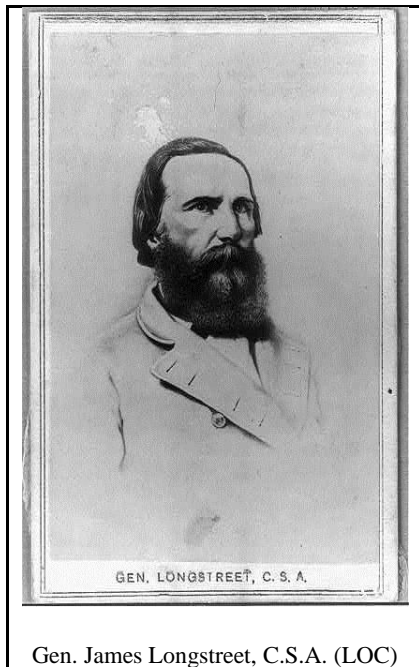


“Such a night is seldom experienced...”

## James Longstreet and the Retreat from Gettysburg

Karlton Smith, Gettysburg NMP

---



Gen. James Longstreet, C.S.A. (LOC)

After the repulse of Lt. Gen. James Longstreet's Assault on July 3, 1863, Gen. Robert E. Lee, commanding the Army of Northern Virginia, knew that the only option left for him at Gettysburg was to try to disengage from his lines and return with his army to Virginia. Longstreet, commander of the army's First Corps and Lee's chief lieutenant, would play a significant role in this retrograde movement.

As a preliminary to the general withdrawal, Longstreet decided to pull his troops back from the forward positions gained during the fighting on July 2. Lt. Col. G. Moxley Sorrel, Longstreet's adjutant general, delivered the necessary orders to Maj. Gen. Lafayette McLaws, commanding one of Longstreet's divisions. Sorrel offered to carry the order to Brig. Gen. Evander M. Law, commanding John B. Hood's division, on McLaws's right. McLaws raised objections to this order. He felt that his advanced position was important and "had been won after a deadly struggle; that the order was given no doubt because of [George] Pickett's repulse, but as there was no pursuit there was no necessity of it." Sorrel interrupted saying: "General, there is no discretion allowed, the order is for you to retire at once."

As McLaws's forward line was withdrawing to Warfield and Seminary ridges, the Federal batteries on Little Round Top opened fire, "but by quickening the pace the aim was so disturbed that no damage was done." McLaws's line was followed by "clouds of skirmishers" from the Federal Army of the Potomac; however, after reinforcing his own skirmish line they were driven back from the Peach Orchard area. After this, Lieutenant Colonel Sorrel reappeared and asked McLaws, "... if I could retake the position I had just abandoned." McLaws wanted to know why Sorrel asked him to do this. Sorrel replied, "General Longstreet had forgotten that he had ordered it, and now disapproved the withdrawal." McLaws replied that Sorrel had given him the order. Sorrel responded, "General Longstreet gave it to me."<sup>1</sup>

In the confusion of a battlefield not everyone receives orders at the same time. Brig. Gen. Henry L. Benning, of Hood's division, occupied a position on and near Devil's Den. He was not aware of any withdrawal until about 5:00 P.M., when "two or three pickets of McLaws' division came to me, and told me that the troops of General McLaws had for some hours been withdrawn from my left, leaving my flank entirely exposed." Soon a courier from General Law arrived with orders for Benning to move "to the crest of the hill." The courier was unclear as to which hill was indicated. Benning withdrew to the

other side of the Wheatfield and to the line just abandoned by McLaws. Shortly afterward, the order was repeated “but this time clearly and in a very different sense.” Benning now withdrew to Warfield Ridge.<sup>2</sup>

After withdrawing, Benning “heard a heavy infantry fire on the left, in the direction of which Col. [D. M.] DuBose had gone.” DuBose, of the 15<sup>th</sup> Georgia, was being attacked by two Federal lines “with his own line between the two.” Benning felt that DuBose “was fortunate to escape at all. His escape is high evidence both of his skill and courage.” Col. J. D. Waddell, of the 20<sup>th</sup> Georgia, reported similar difficulties in trying to withdraw.<sup>3</sup>

Brig. Gen. J. B. Robertson reported that his brigade fell back to Warfield Ridge at about dark (about 8:15 P.M.) “and formed in line.” Maj. John P. Bane, 4<sup>th</sup> Texas, reported that at sunset “I was ordered to move my command, in conjunction with the remainder of the brigade, by the right flank, to occupy the ground from which we first advanced upon the enemy.”<sup>4</sup>

By 6:00 P.M., a thunderstorm hit the Gettysburg area. Within three hours, a little over one inch of rain had “accumulated in town.” It was observed that the “thunder seemed tame, after the artillery firing of the afternoon.” The moon rose at about 9:25 P.M. If it had been a clear night, about 91 percent of the moon’s visible disk would have been illuminated.<sup>5</sup>

Maj. James Dearing reported that at about this same time, “Captain Moody’s four 24-pounder howitzers, two of Captain [Joe] Norcom’s guns, and one of Captain [M. B.] Miller’s [guns] succeeded in driving back the column of infantry that was at that time advancing.” After this incursion had been driven back, “nothing but desultory picket firing could be heard on that part of the line for the rest of the day.”<sup>6</sup>

At 7:30 P.M., Lt. Col. Arthur J. L. Fremantle, a British observer attached to Longstreet’s staff, was riding back to Longstreet’s headquarters site. Along the way, he met a “great many wounded men, most anxious to inquire after Longstreet, who was reported killed; when I assured them he was quite well, they seemed to forget their own pain in the evident pleasure they felt in the safety of their chief.”<sup>7</sup>

Maj. Jedediah Hotchkiss remembered that at about sundown, Lee held a conference with his senior commanders at Lt. Gen. A. P. Hill’s headquarters, about one and a half miles from the Lutheran Theological Seminary, along the Cashtown road. It was at this conference that Lee announced his decision to retreat. Hotchkiss also remembered seeing Pickett’s division that night “scattered all along the road; no officers and all protesting that they had been completely cut up.”<sup>8</sup>

Lee issued final orders for the withdrawal on the night of July 4. The army would “vacate its position” that night. Hill’s 3<sup>rd</sup> Corps would lead the column, followed by Longstreet, with Lt. Gen. Richard S. Ewell’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps bringing up the rear. Longstreet’s corps was also “charged with the escort of the prisoners.” The supply trains would “habitually move between the leading and the rear corps, each under the charge of their respective chief quartermasters.”

Each corps commander was to “see that the officers remain with their trains, and that they move steadily and quietly, and that the animals are properly cared for.” The corps commanders were also expected “to see that every officer exerts the utmost vigilance, steadiness, and boldness during the whole march.”<sup>9</sup>

Because Pickett’s division had suffered heavy casualties on July 3 they were appointed, or “degraded,” as the men in the division saw it, to the position of provost guard and ordered to guard Federal prisoners. About 3,400 prisoners, including some 200 officers, were turned over to Maj. Walter Harrison, Pickett’s adjutant general, “with instructions that the remnant of the division was to guard them in safety through the enemy’s country, and across the Potomac.”<sup>10</sup>

Longstreet reported that after nightfall, “I received orders to make all the needful arrangements for our retreat. The orders for preparation were given, and the work was begun before daylight on the 4<sup>th</sup>.” The movement was to commence with the reserve artillery, followed by Pickett’s division, McLaws’s division, and Hood’s division in the rear.<sup>11</sup>

The work of retreat involved not just withdrawing the troops and their equipment, but also all of the “spoils” of the campaign. Maj. John Denis Keily, Jr., the chief quartermaster of Longstreet’s corps, and the various divisional quartermasters, had purchased or seized large amounts of fodder and other supplies needed by the army. These quartermasters acquired more than 9,000 pounds of corn, more than

9,000 pounds of hay, almost 200 horses, plus halters, curry combs, wagons, forges, coal, steel, iron, and various needed supplies.<sup>12</sup>

Col. James B. Walton, commanding Longstreet's artillery reserve, received the following orders at about 1:00 A.M., July 4:

General Longstreet directs that you have your artillery in readiness to resist an attack by daylight, remembering that you have no shot to spare except for the enemy's infantry. You will also at an early hour in the morning send all your wagons, except such as are required with the command, back to Cashtown to report to Major Mitchell or Colonel Corley. You will have them loaded with as many of the wounded as they will carry, and let them give out to every one that they are going back with the wounded for ammunition. You will also have three days' cooked rations for all the men in your command provided to-night to be carried in their haversacks, and retain enough wagons to carry one days' more, which you will carry.<sup>13</sup>

