

“Simple Grandeur”

The creation of the Soldiers’ National Cemetery at Gettysburg and the men who stepped forward to make their contribution.

Rob Wingert, Licensed Battlefield Guide



(Battles & Leaders)

The rain had started by mid-morning, interspersed with claps of thunder and flashes of lightning. General John Imboden, in command of the 17 mile-long ambulance train filled with Lee’s wounded veterans, wrote on July 4th:

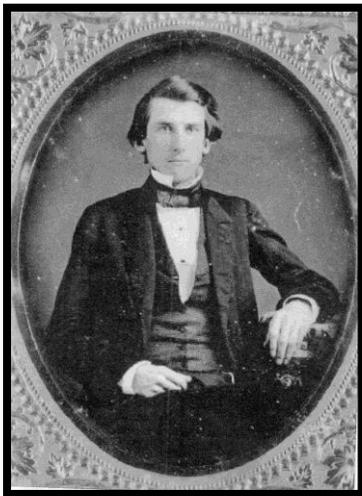
“Shortly after noon of the 4th, the very windows of heaven seemed to have opened. The rain fell in blinding sheets; the meadows were soon overflowed, and the fences gave way before the raging streams.”¹

The two armies were gathered, licking their wounds after three days of horrific fighting. General Robert E. Lee had decided to begin his retreat from Gettysburg, hoping to reach the Potomac River before the Union forces of General George Meade could catch him on the northern side of the river with his back to an impassable, flooded body of water. The battle had lasted three days and with each day passing there were more wounded and dead. At the end of that fight, 7,000 dead lay on the fields surrounding the town of Gettysburg. An additional 3,000 would succumb to their wounds in the ensuing weeks and be listed on the rolls of the dead. Though Lee attempted to get 6,000 of his wounded back to Virginia, there were still over 20,000 wounded Union and Confederate soldiers remaining in scattered field hospitals in Adams County as well as churches, schools and private homes in Gettysburg. These wounded would be cared for by

military and civilians alike, but a larger issue of the catastrophe wrought on the area was the thousands of dead, buried and unburied, as well as the carcasses of 5000 horses and mules on the field immediately surrounding Gettysburg, risking the health and welfare of the survivors.

The deplorable conditions of the battlefield were viewed first hand by Andrew Curtin, Pennsylvania's Republican wartime Governor, when he visited the field soon after the battle. Constant rains had washed soil from the surface of shallow graves of both Confederate and Union dead where makeshift headboards, inscribed in pencil, pen, or other implements were fading as a result of the rain and passage of time. The dishonor of letting these Union men lay on the field, those who "gave the last full measure of devotion,"² was unthinkable and unconscionable, especially those native Pennsylvanians who died on the native soil of the commonwealth. Shocked and deeply moved by what he saw, the governor realized something needed to be done quickly and permanently.

Governor Curtin was accompanied on his visit by Gettysburg attorney, David Wills, destined to become the Governor's agent in charge of the creation of and continued maintenance of the Soldiers' National Cemetery at Gettysburg.



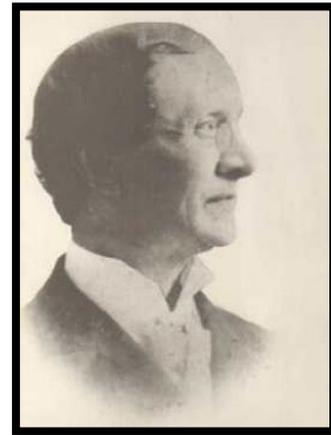
David Wills, ca. 1858.
(GNMP)

David Wills was 32 years old when he and Governor Curtin toured the ravaged battlefield on the afternoon of July 10. Wills was a prominent attorney and Republican in the community. A graduate of the local Pennsylvania College (now known as Gettysburg College) in 1851, he studied law under Thaddeus Stevens and was admitted to the Adams County Bar in 1854. His success allowed him to purchase a large house, which was built in 1816, on the corner of York Street where it merged into the town's Diamond or Square.

