The Antietam Journal

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A Publication of the Antietam Institute

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Kevin R. Pawlak
Editor

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Editorial Advisory Board

The Antietam Journal is a biannual publication of the latest research, interpretation, and stories of the Maryland Campaign of September 1862 that highlights the participants involved—soldier and civilian—and the lasting impact of the campaign on American history.

The Antietam Institute was established in 2021 as a member-based, educational, and philanthropic 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. The Institute educates the public on the central role of the Maryland Campaign of 1862 and Battle of Antietam as a major turning point of the Civil War that directly resulted in the issuance of the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation. Antietam Institute-sponsored conferences, symposiums, publications, and leadership forums facilitate collaborative learning and knowledge exchange, create unique opportunities for discovery and inspire further historical research.

Manuscript Submissions

Send manuscript submissions to the editor at editor2@antietaminstitute.org. Feature articles should be approximately 10,000 words in length (including footnotes).

Cover image: Courtesy of Sharon Murray.

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The Editor's Column

It is hard to believe that you are holding in your hands the fourth volume of *The Antietam Journal*. The editorial advisory board could not have completed our second biannual cycle of journals without your interest and the support of the growing list of names on the Antietam Institute's membership roll.

When I first took up a serious interest in the Maryland Campaign over a decade ago, there were several go-to books more seasoned students showed me that were essential to our understanding of the events in and adjacent to Maryland in September 1862. We all knew, however, that there were still gaps in the scholarship and interpretation of the campaign. More detailed studies were—and in some cases, still are—needed.

Thankfully, the years surrounding the campaign's sesquicentennial in 2012 witnessed a flurry of new books focusing on Antietam, South Mountain, Harpers Ferry, and other aspects of the campaign that began to occupy the empty spaces on our bookshelves. Lately, that momentum has not slowed down. It has become difficult to keep track of and read the new books about the Maryland Campaign, and that is a good problem to have!

Research in the era of digital technology has certainly opened the doors for better access to previously less used sources, but it has also paved the way for more students of the Civil War to offer their perspectives about the Maryland Campaign. Interest has also grown as the history field has expanded to examine not only military operations but how the armies made up of men impacted the civilians they met along the march and on the battlefield, how those men experienced their military tenures, and how their voices and actions in camp and on the thousands of battlefields dotted across the United States shaped the American Civil War. The Maryland Campaign was one of those most seminal events during the four-year conflict.

My hope is that within the pages of our previous publications—and now this one, too—you have learned many new bits of information about the Maryland Campaign and the Battle of Antietam. At the very least, making you think about a long-held interpretation you have had about these events is all we can ask for each article to do. We will continue to provide that for you in future issues and with future publications coming from the presses of the Antietam Institute (see below). Thank you for your support, which makes it possible for us to collect and produce the

growing amount of information revolving around America's bloodiest single day.

In the following pages, you will find the words of three authors in particular who have made our bookshelves groan under the weight of more Maryland Campaign books.

Alexander B. Rossino kicks off Volume IV with an examination of Robert E. Lee's thought process as word reached him of the Army of the Potomac being closer to his divided army than he believed. Rossino uses a wide range of source material to divine Lee's intentions on the morning of September 14 and what they portended for the Battle of South Mountain.

Darin Wipperman also looked at a general's performance in the early days of the campaign, but his focus is on George B. McClellan and his army's advance to Frederick.

Longtime Antietam National Battlefield volunteer Frank E. Bell III studied the command structure on Civil War battlefields from a more localized level. Digging into the sources, ranks, and commission dates of two regiments that marched through Maryland, Bell attempts to answer the question of who led the men of the 8th Michigan Infantry and 19th Mississippi Infantry into the Battle of Antietam.

The abundance of new primary source material has painted a wider picture of the effects of the Battle of Antietam. Author Steven Cowie, whose book *When Hell Came to Sharpsburg: The Battle of Antietam and Its Impact on the Civilians Who Called It Home* (which is reviewed in this volume by Michael Hill) takes a detailed dive into the battle's impact on Sharpsburg's population, produces a contemporary letter from the Piper family showing the devastation that both armies wrought on the agricultural landscape of western Maryland.

Primary sources can be more than letters and diaries, as our Antietam Artifacts section has highlighted. Jon Tracey pulled reunion ribbons from his personal collection to share the postwar visits to the Antietam battlefield of one Pennsylvania regiment that received its baptism of fire on September 17, 1862.

On paper, the Maryland Campaign lasted eighteen days in September. The armies, however, maintained operations along the Potomac River in the vicinity of Sharpsburg for weeks and months following the Battle of Antietam. It was not "All Quiet" along the upper Potomac the following fall. Bring this with you in your car and follow in the footsteps (hoof steps?) of J.E.B. Stuart's cavalry on their 1862 ride to Chambersburg,

Pennsylvania, with a guide to several relevant sites compiled by J.O. Smith.

It is fitting that we end this fourth issue with the words of two eminent Maryland Campaign historians. Tom Clemens sat down with Laura Marfut to share the preservation successes at Antietam National Battlefield through the work of our partner organization, the Save Historic Antietam Foundation, and to discuss Clemens' work with Ezra Carman, the earliest Antietam historian and a veteran of the battle himself.

John Schildt rounds out with a short essay about Shepherd University's Civil War connections. The closest university to the Antietam battlefield was not a school in 1862, but one of its buildings witnessed thousands of wounded Confederates pass by it after the Battle of Antietam, and the school has many links to Antietam's story.

If you have your own story to share about the Maryland Campaign, even if you have not written a published piece before, submit a proposal to have your research and writing featured in a future *Antietam Journal*. You can find more information and where to send your ideas at https://antietaminstitute.org/publications/. I look forward to hearing from you!

Kevin R. Pawlak

Antietam Institute Announcements

From Frederick to Sharpsburg: People, Places, and Events of the Maryland Campaign Before Antietam

We are pleased to announce that the Institute's member incentive publication for 2023 is *From Frederick to Sharpsburg: People, Places, and Events of the Maryland Campaign Before Antietam*, by Steven R. Stotelmyer. Steve is a distinguished author of the Maryland Campaign. He is a native of Hagerstown, Maryland, served in the U.S. Navy and holds a master's degree from Hood College. Steve helped form the Central Maryland Heritage League in 1989 which was successful in preserving part of the South Mountain Battlefield. He is the author of *The Bivouacs of the Dead: The Story of Those Who Died at Antietam and South Mountain*, and most recently *Too Useful To Sacrifice: Reconsidering George B. McClellan's Generalship in the Maryland Campaign from South Mountain to Antietam*.

Antietam Institute Historical Research Center

We live in a digital age with thousands of sources at our fingertips. Unfortunately, there is rarely one place to go to find everything we are looking for. The Antietam Institute's website is now home to the Historic Research Center, a repository to collect and share digital copies of historical and contemporary material about the Battle of Antietam and the related Maryland Campaign.

The Historical Research Center has sources grouped into three categories: unit histories, images, and documents. This is a living resource that will continue to have sources added to it, so continue to visit the page to find more resources. Visit the Historical Research Center at https://antietaminstitute.org/hrc/s/HRC/page/welcome to find these valuable resources or to submit some of your own items for inclusion in the Historical Research Center.

Artillery of Antietam Coming Soon

Scheduled for release soon in 2023, the *Artillery of Antietam* is the first full-length treatment of the artillery fight on America's bloodiest day. Formatted like its companion book the *Brigades of Antietam*, *Artillery of Antietam* provides a detailed history of the over 100 batteries and their commanders who engaged in all the battles of the Maryland Campaign from South Mountain to Shepherdstown.

The book features specially created maps designed to clearly show terrain, battery deployment, and ranges of artillery. Details contained in dozens of letters written by artillery officers and soldiers to Ezra Carman add color and detail to the story. Written by James A. Rosebrock, a retired army officer and former chief of the Antietam Battlefield Guides, the book is the product of years of research and is destined to be the go-to source for everyone interested in learning the amazing story of the cannoneers of the blue and gray at Antietam. The book will be distributed to members at the Sergeant Major level and above.

2023 Spring Symposium: "Commanders, Civilians, and Casualties: New Research on the Maryland Campaign" is sold out!

For this year's Symposium we are excited to welcome five dynamic speakers: Steven Cowie, Zachery Fry, Brian Matthew Jordan, Michael Lang, and Darin Wipperman.

Our symposium will conclude with a panel comprised of our speakers enabling further free-wheeling conversations on these issues and discussions with our audience.

There will be ample opportunities for interactions with the speakers, scholars/experts, and other participants during the presentations, at lunch, and during the panel discussion. A continental breakfast and lunch will be provided.

Annual Scholarship with the George Tyler Moore Center for the Study of the Civil War at Shepherd University

In support of the Institute's mission, we are extremely proud to announce the establishment of an annual scholarship to provide financial assistance to a worthy Shepherd University student majoring in American history. This scholarship is to encourage and inspire future study of one of the most important military campaigns of the American Civil War.

To be considered for selection of this $2,000 scholarship award, the undergraduate student must major in Civil War/Nineteenth Century America and be in good standing with at least one year of study at Shepherd (2.0 or higher GPA).

Working through the Shepherd Foundation and with Dr. James Broomall, Director of Shepherd University's George Tyler Moore Center for the Study of the Civil War, this year's recipient is Kierstyn Williams. Kierstyn and her family moved to the area from North Carolina specifically to attend Shepherd. She is a student in good-

standing in the Civil War Concentration and is working toward a capstone presentation (next year) on field hospitals during the 1862 Maryland Campaign.

We wish Kierstyn all the best in her upcoming studies and are looking forward to her research on the hospitals.

For more information, visit us online at www. antietaminstitute.org

Confederate Defeat at South Mountain: Robert E. Lee's Moment of Hesitation on the Morning of September 14, 1862

by Alexander B. Rossino

There is a mystery at the heart of the Maryland Campaign. It concerns the lack of urgency with which Gen. Robert E. Lee and Maj. Gen. James Longstreet responded to Union Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan's attack on the South Mountain passes at Turner's and Fox's Gaps on September 14, 1862. On the previous day, McClellan had pushed most of Brig. Gen. Alfred Pleasonton's cavalry and a corps of infantry under Maj. Gen. Jesse Reno into Middletown Valley after the Confederate rear guard under Maj. Gen. J.E.B. Stuart fell back from its defensive position atop Braddock Heights five miles west of Frederick. By the time General Lee learned of this movement on the night of the 13th, McClellan's force had reached the eastern foot of South Mountain and appeared ready to strike the infantry division of Maj. Gen. Daniel Harvey "D.H." Hill guarding the Army of Northern Virginia's baggage train near Boonsboro.

McClellan's sudden thrust to the northwest, informed by what he had learned in the lost copy of Special Orders No. 191 on September 13, took Lee by surprise, compelling him to send Longstreet's troops, and a small brigade under Brig. Gen. Nathaniel G. "Shanks" Evans, back to South Mountain to defend the passes and protect the northern flank of the ongoing operation against Harpers Ferry.[1] According to a claim made by Longstreet in 1885, "General Lee ordered me to march back to the mountain early the next morning."[2] The aging general then repeated this statement in his war memoir eleven years later.[3] Lee also stated in 1868 that Longstreet departed from Hagerstown "at day light" after learning that McClellan's army had advanced "more rapidly than was convenient

1 For a detailed treatment of McClellan's response to the information he learned in Special Orders No. 191 see Gene M. Thorp and Alexander B. Rossino, *The Tale Untwisted: General George B. McClellan, the Maryland Campaign, and the Discovery of Lee's Lost Orders* (El Dorado: Savas Beatie, 2022).

2 James Longstreet, "The Invasion of Maryland," in Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buel, eds., *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, 3 vols. (New York: The Century Company, 1885), vol. 2, 665.

3 James Longstreet, *From Manassas to Appomattox: Memoirs of the Civil War in America* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1896), 220.

from Fredericktown."[4]

Further research indicates that these statements, which over time have become the generally accepted version of what happened at South Mountain, are misleading.[5] Longstreet did not get his command underway at daylight as Lee had ordered. More perplexing still, Longstreet did not get his command on the road until well after Federal artillery had opened fire on Hill's troops. This delay meant that Longstreet's men did not begin arriving atop South Mountain until around 3:00 p.m., after a punishing forced march from Hagerstown.

Dire consequences attended so late a return. Required to march "a great deal of...time on the double-quick," (i.e., jog) for as far as 15 miles depending on the portion of Longstreet's command one considers, tremendous straggling took place among the men. One informed estimate of Longstreet's combat strength at the start of his march puts it at around "7,800 effectives," but by the time he reached South Mountain his command, according to Hill, "did not exceed four thousand men."[6] The effort so weakened Longstreet's command, in fact, that even the reinforcements he did deploy proved insufficient to prevent the Federals from turning Hill's left flank before nightfall. This disastrous development mirrored the considerable gains that Union troops had also made on Hill's right flank earlier in the day. Finding himself and his men

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4 Messages from J. E. B. Stuart and D.H. Hill alerting Lee to the Federal advance arrived just after dark on Sept. 13. See William Allan, "Memoranda of a Conversation with Gen. R. E. Lee, held Feb. 15, 1868," in Gary W. Gallagher, ed., *Lee the Soldier* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 8 and Robert E. Lee to Jefferson Davis, September 16, 1862, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 128 vols. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), series 1, vol. 19, pt. 1, 140. Cited hereafter as *OR*. A member of Lee's staff also wrote incorrectly after the war "when, on the night of the 13th, Lee received information of the rapid advance of McClellan, he at once took steps for the effective reinforcement of General Hill. Longstreet's corps was put in motion for this purpose early in the morning of the 14th." See Armistead L. Long, *Memoirs of Robert E. Lee: His Military and Personal History* (New York: J.M. Stoddart & Co., 1886), 215.

5 A notable exception is D. Scott Hartwig, *To Antietam Creek: The Maryland Campaign of September 1862* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012), 338-39.

6 William H. Andrews, *Footprints of a Regiment: A Recollection of the 1st Georgia Regulars, 1861-1865* (Atlanta: Longstreet Press, 1992), 73; W.H. Andrews, "Tige Anderson's Brigade at Crampton's Gap," *Atlanta Journal*, July 27, 1901. Hartwig, *To Antietam Creek*, 339. Daniel Harvey Hill, "Address Before the Reunion of the Virginia Division, Army of Northern Virginia," in *Southern Historical Society Papers*, 44 vols. (1885), vol. 13, 268. Cited hereafter as *SHSP*.

in a precarious position, and after learning that another Federal column had punched through Crampton's Gap some five miles to the south, Lee abandoned the mountain and withdrew to Sharpsburg where he gave battle for a second time a few days later.

Had Longstreet and Evans left earlier in the morning they might have arrived in time to make a meaningful difference to the outcome of the battle for South Mountain, but neither commander got promptly underway. This is perplexing given evidence that shows Longstreet, under instructions from Lee, issued orders for his command to be ready to depart at dawn. According to Brig. Gen. Robert Toombs, "On Saturday night, September 13, while...at Hagerstown, I received orders to hold my command in readiness to march at daylight the next morning."[7] A sergeant named George Wise with the 17th Virginia Infantry, a part of Brig. Gen. James L. Kemper's brigade in Brig. Gen. David R. Jones's division, also recalled "leaving camp about five o'clock A.M." on September 14, suggesting that Kemper, too, had received orders for an early departure.[8]

Additional evidence appears in a letter from Lt. Melvin Dwinell of the 8th Georgia in Col. George T. Anderson's brigade (Jones's division), printed in the *Rome Tri-Weekly Courier* on October 9, 1862. Explaining how he and his comrades had received orders to "be ready to march at daylight," Dwinell added, "it is now 9 o'clock and our Regiment has only moved about ½ of a mile onto the road and stacked arms. No intimation has been given as to which way we are to go."[9]

Other witnesses remembered similarly that once they had formed up they moved nowhere for several hours. John Dooley of the 1st Virginia was one of these men. After assembling on the Williamsport Road "Early in the morning...in line of march back to Boonsboro," the Virginians waited in place speaking to each other "in low meaning voices" until the column finally marched "thru Hagerstown [at] about 9 a.m. while the church bells were ringing their warning sounds."[10] Lastly, Capt. Osmun Latrobe of General Jones's staff recorded in his diary departing at about

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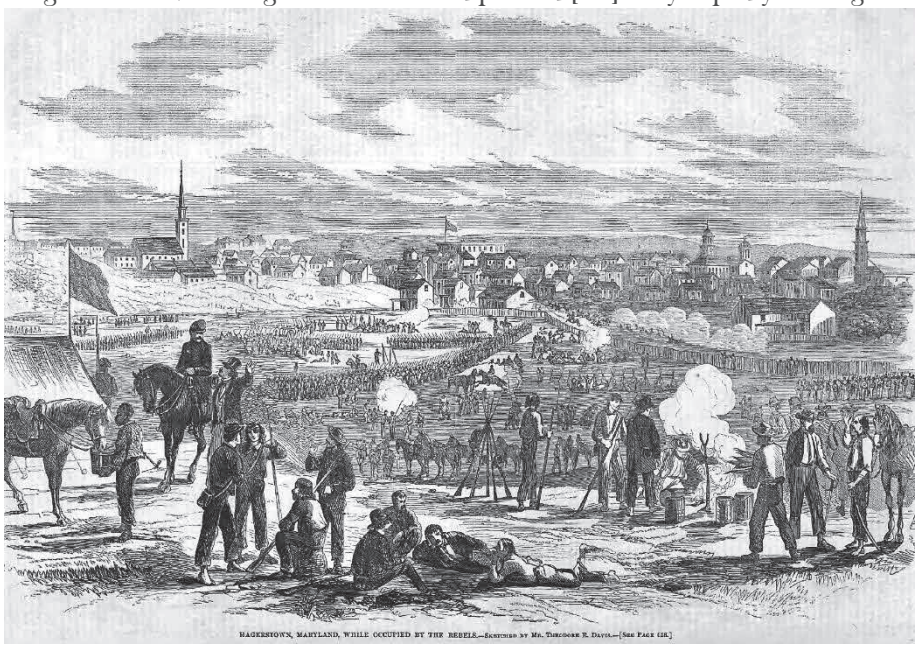
7 Report of Robert Toombs, October 25, 1862, *OR*, vol. 19, pt. 1, 888.

8 George Wise, *History of the Seventeenth Virginia Infantry* (Baltimore: Kelly, Piet & Company, 1870), 111. Also see Robert T. Bell, *11th Virginia Infantry* (Lynchburg: H.E. Howard, 1985), 31: "The order to march reached camp at 5 a.m."

9 *Rome* [GA] *Tri-Weekly Courier*, October 9, 1862.

10 Robert E. Curran, ed., *John Dooley's Civil War: An Irish American's Journey in the First Virginia Infantry Regiment* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2012), 38.

8:00 a.m., while William Sherwood of the 17th Virginia confided to his journal "The sun rose bright and warm. Have no orders [yet]. We left Hagerstown about eight o'clock...and passed [sic] very rapidly through."[11]



"Longstreet's Command Camped Along the National Road in Hagerstown." (Harper's Weekly, September 27, 1862)

The reminiscences of a local lad named David Clough further attest to Longstreet's hesitant start. Traveling into Hagerstown to attend the service at St. John's Episcopal Church, Clough found it "filled with soldiers [who] took part very reverently...till it came to the Prayer for the President of the United States.... In a louder voice than usual [Mr. Anson] prayed for 'the President of the United States and all others in authority'...at this there was rustling in the pews and some went out, while others stood up, to show that they were not praying." One of the visiting Confederates called out for a prayer for the "President of the Confederate States," which he did not receive, and the service continued. "Before the sermon was over," recalled Clough, "a sergeant came in quietly, and whispered to an officer in a general's uniform, who rose up and...gave

11 Diary of Osmun Latrobe, Manuscripts Collection, File Mss5:1 L3543:1, Virginia Museum of History and Culture, Richmond, VA. Journal of William W. Sherwood, May 1862-February 1863, 44. Photocopies of both documents are available in the Virginia Vertical Files, Antietam National Battlefield Library, Keedysville, MD.

some signal to the soldiers, for they all went out, and, going out with them, I heard the orders given to mount. Soon from all over the town bugles were blowing and the troops were hurrying away."[12]

In short, while some of Longstreet's men waited in formation for several hours, other troops, including a senior officer if David Clough identified him correctly, believed they had time that morning to attend church services. Statements written by other witnesses tell a comparable story. Neill Ray of the 6th North Carolina, a part of Col. Evander M. Law's brigade in Brig. Gen. John B. Hood's division, noted that when he and his comrades were camped along Antietam Creek south of Hagerstown "we heard cannonading in the direction of Boonsboro." After this they "hurried back [to]...Boonsboro." Corporal Joseph Polley of the 4th Texas, also a part of Hood's division albeit in Col. William T. Wofford's brigade, remembered hearing the firing as well. Writing that "the sound of cannon back in the direction of Frederick city proclaimed...'Little Mac' was coming after our scalps," Polley informed his sweetheart in a letter dated October 18, 1862, "within an hour our brigade was on the march to Boonesboro Gap."[13]

Such was the experience of General Jones, too. Despite having his men ready at daylight, Jones later reported "hearing heavy firing" back in the direction of Frederick before his division left Hagerstown. Likewise, "We had begun to make ourselves comfortable at Hagerstown when a distant rumbling on Sunday morning was heard," recalled Lt. William Wood of the 19th Virginia, a regiment with Brig. Gen. Richard B. Garnett's brigade in Jones's division. "Listening attentively convinced us that trouble was brewing some distance in the rear. The inevitable courier appeared. The regiment was formed and we entered upon a forced march over the road we had so recently trod." Finally, consider the letter of a man later killed at Sharpsburg identified only as Sergeant Green. This missive, printed in the *Frederick Examiner* after it was found on Green's body, began "In Camp near Hagerstown, Sept. 14, 1862," indicating that Green had written it early that day before his regiment moved out.[14]

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12 Leighton Parks, *Turnpikes and Dirt Roads* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1927), 112, 257-58.

13 Neill W. Ray, "Sixth Regiment," in Walter Clark, ed., *Histories of the Several Regiments and Battalions from North Carolina in the Great War, 1861-'65*, 5 Vols. (Raleigh: E.M. Uzzell, 1901), vol. 1, 306. Cited hereafter as *Histories*. Joseph B. Polley, *A Soldier's Letters to Charming Nellie* (New York: The Neale Publishing Company, 1908), 82-83.

14 Report of David R. Jones, December 8, 1862, *OR*, vol. 19, pt. 1, 886; William N.

Cannon fire erupted atop South Mountain between 8:00 and 8:30 a.m. on September 14, followed by musketry at around 9:00 when Brig. Gen. Samuel Garland's brigade of North Carolina troops engaged the Kanawha Division of Brig. Gen. Jacob D. Cox near Fox's Gap.[15] The statements quoted above suggest that as of 8:00 to 9:00 a.m., three-to-four hours after the arrival of daylight at 5:15, and two-to-three hours after dawn broke at 5:49, not a single regiment of Longstreet's command had departed from the vicinity of Hagerstown. Even Maj. Moxley Sorrel of Longstreet's headquarters staff admitted it was not until after they heard the guns that "We instantly broke camp and raced out for Hill's relief."[16]

Further complicating matters is the fact that some Confederates recalled not leaving camp until two-to-three hours *after* the fighting had started on Hill's front. One of these men, David Johnston of the 7th Virginia, wrote decades later that "On Sunday, just before noon of the 14th, the long roll sounded calling the men into line, and a quick movement was made east in the direction of Boonsboro and Turner's Gap. Wagons, artillery and ambulances cleared the road, giving us the right of way." Johnston provided this time estimate more than once, suggesting that even after many years the memory remained firm in his mind. Writing in 1898, for example, that at "About 11 a.m. the long roll was sounded," he recounted in *Confederate Veteran* magazine, "we were soon in line and on the march to Turner's Gap."[17]

The accuracy of Johnston's memory can be verified by comparing it to an account written by Henry Thweatt Owen. A captain in the 18th

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Wood, *Reminiscences of Big I* (Charlottesville: The Michie Company, 1909), 48; *Frederick Examiner*, October 8, 1862.

