The Commemoration of Antietam and Gettysburg*

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On September 17, 1937, the United States Antietam Celebration Committee commemorated with elaborate ceremonies the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Battle of Antietam. Active preparation for this observance had been under way for more than two years. The Federal government, the state of Maryland, Washington County and Hagerstown, the county seat, located thirteen miles north of the battlefield, all cooperated in this unprecedented commemoration. It was a celebration conceived and carried through to a noteworthy achievement around the living survivors, both Union and Confederate, of the battle fought seventy-five years before—an almost incredible program.¹

In the North, the battle fought on this field is known as the Battle of Antietam, and the war of which it was a part, as the Civil War. In the South this battle is known as the Battle of Sharpsburg, and the war as the War Between the States. The story of the Battle of Antietam properly begins three and a half days before the battle. On September 13, an unexpected incident took place without which, it is not presumptuous, perhaps, to assert, that the Battle of Antietam would not have occurred.

On the afternoon of September 13, 1862, B. W. Mitchell, a private soldier of Company F, Twenty-seventh Indiana Volunteer Infantry, one of five Indiana regiments then in the Army of the Potomac, while stacking arms preparatory to making camp about two miles south of Frederick, Maryland, on the site where Lee's Army of Northern Virginia

* This paper was read before the Indianapolis Literary Club on Oct. 31, 1938.
¹ The author attended the anniversary exercises at Antietam on Sept. 15-17, 1937, and at Gettysburg on July 1-4, 1938.
had been encamped a few days previously, noticed a scrap of paper wrapped around what proved to be, upon examination, three cigars tied with a string. Private Mitchell was no longer interested in stacking arms or making camp. Fortunately, he immediately untied the string and unwrapped the paper from the cigars. For some unaccountable reason, instead of crumpling up the wrapper and throwing it away, he examined the paper and understood its contents sufficiently to know that he should take it immediately to First Sergeant John M. Bloss of his company. Bloss, upon inspection of the paper, hurried with private Mitchell to Colonel Silas Colgrove, commanding the Twenty-seventh Indiana regiment. Colonel Colgrove, upon hastily glancing at the paper, became much excited and the three hastened to the headquarters of General A. S. Williams, commanding the Twelfth Corps, and delivered the paper to Colonel S. E. Pitman of General Williams' staff, who delivered its personally to General George B. McClellan, then commanding the Army of the Potomac.

The paper, astounding as it may seem, was a duly authenticated copy, addressed to D. H. Hill, of General Lee's "Order No. 191", dividing his Army of Northern Virginia and detailing the routes over which the different units of his army were moving at that very hour. His plan of campaign was contrary to every military principle in that it involved dividing his army for the purpose of capturing Harper's Ferry and the immense army stores concentrated there. Such a division of his army and separation of his forces in the face of the Federal army was beyond question dangerous." However, Lee's knowledge of the cautious and slow-moving McClellan doubtless made the move appear entirely feasible to him and likely of success without involving undue risk. But Lee had not anticipated the discovery of his plans. His purpose had been to destroy the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad and the Chesapeake and Ohio canal, means of transporting supplies to Washington and to the Army of the Potomac, to wage his northern campaign chiefly in Pennsylvania where he could replenish supplies greatly needed, and ultimately to dictate terms of surrender at Washington.²

²Lee, trusting to George B. McClellan's cautious nature, evolved a plan that was excellent, and which would probably have succeeded but for the "lost order." Lee did not expect any opposition to his movement for three or four weeks. Major-Gen. John G. Walker, C.S.A., "Jackson's Capture of Harpers Ferry," Battles and Leaders of the Civil War (New York, 1887), II, 605-606.
McClellan, however, upon receipt of the lost order gained a full knowledge of Lee's plans and instantly realizing his great good fortune acted with unaccustomed vigor and promptness. The battles of South Mountain and Antietam were fought as a result of the carelessness of an officer of Lee and of the keen-eyed observation and intelligent action of a private Indiana soldier. So much by way of explanation of the preparation and setting for the Battle of Antietam.

It is not necessary to describe in any detail the formation and movements of the lines of battle on either side, for, interesting as the story is in all its details, the purpose of this paper is chiefly to present the battlefield seventy-five years after the battle and to direct attention to the noteworthy significance of the unprecedented anniversary commemoration. However, this purpose obviously cannot be intelligently and clearly developed without reviewing in some manner the movements of the opposing armies.

Following the battle of South Mountain on September 14, when McClellan had overtaken Hill, and Longstreet had been turned back by Lee to aid Hill in holding the passes against the Union forces, Lee ordered Hill and Longstreet to Sharpsburg to join the main body of his army then marching south from Hagerstown. On September 16, the Confederate right lay at what came to be known as Burnside Bridge over Antietam Creek, and the left across the road from Hagerstown by the little Dunkard Church. Thus did McClellan find his foe, on the afternoon before the battle, with his back to the Potomac and consequently facing the necessity of winning the impending battle or being driven into the river.

Ultimately Burnside was on the Federal left at the bridge that was to take his name, facing the Confederate General Toombs with two Georgia regiments. Hooker, Sumner and Mansfield were on the Federal right facing Stonewall Jackson and D. H. Hill across the famous sunken road, long since known as Bloody Lane, and on to the Dunkard Church.

