



Entangled Intentionally

“ . . . it was their intention, while Entangling us
“ . . . to cut us off from the town”
The 11th Army Corps and the Battle North of Town

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"The simultaneous appearance of the enemy's battalions on so long a line led me to believe that they had been lying in position for some time behind the woods in our front, fully prepared for us, and that it was their intention, while entangling us in a fight where we were, to throw their left wing around our right, and thus to cut us off from the town."¹ These are the words of Union Major General Carl Schurz, who came to believe that his 11th Corps men were craftily drawn in toward Oak Hill by Confederate Major General Robert E. Rodes' division to set them up for a flanking maneuver delivered by Major General Jubal A. Early's division. Furthermore, Schurz assessed that the "enemy's battalions" on the first day of the battle remained concealed "behind the woods" and were "fully prepared for us" until the opportune moment to achieve this task. In other words, Confederate regiments and brigades in these two divisions used the terrain to manufacture surprise in their decisive flanking maneuver. Captain Alfred E. Lee, Company E, 82nd Ohio arrived at the same conclusion when he wrote,

But the enemy had strong reserves ... In fact, it began to be suspected that we were being cunningly dallied with by a greatly superior force, with the design of decoying our left wing beyond supporting distance, while our right might, in the meantime, be circumvented and overwhelmed. Such a scheme, if successful, would not only effect the overthrow of our little army, but would completely separate it from its slender reserves on Cemetery Hill.²

Captain Lee would add that, "The impression that such a design was being attempted was soon confirmed by a report from the skirmish-line that the enemy, in heavy masses, was endeavoring

to turn our right flank. The nature of the ground favored this attempt, since the woods and ravines on that flank afforded a mask to the movement."³

What both Schurz and Lee witnessed was indeed a scheme being directed and carried out by the Confederate 2nd Army Corps under Lieutenant General Richard S. Ewell. As will be discussed in the pages to follow, all significant Confederate movements against the Union 11th Corps on July 1, 1863 were deliberate, calculated, and measured. Ewell's men were not merely in the right place at the right time, but rather were makers of their own fortunes on July 1. The story of the 11th Corps being entangled intentionally by their adversary on the first day of the battle then begins that morning with their hard march from Emmitsburg. It is in the race and rush to the battlefield where one finds the early stages of entanglement, so let us start there.

The forced march in early daylight was characterized by damp roads and detours, by high heat and humidity, which was neither a good nor a bad sign of things to come, but circumstances were difficult nonetheless. The double-time advance culminated with all three divisions of Major General Oliver O. Howard's 11th Corps entering the southern outskirts of Gettysburg around noon. Jonathon Boynton of the 157th New York remembered that, "The day was bright and clear and very warm. We marched at a rapid gait."⁴ Christian Boehm shared similar memories concerning the pace and urgency of the march, recalling that "... oncoming Union couriers reported that the enemy was storming ahead. Now we marched four miles on the double, reaching Gettysburg breathless and exhausted."⁵ An officer from the 61st Ohio recounted, "The hurried orders of march, and finally the double quick, brought us into the little village of Gettysburg ..."⁶ At the end of a march that resembled a race to the finish line, Howard's three divisions nearly crossed paths at the juncture of the Taneytown and Emmitsburg roads. Major General Carl Schurz's 3rd Division, soon to be turned over to Brigadier General Alexander Schimmelfenning when Schurz assumed corps command, was immediately ahead of Brigadier General Adolf von Steinwehr's 2nd Division, which came in by way of the Taneytown road. Meanwhile Brigadier General Francis C. Barlow's 1st Division, after stopping briefly alongside the soon-to-be famous Peach Orchard, found its way into town by the Emmitsburg road. In doing so, all three divisions would pass either directly over or around the base of Cemetery Hill, the decisive position of the battlefield. This was not by accident, because Major General John F. Reynolds had ordered the 11th Corps to Cemetery Hill with a portion of Steinwehr's division being left there in reserve.⁷

Schurz reached this intersection first and affirmed face-to-face with Major General Oliver O. Howard that Reynolds was dead, killed in the morning fighting, that Howard was the senior corps commander on the field, and that he, Schurz, was now the 11th Corps commander in what quickly was becoming a crisis situation. Howard likely informed Schurz of his intention to extend the 1st Corps defensive position west and north of town in the effort to contest every inch of ground while the rest of the Army of the Potomac concentrated behind them. Earlier, Reynolds had verbally sent word to Major General George Gordon Meade, through aide-de-camp Captain Stephen D. Weed to, "Tell him [Meade] the enemy are advancing in strong force, and that I fear they will get to the heights [Cemetery Hill] beyond the town before I can. I will fight them inch by inch, and if driven into the town, I will barricade the streets and hold them back as long as possible."⁸ Howard later clarified the goal, which was, "that an advance guard of the main army should meet the enemy boldly, dispute the ground foot by foot, till the army behind it can be concentrated and prepared for effective resistance."⁹ With the Emmitsburg, Taneytown, and Baltimore roads all coming together at Cemetery Hill, that position became the point of concentration for Meade's army throughout the day.

To accomplish this mission, Schimmelfenning would rush the 3rd Division north through the town by way of Washington Street and eventually out onto the plains beyond the college. A correspondent with General Schimmelfenning reflected, "and on the march from Emmitsburg to Gettysburg with a detail of 10 Corporals one from each company of the brigade marched in rear as rearguard to keep up stragglers. We followed Schimmelfenning through the town and halted

near the Pennsylvania College, Schimmelfenning's division was in an open field near the town."¹⁰ Panting for air and thirsty from the heat and dust, Colonel George von Amsberg's brigade became easily distracted by efforts from townspeople along the way who greeted the soldiers with pitchers of water and morsels of food. To counter this, officers did their duty and kept the men moving along to their appointed destiny.

Every aspect of the crisis was developing so quickly that reaction time was critical to the outcome, and the 11th Corps was doing its part to not squander that most valuable commodity of time. Lieutenant Augustus Horstman of the 45th New York Infantry emphasized that General Schurz wasted no time after being briefed by General Howard. Horstman stated that Schurz, "gave an immediate order for double quick which step was kept through the town out north to the battlefield and our regiment deployed in double quick on the battlefield at 11:30 A.M."¹¹ Reaching the northern outskirts of town, the 1st Brigade, now under George von Amsberg [since Schimmelfenning now commanded the division], immediately assembled beyond the Adam Doersom house, which perhaps later became a major burial ground for southerners who died at the college hospital.¹² Leading the way, Captain Francis Irsch of the 45th New York Infantry guided four companies up the Mummasburg road. He did so to create an immediate skirmish line in the fields east of this road with the initial purpose of contesting Major Eugene Blackford's Alabama sharpshooters, who were operating between the Mummasburg and Carlisle roads.

To address this issue, Lieutenant Horstman stated that with "the first battalion deploying as a mere skirmish line, having to cover a wide field, immediately on the right of the line of the 1st Corps, our regiment established connection with the last regiment on the extreme right of the 1st Corps. The second battalion of the 45th New York was held in reserve."¹³ Accompanying Irsch's forward line and to his right eventually were the balance of 61st Ohio and 74th Pennsylvania regiments. Not lagging far behind was the 157th New York Infantry moving up to a swale astride Mummasburg Road at the Hagy farm and directly in support of Irsch's men. In the same swale approximately two hundred yards to their right were the reliable men of the 82nd Illinois, who waited closely in back of the 61st Ohio and 74th Pennsylvania regiments, while the majority of "[Captain Hubert] Dilger's [1st Ohio Light] battery [I] was in the rear..."¹⁴

Although the immediate task at hand was to contest the Alabama marksmen who were both harassing Thomas C. Devin's brigade of cavalry and probing around the right flank of the Union 1st Corps, there was a greater strategy taking shape. It was becoming clear to Howard, Schurz, and 1st Corps commander Major General Abner Doubleday that Confederate occupation of Oak Hill jeopardized the whole federal position. Oak Hill in a sense was the key to the whole advanced position of the Union army on July 1, in the same way that Cemetery Hill would serve that purpose the remainder of the battle. Oak Hill, as later with Cemetery Hill, rested on the apex of the Union salient line. Like Cemetery Hill, Oak Hill was the point where the two halves of the Army of the Potomac connected and where Union men were most susceptible to both enfilade fire and concentrated fire. General Howard would acknowledge that, "The First Corps ... made a right angle with the Eleventh Corps, the vertex being near the Mummasburg road."¹⁵ Regarding the threat of Confederate artillery posted on Oak Hill, he added that, "From this point [on Oak Hill] he [Lieutenant Colonel Thomas H. Carter] opened fire upon the Eleventh Corps, and also more or less enfilading [Brigadier General John C.] Robinson's division, of the First Corps."¹⁶ The Oak Ridge position would constitute the first salient of many in the three-day battle of Gettysburg.