Colonel Fremantle wrote that he was awakened at daylight, about 4:15 A.M., on the morning of July 4 by Maj. Raphael Moses, Longstreet's chief commissary of subsistence, "complaining that his valuable trunk, containing much public money had been stolen from our tent whilst we slept." The trunk was found in the nearby woods, minus the money. Fremantle wrote that Surgeon Randolph Barksdale "had been robbed in the same manner." It was felt that this was the "work of those rascally stragglers, who shirk going under fire, plunder the natives, and will hereafter swagger as the heroes of Gettysburg."<sup>14</sup>

At about 8:00 A.M., Fremantle; Capt. Fitzgerald Ross, the Austrian observer; and Francis Lawley, of the London *Times*, walked up to the front and met General Longstreet, "who was in a high state of amusement and good humor." Longstreet had just received a message, under a flag of truce, stating that "General Longstreet was wounded, and a prisoner, but would be taken care of." Longstreet replied that he was grateful, but since he was neither wounded nor a prisoner, "he was quite able to take care of himself." Fremantle was amazed at Longstreet's iron endurance. Longstreet seemed "to require neither food nor sleep." His staff, however, "now fall fast asleep directly they get off their horses, they are so exhausted from the last three days' work."<sup>15</sup>

Longstreet wrote that final orders for the retreat had been issued before noon. "The trains of wounded and other impedimenta were put in motion by the Chambersburg and Fairfield routes, the army to follow after night by the latter," Longstreet wrote. He also reported that the march "was much impeded by heavy rains and excessively bad roads." Col. Sorrel remembered the "awful weather—rain in torrents, howling winds, and road almost impassable ..." By 9:00 P.M. more than an inch of rain "had accumulated in town, turning brooklets into fast rushing streams."<sup>16</sup>

Private Robert A. Moore, 17<sup>th</sup> Mississippi, remembered that his regiment left the line at 2:00 A.M. He also wrote that it "rained for several hours this morning as hard as I ever saw it. The roads are muddy & all are much fatigued."<sup>17</sup>

Assistant Surgeon Simon Baruch, 3<sup>rd</sup> South Carolina, along with several other medical officers and staff, was left behind, by order of General Lee, to look after the wounded who could not be moved. Dr. Baruch had been left at the Black Horse Tavern "hospital." He reported that the hospital contained 222 "seriously wounded men, ten orderlies, and three surgeons."<sup>18</sup>

Capt. Fitzgerald Ross wrote that at the Black Horse Tavern,

... stables, barn, and every out-building, were full of wounded men, some of whom were being moved into the ambulances, and others more badly wounded were being removed to the better accommodation left thereby vacant. It was a grievous sight to see these fine young fellows, many of them probably crippled for life, and yet all were cheerful and smiling. Looks of deep sympathy greeted them on every side as they were borne past on stretchers. And sometimes the wounded men would address a few encouraging words to

some friend who stood near, himself too sad to speak. Not one complained. All bore themselves in the same proud manly way.<sup>19</sup>

Col. E. P. Alexander, commanding an artillery battalion in Longstreet's corps artillery reserve, remembered that he had been ordered to withdraw to the area of the Fairfield road at about 4:00 P.M. He was to wait for Maj. Gen. Henry Heth's division of A. P. Hill's corps to pass. Alexander stated that after parking in a meadow, four of them—Maj. Frank Huger, Lt. Frederick M. Colston, the battalion adjutant, and himself—managed to get an old door, put it on the ground, and sit on it. Every so often one of them would go to the road and ask if the troops passing were part of Heth's division. Nobody seemed to know. After nightfall "we were all so overcome with sleep that we tried to lie down together on the door, & to pull our rubber coats over us, but the hard steady rain soaked through them." It was finally daylight before Heth's division was passing and "sunrise when we got strung out on the road."<sup>20</sup>



View west on the Fairfield Road, ca. 1890. This was the primary retreat route for the Army of Northern Virginia on July 4-5, 1863 (Adams County HS)

Capt. Fitzgerald Ross remembered traveling about a mile or two along the Fairfield road after dusk. His party "came upon a blazing fire, around which were Generals Lee and Longstreet, with all their Staff." This fire was kept burning by "continually piling on fresh wood." Even though the fire was a "roaring one," Ross was still surprised that it was not extinguished by the rain. Ross noted that "Lee and Longstreet stood apart in earnest conversation." It is unclear what type of conversation Lee and Longstreet were having, but Lee gave a hint to Ross a few days later. Apparently because of the heavy rain, Lee was hesitating "whether he should not countermand his own retreat, which he certainly would not have commenced if he had anticipated such dreadfully bad weather." It could be that Longstreet was arguing that since the retreat had started the best thing to do was to put as much distance between their forces and the Army of the Potomac. Since the retreat continued, Lee must have agreed with Longstreet.<sup>21</sup>



Capt. William Miller Owen, Washington Artillery, remembered coming upon the same camp scene. He arrived around midnight and found Longstreet, Lee, Ross, Fremantle, and others. He made a report that the artillery of the corps “were all off.” Miller then heard Lee say to Longstreet, or he was simply speaking out loud, “It’s all my fault; I thought my men were invincible!”<sup>22</sup>

Not all of the Washington Artillery accompanied Longstreet’s column. Maj. Benjamin F. Eshleman reported to Brig. Gen. John D. Imboden, commanding the wagon train of wounded at Cashtown. Eshleman stated he had “seven Napoleons, one rifle, and one howitzer, 12-pounder.” Eshleman placed his battalion in sections at intervals of about a mile and made the march from Cashtown to Williamsport “without halting to feed, and only once to water.”<sup>23</sup>

It was reported that a “furious, chilling rain fell continuously from midnight until daybreak.” Captain Owen wrote of not taking the road until daylight (about 4:15 A.M.) on July 5. The rain was becoming so bad that the “battery-horses are slowly dragging the heavy guns through the roads, axle deep. The infantry are picking their way through the fields.”<sup>24</sup>

As Hood’s Texas Brigade marched as best it could through the mud in the early hours of July 5, General Lee passed along the line of march. One Texan remembered, “we all wanted to show to him that we had not lost confidence in him.” The Texans began to cheer, and Lee raised his hat to acknowledge their greeting.<sup>25</sup>

Colonel Fremantle remembered halting “a little beyond the village of Fairfield, near the entrance to a mountain-pass” at 8:00 A.M., July 5. However, it was not until noon that Lee and Longstreet arrived at the same location. Shortly afterwards, Lt. Gen. Richard S. Ewell came up. Ewell was apparently “in a great state of disgust in consequence of the supposed loss of his wagons, and refused to be comforted by General Lee.”<sup>26</sup>

William S. White, 3<sup>rd</sup> Richmond Howitzers, remembered seeing Lee, Longstreet, and Ewell “sitting upon their horses and holding close consultation.” White moved closer to hear “General Lee’s opinion upon the condition of affairs.” Instead, the conversation was about the battle that Ewell wanted to fight. Ewell, according to White, “was actually *crying* and begging for a ‘fight,’ just like a schoolboy begging for a bun.” Lee told Ewell, “we must let those people alone for the present—we will try them again some other time.” White gave no indication of what Longstreet thought of this.<sup>27</sup>

Lee’s next obstacle beyond Fairfield was Jack’s Mountain, a part of the South Mountain range. Lee had several roads he could use to get his army over the mountain. Ewell’s and Hill’s corps, along with their wagon trains, took the current Iron Springs Road. Longstreet had the option of two roads. His wagon train probably used Jack’s Mountain Road, which went over Jack’s Mountain and connected with the old Waynesboro/Emmitsburg turnpike. His infantry, and possibly his artillery, continued on the Fairfield road along the base of Jack’s Mountain to its intersection with the old Waynesboro/Emmitsburg turnpike. This allowed Longstreet’s infantry to better protect the supply wagons from any attack by Federal cavalry. Once on the turnpike both columns proceeded through Fountaindale and encamped on top of the mountain.