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1 General James Longstreet.
2 The Confederate line of battle extended from the heights just north and west of the (Ambrose E.) Burnside Bridge to a point on the Hagerstown Pike about three-fourths of a mile from the Dunkard Church. The line here was at right angles to the road and the first Federal attack came from the north.
3 Joseph Hooker, Edward V. Sumner, Joseph K. Mansfield.
McClellan's orders developed the battle in three parts—definite phases of the day's fighting. In the early morning of September 17, McClellan hurled General Hooker's First Corps against the Confederate lines two miles north of Sharpsburg along the Hagerstown road. After an hour of hard fighting, Stonewall Jackson's old division, supported by Hood and Early, repulsed Hooker's attack. During the engagement, however, Hooker had destroyed the brigades of Lawton, Hays and Trimble and opened in the Confederate lines a disastrous gap, through which Hooker's corps poured down the Hagerstown Pike toward the Dunkard Church, until Hood's division, held in reserve in the west woods, rose from its ambush and threw them back and held them until its own ammunition was exhausted, when the Confederates were in turn repulsed by Mansfield's Twelfth Corps. Again and again, each side attacked and was repulsed with heavy losses. The battle raged fiercely for two hours. General Mansfield was killed. Green's division of the Twelfth Corps held the Dunkard Church. When the firing ceased for a short interval, General Sumner with the Second Corps came on the field. Sedgewick's division began the assault in close formation with brigade front, three brigades deep. They passed to the right of Green's division at the Dunkard Church and advanced toward the west woods. Suddenly Sedgewick found himself and his division almost surrounded by Confederates under Early, Walker, McLaws and the remnants of Jackson's old division. Then followed one of the bloodiest engagements of the war. In twenty minutes more than twenty-two hundred officers and men fell, and Sedgewick, forced into the open ground beyond the woods, was compelled to fall back. Thus ended the early morning phase of the three-phase battle.

About mid-morning, McClellan launched his second attack, against the Confederate center. The remaining divisions of the Second Corps came on the field around ten o'clock, French on the left of Green and Richardson on the extreme left. Green's Division attacked the Roulette Farm, then in the possession of the Confederates, and the west end of
Bloody Lane. Richardson’s Division attacked the east end of Bloody Lane. The lane was defended by four brigades of D. H. Hill’s Division, Jackson’s command, and four brigades of R. H. Anderson’s Division in Longstreet’s command. It has been often said by those competent to judge, that more desperate fighting than occurred here along and across this sunken road did not take place anywhere during the entire war. An enfilading fire by McClellan left the Bloody Lane heaped with Confederate dead, two to five deep, but Hill withstood three such Union attacks; on the fourth successive attack the Confederate line broke, but Hill in an insane rage rallied some two hundred men and with utter recklessness charged the Union flank. Whereupon, General Sumner ordered General Franklin to withdraw his troops. The Confederates were again out of ammunition, were utterly exhausted and some of them were apparently walking in a dazed condition without semblance of order or command. Thus ended the second phase of the battle.

Within thirty minutes, 4,915 men had fallen, killed or seriously wounded, in a Maryland country lane, then dignified by the words “sunken road”, and later and ever after more accurately described as the “Bloody Lane”.

The third phase of the battle was a Union attack by General Burnside, from the Union left, at the bridge crossing Antietam Creek, now known as Burnside Bridge. General Burnside with fourteen thousand men faced the Confederate General Toombs12 with two Georgia regiments strongly entrenched on the rocky bluff overlooking the bridge. Realizing that here was the key to Lee’s right, Burnside hammered away for hours. Two additional regiments were brought to Toombs’ support. At one o’clock in the afternoon Burnside carried the bridge, and by doing so, cut off Lee’s only avenue of escape should he lose the battle. But his success was short-lived, for out of the streets of Sharpsburg and to the bridge suddenly stormed Lee’s missing division of three thousand men under A. P. Hill, which had been hurried over the miles from Harper’s Ferry. Burnside was driven back across the Antietam. Toombs’ stubborn resistance and A. P. Hill’s timely arrival had saved a possible surrender at Sharpsburg instead of Appomattox. The day ended after fourteen hours’ fighting, almost without cessation,

12 Robert Toombs, veteran political leader of Georgia.
with the Confederate troops holding approximately the lines they had established the day before. The losses in that day's fighting were staggering; it was "the bloodiest single day of fighting of the war." Lee had lost 10,700 men and eleven generals; McClellan had lost 12,400 men and nine generals. Estimates of the strength of the opposing armies differ. Perhaps a conservative estimate of the Union strength would be eighty-seven thousand men, of whom not more than sixty thousand were engaged in the battle. The Confederate strength, as estimated by General Lee in his report of the battle, was under forty thousand. The total casualties, therefore, in the day's fight aggregated more than twenty-three thousand out of about one hundred thousand engaged in the battle.

A word as to Indiana's part at Antietam may not be uninteresting. Indiana had but four regiments of infantry, the Seventh, Fourteenth, Nineteenth and Twenty-seventh, and one separate battalion of cavalry made up of six companies that took part in the third phase of the battle. No state was more creditably represented on the battlefield in each phase of the battle.

The Third Indiana Cavalry was stationed near the middle bridge over Antietam creek, constituting a part of the cavalry command of General Pleasanton. Although its losses were not large, it played a very important part in the day's battle.

The Fourteenth Indiana Regiment reached the Bloody Lane, thus placing it in the thickest of the fighting. The regiment carried into the battle three hundred twenty men of whom one hundred and eighty-one were killed or wounded in the day's fighting.

The Twenty-seventh Indiana Regiment is next in losses sustained in this battle. This regiment was placed in an open field between the Dunkard Church and the corn-field in which the Confederates were concealed in the early morning. The regiment went into battle with four hundred forty men, of whom two hundred and nine were killed or wounded in the engagement in which General Mansfield, commanding the corps, was killed.

The Nineteenth Indiana had been so cut to pieces the previous two weeks at Manassas, or Second Bull Run, and South Mountain that the number carried into action was
small. Nevertheless the day's fighting yielded nine killed and sixty-three wounded. The loss of the Seventh was small because it was held in reserve.