Therefore, seizing Oak Hill became a priority for Schurz's men, and Howard's orders at first reflected that. Howard reported that, "I therefore ordered General Schurz to ... push forward a thick line of skirmishers, to seize the point [Oak Hill] first indicated, as a relief and support to the First Corps."¹⁷ The drawback with executing these orders however was that it became increasingly apparent, as the afternoon wore on, that the hill was heavily reinforced and could not be taken. At least the 11th Corps had to give the appearance that they would try. They would have to threaten Major General Rodes there and make him fear of an attack-in-reverse, which

indeed worked for a while. The mission was effective until later, when Major General Early's division fell on Howard's flank.

Upon further inspection, it is evident that Rodes' attacks were aimed directly south with the object of rolling up the 1st Corps flank toward the Chambersburg pike, presumably joining Major General Henry Heth and Major General William D. Pender's assault at right angles from the west. If one traces the general direction of Rodes' various brigades' afternoon assaults, this must be the conclusion. Confederate strategy almost always involved a one-two punch, with one of two parts serving as the fixing force while the other was the flanking force. The defender would be forced to decide where to place his reserves in the face of cooperating attacks from two directions. This pattern of attack can be easily identified in General Robert E. Lee's army at least a dozen more times during the Battle of Gettysburg, and perhaps a couple hundred more instances during the war itself. It is therefore impossible to understand Heth and Pender's movements apart from the cooperation of Rodes during the afternoon of July 1, 1863.

Thus, 11th Corps' strategy had to be focused on threatening Rodes' perch from his flank and rear. In the simplest terms, that is what the monuments on both West and East Howard Avenue reflect today. This is also in keeping with Baron Antoine Henri Jomini's discussion of the advantages of operating with an interior line. He describes an option where one or both wings of a salient can pivot on the central point, much like the encircling and swinging pivot of a compass, and thus instantly pass from the defense to the offense.¹⁸ Von Amsberg's forward movement represented in part the beginnings of such a textbook maneuver with his right wing, or "crochet" as Jomini preferred to call it, swinging around the central position of Oak Hill.¹⁹

This brings us to the subject of 11th Corps monument placement along what is today Howard Avenue. Although the direction of these monuments does indeed reflect a textbook maneuver executed by the crochet of the Union line, the monuments are not as far advanced as they should be. The location of these granite markers has more to do with a philosophy which pervaded battlefield preservation thought immediately following the Civil War, than with an accurate assessment of the battleline. Prior to the establishment of Yellowstone National Park in 1872, which was the first of its kind, and before the National Park Service was made official with the Organic Act in 1916, the belief in setting aside large tracts of land for historical preservation had not come of age. The Sickles legislation, which established Gettysburg National Military Park in 1895, was comprehensive and expansive for its time, but passage of his bill occurred thirty years after the war, when the country itself was shifting its views towards conservation and preservation.

The 1890s, for instance, were marked by widespread industrialization, expansion of the railroad, and settlement of the western part of the United States. Along with it came unprecedented pollution to the water and air, and alteration of the landscape through stripping of timber, coal, and ore. Frederick Jackson Turner's "The Significance of the Frontier" (1893) warned American readers of disappearing frontiers through rapid settlement of the West. The cumulative effect was the birth by 1900 of progressivism in America, and with it the need for the federal government to permanently protect the nation's resources. It was in this spirit that Gettysburg National Military Park was created.

However, in the years that preceded this national movement, battlefields such as Gettysburg, Antietam, and Fredericksburg expanded slowly under a more conservative approach, which one might refer to as the "avenue approach."²⁰ The feeling among early battlefield preservationists, such as the Gettysburg Battlefield Memorial Association (GBMA), was that areas of historical significance were mostly agricultural and would always be so. These preservationists had limited funds generated from state grants, personal donations, and fundraisers. Furthermore they did not have the means to manage thousands of acres anyway, but again there was no need to worry, or so they thought, about preserving agricultural space that would naturally be maintained by farmers.

It was within this context that the GBMA acquired rights of access for monument arrangement upon the first-day fields north of Gettysburg. Working with farmers to secure right-of-ways through and around farms, the egresses gained were often wagon paths on the fringes of farmland, around the borders of deeds, and parallel to cattle fences. Frequently the thin line of property that was negotiated for sale was the farmer's worst piece of land, where thickets, rocks, and trees had yet to be cleared, providing no real advantage for agriculture use. Once a trail around and across was obtained, monuments were lined up and stacked together in accordance with the newly invented avenue with a sometimes-questionable regard for accuracy. This is precisely what happened with the western extension of Howard Avenue, where the placement of von Amsberg's monuments grossly misrepresents his brigade's true location. Besides the demarcation being correct for the greater part of Dilger's and Lieutenant William Wheeler's batteries, the rest of von Amsberg's line is completely misleading. One might conclude that the original location of these two batteries became the hinge-pin for the establishment of West Howard Avenue.

So where were von Amsberg's regiments? Primarily they were 150 to 200 yards west and north of West Howard Avenue, between the Mummasburg road on the left and Carlisle road on the right.²¹ When Captain Francis Irsch led his four companies of the 45th New York out to meet the enemy in unison with Colonel Stephen McGroarty's 61st Ohio and Colonel Adolph von Hartung's 74th Pennsylvania, they advanced beyond the Hagy farm and orchard. Crouched low, perhaps at trail arms, they crept down into a ravine with an east-west running fence, which was fitted with a custom swing gate leading into the Moses McClean-J. Martin barnyard. The fence at that time was post and rail but is today merely a straight defile distinguished only by small trees, brush, and thickets. Parallel to and in front of this fence line was, and is, a farm lane connecting the farmhouse and barn with Mummasburg Road. Today this lane is the site of the extreme advance marker for the 45th New York. Between the fence line and the parallel lane in front of it was a cherry thicket, which gave added concealment to von Amsberg's front line.

The right of the 74th Pennsylvania interestingly was anchored on a fence line running diagonally from northeast to southwest tracing the remnant of an old road that once connected Table Rock Road from one end with the Mummasburg road on the other. Prior to the construction in 1830 of the southern extension of the Carlisle road, which tied the northern fringes of town directly to the town diamond, this earlier road was the main route north for Gettysburg travelers. From 1798 to 1830, travelers paid a toll next to the college at the Kitsman-Doersom house and changed direction from Mummasburg to Carlisle.²² By 1830, this road was abandoned in favor of the "new" or Newville road, but was still recognizable in 1863.²³ An odd-looking zigzag in the middle of West Howard Avenue today is a remnant of this 18th-century road and aligns perfectly with the fence line that the 74th Pennsylvania guided on into the fields below Oak Hill. It may not be a coincidence that the regimental monument was positioned in the zigzag. The specific section of this old road on which the right of the 74th Pennsylvania eventually rested was to the northeast, where it criss-crossed the Carlisle road. Thus the 74th Pennsylvania was buttressed on its right with a double-layer of fences from both roads.

As for the two supporting regiments of the brigade, they were also moved beyond where their monument on the avenue locates them. The 157th New York, for instance, was stationed in close support of the 45th New York, deploying across the Mummasburg road in a swale which was east of the Hagy farm buildings and orchard. Aligned with them on the right in the same dead space was the 82nd Illinois. One section of Dilger's battery, under Lieutenant Clark Scripture, was moved forward to the north of Hagy's orchard, perhaps on a farm road that ran directly west from the edge of town up through the gate to the McClean barn. This road too may have been the guide and axis of advance for the 61st Ohio. All that remains of this field road today is a trace of its width measured by a break in the tangled undergrowth, where the perpendicular swing-gate entrance into the barnyard fence used to be. Taking into account all of

the roads on Howard's front, north of town, it is little wonder that it was covered with twenty-two fences.²⁴

Even though it is evident that von Amsberg's men were considerably out in front of the brigade's monument avenue, there is another issue which blocks one's full acceptance and realization of this fact. It is the hang-up over two words: *skirmish line*. If one refers to von



The line of small trees and shrubs mark the advanced position of Schimmelfennig's brigade. From left to right, the 45th New York, 61st Ohio, and 74th Pennsylvania occupied this line, largely marked by a board fence in July 1863. This was their true position rather than the post-war Howard Avenue. All photos by author.

Amsberg's forward regiments as a skirmish line, then it is easy to lapse back into the thought of West Howard Avenue being the main line, but really there is a game of semantics being played here. Perhaps these word games exist to be in compliance with the park-avenue concept or perhaps the monuments truly deceive. In either case the mental block persists because of the belief somehow that von Amsberg's regiments around the Hagy farm were not the main line, but rather a partial one in advance.

There are three other reasons for calling the main line a skirmish line. One of these is that four of George von Amsberg's five regiments were

undersized, averaging only about 150 to 170 enlisted men or nearly half that found in other Union regiments in other corps at Gettysburg. Disasters in previous campaigns had rendered them a skirmish line in appearance at full strength. The 61st Ohio was at less than full strength because about 40 percent of the men were in Maryland guarding trains on July 1, and did not join the regiment until that evening on Cemetery Hill.²⁵ The 45th New York did not move out all at once either. Captain Francis Irsch's four companies pushed out first and temporarily became detached from Colonel Adolphus Dobke, who was with the six remaining ones that soon followed and came up on Irsch's left at right angles. Reduced numbers, then, gave the impression of a skirmish line.