Longstreet’s troops began to establish camps on South Mountain on the evening of July 5. Maj. M. W. Henry, commanding Hood’s Division Artillery Battalion, reported that he took up camp at about 2:00 P.M. He also reported that the “6-pounder and 12-pounder howitzer, having merely the gun-carriage attached, were abandoned necessarily for the want of the proper means of transportation.” Colonel Alexander wrote of marching by way of Fairfield and Fountaindale and encamping at Monterey Springs by 8:00 P.M. Fremantle reported that after 9:00 P.M., “the rain began to descend in torrents.”<sup>28</sup>

A veteran of Chew’s (Virginia) Battery, assigned to Stuart’s Horse Artillery, remembered that after being on the summit of the mountain for about two hours, they went down about a mile on the Emmitsburg road on picket. They had about five hundred infantry from McLaws’s division for support. The “infantrymen threw up breastworks along the front of our position.” After being on picket the remainder of the day the battery “moved back a mile and encamped at Monterey Springs . . . General Longstreet’s infantry came up the Emmitsburg road this evening.”<sup>29</sup>

Alexander also described walking past “a large hotel, well lit up & up in the mountains. This was Monterey Springs. To stretch my limbs & try & shake off the sleepiness making me nod in the saddle I dismounted & walked in but it seems as much a dream as a recollection.”<sup>30</sup>

Fremantle recalled that the “night was very bad—thunder and lightning, torrents of rain—the road knee-deep in mud and water.” Fremantle and his party met Longstreet at about 7:00 P.M. “near a large tavern,” probably Monterey Springs. Longstreet had ordered supper for himself and his staff at the tavern. However, when Longstreet’s party went inside they discovered General McLaws and his staff “rapidly finishing it.” Another supper was prepared for Longstreet and his staff. The proprietors were “particularly anxious to propitiate the General, in hopes that he would spare their live stock.”<sup>31</sup>

During supper several women came in to complain about the soldiers killing their “fat hogs” and milch cows. Longstreet “replied, shaking his head in a melancholy manner—‘Yes, madam, it’s very sad—very sad; and this sort of thing has been going on in Virginia more than two years—very sad.’”<sup>32</sup>

Capt. T. E. Wentworth, 16<sup>th</sup> Maine, stated that during the march on July 5 the prisoners had been “pushed on rapidly through the mud and rain, arriving a little past midnight at Monterey Springs, where we were halted and kept standing for two hours in the mud, half-leg deep, when we were ordered into a field and told to make ourselves *comfortable*, without shelter, fire, or food!” Wentworth recalled that the officers were ordered into line the next morning and “asked if we would take the parole, as we had frequently been asked to do before and refused.” The officers and men, after consultation, agreed to accept the paroles “and received our certificates accordingly.” Lee, however, according to Wentworth, “countermanded the arrangement, and we were hurried on with the retreating army.”<sup>33</sup>

Lt. Col. Frederick F. Cavada, 141<sup>st</sup> Pennsylvania, wrote that the column of prisoners was “drenched with the torrents of rain which fell without hesitation.” Cavada admitted that it would be difficult to give an adequate description of the prisoners’ night march that “could do justice.” He did state that the prisoners “were pressed forward at the utmost speed of which we were capable, and many, unable to keep up with the column, fell exhausted by the road side.”<sup>34</sup>

Walter Harrison had obtained permission from Lee to parole nearly all the prisoners being guarded by Pickett’s division. The prisoners would be given “safeguards to return, they binding themselves in the parole, that if it were not duly recognized by their Government, to render themselves prisoners of war at Richmond.” However, Harrison was not “permitted to release them at this point” (Monterey Pass) and was thus “required to march them with the rest of the prisoners.” Harrison was later requested by Col. Charles W. Tilden, 16<sup>th</sup> Maine, “to cancel their paroles, as the main object in getting them was to avoid a long and fatiguing march. This I immediately agreed to, as in good faith I felt bound to do, and the paroles were destroyed.”<sup>35</sup>

The next day, July 6, Longstreet’s men left the area of Monterey Springs and proceeded through Waterloo, near present-day Rouzerville. Most of Longstreet’s men took the Midvale road to Lietersburg, Maryland. The men marched in the following order: “First, a brigade of General McLaws’ division; second, Alexander’s artillery; third, three brigades of McLaws’ division; fourth, baggage train of Alexander and McLaws; fifth, Cabell’s artillery; sixth, Henry’s artillery; seventh, three brigades of Hood’s division; eighth, baggage train of Cabell’s, Henry’s, and Hood’s division; ninth, one brigade of Hood’s division.”<sup>36</sup>

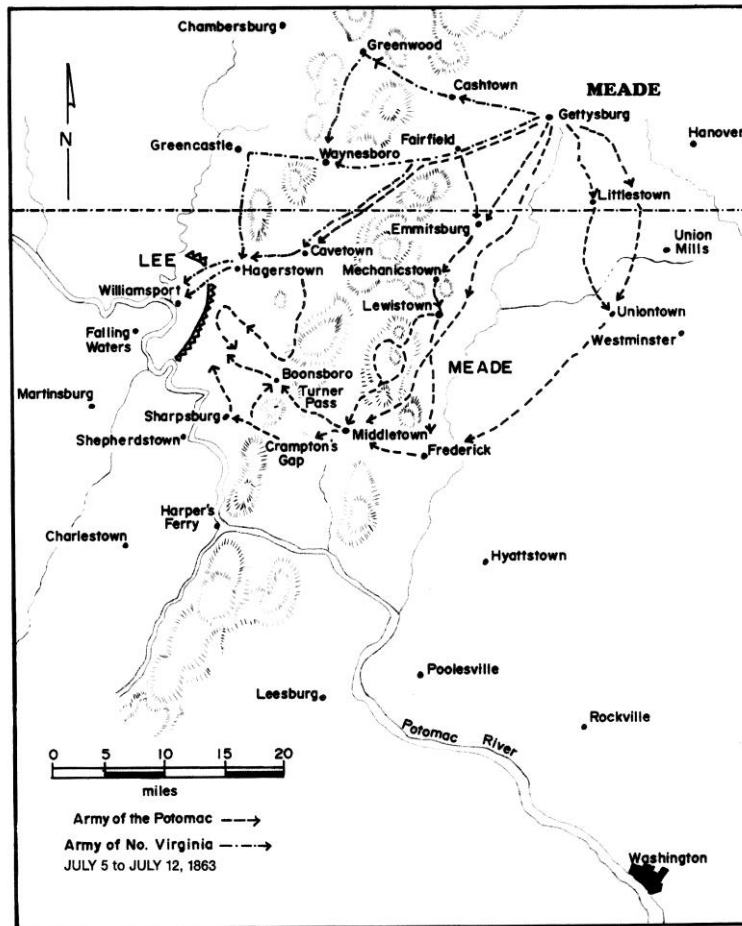
Longstreet reported that as his men and horses were exhausted and “not in condition for rapid movement, I thought myself fortunate when I found that I could reach Hagerstown in time to relieve our trains at Williamsport, then seriously threatened.” Longstreet’s column arrived in Hagerstown at about 5:00 P.M. and “moved down the Sharpsburg turnpike, and encamped about 2 miles from Hagerstown.”<sup>37</sup>

This was another trying day of marching for the Federal prisoners. Cavada wrote that the men were worn out “with torn shoes and bleeding feet.” Despite this, the prisoners “were urged on at our utmost speed, over slippery, stony roads, and through mud, that in many places was knee-deep.”<sup>38</sup>

Alexander remembered marching through Waterloo, Pennsylvania, and Ringgold, Maryland, before arriving at Hagerstown, Maryland, by 4:00 P.M. He estimated that the march from Gettysburg covered roughly forty-five miles and that the troops had covered this distance in approximately thirty-six hours. Alexander went into camp near sundown, about a “mile or two from Hagerstown to the S. E.” It

was Lee's intention to cross the Potomac River the next day, but the river was "swollen by the recent rains, & was to[o] high."<sup>39</sup>

Alexander did not mention in his memoirs that the pontoon bridge at Falling Waters had been destroyed by a Federal force from Harper's Ferry on July 4. The pontoon boats "were too damp to burn, and they were destroyed by axes." This force, commanded by Maj. Shadrack Foley, 14<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Cavalry, also captured a lieutenant and sixteen men of the 12<sup>th</sup> Virginia Cavalry. For good measure, they also captured "three wagon loads of ammunition for small-arms, and destroyed it by throwing it into the river." The troopers also reported that the depth of the water at the site of the pontoon bridge was ten feet.<sup>40</sup>



Routes of the armies from Gettysburg to the Potomac River, July 5-12, 1863. (Map by John Heiser, GNMP)

Colonel Arthur Fremantle, a British Army observer who had accompanied the Army of Northern Virginia on its Pennsylvania invasion, started the day of July 6 at 6:00 A.M., but the march was very slow; "blocked up was the road with wagons, some of which had been captured and burnt by the enemy yesterday." The party halted at about 8:30 A.M. while Lee, Longstreet, Hill, and Cadmus Wilcox "had a consultation." At a noon halt, they "all set to work to eat cherries, which was the only food we got between 5 A.M. and 11 P.M." The party rode through Hagerstown at about 7:00 P.M. "in the streets of which were several dead horses and a few dead men."<sup>41</sup>

After going about a mile beyond Hagerstown, Longstreet ordered four cavalymen to scout the roads "with directions to report every thing they saw." After about ten minutes, "we heard a sudden

rush—a panic—and then a regular stampede commenced, in the midst of which I descried our four cavalry heroes crossing a field as fast as they could gallop. All was now complete confusion.” Officers were mounting their horses, and the soldiers “were climbing over fences for protection against the supposed advancing Yankees.” Longstreet was seen “walking about, hustled by the excited crowd, and remarking, in angry tones, which could scarcely be heard, and to which no attention was paid, ‘Now you don’t know what it is—you don’t know what it is.’” Finally, the cause of all this confusion “emerged from the dark lane, in the shape of a domestic four-wheel carriage with a harmless load of females.” The confusion had spread and “increased in the rear, and caused much harm and delay.”<sup>42</sup>