Colonel Fox, in his *Regimental Losses*\(^\text{13}\) places the Fourteenth and Twenty-seventh Indiana among the first twenty regiments engaged in this battle—a very creditable percentage to furnish two out of the first twenty, with only five regiments in the battle. The Third Indiana Cavalry sustained the greatest loss of any cavalry regiment in the battle in proportion to its enrollment.

Nor has our state failed properly to recognize this outstanding service. Men from each of the Indiana regiments that fought in this battle are buried in the National Cemetery at Sharpsburg. Their memory and that of all Indiana soldiers who saw action there is honored by a granite shaft fifty feet high near the center of the battlefield. Markers in five different locations show the positions of the regiments when the battle ended or where they saw their hardest fighting.

The monument was dedicated by Governor Marshall\(^\text{14}\) on September 17, 1910—the forty-eighth anniversary of the battle. Dr. M. L. Haines, Meredith Nicholson and Major W. W. Daugherty, chairman of the Indiana Antietam Commission, participated in an interesting dedication program. In the light of the spirit in which commemoration of the battle of Antietam was conceived, I wish to quote a single sentence from Governor Marshall's address. "I have come," he said, "to discharge a splendid duty—the duty of consecrating and dedicating this monument to the common soldiers of Indiana who thought life cheap if with it they might purchase a reunited people." This sentiment was the same that inspired the Antietam Commemoration Celebration twenty-seven years later.

It is a matter of note that this battle served to give President Lincoln an opportune time for issuing his Emancipation Proclamation, first prepared in July, but held for a Union victory before making it public. The emancipation policy is believed to have proved helpful in keeping England from recognizing the Confederacy, which she was then seriously considering.

It is, also, an interesting fact that on this field fought

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\(^{13}\) William F. Fox, *Regimental Losses* (Washington, 1889), 432.

\(^{14}\) Thomas Riley Marshall, Governor of Indiana, 1909-1913.
the sons of Oliver Wendell Holmes and Daniel Webster, one of them among America's leading men of letters, and the other a great statesman who had died ten years earlier. Here also fought Sergeant William McKinley, in whose honor the State of Ohio has erected an imposing monument on the battlefield. Nineteen states had soldiers among the Union forces on the Antietam battlefield and twelve states had soldiers in the Confederate ranks there. The state of Maryland alone had soldiers in both armies in this battle—five regiments in the Union and three in the Confederate forces.

The observance and celebration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the battle, on September 17, 1937, was conceived with the high purpose that the survivors of this battle, both Union and Confederate, should themselves together write the last chapter of a permanent and lasting peace on the battlefield where three score and fifteen years before they had fought each other to the death in the absolute conviction that each was right. Pitifully and pathetically few were those who now came together for this final, impressive, unprecedented ceremony. Of the seventy-five thousand survivors of both armies after the battle but sixty-five were living when the anniversary celebration was held. Of this fragment of both Union and Confederate soldiers who participated in the battle, but twenty-one were physically able to make the trip from their homes to the battlefield where the President sealed the final and lasting peace between North and South in their presence, with more than sixty thousand spectators—the largest number ever upon the battlefield at one time since the battle.

It was, indeed, a moving, thrilling occasion. The setting seemed another world for those in whose special honor this celebration had been arranged. Few of them had seen the battlefield within the intervening years. The program carried through for two days preceding the final episode served to complete every important detail for the historically accurate re-enactment of one of the most appalling phases of the battle.

One of the most interesting of these preliminary experiences was the visit to the battlefield by the survivors of the battle during the afternoon preceding the commemoration program. It was all but impossible for one to realize
that these men, all now above ninety years of age, most of them ninety-four to ninety-eight, had themselves engaged in that terrific struggle. They were now describing their positions on the battlefield with convincing detail and incident, but without a discordant note in the complete reconciliation they were cementing and sealing as their last act upon the memorable site. Impressive and stirring beyond the power of description were the stories and recollections related by these Union and Confederate veterans as they recalled their different positions on the field during the fighting on September 17, 1862. After listening to these personal reminiscences, one marvelled, not that twenty-five per cent of all engaged were killed or wounded, but that the number of casualties and survivors was not reversed.

The President, born twenty years after the battle, spoke from a small stand, perhaps twenty-five feet square, in which was seated every survivor of the battle, Union or Confederate, who had the strength, notwithstanding his more than ninety years, to get to the battlefield. The President was introduced by Senator Millard Tydings, Chairman of the United States Antietam Celebration Commission. The introduction was a tactful and masterful performance. The theme of Mr. Roosevelt's address was "not only acting but also thinking in national terms." He stood barely a stone's throw from the famous sunken road where the Union artillery had enfiladed Stonewall Jackson's troops and filled it almost to its banks with dead. Today the Bloody Lane is a peaceful, green country road, part of a national battlefield and lined with memorial markers and monuments which constitute the only visible proof of the desperate struggle of three quarters of a century ago.

It was in and about this road, following the brief address of the President, that the Bloody Lane phase of the battle of seventy-five years before was re-enacted in all its important details by twenty-five hundred Maryland, Virginia and District of Columbia National Guardsmen. In the re-enactment, the opposing armies, in ratio of nine to six in favor of the Union army, as it was on September 17, 1862, were dressed in distinctive uniforms, though not in blue or gray, and the most minute details of the Bloody Lane phase were carried out, requiring an hour and a half. During this re-enactment, the movements of troops, their commanders
and positions were described over a public address system by the chairman of the military committee of the Commemoration with clearness and accuracy. Thus ended the final chapter of the seventy-fifth anniversary program of the commemoration of the Battle of Antietam, and, for the last time, twenty-one survivors of the very bloody battle of Antietam embraced in friendly reunion and saluted the stars and stripes as the emblem of a reunited people.