A second reason why they appeared to be a skirmish line was because they had so much ground to cover and had to spread out to do it. Formations of columns would not have filled this void. To do this their companies likely "divided into two platoons, and each platoon subdivided into two sections; the comrades in battle, forming groups of four men."²⁶ In accordance with military instruction, "The interval between skirmishers depends on the extent of ground to be covered; but, in general, it is not proper that the groups of four men should be removed more than forty paces from each other. The habitual distance between men of the same group in open grounds will be five paces, in no case will they lose sight of each other."²⁷ Protocol demanded, then, that they expand, and that is what the skirmish line did.

A third reason for von Amsberg's men adopting a skirmish line front had to do with the commanding position held by Confederate artillery. Ewell's guns were configured to produce fire from three directions across the bowl-like environment occupied by the 11th Corps, making it too

deadly for them to maintain the traditional battleline. They had to fan out to avoid being an easy target. Captain J. V. Pierce, 147th New York Infantry, articulated this best when he wrote, "Artillery against skirmishers, is like shooting mosquitoes with a rifle."²⁸

As they moved out the first three regiments would immediately have come in contact with Blackford's Alabama sharpshooters, who were screening Rodes as far left as perhaps the Harrisburg road. Christian Boehm proudly remembered twenty-five years later that, "Immediately four companies, under the fearless Captain Irsch were sent out as skirmishers and pressed the enemy sharpshooters back one third of a mile and thus made contact with the already engaged 1st Army Corps..."²⁹ The historical sketch later provided by the 45th New York regimental committee added more color recording that,

At first, the four companies encountered only a Virginia Battery (Page's) near McLean's barn, and an enfilading battery of the enemy on a hill to the east, doing little damage at first, while deploying to the right in the wheat or rye fields continued. When this was completed the skirmish line advanced, fronting towards Oak Hill, and now encountered a battalion of Alabama sharpshooters, under Major Blackford, stretched along the lane at the foot of Oak Hill to the apple orchard, at or near Hagy's Farm, close to the Mummasburg road on our left, and some of them in a skirmish line in the wheat or rye fields aforesaid, in our front. The four companies pushed forward slowly, gaining ground under a terrific artillery and sharpshooter fire, say about four hundred yards, with considerable loss, and then sought shelter behind fences, lying down awhile, but keeping up the contest with the enemy's sharpshooters and Page's Battery with our long-range Remington rifles effectively.³⁰

Opposing Irsch's New Yorkers were Major Blackford's Alabama sharpshooters. Composed of skilled riflemen from one battalion of the 5th Alabama in Edward A. O'Neal's brigade, these handpicked marksmen worked together as an independent force. To shuttle their movements back and forth between the Mummasburg and Carlisle roads, they likely would have used a farm lane running north – south, which connected the Moses McClean and Samuel Cobean farms. This same farm lane loosely tied the position of George P. Doles' Georgia brigade from the ravines in front of the latter farm with the rest of Rodes' division on Oak Hill. It also provided a conduit for shifting Captain W. J. Reese's battery away from the rest of Lieutenant Colonel Thomas H. Carter's battalion on Oak Hill toward the Cobean farm. Much of that farm lane today has been co-opted into the Gettysburg Scenic Railway.

The fall-back position of Blackford's men became configured to a post-and-rail fence east of the McClean farm buildings, at right angles with von Amsberg's men. From beyond this fence, which is still visible but greatly deteriorated, Blackford's men received von Amsberg's fire across the hypotenuse of the 90-degree angle of fire. Eventually Blackford's line melted back easterly into an orchard, trading places with three Alabama regiments of O'Neal's brigade that emerged, from the now-decayed fence area, to attack the extreme right flank of the Union 1st Corps at Oak Ridge.

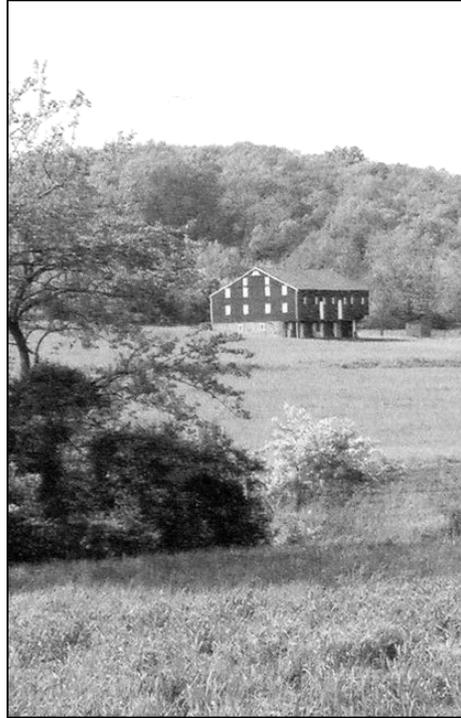
It is readily clear what O'Neal was trying to accomplish had coordination entered the equation. Brigadier generals O'Neal, Alfred Iverson, and Junius Daniel were to fall with their brigades upon the federal right flank, occupied by Brigadier General John C. Robinson's division and Brigadier General Lysander Cutler's brigade, with one of two purposes in mind. Most likely their objective was to reach the Chambersburg pike, but this could be achieved in one of two ways, with Major General Abner Doubleday being forced to pick his poison. The first and most direct way to reach the object was by hitting the Union flank in successive, sequential attacks, rolling the flank up to a point of convergence with Heth and Pender. Had Doubleday resisted this scheme, apart from the help of the 11th Corps, he would have been forced into a catch twenty-two

situation of having to decide how many men of James S. Wadsworth's division to shift down to refuse his far right flank. This is always the game the defender has to play when exposed to a coordinated attack on front and flank. In these situations both sides understand that the flank itself is not the primary objective, but rather a means to gaining a decisive point further up the line. If Rodes' primary objective was to reach the Chambersburg pike, then the presence of the 11th Corps was a real problem.

When the 12th, 26th, and 6th Alabama, right to left, of O'Neal's brigade emerged into the clearing around the McClean buildings, they represented a critical cog in the overall Confederate scheme. They were to draw enough attention from Robinson to aid the remainder of Rodes' division in beginning the process of rolling up the 1st Corps flank. Unfortunately for them several factors combined to bring disaster. First, they were at 60 percent strength because the 3rd and 5th Alabama regiments were not in close support. Secondly, the three regiments which began the assault were advancing under the belief that coordination was in effect with Iverson's brigade, yet broken communication and poor visibility disrupted these arrangements. The chief culprit here was the geography of Oak Ridge, because it obscured movements from one side to the other. Even today it represents a great divide between the 1st and 11th Corps line; between the suggested auto tour and the optional one. A third factor leading to O'Neal's disaster was grounded in George von Amsberg's timely presence and his vantage point to deliver fire directly into the left flank of the 6th Alabama as it passed them from right to left.

Concealed in a ravine, covered partially by both a fence and a cherry thicket, Captain Irsch's four companies, McGroarty's 61st Ohio, and von Hartung's 74th Pennsylvania popped away. Rushing forward to help were the remaining six companies of the 45th New York under the overall command of Lieutenant Colonel Adolphus Dobke. Hustling around to form parallel with the Mummasburg road to the right of Colonel Peter Lyle's 90th Pennsylvania and perhaps Colonel James L. Bates' 12th Massachusetts of the 1st Corps, Dobke's fighting men fired into O'Neal's front.

Multiple Confederate misfortunes, none greater than von Amsberg's strong presence, undid O'Neal's assault, and the Alabamians were soon sent backpedaling. The 45th New York especially pursued them vigorously into the Moses McClean - J. Martin barnyard surrounding perhaps as many as "300 prisoners" of war who had sought refuge in and around the barn.³¹ To achieve such a feat, all three of von Amsberg's front line regiments had to have been very active. They likely were, but not enough of them survived the rest of the battle to leave an account. To date, source material from both the 61st Ohio and 74th Pennsylvania at Gettysburg is conspicuously absent, and therefore the particulars of their repulsing O'Neal are too. However, it is unlikely that the 45th New York and 90th Pennsylvania alone overwhelmed the four Alabama regiments that eventually made the attempt. What also may be discerned from this early 11th Corps victory is that it further bears out that more than a small skirmish line was out there. The



View of the Moses McClean Farm where O'Neal's men first emerged and later retreated too under the pursuit of the 45th New York.

usual Union skirmish line representing 10 percent of a brigade's strength could not have overpowered a Confederate brigade line.

Critical analysis of this triumph suggests one more intriguing reality. That is, von Amsberg's three-regiment front line not only greatly contributed to the defeat of O'Neal, which is important in itself, but more significantly, it caused Iverson's assault to fail by granting Brigadier General Henry Baxter's brigade of Robinson's division undivided attention against the North Carolinians. The blame heaped on Iverson over these many years should be shared with the 45th New York, 61st Ohio, and 74th Pennsylvania. Without their aggressive and timely action, O'Neal's brigade should have overrun the one or two 1st Corps regiments that opposed them and threatened the rear while Iverson and Daniel capitalized on the disarray in front that would follow. A succession of events in this order could have forced the brigades of Brigadier General Lysander Cutler and Colonel Roy Stone to shift north to meet the threat, thus exposing the right flank of Brigadier General Solomon Meredith's brigade to Pender's final push.

