, Printer and Binder, 1901), 312; Calder to his mother, July 8, 1863, William Calder Papers, UNC. Hancock, who had belonged to the 9th Louisiana, wrote to Daniel concerning the possibility of attacking Cemetery Hill on July 1 that the "soldiers ... knew [the] advantages of a fight as well as the Generals[,] and loud and furious were the curses for not allowing us to go on and take Cemetery Hill that day." Capt. Ray wrote "We thought the battle of Gettysburg was over.... Our men were anxious to proceed and take possession of Cemetery Hill...."

²⁵⁵ Gorman to his mother, unknown date, printed in an unknown newspaper, NCSA.

²⁵⁶ Calder to his mother, July 8, 1863, William Calder Papers, UNC; Gorman to his mother, unknown date, printed in an unknown newspaper, NCSA; Michael W. Taylor, "Ramseur's Brigade in the Gettysburg Campaign: A Newly Discovered Account by Capt. James I. Harris, Co. I, 30th Regt. N.C.T." *The Gettysburg Magazine*, Issue 17 (Dayton, Ohio: Morningside House, Inc., July 1997), 34.

²⁵⁷ Seymour Journal, Schoff Collection, UM; Gorman to his mother, unknown date, printed in unknown newspaper, NCSA.

²⁵⁸ Seymour Journal, Schoff Collection, UM.

²⁵⁹ Gorman to his mother, unknown date, printed in unknown newspaper, NCSA. See Coddington, 315-321, for a full analysis of this controversial event.

²⁶⁰ Dawes letters, July 4 and July 6, 1863, Dawes Papers, WHS.

²⁶¹ Pfanz, 350, 351. Accurate statistics concerning the casualties of July 1, 1863 are extremely difficult to

assess as many units fought on July 2 and/or 3. Most casualty returns for both armies were not separated out by the day they were sustained, thus making it nearly impossible to calculate accurately the losses suffered on the first day.

²⁶² Frederick Phisterer, *Statistical Records, A Treasury of Information About the U. S. Civil War* (Carlisle, Pennsylvania: John Kallman Publishers, 1996), 213-219; Livermore, 77-145; James E. and Dean S. Thomas, 16, 22, 24, 26, 30, 34, 38, 42, 54, 58, 60. Ranked against other battles, the combined casualties suffered on July 1, 1863 were the eleventh highest of the entire war. It should be noted, however, that of the ten other battles, all but two (Antietam and Fredericksburg) consisted of multiple days of combat. Only those two single-day battles had higher casualties than the first day at Gettysburg.

²⁶³ Cramer to his wife, August 8, 1863, private collection (Martin Gehring, Knoxville, Tennessee), GNMP; Calder letter, July 8, 1863, William Calder Papers, UNC.

²⁶⁴ Clark to "Dear friend," July 9, 1863, Lewis Leigh Collection, Book 16, USAMHI, transcript in GNMP.

²⁶⁵ Barber letter, July 8, 1863 in, Barber and Swinson, eds., 135, 137.

²⁶⁶ Busy and Martin, 237, 239-241, 253-255, 270, 286-292. The 1st Corps calculation does not count Brig. Gen. George Stannard's Vermont Brigade, for it was not engaged on July 1. Even if the brigade is included, nearly 70 percent of all 1st Corps regiments lost half or more of their men. The six regiments that suffered greater than 50 percent were 24th Michigan, 2nd Wisconsin, 147th New York, 16th Maine, 151st Pennsylvania, and 149th Pennsylvania. Calculating the losses taken by Confederate regiments on the first day of the battle is more difficult, as many of them were also engaged on July 2 and 3 and the losses listed on their returns are not broken down by day. As a whole, however, it seems that these regiments suffered significantly less. Examples include the brigades of Gordon and Ramseur, which were both engaged on July 1 but were idle the remainder of the battle. They took approximately 30 and 27 percent casualties respectively.

²⁶⁷ Dawes to Mary (his fiancée), July 4 and 6, 1863, Dawes Papers, WHS.

²⁶⁸ Busey and Martin, 241; Musser to unknown, September 15, 1863, John Musser Papers, USAMHI. Lt. Col. Musser continued to command the 143rd Pennsylvania until he was mortally wounded on May 6, 1864 at the Wilderness. See David L. Richards, *Priceless Treasures, A History of the Muchy Soldiers' Memorial* (Muchy, Pennsylvania: Muchy Historical Society, 2001), 61-65.

²⁶⁹ Barber to his wife and children, August 3, 1863 in, Barber and Swinson, eds., 135, 137.

²⁷⁰ Coghill to "Pappy Ma and Mit," July 9, 1863, Coghill Papers, SHC.

²⁷¹ Thomson to daughter, July 16, August 11 and 19, 1863, Thomas, ed., "Civil War Letters," David Thomson Letters, GNMP; John W. Busey, *These Honored Dead, The Union Casualties at Gettysburg* (Hightstown, New Jersey: Longstreet House, 1996), 228.

²⁷² Welch to his wife, August 2, 1863 in, Brooks, ed., 38.

²⁷³ Perry to "Dear Friends," July 2, 1863, GNMP.

²⁷⁴ Runge, ed., 50-51.

²⁷⁵ Slagle to his brother, September 13, 1864, in "Letter of First Lieut. Jacob F. Slagle..." EPCWRT.

²⁷⁶ Breck to his wife, July 2, 1863 in, Blake McKelvey, ed., "Rochester in the Civil War," *The Rochester Historical Society*, XXII (1944).

²⁷⁷ Hunter to his mother, July 2, 1863, GNMP.

²⁷⁸ Lord, ed, 203-204, 205. Col. Henry Morrow, 24th Michigan, who was captured on July 1, also commented on the respect that many Confederate officers held for the determination of the Union troops that day. In his official report Morrow wrote, "During the time I was a prisoner I conversed freely with distinguished rebel officers in relation to the battle on the 1st, and, without exception, they spoke in terms of admiration of the conduct of our troops.... One of them informed me that Lieut. Gen. A. P. Hill said that he had never known the Federals to fight so well." See *OR*, Series 1, 27(1):272.

²⁷⁹ Breck to his wife, July 2, 1863 in, McKelvey, ed., "Rochester in the Civil War."