Lt. Albert Walber, 26<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin, remembered that after a short rest at Hagerstown, the prisoners were “driven” to Williamsport. “Yes,” he said, “driven, for if any one dropped behind, either sick or tired, a stab with the bayonet, accompanied by an oath, would cause the unintentional straggler to master his weakness and move on.”<sup>43</sup>

Longstreet moved to a new position on July 7. His camps were located about two miles from Hagerstown along the Williamsport road. Lee’s camp was about a half-mile beyond Longstreet’s. Early on this day, Alexander was sent to join Lee’s engineer officers “in a reconnaissance of the country, & the selection of a line of battle upon which the army could make the best possible fight.” It began raining again in the afternoon “and very hard at night; bad sleeping in the mud, but all bore it patiently.”<sup>44</sup>

Brig. Gen. William T. Wofford’s brigade was sent to support Maj. Gen. J. E. B. Stuart’s cavalry division and was stationed by Stuart at Downsville on the road to Sharpsburg. Stuart’s cavalry covered the rest of the army’s front.<sup>45</sup>

Lee, Longstreet, Ewell, and Hill, along with their staffs and the army’s engineers, spent July 8 “on a reconnaissance of a line of defense from Hagerstown towards Williamsport.” The Potomac River was still in flood stage. Lee had insufficient pontoons to cross the river. Timber was being felled in order to construct entrenchments and a new bridge utilizing captured canal boats.<sup>46</sup>

On the morning of July 10, E. P. Alexander had an interview with Lee. Lee asked Alexander “questions about our lines, & seemed to try to draw out my opinion, & to take satisfaction in the confidence I felt that we could hold them.” Alexander reported that as the troops were arriving on the lines, “everything, infantry & artillery, went to work fortifying it & making it stronger.” As at Gettysburg, Alexander was given the general charge of Longstreet’s artillery. He placed his own battalion at Downsville, “the key point of our right flank.” He wrote that his men, seeing him anxious, “assured me that future history would proudly record that ‘Downsville never surrendered.’” He also recalled that the grounds of St. James College provided “some good artillery positions & could also utilize the college buildings in defence.”<sup>47</sup>

That same morning, July 10, Capt. Justus Scheibert wrote that at Lee’s request, he rode to the Potomac River “where the engineers... were to rebuild the parts of the bridge destroyed by the Northerners.” The job of rebuilding was to be done “as soon as possible.” The engineers found “suitable lumber for the boats a short distance up stream from the site selected for the bridge, it was floated down and the bridge completed in about three days.” Scheibert remembered that the engineers built fifteen new pontoons and repaired seven old ones for the eight hundred feet long bridge.<sup>48</sup>

Longstreet’s troops, on July 10, would be sent to help Stuart at Funkstown, Maryland. Stuart’s job was to keep the Federal army on the other side of the Antietam Creek until Lee’s defense line was ready. The brigade of Brig. Gen. George T. Anderson, now under the command of Col. W. W. White, was stationed “at the bridge across the Antietam, on the Hagerstown and Boonsborough pike.” It had been placed there by order of the division commander, Brig. Gen. E. M. Law. Because of this, White felt inclined not to obey Stuart’s order for support. White reported to Stuart in person and again refused. Stuart replied that White “was subject to his orders, and, as to this man Law, he knew nothing about him.” Since Stuart was White’s superior in rank, White “felt bound to obey his orders.” White then brought his brigade forward.<sup>49</sup>

White’s brigade was led into position by Brig. Gen. Fitzhugh Lee. White halted in the road until Lee’s artillery had fired on the enemy. White was then ordered to “move forward by the flank through a narrow lane, a la cavalry, to within 150 yards of the enemy.” White, knowing that this formation could be



suicidal, asked permission to deploy before moving up, but Lee refused. As White started to advance, he was subjected to a raking fire, but he continued to push forward to the crest of the hill and drove Federal sharpshooters from a barn. The 59<sup>th</sup> Georgia halted at the barn and was then fired on by Stuart's Horse Artillery. White reported that his "left and center were advancing in splendid order, and would have continued to advance but for orders from General [Fitzhugh] Lee to fall back." The 7<sup>th</sup> Georgia had been detached from the command for several days to protect the road on the right of the brigade's original position and engaged in skirmishing with Federal cavalry.<sup>50</sup>

Brig. Gen. Joseph B. Kershaw had been directed to proceed with his and Brig. Gen. Paul J. Semmes's brigade, commanded by Colonel Goode Bryan, and a section of Capt. J. C. Fraser's battery "to the bridge across the Antietam, near Macauley's, and defend that position, the enemy having appeared in force on the other side."<sup>51</sup>

Col. James D. Nance, 3<sup>rd</sup> South Carolina, reported that he "went into line of battle on the Antietam Creek, to the right of a bridge below Funkstown, and at some mills, name unknown. Company I was advanced beyond the bridge, and lost 1 man killed (Private [G. L.] Beasely), while acting as sharpshooters."<sup>52</sup>

Col. Henry C. Cabell reported that on the morning of July 10, Capt. J. C. Fraser's Pulaski (Georgia) Battery, under the command of Lt. R. M. Anderson, was ordered to report to Brig. Gen. Joseph B. Kershaw on the Sharpsburg turnpike, across the Antietam from Funkstown. At around 2:00 P.M., "the battery took position on a hill to the left of the bridge over the Antietam, and in close range of the enemy's sharpshooters, who immediately opened a vigorous fire, killing 1 man and slightly wounding another." Lieutenant Anderson opened fire into a brick building across the creek "under cover of which the enemy's sharpshooters were collecting and seriously annoying our forces." Anderson, after a few rounds from each of his guns, "succeeded in dispersing them from the house, as well as (for the time) silencing their sharpshooters in his immediate front." Anderson received orders at twilight to report to Col. T. T. Munford, commanding a brigade of cavalry, and remained with him until about 9:00 A.M. on July 11, when he reported back to Cabell's battalion.<sup>53</sup>

Capt. B. C. Manly's 1<sup>st</sup> North Carolina Artillery, Battery A, had been picketing near Funkstown since July 8. On July 10, Manly crossed the Antietam and went to Stuart's assistance. Manly, near the suburbs of Funkstown, went into action at about 6:00 A.M. and fought from this position "until late in the afternoon," compelling the Federal artillery "to change position twice during the engagement." Longstreet ordered Manly to send four of his guns to report to General Pickett. Lt. S. M. Dunn was left with one gun with Cabell. Manly's battery rejoined Cabell's battalion after crossing the Potomac River.<sup>54</sup>

Longstreet wrote that the "troops were put to work, and, in twenty-four hours, our line was comfortably intrenched." Capt. O. B. Taylor, Virginia Battery, of Alexander's battalion, reported that on July 11, at Downsville, he received "orders to dig pits for our pieces and prepare for action. Again we met with a disappointment. The enemy did not advance."<sup>55</sup>

Lt. Frederick M. Colston, an ordnance officer serving with Alexander, never saw the army so "'mad' as it was on the Downsville line; and if occasion had called it forth, we would have put up the biggest kind of fight."<sup>56</sup>

Col. E. P. Alexander remembered "two points on our line distinctly. Downesville, a little village near the Potomac, of only a few houses, was the key point of our right flank, & there I put the greater part of my own battalion, thinking likely that [Gen. George G.] Meade's principal effort would be directed there, whence our bridge could be threatened." The other point was on the left of Longstreet's lines at St. James College. Alexander felt "we had some good artillery positions & could also utilize the college buildings in defence."