Wills' prominence in Gettysburg and the local Republican Party made him a natural choice to be the agent to carry out the wishes of Governor Curtin. First and foremost were the hundreds of visitors coming to the field looking for friends and relatives wounded or dead. Wills would lead efforts to assist them in locating those men. Under Wills' direction and supervision, the Soldiers' National Cemetery would become a reality. He would form an alliance with other agents of the governors of the Union States whose men had fought and died at Gettysburg. This alliance would result in the creation of the Cemetery and the burial, over a 6 month time period, of over 3500 Union soldiers. He would plan the dedication ceremony, inviting Edward Everett as the keynote speaker. He also invited the President of the United States, Abraham Lincoln, to deliver a few appropriate remarks as the Chief Executive of the nation. Wills oversaw the creation of burial maps locating the numerous mass graves of both Union and Confederate bodies. Over the next few years, Wills would complete the task of finishing the Cemetery, overseeing the placement of the central focal

point of the site, the Soldiers' National Monument. He also established the format for the continued maintenance of the Cemetery into perpetuity.

Another prominent attorney in Gettysburg was David McConaughy, a professional and political rival of David Wills. Born in 1823, McConaughy graduated from Washington College in 1840. He taught school in Howard County, Maryland for a year then studied law under Moses McClean. Admitted to the bar in 1845, he practiced law for the next 57 years and became a member of the Republican Party after the Whigs Party fell apart. He became politically active as a delegate to National Conventions and as a State Senator in 1865. In 1853, McConaughy was a proponent in the formation of a town cemetery in Gettysburg and the following year became the president of the association that founded Evergreen Cemetery, a post he held till 1863.



David McConaughy. (GNMP)

After the battle, McConaughy saw an immediate need to properly care for the dead on the field. In his capacity as president of Evergreen Cemetery, he envisioned a soldiers' cemetery as a greater part of the civilian, creating a continuous cemetery without distinct borders. Within weeks after the battle, he was negotiating with private landowners to acquire land adjacent to Evergreen Cemetery. When McConaughy offered his plan to Governor Curtin, hoping for his approval and the chance to be appointed the Governor's agent, the competition between Wills and McConaughy entered a new level of confrontation.

As early as June 24, 1862, in a letter to the editor of the *Adams Sentinel*, McConaughy wrote:

“Let there be a selection made of an eligible site and commodious ground in Ever Green Cemetery, and in the center let there be erected a handsome and imposing shaft of marble, around which will be interred the remains, and upon which shall be inscribed the names of all the glorious dead, native to, or citizens of, our Country, who die in the defense of the nation in this momentous struggle. Let each grave be indicated by a small headstone. Upon the Monument should be inscribed the names alike of privates and of officers, without any other distinction whatever, save the simple yet eloquent record of the names and battlefields of our martyred dead.”³

With the immediate results of the battle surrounding Gettysburg, McConaughy was inspired to pursue his plan and the race to secure land that was most appropriate for the cemetery was on. Land abutting Evergreen Cemetery on west Cemetery Hill was deemed the most desirable by agents representing governors of the Union States. However, it was now owned by McConaughy. After lengthy negotiations and a personal appeal from Governor Curtin,

McConaughy sold the land that abuts Evergreen to Pennsylvania and the Soldiers' National Cemetery was established where it currently exists.

McConaughy's suggestion for creation of a cemetery in 1862 was brought about because of the deaths earlier in the year of two men from Gettysburg, Nesbitt Baugher and Frederick Huber, both buried in Evergreen. He felt strongly in his vision and with the Battle at Gettysburg finished and the aftermath ongoing it seemed fitting to propose again, though David Wills would be the agent for the Governor of Pennsylvania. In that capacity, Wills will be the mover and creator of the Soldiers' National Cemetery. However, there was a second part to McConaughy's vision; preservation of the fields that had so recently been fought over. It was a rather revolutionary idea:

“There could be no more fitting and expressive memorial of the heroic valor and signal triumphs of our Army on the 1st, 2d & 3 days of July, 1863, than the Battle field itself, with its natural and artificial defenses preserved and perpetuated in the exact form and condition they presented during the Battles.”⁴

McConaughy was laying the ideas for the foundation of a battlefield memorial park. Within weeks after the battle, he purchased significant areas of the field including McKnight's Hill (“Stevens' Knoll”), Raffensberger's Hill (East Cemetery Hill), the west face of Little Round Top, a substantial portion of Culp's Hill, and part of Big Round Top. A year later the Gettysburg Battlefield Memorial Association was born and for the next 32 years this association worked tirelessly to acquire about 500 acres of battlefield land eventually turned over to the United States War Department in 1895. McConaughy's first efforts were the building blocks for Gettysburg National Military Park that now consists of 6,000 acres.