The commemoration of the anniversary of the battle of Gettysburg in several respects was similar to the commemoration nine months previously of the battle of Antietam. The underlying purpose—symbolizing a permanent peace between north and south—was the same. In each instance the commemoration program reached its climax in the presence of survivors who had participated in the battle on both sides, although at Gettysburg, the attendance of survivors was not restricted to those who had participated in the battle. In this respect obviously there can never be another such commemoration on any battlefield of the Civil War. In the Antietam celebration the special effort was to secure the attendance of those who had participated in that battle, while at the Gettysburg celebration the attendance of every survivor of the Civil War was sought, Union or Confederate, whether he had participated in the battle of Gettysburg or not. About 1240 Union soldiers and about 640 Confederate soldiers, out of a total of less than 7000 living, were physically able to return, and of these nineteen hundred present, less than fifty on both sides had participated in the Battle of Gettysburg.

Before discussing the Gettysburg commemoration it would seem pertinent to review hastily and very generally the three days' battle which this celebration commemorated. Neither army knew definitely the whereabouts of the other army when the first shot of the battle was fired on the morning of July 1, 1863, and neither commander had any clear conception as to when or where the opposing armies would meet. General Lee, fresh from a decisive triumph over Hooker in Virginia, was invading Pennsylvania, threatening Harrisburg and Philadelphia, and bringing the war home to the north. General George G. Meade, three days previously, had succeeded General Hooker and was charged
with the responsibility of stopping the Confederate invasion. Neither Meade nor Lee knew definitely the other's plans nor the movements of his troops. Consequently when General Hill reached Gettysburg with the advance corps of the Confederate army, the stage was unwittingly set for the battle which began within a few hours.

The night before the first day of the battle, scouts sent out by General John Buford, who had the only Federal troops within five miles of Gettysburg, reported that Hill was just east of Cashtown, about six miles west of Gettysburg. The rest of the Federal troops were camped from ten to twenty miles east, southeast and south of Gettysburg. The Confederates had Hill near Cashtown, Longstreet was with Lee about eight miles farther west, Pickett at Chambersburg and Rodes15 and Early near Heidlersburg, ten miles northeast of Gettysburg.

On Wednesday morning, July 1, 1863, Hill and Buford clashed about a mile and a half west of Gettysburg on the Chambersburg road while Hill was carrying out his plan to march into the town. The Confederates reached Willoughby Run before eight o'clock and encountered Union cavalry, including three squadrons of the Third Indiana Cavalry under command of Colonel George H. Chapman, troops that General Buford had advanced, dismounted, to the creek.14 For two hours or more this force fought the strong infantry brigade of Archer and Davis, holding them in check until the arrival of General Reynolds17 from Marsh Creek, south of Gettysburg, with the First Corps. It is worthy of note here that in this first attack of the three days' battle, Indiana troops participated in such creditable manner as to receive the special commendation of the division commander, General Buford. It is likewise a matter of interest that this cavalry regiment was commanded by Colonel George H. Chapman, a resident of Indianapolis. A granite marker appropriately inscribed now locates the position of this regiment upon the field at the time of this engagement.

Shortly after nine o'clock, General Reynolds reached Gettysburg by way of the Emmetsburg Road in advance of the first corps, and after conference with General Buford took command of the Union troops. Shortly thereafter General

15 George E. Pickett, Robert E. Rodes.
16 The division of General Henry C. Heth of General A. P. Hill's corps met Buford's cavalry. The meeting was something of a surprise to both forces.
17 James J. Archer, Joseph R. Davis, John F. Reynolds.
Reynolds was killed in McPherson's Woods just west of Gettysburg while directing the advance of the first brigade, of the first corps (the "Iron Brigade" under command of General Solomon Meredith of Cambridge City, Ind.) which included the Nineteenth Indiana Regiment. This regiment has the distinction of having sustained the highest percentage of losses of any Indiana regiment during the war, and this distinction was largely due to the heavy losses sustained in the first engagement of the three days' battle of Gettysburg on the morning of July 1. It went into action at the beginning of this engagement with 279 effective officers and men; of this number 156 were killed or seriously wounded and fifty-four were slightly wounded and taken prisoners, making the total loss sustained by this regiment during its first day's battle 210 of the 279 who went into action. The father of Dr. M. L. Haines, pastor emeritus of the First Presbyterian Church of Indianapolis served as surgeon of this regiment.

The town of Gettysburg, founded in 1780, is the county seat of Adams County and is located about forty miles southwest of Harrisburg and seven miles north of the southern boundary of the state. Its population at the time of the battle was less than fifteen hundred and today is about six thousand. The town is about the center of the battlefield as the fighting on July first was north and west of it, while on the second and third, the fighting was on the south and east of it. Gettysburg is situated in a beautiful valley between two ridges, which are now classic by reason of the importance attaching to them from the battle.

The hill west of the town is Seminary Ridge, the Lutheran Theological Seminary located there giving it the name. The Ridge runs for many miles northeast and southwest, a portion of it being the line held by the Federal troops during the first day's battle and forming the principal line of defense of the Confederate army during the remainder of the battle.

The ridge south of the town is Cemetery Ridge, so named because Evergreen, the town cemetery, was located thereon, on the Baltimore Pike, a half mile from the town. It is an interesting fact that during the second and third days of the battle some of the hardest fighting occurred in or about the cemetery grounds, notwithstanding a sign on the Baltimore Pike at the entrance to the cemetery which forbade
the discharge of fire arms within its boundaries. Cemetery Ridge begins in Cemetery Hill a few hundred yards northeast of the cemetery entrance and extends south for about two and a half miles, nearly parallel with Seminary Ridge, rising to Little Round Top and again, a little to the south, rising to (Big) Round Top. This ridge formed the main line of the Federal army during the second and third days' battles; the wheatfield and the peach orchard are west and slightly north of Little Round Top. A short distance from the cemetery toward the east, this ridge bends sharply to the right forming two rocky and woody prominences—Spangler's Hill and Culp's Hill—terminating in Wolf's Hill, a steep knob to the east beyond Rock Creek.