15 Report of Samuel N. Benjamin, September 20, 1862, *OR*, vol. 19, pt. 1, 435; Report of Daniel Harvey Hill, 1862, *OR*, vol. 19, pt. 1, 1020; Thomas F. Toon, "Twentieth Regiment," in Clark, ed., *Histories*, vol. 2, 115; Vines E. Turner, "Twenty-Third Regiment," in Clark, ed., *Histories*, vol. 2, 220; Report of Roswell Ripley, September 21, 1862, *OR*, vol. 19, pt. 1, 1031; Report of Duncan K. McRae, October 18, 1862, *OR*, vol. 19, pt. 1, 1040; Report of Eliakim Scammon, September 20, 1862, *OR*, vol. 19, pt. 1, 461; George D. Grattan, "The Battle of Boonsboro Gap or South Mountain," in *SHSP* (April 1914), vol. 39, 38; Daniel Harvey Hill, "Address Before the Reunion of the Virginia Division, Army of Northern Virginia," in *SHSP* (1885), vol. 13, 268; *New York Herald*, September 18, 1862.

16 G. Moxley Sorrel, *Recollections of a Confederate Staff Officer* (New York: The Neale Publishing Company, 1905), 106.

17 David E. Johnston, *The Story of a Confederate Boy in the Civil War* (Portland: Glass and Prudhomme, 1914), 137-38, and "Concerning the Battle of Sharpsburg," in *Confederate Veteran*, vol. 6, no. 1 (January 1898), 27.

Virginia, Brig. Gen. Garnett's brigade, Owen described cannon fire reverberating across the Cumberland Valley that morning. Then, at around 11:00, a courier "came tearing along at a mad gallop...and dashed through the camp like a shooting meteor straight on toward headquarters." Within a short time the men of the 18th were back on the road to Boonsboro.[18]

Given the fragmented state of his army and the alarming messages coming in from generals Stuart and Hill concerning the approach of Reno's Ninth Corps, why did Lee not make a priority of going to Hill's support? Foot-dragging by Longstreet cannot be considered a realistic explanation because the evidence shows that he issued daylight marching orders to his brigade commanders as Lee had instructed. Moreover, despite the doubts that Longstreet had voiced about some of the army's movements in Maryland, Lee never wrote a word condemning Longstreet for his performance during the campaign. He even recommended Longstreet's promotion to lieutenant general within weeks after the operation had ended. This is not something a field commander would do if his senior subordinate had failed to perform according to expectations.

A more convincing explanation for Longstreet's (and Evans's) delayed departure is second-guessing by Lee himself. Scott Hartwig proposes the intriguing suggestion that Lee may not have expected the Federals to attack Hill immediately, and so he made his preparations on the morning of September 14 "at a leisurely pace."[19] This theory contradicts the evidence showing that Toombs and Jones received orders to hold their commands in readiness to march at daylight. On the other hand, Hartwig's hypothesis does fit Longstreet's claim that Lee, "held to the thought...he had ample time" because he did not believe McClellan "capable of serious work."[20] Hartwig finds this as reasonable an explanation as any to describe what he aptly refers to as Lee's "baffling" delay near Hagerstown when Hill needed reinforcement.[21]

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18 Henry T. Owen, "South Mountain," *Philadelphia Weekly Times*, July 31, 1880.
19 Hartwig, *To Antietam Creek*, 338.
20 Longstreet, *From Manassas to Appomattox*, 220.
21 Hartwig, *To Antietam Creek*, 338-39.

Fair enough. But what might Lee have hoped to accomplish by waiting in place instead of marching directly to Hill's assistance? The most convincing explanation is that he considered ordering Hill to withdraw from his position if news arrived from Maj. Gen. Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson announcing the capture of Harpers Ferry. Thanks to war correspondent Peter Wellington Alexander, who was with Longstreet's troops near Hagerstown, we know that on the morning of September 13, "Heavy firing was heard in the direction of the Potomac."[22] That firing came from Harpers Ferry, around which Jackson, Maj. Gen. Lafayette McLaws, Maj. Gen. Richard H. Anderson, and Brig. Gen. John G. Walker had just tightened the noose. Special Orders No. 191, issued by Lee in Frederick, Maryland, on September 9, specified that McLaws and Walker should be in position on Maryland Heights and Loudoun Heights in Virginia by September 12, which suggests that Lee hoped Harpers Ferry would fall soon afterward.[23] Longstreet confirmed this assumption in his postwar memoir, writing, "The plans of the Confederates...anticipated the surrender of Harper's Ferry on Friday, the 12th, or Saturday, the 13th, at latest."[24] Stuart also believed that "Friday [Sept. 12, was] the day on which, by the calculation of the commanding general, Harper's Ferry would fall," and McLaws concluded the same from his private conversation with Lee on

General Lee in early 1863. Lee waited in vain for news of Harpers Ferry's capture before returning to reinforce D.H. Hill at South Mountain. (Virginia Museum of History and Culture)

22 William B. Styple, ed., *Writing and Fighting the Confederate War: The Letters of Peter Wellington Alexander Confederate War Correspondent* (Kearny: Belle Grove Publishing Company, 2002), 101.
23 Special Orders No. 191, September 9, 1862, *OR*, vol. 19, pt. 2, 603-04.
24 Longstreet, *From Manassas to Appomattox*, 206.

September 9.[25]

That the Confederate commander expected the Federal garrison to capitulate quickly is further demonstrated by three other pieces of evidence. The first is a comment Lee made to Anderson on September 9. Telling the general "Harper's Ferry must be taken against Thursday evening (September 11)," Lee made it clear that he assumed the Federal garrison would surrender almost immediately once it had been surrounded.[26] The second document is a missive Lee dictated through Col. Armistead Long to McLaws on September 13 informing him "The enemy have doubtless occupied Frederick.... Jackson will be at Harper's Ferry by noon to-day to co-operate with you." Adding "The commanding general hopes that the enemy about Harper's Ferry will be speedily disposed of, and the various detachments returned to the main body of the army," it makes sense to conclude that Lee expected Jackson to report the fall of the Federal garrison at any minute on September 14.[27] Lee confirmed this in a statement to William Allan, a veteran of the Army of Northern Virginia and one of its early historians, in February 1868, providing the third piece of evidence, saying that upon learning of the enemy's sudden advance on September 13, a "message was sent to hurry up Jackson (who was a day later than expected)."[28]

The news of Harpers Ferry's fall did not come when Lee expected it. This prompted him to re-emphasize the need for haste to his detached field commanders as part of an effort, per paragraph nine of Special Orders No. 191, to re-assemble his army between Boonsboro and Hagerstown.[29] Ordering Jackson and McLaws late on September 13 to bring "a prompt conclusion to the operations at Harper's Ferry," Lee instructed McLaws to move his force "as rapidly as possible to

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25 Report of James E.B. Stuart, February 13, 1864, *OR*, vol. 19, pt. 1, 816; Lafayette McLaws, "The Maryland Campaign" (Savannah, GA, 1896) in McLaws Papers, Southern Historical Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

26 Richard H. Anderson to D.H. Hill, November 14, 1867, Daniel Harvey Hill, Jr. Papers, 1808-1967, PC.94, State Archives of North Carolina, Raleigh, NC. Lee's comment is bizarre considering Paragraph V of S.O. No. 191 did not call for McLaws to "possess himself of the Maryland Heights" until "Friday morning" September 12.

27 Robert E. Lee to Lafayette McLaws, September 13, 1862, *OR*, vol. 19, pt. 2, 606.

28 Gallagher, ed., *Lee the Soldier*, 8.

29 *OR*, vol. 19, pt. 2, 604: "The commands of Generals Jackson, McLaws, and Walker, after accomplishing the objects for which they have been detached, will join the main body of the army at Boonsborough or Hagerstown."

Sharpsburg" once the enemy garrison fell.[30] From there, McLaws could meet "General Longstreet [who] will move down to-morrow and take position on Beaver Creek this side of Boonsborough."

On the morning of September 14, Lee also issued a warning to the people of Funkstown, which is located less than five miles north of the creek. Writing that "General Lee, who was still at his headquarters in Hagerstown, sent word to the citizens of Funkstown that there might be a battle in our midst at any time," local resident Angela Kirkham Davis noted that the general promised "if possible, he would give us a few hours warning so that the women, children, sick and infirm could get out of town."[31] And finally, while the fight atop South Mountain raged, Lee ordered Brig. Gen. William N. Pendleton to "place in position on the heights of Beaver Creek the several batteries of [his] command."[32]

These sources reveal that Lee planned to concentrate his army at Beaver Creek, located between Boonsboro and Hagerstown, for a decisive clash with McClellan. It is only logical to conclude that the general probably countermanded Longstreet's daylight marching order on September 14 so he could wait for news from Jackson. If Harpers Ferry fell early in the day, the detached Confederate forces operating around it could march to meet Longstreet. Hill, in the meantime, could fall back from South Mountain to Lee's desired Beaver Creek position.

Hearing cannon fire from the direction of Boonsboro changed all of this for Lee. The alacrity of the Federal attack meant he did not have time to bring his army back together and that he needed to reinforce Hill as quickly as possible to keep McClellan from getting into Pleasant Valley. If McClellan managed to penetrate Hill's line, he could turn on McLaws and destroy or capture his command before either Lee or Jackson could respond. Lee had to ensure that this disastrous outcome did not occur, and so after waiting for word from Jackson for as long as he could, he finally ordered Longstreet to march once gunfire from the southeast told him Hill was under attack.

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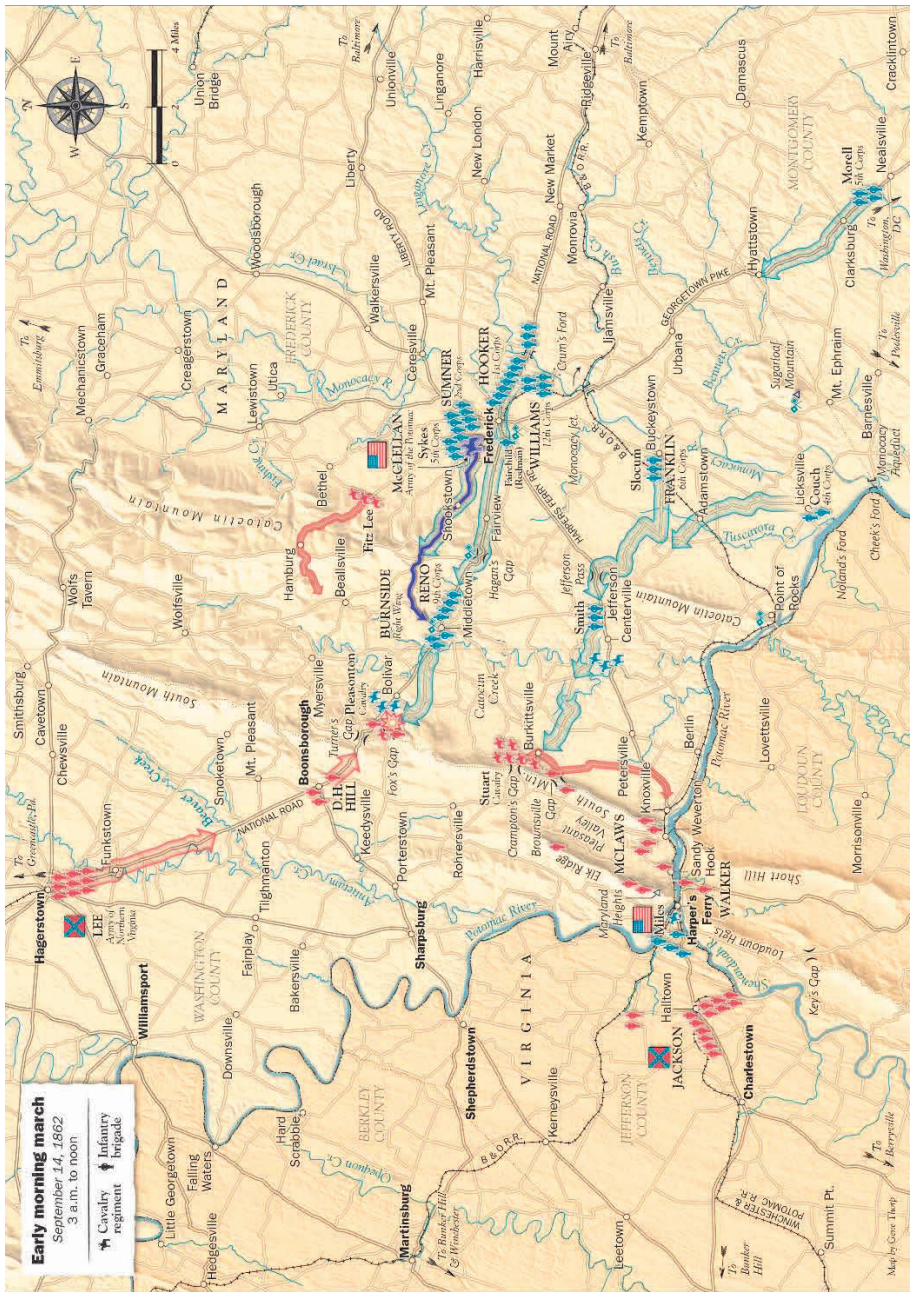
30 William Allan, *The Army of Northern Virginia in 1862* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1892), 346; Robert E. Lee to Lafayette McLaws, September 13, 1862, *OR*, vol. 19, pt. 2, 607.

31 Angela K. Davis, "War Reminiscences: A Letter to My Nieces," Washington County Historical Society, Hagerstown, Maryland.

32 Report of William N. Pendleton, September 24, 1862, *OR*, vol. 19, pt. 1, 830. Also see David G. Martin, *The Fluvanna Artillery* (Lynchburg: H.E. Howard, 1992), 49. "Nelson formed his guns along Beaver Creek Heights."



Support for this scenario may be found in Lee's plan for the second half of the Maryland Campaign. Explaining in his August 1863 report "it was proposed to move the army into Western Maryland, establish our

communications with Richmond through the Valley of the Shenandoah, and, by threatening Pennsylvania, induce the enemy to follow," Lee intended to "draw him from his base of supplies.... It had not been intended to oppose its (the Federal army's) passage through the South Mountains, as it was desired to engage it as far as possible from its base."[33]

This summary repeated the substance of a comment Lee is alleged to have made during the campaign itself. "We have now come to redeem our pledge to the people of this State," he told a man from Baltimore while the army reposed in Frederick. "We extend the olive branch to them, and, should they accept it, we shall welcome and protect them, with the assurance that the next battle ground will be in Pennsylvania. But, should they not come forward, after having been amply assured that their property would be unmolested, and every guarantee given that the Southern army should remain on Maryland soil, for the maintenance of their sacred rights, then the battle-ground must hereafter be in Maryland."[34]

These comments match what Lee later wrote Confederate President Jefferson Davis after he had returned to Virginia. Declaring, "It was hoped that military success might afford us an opportunity to aid the citizens of Maryland in any efforts they might be disposed to make to recover their liberties," Lee confirmed his intent to spill blood in order to prove his army's support for Maryland's secessionists.[35] Because Maryland's people did not rise up it prompted Lee to give battle in Washington County and every decision he made flowed toward that end.

Despite learning of McClellan's more aggressive than expected advance, Lee clung to the idea that he could fight the decisive battle of the war along Beaver Creek. Yet by early September 14, and because Harpers Ferry remained in enemy hands, McClellan's offensive forced

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33 Robert E. Lee, Report on Operations in Maryland, August 19, 1863, *OR*, vol. 19, pt. 1, 145.

34 *Philadelphia Inquirer*, September 12, 1862.

35 Robert E. Lee to Jefferson Davis, August 19, 1863, *OR*, vol. 19, pt. 1, 144; General Lee's nephew concluded this as well, writing long after the war, "The Southern feeling had been overawed and kept down in Maryland for so long a time by Federal occupation that recruits from that State did not care to join the Southern army till it was demonstrated that it could seize and hold their territory." Fitzhugh Lee, *General Lee* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1898), 198. Also see Alexander B. Rossino, *Their Maryland, The Army of Northern Virginia from the Potomac Crossing to Sharpsburg in September 1862* (El Dorado: Savas Beatie, 2021), 36-37 and Alexander B. Rossino, "Lee's Beaver Creek Plan: The September 1862 Battle He Never Had the Chance to Fight and Why That is Important," in *North & South*, series II, vol. 3, no. 1 (June 2022).

Lee to shift his operation to supporting Hill and protecting McLaws. "General Longstreet moves down this morning to occupy the Boonsborough Valley, so as to protect your flank from attacks from forces coming from Frederick, until the operations at Harper's Ferry are finished," he explained in a missive to McLaws. Urging the Georgian to push his operation "as rapidly as possible," Lee added, "if the point (Harpers Ferry) is not ultimately taken, so arrange it that your forces may be brought up the Boonsborough Valley."

If Harpers Ferry fell on September 14, then "the road will be open to...Sharpsburg," indicating that the crisis induced by McClellan had forced Lee to reconsider his Beaver Creek plan in favor of an alternate location closer to the detached parts of the army besieging Harpers Ferry. Easily accessible from Boonsboro, Sharpsburg offered a viable rallying point for the Army of Northern Virginia's scattered pieces. As Longstreet had cogently advised Lee on the night of September 13, "order Hill away" from South Mountain and "concentrate [the army] at Sharpsburg."[36]

Falling back to that point would enable Lee to realize his original objectives. He could still confront McClellan in Washington County and he could give battle on ground that he had chosen. McClellan may have forced Lee to fight at South Mountain before he was ready, but with a little adjustment the Confederate commander's overall plan to engage the Federals remained intact.[37] Lee found terrain near Sharpsburg that provided him with topographical characteristics (i.e., formidable heights behind a water course) he had sought to leverage against the Federals at Beaver Creek.[38] The discovery of this comparable high ground enabled Lee to carry out his plan of confronting the enemy far from his supplies, far from reinforcement, and far from the safety of the defensive fortifications surrounding Washington, D.C.

Returning to the missive that Lee sent to McLaws concerning Longstreet's return to Boonsboro on the morning of September 14, it

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36 Robert E. Lee to Lafayette McLaws, September 14, 1862, *OR*, vol. 19, pt. 2, 608; Longstreet, "The Invasion of Maryland," 665-66; Longstreet, *From Manassas to Appomattox*, 219.

37 Lee told Edward C. Gordon after the war that the loss of Special Orders No. 191 near Frederick "caused him (McClellan) to act as to force a battle (i.e., the fight for South Mountain) on me before I was ready for it." Gallagher, ed., *Lee the Soldier*, 13 and Douglas Southall Freeman, *Lee's Lieutenants*, 3 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943), vol. 2, 717.

38 See Rossino, *Their Maryland*, 180, 188 for a discussion of the evidence that Lee decided to stand and fight at Sharpsburg early on the morning of September 15.

does not have a timestamp so we do not know when Lee wrote it. The only firm observations that can be made about it are: 1) Lee sent the dispatch before leaving his headquarters encampment; 2) Lee's use of the future tense ("Longstreet moves down this morning") indicates the time of its composition was early in the day; and 3) Longstreet's command had not yet departed. We know for certain that Lee remained near his headquarters on the morning of September 14 thanks to two gunners from the army's Reserve Artillery camped near Funkstown. These men met the general "at about 9 a.m." on the 14th while they were out collecting peaches. Seeing the two men in the road, Lee informed them that "their unit was moving" and so they rushed back to their guns.[39]

Lee's mention of Sharpsburg to McLaws before Longstreet marched back to South Mountain, suggests that by early on September 14 the general had begun to question what he could accomplish before the Federals attacked Hill; and yet this second-guessing did not dissuade Lee from pursuing his previously chosen course. He looked for welcome news from Jackson concerning Harpers Ferry, but intended to stick to his Beaver Creek plan if it proved possible. Unwilling to act early in the day, Lee consequently made the calamitous mistake of holding Longstreet's men in place until the cannon fire on Hill's front forced his hand. Longstreet moved thereafter, but by then several hours late, requiring the forced march that decimated his command.

Confusion surrounding Longstreet's departure from Hagerstown complicated matters for Lee. David Clough's sighting of Confederate troops at his church and Lee's encounter with the gunners from the Reserve Artillery make it clear that at least some of the units around Hagerstown had men absent on various errands when the orders arrived to get underway. Longstreet and Evans moved out as fast as they could, but may have been delayed by waiting for brigade and regimental commanders to collect their missing men. As Major Sorrel of Longstreet's staff remarked of that morning, it was only after hearing the guns on South Mountain that "Longstreet's quick military instinct told him what was happening" and he hurried to get his command on the

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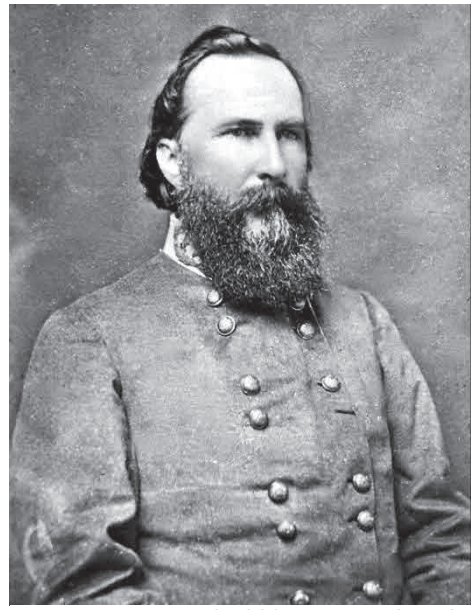
39 Marilyn Brewer Koleszar, *Ashland, Bedford, and Taylor Virginia Light Artillery* (Lynchburg: H.E. Howard, 1994), 11. An officer with the Second Battalion of Longstreet's artillery also recalled having the opportunity to complete "the equipment of our mess," before they "moved rapidly to South Mountain." Francis W. Dawson, *Reminiscences of Confederate Service, 1861-1865* (Charleston: The News and Courier Book Presses, 1882), 64.

road.[40] The level of disorganization exhibited by Longstreet is remarkable under the circumstances unless one takes into account the likelihood that Lee held him up for several hours before finally letting him go.

When it came time to recount these events in his postwar writings, Longstreet either misremembered the timing of all of this or he covered for Lee by stating that he had marched at daylight in accordance with Lee's orders. It is perhaps telling that Longstreet offered the daylight marching order claim only after Lee had died. His October 1862 campaign report makes no mention of it, stating that merely he and Lee "were obliged to make a forced march, in order to reach Boonsborough Pass, to assist Maj. Gen. D.H. Hill's division...so as to give time for the reduction of Harper's Ferry."[41] Lee also told only a part of the story in his communications, reporting in a letter to Davis on September 16 that he had "determined to return with Longstreet's command to the Blue Ridge, to strengthen D.H. Hill." Lee then repeated this claim in his campaign report, writing, "General D.H. Hill was directed to guard the Boonsborough Gap and Longstreet ordered to march from Hagerstown to his support."[42]



James Longstreet had his command ready to go at dawn on September 14 before Lee countermanded his marching orders. (Confederate Portraits)

These statements conveniently omit Lee's hesitation after daybreak on September 14, as well as his late return to South Mountain and the defeat that likely resulted from it. The acerbic Hill then called out Lee for all of this, writing in his campaign report, "Had Longstreet's division been with mine at daylight in the morning the Yankees would have been disastrously repulsed." These words surely alienated Lee and son he had

40 Sorrel, *Recollections*, 106.

41 Report of James Longstreet, October 10, 1862, *OR*, vol. 19, pt. 1, 839.

42 Robert E. Lee to Jefferson Davis, September 16, 1862, *OR*, vol. 19, pt. 1, 140; Report on Operations in Maryland, August 19, 1863, *OR*, vol. 19, pt. 1, 146.

the irritable Hill transferred out of the Army of Northern Virginia.[43] Hill understood that Lee did not respond as promptly to the looming Federal threat as he should have on the morning of September 14. The resulting reverse at South Mountain then forced Lee to fight a hazardous battle at Sharpsburg in an attempt to salvage what he could of a campaign that he himself had contributed to wrecking, and about which Longstreet remained dutifully silent for the rest of his days.