With McConaughy out of the picture, David Wills proceeded to initiate plans and a design for the cemetery. William Saunders, Botanist and Superintendent of Horticulture for the United States Government, was requested for consultation on the design of the new cemetery. Saunders was from Scotland, educated at Edinburgh College and Kew Royal Gardens. In 1848, he had emigrated to the United States, and in 1854, joined in partnership with Thomas Meehan, forming a landscape gardening and horticultural business. By 1862, he was working for the United States government. It was in this capacity that David Wills contacted him for advice on the ground selection and the cemetery design.

William Saunders came into the task with a wealth of experience. He had introduced a fixed roof for greenhouses, saving owners large sums of money. He had landscaped large estates, several city parks, including assisting Frederick Olmstead with Central Park in New York City. He specialized in out-of-town cemeteries that were sweeping the country because of hygienic reasons. He laid out several cemeteries in Amboy and Rahway, New Jersey, Rosehill Cemetery in Chicago, and Oak Ridge Cemetery in Evanston, Illinois, where President Abraham Lincoln would eventually be buried. Additionally, in 1870, Saunders introduced Russian apple trees to

the colder, northern United States and the Navel Orange from Bahia, Brazil, that built the orange industry in California.

Saunders arrived in Gettysburg in late August to meet with Wills to tour the prospective ground for the cemetery. With few additions, he approved the site and presented Wills with his initial plan:

“He recommended that a monument be placed at the central point on the highest reach of ground and that it serve as the focal point for the half-circle in which the graves would be placed. Parcels allotted to each of the eighteen participating states would run toward the common center, fitting together in a semicircular arrangement. Saunders promised the services of a government surveyor to mark off the twelve-foot semicircular parallels, allowing five feet for a walk between parallels and seven feet for each grave.”⁵

Saunders’ plan closely resembled many of McConaughy’s ideas which he had proposed in his 1862 editorial to the *Adams Sentinel*, including the suggestion of officers and enlisted men being laid equally without regard to rank. Some speculation exists of a conversation occurring between the two when Saunders came to visit the site in the early days after the battle and it’s possible that Saunders welcomed the attorney’s suggestions, which he incorporated into the draft of his landscape and cemetery plan, the final draft of which was provided to the Cemetery Committee in September. On the evening of November 17, 1863, Saunders, by personal invitation, went to the White House to present the plans to President Lincoln. “I... spread the plans on his office table,” Saunders recalled. “He took much interest in it, asked about its surroundings, about Culp’s Hill, Round Top, etc. and seemed familiar with the topography of the place although he had never been there. He was much pleased with the method of the graves, said it differed from the ordinary cemetery, and, after I had explained the reasons, said it was an advisable and benefitting arrangement.”⁶

The President had, himself, approved the plan and with the cemetery committees’ approval, Saunders could move forward. In Saunders’ *Remarks on the Design for the Cemetery*, included in the 1865 edition of *Soldiers’ National Cemetery, Gettysburg*:

“The prevailing expression of the Cemetery should be that of simple grandeur.... With regard to the future keeping of the ground the walks should be smooth, hard and clean, the grass kept short and maintained as clean and neat as the best pleasure ground in the country.”⁷

Saunders would also include in the plan the planting of trees and shrubbery and the placement of roads and walkways that would “realize a pleasing landscape.”⁸ Saunders had worked tirelessly towards the creation of the Soldiers’ National Cemetery, yet he got little recognition or compensation for his efforts as a dutiful employee of the United States government.