Ten roads concentrate in the town of Gettysburg almost as regularly as the spokes of a wagon wheel at the hub. From these unusual facilities for the movement and concentration of large bodies of troops, together with the conformation of the surrounding hills and fields, one cannot escape the feeling that Gettysburg had been designed by nature for a battlefield.

The Union forces held a slight advantage during the greater part of the forenoon of the first day's fighting until the arrival of Rodes' and Early's divisions of Ewell's\textsuperscript{18} Corps about noon turned the tide in favor of the South. The Union forces were finally beaten back into the town of Gettysburg and through the town to the south side, closely followed by the Confederate troops. The Union force in action lost half its men, and Gettysburg, for the time being, was lost. However, the Federal troops succeeded in reaching Cemetery Hill southeast of the town after the enemy had ceased pursuit; Steinwehr's\textsuperscript{19} Division was engaged most of the afternoon in fortifying the hill. In the meantime, in mid-afternoon, General Lee reached the field from Cashtown and witnessed the retreat of the Union lines through the town. He ordered Ewell to follow up the enemy if he thought it practical, but Ewell, fortunately for the Federal troops, did not do this for the reason he afterwards gave, that his men were tired and that Cemetery Hill was so situated that he could not bring his artillery to bear on the Union forces. He thought his men could not take the hill. Many critics consider this to have been Lee's greatest opportunity to win the battle.

\textsuperscript{18} Richard A. Ewell.
\textsuperscript{19} Adolph von Steinwehr
Lee was anxious to hasten the arrival of General Pickett, who was in charge of the rear guard at Chambersburg, with three of his brigades. He did not arrive, however, until the afternoon of July 2, and was not pressed into service until the afternoon of the third. During the night of the first, the Union forces had an opportunity to establish a line of defense that enabled them to hold off the Confederates during the terrific fighting of the following day, the second day of the battle. On the evening of the first, at Taneytown, about fourteen miles south of Gettysburg, where the larger part of General Meade's troops had been halted, scouts had informed him of the results of the first day's fighting. Accordingly, Meade rushed every available man that he had to Gettysburg and he himself arrived on the field shortly after midnight. After surveying the situation at daybreak, he laid plans for the disposition of his various corps as soon as they should arrive.

Both Meade and Lee spent part of the morning of the second day in the arrangement of their lines of battle. The two had their forces formed at a distance of about a mile and a quarter apart, Meade on Cemetery Ridge and Lee on Seminary Ridge. Lee intended to attack in the morning, but because of Longstreet's delay in getting his troops into position, he did not strike until afternoon. He attacked the left end of Meade's line. When Lee had planned his attack it was with the belief that Meade's left terminated at the peach orchard. He did not know that Sickles' advance line extended to the left from the salient at the peach orchard through the wheatfield to Devil's Den.

In the most desperate phase of this attack, Longstreet hurried every battery, every gun into action; he pushed forward every regiment to the firing line. He believed he could take Cemetery Ridge yet—on the evening of the second day. Finally, the wheatfield was all that remained between Longstreet and Cemetery Ridge! The wheatfield became a seething whirlpool. At 5:30 the battle lost all form of regularity—lines swayed, twisted, surged. Over and again the Confederates all but succeeded in taking the Round Tops, and doubtless would have done so except for the stubborn defense of the Union forces directed by General Warren. That last hour has been known as "the bloody sunset hour."

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Daniel E. Sickles.
And who will say that those four hours from four to eight o'clock against Meade's left on the afternoon and evening of July 2 did not constitute the high tide of the Rebellion and mark the success of the Union army at Gettysburg!

The Fourteenth Indiana lost thirty-one in killed and wounded. The Twentieth Indiana was engaged for two hours in the desperate fighting between the wheatfield and Little Round Top, during which attack Colonel Wheeler, in command of the regiment, was killed. This regiment had engaged in the battle twenty-six officers and four hundred men. It lost two officers and thirty men killed, nine officers and one hundred and five men wounded, and ten missing, making a total of 156 casualties of its 426 engaged.

The Confederate attack next began on Meade's right. From Benner's Hill northeast of the town, Ewell's artillery opened fire on Culp's Hill and Cemetery Ridge, where the Union forces were well protected by earthworks, after Longstreet had begun the attack on Meade's left. On account of the destructive fire of Union batteries on East Cemetery Hill, Ewell lost almost all of his guns and no advance was made by the infantry until Longstreet's assault on the left had ended.

At sundown came a final attack with General Johnson's infantry advancing against Culp's Hill and Early against East Cemetery Hill. Rodes, who was directed to move against West Cemetery Hill, having farther to go than the others, was unable to carry out instructions on time, and General Walker, who had been sent to guard Ewell's flank and who was expected to assist in this attack, was prevented from doing so by a detachment of Union cavalry of Gregg's division which had arrived by the Hanover Road in the forenoon. The second day's fighting ended about nine o'clock in the evening.

The attack of the Confederates lasting through the afternoon, was conducted with great courage, much of it up rough slopes of woodland, over boulders that now seem insurmountable. On East Cemetery Hill the fight among the Union guns became a hand to hand engagement with clubbed muskets, stones and rammers used to stop the enemy. A portion of the hill, in fact, was taken for a time, but the Union troops held practically all of their territory.