While this drama was unfolding, another one was about to begin further to the right, between the Carlisle, Table Rock, Harrisburg-Heidlersburg, and York roads. A grand set-up was starting to take shape as Lieutenant General Richard S. Ewell's men played a game of cat and mouse with the right of the 11th Corps line. As the officers of the Colonel Wladimir B. Krzyzanowski's brigade watched von Amsberg's success through field glasses from afar, they immediately relayed news of victory to the Union men of their brigade who were resting in J. Crawford's apple orchard and the Gettysburg Alms House orchard east of the Carlisle road. Cheers from the men greeted these encouraging reports, but they soon turned to tempered remarks of suspicion. Even as von Amsberg's brigade tasted victory, dark clouds appeared on the horizon in the form of Confederate reinforcements that could be seen building to the right.³² What did Krzyzanowski's officers see that could prove to be so disturbing?

What they saw appeared to them as a scheme or "design."³³ The traditional view of this fight has Ewell's men coming upon the field by happenstance at the right moment, but that is not what the evidence suggests. To the contrary, Ewell used part of Major General Robert E. Rodes' division as a decoy to draw 11th Corps attention towards Oak Hill, while the division of Major General Jubal A. Early by design fell on their right flank. Lee's army typically liked to take a stagnant situation and manipulate it to create an opportunity.³⁴ One force would create the opportunity while the other would seize it. That is precisely what happened here. It is necessary to retrace the steps of their deliberate actions.

The scheme started with Rodes' division turning off the Carlisle road at Keckler Hill around 11:00 A.M., with the vast majority of his men marching south along the latter hill to where it connects with Herr Ridge. From there, four of his brigades approached Oak Hill on its western side and used its slopes and wood lots for cover and concealment. Elements of that division then revealed themselves in stages, enough to draw 1st Corps troops northward and thus thin out the McPherson ridge position in favor of Heth's attacks beginning there.

Meanwhile, Brigadier General George Doles' Georgia brigade did not turn south on Keckler's Hill with the rest of Rodes' division. By design they were instructed to continue straight down the Carlisle, Middletown, or Newville road directly toward the north end of town. The purpose of this satellite mission was for Doles to serve as a bridge between Rodes' division to his right and Early's division, which was to soon come up on his left. Rodes specifically ordered Doles to use his Georgians to bait 11th Corps forces in his direction, with their right flank presented to Early's eventual assault. To this end Doles would provide sneak peaks of his strength at measured intervals to lure Barlow and Krzyzanowski out in this manner.

What greatly increased Early's chance of success was his ability to remain out of view until Doles completed the set-up, and then his force made its entry just in time to save Doles from an over-committed Union 11th Corps. This raises the question of how Early was able to achieve an element of surprise. The answer has mostly to do with design, which began with Doles' separate excursion down the Carlisle road. Colonel William Sackett's 9th New York Cavalry of

Devin's cavalry, Brigadier General John Buford's division had been screening above Barlow's division on the Harrisburg-Heidlersburg road where it junctures with Shealer Road. Operating to the left of the 9th New York Cavalry, on the same line at the crossing of Carlisle Road with Keckler Hill, were Colonel J. H. Kellogg's 17th Pennsylvania Cavalry of the same brigade and division. The screening movements of both units were greatly imbued with purpose that morning because of gathered intelligence over two days pointing toward large numbers of Confederate troops operating between the York and Harrisburg roads. Such expectations caused great anxiety for General Howard, who subsequently sent urgent dispatches to Major General Henry Slocum to hurry the Union 12th Corps to the field and to the right of his position, which did happen but only after the 11th Corps had broken.

Heightened alert was the credo then for Devin's cavalry, but Confederate deception would dull Union readiness around 11:00 A.M. as Rodes' division turned south in strength off of Carlisle Road toward Mummasburg Road and Oak Hill. Both Union cavalry outposts observed this arrival and presumed that Confederate forces, which were reported to be operating between the York and Harrisburg roads, were then accounted for. Within an hour's time, Union eyes would dim there, and in fact would develop into a blind spot.

The time and circumstances of Union cavalry letting down its guard began with a presumption made by the 17th Pennsylvania and 9th New York cavalries that the arrival of Rodes' division represented the last of the Confederate reserves. Captain Newel Cheney noted that companies C and M, 9th New York Cavalry, watched, "From the high ground on the Harrisburg road beyond Rock Creek [and that] about 11:00 o'clock a.m., a mile or more to the north across the Carlisle road could be seen the long lines of Ewell's corps advancing over the hills and across the fields, followed by heavy columns of infantry."³⁵ Captain James R. Denin of Company C, 9th New York, then sent two separate messages by two different riders to report to Devin exactly what they had seen, but neither returned. Having sent them out between perhaps 11:00 and 12:00, Denin decided to go handle it himself. Presumably he ventured over to the York road to find Devin, and then returned to the Harrisburg road only to find that his cavalry outpost near Shealer road was abandoned.

His men had deliberately fallen back to Blocher's Knoll out of concern that Doles' brigade would gain their rear and breach the connection between themselves and the 11th Corps. Regimental historian, participant, and eyewitness Cheney recorded that,

...Devin's brigade [was] to the right forming a skirmish line across the Carlisle road, which runs due north from Gettysburg to Rock Creek near the Harrisburg road. Here Devin's men opposed the approach of Ewell's corps till the Eleventh corps arrived. As the enemy greatly outnumbered his small brigade, Devin retired gradually, effecting this movement to the rear by successive formations in line by regiment. But seeing the necessity of holding the ground till an infantry force could arrive, Devin ordered the 9th New York to support the skirmish line, and forming the rest of the brigade as dismounted carbineers, he delayed the approach of Ewell until relieved by the arrival of the Eleventh corps.³⁶

As Devin fell back gradually toward the Josiah Benner farm, "effecting this movement to the rear by successive formations in line by regiment," the 9th New York left a vacuum to be filled over the next two hours by Early's division. Slowly and deliberately, his Confederate division would take advantage and camouflage its whereabouts within the well-suited terrain features above and below Shealer Road.

It is imperative to understand that Ewell's fingerprints are all over this scheme. Rodes and Early, for instance, understood that they were to work together prior to the arrival of Early's division. The very purpose of Rodes' sending Doles' brigade independently down Carlisle Road was to bait 11th Corps reserves out and away from the Harrisburg road in favor of Early's assault

there. Rodes gave precise orders that, "... Doles' brigade, which was moved somewhat to the left for this purpose, and trusting to this gallant brigade thus holding them [Barlow's division] until Early's division arrived, which I knew would be soon, and which would strike this portion of the enemy's force on the flank before it could overpower Doles."³⁷ Early in turn knew to expect to see Rodes on his right as he reached the field, and he understood which road to take so that this would happen on a parallel track.

Ewell's fingerprints are traceable even down to the brigade level. Early's lead brigade, for instance, under Brigadier General John B. Gordon, clearly waited for Barlow to face Doles to the north before he moved out from his cover for the assault. Gordon specified that his, "... men were much fatigued from long marches, and I therefore caused them to move forward slowly until within about 300 yards of the enemy's line, when the advance was as rapid as the ... ground ... would permit."³⁸ If it were not for Gordon's next statement one would be led to believe that he slowed his brigade's pace only due to fatigue. However in Gordon's next sentence he revealed other timely developments that likely point to Ewell and Early permitting him to move at a crawl. Gordon recorded, "The enemy had succeeded in gaining a position upon the left flank of Doles' brigade. ... This movement ... would necessarily have exposed his right flank ... that my brigade charged."³⁹ Such coordination points towards an invisible hand stemming from at least the corps level.

As for Early's attempt at disguise, he would place Gordon on the northern fringe of and at the top of an L-shaped patch of woods, which extended from his position at Shealer Road south a mile to Barlow's Knoll.



Hays' Louisiana brigade was concealed here during the artillery bombardment of Barlow's Knoll. The Gettysburg Lutheran Nursing & Rehabilitation Center visible on the left was the location of the artillery platform for Hilary P. Jones' Battalion, which Hays' men were supporting. The Harrisburg Road to the right marks the center of Hays' line. The swale extends to both sides of the road.

Brigadier generals Harry T. Hays and William Smith, with Colonel Isaac E. Avery, were placed to Gordon's left originally in a patch of woods slightly east of the Harrisburg road. From there, Hays and Avery would move forward to the cover and concealment provided by an artillery platform being utilized by the gunmen of Lieutenant Colonel Hillary P. Jones' battalion. Major General Jubal A. Early clarified, "... Gordon being on lower ground and there being a finger of timber in the crook of

Rock Creek, was not exposed to the view of Federal Troops, and I think he took Barlow by surprise when he advanced." He added that, "When Hays and Hoke got into line, Jones' artillery was immediately in front of Hoke's (Avery's) brigade."⁴⁰ In his description of the events, Barlow conveyed to military historian John Bachelder that he later learned from John M. Daniel of Early's staff that Early formed his columns "in line behind some farm buildings & a house, & then marched upon us directly parallel to my line."⁴¹ Whether these farm buildings were those belonging to Josiah Benner or J. B. Tacobs-Bringman, Barlow's recollection reveals that Early

used the landscape to cover and conceal his true strength until ready to begin a general engagement. When Gordon advanced apart from the rest of his division toward Blocher's Knoll, his mission was to both save Doles and aid him in holding or fixing in place the men of Barlow's division. He was to do this while Hays and Avery skirted passed the Union right flank, perhaps to envelope Barlow from the rear had that position not broken from the holding mission of Gordon. Instead of holding or fixing, Gordon surprisingly burst through and caused wholesale chaos, which might have saved Barlow's division from envelopment.