With land for the cemetery secured, the landscape plan developed and approved by the Cemetery Committee and President Lincoln, the next priority was disinterment of Union dead from battlefield and nearby hospital sites for transfer to the new cemetery. Bids for the project ranged from a low of \$1.59 per body to a high of \$8.00 per body. The lowest bid accepted by Wills came from Frederick Biesecker, who hired a group of 10 to 12 free African Americans from the local community under the general direction of Basil Biggs. To oversee the whole process, Wills hired Samuel Weaver to identify and oversee dis-interments and interments. Each body was to be placed in a wooden coffin while personal effects found with the remains were to be gathered, cataloged, and stored with the chance that a family member or friend would claim them.

Samuel Weaver had the first permanent photographic studio in Gettysburg, establishing a daguerreotype gallery on Chambersburg Street in 1852. By 1857, he had moved it to his home on West Middle Street. In 1860, he was 48 years old and it is believed that he had retired from the photography business, turning it over to his son, Peter, who established a photographic gallery in Hanover, PA. One of Weaver's sons, Hanson, was a second lieutenant in the 8th United States Infantry when the Civil War started. He served until January, 1866, but missed Gettysburg while on detached service. Another son, Rufus, age 21 was away in medical school.



Samuel Weaver (with notebook) and laborers exhume the body of a Federal soldier near Hanover, Pennsylvania. (Hanover Historical Society)

The recovery of bodies began in August, but the decision was made to halt the process because of difficulties in dealing with the decomposed remains in the warm, humid temperatures and the fear of spreading further disease to an area still reeling from the effects of the battle. The decision was made to wait for colder temperatures that fall, initiated again on October 27, 1863.

Burials in the cemetery continued till the following March, when the last body was buried on the 18th. Weaver was meticulous in his recordkeeping:

“There was not a grave permitted to be opened or a body searched unless I was present. I was inflexible in enforcing this rule, and here can say, with the greatest satisfaction to myself and to the friends of the soldiers, that I saw every body taken out of its temporary resting place, and all the pockets carefully searched; and where the grave was not marked, I examined all the clothing and everything about the body, and all the hair and all the particles of bone, carefully placed in the coffin, and if there was a head-board, I required it to be at once nailed to the coffin. At the same time I wrote the name, company, and regiment, of the soldier on the coffin, and numbered the coffin, and entered in my book the same endorsement.”⁹

Weaver gathered the contents of soldiers’ pockets and any jewelry, letters, books, and other personal property found to assist with identification. At the conclusion of his work, Weaver cataloged 287 packages of personal effects that would be eventually stored in the cemetery gatehouse. A total of 3,354 bodies were exhumed and reburied in the Soldiers’ National Cemetery, of which 979 were unknown as to name, unit or state affiliation. His work brought him in contact with Confederate dead as well. In his report to David Wills on March 19, 1864, he wrote:

“In searching for the remains of our fallen heroes, we examined more than three thousand rebel graves. They were frequently buried in trenches, and there are two instances of more than one hundred and fifty in a trench.”¹⁰

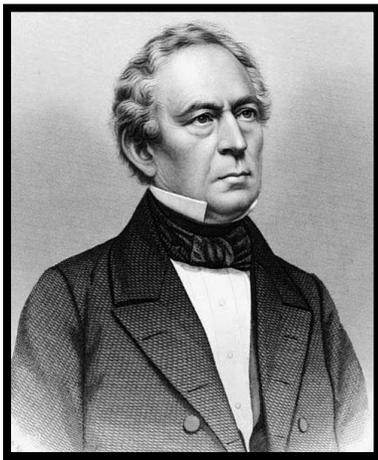
Later in the report he writes of how he differentiated Confederate remains from Union:

“This was generally very easily done. In the first place, as a general rule, the rebels never went into battle with the United States coat on. They sometimes stole the pantaloons from our dead and wore them, but not the coat. The rebel clothing is made of cotton, and is of grey or brown color. Occasionally I found one with a blue cotton jean roundabout on. The clothing of our men is wool and blue... If the body were without a coat, then there were other infallible marks. The shoes of the rebels were differently made from those of our soldiers. If this failed, then the underclothing was the next part examined. The rebel cotton undershirt gave proof of the army to which he belonged... And I here most conscientiously assert, that I firmly believe that there has not been a single mistake made in the removal of the soldiers to the Cemetery by taking the body of a rebel for a Union soldier.”¹¹