43 Report of D.H. Hill, 1862, *OR*, vol. 19, pt. 1, 1022. Lee commented to William Allan that Hill "croaked" (i.e., complained). Gallagher, ed., *Lee the Soldier*, 9 and Freeman, *Lee's Lieutenants*, vol. 2, 721.

Caution East of Frederick: George B. McClellan in the Early Part of the Maryland Campaign

by Darin Wipperman

Ordered to terminate his Peninsula Campaign east of Richmond, then lacking a role in the field during the Union catastrophe at Second Bull Run, Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan endured a frustrating August in 1862. With an intense national crisis swirling in early September, McClellan quickly became the key player in the drama as Robert E. Lee's victorious Confederates invaded Maryland. First given command of the defenses of Washington, DC, then taking the Army of the Potomac in pursuit of the seemingly unstoppable Southerners, McClellan had an opportunity to seize his destiny. The key question became how soon McClellan's soldiers would once again engage Lee's Army of Northern Virginia.[44]

Students of the Maryland Campaign have differing views on the pace of McClellan's pursuit of the Confederates in the first third of September. Great historians—and the campaign has been blessed with several—have generally accepted, to varying degrees, McClellan's rate of advance. Caution, after all, need not automatically condemn a general. In certain circumstances, avoiding sudden contact with an enemy, especially one as victorious as Lee and his army in the late summer of 1862, might be the best approach. In the vanguard of McClellan's army, the Ninth Corps reached Frederick, Maryland on September 12. Was that the first day any part of McClellan's force could have realistically arrived? Did orders or military necessity compel McClellan's slow march? A negative answer to these questions makes sense. A faster advance to Frederick for the Army of the Potomac offered solid benefits to the United States.

This essay's purpose is not to pile on to the anti-McClellan bandwagon. As a general and human being, McClellan had virtues his harshest critics have no right to deny. Likewise, the most fervent supporter of McClellan must accept that the general possessed some notable weaknesses. I have no intention to pillory McClellan unfairly or write hagiography that places him on an undeserved pedestal. The great campaign writer and thinker Joseph L. Harsh gave us a highly pithy

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44 Ethan Rafuse, *McClellan's War: The Failure of Moderation in the Struggle for the Union* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 232-79.

charge when he declared, "Before historians reach judgment, they ought to render justice."[45] Only an imprudent writer would cast aside Harsh's cogent guideline. A commitment to facts must always direct a historian, especially when tackling the vitally important days in September 1862 when the fate of a nation and human slavery hung in the balance.

Confident yet cautious, Maj. Gen. George McClellan sent daily notes to his wife Nelly outlining his hopes and fears. (Library of Congress)

Justice to All

William Swinton, a Civil War journalist who wrote the first extended history of the Army of the Potomac, started the multi-generational conversation about McClellan's performance in the opening days of the Maryland Campaign. He suggested the general conducted his advance from Washington with "much circumspection." He even asserted McClellan's slow progress could "be fairly chargeable with tardiness." Yet, Swinton blamed general in chief Henry W. Halleck and President Abraham Lincoln's concern about the safety of Washington for McClellan's unhurried pace.[46]

In our own time, Stephen Sears showed a clear distaste for McClellan, heaping much criticism on the general in multiple books. D. Scott Hartwig's 2012 epic about the campaign used a more sensible and just approach. Hartwig lucidly discussed justifications for the timing of McClellan's arrival in Frederick. Yet, he also wrote with strong reasoning about how the Army of the Potomac lost opportunities because the

45 Joseph L. Harsh, *Taken at the Flood: Robert E. Lee and Confederate Strategy in the Maryland Campaign of 1862* (Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 1999), 6.
46 William Swinton, *Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac* (Seacaucus, NJ: The Blue and Grey Press, 1988), 198.

measured advance allowed the Confederates to dictate the terms of the campaign's opening week.[47]

Ezra A. Carman, the first major historian of the epic late summer of 1862, aimed for balance well over a century before Hartwig. A veteran of the campaign, Carman tried to find an equilibrium on the grand and unending debate over McClellan. Carman recognized McClellan's need to satisfy his bosses about protecting Washington while ensuring the battered Union army had days to recuperate and collect stragglers.

Carman did not excuse McClellan's pace during his first week in Maryland, however. The commander made habitually tentative decisions, with fear of failure governing his choices. After accounting for the facts instilling caution into McClellan, Carman suggested "no good reason" existed "why he might not have advanced to the Monocacy" just east of Frederick "as early as the tenth" of September.[48] That fateful day marked the point when Lee's army divided into separate units, with more than half of the Confederates under the leadership of Stonewall Jackson sent against the federal troops and supplies at Harpers Ferry, Virginia.

To meet Harsh's standard of justice to historical figures, we cannot cast aside Carman's thoughts. He participated in the campaign as a Twelfth Corps regimental commander before spending much of the rest of his life documenting the important meaning of that horribly bloody September. His work included conversations and correspondence with numerous Civil War veterans. Accepting McClellan's decisions while failing to offer justice to Carman simply will not suffice.

As early September unfolded, McClellan wrote of his intense desire to plan for and bring victory to the United States. On September 2, before the immediacy of sending an army to the field became obvious, McClellan informed Lincoln, "You may rest certain that nothing I can think of shall be left undone." Three days later, the general wrote his wife, "I am doing all I can for my country." Soon after establishing headquarters in Rockville, Maryland, McClellan wished his immediate superior Halleck to know the Army of the Potomac would locate, pursue,

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47 Stephen Sears, *George B. McClellan: The Young Napoleon* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 1999), 270-95; Stephen Sears, *Landscape Turned Red: The Battle of Antietam* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1983), 74-111; D. Scott Hartwig, *To Antietam Creek: The Maryland Campaign of 1862* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012), 172-88.

48 Joseph Pierro, ed., *The Maryland Campaign of September 1862: Ezra A. Carman's Definitive Study of the Union and Confederate Armies at Antietam* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 89.

and attack the Confederates. "As soon as I find out where to strike," McClellan promised, "I will be after them without an hour's delay."[49]

The commanding general should have focused on three early milestones to make real his bellicose language. McClellan needed to (1) retain Sugar Loaf Mountain as a point of observation; (2) possess Parr Ridge, an excellent position which crossed the National Road at Ridgeville (now Mt. Airy); and, (3) save the supplies and troops at Harpers Ferry. McClellan lost out on swiftly meeting the first and second goals, although he did accomplish them later in the campaign. On the third goal, he failed.

McClellan also needed to placate his superiors about the protection of the national capital. He skillfully handled this matter, something McClellan failed to do at the start of the Peninsula Campaign earlier in the year. More than 70,000 soldiers remained around Washington's fortifications as the first third of September ended. The defenders of the capital included most divisions from the battle-hardened Third and Fifth corps, both heavily engaged on the Peninsula and at Second Bull Run. Additionally, other veteran troops and thousands of soldiers newly arrived from Northern states manned the capital's fortifications. The defensive force nearly equaled the size of McClellan's field army. Soldiers around the capital were either tired or inexperienced, but capable of being supplied from the large stores around Washington, well supported by artillery, and in no worse shape than Lee's Confederates. Troops in such numbers manning strong fortifications could hold Washington against a Confederate attack while McClellan returned to assist with his experienced army.[50]

Assuaging the fears of his bosses stood as just one of the reasons to adequately plan for Washington's safety. After ensuring a solid defense of the capital, McClellan could have gained greater knowledge of Lee's force through a more rapid march. Unfortunately, McClellan's army did not reach the Monocacy sooner as a way to follow up the laudable creation of a strong shield around Washington. Wildly inaccurate estimates of Confederate strength that McClellan accepted, even when

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49 Stephen W. Sears, ed., *The Civil War Papers of George B. McClellan* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 1992), 429, 435, 439.

50 *War of the Rebellion: The Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies,* 70 vols., 128 parts (Washington, DC: GPO, 1884), vol. 19, pt. 2, 264, hereinafter cited as *OR*; Hartwig, *To Antietam Creek,* 172-89.

calling them unreliable, greatly hindered the general.[51] History should not blame McClellan exclusively for the dearth of information about Lee's whereabouts and intentions. However, as the nation's senior field commander called on to defeat an enemy invasion, the general did not do enough to bolster his knowledge of the strategic picture. Justice with criticism still constitutes justice.

My Kingdom for a Loaf

Sugar Loaf Mountain, ten miles south of Frederick, stood as a vital means to better understanding the power and position of the Confederates. Union signal staff occupied the peak early in the campaign. Major General Nathaniel P. Banks, not one who receives a positive view from history, knew that the Maryland mountain allowed for clear vision of Confederate movements from around Leesburg, Virginia well into western Maryland. As a member of the Signal Corps recalled of the mountain, "The range of vision from this point is unequalled by that from any other in Maryland." On September 4, Union personnel reported a large group of Confederate wagons and troops visible in Leesburg, preparing to cross the Potomac from Virginia. Confederates seized Sugar Loaf soon thereafter.[52]

Almost a full week passed between periods of Unionist control of Sugar Loaf Mountain. Thus, McClellan missed out on amazing intelligence detectable from the nearly 1,300-foot summit. Continued possession of the mountain throughout the campaign would have confirmed the Confederate occupation of Frederick on September 6 and Lee's evacuation of the city four days later. Such intelligence undoubtedly would have hurried McClellan's pursuit before the afternoon of September 13, when Union headquarters received the "Lost Order" detailing Confederate plans.[53]

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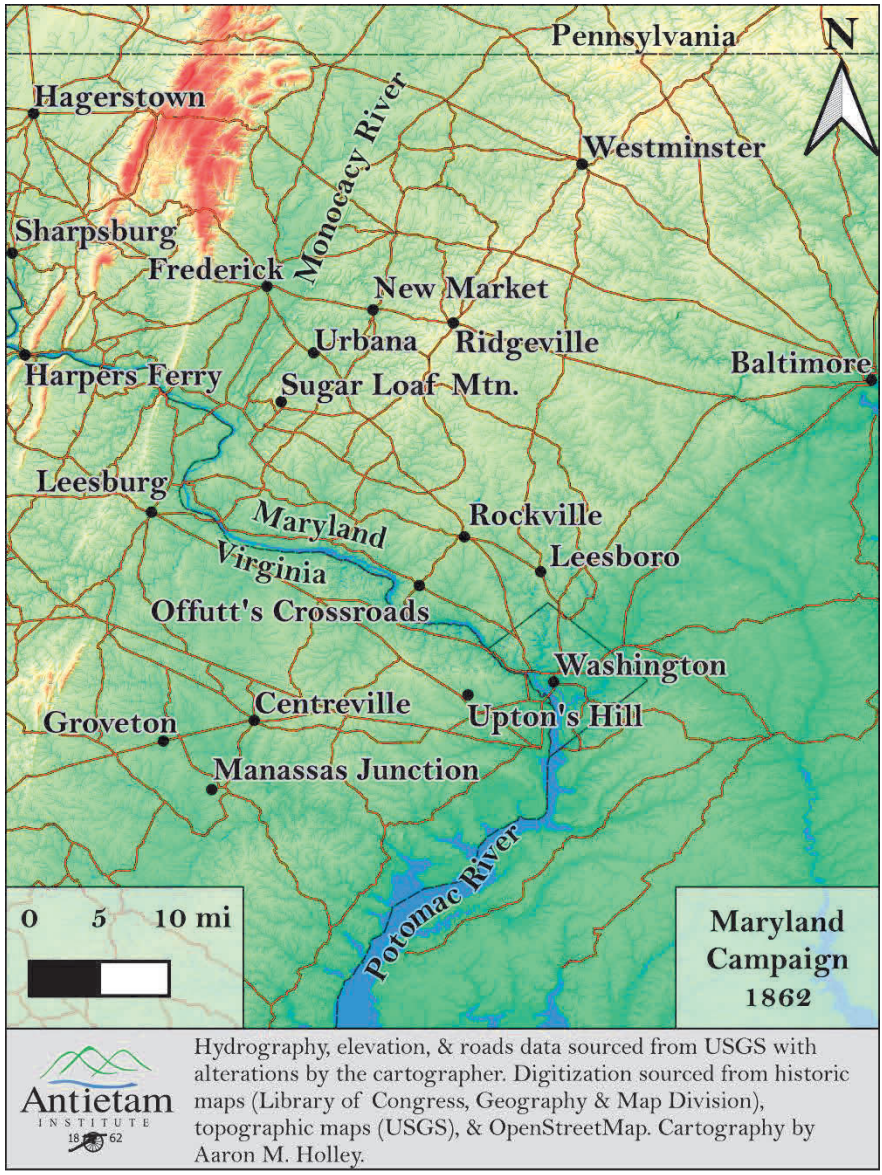
51 *OR,* vol. 51, pt. 1, 800.

52 Edwin C. Fishel, *The Secret War for the Union: The Untold Story of Military Intelligence in the Civil War* (Boston: Hougton Mifflin, 1996), 211-12; Pierro, ed., *The Maryland Campaign,* 86; J. Willard Brown, *The Signal Corps, U.S.A. in the War of the Rebellion* (Boston: Signal Corps Association, 1896), 325; George Brinton McClellan Papers, Library of Congress, reel 30.

53 The "Lost Order" refers to Special Orders No. 191, which Lee issued on September 9. Union troops discovered a copy of the order in a field near Frederick, misplaced in a manner still not fully known.



During Confederate possession of the vital height, McClellan relied on cavalry under the command of the overworked and undermanned Brig. Gen. Alfred Pleasonton, who could not penetrate the cavalry shroud protecting Lee's infantry. McClellan suffered a lack of clarity about the enemy well into the second week of September. Fatal to hope for a rapid advance to confront the Confederates, estimates of Southern strength in

Maryland quickly reached the wildly inaccurate level of 150,000 men.[54]

Retaining Sugar Loaf Mountain as a signal station would have been a greater intelligence coup than ten Lost Orders. If McClellan did not know about the mountain's value early in the campaign, as Hartwig suggests, he should have. No credible excuse exists for the army commander to not grasp the mountain's role as a means of understanding Confederate numbers and intentions. After all, McClellan served as head of the Army of the Potomac starting in the summer of 1861, with headquarters in Washington. Days after the Unionist signal station went quiet in September 1862, McClellan's chief of staff (and father-in-law) Randolph B. Marcy could muster only a plaintive plea to Pleasonton about regaining the peak. On the morning of September 9, headquarters asked, "Will it be possible for us to get possession of it without incurring much risk?"[55]

Such a sentence perfectly sums up McClellan's penchant for excessive prudence when visions of success failed to materialize readily at headquarters. Perhaps no greater risk taker existed in American military history than the Confederate opponent McClellan faced in Maryland. Robert E. Lee's very nature made risk central to Confederate strategy, as he admitted to his commander in chief, President Jefferson Davis, before moving his troops north. Even with logistical limitations and his fatigued army, Lee exhibited great boldness. "I am aware that the movement is attended with much risk, yet I do not consider success impossible," the Confederate army leader averred.

Lee certainly understood the status of his battered army. On the evening of September 6, in plenty of time for McClellan to adjust his plans to be more aggressive, Pleasonton informed headquarters that the Confederates in Maryland "are running over the Country hunting something to eat and are a hard looking set with a large number of stragglers." The following day, Pleasonton reported the enemy troops seemed "badly cared for," with "many of them without shoes."[56] After months of long marches and intense fighting, the weary and famished

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54 John C. Waugh, *Lincoln and McClellan: The Troubled Partnership Between a President and his General* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 139-41; Sears, *George B. McClellan,* 274-77.

55 Hartwig, *To Antietam Creek,* 176-77; *OR,* vol. 51, pt. 1, 802-03; Michael S. Lang, *Decisions of the Maryland Campaign: The Fourteen Critical Decisions That Defined the Operation,* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2022), 46-54.

56 *OR,* vol. 19, pt. 2, 591; McClellan Papers, LOC, reel 31; Harsh, *Taken at the Flood,* 42-61.

nature of the Confederates should have been no surprise to McClellan, a brilliant student of military history. The Confederates were not an army of demigods, but rather humans suffering hunger, lethargy, heat exhaustion, and low morale at times. Lee knew his redoubtable men could do much, but admitted to his president the whole game could be lost north of the Potomac.

Commanding the center of McClellan's army, experienced Maj. Gen. Edwin Sumner tried to make the most of the limited information he gleaned from Rockville. (Library of Congress)

Advancing the Army

McClellan's headquarters could not offer much information to senior infantry commanders who took tens of thousands of Union troops into Maryland. Major General Edwin V. Sumner, leading both the Second and Twelfth corps, received a short instruction on September 5 to head to Rockville, northwest of Washington. Chief of Staff Marcy wrote of the "considerable force" Lee had moved into the Old Line State, rather incomplete news for Sumner, who was responsible for the center of McClellan's army.

Even without Sugar Loaf's observational gold and lacking excellent cavalry leadership, sound nuggets of good information arrived at headquarters before McClellan departed Washington to join the army in the field. Sumner soon gained vital insights after a scare about possible Confederate designs against Rockville. He mentioned a civilian report of Lee's army heading to Frederick with 50,000 men, a total number of troops and destination far more correct than musings from others of a much larger Confederate army with Baltimore in the crosshairs. The next morning, Sumner found all quiet in the front of his two corps around Rockville.[57]

57 McClellan Papers, LOC, reel 31; *OR,* vol. 19, pt. 2, 189-90, 196, 202.

Assigned an important role as the left of the army, Maj. Gen. Darius Couch led a division into Maryland. (Library of Congress)

Major General Darius N. Couch, leading a Union division near the Potomac River at Offutts Crossroads, also reported no sign of Confederates. Later on September 7, in a report gleaned from multiple sources, Couch informed headquarters of Confederates along the Monocacy River to the north, another sign of Frederick being Lee's target. McClellan responded to the lack of Confederates east of Frederick with a charge to Marcy. Ordering an increase in the army's supply of shoes and stockings, McClellan explained, "I wish all the troops intended for active operations to move up with the least possible delay."[58] Although his men were not immediately put in motion to retake Sugar Loaf Mountain or unite close to Frederick sooner than later, McClellan retained, or at least wrote with, a fighting attitude.

Farther east, the First and Ninth corps had begun their campaign during the evening of September 6. Their enervating trek took 25,000 men under the command of Maj. Gen. Ambrose E. Burnside to Leesboro (now Wheaton), Maryland by late morning of the next day.[59] Justice requires no criticism of McClellan for this move. He could not crowd a dozen infantry divisions onto the same road to Rockville, a more direct route to Frederick. The field commander competently stretched his army

58 McClellan Papers, LOC, reel 31. Offutts Crossroads is the intersection of River Road and Falls Road in Potomac, Maryland.

59 Hartwig, *To Antietam Creek,* 168-70; Darin Wipperman, *First for the Union: Life and Death in a Civil War Army Corps from Antietam to Gettysburg* (Guilford, CT: Stackpole Books, 2020), 12-14.

across a large area of central Maryland. McClellan seemed positioned to place his troops along the Monocacy by September 10, as Carman suggested was possible.

The army commander did not advance with celerity, quickly losing out on the chance to reach the Monocacy quickly. In updating Halleck on the evening of the 8th, McClellan opined, "Our information is still entirely too indefinite to justify definite action." Sensible inferences from the available information showed no significant force of Confederates east of the Monocacy, a sign of Baltimore's safety. When discussing McClellan's September 8 statement of befuddlement, a wonderful historian of Civil War intelligence found McClellan overly careful. Edwin C. Fishel offered a vision a plucky military leader would have seized. He correctly suggested minimal doubt should have existed about the Confederate occupation of Frederick by September 8.[60] Fishel's statement meets Harsh's justice standard.

By the evening of September 9, the First and Ninth corps had moved farther north and spread out well while staying close to Sumner's wing. The only problem with such a focus on Baltimore was the exceedingly low threat to the city. Lee had used the Monocacy River as the line of advance on the way to Frederick, instead of heading east to Baltimore, which would have negligently exposed the Confederate right to McClellan's advancing troops. The Union commander retained a focus on defending against any Confederate move east of Frederick while remaining within supporting distance of Washington. He must garner some credit for advancing, even at a slow pace.[61]

McClellan's superiors, most notably general in chief Halleck, had been reminding the field commander about the defense of the national capital. Although Halleck's words give some support to those uncritical of McClellan's rate of march to the Monocacy, they do not overtake Carman's better vision for Unionist progress.

Not every idea a superior presents to a field commander translates to an unmistakable and controlling directive. Halleck's key missives to senior subordinates early in the campaign do not read like military orders. Rather, the general in chief articulated a viewpoint without compelling action. Halleck first wished McClellan to counter the Rebel move north, rather than force a languid advance as a means to safely cover Washington. As he wrote to McClellan on September 5:

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60 *OR,* vol. 19, pt. 2, 211; Fishel, *Secret War*, 214.
61 Rafuse, *McClellan's War,* 283-85.

> I think there can now be no doubt that the enemy are crossing the Potomac in force, and that you had better dispatch General Sumner and additional forces to follow. If you agree with me, let our troops move immediately.

Halleck wrote another discretionary note to Maj. Gen. John E. Wool, department commander in Baltimore. The general in chief suggested, but did not order, Wool move all Union troops in Harpers Ferry to Maryland Heights, a fine defensive position immediately east of the town on the Maryland side of the Potomac River.[62] Wool should have ordered such a move from Col. Dixon S. Miles, commanding the Harpers Ferry garrison. Fatefully, Wool did not implement Halleck's suggestion.

Before receiving Halleck's message about sending the army into Maryland, McClellan had already wisely issued orders starting the move of five corps and supporting units. Halleck's latitude to McClellan about when to move the army fits with the general in chief's reputation as a leader who grew horribly concerned when forced to make crucial decisions.[63]

Granting some flexibility to officers in the field with more local knowledge made eminent sense. Military leaders often allow discretion to subordinates, including the fateful Halleck-McClellan correspondence not even two weeks prior when another Union army faced intense Confederate pressure near Manassas.[64]

Halleck shifted his concern to Washington's safety on September 7. A note far more discretionary than dictatorial went to McClellan about the status of the capital. In the afternoon, Halleck noted fears about McClellan taking too many Union troops from the Virginia side of the Potomac. "It may be the enemy's object to draw off the mass of our forces and then attempt to attack from the Virginia side of the Potomac," Halleck wired.

Again, the superior offered an idea, not an order. Halleck's indefinite "it may be the enemy's object" are not words to connote an obligatory

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62 *OR,* vol. 19, pt. 2, 182, 189.

63 Hartwig, *To Antietam Creek,* 33-34; Pierro, ed., *The Maryland Campaign,* 60-67.

64 With Pope under serious pressure, Halleck's notes to McClellan, who was in Alexandria, Virginia, also do not read like orders to send more elements of the Army of the Potomac to Pope. McClellan did not do enough to defuse the crisis, but Halleck's messages failed to compel much action. Rafuse, *McClellan's War,* 258-67.

tone. His flexible perspective continued when Halleck implored, "Think of this." Rather than retract his suggestion of two days before to place the army in motion, he asked McClellan to ponder the possible threats to Washington. Moreover, Halleck's concern dealt with the Union troops in Virginia guarding the western approaches to the capital. The note did not dictate the placement of McClellan's troops in Maryland.

McClellan's pace remained quite measured while he felt uncertainty about the best next steps. If McClellan had boldness in mind, he would have protested any order so focused on Washington's safety. An example of a subordinate requesting a change to orders occurred earlier in September, when McClellan requested, and quickly received, alterations to Halleck and Lincoln's plan for several leadership positions in the field army and Washington's defenses.[65]

Even without full clarity about Lee's movements, McClellan attempted to reassure the governor of Pennsylvania of the army's ability to give chase to the Confederates if the Keystone State became a target. Without making any commitment to advance quickly on the enemy himself, McClellan requested Governor Andrew G. Curtin be bold. "It would be well for you to push your investigations toward Frederick as far as possible," essentially begging Pennsylvania's help in ascertaining Confederate intentions.[66]

A field commander willing to take risks would have moved his pursuing force toward Frederick a bit faster while reminding his superiors of the large contingent of Union soldiers in the immediate vicinity of Washington. The need to protect the national capital had been commendably met. McClellan should not have relied on second-hand observations from a state governor to learn Confederate whereabouts.