This scenario of course raises some questions about what Barlow knew. According to First Lieutenant Edward C. Culp of the 25th Ohio Infantry, who served on Barlow's staff, Culp discovered Early's presence through a fortunate glance in passing while delivering an order. The



The David Blocher or Blucher House and Barn provided more cover and concealment for Confederate movements towards Barlow's Knoll.

lieutenant reflected on how, "I caught a glimpse through an opening in the woods of moving troops ... and became satisfied they were rebel reinforcements."⁴² Startled by the discovery, he returned to Barlow at the knoll and led him to a comparable vista where approaching Confederates could be seen. Riding with Barlow to the spot, Culp recounted that, "One glance showed that I was correct. Thousands of fresh troops were hurled against our weakened lines."⁴³ It was their first inkling that a force of such magnitude was resting on their front and flank.

How could this have happened? In part, this has already been answered above with detailed descriptions of how and where Early concealed his brigades. Such cover and concealment was achieved in the first place though due to the unfortunate withdrawal of the 9th New York Cavalry back closer to the 11th Corps line. But the explanation does not stop there. Rather, full understanding begins with the realization that the 9th New York fell back to Blocher's or Barlow's Knoll. By establishing itself on this hill, it was, albeit unknowingly, assuring the hill's importance. It was from this new position that the saga would build.

As part of Doles' orders, his Georgians were to configure 11th Corps numbers in favor of Early's attack. To accomplish this he would push the 9th New York Cavalry off the knoll, which in turn grabbed Barlow's attention. Because Doles committed only a skirmish line for this task, Barlow committed an appropriate ratio of three regiments in response to retake it. Barlow's decision to claim the hill was not like that of Major General Daniel E. Sickles the next day as is sometimes the presumption and comparison. He did not have time to think, "Shall I go out?" or



The Josiah Benner House was located in no-man's land between Barlow's and Early's two positions respectively.

serious business, but he displayed a calm craftiness placing his confidence in Early's timely appearance. Even when Early was ready to enter the fight, a masking of true strength continued with Early sending in Gordon first, while not yet showing Hays, Avery, or Smith, who were hidden behind the Confederate artillery platform.

In his correspondence with John Bachelder, Barlow would adamantly maintain that his flank was not presented to Early, but rather that he was attacked "in front" and "directly parallel to my line."⁴⁴ Bachelder's maps indicate that he did not believe Barlow.⁴⁵ Perhaps the source of their disagreement had to do with the scope and scale of what presenting the flank really meant. In the smaller scope, Barlow could argue that at least twenty-six companies belonging to either the 17th Connecticut, 54th New York, 68th New York, or 153rd Pennsylvania were on the front line and facing due north from the outset. That Barlow's refused line was "fronting" Early's eventual assault is basically true, from a micro-perspective. However, what Bachelder saw on a larger scale was that Barlow's position represented the right flank of the Army of the Potomac, and that flank was unsecured. In other words, twenty-six Federal companies angles to the rest of Barlow's division is trivial within the Union line in which Barlow's division was the flank.

"Which is the better position, here or there?" To the contrary, Doles did not give him that luxury. He had to react or be forced to watch the Georgians place artillery there and fire straight down Schimmelfenning's line at point-blank range. After he moved out three regiments, Doles revealed slightly more of his brigade to force another response by Barlow and so on until he had committed the bulk of his two brigades to the knoll. The commitment was gradual.

Doles in the meantime had been encouraged by Rodes to expect Early to come into the fray before his Georgia regiments were overwhelmed. Doles understood that this baiting process was



A modern view of the Josiah Benner Barn where the 17th Connecticut dispatched four companies to skirmish. This barn was a dangerous structure from the federal perspective as it provided cover and concealment in close proximity to the Confederate point of attack.

As Gordon's men emerged from the L-shaped woods above the banks of Rock Creek in unison with a general movement by Doles' whole brigade, it became necessary for Krzyzanowski's New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin men to rush to Barlow and Schimmelfenning's aid. With Gordon collapsing the former's front, and Doles' threatening to envelope the latter's right, the natural placement for Krzyzanowski's men was between the two, now separated, Union lines. The bridge that they would build served merely as a temporary stopgap measure, but it was heroic nonetheless.

Krzyzanowski's brigade had been concealed in Crawford's orchard south of Crawford Run and east of Carlisle Road. Using the water source to fill canteens and the apple orchard to shield the afternoon sun, and conceal the brigade, "Kriz's" men waited their turn. They were along the current location of Broadway Street, which in 1863 was the northernmost edge of the town. In their front beyond the orchard, the stream, and another orchard were open meadows. Gathering there, resting from the rigors of a hard march, they waited for stragglers to stagger in between 11:30 A.M. and 1 P.M. and nourish themselves from the water source and orchard.

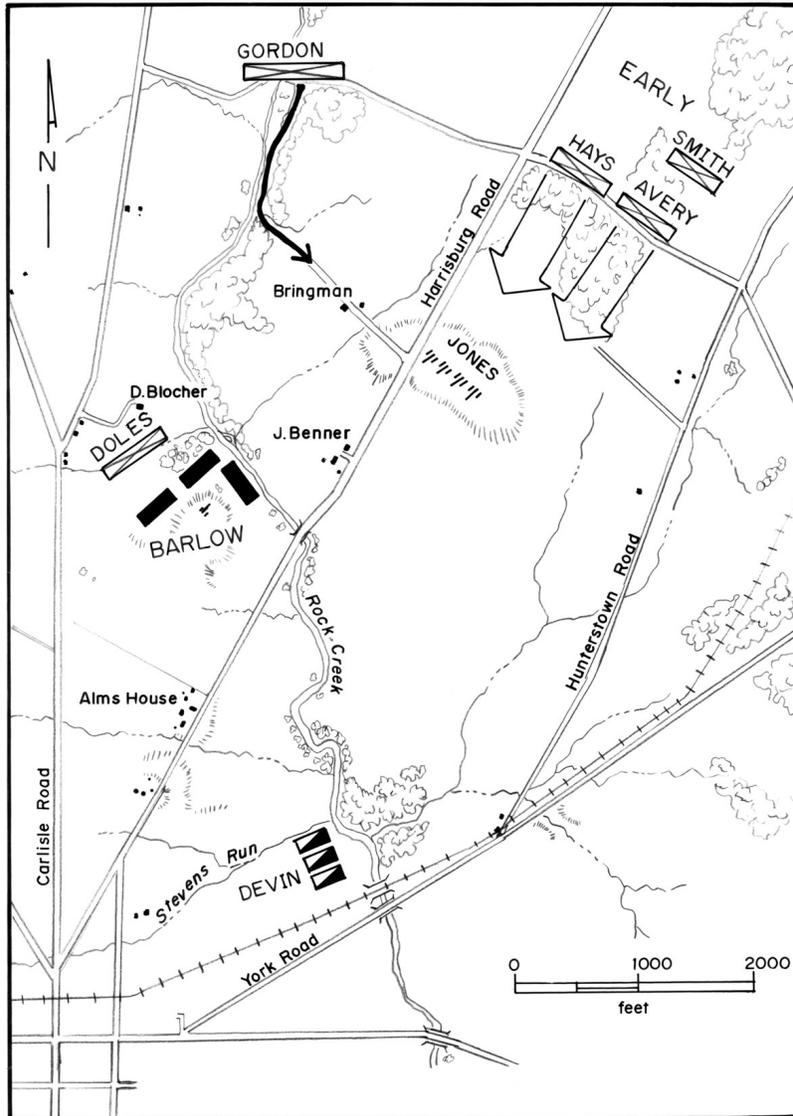
As more and more of the brigade filed into the orchard, regimental commanders called the roll to account for strengths and readiness.⁴⁶ The intermittent time prior to direct engagement was also complemented by pep talks and reflection. From Krzyzanowski's translated memoirs, biographer James S. Pula has found that, "Krzyzanowski rested his weary men briefly in the shade of an apple orchard while the first sergeants called the roll. . . . Only too well aware of the past abuses heaped upon them, they were determined to cleanse their record. Aware, as well, of the crucial significance of this invasion of the North, and the battle about to be joined, Kriz resolved to fight as never before."⁴⁷ Morale-building conversations, exchanged in the 11th Corps rank-and-file, mostly centered on securing redemption at Gettysburg for what had transpired at Chancellorsville two months earlier. Their need to be exonerated was so strong, as is easily discerned through personal accounts, that it may have had something to do with mistakes made that day by the 11th Corps. An over-commitment of troops facing west and north towards Rodes' division and the over-zealous enthusiasm in which they did it perhaps is traced back to this need for vindication.