Brig. Gen. Andrew H. Humphreys, chief of staff in the Army of the Potomac, and a well-trained engineer, wrote that the Confederate position “was naturally strong, and was strongly entrenched; it presented no vulnerable points, but much of it was concealed from view.” Humphreys was able to make a more careful survey after Lee crossed the Potomac. This survey “showed that an assault upon it would have resulted disastrously to us.”<sup>57</sup>

Col. David W. Aiken, 7<sup>th</sup> South Carolina, wrote to his wife concerning camp rumors. He thought that no one but Lee knew what was going to happen next. He had heard that Lee intended to fight again on the north side of the Potomac, but Aiken hoped not. “The Potomac,” he wrote, “is swimming & I imagine we will remain here till it falls, & then cross again into Virg. but cannot tell. I am sick of Maryland, and never want to come this side of the river again. As a Yankee prisoner told one of my men, we have found a great difference between invading the North & defending the South.”<sup>58</sup>



Col. E. P. Alexander (LOC)

Even though St. James College was on the left flank of Longstreet’s lines, on the morning of July 11, Lt. Gen. A. P. Hill and Brig. Gen. Cadmus Wilcox went to the college to inform Mrs. Eliza (Clarke) Porter, the mother of Federal Maj. Gen. Fitz John Porter and a matron of the college, to leave at once. They also urged Rev. Dr. John B. Kerfoot, the rector, to take every woman and child away, as they had no doubt a battle would take place on or near the campus grounds.<sup>59</sup>

Dr. Kerfoot, a staunch Unionist, wrote that the Confederates had placed “batteries just inside our hedge; *we* see their guns; the hedge hides them from *our* army.” On July 11, the day Hill and Wilcox visited, Kerfoot reported that “the skirmishers of the two armies are visible—many of them—and closing in on one another, and firing, about three-quarters of a mile south of us.” Kerfoot packed up in haste, and at 1:30 P.M. he left the college with his wife, two daughters, and Miss Bertha Falk in the college wagon. Mrs. Porter; Lucian Porter Waddell, Mrs. Porter’s grandson and an instructor at St. James; and “C. H.” left in Dr. Kerfoot’s carriage. “The cannon of *our* United States Army,” reported Dr. Kerfoot, “were already throwing shells, visible and audible, against the batteries at our outer gate; and the brigade of cavalry (Confederate) wheeling into position on our lawn as we drove off.”<sup>60</sup>

Longstreet reported that a “few of the enemy’s sharpshooters came up on the Boonsborough road, and to within long range of our picket line on the 12<sup>th</sup>. On the evening of the same day, a light skirmish was brought on by an advance of a line of sharpshooters at the Saint James’ College.” He also wrote, “the bridge was completed that night.”<sup>61</sup>

Since the original pontoon bridge had been destroyed, it was necessary to somehow rebuild or replace it. Lee, at one time, had expressed, “great impatience at the tardiness in building rude pontoons.” He ordered his chief quartermaster, Col. James L. Corley, to put Maj. John A. Harman in charge, remarking that “without Harman’s extraordinary energy to conduct the work, the pontoons would not be done for several days.” Harman, by refurbishing some of the pontoons sunk by Federal cavalry and by tearing down warehouses along the canal, “got joists to build boats with, and in twenty-four hours had enough of them ready to float down to Falling Waters and construct a bridge.”<sup>62</sup>

Sgt. William S. White, 3<sup>rd</sup> Richmond Howitzers, reported that his unit, normally in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps (Ewell’s), was detached to the command of Col. E. P. Alexander. White stated that each “of our detachments were ordered to throw up breastworks, and that too in a hurry—although broken down and fatigued, almost beyond the power of endurance, yet in the course of four or five hours, each gun was snugly ensconced in a neat, strong redoubt, affording the men great protection.”<sup>63</sup>

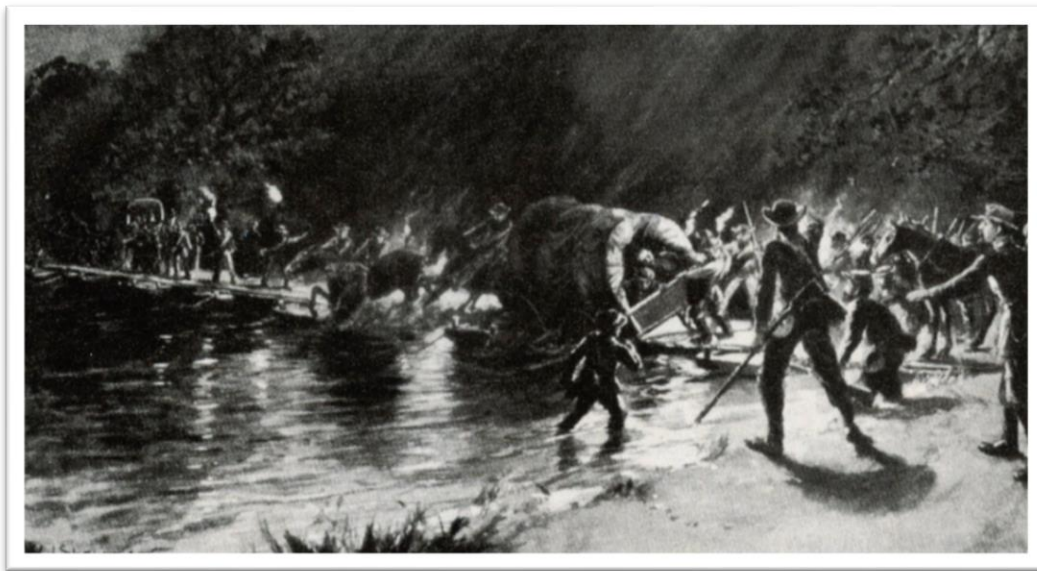
After Lee issued orders to re-cross the river, Longstreet had some second thoughts. He felt that since “the lines were comfortable, the roads heavy . . . the hurried move during a single night would be troublesome.” Longstreet made the suggestion “that the trains and wounded should be moved over during the night, and give us easy march the next night.” However, “since the waters on the other side were high,

and only enough mills running to supply food from day to day, and the weather treacherous,” General Lee “thought it better to hurry on.”<sup>64</sup>

Once the orders for the crossing were issued, Longstreet’s men proceeded to the crossing point at Falling Waters. They would have marched along the Downsville road before taking the Falling Waters road. This road intersects with the current National Park Service access road to the C & O Canal and to the crossing site. (The gate to the site is usually locked.)

Longstreet’s corps would be the first to re-cross the Potomac. His caissons were started at 5:00 P.M. on July 13. The infantry started to march “as soon as it was dark.” Since there was only one road, “the trains soon came to a halt.” Longstreet rode onto the pontoon bridge “to hasten the movements as much as possible, and sent my staff officers to different points along the line to keep everything in motion.” Longstreet ordered details “to keep up fires to light the road at the worst points.” Capt. J. H. Manning, Longstreet’s signal officer, “with his signal torches, lighted us across the bridge.” White remembered being supported by McLaws’s division with Hood’s division “being directly on our right.”<sup>65</sup>

The difficulties in such a movement were compounded by the “darkness of the night, a heavy rain storm, flooding the road with mud and water.” Longstreet later wrote that the “rain fell in showers, sometimes in blinding sheets, during the entire night.” A soldier in the Texas Brigade remembered, “All night long the rain descended pitilessly on Longstreet’s devoted corps as it moved slowly on through the dense night and yellow mud.” E. P. Alexander remembered, “we were marching all night in awful roads, in mud & dark, & hard rain, & though we had only three miles to go, we were still some distance from the bridge at sunrise.” Sgt. William S. White believed “that more rain has fallen since we crossed the Potomac than at any period since the Deluge.”<sup>66</sup>



An incident in the hazardous river crossing near Falling Waters. (LOC)

General Lee reported that the “movement was much retarded by a severe storm and the darkness of the night ... The condition of the road to the bridge and the time consumed in the passage of artillery, ammunition wagons, and ambulances, which could not ford the river, so much delayed the progress of Longstreet and Hill, that it was daylight before their troops began to cross.”<sup>67</sup>

Longstreet explained that the direct route to the bridge “was over a new road; at the ends of the bridge were green willow poles to prevent the wheels cutting through the mud, but the soil underneath was wet and soggy under the long season of rain, and before night rain again began to fall.”<sup>68</sup>



Longstreet remembered that Lee, “worn by the strain of the past two weeks, asked me to remain at the bridge and look to the work of the night.” Longstreet explained that the wagons were cutting “deep in the mud during the early hours, and began to ‘stall’ going down the hill, and one or two of the batteries were ‘stalled’ before they reached the bridge. The best standing points were ankle-deep in mud, and the road half-way to the knee, puddling and getting worse. We could only keep three or four torches alight, and those were dimmed at times when heavy rains came.”<sup>69</sup>

One of Longstreet’s wagons, loaded with wounded, missed the end of the bridge, “breaking it down, and throwing our wounded headlong into the river.” At the end of the bridge, the water was three feet deep and the current “swift and surging.” “We were so fortunate, however, as to rescue them in a few moments. They were made somewhat comfortable in other vehicles and sent forward.” Several engineer officers, including Maj. John J. Clarke and captains Henry T. Douglas and Samuel R. Johnston “applied themselves diligently to the work of repairing the bridge, and, in two hours, our line was again in motion.”<sup>70</sup>

Col. Henry C. Cabell reported that he was “ordered to send his caissons across the Potomac, and to withdraw my pieces at dark.” Col. James D. Nance, 3<sup>rd</sup> South Carolina, wrote that he “evacuated our position, and marched via Downsville, to Falling Waters, where we crossed the Potomac about noon the next day. This night’s march deserves to be characterized as the severest which I have ever witnessed.” Maj. James Dearing, commanding an artillery battalion, remembered, “crossing the bridge about 7 o’clock on the morning of July 14.” Capt. O. B. Taylor stated that he left “our fortifications on the evening of the 13<sup>th</sup>, and after a very disagreeable march, occupying the whole night, through mud, rain, and darkness, we recrossed the Potomac on the morning of July 14.”<sup>71</sup>



The crossing site at Falling Waters during wartime. (LOC)



The crossing site at Falling Waters, 2010. (photo by author.)