"A Grand Stew for Dinner"

Even while leaving a strong contingent in the capital's fortifications, McClellan wielded a powerful and experienced field army capable of protracted and difficult service, as would be proven in battle during mid-September. Brigadier General Jacob D. Cox—not an inveterate McClellan critic—deemed the army in sufficient trim for the difficulties of

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65 *OR,* vol. 19, pt. 2, 189-90; A. Wilson Greene, "'I Fought the Battle Splendidly': George B. McClellan and the Maryland Campaign," in *Antietam: Essays on the 1862 Maryland Campaign,* ed. Gary W. Gallagher (Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 1989), 59.

66 *OR,* vol. 19, pt. 2, 216.

a new campaign while healing from a summer of defeat and facing supply woes. Cox correctly noted how three of the corps marching against Lee, the Second, Sixth, and Twelfth, had not been engaged at Second Bull Run. The young general labelled as "hardly proper" any assumption "the army as a whole was not one which could be rapidly manoeuvred." Cox articulated ideas similar to Carman on the preferred pace of McClellan's army.

> I see no good reason why it might not have advanced at once to the left bank of the Monocacy, covering thus both Washington and Baltimore, and hastening by some days Lee's movement across the Blue Ridge. We should at least have known where the enemy was by being in contact with him, instead of being the sport of all sorts of vague rumors and wild reports.[67]

This view was a postwar observation, not an idea Cox wrote in the midst of the campaign. Nonetheless, his words hold special merit. Cox respected aspects of his commanding general's leadership and personality.[68] Furthermore, Cox – whose service with the Army of the Potomac would be rather brief—had no reason to extol the prowess of McClellan's men just to make himself look good. Cox stood as an unbiased observer of the army's capability to march more rapidly.

Writing from his comfortable retirement in memoirs that would be posthumously published, McClellan stressed the Army of the Potomac's unreadiness for service in the field in early September. He wished for weeks to restructure and rejuvenate his troops. "Nothing but sheer necessity justified the advance of the Army of the Potomac to South Mountain and Antietam in its then condition," McClellan argued, "for the work of supply and reorganization was continued as best we might while on the march."

Insights from McClellan's letters suggest he had a different mindset at the time. Those who argue the Army of the Potomac's poor state of morale and supply necessitated a slow march in Maryland must first explain why McClellan himself held a contrary view as events unfolded. On September 7, McClellan happily wrote his wife of the great challenge facing him. With God's help, he expected to win. Regarding the

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67 Jacob Dolson Cox, *Military Reminiscences of the Civil War,* vol. 1 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1900), 267.
68 Hartwig, *To Antietam Creek,* 4, 6.

condition of his soldiers, he declared, "We are all well & the entire army is now united, cheerful & confident."[69] These are not words from a later book, a contemporaneous public report, or telegram to Washington, but thoughts from a husband to his spouse that McClellan likely assumed would forever stay private. They stand as a trustworthy assessment of the Army of the Potomac's general condition as the campaign began. Conversely, McClellan's memoirs read like an attempt to protect a reputation time had sullied.

Even if Carman and Cox never suggested a faster pace for the army, other evidence points to a better condition for McClellan's troops than the field commander offered in his memoirs. The historian of the 2nd Massachusetts, who accepted McClellan's slow advance to the Monocacy, admitted "confidence had been established" in the army during the period before the troops marched north. Exhausted and hungry men found the energy to persevere, as did their Confederate opponents, who were likely more tired and in a more doubtful state of supply.[70]

Famished and fatigued soldiers could echo the optimism at the core of their decision to enlist and save their country from disunion. A member of the 9th New York State Militia (also known as the 83rd New York) had informed his family in early September, "You ought to see me now, you'd swear I was no relation of yours." He described the regiment's tough summer service, including the loss of knapsacks at Second Bull Run. Casualties, marching in horrible heat, and poor food would not keep the heroes down. The New Yorker concluded, "I'm happy as a king," while mentioning a comrade who "says he had a grand stew for dinner – crackers and water."[71]

While on the march, the bounty of Maryland accrued to the benefit of McClellan's army, a fact that helped feed men when supply trains lagged. As the historian of the rookie 124th Pennsylvania, part of the Twelfth Corps, recalled, "Trespasses were committed upon the corn and potato fields and orchards, and bountifully they yielded." In the Ninth Corps, soldiers remembered the energy and buoyancy flowing from food, friendly citizens, and the countryside's beauty. "The people all along

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69 George B. McClellan, *McClellan's Own Story* (New York: Charles L. Webster, 1887), 552-53; Sears, ed., *Civil War Papers*, 438.

70 Alonzo H. Quint, *The Record of the Second Massachusetts Infantry, 1861-65* (Boston: James P. Walker, 1867), 129; Waugh, *Lincoln and McClellan,* 138-39.

71 George A. Hussey, *History of the Ninth Regiment* (New York: Press of J.B. Ogilvie, 1889), 180; Wipperman, *First for the Union,* 2-3.

through Maryland cheered and welcomed our troops," the historian of the very tired 6th New Hampshire wrote.[72]

Another Granite Stater in the Ninth Corps found the travails of military service necessary to protect the country. Corporal Elmer Bragg, 9th New Hampshire, in diary entries early in the campaign, proclaimed, "I am glad that I am here for I know that I am needed. Life is a valuable sacrifice but not too great for a country like ours." Military service included many negatives, Bragg added, but he must "go forward under the convictions of duty."[73] Tired soldiers proved able to see positives, and sometimes humor, in their difficulties while remaining firmly committed to their country.

Optimism bolstered McClellan's weary warriors. An enlisted man in the 6th Wisconsin, writing to a newspaper, described how the state's troops seemed ready to fight. On September 5, Levi Raymond illustrated the resolute character of the American solider. "Notwithstanding the humiliation of being compelled to lie in camp," Raymond wrote, "the boys are generally in good spirits, and ready to take the field again."[74]

Major Thomas W. Hyde, who would earn a Medal of Honor leading the 7th Maine at Antietam, fondly remembered the start of the march in Maryland. He gave credit to the inspiriting presence of McClellan, in whom many of the men had seemingly limitless faith. To again give justice to the general, historians cannot forget the boost to morale McClellan's mere presence provided at the start of September, even after his costly failure on the Peninsula earlier in the summer. Hyde then fondly remembered heaven on earth after the first night's march:

> Our next bivouac seemed very conveniently situated as to chickens, and corn, and honey, and apple butter, and like the Israelites of old, we looked upon the land, and it was good. The girls no longer made faces at us from the windows, and the people

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72 Robert M. Green, *History of the One Hundred and Twenty-fourth Regiment Pennsylvania Volunteers in the War of the Rebellion, 1862-1863* (Philadelphia: Ware Bros., 1907), 23; Lyman Jackman, *History of the Sixth New Hampshire Regiment in the War for the Union* (Concord, NH: Republican Press, 1891), 98.

73 Elmer Bragg Papers, Rauner Library, Dartmouth College. Men in the 5th New Hampshire could echo Bragg's thoughts while benefiting from Maryland's largess. Mike Pride and Mark Travis, *My Brave Boys: To War with Colonel Cross & the Fighting Fifth* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 2001), 120-22.

74 Quiner Scrapbooks, Wisconsin Historical Society, vol. 3, 261. https://content.wisconsinhistory.org/digital/collection/quiner/id/33964.

> were down at their front gates with cool water, at least, if they had nothing better. It seemed like Paradise, this Maryland, and many were the blessed damosels we saw therein. Where was the man "who would not dare to fight for such a land?"

Although Hyde counted relatively small numbers of men in regiments of the Sixth Corps, he found fortitude in the ranks, with the drive for victory quite strong, even under the adversity of military life. "They were all seasoned veterans and equal to anything," Hyde wrote, "I did not believe the same number of soldiers of the great Frederick could have stood against them."[75]

In very frank letters, Brig. Gen. Alpheus S. Williams, in temporary command of the Twelfth Corps, listed an array of problems impacting his men. The summer's losses severely diminished several regiments as the corps continued their season of ennui as part of McClellan's army. Even though many of his troops lacked tents or even experience in a military campaign, Williams declared to his daughter on September 12, "I have great confidence that we shall smash them terribly . . . when we do strike I think it will be a heavy blow."[76]

Confidence had filled ranks across the Twelfth Corps soon after news of the Confederate move north. The men under Williams held the chance to exact some revenge for the horrid summer they experienced. As the regimental historian of the 27th Indiana remembered, "At once, as if by magic, a wonderful change came over our army. Every one who was the least discouraged or doubtful before, was now buoyant and full of confidence." He noted how McClellan's presence accounted for some of the improved spirits, but the 27th Indiana found other motivations than the identity of the army's leader. The chance to get reacquainted with some regiments the Hoosiers had not seen for several months provided much of the renewed drive.[77] Camaraderie serves as the glue of an army.

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75 Hyde referred to Frederick the Great, the ruler of Prussia for nearly half of the eighteenth century. Thomas W. Hyde, *Following the Greek Cross Or, Memories of the Sixth Army Corps* (Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press, 1894), 88-90.

76 Milo M. Qauife, ed., *From the Cannon's Mouth: The Civil War letters of General Alpheus S. Williams* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 97-121.

77 A Member of Company C, *The Twenty-Seventh Indiana Volunteer Infantry in the War of the Rebellion* (Monticello, IN: n.p., 1899), 224-25; M. Chris Bryan, *Cedar Mountain to Antietam: A Civil War Campaign History of the Union XII Corps, July-September, 1862,* (El Dorado Hills, CA: Savas Beatie, 2021), 198-201.

In the Irish Brigade, part of the Second Corps, the historian of the 29th Massachusetts summed up reasons for the army's positive demeanor:

> The marches were not at this time very long nor forced; the country through which the army moved was very picturesque and fruitful; the fields were filled with corn, and from these the soldiers had many delicious meals, roasting the milky corn, gathering peaches and apples from the well-laden orchards, and not seldom supping upon fresh pork (purchased of course of the country people).[78]

The summer of 1862 saw an intense level of recruiting across the North, with some rookies filling up entirely new regiments, while others mustered into established units, a way for damaged outfits to increase strength. Perhaps not all of these new men could instantly be great soldiers, but raw numbers can count in war. Sumner's Second Corps was in better shape with 18,000 men at Antietam than in the immediate aftermath of the Peninsula Campaign six weeks before.

The opening service of Ninth Corps rookies in the 17th Michigan—an intense and overwhelming attack on South Mountain, then another day of heavy loss at Antietam – proved the mettle new soldiers could exhibit. The dozens of dead Wolverines in the regiment across four days in September speak better than any historian about the greatness callow soldiers can demonstrate. Without doubt, the Army of the Potomac's morale increased thanks to the troops added over the summer.[79]

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78 William H. Osborne, *History of the Twenty-Ninth Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry in the Late War of the Rebellion* (Boston: Albert J. Wright, 1877), 181.

79 D. Scott Hartwig, "Who Would Not Be a Soldier: The Volunteers of '62 in the Maryland Campaign," in *The Antietam Campaign*, ed. Gary W. Gallagher (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 143-68; Lawrence A. Kreiser, Jr., *Defeating Lee: A History of the Second Corps, Army of the Potomac* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011), 45-47; 159-74; Brian Matthew Jordan, *Unholy Sabbath: The Battle of South Mountain in History and Memory, September 14, 1862* (New York: Savas Beatie, 2012), 159-74; William F. Fox, *Regimental Losses in the American Civil War, 1861-1865* (Albany, NY: Albany Publishing, 1889), 388.

Henry Halleck, McClellan's former subordinate who became his boss in the summer of 1862, shared a cautious mindset. (Library of Congress)

None of the positives about the condition of McClellan's army meant happiness and light prevailed for Union troops. No marching army in the nineteenth century, including Lee's Confederates, faced easy days or a perfect state of morale and supply. One problem, the low quality of some food, often led to serious issues for drained and overheating Union soldiers. From digestive misery to long lines of stragglers, some units faced great hurdles on the way to the Monocacy and beyond. Yet, they moved with commitment to their task, as soon proven on battlefields in Maryland. As his campaign commenced, Brig. Gen. George G. Meade, who would lead a brigade and then the entire division of the exhausted Pennsylvania Reserves, noted the command's fatigue and harsh service earlier in the summer. They would persevere quite well, then fight stridently at South Mountain and Antietam during crucial moments in those two epic battles.[80]

Likewise, while summing up the march through Maryland, the historian of the 45th Pennsylvania suggested, "Many went into the battle of South Mountain in such a weak condition that they could scarcely march, but nevertheless stuck to their posts." The unit would suffer more than 40 killed or mortally wounded on September 14.[81]

Without question, some demoralization impacted the army. Yet, mass dejection to the point of the army's incapacitation simply did not exist. Brave men proved McClellan's troops had the potential for devoted

80 Wipperman, *First for the Union,* 11, 24-28, 63-67.

81 Allen D. Albert, ed., *History of the Forty-Fifth Regiment Pennsylvania Veteran Volunteer Infantry, 1861-1865* (Williamsport, PA: Grit Publishing, 1912), 47-48.

service during trying marches and bitter combat.[82] Pushing the army faster than McClellan dared in the campaign's first week was not a risky, impossible dream, but something the men could reasonably have expected.

Not Knowing Your Enemy

Sufficient facts were available on the morning of September 8 for an intrepid general to get his men moving in time to arrive along the Monocacy on the 10th. Without such a bold plan, the lack of closer contact between the armies relinquished the initiative to Robert E. Lee. Imperfect intelligence—but not a void utterly detrimental to army progress—gave McClellan pause.

In one of the most fascinating messages a general sent during the war, McClellan explained on September 11 why he had been content to allow the Confederates to dictate the pace of the early campaign. From Rockville, he wrote general in chief Halleck:

> At the time this army moved from Washington, it was not known what the intentions of the rebels were in placing their forces on this side of the Potomac. It might have been a feint to draw away our troops from Washington, for the purpose of throwing their main army into the city as soon as we were out of the way, or it might have been supposed to be precisely what they are now doing. In view of this uncertain condition of things, I left what I conceived to be a sufficient force to defend the city against any army they could bring against it from the Virginia side of the Potomac. This uncertainty, in my judgment, exists no longer.[83]

McClellan continued with pessimism about his success, then penned sentences Hartwig rightly branded "either marvelously naïve or preposterous." Although confident earlier in the year that taking the

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82 Additional histories or manuscript collections could be cited to expound on the idea that the Army of the Potomac was not utterly demoralized or incapable of good marching in September 1862. For examples of pro-McClellan viewpoints regarding these questions, see Rafuse, *McClellan's War,* 274-90, Daniel J. Vermilya, "'Perceptions, Not Realities': The Army of the Potomac in the Maryland Campaign," *The Antietam Journal,* vol. 1, September 2021, 11-34, and H.J. Eckenrode and Bryan Conrad, *George B. McClellan: The Man Who Saved the Union* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1941), 166-78.

83 *OR,* vol. 19, pt. 2, 254.

Confederate capital of Richmond, Virginia would bring victory, McClellan showed a stunning lack of concern for Washington. He believed the capital's defenders could handle any attack, but McClellan declared:[84]

> . . . even if Washington should be taken while these armies are confronting each other, this would not, in my judgment, bear comparison with the ruin and disaster which would follow a signal defeat of this army. If we should be successful in conquering the gigantic rebel army before us, we would have no difficulty in recovering it. On the other hand, should their force prove sufficiently powerful to defeat us, would all the forces now around Washington be sufficient to prevent such a victorious army from carrying the works on this side of the Potomac, after they are uncovered by our army? I think not.

Combined with a slow advance during the early campaign, McClellan's words about the fate of the Union cause while losing Washington presents a rather vexing contrast to history. Instead of using the capital's secure status to embark on a bold endeavor, McClellan elected to let Lee control the situation, undoubtedly because of an incorrect fixation on the "gigantic" Confederate force in Maryland. As he informed Halleck:

> All the evidence that has been accumulated from various sources since we left Washington goes to prove most conclusively that almost the entire rebel army in Virginia, amounting to not less than 120,000 men, is in the vicinity of Frederick City.[85]

The Union commander deserves credit for rebuilding the Army of the Potomac while also keeping Washington well protected at the start of the campaign. On the other side of Harsh's justice scale, Edwin Sumner, an officer in the United States Army seven years before McClellan's birth, more closely approximated Lee's strength at 50,000.[86]

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84 Hartwig, *To Antietam Creek,* 186.

85 *OR,* vol. 19, pt. 2, 254-55; Donald R. Jermann, *Antietam: The Lost Order* (Gretna, LA; Pelican Publishing, 2006), 101-103.

86 As previously cited, Sumner's estimate of 50,000 Southern troops heading to Frederick went to headquarters on September 6. A day earlier, General Wool—a soldier for so long he had been wounded in the War of 1812—believed 30,000 Confederates had already crossed the Potomac near the Monocacy, with more on the way. *OR,* vol.

McClellan possessed a high intellect and extensive knowledge of the world's militaries, thanks in part to fluency in several languages. How could he believe the Confederacy, with less than thirty percent of the manpower of the United States, mobilized the men and logistical system to place and support so many troops in Union territory? With six million free residents, the Confederacy could not realistically engage McClellan's army with "not less than" 120,000 Southerners in Maryland, while simultaneously threatening Washington with another force capable of capturing the Union capital.

Some suggest justice to a historical figure requires judgments based solely on what he knew as reality unfolded before him. This essay suggests verdicts can reasonably be rendered while considering what a brilliant man, the star of his West Point class who graduated as a teenager, should have known as humanly possible from his opponent. McClellan simply cannot be taken seriously on his understanding of the number of men in Lee's army in September 1862. His delusions on the matter, which defined his military career, did not excuse the cautious advance of the Army of the Potomac east of Frederick. Modern scholars who opine how most other generals failed to understand the strength of their opponent provide necessary perspective and items for other historians to ponder. Nonetheless, their effort to defend McClellan in this instance should not prevail.

A primary weakness of McClellan as a field commander was a penchant to automatically accept poor intelligence as fact when rumors of immense Confederate strength abounded. Lee's army included perhaps half the men in McClellan's estimate of at least 120,000 before straggling unsurprisingly took a severe a toll, as Lee articulated to President Davis.[87]

McClellan should have realized how a more rapid pursuit of the Confederates in the first days of the campaign would perform a great service to his country. His army's arrival outside Frederick on September

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19, pt. 2, 189-90, 196; John H. Eicher and David J. Eicher, *Civil War High Commands* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 371, 519, 581; Richard Slotkin, *The Long Road to Antietam: How the Civil War Became a Revolution* (New York: Liveright Publishing, 2012), 170-75.

87 Sears, *Landscape,* 104-107; Sears, *George B. McClellan,* 273-79; Fishel, *Secret War,* 216-17; John C. Waugh, *The Class of 1846: From West Point to Appomattox: Stonewall Jackson, George McClellan, and their Brothers* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1994), 66-67); Harsh, *Taken at the Flood,* 117-19; Russell Rich, "Very Much Diminished: Straggling in the Army of Northern Virginia in the Maryland Campaign," *The Antietam Journal,* vol. III, September 2021, 34-60.

10 would likely have compelled Lee to take a defensive posture, exactly what he did not want to do in Maryland. Lee would have been unable to resort to his usual boldness, therefore losing the opportunity to take Harpers Ferry. Other ideas on Lee's mind, such as moving north to Hagerstown, Maryland or into Pennsylvania would also be off the table until he confronted the blue Unionist host.

In reality, no opposing army worried Lee as the Confederates departed Frederick. Jackson was well on his way to Harpers Ferry, while a smaller part of the Confederate army eventually headed to Hagerstown, as McClellan continued his September 11 note:

> From the moment the rebels commenced the policy of concentrating their forces, with their large masses of troops operating against our scattered forces, they have been successful. They are undoubtedly pursuing the same policy now, and are prepared to take advantage of any division of our troops in the future.[88]

Nothing he wrote in the campaign showed McClellan's lack of knowledge about the enemy more than the above paragraph. Instead of concentrating for a knockout blow, Lee and his heavily divided army began moving west from Frederick, with the Harpers Ferry strike force using three separate routes to invest the town.

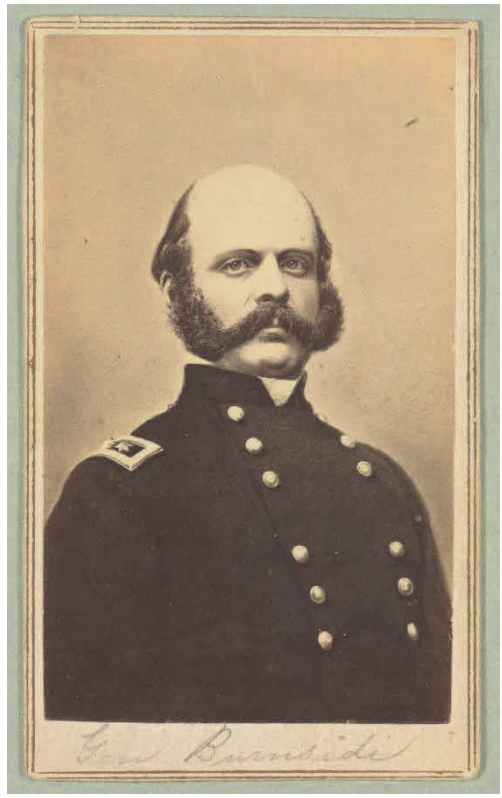
To satisfy Harsh's command to render justice first, we must respect the difficulty McClellan had in assembling concrete information on Confederate strength. The Union army's pursuit of Lee had not begun in earnest until the Southern warriors already occupied Frederick. Relying on civilian observations and receiving false information from captured Confederates, McClellan faced severe limitations while trying to break through the "fog of war." At the same time, focusing like a laser on retaining Sugar Loaf Mountain could have saved McClellan from his obliviousness. With his own balanced and respectful approach to McClellan, Carman still struck with venom regarding the army leader's lack of information on the number and location of Southern warriors in

88 Rafuse, *McClellan's War*, 284; Sears, ed., *Civil War Papers,* 445-46.

Maryland. "It was a saying of Napoleon," Carman asserted, "that the general who is ignorant of his enemy's strength and disposition is ignorant of his trade."[89]

Burnside the Conqueror

The advance of Burnside's wing epitomized the army commander's languid philosophy. McClellan envisioned a major advance of the First and Ninth corps on September 10; scouts had reported Jackson's command around New Market, about eight miles east of Frederick. Burnside's men were under orders to move toward Ridgeville, only about six miles closer to Baltimore than Jackson's presumed location. Burnside wrote pages of orders to ensure his men moved quickly to occupy positions in the central Maryland town.[90]



A friend of McClellan's for nearly 20 years, Maj. Gen. Ambrose Burnside seemed ready to occupy Frederick soon after the start of the Maryland Campaign. (Library of Congress)

In a wire to President Lincoln at noon, McClellan wrote, "I am perfectly certain that none of the enemy's troops have crossed the Potomac within the last twenty-four hours below the mouth of the Monocacy." Such a sentiment may have lifted Lincoln's spirits, with the President possibly expecting boldness from his general. McClellan originally wrote of Ridgeville's possession being vital. Then, after learning of the lack of any Confederate move east, McClellan informed Lincoln he canceled Burnside's surge west, turning the general movement into a

89 *OR,* vol. 19, pt. 2, 222-23; Lang, *Decisions,* 154-56; Pierro, *The Maryland Campaign,* 85.
90 *OR,* vol. 19, pt. 2, 239-41.

smaller reconnaissance.[91]

McClellan's flummoxed view of the enemy led to less than logical conclusions about where and how quickly Burnside's men could confront Jackson if the mighty Stonewall was moving east from the Monocacy. Jackson camped at New Market could have occupied Ridgeville far sooner than Burnside's men. Instead, because the Confederates were farther away from his army than expected, McClellan concluded a slothful advance sufficed.