Indiana was most creditably represented in this desper-
ate fighting of the afternoon. The Fourteenth Indiana Regiment was in the heaviest of the fighting under General Hancock on Cemetery Hill at the beginning of the Confederate attack, and the Twentieth Indiana participated in the furious whirlpool as the fighting surged back and forth in the wheatfield.

In the evening Confederate attack on Culp's Hill, Indiana was represented by the Seventeenth. Fortunately its position, well up on the hill, was so protected by breastworks and the enormous stones on that part of the hill that its losses were not as heavy as those of the other Indiana regiments engaged in the battle. The regiment's total losses during the evening in killed and wounded aggregated ten men.

Meade, at a council of his corps commanders, including Gibbon, Williams, Sykes, Newton, Howard, Hancock, Sedgwick and Slocum, late on the night of the second, decided that the Union army would continue its defensive tactics the following day. As Lee had attacked both wings of Meade's line on the second, it was expected that if another attack were made on the morning of the third, it would be against the center. This conjecture proved to be correct.

Lee's general plan for the next day was unchanged. Longstreet, reinforced by the three brigades under Pickett, that had arrived during the afternoon of the second, was ordered to attack the Union center the next morning, and General Ewell was directed to attack Meade's right at the same time. Ewell, during the night, reinforced General Johnson with three brigades from Rodes' and Early's divisions.

Neither army was given much rest during the night of July 2. The fighting continued until late and the Confederates managed to gain a portion of Culp's Hill. Very early on the morning of the third, General Meade determined to retake the portion of the hill that he had lost the previous evening. From four o'clock in the morning of July 3 until about half past ten, Slocum for the Union Army and Johnson for the Confederate, waged a bitter fight. The former tried to edge the Confederates off the part of the hill they had taken the evening before, while the latter was not only attempting to protect that gain but fighting desperately to win more of the hill. This action was one of the most hotly

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21 John N. Gibbon, Alpheus A. Williams, George Sykes, John Newton, Oliver O. Howard, Winfield S. Hancock, John Sedgwick, Henry W. Slocum.

22 Edward Johnson.
contested of the three days' battle. The Confederate losses in killed were almost as heavy as those of Pickett's division in the attack on Meade's left center in the afternoon. General Meade, in the course of his description of this engagement says in his report of the battle:

After repeated attacks General Ruger\(^{23}\) was ordered to try the enemy with two of his regiments on the right of the line of breastworks to the left of the swale and if practicable to force him out. Through an unfortunate mistake in transmitting orders, it was attempted to carry the position with these two regiments without first feeling the strength of the enemy. In consequence the two regiments selected—the 2nd Massachusetts and the 27th Indiana—crossing the swale on their front under a murderous fire, their officers leading and cheering on the men, charged up the slope to the breastworks. Their ranks, however, had been so thinned by the sweeping fire of the enemy that it was impossible to dislodge him and the two regiments, after having sustained enormous losses in officers and men, were ordered to retire.

This engagement was the beginning of the battle carried on most of the morning, during which the fighting at times was as desperate as any in the entire battle. In this early engagement, the Twenty-seventh Indiana went into action with 337 men, 110 of whom were lost in killed, wounded and missing in less than fifteen minutes during the attempted advance across what came to be known as the "bloody swale". A marker placed at this point a few years ago by the Gettysburg National Military Park Commission contains the inscription:

The 27th Indiana Infantry. This marks the farthest point gained by the regiment in its charging at 6 AM July 3, 1863 on the works at the base of the hill behind this tablet. Four color bearers were killed and four were wounded.

From about ten-thirty on the morning of the third until precisely one o'clock in the afternoon, comparative quiet prevailed over the battlefield. Upon the stroke of that hour two guns of the Washington artillery of New Orleans, posted near the peach orchard were fired in rapid succession as a signal to the Confederate artillery. Then the air was filled with whirling shot and shell. Occasionally from Oak Hill far to the north of the battlefield came a Whitworth missile that could be heard above the din of all others. After the artillery had operated perhaps half an hour, the Union Chief

\(^{23}\) Thomas Ruger.
of Artillery deemed it prudent to stop the fire in order to cool the guns, save ammunition and allow the atmosphere between the lines to clear of the dense smoke before the expected attack was made. This pause in the fire led the Confederates to believe that the Union line was demoralized and that the opportune time had arrived for the onset of the infantry.

Longstreet had protested in vain against the project and held such a strong conviction that a useless slaughter of the best men in Confederacy had been ordained to die by Lee, that he had no voice to give the final command, and Pickett having received word that the time seemed right for the charge, saluted Longstreet and said, “General, shall I advance?” General Longstreet, in his own account of the battle, says: “The effort to speak the order failed and I could only indicate it by an affirmative bow.” “I shall move forward, sir,” said Pickett as he rode away. A moment later the words of command had been given. Pickett’s division was to sustain the principal charge. The troops were formed in two lines: Kemper’s and Garnett’s brigades in the first line and Arminstead’s brigade in the second line. Wilcox’s and Perry’s brigades supported Pickett on the right; on his left were Heth’s Divisions, now under Pettigrew, with two brigades of Pender’s Division. The combined forces numbered about fifteen thousand men, or something less than that.

Within ten minutes after the artillery ceased firing Pickett’s and Pettigrew’s brigades in close order marched out of the woods that had afforded cover, and with steady, measured steps, as on parade, headed down the eastern slope of Seminary Ridge. The flower of the army of Northern Virginia had started to execute its desperate adventure. From the edge of the woods on Seminary Ridge, where the Confederates came out from their shelter, to the umbrella shaped copse on Cemetery Ridge, selected for Pickett’s objective, was little short of a mile and a quarter. The course of the march crossed the valley and the Emmetsburg Road. Along this frontage, Seminary Ridge slopes rapidly to the eastward for the first three hundred yards, then for a thousand yards the valley is undulated to a perceptible rise along the Emmetsburg Road, about three-fourths of the way.