Lt. Frederick M. Colston remembered that one of the gun carriages “got out of the way in the darkness and blocked the march.” As a squad was trying to unblock the road, a general rode up. Colston does not name the general, but it could have been Longstreet. The unnamed general in addressing the sergeant in charge of the squad said, “Come, hurry up with that gun and get it out of the way.” The sergeant, whose patience was wearing thin at this point, replied; “Now I am doing all that I can do, and all that can be done, to get this gun up; and if you can do any better, you get down here in the mud and I will get up on that horse.” The unnamed general “laughed good-naturedly and went on.”<sup>72</sup>

Although not part of Longstreet’s command, Brig. Gen. James H. Lane, of Heth’s division, Hill’s corps, thought the “retreat from Hagerstown the night of the 13<sup>th</sup> was even worse than that from Gettysburg. My whole command was so exhausted that they all fell asleep as soon as they were halted—about a mile from the pontoon bridge at Falling Waters.”<sup>73</sup>

Lieutenant Colston thought that even the terrible conditions of the march “could not dampen the spirits of the ‘boys.’” The dirt road they were on was being churned “into mud about the consistency of



molasses and about six inches deep.” In one Texas regiment, one of the men “with a ragged hat on a general don’t-care look, called out to a comrade, using strong adjectives: “\_\_\_\_\_, it, Bill, put your foot down flat and don’t kick up such a dust.”<sup>74</sup>

A soldier in the Texas Brigade remembered:

It was daylight when the head of the Texas Brigade reached the river ... General Lee, mounted on Traveler, sat calmly in the saddle near the river on the Maryland side with a few staff officers and couriers near him. He had always appeared to me before that morning as a model of elegance. On that gloomy occasion he looked pale, haggard, and old, but sat old Traveler as knightly as Chevalier Bayard. He was bespattered with mud from the spurs on his boots to the gold cord on his black Kossuth hat. Old Traveler, whose original color was light gray, on that memorable morning was a veritable claybank. General Lee was calm but wore an anxious look as he spoke in low, pleasant tone, telling the men to fall in two ranks, and keep on the middle of the bridge.<sup>75</sup>

D. Augustus Dickert, with Kershaw’s brigade, wrote vividly of the night crossing:

An hour after dark we took up the line of march, and from our camp to the river, a distance of one mile or less, beat anything in the way of marching that human nature ever experienced. The dust that had accumulated by the armies passing over on their march to Gettysburg was now a perfect bog, while the horses and vehicles sinking in the soft earth made the road appear bottomless. We would march two or three steps, then halt for a moment or two; then a few steps more, and again the few minutes’ wait. The men had to keep their hands on the backs of their file leaders to tell when to move and when to halt. The night being so dark and rainy, we could not see farther than ‘the noses on our faces,’ while at every step we went nearly up to our knees in slash and mud. Men would stand and sleep—would march (if this could be called marching) and sleep.<sup>76</sup>

Col. E. P. Alexander remembered that the,

... whole night had been spent in groping & pulling through the mud, a few feet at a time, & then waiting for the vehicle in front of you to move again. And men would go to sleep on their horses, or leaning in fence corners, or standing in the mud. At last, not long after sunrise, we came to the pontoon bridge. It had a very bad approach, steep & on a curve—a bad location & several wagons, caissons, etc. had gone into the river during the night, though big fires were kept up to light it. But we got over fairly well ...<sup>77</sup>

William Frederick Pendleton, 50<sup>th</sup> Georgia, thought this:

... march was the most memorable march I had during all the war. It had been raining a good deal. It was very muddy, misty, and rainy. We marched in mud knee deep. One of my shoes came off, but I found it again. We went very slowly. I once fell into some entrenchments and struck my canteen against my side and hurt myself. When daylight came we had not yet reached the Potomac River. All were covered with red mud, and we had no breakfast that morning. We soon reached the Potomac ... Just as we crossed we saw Lee and his staff watching us, and we saluted as we passed.<sup>78</sup>

R. T. Coles, 4<sup>th</sup> Alabama, and his regiment reached the bridge “after floundering through mud and rain for at least ten hours.” When the regiment reached the Virginia shore, General Lee ordered the regiment to take up positions in some prepared rifle pits “with instructions to remain there until the army had crossed over.” The regiment was then to take up the pontoon bridge and load it onto the wagons. Lt

Col. Thomas H. Carter's battalion of artillery, Ewell's corps, was left with the infantry as additional support.<sup>79</sup>

D. August Dickert also remembered seeing Lee once across the river. He wrote that "not a murmur or harsh word for our beloved commander—all felt that he had done what was best for our country, and it was more in sorrow and sympathy that we beheld his bowed head and grief-stricken face as he rode at times past the moving troops."<sup>80</sup>

Capt. Charles M. Blackford wrote to his wife that he crossed the bridge with General Longstreet. "We were," he told her, "nearly the last to cross, all but the rear guard, and the enemy were keeping a very sharp cannonade upon us."<sup>81</sup>

According to Lt. Col. G. Moxley Sorrel, Longstreet's corps was all night crossing "and at dawn I was able to approach General Lee on the south bank, 'tete de point,' with a report to that effect." General Lee's "anxiety was intense" as he "expected to be attacked at the passage of the river." Lee had been up all night, and his staff "were stretched in sleep on the ground." Lee asked Sorrel to re-cross the bridge and to urge Lt. Gen. A. P. Hill "to the utmost haste in getting his men over, stopping only when imperatively necessary." Sorrel found the way back "deep in mud but clear of any impediment to the men. Broken wagons or a dismounted gun or two had been cleared away and thrown to one side."<sup>82</sup>

After delivering his message, Sorrel reported back to Lee with information that Hill was about three quarters of a mile from the bridge and "marching rapidly to it." Lee wanted to know who was leading Hill's column. Sorrel told him that Maj. Gen. Richard H. Anderson's division was leading. Lee remarked that "my friend Dick is quick enough pursuing, but in retreat I fear he will not be as sharp as I should like."<sup>83</sup>

Federal Brig. Gen. Benjamin F. Kelley, commanding the Department of West Virginia, had concentrated his force (about 6,000 men) near Clear Spring, Maryland, on Lee's flank. At 3:00 A.M. on July 14, Kelley notified the War Department that he would move "on Williamsport in the morning." However, later in the day, having learned that Longstreet "with his corps is within supporting distance of Williamsport," Kelley decided to "defer my proposed advance against that place, but will operate against the enemy on his other flank." It appears that Kelley had no desire to tangle with any part of Longstreet's command.<sup>84</sup>

After Longstreet's rear had finally crossed the bridge, at about 9:00 A.M., the column encamped for the night near Hainesville, West Virginia. The army later encamped near Bunker Hill, West Virginia. Brig. Gen. Montgomery D. Corse, whose brigade had been left behind during the army's march north to Pennsylvania to help guard the approaches to Richmond, reported in and was ready to rejoin Pickett's division. On July 19, Longstreet received orders "to march with my command for Millwood, in order to obtain possession of Ashby's Gap, with a view to covering our future movements."<sup>85</sup>

Part of Longstreet's command reached Millwood by the evening of July 20 and found the Shenandoah River "to be past fording." They also discovered that Federal cavalry was in possession of Ashby's Gap "down to the river bank." After reporting this situation to Lee, Longstreet continued his march the next day—July 21—for Manassas and Chester Gaps.<sup>86</sup>

Longstreet arrived at the Shenandoah River at Front Royal, Virginia, and again found the Shenandoah to "be past fording, and the work of laying our bridges was hardly [hurriedly?] begun." Brig. Gen. Montgomery D. Corse "succeeded in passing the stream with his men and several batteries" in order to secure the gaps. The bridges were completed "about 12 o'clock at night, and the passage by our trains commenced."<sup>87</sup>

Corse detached Col. Arthur Herbert, 17<sup>th</sup> Virginia Infantry, to guard Manassas Gap. He took the rest of his brigade into Chester Gap "and succeeded in getting possession of the latter some few moments before the enemy appeared." Herbert, in Manassas Gap, had "secured a strong position with his regiment, from which he held the enemy in check." The rest of Pickett's division "was hurried over by crossing the ammunition and arms in a flat-boat, the men wading." Herbert received much needed reinforcements "when he drove back the enemy, and secured as much of the Gap as was desirable." Corse, who was being "threatened by a large cavalry force," also received some needed reinforcements. This cavalry force withdrew "about the time the re-enforcements" reached Corse.<sup>88</sup>