A delay in Burnside's supply train halted two divisions prior to the cancellation of the September 10 advance. Certainly, Carman's vision of bold action faced some limitations. Even with better access to supplies, would McClellan have been bolder? Likely not. At 12:05 p.m. on September 11, headquarters communicated great concern about a Confederate attack from the north, informing Burnside, "look out well for your right and rear," while advancing troops on the planned reconnaissance. Headquarters demanded the vanguard of the army move "with great care, feeling your way cautiously."[92]

Burnside likely would have agreed with Carman on the possibilities for a faster arrival on the Monocacy. The wing commander wondered why his friend McClellan felt the need for tentative efforts against a countryside empty of the enemy. At 4 p.m., he wrote of his retention of communication with Sumner. He also issued an order to the First Corps to support the advanced Ninth Corps while remaining cognizant of any Confederate movements to the north. Later, Burnside did not understand the unyielding demand for relative torpor:

> I shall send a squadron of cavalry to New Market at once and report to you on their return. Everything would seem to indicate that the enemy has left this neighborhood, but in accordance with your directions I shall move carefully.

Burnside's reply changed no minds at headquarters. At 10 p.m., chief of staff Marcy requested, "Be extremely cautious in your advance. Watch your front and flanks with care, and be careful to communicate fully with headquarters and the troops on your left," a reference to Sumner's wing.[93]

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91 Ibid., 233.

92 McClellan Papers, LOC, reel 31; Hartwig, *To Antietam Creek,* 181-83; *OR,* vol. 51, pt. 1, 817.

93 McClellan Papers, LOC, reel 31; *OR,* vol. 51, pt. 1, 818.

Burnside sent additional pointed comments the following morning. He noted accurate reports of Jackson near Hagerstown (on his march to Harpers Ferry), while rumors had Confederates on roads to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, as well. "If they are going into Pennsylvania they would hardly be moving upon the Harper's Ferry road," Burnside wrote. Even knowing his supply limitations, Burnside seemed ready for the occupation of Frederick. He declared, "My opinion is that a direct movement upon Urbana {a few miles southeast of Frederick} and the line of the Monocacy would develop the strength of the enemy, and in all probability drive him beyond it."[94] For a general many students of the Civil War see as incompetent, Burnside nailed what should have been McClellan's central goal days before.

On September 11, McClellan requested the government evacuate the Harpers Ferry garrison, with those troops added to the Army of the Potomac. Halleck rejected the idea, which might have been more realistic days earlier, although Colonel Miles had a chance of linking up with Franklin's Sixth Corps, marching close to the Potomac.[95] In reality, the Union lost nearly 10,000 prisoners and bountiful supply stores that ended up feeding Confederates. Some may wish to blame Halleck exclusively for the unfortunate denouement of the Harpers Ferry drama. Perhaps McClellan's caution east of Frederick did not dictate such a regrettable outcome, but justice requires some fault be given to the Army of the Potomac's commander. McClellan talked tough about saving Harpers Ferry, but he lacked the drive to turn words into reality.

With a swifter move north and then west after reaching the National Road, the First and Ninth corps could have arrived at the Monocacy near Frederick by the evening of September 10. Sumner's two corps, also moving with a bit more celerity, could have linked with Burnside's left near the river, forming a very a strong front. These troops would have gained additional support from the Sixth Corps and Couch's division to the south, as well as Sykes' division of regular army troops, detached from the Fifth Corps, acting as a general reserve. The effort would have taxed the men greatly, but Ezra Carman and Jacob Cox's postwar thoughts of the army's pace offered a viable alternative to the reality of McClellan's measured advance.

Numbers tell an interesting story when comparing the march of Burnside's wing to the Monocacy and Stonewall Jackson's journey after

94 *OR,* vol. 19, pt. 2, 272-73.
95 *OR,* vol. 19, pt. 1, 758; Jermann, *Antietam*, 100-101.

departing Frederick. The two Unionist corps had made a difficult march through Washington to Leesboro. After a few short marches, the leading part of Burnside's command, in the vicinity of Ridgeville on the evening of the 11th, had only covered 40 miles since departing Meridian Hill in Washington. These troops at Ridgeville were 15 miles east of the Monocacy River, with First Corps divisions several miles behind. On their arrival at Ridgeville, Cox's Ohioans (added to the Ninth Corps) and the First Corps had marched 50 miles from Upton's Hill, Virginia.[96]

In comparison, Jackson's units—the largest portion of Lee's army that would invest Harpers Ferry—marched at a wicked pace. With a command of about 14,000 men, approximately the size of McClellan's First Corps early in the campaign, Jackson pushed his troops hard. His portion of the Harpers Ferry operation marched from Frederick on the morning of September 10. Over the next two days, the steadfast soldiers crossed the Potomac back into Virginia at Williamsport, Maryland, 30 miles from their starting point. After a move south to Martinsburg, Jackson turned southeast to Bolivar Heights just west of Harpers Ferry, roughly 35 miles south of Williamsport.[97]

If McClellan's army camped along the Monocacy on the evening of the 10th, Burnside's two corps would have marched from either Washington or northern Virginia to the Monocacy (55 to 65 miles) in four days. From Frederick to Harpers Ferry, Jackson's immortals covered nearly the same distance in slightly less time. In reality, Burnside's march took just under a week. Jackson attacked Harpers Ferry after covering a similar number of miles in half the time.

Men of the First and Ninth corps and others in McClellan's army would have been exhausted and hungry just east of Frederick on September 10. However, the difficult journey would have been nowhere close to a record distance for Civil War troops. And the men were not incapacitated with demoralization or incapable of heroic service. McClellan never could explain why the Confederacy's famished and tired men regularly made forced marches with bare feet and little food.[98] They were not better

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96 Bradley M. Gottfried, *The Maps of Antietam: An Atlas of the Antietam (Sharpsburg) Campaign, Including the Battle of South Mountain, September 2-20, 1862* (New York: Savas Beatie, 2013), 2-21.

97 James I. Robertson, Jr., *Stonewall Jackson: The Man, the Myth, the Legend* (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1997), 594-97.

98 James V. Murfin, *The Gleam of Bayonets: The Battle of Antietam and Robert E. Lee's Maryland Campaign, September 1862* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2010), 92-96.

soldiers, as the Maryland Campaign and nearly three more years of war would prove.

"We are Mighty Careful"

Would Lee have delayed the evacuation of Frederick, then attacked the Union Army east of the city if McClellan met Carman's September 10 timeframe for arrival at the Monocacy? Would Lee have retreated to the South Mountain passes or the town of Sharpsburg, anyway? Attempting to solve the riddle of George McClellan leaves us with many unanswered questions. Historians must sometimes content themselves with nothing but "what ifs" fortunately buttressed by the extensive historical record. McClellan possessed notable talents as a military officer, but he also spent too much time obsessed with worst case scenarios, missing vital opportunities to grasp victory from stalemate or perhaps shorten the war.

Harsh's excellent standard for historians, that justice should precede judgment, requires an acknowledgement of McClellan's positives. Most prominently, McClellan's caution east of Frederick still brought victories at South Mountain and Antietam. Ironically, the last major fight of McClellan's military career—which forced the Confederates from Maryland—brought what he did not wish: the government adopting abolition of slavery as a war aim. As he incorrectly estimated the size of Lee's army, McClellan proved himself a failed prognosticator about the U.S. soldier when, earlier in the summer, he begged President Lincoln to not use the military "to interfere with the relations of servitude." He continued, "A declaration of radical views, especially upon slavery, will rapidly disintegrate our present Armies."[99]

McClellan simply did not know his men as well as he thought. The army had the grit and devotion to country to transcend the difficulties a more rapid march in Maryland would have created. Likewise, contrary to McClellan's prediction, soldiers continued to serve as great patriots do after Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on the heels of Lee's retreat back to Virginia. By the time final victory seemed highly likely, McClellan lost the 1864 presidential election to the man who fired him two Novembers before. A general with so much unfulfilled potential ended the nation's bloodiest conflict as a War Democrat with a peace platform.[100] Even out of uniform, dichotomy defined George Brinton

99 Sears, ed., *Civil War Papers,* 345.

100 John C. Waugh, *Reelecting Lincoln: The Battle for the 1864 Presidency* (New

McClellan.

Sorting through the contradictions makes for much work sometimes without absolute certainty about the past in general or McClellan in particular. Historians today lacking definitiveness on how best to balance the gold and dross of McClellan stand in good company. Any given Union soldier marching in September 1862 might not have quite figured out his army commander. Within the span of four days, Pvt. Charles F. Johnson, 9th New York Infantry, summed up the positives and negatives of McClellan. On September 8, Johnson happily realized major work awaited because "McClellan is at the head of us now and he is not the man to make a move for the fun of the thing." On September 10, Johnson added, "McClellan seems to have put new life into everything, and I hope we will only get a fair shake at the enemy." Then, two days later, when pondering the rate of march to counter Robert E. Lee, the Empire State warrior lamented, "We are mighty careful about meeting some one ahead of us."[101]

York: Crown Publishers, 1997), 25-31, 298-302.

101 Charles F. Johnson, *The Long Roll* (East Aurora, NY: The Roycrofters, 1911), 180-81.

Who's the Boss? Command Turnover in Two Maryland Campaign Regiments

by Frank E. Bell III

Among the greatest challenges for volunteer officers in the Civil War, especially those with civilian backgrounds, was acquiring military leadership and administrative skills on the job, in the field and far from home. They gained an acceptable degree of proficiency in most instances, only to find themselves expected to learn and undertake new, more demanding responsibilities with little or no notice, because illnesses, battle casualties, promotions, leaves, transfers, and special details regularly took fellow officers away from the scene. Easier said than done!

This paper considers two mysteries the author encountered while developing up-to-date Army of the Potomac and Army of Northern Virginia Tables of Organization to enhance Antietam National Battlefield's resource education materials. The first mystery centers on an unexplained command change in an upper Midwest regiment between September 14 and 17, 1862, the second on the identity of the officer in command of a Deep South regiment at the Sunken Road, among the few such unknowns that linger to this day.[102] Separated by over 600 miles when organized in 1861, the two units were just 6 miles apart when the Siege of Petersburg concluded on April 2, 1865.[103]

The 8th Michigan's Two (Three?) Commanders

The *Official Records* (*OR*), Ezra Carman's manuscript[104] and other historical accounts do not address why Lieutenant Colonel Frank Graves, the 8th Michigan Infantry's commander at South Mountain, was replaced by Major Ralph Ely just prior to Antietam, nor delineate Colonel William Fenton's accomplishments during September and October 1862.

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102 Should Maryland Campaign scholars accept this identification, the 2nd Georgia Battalion and 51st Georgia Infantry would be the only two infantry units in the complete Tables of Organization whose commanders remain unknown.

103 Comparing the geographic breadth of the American Civil War with those of the conflicts that bedeviled Europe for centuries is instructive: 600 miles matches the distance between Paris and Vienna, for example.

104 Ezra A. Carman, *The Maryland Campaign of September 1862*, Thomas G. Clemens, ed., (El Dorado Hills, CA: Savas Beatie, 2010, 2012, 2017), vol. 1, chapters 1-11; vol. 2, 12-22; and vol. 3, 23-27.

The regiment mustered into federal service in September 1861, with Fenton, Graves, and Major Amasa B. Watson as its three field grade officers and Ely one of its ten company captains. It initially served in the South Carolina Expeditionary Corps for six months and was then assigned to Maj. Gen. David "Black Dave" Hunter's Department of the South just in time to support the final days of the successful siege of Fort Pulaski. On June 16, 1862, the 8th Michigan led the dawn attack on Tower Battery (Fort Lamar) at Secessionville, South Carolina, where Ely was wounded. In mid-July, it transferred to the Army of the Potomac (First Brigade, First Division, Ninth Corps) and subsequently fought under Maj. Gen. Jesse L. Reno at both Second Manassas and Chantilly.[105]

Fenton seems to have outranked every officer in the division other than its commander and brigade commanders; he would temporarily command a brigade from time to time, whereupon Graves would step up and lead the regiment. After Brig. Gen. Isaac Stevens was killed in action at Chantilly on September 1, for example, Col. Benjamin C. Christ took over the division, Fenton led the First Brigade, and so on, until Brig. Gen. Orlando B. Willcox relieved Christ a week later.[106]

The 8th Michigan crossed the Long Bridge into Washington City on September 4, the same day Maj. Gen. Daniel H. Hill's Confederate division forded the Potomac into Maryland. September 10, a Wednesday, was memorable for Ely, who was promoted to replace Major Watson (he resigned), and for the 8th Michigan's veterans, who were delighted by the rookie 17th Michigan's arrival and their assignment to Christ's brigade.[107]

Four days later, the two Michigan regiments found themselves aligned, several hundred yards apart, south and north of the Old Sharpsburg Road, advancing steadily under fire toward Fox's Gap. Willcox's report identified Lieutenant Colonel Graves as the 8th Michigan's commander at South Mountain. Christ's report mentioned the regiment, but did not name Graves, Ely, or any other officers.[108]

The regiment was transferred to Col. Thomas Welsh's Second Brigade on September 16.[109] The rank and file were likely disappointed at being

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105 The 8th Michigan Infantry fought in six states and became known as the "Wandering Regiment."

106 Fenton apparently did not command the regiment at Second Manassas or Chantilly.

107 *OR*, vol. 19, pt. 1, 432

108 *OR,* vol. 19, pt. 1, 428, 438. The omission of Fenton will be covered shortly.

109 *OR,* vol. 19, pt. 1, 177, note ||. The reassignment meant all Ninth Corps infantry brigades fielded four regiments at Antietam, other than the 4th (Kanawha) Division,

separated from their fellow Michiganders after only a week in the same brigade, but the next day the 8th again found itself aligned with the 17th, this time ⅜ mile apart, south and north of the Sharpsburg-Rohrersville Road, fighting uphill to the edge of Sharpsburg. Willcox's (separate) report for Antietam identified "Captain [sic] Ely" as the 8th Michigan's commander, with no explanation of the change in command.[110] Welsh's report for Antietam resembled Christ's for South Mountain, insofar as it mentioned the regiment, but did not name Ely or Graves, neither of whom wrote a report.[111]

Christ's and Welsh's silence regarding these two direct subordinates is particularly puzzling in light of the decisions on September 15-16. What circumstances might have caused Graves' replacement by Ely? An obvious possibility, termed scenario one herein, is that injuries, illness, and fatigue Graves suffered or aggravated at Fox's Gap led a surgeon or superior to determine Major Ely, a proven combat leader himself, was simply in better shape than Graves at that moment, given what was at stake in the Maryland Campaign.

Alternatively, an ailing Graves might have taken stock of himself in the hours immediately following South Mountain, understood serious fighting was on the horizon, considered the best interests of his regiment, and forthrightly offered or asked to be to be relieved, termed scenario two.

A third possibility, perhaps not known to Graves at the time, requires a look back at Fox's Gap. Brigadier General Jacob D. Cox led the Kanawha Division there and succeeded Reno two days later as Ninth Corps commander.[112] Cox's South Mountain report accordingly encompassed his own division's actions and those undertaken by Ninth Corps units reporting to his fellow divisional commanders (brigadier generals Willcox, Samuel Sturgis, and Isaac Rodman). Remarkably, the final

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whose two all-Ohio brigades had three regiments apiece.

110 *OR,* vol. 19, pt. 1, 430, 440. Because Ely's promotion was effective September 10, the day Major Watson resigned, Organization of the Army of the Potomac (loc. cit.) properly listed his rank at Antietam as "Major."

111 Only one regimental commander in the entire 1st Division wrote individual South Mountain and Antietam reports for his unit: Lt. Col. Joseph Gerhardt, 46th New York (*OR,* vol. 19, pt. 1, 441-442).

112 Reno's death on September 14, resulted in an odd command structure: "...Major-General Burnside exercised general command on the left, and Brigadier-General Cox was in immediate command of the corps" (*OR,* vol. 19, pt. 1, 177, note ‡). See also Carman, vol. 2, 408.

paragraph of Cox's comprehensive report singled out a junior 8th Michigan officer:

> I cannot close this report without speaking of the meritorious conduct of First Lieut. H[oratio] Belcher, of the Eighth Michigan, a regiment belonging to another division. His regiment having suffered severely on the right, and being partly in confusion, he rallied about 100 men and led them up to the front. Being separated from the brigade to which he belonged, he reported to me for duty, and asked a position where he might be of use until his proper place could be ascertained. He was assigned a post on the left, and subsequently [positioned] in support of the advanced section of Simmonds' battery, in both of which places both he and his men performed their duty admirably, and after the repulse of the enemy in the evening he carried his command to their proper brigade.[113]

The report elsewhere noted the "good service" of the two 10-pounder Parrott rifles, which were "pushed forward to an open spot in the woods" and thus visible to Cox.[114] Though the report overstated the extent to which the 8th Michigan was engaged on September 14—its casualties totaled eight soldiers wounded[115]—Cox cited Belcher's judgment and coolness under fire and in parallel observed "a regiment belonging to another division...and being partly in confusion." The contrast between a junior officer's initiative and a commander's less than desirable overall guidance of his regiment may have been all too plain.

Scenario three thus comprises a sequence of events: Graves' on-scene superiors at South Mountain (Cox, Willcox, and/or Christ) deemed his leadership sub-standard, elected to ease him aside in conjunction with the transfer of the regiment to Welsh, directed Ely to assume command, and

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113 *OR,* vol. 19, pt. 1, 461

114 Lt. Daniel W. Glassie commanded this "advanced section" of Simmonds' Battery (*OR,* vol. 19, pt. 1, 459). Carman chose to consolidate Glassie's contributions and Belcher's late-afternoon actions into a single paragraph (Carman, vol. 1, 330-31).

115 Refer to Return of Casualties in the Union forces at the Battle of South Mountain (*OR,* vol. 19, pt. 1, 186).

By accident or intent, the 8th was not assigned to the Ninth Corps' front-most attacking ranks and was gradually repositioned west away from the heaviest fighting, factors that limited its casualties.

decided, lastly, to omit the underlying rationale for these actions from the written record.[116]

Is this scenario plausible? A close reading of Willcox's report makes it clear he received orders, requests, guidance, and advice from generals Cox, Pleasonton, Burnside, Reno, and McClellan throughout the battle.[117] Willcox, his peers, and their subordinates were not alone: Ninth Corps units ended up all across the fields, forests, and ravines below Fox's Gap.[118] The 8th may have been "partly in confusion," but at day's end it remained in fighting trim. Even if the actions of Graves' superiors postulated here come across as harsh, the scenario cannot be disregarded.

On September 17, the 8th Michigan was placed on Welsh's left flank. It fought hard west of the Otto farm, overcame the stone wall that flanks today's Branch Avenue, and struggled uphill to the far side of Avey's orchard. The 4:20 p.m. Carman-Cope map depicts the 8th closer to the "great spring" at the southeast corner of Sharpsburg than any other Ninth Corps unit. Its casualties at Antietam totaled four officers and 25 soldiers wounded, plus two soldiers captured or missing.[119]

As to Colonel Fenton and his accomplishments, his week-long stint leading Christ's First Brigade after Chantilly had finished on September 8. Rather than rejoin the 8th Michigan, Fenton left Graves to act in his stead. He "returned to the regiment" on September 24—which by then had "marched back into Virginia...via Sharpsburg and Harpers Ferry"—and thereupon "assumed command of the 1st brigade, while Major Ely [remained] in command of the 8th."[120]

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116 Why cast aspersions when the Battle of South Mountain, the campaign's first major conflict, was a long-awaited Federal triumph in the Eastern Theater; when Graves' mistakes neither cost lives nor jeopardized the day's success; and when he had not acted in an insubordinate, cowardly or dishonorable manner?

117 *OR,* vol. 19, pt. 1, 427-429. Cox's concerns and Willcox's experiences on September 14 foreshadowed operational difficulties the officers of the reconstituted Army of the Potomac needed to address, in particular the daunting command and control challenges they all would encounter in combat.

118 See map sets 3.1–3.7 and 4.1–4.8 in Bradley M. Gottfried, *The Maps of Antietam* (El Dorado Hills, CA: Savas Beatie, 2012).

119 *OR,* vol. 19, pt. 1, 186. This constituted 7% of the regiment's 435 officers and enlisted men present at daybreak, a lower percentage than might have been expected.

120 Ely had held command since Graves was sidelined on September 16. The quoted excerpts are from *Michigan in the War*, compiled by Jno. Robertson (Lansing, MI: W.S. George & Co., 1882), 287.

Fenton, in other words, missed every Maryland Campaign engagement. No other conclusion can account for his absence from any *OR* Volume 19 battle report, Carman's manuscript, Joseph Harsh's trilogy, Scott Hartwig's *To Antietam Creek,* John Hoptak's *Battle of South Mountain*, Brian Downey's Antietam on the Web, and Jack Dempsey and Brian James Egen's *Michigan at Antietam: The Wolverine State's Sacrifice on America's Bloodiest Day.*

Fenton's assignment to lead the First Brigade, and at times the entire First Division, lasted from late September to late October.[121] He perhaps commanded the Second Brigade at Fredericksburg (sources differ), but saw little if any action there because Brig. Gen. William W. Burns' First Division was never sent in. Fenton resigned his commission for health reasons and was honorably discharged March 15, 1863.[122] The record demonstrates he was little more than a supernumerary for the final third of his 18 months of service.

Meanwhile, almost immediately after Fenton's return on September 24, Graves had submitted a resignation request of his own, reportedly "due to ill health."[123] Medical issues—noted by others (scenario one) or self-reported (scenario two)—and career concerns based on his superiors' apparent loss of confidence (scenario three) must all remain possible causes of Graves' decision. In fact, the third scenario alone could have triggered it. Fenton's reappearance, moreover, may have weighed on Graves' state of mind, in two respects: his frustration with their working relationship and, worse yet, an outright loss of respect for his nominal superior.[124]

Graves had gained valuable experience leading the 8th Michigan in combat, thanks to Fenton's ad hoc brigade command duties.[125] But those same duties limited the opportunities for the two of them to manage the regiment side-by-side on a daily basis and perhaps led Fenton to

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121 Refer to Burnside's October 26 "Indorsement" of the Potomac River crossing sequence (*OR,* vol. 19, pt. 2, 495) and the October 30 Report of the Number of Officers and Enlisted Men (*OR,* vol. 19, pt. 1, 98) for corroboration.

122 Health: https://civilwarintheeast.com/us-regiments-batteries/michigan/8th-michigan/; honorably discharged: *Record of Service of Michigan Volunteers in the Civil War 1861-1865–Eighth Infantry* (Kalamazoo, MI: Ihling Bros. & Everard, n.d.), 52.

123 https://antietam.aotw.org/officers.php?officer_id=429.

124 Fenton (b. 1808) and Graves (b. 1836) belonged to politically prominent Michigan families. Fenton had served as the state's Lieutenant Governor (1848-52), and William Graves (Frank's father) as its Secretary of State (1853-55).

125 https://civilwarintheeast.com/us-regiments-batteries/michigan/8th-michigan/

concentrate on gaining a star rather than mentoring an officer half his age. If so, would Graves have come to resent the lack of attention, recognition, or promotion?

As to a loss of respect, George M. Blackburn, who edited the wartime diary kept by Major Ely, officially third in command of the 8th since his promotion in early September, said, "It is clear that toward the end of 1862 morale of the regiment was low and feeling was running high against the original commander, William Fenton. In fact, Fenton seems to have recommended to the officers that they resign and that the regiment be disbanded."[126]

Imagine an officer as courageous and dedicated as Graves having to listen to near-treasonous sentiments of this sort and to serve under their source. Little wonder he had exercised his officer's prerogative to request approval to resign.