Some of the men spent the wait time, not immersed in rousing speech, but settled down in reflection and introspection. Lieutenant Theodore A. Dodge of the 119th New York Infantry and Colonel John T. Lockman of the same regiment were given more to the latter. Bowing their heads together in earnest, "while the men rested in the orchard Adjutant Dodge and Colonel Lockman said a short prayer in view of the hot work that lay ahead."⁴⁸

Regardless of how they expressed it, all of Krzyzanowski's men were moved by the mixed exhilaration and seriousness of the hour. During the march, there was a certain mindlessness, which settles in with the drudgery of continual movement, but once they heard the boom of artillery, everyone seemed to undergo a transformation. Lieutenant Dodge reflected that, "By this time everyone had forgotten any symptoms of fatigue which may have been creeping over him, in the exciting anticipation of an approaching fray. Everyone's blood flows quicker, every pulse beats louder, every nerve is more sensitive, and everyone feels that he is living faster than he was half an hour since."⁴⁹

Once in position, Krzyzanowski's men began to be tormented by Confederate artillery fire from two directions, especially from their left. The diagonal trajectory of Captain R.C.M. Page's Virginia guns firing from Oak Hill toward the four rear pieces of Dilger, carried over on a natural line into their defile, forcing them to shift forward, perhaps north of the creek or run. One important ramification of Krzyzanowski's position, east of Carlisle Road instead of west, as many maps incorrectly illustrate, became the overall implications his location had on Barlow's forward movement. When Barlow made his final decision to move out, Krzyzanowski's men, except for perhaps the 82nd Ohio Infantry, were east of the Carlisle road and directly in support.⁵⁰ Confusion over this issue among cartographers and historians through the years might be traced back to mistaking the location of the orchard that concealed Kriz's men. National Park Commission

Engineer, Emmor B. Cope's 1904 wood-carved "Map of Gettysburg," fashioned on behalf of the Battlefield Commission for the St. Louis World Fair, may have had something to do with this.⁵¹ Although a great resource, the well-used map illustrates a 1904 landscape that includes an orchard west of the Carlisle road that was not there in 1863.⁵² That Krzyzanowski's men adjoined Barlow's original position is a matter not to take lightly when judging Barlow's decision to advance.



The deployment of Early's division and Doles's brigade against Barlow. Map by John Heiser

This point raises another important issue, which is how much Barlow knew about Devin's three-quarter-mile cavalry picket line to his right along York Road, or of the 9th New York Cavalry of the same brigade *en echelon* to his immediate right rear. Even more tantalizing is the question of how much information Barlow gained about the projected arrival of Union 12th Corps forces on his right at Benner's Hill. Howard had spread the word to several 1st and 11th Corps commanders to "Hold out, if possible, awhile longer, for I am expecting General Slocum every moment."⁵³ Because Slocum's 12th Corps' was moving rapidly toward Gettysburg after 1:00 P.M., it was reasonable for Howard to anticipate that their five-mile march from Two Taverns

could complete in time to rescue his line. As it turned out, Brigadier General Alpheus Williams' division of the 12th Corps began to ascend Benner's Hill, and its northern extension known later as Hospital Hill, after 4 P.M. Barlow's last line of defense, north of town, was likely abandoned around 3:45 P.M., approximately a half-hour earlier. Although Williams' arrival was too late to reach Barlow, his presence did have a profound effect on the outcome of the day by threatening Ewell's left at the critical moment of decision involving Culp's and Cemetery hills.⁵⁴

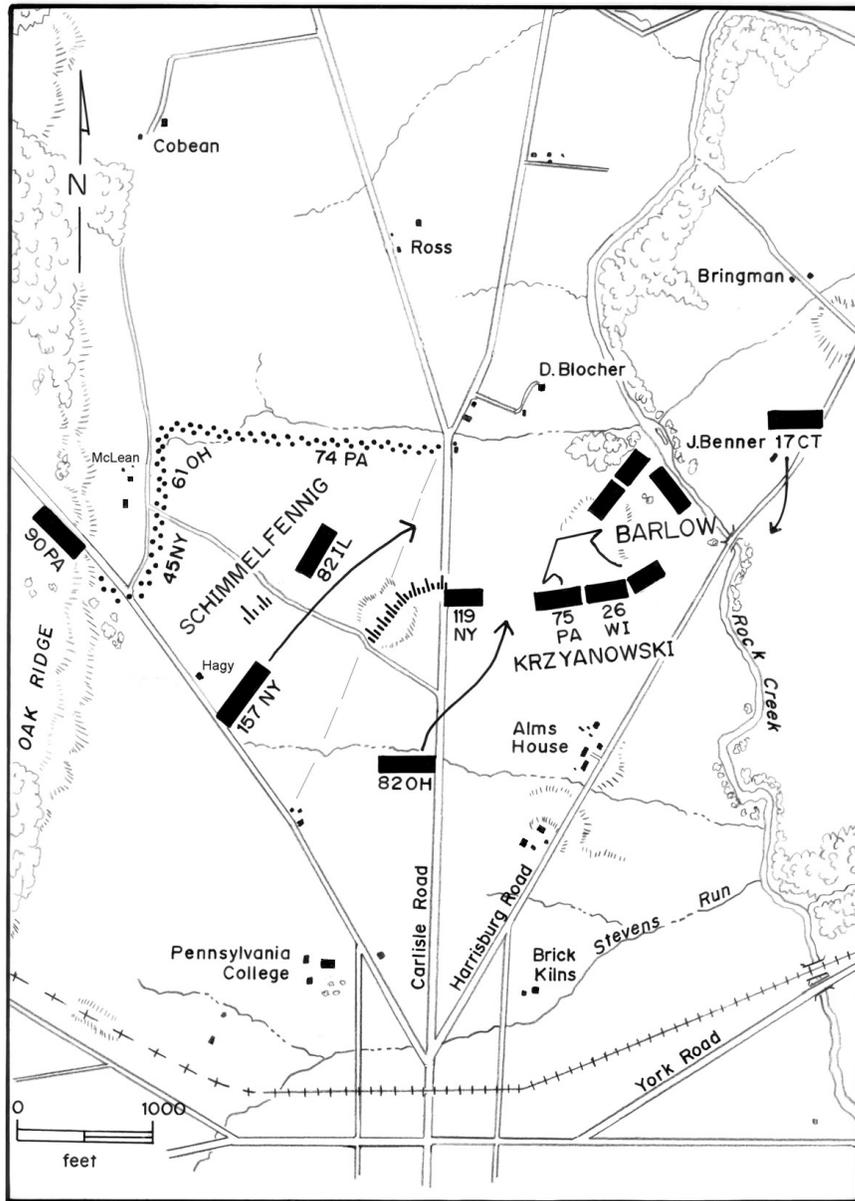
More relevant to this work is the question of whether the left hand knew what the right hand was doing. There are two ways to interpret Barlow's level of awareness of 12th Corps help coming to his right. One perspective begins with the belief that Barlow was oblivious to this support due to rigidity of command structure within the Army of the Potomac. The contention is that Barlow had to wait for information to be transmitted through vertical channels or strictly through upward and downward lines of communication. That is, Barlow had to ask Schurz to ask Howard to ask Major General Alfred Pleasonton to ask Buford to ask Colonel Devin to ask Colonel Sackett of the 9th New York Cavalry to find out what was going on immediately to his right. Lateral communication, so common in Lee's Army of Northern Virginia, was not fostered or encouraged in the Army of the Potomac, or so the theory goes.

Lateral communication was essential to immediacy in an age only in the infancy of wired communication, yet few commanding generals seemed to understand this or were willing to risk employing such a system during the Civil War. Generals Ulysses S. Grant and William T. Sherman certainly operated this way, especially during the last year of the war, but Grant would not come East until 1864. Only General Robert E. Lee, in his first year of command, had implemented this kind of system in the East, where information was shared freely across all levels of command. Decision-making was made at the corps level, and occasionally, if necessity required it, at even lower echelons of command. The process began with Lee establishing a general plan with primary and secondary objectives that were communicated in the form of basic concepts to his corps commanders. From there, the general plan was communicated downward to the division and brigade level so that everyone was armed with knowledge of the plan, which empowered them to make adjustments on the spot in favor of the overall scheme. Expediency, at least up until Gettysburg, became the order of the day within this command structure.

In stark contrast, the high command of the Army of the Potomac followed a much more restricted course the first two years of the war. Generals George B. McClellan, John Pope, Ambrose E. Burnside, and Joseph Hooker formulated plans with objectives, but communicated the particulars only to an inner circle of men who carefully guarded the information. Details of the plan barely trickled down, and those closer to the front line making the assaults functioned in the dark with partial knowledge of the whole at best. If those implementing Plan A experienced setbacks, then Plan B always involved waiting for further information from the top, if not an eventual retreat. Discretionary alterations made to the plan at the corps or divisional level were out of the question because corps and divisional commanders did not know the plan. Out of necessity, this practice partially evaporated during the Gettysburg campaign, as Meade did not have enough days in command or enough seniority to micro-manage everyone at Gettysburg.