Maj. James Dearing, commanding Pickett's artillery brigade, reported that his advance under Maj. J. P. W. Read, "after a rapid march and crossing both forks of the Shenandoah, one of which was very deep, succeeded in reaching Chester Gap just before the enemy." When the Federal force began to advance, "they were handsomely driven back by Captain Blount's and Captain Caskie's batteries ... without the assistance of the infantry."<sup>89</sup>

Col. William Gamble, 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade, 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division, Cavalry Corps, Army of the Potomac, reported that he arrived in the area of Chester Gap at about 3:30 P.M. on July 21. Gamble encountered a line of skirmishers posted about one mile from the gap. Gamble "dismounted six squadrons, and drove the enemy's pickets to the crest of the Gap on their reserve, which was found to consist of Pickett's division of infantry, one regiment of Jones' cavalry, and a battery of six guns." Gamble, not having a "sufficient force to drive the enemy from the Gap, having no support nearer than 20 miles," decided to fall back about one and a half miles in order to cover the two roads leading from the gap.<sup>90</sup>

By the next day, July 22, Longstreet had posted Hood's division, under Brig. Gen. E. M. Law, in Manassas Gap. When a Federal force appeared "he gave us but little trouble." After Longstreet's men had finished cooking their rations, Longstreet sent Brig. Gen. W. W. Wofford's brigade, of McLaws's division, into Chester Gap "to disperse the cavalry that was at the foot of the mountain, and endeavor to capture his artillery." Pickett's division "was ordered to send a force down the mountain by a different route, to get in rear of and intercept the cavalry. After a light skirmish with General Wofford, the enemy made a hasty retreat."<sup>91</sup>

Colonel Gamble wrote that his pickets reported Longstreet's advance at 8:00 A.M. When the head of Longstreet's column "came within easy range, we opened fire on it with artillery and the carbines of the dismounted men so effectually that his column, with his wagon train, halted and fell back out of range." Gamble claimed that he had held up Longstreet's advance from 8:00 A.M. until 6:00 P.M. "when the enemy brought five regiments of infantry around out of sight in the woods, and, approaching my left flank, drove in our skirmishers, and only by overwhelming numbers compelled me to fall back slowly."<sup>92</sup>

At dawn of July 23, Hood's division was on the road from Front Royal to Linden via Manassas Gap. Brig. Gen. Henry L. Benning's brigade "was stretched across the road on a ridge parallel with the Gap, and such dispositions were made by General Law on my flanks with the other brigades that the enemy's pickets soon fell back a mile or more, and his reserve regiments quite to the Gap." Near nightfall, Law ordered Benning, with the 4<sup>th</sup> Alabama, to maintain his position until relieved by Lt. Gen. A. P. Hill. Benning was not relieved until 9 A.M., July 24, when he "started to overtake the division."<sup>93</sup>

The main body of Longstreet's corps continued with the retreat. It finally arrived in the relative safety of Culpeper Court House "at noon on the 24<sup>th</sup> instant." When the troops arrived at this location, the long retreat from Gettysburg and the Gettysburg campaign was officially over.<sup>94</sup>

Baron Antoine Henri de Jomini, the leading nineteenth-century military theorist, wrote that retreats "are certainly the most difficult operations in war." Jomini also stated,

The magnitude of the distances and the nature of the country to be traversed, the resources it offers, the obstacles to be encountered, the attacks to be apprehended, either in rear or in flank, superiority or inferiority in cavalry, the spirit of the troops, are circumstances which have a great effect in deciding the fate of retreats, leaving out of consideration the skillful arrangements which the generals may make for their execution.<sup>95</sup>

While General Lee was responsible for the overall retreat of the Army of Northern Virginia, Lieutenant General Longstreet was responsible for getting his corps in motion and to the Potomac River crossings in a timely fashion. Longstreet's men reportedly covered forty-five miles, from Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, to Hagerstown, Maryland, in thirty-six hours. This is an average of approximately one and one-quarter to one and one-half miles per hour. This was a remarkable feat of marching for an army that had just been defeated on the field of battle and was marching in some of the worst weather imaginable.

Once at the Potomac River crossings, Longstreet efficiently and effectively put his men to work erecting strong defensive works to protect the crossing points, particularly the pontoon site at Falling Waters. During the night of the crossing, Longstreet, on the Maryland side of the Potomac, supervised the crossing of his troops while Lee supervised the crossing from the West Virginia side. Despite the bad weather and several mishaps at the bridge, Longstreet was able to get his men safely across the river and eventually to Culpeper Court House, where they and Lee could continue the war.

It has been charged that there were hard feelings between Lee and Longstreet growing out of their disagreements during the Battle of Gettysburg. However, Brig. Gen. John D. Imboden recalled that when he visited Lee on July 9 near Williamsport, Longstreet came into the tent “wet and muddy.” “Well, my old war horse,” Lee said to Longstreet, “what news do you bring us from the front?” To Imboden, this “cordial greeting between chief and lieutenant is a sufficient answer, in my mind, to the statements of alleged ill feeling between the two men ... They were surely cordial on the 9<sup>th</sup> of July, 1863.”<sup>96</sup>

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Lafayette McLaws, “Gettysburg,” *Southern Historical Society Papers*, vol. 7 (Richmond: Southern Historical Society, 1879), 87, 88, Sorrel later wrote that his commission as lieutenant colonel arrived in the mail on July 3. See G. Moxley Sorrel, *Recollections of a Confederate Staff Officer* (1905; reprint, Wilmington, N.C.: Broadfoot Publishing, 1991), 164.

<sup>2</sup> U. S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: The Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1888-1904), Series 1, 27(2); 417. [Hereafter cited as *OR*. All citations are from Series 1, unless otherwise noted.]

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 417, 423, 427.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 406, 411; For times of metrological events see: U. S. Naval Observatory, “Astronomical Applications Department,” <http://aa.usno.navy.mil> (accessed September 18, 2011).

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Elmore, “A Meteorological and Astronomical Chronology of the Gettysburg Campaign,” *Gettysburg Magazine*, 13 (July 1995), 15, 20.

<sup>6</sup> *OR*, 27(2): 389.

<sup>7</sup> Arthur J. L. Fremantle, *Three Months in the Southern States: April-June, 1863* (1864; reprint, Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), 271.

<sup>8</sup> Jedediah Hotchkiss, *Make a Map of the Valley. The Civil War Journal of Stonewall Jackson's Topographer*, ed. Archie P. McDonald (Dallas, Tex.: Southern Methodist University Press, 1973), 157, 158.

<sup>9</sup> *OR*, 27(2): 311.

<sup>10</sup> Walter Harrison, *Pickett's Men: A Fragment of War History* (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1870), 105.

<sup>11</sup> *OR*, 27(2): 360; E. P. Alexander, “Causes of Lee’s Defeat at Gettysburg,” *Southern Historical Society Papers*, vol. 4 (Richmond: Southern Historical Society, 1879), 102. Alexander wrote in a footnote that he had “just found copy of a brief dairy kept by Colonel G. Moxley Sorrel, Adjutant-General of Longstreet’s corps from which I copy the following entries, showing movements of the infantry divisions more accurately.”

<sup>12</sup> Kent Masterson Brown, *Retreat from Gettysburg: Lee, Logistics, and the Pennsylvania Campaign* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 31, 32.

<sup>13</sup> *OR*, 27(2): 734.

<sup>14</sup> Fremantle, *Three Months in the Southern States*, 272.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 272, 273.

<sup>16</sup> James Longstreet, *From Manassas to Appomattox* (1896; reprint, Secaucus, N.J.: Blue & Gray Press, 1984), 426; Sorrel, *Recollections of a Confederate Staff Officer*, 165; Elmore, “A Meteorological and Astronomical Chronology,” 15. It actually had started raining at about 2:15 P.M.; see Elmore, “A Meteorological and Astronomical Chronology,” 20.

<sup>17</sup> Robert A. Moore, *A Life for the Confederacy: As Recorded in the Pocket Diaries of Pvt. Robert A. Moore, Co. G, 17<sup>th</sup> Mississippi*, ed. James W. Silver (Jackson, Tenn.: McCowat-Mercer Press, Inc., 1959), 154.

<sup>18</sup> Simon Baruch, “A Surgeon’s Story of Battle and Capture,” *Confederate Veteran* 22 (1914), 545; Brown, “Retreat from Gettysburg,” 114-115.