Graves' resignation and Ely's formal promotion to lieutenant colonel became effective on February 1, 1863.[127] The 8th Michigan transferred to the Western Theater in March, where it spent three months with the Army of Ohio in Kentucky. Home in Michigan, Graves underwent a change of heart, not to mention an improvement in health, and, to everyone's surprise except perhaps his own and the governor's, received a colonel's commission and appointment to command the 8th Michigan, which he rejoined on May 1. His war was not over. Reassigned to the Ninth Corps, where it remained for the duration, the regiment fought in Mississippi and eastern Tennessee before returning to the Eastern Theater in the winter of 1863-64.

Leading his men at the Wilderness on May 6, 1864, Col. Frank Graves was killed in action, age 27 or 28. His remains were never recovered.[128] An online memorial dolefully observes the casualties were "so extremely high and the circumstances surrounding the battle so grotesque, he was more than likely buried on the battle field following the fighting, or the body was cremated by the forest fires that were sparked there on account

126 *The Diary of Captain Ralph Ely of the Eighth Michigan: With the Wandering Regiment*, George M. Blackburn, ed. (Mount Pleasant, MI: Central Michigan University Press, 1965), 13.

127 https://antietam.aotw.org/officers.php?officer_id=430. See also *Record of Service of Michigan Volunteers* (op. cit.), 50.

128 https://antietam.aotw.org/officers.php?officer_id=429.

of burning lint and powder of musketry and artillery falling on the floor of the dried out wilderness."[129]

Lt. Col. Ralph Ely, promoted to colonel, succeeded Graves; led the 8th Michigan during the rest of the Overland Campaign and the Siege of Petersburg;[130] was breveted Colonel and, later, Brigadier General, United States Volunteers, for his leadership in action; served briefly in the Freedman's Bureau; returned to Michigan; became a state senator and, in turn, the state's auditor general; and died peacefully at age 63.[131] Fenton unsuccessfully ran for governor in 1864, but remained in public service and died of injuries sustained on duty as the fire chief of Flint, Michigan at age 62. If only he could have known, Frank Graves would have been especially proud of the successes of Ely and the Wandering Regiment, as well as those of his brother-in-law, Henry A. Morrow of the 24th Michigan, ultimately breveted Major General, United States Volunteers.

The 19th Mississippi's Commander at Sharpsburg

Handcuffed by a blank *Official Records* entry and a dearth of campaign reports for Maj. Gen. Richard H. Anderson's division, Ezra Carman named Col. Nathaniel W. Harris as the 19th Mississippi Infantry's commander.[132] Carman's editors and other modern historians, however, have determined Harris was not at Sharpsburg based on several facts: his September 15–October 5, 1862, medical leave of absence, a result of his wound at Second Manassas; the three gold bars (captain) he wore until

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129 https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/6554023/frank-graves. One source, without attribution, avers Graves was captured and, when he declined to relinquish his boots, murdered on the spot; refer to https://civilwarintheeast.com/ us-regiments-batteries/michigan/8th-michigan/.

130 Ninth Corps reassignments as the Appomattox Campaign began resulted in Ely's transfer to lead the 2nd Brigade, while the 8th Michigan stayed in the 1st. Both brigades, in turn, reported to the 1st Division's commander, now Brevet Maj. Gen. Orlando B. Willcox, just as they had 30 months before during the Maryland Campaign.

131 https://antietam.aotw.org/officers.php?officer_id=430.

132 The report of Capt. Abram M. Feltus, Jr., 16th Mississippi, was long deemed the only contemporaneous account (*OR,* vol. 19, pt. 1, 884-885). Harsh wrote "Anderson's is the mystery division of the Maryland Campaign, since the *Official Records* contain no report from Anderson or any from his six brigade commanders or from twenty-five of his twenty-six regimental commanders," but he in fact found and exploited an additional account: "a recently published report by Col. William Gibson for Wright's brigade" that cited the *Supplemental Official Records* 3:568 (Joseph L. Harsh, *Sounding the Shallows: A Confederate Companion for the Maryland Campaign of 1862* [Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2000], 198-99). Two reports from 33 officers, nonetheless, is poor form.

his promotion to major on November 4; and his true middle initial (H, for Harrison).[133] While the regiment's commander on September 17 may never be known for certain, this paper examines the field of candidates and concludes Capt. Word Gideon Vaughan is the most likely possibility.

Organized in the spring of 1861 with volunteers from seven Mississippi counties, the 19th soon headed east and joined what became known as the Army of Northern Virginia. Delayed by a train collision on the Manassas Gap Railroad near Piedmont Station, the regiment missed First Manassas by one day, but served faithfully under Gen. Robert E. Lee all the way to Appomattox. Two of the 19th's (original) company captains resigned before summer's end.[134]

Active campaigning resumed in May 1862. In the span of seven weeks—from Williamsburg to the eve of the Seven Days—Col. Christopher H. Mott, Lt. Col. Lucius Q.C. Lamar and two additional company commanders were rendered *hors de combat.*[135] A third was arrested owing to a seniority dispute.[136] Two other officers elevated by then to

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133 Refer to Ezra A. Carman, *The Maryland Campaign of September 1862*, Joseph Pierro, ed. (New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 417, note 15; Carman, vol. 2, 545, note 61; and https://antietam.aotw.org/officers.php?officer_id=593. Confusion over Harris' rank arose because his promotion to major was backdated. This author finds it difficult to fault Carman, cognizant of Harris' effective leadership of the 19th *after* Sharpsburg and his eventual elevation to brigade command. Did he also know 1. Harris took over mid-battle at Gaines Mill, 2. recovered quickly from his June 30 wound, 3. led the 19th at Second Manassas until wounded again (i.e., *before* Sharpsburg), and 4. attained the ranks of major, lieutenant colonel and colonel in a period of six months? If so, his deduction Harris was in command *at* Sharpsburg seems logical. Ignorance of Harris' three-week medical leave, it would seem, is what led to Carman's error in identification.

134 Captains J.W.C. Smith (Co. E) (appointed surgeon/transferred) and James G. Hamer (Co. H)

135 Captains Jacob M. Macon (Co. A) and Chesley S. Coffey (Co. D)

136 Seniority was a touch point within Civil War regiments. Officers were jealous of their prerogatives, conscious of where they stood in the pecking order and sensitive to perceived favoritism or capriciousness on the part of superiors. The 19th Mississippi was not immune. Col. Mott and Lt. Col. Lamar, accomplished law firm partners before the war and founders of the regiment, were highly respected by the officers and men alike; their loss that spring was keenly felt. Maj. John Bailey Mullins (West Point 1854) assumed command. About the time Gen. Lee was reorganizing the entire army (after he replaced Gen. J. E. Johnston), Mullins took it upon himself to alter his captains' positions on the seniority list. Capt. William G. Martin (Co. B) rightly objected and was arrested for his trouble. In short order, news of this kerfuffle reached Martin's fellow Mississippian Jefferson Davis, who asked Lee to look into the matter. Martin was released, but unsurprisingly chose to resign on July 1. By that point Mullins had left to

company command left the regiment in that same span, one by resignation and the other by a self-inflicted, apparently accidental gunshot that proved fatal.[137]

The eighth week was no better. The remaining field grade officer, Maj. John B. Mullins, was severely wounded at Gaines' Mill on June 27 and departed the scene indefinitely. Captain Harris (Co. C) assumed command as senior officer present, only to suffer a minor wound himself on June 30 at Glendale, where a capable young Co. B officer was mortally wounded.[138] To add insult to injury, the resignation of Co. B's captain (previously arrested) took effect the following day.

Captain Harris took a brief leave of absence, returned to the regiment on July 10, and exercised command until he suffered a somewhat more serious wound at Second Manassas. Whether he requested medical leave or was simply dispatched by a surgeon for rest and recovery remains unknown. Regardless, Harris never reached Sharpsburg in September 1862.

With Mott, Lamar, and Mullins long gone and Harris now on leave, who led the 19th? Anticipating Harris to return relatively quickly and aware of its heavy losses from May through August, acting brigade commander Col. Carnot Posey could have temporarily combined it with another unit, but chose not to do so.[139] The awesome responsibility of commanding the 19th in combat was about to land on the shoulders of one of its other captains.

Determining who had seniority at Sharpsburg demands a recap of its officers' actions and fates from May 1861 through mid-September 1862. The summary below lists the initial field grade officers, the ten original captains, and a dozen other company grade officers, several by now in

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recover from his wound at Gaines Mill, never to return to any Confederate States Army infantry billet.

137 Capt. Larkin T. McKinzie (Co. H) and Lt. Robert Duncan (Co. D)

138 With Capt. Martin (he of the seniority dispute) about to depart, then-Lieutenant George D. Norris likely led Co. B at Glendale; the posthumous promotion of Norris to captain certainly supports this notion.

139 The 19th lost nearly half its effective strength over those four months, including 325 casualties during the Seven Days Battles alone. Brig. Gen. Winfield S. Featherston, ailing, may have led his brigade for a time during the siege of Harpers Ferry; McLaws' phrasing (*OR,* vol. 19, pt. 1, 855) is ambiguous. In any event, Posey took over before Sharpsburg, though without authority to make permanent reorganizations. The 12th, 16th and 19th Mississippi Infantry and the 2nd Mississippi Battalion' six companies remained the brigade's four units, with Captain Feltus now in command of the 16th, Posey's former regiment (*OR,* vol. 19, pt. 1, 804).

command of their own companies. Blue highlights original captains, company designations, and the applicable muster dates in 1861, treated here as the captains' effective dates of rank.[140] Green and red denote the officers present at Sharpsburg, or absent, with brief explanations.

Command Changes—The 19th Mississippi's First 15 Months [141]

Rank and Name	Co	DoR	💣	Comments
Col Christopher H Mott	-		NP	KIA Williamsburg May '62
Col Lucius Q C Lamar	-		L	Medical Leave eff May '62
Maj John B Mullins	-		NP	WIA Gaines Mill Jun '62 Never returned (Resigned Jul '64)
Capt James G Hamer	H	5/30	NP	Resigned Jul or Sep '61
Capt Larkin T McKinzie			NP	Resigned May '62
Capt James B Wall			Pr	Rank eff May '62 – first name John?
Capt Nathaniel H Harris	C	6/01	L	WIA 2nd Manassas Aug '62 Medical Leave Sep 15-Oct 5 '62
Lt Thomas R Reading			Pr	
Capt Jacob M Macon	A	6/04	NP	MWIA Williamsburg May '62
Capt Charles M Thomas			NP	Rank eff May '62—WIA 2nd Manassas Later retired, then raised a Cavalry unit

140 Seniority of officers of the same rank depended on time in grade. A captain's seniority in a new regiment sometimes depended on his company's muster date, which did not always align with its alphabetical designation.

141 *Muster Roll of the 19th Mississippi Infantry* at https://www.msgw.org/confederate/19thms.htm and *The 19h Mississippi Infantry Regiment* at http://sites.rootsweb.com/~ms19inf/; https://sites.rootsweb.com/~ms19inf/misc.htm#RSCO; https://sites.rootsweb.com/~ms19inf/1861.htm, ...1862.htm, ...1863.htm, ...1864.htm and ...1865.htm; and https://sites.rootsweb.com/~ms19inf/Coffey.html.

Rank and Name	Co	DoR	💣	Comments
Lt Ivory Q Perry			Pr	
Capt Word G Vaughan	F	6/07	Pr	Resigned Jul '63
Lt Richard W Phipps			Pr	
Capt J W C Smith	E	6/08	NP	Resigned Jun '61; joined Med Corps
Capt Lemuel R Mullins			Pr	Rank eff Jun '61 – Died Nov '62
Lt James H Duncan			Pr	
Capt Chesley S Coffey	D	6/12	Pr	WIA Williamsburg May '62 Captured/Exchanged/Returned to Rgt.
Lt Robert Duncan			NP	Accidental death May '62
Lt Thomas J Key			NP	Resigned Jul '62
Lt P (T?) Hinds Burch			Pr	Resigned Sep 27 '62
Capt William G Martin	B	6/12	NP	Resigned Jul '62
Capt George D Norris			NP	MWIA Glendale Jun '62
Capt Francis R Gregory			Pr	
Capt Robt. S Abernathy	G	6/12	Pr	
Capt Thomas J Hardin	I	6/12	Pr	
Capt William H H Tison	K	6/12	Pr	

Pr = Present at Sharpsburg L = Approved Leave NP = Not Present (see comment) Original Company Captain DoR = Date of Rank (May or June 1861)

A line-by-line check of the table confirms no 19th Mississippi field grade officer was present and demonstrates *none of the captains present for duty had a date of rank earlier than that of Capt. Word G. Vaughan.*[142] When Harris was incapacitated by his wound at Second Manassas—or, at the latest, when his medical leave began—Vaughan became the 19th Mississippi's senior officer. Authority to command the regiment remained with him through the battle and until Harris returned on October 5.

Vaughan's presence at Sharpsburg and the excellence of his performance under fire, then and subsequently, are evidenced by his rapid, well-synchronized advancement. His promotion to major, for example, coincided with Harris's backdated promotion to lieutenant colonel and with Lamar's formal resignation on November 24, 1862.[143] Similarly, when Harris was elevated to colonel the following April, Vaughan was promoted to lieutenant colonel, i.e., second in command, further validation of his combat leadership prowess and management skills.

As the Promotion History table illustrates, Vaughan was on track to assume command of the 19th Mississippi someday. Had not his accumulated injuries and wounds led him to resign two weeks after

142 Sources differ as to his given name: "Ward," "Wood" or "Word." The latter is used here based on a Mexican War pension-related attestation written by his nephew following his death in 1889, age 65; see the image available at https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/143573226/word-gideon-vaughan. His June 7, 1861, date of rank reflects Co. F's muster date, but he may have been commissioned May 15, 1861, given his prior service in Mexico in the volunteer 1st Mississippi Rifles, led by Col. Jefferson Davis (https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Vaughan-3738). If so, Vaughan outranked all company captains in the 19th except Harris, commissioned captain April 15, 1861, per https://sites.rootsweb.com/~ms19inf/misc.htm#RSCO and https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Harris-37455.

143 Lamar's November, 1862, resignation vacated the 19th's colonelcy, an opening filled on *paper* by Mullins' promotion. In the *field*, Harris, now promoted to lieutenant colonel, could act as the regimental commander during Mullins' (indefinite) absence. All three field grade vacancies were officially filled upon the appointment of Harris, Vaughan and Hardin as colonel, lieutenant colonel and major of the 19th, respectively, in April, 1863.

Gettysburg, Vaughan would have been well-positioned to succeed Harris as the regiment's colonel in January 1864, when the latter was promoted to brigadier general.

Promotion History—The 19th Mississippi's Senior-most Officers (1861-1865)

Rank †	Capt. ▲	Major ▲	Lt. Col. ▲	Colonel ▲	Comments
1. (Col.) Mott	—	—	—	6/11/61	5/05/62: KIA Williamsburg
2. Col. Lamar	—	—	6/11/61	5/05/62	11/24/62: Resigned (health)
3. Maj. Mullins	??	12/11/61	5/05/62*	11/24/62 *	6/27/62: WIA Gaines Mill
4. Capt. Harris	6/01/ 61	11/04/62	12/20/62	4/02/63	1/20/64: Brig Gen
		[5/05/62]	[11/24/62]	[5/05/62]	[10/14/63]? ▲
Capt. Vaughan	6/07/ 61	11/24/62	4/02/63	7/17/63: Resigned (disabilities)	
5. Capt Hardin	6/12/ 61	4/02/63	7/17/63	1/20/64	5/12/64: KIA Spotsylvania
6. Lt. Phipps	1/??/ 63	10/08/63	1/20/64	5/12/64	4/09/65: Surrendered

† Rank as of Sept. 17, 1862 [Effective Date] for *backdated* promotions
● The six officers who held the regimental colonelcy are listed in order of their appointment. Mullins is considered one of the six, although his two promotions marked with asterisks (*) were subsequently nullified. (Same sources as the Command Changes summary)

Approaching the Sunken Road on September 17, the 19th Mississippi's officers and men, plus Posey's brigade staff, clearly knew who was in command. But who would replace Vaughan if the need arose?[144] The

144 Posey positioned the 16th on the brigade's far left, a vote of confidence in Captain

Command Changes seniority data provides scant help in deducing the identity of Vaughan's putative successor because the four original captains present (Coffey, Abernathy, Hardin, and Tison) shared a common date of rank.[145]

A brief entry for Captain Coffey in *Muster Roll of the 19th Mississippi Infantry*, however, offers much-needed clarity: "Captured at Williamsburg and exchanged, served as Lt. Col. of regiment, resigned on February 14, 1863, due to his wound (and his being too fat to march)."[146] Coffey's time as "Lt. Col." (i.e., second in command) of the 19th presumably began when Vaughan assumed command in late August or mid-September and ended when Harris returned to the regiment on October 5, a period encompassing the Maryland Campaign.[147]

Feltus, but placed the 19th in the right center, close at hand (*OR,* vol. 19, pt. 1, 884). Carman determined the brigade's alignment, though his source remains a mystery all of its own; see Carman, vol. 2, 271, note 53.

145 Had any seniority dispute arisen, Col. Posey would no doubt have settled it on the spot. Coffey could possibly have been junior to Capt. Lemuel R. Mullins, had the latter replaced Co. E's Captain Smith as early as June 11, 1861, the day before Coffey's Co. D mustered in. (In that case, Coffey's role on September 17 would matter little.) This possibility is considered remote for three reasons: 1. Mr. William Frazier Furr's narratives for 1861 and 1862, based on his great-grandfather's recollections ((http://sites.rootsweb.com/~ms19inf/1861.htm and ...1862.htm) do not mention any "Captain Mullins." The narratives are based on Furr's great-grandfather's recollections, addressed in the next note. 2. It contradicts the *Muster Roll* "Lt. Col. of regiment" entry. 3. Mullins' fitness for command during the Maryland Campaign is questionable, given his death on November 10, 1862; refer to http://www.civilwardata.com/active/hdsquery.dll?RegimentHistory?1638&C and http://sites.rootsweb.com/ ~ms19inf/misc.htm#RSCO.

146 *The 19th Mississippi Infantry Regiment* at http://sites.rootsweb.com/~ms19inf/ is a fascinating online collection of 19th Mississippi reference materials and links assembled over 35 years by Mr. Furr, a great-grandson of Private William Meek Furr, Co. E. One example is its image of Coffey in dress uniform at http://sites.rootsweb.com/~ms19inf/Coffey.html, which confirms the "too fat to march" comment at https://www.msgw.org/confederate/19thms.htm (Co. D, line 20). Lastly the NPS Soldiers and Sailors Database spells his given name "Chesly," but "Chesley" is carved on his headstone; see https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/23782168/chesley-shelton-coffey.

147 There was only one other period in the latter half of 1862 when 1. Harris left the regiment, 2. Vaughan perhaps assumed command, and 3. Coffey possibly had a "second in command" opportunity, namely, Harris' brief post-Glendale medical leave in early July. It seems unlikely Coffey—wounded in May at Williamsburg (by a cannon ball in the leg, his family believes) and then captured and eventually exchanged—would have been able to return to the 19th Mississippi soon enough and well enough recovered to serve as "Lt. Col. of regiment."

The entry "served as Lt. Col. of regiment" not only corroborates Coffey's presence and role that day at Sharpsburg but also strengthens the case for Vaughan. How so? Imagine Vaughan was absent himself for unknown reasons, outranked somehow by Coffey, and/or incapacitated while in command and relieved by Coffey. In any of those situations, Coffey would have been in command, even if briefly, and the *Muster Roll* entry surely would have noted Coffey "served as Col. of regiment" [emphasis added].[148] Since no such entry exists, the logical inferences are that Vaughan was present, was in command, and was not wounded, at least not at all seriously.

The candid "too fat to march" comment raises a final issue: Coffey's presence during the Sunken Road fight itself. Given his physical limitations, he surely struggled during the 20-hour, three-stage march from Pleasant Valley to Sharpsburg undertaken by R.H. Anderson's division on September 16-17, unless he was fortunate enough to have a horse.[149] Did Coffey fall farther and farther behind the rank and file as they forded the Potomac that morning and slogged uphill to the vicinity of the battlefield?

Though sources differ as to when that division arrived at its forward reserve position slightly north of town, the hour between 8:00 and 9:00 a.m. seems most probable. Not long after 10:00, the division was advancing brigade by brigade[150] across the Piper farm under heavy artillery fire from Federal guns on the Dunker Church plateau and the heights just across Antietam Creek. Picture those soldiers and officers striding past the magnificent barn, ducking through the pretty, picket-fenced apple orchard, and double-quicking between the cornstalks—some upright, many now shattered by shot and shell—toward fences, and chaos, and a place of extraordinary heroism, inconceivable horror, and towering sacrifice, their destinies yet unknown.

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148 A proud distinction, indeed, for any commanding officer present at the Sunken Road, regardless of rank or side.

149 Each stage was roughly 7 miles: Pleasant Valley west across the Potomac to Halltown; north from there to a middle-of-the-night, all-too-brief bivouac somewhere south of Shepherdstown; and northeast across the river at Blackford's Ford and thence, along a route that to this day remains uncertain, to the vicinity of Sharpsburg. See Harsh, *Sounding the Shallows,* 198-99; "Atlas of the Battlefield of Antietam," 9:00-9:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. maps.

150 Posey's Brigade was third in line (front to rear). Gottfried, *The Maps of Antietam* (op. cit.), maps 16.3–16.5.

The 19th Mississippi section of this paper has brought a heretofore anonymous commander at the Sunken Road out of the shadows of history and, serendipitously, assembled data sufficient to name with fair confidence the regiment's second in command as well as the individual captains and lieutenants who led each of its companies on September 17: A: Lieutenant Perry; B: Captain Gregory; C: Lieutenant Reading; D: Captain Coffey or Lieutenant Burch; E: Captain Mullins or Lieutenant Duncan; F: Lieutenant Phipps; G: Captain Abernathy; H: Captain Wall; I: Captain Hardin; and K: Captain Tison.

Today we know something of their fates after Sharpsburg. When Harris achieved brigade command, Hardin took over the 19th and led it until his death at Spotsylvania in May 1864. Phipps, in turn, held the command through Appomattox. Duncan and Tison eventually rose to command the 16th and 32nd Mississippi Infantry, respectively. On the other side of the ledger, *six of the officers listed above resigned, retired, or died within six months of Sharpsburg* (Perry, Coffey, Burch,[151] Mullins, Abernathy, and Wall), as did Vaughan and Reading within a year.

Company B proved to be the hard luck outfit. Martin, its first captain, resigned following his unjust arrest, as noted previously, and Norris (its second) was mortally wounded at Glendale. Gregory (its third) was murdered in July 1863. Richard T. Riley (its fourth) was the exception: though reported as missing in action at Spotsylvania, he survived the war and died at age 80.

William Frazier Furr's narrative for 1865 concluded with a refrain all too common for the 19th Mississippi, its brigade, and many other Confederate commands:

> The muster roll of the surrender for Harris' Brigade showed 33 officers and 339 enlisted men.[152] According to a member of the 16th Miss., "When we surrendered, our division commander, Billy Mahone, formed a square of his division, getting in the center of the square and delivering his eloquent and pathetic farewell address, paying a glowing tribute to his faithful men. The soldiers were paroled as fast as possible and turned loose to get home the best way they could. We had known nothing but war

151 Burch may instead have transferred to Co. I. Compare the *Muster Roll* and http://www.civilwardata.com/active/hdsquery.dll?RegimentHistory?1638&C

152 The 19th's figures were six officers and approximately 130 men (http://sites.rootsweb.com/~ms19inf/misc.htm#RSCO).

for four years, but the home journey was the tug of war. No transportation, no rations, no money, ragged and heart-sick, with miles and miles between us and our homes away down south in Dixie."[153]

153 http://sites.rootsweb.com/~ms19inf/1865.htm.