This gives the reader an idea of Samuel Weaver’s dedication to the project, though his claim of no Southern dead in the cemetery will in later years turn out to be incorrect; there are possibly nine Confederate soldiers buried in the cemetery, though identified to Union regiments. He kept

careful record of the daily recoveries and through the investigation of the bodies attempted to identify each beyond a doubt. He also saw his duty to the families or friends of that soldier to retain in a secure place the personal effects. Samuel Weaver will again be called upon when memorial associations in North Carolina and Georgia sponsor projects to have their native sons removed to southern cemeteries though most of that will be the responsibility of Weaver's son Rufus, who assumed his father's duties after his unfortunate passing in February 1871.

The development of the cemetery was progressing well by October 1863. David Wills was present for the first burial in the Cemetery on October 28th of an Ohio soldier. The newly-appointed superintendent of the cemetery, James S. Townsend, had surveyed the grounds, laying out the directions and modifications according to Saunders' plans, and was on hand to supervise every burial as they were carried out. According to Wills' direction, there were to be no more than 100 bodies buried per day, and none left unburied overnight.



Edward Everett
(Library of Congress)

Wills proposed October 23rd as the dedication date for the cemetery but his keynote speaker, Edward Everett, requested that the ceremony be pushed back to give him time to complete his oratory. Edward Everett was 70 years old in 1863. A Massachusetts native and graduate from Harvard, he served as the ordained pastor of the Brattle Street Unitarian Church in Boston. From 1820 -1826 he was the Eliot Professor of Greek Literature at Harvard followed by five terms in the House of Representatives in Washington, D.C., four terms as governor of Massachusetts, president of Harvard for one year, and was the Envoy Plenipotentiary to Britain. Under President Millard Fillmore, he served as the Secretary of State and later as a United States Senator. When Daniel Webster died in 1852, Everett emerged as the most renowned and respected orator of his

day. With such a remarkable career and his gift for oratorical history, Everett quickly won approval to speak at the dedication of the cemetery.

The dedication ceremony on November 19, 1863, was a cool, crisp day. The processional parade formed at 9 o'clock that morning, moved south on Baltimore Street and slowly filed onto the cemetery grounds where the dignitaries took their seats on the speaker's platform and the program commenced under the direction of Ward Hill Lamon, a close associate of the president. Prayer, music and brief comments preceded Everett, though once introduced, he commanded the full attention of the audience, his two hour speech broaching various aspects of the Battle of Gettysburg, campaign strategy, tactics, and battle highlights. He ended blaming the South for, "...slavery, the nefarious doctrine of states' rights and errant Southern leaders."¹² Ever the politician and supporter of the Union cause, it was natural for Everett to close with criticism of the Confederacy. While his speech was considered outstanding by some, one critic wrote was deeply disappointed:

“Seldom has a man talked so long and said so little. He told us nothing about the dead heroes, nothing of their former deeds, nothing of their glories before they fell like conquerors before their great conqueror, Death. He gave us plenty of words, but no heart.”¹³

Everett himself felt that his speech, though detailed and worthy of such an event, fell short in comparison to Lincoln’s brief address, but any personal disappointment did not stop him from a rigorous schedule of speaking engagements which continued up to his death in Boston on January 15, 1865.



Ward Hill Lamon (NARA)

Among the dignitaries on the platform that day, the most intriguing was Ward Hill Lamon, requested by David Wills to be the Marshal-in-Chief of the procession to the cemetery and the master-of-ceremony for the dedication. A Virginian by birth, Lamon was born 20 miles from Harpers Ferry, Virginia, and resided in Virginia till, at age 21, he moved to Illinois. “A big, gruff fellow,” as one historian noted, “Hill was a legendary boozier who spent much of his time in the saloon under his office where he sang lewd and comic songs and got into brawls.”¹⁴