This brings us to a second means of interpreting what Barlow knew when he committed a majority of his division to the advanced position. That is, perhaps he was fully aware of Devin's three-quarter-mile picket line on the York road and of Alpheus Williams' division of 12th Corps' soldiers rushing up to save his right. Perhaps he knew all of this through both lateral and vertical channels of communication, but the orders and correspondence were verbal or on little pieces of paper that did not survive to make publication in the Official Records. General Meade's testimony before the Committee on the Conduct of the War conceded this prospect, admitting that there was an unknown quantity of orders issued "verbally," and that "a great many orders and directions were written on little slips of paper, and no copies kept of them."⁵⁵ If this can be accepted as fact, then Barlow may have been waiting for and expecting Williams "every

moment."⁵⁶ At the very least, the breadth of Barlow's knowledge of both friend and foe that day may never be known. This is largely true because Barlow did not write an official report.



The deployment of the 11th Corps and movements of Krzyzanowski's brigade, and the 157th New York in response to Gordon's and Doles's advance. Map by John Heiser

Whatever Barlow knew, the result of his forward move "is what it is," and Krzyzanowski's regiments would have to rush forward "rashly" to meet the enemy "half-way in the open plain" to save Barlow's left and Schimmelfenning's right.⁵⁷ Even at this juncture, it seems highly unlikely that anything was known of Early's presence outside of artillery fire from that direction, which might be interpreted as nothing more than a Confederate attempt at artillery crossfire. In retrospect, Krzyzanowski's reserves should have moved to the right of Barlow to extend his line east of the Harrisburg road. The 100 percent commitment of 11th Corps forces to face Rodes' division points to an absence of information concerning Early's strength.

The advance was marked with visible signs of urgency, starting with the formations adopted to press forward. Instead of marching in under traditional battle lines, it was thought prudent to go forward in "double columns."⁵⁸ This alignment calls for the companies to "double on the center," thus compressing down to a five company front and creating "solid squares."⁵⁹ The huddled, dense lines must have harkened back in appearance to a narrow version of the ancient phalanx, as it permitted the men to trot together on a direct line to their destination. In contrast to the expanse of a traditional ten-company front, compact ranks reduced the odds of a section of the line becoming entangled and overwhelmed prior to reaching its mark. Once the objective point was reached, the battlefield unfolded through a series of evolutions just before contact was made with an enemy. In the rush, "Fences that might have served in the construction of a breastwork were thrown down in a twinkling and absolutely nothing remained to screen our line from the crossfire that poured upon it from flank and front," wrote Captain Alfred E. Lee of the 82nd Ohio Infantry.⁶⁰ Expressing the same sentiment, Adjutant Dodge of the 119th New York Infantry remembered quickly forming and marching, "forward through the fields, tearing down the fences in our way or climbing them in confused ranks, and reforming on the other side."⁶¹ Colonel James S. Robinson of the 82nd Ohio displayed his frustration over the careless race to the front when he remarked, "We were not permitted even to build a temporary barricade out of the numerous fence rails that encumbered our movements."⁶²



Bend in Howard Avenue, which is the remnant of a major road existing there from 1798 – 1830. The right of Schimmelfennig's brigade likely guided on this road out to their advanced position above Blocher's or Blucher's run.

The objective point was a slight rise of terrain, which ran east-west and was a continuation of the same ridge that Lieutenant Clark Scripture's advanced section of Dilger's guns rested on at the Hagy farm. This same ridge traversed both the abandoned 1798 road and the Newville or Carlisle road terminating above Blocher Run, opposite the present site of the 58th New York Infantry monument. It was this ridge that the 157th New York Infantry used to conceal its "oblique to the right" from the Mummasburg road at the Hagy farm over to Carlisle Road, to refuse Schimmelfennig's right flank.⁶³ The 82nd Illinois Infantry took cover behind the ridge as well throughout the afternoon in support of the brigade, until the moment came to withdraw from

the field. From there they were “assigned to be the rear guard for the retreat through the town of Gettysburg to the stronghold of Cemetery Hill ...”⁶⁴ What made this slight ridge significant from a Confederate perspective was its ability to conceal the 21st, 44th, and 4th Georgia regiments until the last possible moment, when these three regiments might join the 12th Georgia in a general attack along the whole federal front. Any move in-force by Doles would reach a point of no return upon that slight crest, and it did. Prior to that move, the minor summit had functioned as a jump-off point for their skirmish line while the main body remained further back at the Cobean farm.

It was this skirmish line that earlier pushed the 9th New York Cavalry from Blocher Knoll, which in turn forced Barlow to establish a presence upon the hillock that afterward bore his name. It was this skirmish line that lured Barlow out piece-by-piece into a grand set-up taken advantage of by Early. As Krzyzanowski's brigade rushed ahead in double columns, they rapidly closed in on this rim, where Doles' Georgians became completely uncovered all at once.⁶⁵ Lieutenant Colonel Dodge of the 119th New York recalled the moments of doubt, speculation, and conjecture just before the clash when he recorded that,

Our whole division thus advanced some three or four hundred yards, when we were ordered to halt and deploy, the brigades in reserve remaining in column. On deployment, we stood, as far as we could see over the level ground to the left, and extending to some woods on the right. How our flanks were protected we could not see, through we could readily imagine. All we expected was that there was work enough cut out for us in front, and we concentrated our whole attention to the point.⁶⁶

Going through a series of evolutions, four of the five Union regiments rapidly expanded in width on the fly and greeted their foe with small arms fire at close range. Lieutenant Colonel Frederick C. Winkler of the 26th Wisconsin recounted that, “When the charge of Ewell's men came it [the 26th Wisconsin] was ordered forward and taking its place in the first line of battle found itself face to face with the invading force at short distance. There was no cover or shelter. It was a strenuous fight against superior numbers in the open.”⁶⁷ As “the gray lines of the Confederates now began to be unmasked from the ravine and to deploy themselves on the level surface of the plain,” they emerged with their, “movements firm and steady, as usual, and their banners, bearing the blue Southern cross, flaunted impudently as to challenge combat.”⁶⁸ Although both sides advanced in earnest on a collision course, Captain Lee of the 82nd Ohio Infantry commented that oddly enough,

Up to this time scarcely a musket-shot had been fired; but now our solid squares deployed, and the men were ordered to “let them have it.” Quick as a flash the compliment was returned; bullets hummed about our ears like infuriated bees, and in a few minutes the meadow was strewn with arms and accoutrements, with the wounded and the dead. The combatants approached each other until they were scarcely more than seventy-five yards apart, and the names of the battles printed on the Confederate flags might have been read ...⁶⁹

Within moments the ground was littered with the injured and dead from Georgia, Ohio, New York, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. Events had unfolded so quickly that there was little time to second guess. Even though in retrospect it may have been prudent for Krzyzanowski's troops to move right and *en echelon* to Barlow and the Harrisburg road, this would have been an awkward shift because it would have separated him from his division and the operational control of Schurz and Schimmelfenning. Moreover, the temporary corps commander, General Schurz, was not aware that Barlow had committed all of his division to the knoll and thus did not have

additional infantry support east of the Harrisburg road. Lastly, although Early had committed Gordon into the fight, Hays' and Avery's brigades were not accounted for until Barlow was fully locked in mortal combat with the two Georgia brigades belonging to Gordon and Doles.

Had Krzyzanowski not gone where he did, then Schimmelfenning would have been completely enveloped to his left, and Barlow to his right would have been taken in reverse upon the knoll. His dash into this place became a literal stop-gap measure. Within a half-hour's time the field in front of today's East Howard Avenue was littered with blue and gray.

Amsberg's men watched Krzyzanowski and Barlow fall back on their right while the 1st Corps began the retreat to their left. It might well be argued that Amsberg's men along with some of Robinson's 1st Corps' men were the last to abandon the field. From there, the fight resumed in the town where Captain Francis Irsch would distinguish himself again in actions for which he would later be awarded the Medal of Honor.⁷⁰

As the retreat of both corps was underway several questions arise about the implications of Confederate trickery and 11th Corps willingness to be outwitted. The first of these is the failure of the 9th New York Cavalry to hold its post near the juncture of Shealer and Harrisburg roads. By falling back to Blocher Knoll the cavalry not only created a vacuum for Early to fill, but left a blind spot that enabled him to deploy in secrecy. In retrospect though, did the 9th New York Cavalry have a choice in the matter as Doles' brigade was marching south on the Carlisle road threatening to wedge between them and the 11th Corps? This is an issue that cannot be resolved until historians of the battle are willing to consider that a regiment in Buford's cavalry division was capable of making a mistake on July 1. Such an implication is troublesome to many because Buford's men are regarded as having fought flawlessly on the first day of the battle. Rather than risk changing that perspective, it is easier for the historian to blame the whole mess on Barlow.