In Their Own Words: "I Could Scarcely Recognize the Place"

by Steven Cowie

In September 1862, Mary Ellen Piper, 21 and single, lived with her parents, Henry and Elizabeth Piper, on what is now the historic Piper farm at Antietam National Battlefield. In 1862, the property teemed with ripening crops and dozens of cattle, sheep, swine, and chickens. Mary Ellen's younger sister, Susan, 17, also resided on the farm, as did several enslaved people. In addition, three older siblings lived in the area.[154]

After witnessing part of the battle's prelude and aftermath, Piper documented her experiences in a note to an Ohio friend on October 4, 1862. The letter ran in the Wilmington, Ohio, *Watchman* on October 23, 1862, which Civil War researcher Daniel A. Masters later discovered on microfilm. Mary Ellen's account begins with the Army of Northern Virginia's arrival at Sharpsburg on September 15, 1862.

> The first I saw of the Rebels was early Monday morning...in a short time, I perceived them throwing down our fence, and the whole column was entering. In a few minutes, the fences were all level with the ground and as far as the eye could see was one living mass of human beings. At 10 o'clock, Generals Longstreet, Lee, and [D.H.] Hill were on our porch. We inquired of them if there was any danger, and if they anticipated having a battle. They answered us they did not—that they intended only remaining an hour or two and passing on, although they admitted it was the most splendid position they could possibly have. I inquired of them why they were planting cannon in every direction? They replied it was merely to cover their retreat, and gave us every assurance if there was any danger whatever, they would give us warning in time.

154 Congressional case of Henry Piper, Record Group 123, Records of the U.S. Court of Claims, Congressional Jurisdiction Case Files, 1884-1943, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC, Entry 22, Box 100, Case No. 445; The 1860 Federal census for Sharpsburg, Dwelling #1737, lists three Piper daughters (Elizabeth, Mary Ellen, and Susan) in their parents' household. Three months after the September 1860 census enumeration, Elizabeth Piper married Raleigh Showman.

While the Pipers labored to feed the men and officers, elements of the Army of the Potomac arrived and deployed batteries east of Antietam Creek, aiming their guns toward Confederate targets.

"Before 2 o'clock," Mary Ellen wrote, "I was startled to hear the report of the cannon of the Federal army, which was not more than two miles back. The shell exploded about ten yards from the house and wounded two men. The next moment a messenger came directing us to leave the house instantly as it was in the range of the Federal army's guns. We took a few dresses on our arms, locked up the house, and started off."

The Pipers and their slaves fled three miles northwest to the farm of Henry's brother, Samuel I. Piper, located near Lock 40 along the Potomac River, where they sheltered with other displaced residents until September 19.

Mary Ellen described her arrival home on the 19th:

> I could scarcely recognize the place. I entered the yard, which was covered with bloody clothing, straw, feathers, and everything that was disgusting. I went up the steps and opened the dining room door and was thunderstruck. Great Heaven! What a sight met my gaze. The room was full of dead men! Pools of blood were standing on the floor. I only looked one glance and passed on. I next went into the parlor. The dead had been removed from here, but the carpets were full of stains, the furniture broken up, and everything destroyed. The house had been pillaged from garret to cellar...in fact everything of any value whatever was gone. Our shoes, stockings, shawls, dresses, bonnets, even down to our toothbrushes, and if you would have gone from cellar to garret, not a mouthful could have been found to eat. Our cattle had been killed; the sheep, hogs, chickens, and everything were gone.

Mary Ellen emphasized to the letter's recipient, "Do not understand me to say that all the damage was done by the Rebels; at least half was done by Federal forces."

Union soldiers carried the Confederate corpses from the dwelling, and Mary Ellen "put the colored men to removing the carpets, charging them to clean the floor before they left." Then, having seen enough of the ravaged home, the Sharpsburg lass ventured outdoors to inspect her parents' farmstead, noting, "You could have walked five miles and not been off the battlefield. No tongue can tell or pen describe the horrors."

Reaching the Sunken Road—later known as Bloody Lane—she observed that "the lane that separates our farm from Mr. Roulett's [sic] had been washed into a tolerably deep gulley, and this was used as a rifle pit. The dead were lying so thick in this lane that it looked like the living mass."

In the weeks following the battle, Mary Ellen struggled to adjust to her uncomfortable living conditions, writing, "I tell you we are living in style now; no carpet on the floor in some of the rooms and only one room in the house that a cannon ball had not penetrated." Members of the Piper household fell ill during Antietam's disease outbreak in late 1862, but everyone survived. However, Mary Ellen lost several relatives during the epidemic, including her older sister, Barbara Piper Cost, a nephew, Rolla Cost, and brother-in-law, Raleigh Showman.[155]

Later, Mary Ellen married David M. Smith, had three sons, and spent her remaining years in Sharpsburg, dying in 1925. Her grave in Mountain View Cemetery lies a short distance from the Piper farm at Antietam National Battlefield.[156]

155 E. P. to Sarah "Sallie" Farran, October 4, 1862, cited in Daniel A. Masters, "Elizabeth Piper and the Battle of Antietam," blog, *Dan Masters' Civil War Chronicles*, September 29, 2017, https://dan-masters-civil-war.blogspot.com/2017/09/elizabeth-piper-and-battle-of-antietam.html. Primary sources support that Mary Ellen Piper, rather than her older sister Elizabeth, wrote the letter; Dr. Augustin A. Biggs, Daybooks and Ledgers, Vol. 2, 2/23/1862–8/7/1863, John Clinton Frye Western Maryland Room, Washington County Free Library, Hagerstown Maryland.

156 Congressional case of Henry Piper, RG 123, Case No. 445, NA; Federal census listings from 1870–1920 show Mary Ellen Piper Smith's residence as Sharpsburg.

Antietam Artifacts: Reunion Ribbons of the 130th Pennsylvania Infantry

by Jon Tracey

As the men of the 130th Pennsylvania Infantry marched towards the Roulette farm on the morning of September 17, 1862, they barely merited the title of soldier. The regiment mustered in for a nine-month term of service in mid-August, having enticed recruits from southern Pennsylvania with bounties, a shorter term of service, and the federal threat of a draft if state quotas were not met. Mere days before the regiment joined the Army of the Potomac in early September, one private wrote, "We practically know nothing about the Manuel [sic] of Arms and less about executing movements" as the unit drilled near Washington.[157] Despite this inexperience, they were brigaded with two other untested regiments, the 14th Connecticut and 108th New York, in the Second Brigade, Third Division, Second Corps. The regiment was not engaged at South Mountain, though marching through the aftermath was an introduction to the harsh realities of war.

Around 9 a.m. on the bloodiest day in American history, these untried men crossed Antietam Creek and pushed aside enemy skirmishers in and around the Roulette farm buildings. As Confederate artillery shells rained upon the farm, one upset the family's nearby beehives and the regiment was beset by bees, a somewhat humorous story in contrast to combat that is often retold in histories of this fight. They then moved into the fields beyond and slugged it out with foes in the Sunken Road for hours until reinforcements shattered the Confederate line in the road. There, Pvt. Edward Spangler remembered, "The bullets flew thicker than bees, and the shells exploded with a deafening roar."[158] After a smaller fight against Confederate forces under Col. John Cooke that attempted to flank the brigade, the regiment withdrew to a reserve line near the Roulette buildings, and their fight was over.

By most accounts, the soldiers of the 130th handled themselves

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157 John D. Hemminger Diary, Michael Winery Collection, USAMHI, Carlisle, Pennsylvania, in Terrence W. Beltz, "The History of the One Hundred and Thirtieth Regiment, Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry" (Master's Thesis, University of Richmond), 37.

158 Edward W. Spangler, *My Little War Experience with Historical Sketches and Memorabilia* (York, PA: York Daily Publishing Company, 1904), 31.

passably at Antietam considering their situation. In his work on freshly recruited units in the Maryland Campaign, historian D. Scott Hartwig stated that the "static slugfest" around the Sunken Road was exactly the type of fight green soldiers could succeed in and wrote of Brig. Gen. William French's Third Division that "under these circumstances, and despite frightful losses, the rookies fought quite well."[159] French's own report drew similar conclusions, noting, "The conduct of the new regiments must take a prominent place in the history of this great battle."[160]

The 130th Pennsylvania paid a heavy price for this praise, losing 32 men killed and 146 wounded.[161] They reckoned with this price more than most, though, as a veteran at the dedication of the regimental monument facetiously recalled the regiment being "honored in the appointment as undertaker-in-chief" in the area around the Sunken Road where they had fought.[162] The speaker claimed the regiment had buried 300 Confederates and over 100 United States soldiers by the conclusion of their duties on September 21. It is little wonder, then, why the fields of the Roulette farm held such importance to the veterans of the 130th Pennsylvania. It was where they came under fire for the first time, where they experienced some of the most intense fighting of their nine-month career as soldiers, and where they spent several days face to face with the aftermath of battle as they buried both comrade and foe.

Some of the artifacts that most catch my eye as a historian are not necessarily those ones worn or used during those uncommon bloody days that defined a soldier's experience, but are rather those that marked how soldiers came to terms with those experiences decades after the war. Several times, the veterans of the 130th Pennsylvania left their homes and returned to the stained fields of Antietam to reckon with those memories among ranks of comrades. These two rare ribbons mark some of these special occasions.

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159 D. Scott Hartwig, "Who Would Not Be a Soldier: The Volunteers of '62 in the Maryland Campaign," in *The Antietam Campaign*, edited by Gary W. Gallagher (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 160.

160 *OR*, vol. 19, pt. 1, 323-24.

161 Hartwig, "Who Would Not Be a Soldier," 164.

162 *Pennsylvania at Antietam: Report of the Antietam Battlefield Memorial Commission of Pennsylvania and Ceremonies at the Dedication of the Monuments Erected by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to Mark the Position of Thirteen of the Pennsylvania Commands Engaged in the Battle* (Harrisburg, PA: Harrisburg Publishing Company, State Printer, 1906), 164.

Two reunion ribbons for the 130th Pennsylvania. To the left is the elaborate colored ribbon for the September 1891 reunion, while the cream ribbon to the right marked the reunion and monument dedication held in September 1904.

The 1891 reunion was a grand, multi-regiment event across several battlefields, which perhaps explains why the regimental ribbon marking the occasion was so ornate. The 14th Connecticut and 108th New York, who were brigaded with the 130th Pennsylvania, were represented, as well as contingents from the 14th Indiana, 4th and 8th Ohio, 12th New Jersey, 7th West Virginia, 10th New York, and 1st Delaware; the combined groups of veterans and families may have numbered as many as 1,500 people.[163] Newspapers also hinted at the complex emotions that must have flowed through the minds of the veterans surrounded by friends on a now peaceful landscape once so deadly, writing, "it doubtless evoked some painful memories. But the reunion was highly enjoyed."[164] The men of the 130th Pennsylvania hosted a campfire and listened to speeches and stories, and as they did so they wore the colorful ribbons like this one, proudly displaying the badge of the Second Corps and the names of the battles they served with the Army of the Potomac before they mustered out in late May 1863.

An image from the 130th Pennsylvania's 1891 reunion, showing veterans wearing the ribbon at the Roulette farm. (Stephen Recker Collection)

163 *Democrat and Chronicle* (Rochester, NY), September 15, 1891; *The Herald and Torch Light* (Hagerstown, MD), September 21, 1891.
164 *The Herald and Torch Light* (Hagerstown, MD), September 21, 1891.

Though it was not the only other time the Pennsylvanians crossed the Mason-Dixon Line to hold a reunion at Antietam, one of their other impressive events is commemorated by the other reunion ribbon pictured for this article. In September 1904, they returned to dedicate their regimental monument on the northern side of the Sunken Road. Atop the granite monument, a soldier wearing a frock coat stands in the soldier's position "At Ease," resting on his musket and peering over the once chaotic lane, while the pedestal includes a bronze bas-relief of beloved Col. Henry Zinn who was killed at Fredericksburg. At this event the veterans proudly pinned ribbons like this second example to their chest while former comrades urged them "to revere the memories of the great deeds of those who shed their blood for their country."[165] The ribbon does not depict the monument itself in the way that many ribbons from dedications tend to. Instead, it features Chaplain George M. Slaysman of York, Pennsylvania. Chaplain Slaysman was only with the regiment from February to early April 1863 when he was struck with dysentery that plagued him the rest of his life.[166] However, both before and after his service, Slaysman was active in the local community and was clearly well-respected. Slaysman had died in January 1904, and his comrades decided to honor his memory by placing him on the ribbon they wore as they returned to Antietam.

Though the 130th Pennsylvania Infantry only existed for nine months, the organization and their service within it meant a great deal to the regiment's surviving veterans. These ribbons are a tangible reminder of this. As these ribbons were specific to a single unit and as the number of veterans dwindled during the decades after the war (including my ancestor, Pvt. Jacob Reever, who served with the 130th Pennsylvania but died before either reunion), it is unlikely that large numbers of ribbons ever existed and it is less likely that many of them survive today. Thus, these small rectangles of cloth are a unique insight into the ways that an unheralded regiment commemorated their service and remembered their comrades.

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165 *Pennsylvania at Antietam*, 182.

166 Scott L. Mingus, Sr., "York First Baptist preacher briefly was chaplain of the 130th Pennsylvania Infantry," *Cannonball* August 4, 2011, accessed July 12, 2022. https://yorkblog.com/cannonball/york-preacher-was-chaplain-of/

A case with the two reunion ribbons placed upon the 130th Pennsylvania's regimental monument along the Sunken Road. The 1904 ribbon was worn at the dedication of the monument, and this may have been the first time it returned to Antietam.

In Antietam's Footsteps: J.E.B. Stuart's Pennsylvania Raid

by J.O. Smith

As both armies licked their wounds after the Battle of Antietam—much of the Army of the Potomac along the Potomac River from Harpers Ferry to Sharpsburg and the Army of Northern Virginia around Winchester—Gen. Robert E. Lee sent word to Maj. Gen. J.E.B. Stuart on October 8, 1862, that "[a]n expedition into Maryland with a detachment of cavalry . . . is at this time desirable." Stuart was to take 1,200 to 1,500 troopers, cross the Potomac above Williamsport and proceed to Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, where he should "endeavor to destroy the railroad bridge over the branch of the Conococheague." From October 9 to October 12, Stuart and 1,800 cavalrymen rode around the Army of the Potomac without losing a single trooper. Along the way, they picked up 1,200 horses but failed to destroy the bridge at Chambersburg. The Civil War explorer can visit a number of notable points along Stuart's ride, including both Potomac River fords used by the expedition.[167]

McCoy's Ford—After setting out from his headquarters at the Bower near Leetown, (West) Virginia on October 9, Stuart led his force across the Potomac at McCoy's Ferry (or Ford) the next morning, the river being approximately 160 yards wide at this location. Stuart reported "some little opposition" at the ford and the capture of "two or three horses of enemy's pickets." Stuart's Orders No. 13 for the expedition instructed brigade commanders to "make arrangements for seizing horses, the property of citizens of the United States, and all other property subject to legal capture." Continuing northward from the ford and just missing a Federal infantry column heading west, the Confederates were in Pennsylvania before noon.[168]

The ford is located in the area of the McCoy's Ferry Campground at the end of the McCoy's Ferry Road. N 39.608023, W 77.968886.

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167 United States War Department: *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 128 volumes (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), vol. 19, pt. 2, 52-55; Emory M. Thomas, *Bold Dragoon: The Life of J.E.B. Stuart,* (New York: Vintage Books, 1988), 174-181.
168 Thomas, *Bold Dragoon*, 174; *OR*, vol. 19, pt. 2, 52.

Chambersburg—The Confederates reached Chambersburg by way of Mercersburg the same evening but did not yet enter the town. Stuart first sent in a demand for surrender under a flag of truce. Though much of the town's leadership had fled, a few prominent citizens received Stuart's message that the troopers would occupy the town and any resistance would prompt "the place [to be] shelled in three minutes." With no opposition, the Confederates occupied the town that evening. Stuart's men paroled 275 sick and wounded soldiers, cut telegraph wires, obstructed railroad tracks, and seized horses. The troopers sent to burn the railroad bridge over the Conocheague Creek turned back after locals informed them it was made of iron, a bluff that saved the bridge until Confederates returned the following June. From Chambersburg, the aim now was twofold—the acquisition of horses and a safe return to Virginia.[169]

The Chambersburg town square is located at the intersection of Main Street (Route 11) and Lincoln Way (Route 30). N 39.937507, W 77.661281. Stuart spent the night in a hotel on the southwest corner of the town square.

Cashtown—After his men burned railroad depot buildings and machine shops in Chambersburg and seized or destroyed small arms, ammunition, and other supplies, Stuart decided "to strike for the vicinity of Leesburg." There would be no return along the route they had already traveled. Stuart figured the Federal infantry to his rear "would be halted to wait for him, . . . while below they would not be expecting him." In addition, the ground to be covered was "level and open and everything was to [Stuart's] advantage except the much greater distance and passing so close to the enemy at Harpers Ferry." The troopers headed east out of Chambersburg on the rainy morning of October 11 and crossed over South Mountain toward Gettysburg. About eight miles short of that town, they turned south at Cashtown. There would be no halts until the five-mile-long column was back in Virginia. Reminiscent of Lee's orders for the treatment of Old Line State civilians the month before, Stuart instructed that "the collection of horses . . . [was to be] ceased as soon as [his men] crossed the line into Maryland." From Cashtown, the route to

169 *OR*, vol. 19, pt. 2, 55; Ted Alexander, "Stuart's Chambersburg Raid," *Essential Civil War Curriculum,* https://www.essentialcivilwarcurriculum.com/stuarts-chambersburg-raid.html.

the Potomac stretched more than 60 miles.[170]

The historic Cashtown Inn is at 1325 Old Route 30, Ortanna, Pennsylvania. N 39.884865, W 77.3599381.

White's Ford—Safety for Stuart's troopers was here at the Potomac crossing that much of the Army of Northern Virginia had used on their way northward in early September. The Confederates passed through Emmitsburg, Rocky Ridge, Liberty, New Market, Hyattstown, and Barnesville on their way south. Stuart and a few of his staff officers found time to visit the Cockey family in Urbana around midnight on the 11th, no doubt sharing fond memories of the September 8 ball hosted at the nearby Landon House when the prospects of Lee's invasion north were still bright. Though Federal cavalry and infantry seemingly threatened access to White's Ford, bold action by Stuart's men assured the way back to Virginia would remain open. When the advance guard met a company of Union cavalry near Barnesville, they charged and scattered the Federal troopers. At the ford, Federal infantry held a quarry bluff and appeared to block the crossing to the Confederates. The brigade of Col. W.H.F. "Rooney" Lee was the first to confront this predicament. After Stuart declined to come forward just then because he was needed elsewhere, Colonel Lee "concluded to try the effect of a little bravado." He sent forward a courier under flag of truce to deliver a note to the Federal infantry commander. The contents of the note were that Stuart's "whole command" was bearing down on this small infantry force and "the hopelessness of making successful resistance must be apparent." The bluff worked, and the Union infantry at the ford withdrew. Artillery under Maj. John Pelham covered the route to the river. As the last of the rearguard approached the ford at a gallop, Pelham kept the way clear with one gun along the towpath. Stuart's troopers rested at Leesburg and then "by easy marches they returned to their camps west of the mountains." Stuart celebrated the success of the expedition with a "grand ball" at the Bower on October 15. Though the bridge across the Conococheague remained intact, Stuart's ride around the Army of the Potomac had taken at least a small amount of luster off the Union victory in the Maryland Campaign.[171]

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170 *OR*, vol. 19, pt. 2, 55; W.W. Blackford, *War Years with Jeb Stuart* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1946), 170-71.

171 H.B. McClellan, *The Life and Campaigns of Major-General J.E.B. Stuart:*

White's Ford can be accessed on the Maryland side from the Dickerson Conservation Park, 20700 Martinsburg Road, Dickerson, Maryland. The ford crossed the river just upstream of Mason Island and below Lock 26, N 39.194823, W 77.469375.

Commander of the Cavalry of the Army of Northern Virginia (New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1885), 156-161; Thomas, *Bold Dragoon*, 178-179; Blackford, *War Years,* 177-178, 181; also, see the wayside along the towpath at White's Ford.

Institute Interview: Sitting Down with Dr. Thomas G. Clemens

by Laura Marfut

Few modern historians have contributed to our understanding of the Maryland Campaign as much as Dr. Tom Clemens. Tom spent nearly 25 years editing and annotating Antietam veteran Ezra Carman's 1,800-page narrative on the subject. The result is a three-volume set considered by most serious students to be the bible of the Maryland Campaign—the truth, as best we know it, from the officers and soldiers who lived it. As if that weren't enough, Tom helped found the Save Historic Antietam Foundation (SHAF), a non-profit organization responsible for preserving and restoring large swaths of the battlefield and surrounding area. In this interview, Tom shares his thoughts on striving for the truth and preserving what's important.

Dr. Clemens earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in history from Salisbury University, and his Doctorate in History Education from George Mason University, studying under Dr. Joseph L. Harsh. Tom spent most of his career at Hagerstown Community College, retiring as Professor Emeritus in 2012. In addition to editing Carman's narrative, he has authored many magazine articles and book reviews and appeared in several documentaries and television shows, including the introductory film shown in the Visitor Center at Antietam National Battlefield. He is the president of SHAF, an Antietam Battlefield Guide, and has been volunteering at the battlefield for over 30 years.

LM: Your three-volume version of Ezra Carman's narrative is considered the most detailed study of the Maryland Campaign on book shelves today. What led you to take on this massive research project and how did you approach it?

TC: In the early 1990's at George Mason University, I took a Civil War course from Joe Harsh. We hit it off and I ended up working with him

for the next several years. Harsh was, at that point, writing his trilogy on the Maryland Campaign (*Confederate Tide Rising*, *Taken at the Flood*, and *Sounding the Shallows*) and one night he was bemoaning the fact that a lot of his material came from Ezra Carman's manuscript, which was not footnoted. As a graduate student trying to impress my mentor I said, "Yes, exactly. How do we know Carman knows what he's talking about?" Harsh pointed his index finger at my nose and said, "I think you just named your dissertation."

So, editing the Carman manuscript became my doctoral dissertation...well, only the first volume. When the doctoral committee asked for a progress report, I only had the first seven of 24 chapters completed; about 500 pages. But they said that was fine with them. The committee was mostly social and cultural historians who weren't terribly interested in military history and I knew they didn't want to read the whole thing.

But being stubborn, I just kept going and did the whole thing anyway. It took a lot longer than I expected, but Hagerstown Community College (HCC), where I was teaching, gave me a sabbatical to keep working on it.

One day, I was sitting in my office at HCC when I got a call from fellow historian Joe Pierro. He had heard I was working on the Carman manuscript and asked how close I was to publication. He said, "I'm getting ready to publish mine next month." It felt like somebody had put their hand in my stomach, grabbed my chest, and twisted. I quit working on it for over a year. Ted Alexander, long time chief historian at Antietam, was a person who cared about people and had a big influence on a lot of us. He knew I was working on this and he put Ted Savas (of Savas Beatie) in touch with me. I sent him a chapter and he called me back to say there was a world of difference between what I was doing and what Pierro was doing. He said, "You finish it and I will publish it." It wouldn't have happened if Ted had not intervened.

The first volume, *South Mountain*, was published in 2010, the same year Joseph Harsh died. I took a copy down to him about three weeks before he died. He was in bad shape but was happy that I had done it and knew I was going to finish the whole thing.

Publishing all three volumes took over 25 years. The second volume, *Antietam*, was published in 2012 and the third, *Shepherdstown*, in 2017. I had never published a book before so it was a big learning process.

LM: In your opinion, which aspects of the Maryland Campaign remain somewhat of a mystery?

TC: Oh, lots. Who lost Special Orders No. 191? Why did Lee stop at Sharpsburg? Was it to fight...or to move to Hagerstown without a fight? Seems like he would have built entrenchments if he was planning to fight. What was the purpose of the cavalry expedition on the Confederate left in the afternoon of the 17th? Some say the Confederates were trying to flank the First Corps, others say the objective was to get around and move toward Hagerstown. We just don't know. Another that comes to mind is that the Confederate army organization at Sharpsburg was haphazard, and Lee never wrote to say exactly what he was thinking. Was Lee auditioning Daniel Harvey Hill to see if he could divide the army into three corps instead of two? Just a lot of uncertainty.