Lamon was a polar opposite in character from Lincoln, their acquaintance initiated as lawyers riding the circuit together in Illinois. In fact a “partnership” so to speak, developed- Lamon would often precede Lincoln into a town and secure clients who Lincoln would then represent in court. Lincoln accepted Lamon’s behavior, enjoying his stories and songs. This relationship would develop throughout Lincoln’s early political career with Lamon giving speeches supporting Lincoln and forming alliances and wrangling political favors to bring Lincoln into various political offices. Once Lincoln took office in Washington, Lamon became the United States Marshal for Washington, D.C. as well as Lincoln’s bodyguard and troubleshooter. Though often criticized by detractors, Lincoln accepted Lamon’s somewhat blunt behavior by saying, “It’s been my experience that folks who have no vices have generally very few virtues.”¹⁵ Though an invitation to a man with such a reputation seemed to be an odd choice, Wills hoped it would encourage the President to accept a previous invitation to attend the dedication. Indeed, Lamon suggested to Lincoln that participation in the dedication would have political as well as social benefits and his advice certainly held sway with the president.

Ward Hill Lamon would stay by the President’s side for the rest of Lincoln’s life. After the war, he returned to Illinois and his law career but maintained a steadfast loyalty to Lincoln, even in death. He purchased the Lincoln Funeral Car for \$10,000 in 1866. With the assistance of a ghost writer, Lamon published *The Life of Abraham Lincoln; From his Birth to his Inauguration as President*, though it was not well received and much criticism was directed toward him as a

result. He traveled to Colorado and to Europe, when his health began to decline. Eventually, he moved back to Martinsburg, West Virginia, where he died on May 7, 1893 at the age of 65.

Though the other seats were filled with governors and cabinet members, it was Reverend Henry Baugher, president of Pennsylvania (Gettysburg) College at the time of the Civil War, who gave the benediction at the dedication ceremony. The 59 year-old ordained minister in the Lutheran Church had been a professor at the College since its founding in 1832. Appointed president in 1850, Baugher would continue serving until his death in 1868 and was one of those at the ceremony who had suffered a personal loss in the war. Baugher's son Nesbitt, a 1st lieutenant in Company B, 45th Illinois Volunteer Infantry, suffered seven bullet wounds at the Battle of Shiloh, succumbing to his injuries in a hospital in Quincy, Illinois on May 16, 1862. Nesbitt Baugher was the first combat-related burial in Evergreen Cemetery and many townspeople believed that Reverend Baugher was selected because of this.

With the cemetery dedicated and burials completed the following year, the Soldiers' National Cemetery project was not complete until 1869, when the Soldiers' National Monument was dedicated on July 1. The featured speaker that day was Major General George G. Meade, returned to the field six years to the day when the Army of the Potomac had opened the famous battle against the Army of Northern Virginia west of town. While the general spoke highly of those who now rested in the cemetery, his attention also turned to those still lying in shallow graves on the battlefield and farms once used as temporary field hospitals. "When I contemplate this field, I see here and there the marks of hastily dug trenches in which repose the dead against whom we fought," Meade said. "Why should we not collect them in some suitable place? In all civilized countries it is the usage to bury the dead with decency and respect, and even to fallen enemies respectful burial is accorded in death."¹⁶

Meade was merely reflecting the concerns of fellow soldiers and citizens alike. While efforts to establish and complete the national cemetery had gone fully ahead, the Confederate fallen, hastily buried by details of men from both armies, remained in scattered burial sites with degrading markers or no markers at all. The same expression of consideration for southern remains had been echoed five years earlier in the April 11, 1864, edition of the *Gettysburg Complier* in response to reports that fields where many of the Confederate dead were buried, "are to be ploughed up....It is far more in accordance with the laws of civilized warfare, to pay proper respect to the buried remains, even of one's enemies."¹⁷

Unkempt graves were noted by many early battlefield visitors. In 1866, Henry Boynton, the former Lt. colonel of the 35th Ohio Volunteer Infantry, visited the battlefield and while walking the area of Joseph Sherfy's peach orchard, observed:

"The grass had closed over the almost countless graves, and their mounds had melted away or corn and the lesser grains bent above them. Still the deep green spot in the turf, the few hills of corn more luxuriant than their neighbors, or the

dark color of the oats and the ranker growth of the wheat, told where vegetable life had grown rich nourishment from the dead.”¹⁸

The obvious disparity in care of the dead of Gettysburg struck a chord with many, but proper internment of southern dead was unfortunately not a priority in Gettysburg. It was only through the efforts of memorial associations composed of widows, wives and daughters of the fallen in Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina, that funds became available for the undertaking of removing southern dead to southern cemeteries. Samuel Weaver was the obvious choice to undertake this task because of his close connection with removal of Union dead. IN company with Dr. John William C. O’Neal of Gettysburg, Weaver had been instrumental in the recovery of Confederate officers including William Barksdale, Lewis Armistead, and in the spring of 1867, the remains of Colonel Henry Burgwyn, the “Boy Colonel” of the 26th North Carolina Infantry.