- 
- <sup>19</sup> Fitzgerald Ross, *Cities and Camps of the Confederate States*, ed. Richard B. Harwell (1865; reprint, Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 63-64.
- <sup>20</sup> *OR*, 27(2): 430; E. P. Alexander, *Fighting for the Confederacy: The Personal Recollections of General Edward Porter Alexander*, ed. Gary W. Gallagher (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 267).
- <sup>21</sup> Ross, *Cities and Camps*, 64-66.
- <sup>22</sup> William Miller Owen, *In Camp and Battle with the Washington Artillery* (Boston: Ticknor and Co., 1885), 255-257.
- <sup>23</sup> *OR*, 27(2): 436-439.
- <sup>24</sup> Elmore, "A Meteorological and Astronomical Chronology," 16; Owen, *In Camp and Battle*, 257.
- <sup>25</sup> Douglas Southall Freeman, *R. E. Lee: A Biography* vol. 3 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935), 136; Harold B. Simpson, *Hood's Texas Brigade: Lee's Grenadier Guard* (1970; reprint, Gaithersburg, Md.: Olde Soldier Books, Inc., 1994), 287.
- <sup>26</sup> Fremantle, *Three Months in the Southern States*, 277, 278.
- <sup>27</sup> William S. White, "A Diary of the War," *Contributions to a History of the Richmond Howitzer Battalion: Pamphlet 2* (1883; reprint, Baltimore: Butternut & Blue, 2000), 212.
- <sup>28</sup> *OR*, 27(2): 361, 428; Janet B. Hewett, Noah A. Trudeau, and Bryce A. Suderow, eds. *Supplement to the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, part 1, vol. 5 (Wilmington, N.C.: Broadfoot Publishing, 1995), 356; Fremantle, *Three Months in the Southern States*, 280.
- <sup>29</sup> George M. Neese, *Three Years in the Confederate Horse Artillery* (New York: The Neale Publishing Co., 1911), 193.
- <sup>30</sup> Alexander, *Fighting for the Confederacy*, 268.
- <sup>31</sup> Fremantle, *Three Months in the Southern States*, 276-280.
- <sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 279-280.
- <sup>33</sup> T. E. Wentworth, "Statement of Capt. T. E. Wentworth," *The Northern Monthly: A Magazine of Original Literature and Military Affairs* vol. 1 (Portland, Maine: Bailey & Noyes, 1864), 137.
- <sup>34</sup> Frederick F. Cavada, *Libby Life: Experiences of a Prisoner of War* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1865), 14.
- <sup>35</sup> Harrison, *Pickett's Men*, 105-106.
- <sup>36</sup> *OR*, 51(2): 734-735; *OR*, Series 1, 27(2): 361.
- <sup>37</sup> *OR*, 27(2): 361.
- <sup>38</sup> Cavada, *Libby Life*, 15.
- <sup>39</sup> Alexander, *Fighting for the Confederacy*, 268. Lt. Col. I. Spaulding, Volunteer Engineers, reported from Sandy Hook to Brig. Gen. G. K. Warren on July 11 that the Potomac "is still 4 to 5 feet above the stage of the water which renders it fordable..." *OR*, Series 1, 27(3): 646.
- <sup>40</sup> *OR*, 27(1): 489; *OR*, 27(3): 524, 538; *OR*, Series 3, 51(1): 1068.
- <sup>41</sup> Fremantle, *Three Months in the Southern States*, 280-281.
- <sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 283-284.
- <sup>43</sup> Albert Walber, "From Gettysburg to Libby Prison," *War Papers: Read Before the Commandery of the State of Wisconsin*, vol. 4 (Milwaukee, Wis.: Burdick & Allen, 1914), 197.
- <sup>44</sup> Fremantle, *Three Months in the Southern States*, 285; Alexander, *Fighting for the Confederacy*, 269-270; Hotchkiss, *Make a Map of the Valley*, 159.
- <sup>45</sup> Henry B. McClellan, *I Rode with J.E.B. Stuart: The Life and Campaigns of Major General J.E.B. Stuart* (1958; reprint, Cambridge, Mass.: Da Capo Press, 1994), 361.
- <sup>46</sup> Hotchkiss, *Make a Map of the Valley*, 159.
- <sup>47</sup> Alexander, *Fighting for the Confederacy*, 271.
- <sup>48</sup> Justus Scheibert, *Seven Months in the Rebel States During the North American War*, (Tuscaloosa: Confederate Publishing Co., 1958), 120; Channing M. Bolton, "With General Lee's Engineers," *Confederate Veteran*, vol. 30 (1922), 299.
- <sup>49</sup> *OR*, 27(2): 398.
- <sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 370.
- <sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 374.
- <sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 377.
- <sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 376.
- <sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 361, 433.
- <sup>56</sup> F. M. Colson, "Gettysburg as I Saw It," *Confederate Veteran*, vol. 5 (1897), 553.
-

- 
- <sup>57</sup> Andrew H. Humphreys, *From Gettysburg to the Rapidan* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1883), 6, 7.
- <sup>58</sup> Col. David W. Aiken to his wife, July 11, 1863. David W. Aiken Papers, South Carolinian Library, University of South Carolina. (Copy in GNMP Files, V7-SC7A).
- <sup>59</sup> Thomas J. C. Williams, *A History of Washington County* (Hagerstown, Md.: Runk & Titsworth, 1906), 350.
- <sup>60</sup> Hall Harrison, *Life of the Right Reverend John Barrett Kerfoot*, vol. 1 (New York: James Pott & Co., 1886), 262; Williams, *A History of Washington County, Maryland*, vol. 1 (Baltimore, Md.: Regional Publishing Company, 1968), 341.
- <sup>61</sup> *OR*, 27(2): 361.
- <sup>62</sup> John D. Imboden, "The Confederate Retreat from Gettysburg" in *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, vol. 3, ed. Clarence C. Buell and Robert U. Johnson (New York: The Century Company, 1887-1888), 428; John Esten Cooke, *A Life of Gen. Robert E. Lee* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1881), 333.
- <sup>63</sup> White, "A Diary of the War," 215.
- <sup>64</sup> Longstreet, *From Manassas to Appomattox*, 429.
- <sup>65</sup> *OR*, 27(2): 361.
- <sup>66</sup> *OR*, 27(2): 361; Val C. Giles, *Rags and Hope: The Recollections of Val C. Giles, Four Years with Hood's Brigade, Fourth Texas Infantry, 1861-1865*, ed. Mary Laswell (New York: Coward & McCann, 1961), 189-190; Longstreet, *From Manassas to Appomattox*, 429-430; Alexander, *Fighting for the Confederacy*, 272; White, "A Diary of the War," 215.
- <sup>67</sup> *OR*, 27(2): 323.
- <sup>68</sup> Longstreet, *From Manassas to Appomattox*, 429.
- <sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>70</sup> *OR*, 27(2): 361; Longstreet, *From Manassas to Appomattox*, 429-430.
- <sup>71</sup> *OR*, 27(2): 374, 377, 390, 433.
- <sup>72</sup> Colston, "Gettysburg as I Saw It," 553.
- <sup>73</sup> *OR*, 27(2): 667.
- <sup>74</sup> Colston, "Gettysburg as I Saw It," 553.
- <sup>75</sup> Giles, *Rags and Hope*, 189-190.
- <sup>76</sup> D. Augustus Dickert, *History of Kershaw's Brigade* (1899; reprint, Dayton, Ohio: Morningside Bookshop, 1976), 258.
- <sup>77</sup> Alexander, *Fighting for the Confederacy*, 272.
- <sup>78</sup> Constance Pendleton, ed., *Confederate Memoirs: Early Life and Family History of William Frederick Pendleton and Mary Lawson Pendleton* (Bryn Athyn, Pa: Bryn Athyn, 1958), 37.
- <sup>79</sup> R. T. Coles, *From Huntsville to Appomattox: R. T. Coles's History of the 4<sup>th</sup> Regiment, Alabama Volunteer Infantry, C. S. A, Army of Northern Virginia*, ed. Jeffrey D. Stocker (Knoxville, Tenn.: University of Tennessee Press, 1996), 113.
- <sup>80</sup> Dickert, *History of Kershaw's Brigade*, 259.
- <sup>81</sup> Susan Leigh Blackford and Charles Minor Blackford, *Letters from Lee's Army* (1947; reprint, Lincoln, Nebr.: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 192-193.
- <sup>82</sup> Sorrel, *Recollections of a Confederate Staff Officer*, 165-166.
- <sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>84</sup> *OR*, 27(3): 698, 748.
- <sup>85</sup> *OR*, 27(2): 362; Harrison, *Pickett's Men*, 108.
- <sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>89</sup> *OR*, 27(2): 390.
- <sup>90</sup> *OR*, 27(1): 937.
- <sup>91</sup> *OR*, 27(2): 362.
- <sup>92</sup> *OR*, 27(1): 937.
- <sup>93</sup> *OR*, 27(2): 417-418.
- <sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 362.
- <sup>95</sup> Antoine Henri de Jomini, *The Art of War* (1838; reprint, Novato, Calif.: Presidio Press, 1992), 230, 233, 234.
- <sup>96</sup> Imboden, "The Confederate Retreat from Gettysburg," 428.