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across, then a gentle slope upward for the last two or three hundred yards to Cemetery Ridge. As the line advanced from the woods, seventy cannon opened up from Cemetery Ridge, tearing great gaps in the advancing line. The gaps were closed and the men pressed forward in close order. When they reached the Emmetsburg Road, three-quarters of the way across, they smashed down the fences lining the road, halted and reformed their lines in the fields just east of the road. In order to reach his objective, Pickett had made an oblique movement which brought his lines under enfilading fire from certain of the guns on Cemetery Ridge. Now he made a right wheel which nearly centered his lines on the copse of trees where Gibbon's men were in line. For some never-explained reason, Wilcox and Perry had already drifted off to the right in the smoke-and-dust-filled valley and had halted without making any attempt to close in on Pickett's men or to carry the charge home. The Confederates were now within one hundred and fifty yards of the Union line and charged forward, Pickett's first line, in advance, was shot to pieces as it came on, followed by the second line. The Union battery hurled double canister into them at ten yards and then became silent as Cushing fell among his guns. The struggle was now left to the infantry alone. Armistead pressed forward, gathering up his shattered remnants for a final effort—a few yards further to the copse on the top of the ridge, and to Hancock's waiting line of infantry; then the crash of musketry—Kemper was wounded, Garnett was killed, Armistead with his cap on the point of his sword to guide his devoted band, leaped the outer wall, and fell beside the wheels of the Union guns—all symbolizing the high point of Southern chivalry.

Meanwhile, fifty yards to the left, at the angle of the wall, a converging deadly fire directed by General Stannard of the Third Brigade, Third Division, First Corps, was added to that of Gibbon, and the attack was ended. When the smoke lifted the three brigades of Pickett's division were annihilated. The division had lost all three of its brigadier commanders. Every field officer of its fifteen regiments, except one lieu-

26 Cadmus M. Wilcox.
27 Alonzo H. Cushing, Lewis A. Armistead.
28 General Richard B. Garnett may have been killed before the assault reached the Union lines. It is known that his horse had been shot and that he was afoot, but no one has ever learned where he fell. His body was not identified at any time.
29 George V. Stannard.
tenant colonel, and two-thirds of its line officers were either 
killed or wounded, and only about fourteen hundred of the 
forty-nine hundred men of Pickett's division returned to 
their line. The final forward thrust of the Confederates, 
pitiful in its hopelessness, magnificent in its gallantry, had 
been valiantly attempted and failed. Meade had won Gettys-
burg and Longstreet's fears and reluctance proved more than 
justified.  

It was to commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary 
of this battle, thus decisively ended, that seventeen hundred 
survivors of the more than three million who fought in the 
Civil War, or the War between the States, as you will, were 
brought to Gettysburg for a week, the first of last July. A 
pathetic picture? Yes—but one of great historic interest 
and deep significance and of incalculable value to the coun-
try. Survivors were there to write the final chapter on the 
battlefield of Gettysburg, as they alone could fittingly and 
everlastingly do—and then to close the book. 

A more impressive chapter was never written on any 
battlefield than that written by these nineteen hundred men, 
met in friendly reunion on the battlefield where seventy-five 
years before a few of them had met as implacable foes—a 
most felicitous and appropriate observance of the seventy-
fifth anniversary of the battle, leading to the very inspiring 
dedication by the President, of the Eternal Light Peace 
Memorial in the presence of these survivors of the war and 
of more than two hundred thousand interested spectators. 
The site was on Oak Hill within a few hundred yards of the 
spot where the first shot of the battle was fired in the early 
morning of July 1, 1863, and on the spot where a few hours 
later some of the hardest fighting of the three days' battle 
occurred. 

Inasmuch as Gettysburg is now a town of only six 
thousand population, it is obvious that not the least problem 
that confronted the committee for the observance of this 

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80 The author not only attended the seventh-fifth anniversary celebration of 1937 
and 1938 at Antietam and Gettysburg, respectively, but he has visited and studied both 
battlefields. The accounts of the two battles are based on personal knowledge of the 
battle areas and on a number of printed accounts. The principal materials relative to 
the battles used in the preparation of the paper are included in the following list: 
*The War of the Revolution: A Compilation of the Official Records of special 
value was Part I. Volume XIX, Series I: Reports of the Committee on the Conduct of the 
War (Congressional); Century Company, Battles and Leaders of the Civil War; James 
Longstreet, From Manassas to Appomattox; James P. K. Scott, The Story of the Battle 
at Gettysburg; Edward P. Alexander, Military Memoirs of a Confederate; Douglas S. 
Freeman, Robert E. Lee; Frederick H. Dyer, Compendium of the War of the Rebellion. 
In addition, eastern and Indianapolis newspapers carrying accounts of the commemor-
ative celebrations of 1937 and 1938 were used, as were official programs of each meeting.
anniversary was that of adequate provision for the proper care of these nineteen hundred old men—of the average age of ninety-four years—and of a like number of attendants who came along to see that these aged veterans had everything they needed for their comfort and pleasure. Two camps were established, including thirty-five hundred tents erected to accommodate the veterans and their attendants and for other provisional service. Each tent had a wooden floor and heavy wooden frame, a screen door, and two comfortable beds, and was equipped with electric lights and necessary furniture. Dining halls and other conveniences were provided.

On the first day of their arrival, Wednesday, June 29, the veterans had exchanged individual greetings with their own comrades and former foes. On Thursday, the thirtieth, about half of them were taken to places on the battlefield in which they were especially interested, most of them going to the Bloody Angle. There Union and Confederate veterans discussed with each other Pickett’s heroic charge, and then exchanged vows of friendship and gave and received personal assurance of complete reconciliation and everlasting good will for their re-united country.