Born in Fairfax County, Virginia, in 1821, J.W.C. O’Neal attended Pennsylvania College and received a medical degree from the University of Maryland in 1844. His first battlefield-related experience was after Antietam where he assisted with treatment of the countless wounded. Nine months later, O’Neal was a Gettysburg resident and attended to wounded soldiers in the town and outlying field hospitals, where ever his services were needed. While making his normal rounds throughout the area, he compiled a ledger of approximately 1,100 identified Southern grave sites. The partnership between Weaver and O’Neal began the process of recovering those remains until 1871 when Samuel Weaver was killed in a railroad accident. His son, Rufus, stepped forward to take on the task. Initially, he was not going to follow up his father’s commitment as he had recently married and started a new job in Philadelphia, but felt his expertise in the medical field and the need to continue his father’s work were prerequisites for the task.

Dr. Rufus Weaver was the Demonstrator of Anatomy at the Hahnemann Medical College in Philadelphia and believed his skills would be needed to identify the remains accurately and gather each completely, writing that he intended “to gather all bones (which workmen could not do) and regarding each bone important and sacred as an integral part of the skeleton, I removed them so that none might be left or lost.”¹⁹ The task required intense thought, meticulous handwork and recordkeeping, with an average of 18 to 20 hours per day and very little sleep. Between the years 1871-1873, Dr. Weaver would examine, box, and ship to Southern states 3,320 remains, including those that his father and Dr. O’Neal had recovered. Of that number, 2,273 remains were shipped to Hollywood Cemetery in Richmond, Virginia, the rest previously going to Raleigh, North Carolina, Charleston, South Carolina, and Savannah, Georgia.²⁰

In the aftermath of the Battle of Gettysburg, these men stepped forward with their time and talents to create the Soldiers’ National Cemetery and recovery of the Southern dead. There were many involved in this task, but I have chosen to discuss some of the more prominent as well as less prominent. All together, the task of fulfilling the need for the care of the dead on this

battlefield, and giving them a permanent resting place into perpetuity, became a reality. Additionally, the return of thousands of Southern remains after the battle was an important part in the healing of the Nation.

Epilogue

When I was asked to contribute to this project, I wanted to apply it to today. The best way I thought to do this was by telling a story when I was a 13 year old boy.

About a year ago, my wife and I visited Washington, D.C. While there we took one of the many bus tours of the Capital and surrounding area. One of the stops was Arlington National Cemetery. I had only been there twice before, once a few years after President Kennedy was assassinated and the first time in October, 1963, when my uncle was being buried.

I remember the day, 51 years ago as we arrived at the Cemetery for the service. The long rows of headstones arrayed on the slopes of the ground that had been Robert E. Lee's home before the Civil War. The small chapel, where the service was held and where my uncle's casket was in place, was my first experience with a funeral.

Uncle Earle was a Lt. Colonel in the Army, and had seen service in Europe during World War II and in Korea. However, it was cancer that caused his death. Now the family was gathered, along with friends, who had been in the service with him. I was impressed with the magnanimity, yet simplicity of the service. It spoke of honor, sacrifice, and respect. At the conclusion of the service, we filed out after my Uncle's flag-draped casket to the awaiting horse-drawn caisson. The casket was strapped to the caisson, and we proceeded to the gravesite. Behind the caisson was the lone black horse, fully saddled with the black riding boots backward in the stirrups, the last march of the officer to his final bivouac. As we proceeded to the gravesite, the muffled drums beat a slow dirge as we rode around the top of the hill to his final resting place. There his casket was carried by the honor guard to his last repose. After a brief ceremony, a 21-gun salute was rendered, followed by the folding of the flag and presentation to my Uncle's widow. The final part of the ceremony was the playing of Taps by a military bugler. As the sounds of the bugle echoed over the lawn and through the trees, an air of peace and calm seemed to arrive. There was closure for us and for the life of my uncle.