A second matter of interest and inquisition should address whether Schimmelfenning was more responsible than Barlow in advancing too far. Did not his brigade set the precedent of over-extension and thereby force Barlow to adjust his supporting distance? As Schimmelfenning's right became gradually endangered, could Barlow have realistically turned a blind eye to his predicament? If one realizes that Schimmelfenning's skirmish line and battle line were one, and that that line operated near the Moses McLean barn, then it must be conceded that Barlow was never out in front of the corps. He was well behind it even after his move to the knoll.

A related issue raised within this paper is the question of what Barlow knew of Williams' race to reach and protect his right flank. Generals Howard, Slocum, and Williams knew the purpose of the 12th Corps movement, but was that information ever passed on to Schurz or Barlow? If so, did this information affect Barlow's decision to over-commit his force in the direction of Doles' position? Similarly, did Krzyzanowski's true position east of the Carlisle road influence Barlow in the same manner?

One other lasting question should ask whether Schimmelfenning and Barlow were too far in front of their reserves at Cemetery Hill. Although Cemetery Hill was the key position to holding Gettysburg and its roads south, and though the town offered opportunities for an effective delaying action in the event of retreat, still the distance between the front line and reserves was about two miles. This is indeed extraordinary. Closely akin to this issue is the question of how soon Howard could have advanced Colonel Charles R. Coster's brigade of Steinwehr's division. As it turned out, it was rushed forward too late from Cemetery Hill in the form of a stop-gap measure, and the men paid the price for it.

All –in –all, Confederate strategy against the 11th Corps worked to a large degree. Ewell, Rodes, and Early employed a sophisticated cat-and-mouse game using terrain on their front which was perfectly suited for such trickery. One is impressed even today, for example, when walking the ground of Early's pre-assault deployment. It is striking to see the depth of the swales, the height of their artillery platform, and the thickness of the wood lots that concealed an entire Confederate division until the opportune moment. Barlow, it may be concluded, failed because of a lack of accurate intelligence that day. He literally did not know what hit him. Yet, had he

not moved forward, Shimmelfenning's division would have been destroyed with the fault resting on Barlow. It may be said in hindsight that General Doles forced General Barlow to pick his poison that afternoon. It may also be concluded that the 11th Corps' only hope of success that afternoon depended on the timely arrival of Williams' 1st Division from the 12th Corps. This nearly happened, but not in time to prevent the disaster at Barlow's Knoll.

Notes

¹ U.S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1889) [Hereafter cited as *OR*], 27(1):729.

² Alfred E. Lee, "Reminiscences of the Gettysburg Battle," *Lippincott's Magazine of Popular Literature and Science* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Company, July, 1883), (Gettysburg National Military Park Library (GNMP), VF6-OH82), 6:55.

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⁵ Christian Boehm, "Comrades, Friends, Ladies of the Regiment and Fellow Citizens," Oration at the Unveiling of the 45th New York Monument, October 10, 1888 (GNMP-VF6-NY45 PC-135970).

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⁸ George Gordon Meade, *The Life and Letters of George Gordon Meade* (Baltimore: Butternut & Blue, 1994), 2:35-36.

⁹ Oliver O. Howard, "Letter From O.O. Howard to Colonel John T. Lockman, 119th New York, dated May 31, 1888," *Ceremonies and Addresses* (GNMP VF6-NY119 PC), 19.

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¹¹ Augustus Horstmann, "Horstmann Account," (GNMP VF6-NY45 PC), 12.

¹² Gregory A. Coco, *Gettysburg's Confederate Dead* (Gettysburg, Pennsylvania: Thomas Publications, 2003), 118.

¹³ Horstmann, 12.

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¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *OR*, 27(1):702.

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²⁰ Robert M. Dunkerly, "Reading the Battlefield Landscape: The Restoration, Preservation, and Interpretation of Historic Landscapes at Battlefield Parks" (master's thesis, Middle Tennessee State University, May 1998), 92, 94, 146-47.

²¹ Chuck Teague, personal interview with author, February, 2004. See Teague's, "Brutal Clash At Blocher's Knoll," *The Gettysburg Magazine*, Issue #32, pp 52-70. Also see Teague's, "Leadership Impaired? Lee's Health During The Gettysburg Campaign," *North & South Magazine* (July 2003).

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²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ John Bachelder, "Hour by Hour Troop Position Maps," Map 10-2756.0, July 1, 1863, 2:30 P.M., Battlefield of Gettysburg, GNMP Map Room. These maps were completed in the late 1870s.

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- ³⁵ Newel Cheney, *History of the Ninth Regiment, New York Volunteer Cavalry, War of 1861 to 1865: Compiled From Letters, Diaries, Recollections and Official Records* (Jamestown, New York: Martin Merz & Son, 1901), 110.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*, 109.
- ³⁷ *OR*, 27(2): 553.
- ³⁸ *OR*, 27(2):492.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁰ Jubal A. Early to John Bachelder, March 23, 1876, in David L. and Audrey J. Ladd, eds., *The Bachelder Papers* (Dayton, Ohio: Morningside Press, 1994), 1: 459.
- ⁴¹ Francis C. Barlow to John Bachelder, March 31, 1883, in Ladd and Ladd, eds., *The Bachelder Papers*, 2: 938.
- ⁴² Edward C. Culp, "Gettysburg: Reminiscences of the Great Fight by a Participant," *The National Tribune* (March 19, 1885). Also Baumgartner, 46.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁴ Ladd and Ladd, eds., *The Bachelder Papers*, 1:938-939.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 938. See editor's footnote, which states, "188. Early attacked Barlow on his right flank. See Map [1] T/U-2/4 then Map [1] R/S-4/5. He apparently did not convince Bachelder."
- ⁴⁶ James S. Pula, *For Liberty and Justice: The Life and Times of Wladimir Krzyzanowski* (Chicago: Polish American Congress Charitable Foundation, 1978), 97.
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁸ Ralph Whitehead, "The 119th New York Volunteers and Their Participation in the Gettysburg Campaign, June 12 to July 4, 1863," 5-6, Typescript GNMP-VF6-NY119.
- ⁴⁹ Theodore Ayrault Dodge, "Left Wounded on the Field," *Putnam's Magazine* (September 1869), 318.
- ⁵⁰ John B. Bachelder, *Gettysburg: What To See, and How To See It: Embodying Full Information for Visiting the Field* (New York: Lee, Shepard & Dillingham, 1873), 32-33. Also see ⁵⁰Bachelder, "Hour by Hour Troop Position Maps," Map 10 -2756.0, July 1, 1863, 2:30 P.M., Gettysburg National Military Park Map Room. These maps were completed in the late 1870s.
- ⁵¹ E. B. Cope, "Map of Gettysburg" (Battlefield Commission United States War Department, 1904). Displayed in Gettysburg Cyclorama Center at Gettysburg National Military Park.
- ⁵² G. K. Warren, "Maps of The Battle Field of Gettysburg." Survey completed from October 21, 1868 - October 23, 1869. Gettysburg National Military Park Map Room.
- ⁵³ *OR*, 27(1): 703-704.
- ⁵⁴ George G. Meade to Colonel G. G. Benedict, March 16, 1870, in, *Battles & Leaders of The Civil War: Retreat From Gettysburg* (New York: Castle Books, no date), 413-414. Meade informed Benedict that Ewell attributed his inability to attack Cemetery Hill on July 1, 1863 to the presence of the 12th Corps at Benner's Hill. Meade wrote, "[Ewell] received an order from General Lee directing him to assume the defensive and not to advance. ... To my inquiry why Lee had restrained him, he said our troops coming up (Slocum's) were visible, and Lee was under the impression that the greater part of my army was on the ground and deemed it prudential to await the rest of his – as you quote from his report." Ewell's central

purpose for awaiting the arrival of Major General Edward Johnson's division, on the battle's first day, was to counter the movement of Slocum's corps against Benner's Hill.

⁵⁵ *Report of the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War at the Second Session of the Thirty-eighth Congress*, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1865), 349.

⁵⁶ OR, 27(1): 704.

⁵⁷ Lee, 56.

⁵⁸ Dodge, *Putnam Magazine*, 319.

⁵⁹ Lee, 56.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ Dodge, 319.

⁶² James S. Robinson, "Robinson's Address at the Dedication of the 82nd Ohio Monument on September 14, 1887," Ohio Historical Society (GNMP VF6-OH82 PC).

⁶³ Boynton, *Memoir*, 1.

⁶⁴ 82nd Illinois Infantry Monument (GNMP VF6-IL82 PC 12340).

⁶⁵ Lee, 55.

⁶⁶ Dodge, 319-320.

⁶⁷ Frederick C. Winkler, "Winkler Account – Document #46," *Henry Dillon Papers* (State Historical Society of Wisconsin, , GNMP VF6-WI26).

⁶⁸ Lee, 56.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ U.S. War Department, *Medals of Honor Issued by the War Department* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1906), 73. On May 27, 1892, Captain Francis Irsch of Company D, 45th New York Infantry, was issued the Medal of Honor for, "Gallantry in flanking the enemy and capturing a number of prisoners, and in holding a part of the town against heavy odds while the army was rallying on Cemetery Hill."