The official opening of the Commemoration’s four day program took place on Friday afternoon, July 1, 1938, in the stadium of Gettysburg College. At this opening meeting of the first day’s official program, there was no strict observance of a Confederate side and a Union side, as in the camps and on the battlefields. This meeting was a mass reunion, sponsored by state and nation; it was not an isolated picture of one man meeting another against a distant background of war with some evidence of reconciliation; here the veterans in both Blue and Gray sat with their families of two and three generations, and there was no division in the seating—Virginia sat with Indiana and Georgia with New York and Massachusetts. The United States Army Band played, first “The Battle Hymn of the Republic,” then “Dixie,” and finally “The National Anthem,” and the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the three days’ battle that had decided the ultimate result of the war was appropriately under way.

The Secretary of War extended very cordial greetings and felicitations to the veterans of both Union and Con-
federate armies, and the Governor of Pennsylvania joined heartily in the welcome extended by the Secretary of War. Dr. Overton H. Mennet, Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Army of the Republic, then graciously responded for the Union veterans. He was followed by General John M. Claypool, Commander-in-Chief of the United Confederate Veterans, who spoke appropriately for the "Southern Element of this American Fellowship," as he termed it, closing his response with the indisputable and felicitous observation that "the courage of reconciliation was as great as the courage of war."

With such a beginning and with the remaining program including addresses, reviews, parades, band concerts and religious exercises, all carried through in the same exalted spirit, it is obvious that the commemoration program sustained throughout the high purpose of the celebration. It was properly and appropriately climaxed in the dedication by the President, of the Eternal Light Peace Memorial, on Oak Hill, in the late afternoon of July 3—just seventy-five years after Pickett's charge had failed.

For the theme of his address the President fittingly turned to Lincoln and recalled that he had spoken "in solace for all who fought upon this field"; then observed most appropriately that "the years have laid their balm upon its wounds." "Men who wore the blue and men who wore the gray," the President continued, "are here together, a fragment spared by time. They are brought here by the memories of old divided loyalties, but they meet here in united loyalty to a united cause which the unfolding years have made it easier to see." Then turning to the assembled veterans he declared, "All of them we honor, not asking under which flag they fought then—thankful that they stand together under one flag now."

When President Roosevelt finished speaking there was a brief pause; then with tottering steps, two aged veterans, one in blue, the other in gray, moved towards the ropes by which a giant American flag was draped over the Peace Memorial. They gave a feeble jerk and the flag fluttered down, revealing the strikingly beautiful and appropriate monument. The hush continued for a few seconds until the sun's rays had set off an electric spark which, in turn, set aflame a stream of natural gas issuing from the top of the
Shaft, where it is to continue to burn forever as the "Eternal Peace Light."

The ceremony of dedication was the climax of the entire anniversary observance. It was the requiem for the generation that had participated in the War between the States and the confirmation of another generation in the service of an undivided nation. The scene was impressive and moving beyond description, but the dedication would have been without its most comprehensive significance and deepest meaning had it not been for the presence of the nineteen hundred aged veterans who had come for this final reunion. As they moved along to their seats of honor the crowd seemed to realize that somehow they personally transcended all the ordinary things about the occasion; that somehow they stood for something that was also to be found in the altar-like monument and in the incredible beauty of the landscape all about. In a word, the Eternal Light Peace Memorial symbolizes the peace and amity which exists today between all the people of the nation.

The monument is located northwest of the town of Gettysburg in the beautiful, heavily wooded Oak Ridge area of the battlefield. It faces towards the southeast. The site provides, as one stands on the platform, an extensive panorama of the scene of the three-day battle, including Big Round Top three and a half miles to the south. There on this site seventy-five years ago, for two and one-half hours in mid-afternoon, men fought as desperately as on any part of the great battlefield. It was here that the Sixteenth Maine lost eighty-four percent of its men who were engaged in the terrific fighting on the afternoon of the first day of the battle. Because of its favorable location on elevated ground and proximity to main roads, the memorial may be seen from many highways leading into Gettysburg. The monument is in the form of a tall square shaft rising from the center of an elevated platform. Surmounting the shaft is a bronze urn containing a perpetually burning light. The shaft is approximately forty feet in its over-all height above the platform, and the platform is about eleven feet above the ground approach to the memorial. The platform is rectangular in shape, forty-two by eighty-five feet. The memorial is of veined Alabama limestone and the pavements of Crab Orchard flagstone.
On the principal face of the shaft near the base is a sculptured bas-relief by the well-known American sculptor, Lee Lawrie. The bas-relief is eight feet high and symbolizes the peace and good will existing between North and South today. This is represented by two standing figures in embrace, holding a branch of laurel and a wreath with an eagle symbolic of the nation completing the group. On two sides of the shaft at a level with the bas-relief are the two inscriptions:

WITH FIRMNESS IN THE RIGHT AS GOD GIVES US TO SEE THE RIGHT

AN ENDURING LIGHT TO GUIDE US IN UNITY AND FELLOWSHIP

The platform is reached by means of steps at either side from the lower terrace, paved in Crab Orchard flagstone, flanked by wide stretches of grass. On the face of this platform is the principal inscription:

PEACE ETERNAL IN A NATION UNITED

This is the theme of the memorial. The eminent architect, Paul Philippe Cret, designed the memorial. Its cost was sixty thousand dollars, which amount was contributed by seven states—Pennsylvania, Virginia, New York, Tennessee, Wisconsin, Indiana and Illinois.

Thus the most significant monument, perhaps, since the one erected to mark the spot where Lincoln delivered his immortal classic has been added to the more than eight hundred monuments and markers in bronze and granite upon this battlefield, which has become our best known, if not our greatest, military shrine.