After a battle, both sides sometimes came together, under a flag of truce, to bury the dead and claim the wounded. Many times that task fell to the victor or the army remaining on the field. The dead of the victor was often properly buried and identified. The enemy was often hastily buried in shallow graves or left on the field to rot, unidentified, and without care. As these fields were again passed through or fought over, men of both sides often saw the hundreds of skeletal remains of those from previous battles, lying about, unburied, uncared for, and unidentified.

These reports reached home and there was a desire by friends and families to recover their loved ones during the war and afterwards. Dignity in death, as one hopefully had in life.

Arlington, just like Gettysburg, started out as a Civil War cemetery to care for the thousands of dead which that conflict had brought about. Then, as now, there was a need for an appropriate place of “simple grandeur”²¹ for the fallen in service to the country to lay in that final bivouac, alongside those who had fought with them in battle. A place where friends and family can be assured of continued care and maintenance into perpetuity. The National Cemetery system guaranteed that for the future.

Edward Everett in the final sentences of his address at Gettysburg said:

“...no lapse of time, no distance of space, shall cause you to be forgotten. ‘The whole earth,’ said Pericles, as he stood over the remains of his fellow-citizens, who had fallen in the first year of the Peloponnesian War, ‘the whole earth is the sepulchre of illustrious men.’ All time, he might have added, is the millennium of their glory.”²²

“Lest we forget-lest we forget!”²³

Endnotes:

¹ Eric A. Campbell, “The Aftermath and Recovery of Gettysburg, Part 1,” *The Gettysburg Magazine*, July 1994, p. 105.

² Gary Wills, Lincoln At Gettysburg, The Words That Remade America (New York: Touchstone, 1992) p. 261. (hereafter cited as Wills)

³ Brian A. Kennell, Beyond the Gatehouse, Gettysburg’s Evergreen Cemetery (Hanover: Sheridan Press, 2000).

⁴ William A. Frassanito, Early Photography at Gettysburg (Gettysburg: Thomas Publications, 1995) p. 142.

⁵ Frank Klement, The Gettysburg Soldiers’ Cemetery and Lincoln’s Address (Shippensburg: White Mane Publishing, 1993) p. 96. (hereafter cited as Klement)

⁶ Wills, p. 29.

⁷ Gettysburg Battlefield Memorial Association, Soldiers’ National Cemetery, Gettysburg, 1865 Reprint (Gettysburg: Thomas Publications, 1988) Report of William Saunders. P. 148.

⁸ *Ibid*, 147.

⁹ Gettysburg Battlefield Memorial Association, Soldiers’ National Cemetery, Gettysburg 1865, Reprint, Report of Samuel Weaver, p. 149.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 151.

¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 151.

¹² Klement, p. 92.

¹³ Klement, pp. 92-93.

¹⁴ Stephen B. Oates, With Malice Toward None, The Life of Abraham Lincoln (New York: Harper and Row, 1977) p.112. (hereafter cited as Oates)

¹⁵ Oates, p. 112.

¹⁶ Eric Campbell, “The Aftermath and Recovery of Gettysburg, Part 2,” *The Gettysburg Magazine*, January 1995, p. 102.

¹⁷ Gregory A. Coco, A Strange and Blighted Land Gettysburg: The Aftermath of a Battle (Gettysburg: Thomas Publications, 1995) p. 137. (hereafter cited as Coco)

¹⁸ Coco, 124

¹⁹ Coco, p. 139.

²⁰ During the shipments to Richmond, Weaver was informed that the Hollywood Memorial Association was in deep financial straits and of the \$6,499 he was owed, he only received \$380. Dr. Weaver never received the balance due him for his services.

²¹ Gettysburg Battlefield Memorial Association. 1865 Reprint, p. 148.

²² Klement, p. 241.

²³ Kipling, Rudyard, Recessional, 1897.

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