LM: What can you tell us about your current project of transcribing and compiling many of the letters collected by Carman?

TC: When Carman was writing to Antietam veterans for information, he wanted to know, "Who did you shoot at, where were you, what time?" Carman was a government employee just looking for the facts, information for his maps and a narrative to go with them.

As I dug through the letters, there were good human interest stories in the narratives, but they weren't much use for Carman so he didn't include them. The more I read the letters, the more fascinated I became. After the third volume of *The Maryland Campaign* came out, I took a couple of years to rest. Around January 2020, I thought it would be neat to transcribe the letters and publish them. Scott Hartwig encouraged me, and I had a team of people willing to transcribe the letters, which really helped. Many of them are fellow members of the Antietam Institute. So, during the pandemic I had everything here and could keep working. It's over 1,300 pages, so it will probably be two volumes. Maybe one Union and one Confederate. The letters will be organized by unit to make it easier for researchers.

There are so many stories that I find interesting. For example, one is from a Massachusetts soldier who gets wounded and talks about what that feels like: he puts his hand into his jacket and can feel the blood, his arm is numb but he can still walk...

I'm at the proofreading stage now, and scanning all the hand drawn maps so they can go in the books, too. I'm trying not to footnote every detail. It's their story, so let them tell it. It will probably come out in 2024.

LM: What was your vision for the Save Historic Antietam Foundation (SHAF) when you helped found it in 1985?

TC: A bunch of us started it: John Schildt, John and Dennis Frye, Paula

Reed, myself, and many others. We had no idea what we were doing or how to do it, but it started when the county commissioners rezoned the Grove farm (also called Mount Airy) so that a shopping center could be built on ten acres and the rest of the land subdivided. The Grove farm is the one where the famous photo was taken of President Lincoln, General McClellan, and several other commanders and staff. It sits on 120 acres just outside of Sharpsburg.

The Civil War community was outraged, but there were no structured organizations to take on something like this. A bunch of us in the Hagerstown Civil War Round Table decided to sue the county commissioners for illegal rezoning. We found out too late that action had to be taken within 30 days to stop it, so we lost the court case. But it sparked something within the group to take action to preserve Antietam. A lawyer told us, "You are filling up newspapers with what you don't like. Nobody cares about that. Go do something to show that you are putting your money where your mouth is."

Our first big adventure was purchasing a small Civil War era house that came up for sale in Sharpsburg. The house had a shell in one of its exterior walls from the battle. We bought it with no idea of how to pay for it, then started sending letters asking for donations. We never missed a payment. Several years later, we found a buyer who would preserve it. It's still there.

Though we lost our case over the Grove farm, things worked out. Before the shopping center could be built, the savings and loan crisis hit, then the economy tanked and everything had to be sold. Forty acres in front of the house went up for sale and we bought it for $315,000. Again, we had no idea how we would pay. We got a grant from the state of Maryland for $100,000, a donation of $100,000 from one of the founders of the Civil War Trust (today's American Battlefield Trust), and kept sending letters. Many years later, we found a buyer who wanted to farm the land. We put easements on it and sold it to him, which means it will be farmland forever. Another positive result of the Grove farm debacle was the establishment by the county of the 'Antietam Overlay District,' which places additional restrictions on existing zoning designations to protect Antietam's structures, land, and viewshed.

What makes SHAF work is that we are all volunteers, so every dollar goes into buying dirt, as we like to say. When we started, we had no idea how far we would go. That was 38 years ago.

Dennis Frye was the original president, but he was working for the

National Park Service (NPS) then so there was a conflict of interest. I became president in 1989 and nobody has been willing to take the job since. I get to be the talking head, but a LOT of people have been involved.

LM: How does SHAF work with the National Park Service and other organizations to accomplish common goals?

TC: SHAF works cooperatively with the State of Maryland, American Battlefield Trust, the National Park Service, and many other like-minded organizations.

In the early 1990's, William Donald Shaefer was governor of Maryland. He *really, really* liked the Civil War. His secretary of transportation, O. James Lighthizer, developed programs that matched state and federal funds to protect battlefield land. The funding was used for enhancement of scenic restoration of state roads and buying up development rights on 4,800 acres around the Antietam battlefield. As a result, everything south of Keedysville Road is under an easement that it cannot be subdivided. We now have a buffer around the battlefield itself. Antietam will never be like Valley Forge, for example, which is surrounded by a city. The Antietam National Battlefield boundary is 3,200 acres, but the easements control 4,800 acres beyond that. Essentially, because SHAF provided the instigation and the state stepped in and helped us, we've got a Civil War preserve of about 8,000 acres.

Two years later, the national organizations that would eventually become American Battlefield Trust (ABT) got together. It started out as the Association for Preservation of Civil War Sites and Civil War Preservation Trust before becoming ABT. We have worked with them on a number of projects over the years. In 2015-2016, we bought a house that was sitting on the north end of the battlefield, near the access point from Maryland Route 65 to the historic Hagerstown Pike, across from Mondell Road. The house went up for auction and ABT bought it. SHAF put in some money and took care of the demolition. Now the land is restored to its 1862 appearance.

SHAF also worked with ABT to purchase a house in the East Woods. The owner had built a 40 x 100-foot metal structure where he worked on vehicles. SHAF took care of the demolition.

Just a few years ago there was a large house in the triangular field south of D.R. Miller's cornfield, with a barn, another outbuilding, and a dense tree line blocking the view between the East and West Woods. ABT paid nearly $500,000 for the house and 44 acres. SHAF did the restoration:

cut down the tree line, demolished the buildings. The property has now been transferred to the NPS.

Another big player was the Conservation Fund. Up until the 1990's, Cornfield Avenue was about all the NPS owned. Everything else was in private hands. The Conservation Fund came in with millions, bought land and turned it over to the park. SHAF was the liaison, but it was Conservation Fund money.

SHAF is an advocacy group as much as a preservation group. We don't always have the money to buy these things, but we try to find people who do. It has been very successful. At the time of the 1962 centennial celebration, the NPS owned only 90 acres. Now the park consists of nearly 3,200 acres.

LM: What would you like to see SHAF accomplish in the future?

TC: Acquire everything inside the park boundary (there are still a couple of private plots) and expand the boundary to include the Reel and Nicodemus farms.

Continue to advocate for restoration. Once we stop buying land, focus on restoring it. Cut, replant, and interpret the ground.

LM: In 30 plus years of leading tours of the Maryland Campaign, which one was your most memorable?

TC: I've been doing tours for a long time, but one that sticks with me was many years ago. I was with a large family with several kids, a couple of them were pretty young. As with any group, we started out talking about the strategy, the generals, and the set up for the battle. We walked to the four-gun battery near the Visitor Center and I showed them the Alexander Gardner picture taken from that spot, looking toward the Dunker Church. The photo shows several corpses near the guns. One of the daughters, a girl about 11 years old, started to cry. Her mother asked what the matter was and she said, "Nobody told me people died here." It just hit me...this is what it's about. Yes, it's the turning point of the war, Emancipation Proclamation, and all that...but people died here. We should never lose sight of that. That tour really stuck with me. That's what we need to be talking about.

LM: For decades, the Philip Pry House has been considered George McClellan's headquarters during the Battle of Antietam. However, a few years ago you discovered evidence that says otherwise. What led you to this discovery?

TC: The discovery was the result of a question I couldn't answer off the top of my head. Ethan Rafuse (author of *McClellan's War*), another

Harsh student and a friend of mine, sent me an email a few years ago asking whether the Pry House was McClellan's headquarters for the five days he was on the east side of the Antietam Creek, September 15-20. I didn't know the answer, and told him I'd look into it. The more I looked into it, the more evidence I found that led elsewhere. Kevin Pawlak and Joe Stahl also found things and sent them my way.

The same thing happened with my research on the New York Iron Brigade. Brian Pohanka, who had become a rock star by consulting on the Ken Burns documentary, *The Civil War*, got a call one day from a lady who said she had some papers from an ancestor that she'd like him to see. Brian didn't have time to do it, so he called me and asked if I could go see her. The ancestor turned out to be Col. Walter Phelps, Jr. (brigade commander in Brig. Gen. Abner Doubleday's division, Maj. Gen. Joseph Hooker's First Corps)! She had his diary, scrapbook, clippings, and so on. As I went through the papers at her house, I kept reading snippets referring to the "Iron Brigade." I went to Glens Falls, New York, where Phelps lived to dig deeper and found more references to the nickname. Phelps's brigade started calling themselves the Iron Brigade in the summer of 1862. Many historians call Brig. Gen. John Gibbon's western brigade the "Iron Brigade," which allegedly earned the sobriquet on South Mountain on September 14, 1862. However, I believe that is a post-war fabrication. Gibbon's brigade was not called the Iron Brigade until after Antietam.

LM: What advice would you like to give aspiring historians?

TC: Don't take anything you learn for granted. For most of my adult life and 50 years before that, everybody thought the Pry House was McClellan's headquarters. Do the research. Do the hard work. Look it up and try to get to the sources for how we know what we think we know.

Another thing is that we've got to preserve battlefields while we still can. Years ago, Dr. Harsh took his Civil War class on a bus trip to the Chantilly battlefield. The battlefield is a housing development now; only a two-acre plot remains. We stood in that plot while Harsh gave a stirring narrative of what happened there for about an hour—rain, confusion, etc. As we were getting back on the bus, one of the undergrads muttered, "Give it up, doc, it's a housing development." I thought, they can't see it because there's no visual. Our generation was raised with a teacher lecturing in front of the class, without the power points and all the visuals that are available today, so we had to use our imaginations. The younger generation doesn't have that skill. That's what pushed me into

preservation—if they can't see it, they're not going to care about it. If they go to a battlefield that doesn't look like a battlefield, they won't care about preserving it. We've got to save these things.

Book Review

Cowie, Steven. *When Hell Came to Sharpsburg: The Battle of Antietam and Its Impact on the Civilians Who Called It Home*. El Dorado Hills, CA: Savas Beatie, 2022. Hardcover, Eight maps, photos, notes, bibliography, index. ISBN: 978-1-61121-590-8. $34.95.

Review by Michael Hill

To be honest, I approached this book with some trepidation. The combination of an amateur historian and an apparent obsession with a subject often renders Civil War books that are little more than a delirium of data unceremoniously dumped on the page. While you might appreciate the research, you don't eagerly look forward to the next chapter.

The good news is *When Hell Came to Sharpsburg* is not such a book. Perhaps reflecting his background in film production and script writing, Steven Cowie knows how to tell a story and he tells an important and compelling one here. During the 15 years spent on this book, he hit pay dirt and has mined a rich vein of information to deepen our understanding of the impact of this battle and its aftermath.

This is most evident in the first hundred or so pages because Cowie is telling us a story we know—the Battle of Antietam—but doing it from a different viewpoint, that of those who lived in the area. The result is a picture quite different from the one we usually see. Consider those days leading up to the battle. Our narrative usually begins at 4 p.m. on September 16 when Joseph Hooker leads the Union's First Corps across Antietam Creek. September 15 and the morning of the 16th get at most a cursory mention about troops gathering and a few artillery exchanges.

But to those who lived in Sharpsburg and its environs, those were stunning days. This was when they looked out their windows and instead of seeing fields almost ready for harvest, gazed upon thousands and thousands of soldiers, more people than they had ever seen probably in their lives. As Mary Ellen Piper said, "...as far as the eye could see was one living mass of human beings." (12)

Many of them were hungry and asked for food which was often given, either from compassion or intimidation—or both. Others didn't ask, they just took—crops, livestock, horses, whatever. "They would eat anything they could lay their hands on. I believe we fed 200 in half a day," Piper

reported. (12) Seems like a lot but consider that eventually there were 35,000 Confederates in the vicinity. Similar scenes were taking place on the other side of the Antietam where Union forces were gathering.

As for those minor artillery skirmishes, they might not have affected the course of the Civil War, but they certainly affected civilians who were terrified by explosions of a power they had never experienced. Now they faced a tough decision: flee for their safety or stay and guard their property. Most chose the former though a hearty few in the town of Sharpsburg remained in basements that soon grew crowded with those seeking safety as shells landed throughout the town. Others who thought they had found refuge on a nearby farm soon discovered the range of Civil War artillery and were forced to flee further.

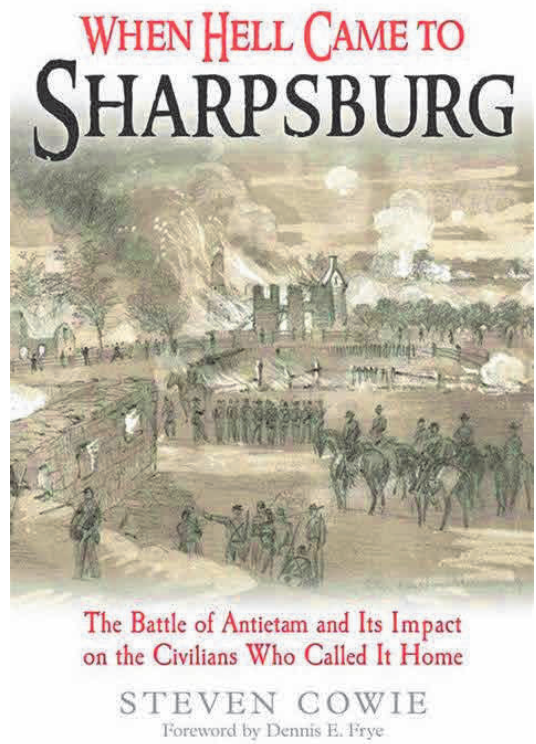
For most civilians, the battle itself took place in the background. Our familiar narratives conclude with the battle's end, whether at sunset on September 17 or a few days later in Shepherdstown. But at that point you're only about a quarter of the way through *When Hell Came to Sharpsburg* because the ordeal for the residents was just beginning.

The deprivations those who lived in and around Sharpsburg faced in the coming days, weeks, months, and years were nearly endless. It might help to picture this: the National Park Service strives to make Antietam battlefield look as it did on September 17, 1862. If instead, they chose a few weeks later, the view would be totally altered. The crops would be gone, those not destroyed in battle quickly eaten by the armies' horses. The fields would now hold thousands of graves, many of them so shallow that body parts and bones appear above the ground. Roaming hogs would be rooting some up. Fields that had been plowed for planting winter wheat would have been pounded rock hard by tens of thousands of marching feet. And all those pristine worm fences zig-zagging across the landscape would be gone, burned for firewood.

As Cowie writes: "Sharpsburg's formerly picturesque landscape resembled a fenceless wasteland, blemished with acres of tree stumps, stripped cornfields and shallow graves. Families devoid of food and firewood huddled inside of cold homes. With temperatures dropped, stressed and malnourished citizens—who lost clothing, coats and blankets to army appropriations—struggled to maintain their health." (304)

It's a bleak picture and it would remain that way because, as we know, the Union army stayed in the vicinity for over a month. To say that an army is like a swarm of locusts is an insult to those voracious insects that after all only eat crops. The army does that but also takes everything else,

from prepared and preserved food in every house to firewood cut and stored for the coming winter to the trees of carefully tended woodlots now chopped down for huts to carpet cut up for bandages to every animal that could be eaten or put to work. And they leave behind enough excrement to pollute water sources and attract insects that spread deadly disease.



At times in these sections Cowie does border on data dumping as he accounts for every cow, hog, and chicken claimed to be lost. But you understand why because the stories of deprivation he finds are so compelling that even if they become repetitious it would be difficult to leave any of them out.

To his credit, Cowie does not make villains out of the Union soldiers or their officers. Just like the civilians, they were in dire straits, thousands wounded in makeshift hospitals desperate for supplies, tens of thousands of others simply in need of food and shelter as they awaited shipments that were trickling in from Washington. What were they supposed to do? Many of the farmers did what they could to help getting what turned out to be hollow promises of recompense.

We are taught that no civilians died at Antietam but Cowie shows that's an outright lie. While no one out of uniform was killed by a bullet or shell, it is clear that many lives were shortened by the impact of this battle. Cowie finds an interesting way to chronicle this, using a journal kept by a doctor, Augustin A. Biggs, as he made his rounds before and after the battle. Suffice it to say, he was much busier after the battle as disease and death stalked family after family. It is well established that most of the 700,000 deaths in the Civil War were due to diseases passed along in

army camps. The citizens of Sharpsburg and environs lived in such a camp for weeks—many, both in towns and on farms, with sick and wounded living in their homes—and were affected accordingly. When someone died, there was no proper funeral because all the churches were hospitals. There weren't even enough horses available to pull the hearse.

If you're looking for villains, you can find them in the concluding chapters as Cowie tells of the desperate attempts of these people to get repaid for what they lost helping their army win this critical battle and get ready for the next campaign. It is a story that could have been written by Franz Kafka or George Orwell as the government draws strict limits on what could be claimed—only goods that replaced standard commissary items—and then looks for any excuse not to pay. Here's an example: straw that was used for fodder for horses was eligible, but that taken by soldiers for bedding was not. Even if most of your straw was taken for fodder, if any of it was taken for bedding: DENIED. Also on the ineligible list: battle damages (meaning none of the many Sharpsburg houses hit by Union artillery qualified), stealing by marauding soldiers, destruction due to marching or camping, etc.

Compensation decisions were made from just after the battle until well into the 20th century under three different sets of regulations, each a bit more relaxed. Some political context for those changes would have been helpful, but Cowie powerfully chronicles the frustrations these people encountered as they dealt with the lasting economic catastrophe that befell them in September 1862.

Many of the students of the Maryland Campaign have learned of the plight of civilians from Kathleen Ernst's *Too Afraid to Cry: Maryland Civilians in the Antietam Campaign*. Consider that an excellent introductory course; *When Hell Came to Sharpsburg* is a graduate seminar.

In this book, Cowie reminds us how important it is to look at history from various points of view. Just as the Battle of Antietam looks different when seen through the eyes of civilians, so the story of the United States looks different from the viewpoint of an African slave or Cheyenne warrior. Some are threatened by such accounts seeing them as a threat to established narratives. But we should instead celebrate them as each adds to our understanding of the always elusive story we call our history.

Close Beside Potomac Waters
by John Schildt

High on the bluffs on the west bank of the Potomac River is Shepherd University. Antietam National Battlefield and the Antietam Institute have a close relationship with the university and Dr. James Broomall and the George Tyler Moore Center for Civil War Studies.

Ranger Keith Snyder along with authors and guides Dennis Frye, Mac Bryan, Kevin Pawlak and this writer are all graduates of the school, "close beside Potomac waters."[172]

The university began in McMurran Hall located in the center of town on German Street. The large building was a gift of Rezin D. Shepherd, a descendant of the founders of Shepherdstown. Rezin had made a fortune in the sugar cane business. However, he never forgot his hometown.

Briefly the structure served as the Town Hall. From 1865 to 1871 it was the Jefferson County House. Then the county seat and government was relocated to Charles Town. Therefore, in late 1871 the building was empty. The question was how could it best serve the community.

The rector of the Episcopal Church and others formed a committee, then a Board of Trustees leading to the birth of Shepherd College, now Shepherd University.

The gentleman selected to lead was Joseph G. McMurran. He was a graduate of Hampden Sydney College and had served as a school administrator in Alabama and South Carolina. McMurran was a Civil War veteran having served in Company G, 4th Virginia Infantry. The 4th was part of the famed "Stonewall Brigade." He became a prisoner of war at the Battle of Kernstown in March 1862. Paroled McMurran became Sergeant Major after Sharpsburg. He was seriously wounded in the arm and leg at Gettysburg, and then again at Third Winchester in September 1864.

McMurran began raising money and assembling a faculty. Books and shelving were obtained from the Smithsonian. A man with a likeable personality, he was good at recruiting students. McMurran accepted the task of leading Shepherd at the age of 37, and remained as president for eleven years, then continued to serve as trustee.

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172 J.D. Muldoon, "Alma Mater," Shepherd University.

Upon his resignation, McMurran became partner in the drug firm of Baker and McMurran. The school he established has grown from one building to many, from a handful of students to more than 4,000.

His spirit lives on as the former courthouse and Civil War hospital bears his name. Yearly, top academic students are inducted into the McMurran Honors Society. The soldier, educator, and pharmacist is remembered at the university "Close Beside Potomac Waters."

Contributor Biographies

Alexander B. Rossino is an award-winning scholar living in Maryland. He is the author of numerous articles and several books, including *Their Maryland: The Army of Northern Virginia from the Potomac Crossing to Sharpsburg in September 1862* (Savas Beatie, 2021), and, along with co-author Gene M. Thorp, *The Tale Untwisted: General George B. McClellan, the Maryland Campaign, and the Discovery of Lee's Lost Orders* (Savas Beatie, 2023).

Darin Wipperman is the author of *First for The Union: Life and Death in a Civil War Army Corps from Antietam to Gettysburg* (Stackpole Books, 2020) and the forthcoming *Burnside's Boys: The Union's Ninth Corps and the Civil War in the East* (Stackpole Books, 2023). A native of Iowa, Darin has studied the Civil War for much of his life. After receiving bachelor's and master's degrees in political science, he served for seventeen years as an employee of the United States Government, then was a reporter and editor for weekly newspapers in northern New Hampshire prior to early retirement. In addition to research and writing, Darin now manages the forested land he lives on with his wife in Lancaster, New Hampshire.

Frank E. Bell III earned B.S.E. and M.S.E.E. degrees from Princeton University and the University of Illinois. His United States Air Force active-duty tour focused on pathfinding flight simulation work, and his multi-decade aerospace and defense career contributed to space-lift range and satellite control system advances worldwide. A former Hagerstown Round Table president, he has been an active National Park Service volunteer and Antietam Battlefield Ambassador since 2008.

Steven Cowie earned a degree from California State University, Long Beach. As part of the Los Angeles film industry, he penned spec screenplays and sold his award-winning short film to the Sundance Channel. A lifelong student of the Civil War, Cowie dedicated fifteen years to exclusively research the Battle of Antietam. *When Hell Came to Sharpsburg: The Battle of Antietam and Its Impact on the Civilians Who Called It Home* (Savas Beatie, 2022) is his first book.

Jon Tracey is a public historian focused on soldier experience, medical

care, memory, and veteran life in the Civil War era. He holds a B.A. in History from Gettysburg College with minors in Public History and Civil War Era Studies and a M.A. from West Virginia University in Public History with a Certificate in Cultural Resource Management. Jon has worked extensively preserving and interpreting historic sites, including with the National Park Service.

J.O. Smith has a master's degree in history from the University of Georgia and undergraduate and law degrees from Duke University. He is an attorney and lives with his family near Annapolis, Maryland. He has been a Certified Antietam Battlefield Guide since 2018.

Laura Marfut is a retired U.S. Army colonel with master's degrees in International Relations and Education, and a Master of Strategic Studies degree from the U.S. Army War College. She has been a Certified Antietam Battlefield Guide since 2019.

Michael Hill came to Baltimore from Atlanta, where he grew up on the Peachtree Creek battlefield. He attended Johns Hopkins University and spent most of his career as a journalist at the *Baltimore Sun*. Now retired, he is a Certified Antietam Battlefield Guide.

John Schildt is the author of many Civil War books, including *September Echoes*, *Drums Along the Antietam*, *Four Days in October*, and *Roads to Gettysburg*. He has been a pastor, hospital chaplain, and teacher, as well as the National Chaplain of the 29th Infantry Division Association. He is a Certified Antietam Battlefield Guide.

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The Antietam Institute was established in 2021 as a member-based, educational, and philanthropic 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. The Institute educates the public on the central role of the Maryland Campaign of 1862 and Battle of Antietam as a major turning point of the Civil War that directly resulted in the issuance of the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation. Antietam Institute sponsored conferences, symposiums, publications, and leadership forums facilitate collaborative learning and knowledge exchange, create unique opportunities for discovery and inspire further historical research.

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