

GETT. 129 v2

"A COMMON PRIDE AND FAME"

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The Attack and Repulse of Pickett's
Division July 3, 1863 305/131520

PART II

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Chapter 9: The Repulse--"Oh, my country! My country!" 290

". . . God walled his power,
And there the last invader charged.

He charged, and in that charge condensed
His all of hate and all of fire;
He sought to blast us in his scorn,
And wither us in his ire.
Before him went the shriek of shells--
Aerial screamings, taunts and yells;
Then the three waves in flashed advance
Surged, but were met, and back they set:
Pride was repelled by sterner pride,
And Right is a strong-hold yet." 291

To give order to this most disorderly of moments in American history, this scorching and singeing "khamsin wind" that blew all reason and order from the ridgeline, is a near impossible deed. Surely, we can telescope the events that passed in those slow moments to a few meaningless sentences-- to capsulize the movements of regiments and brigades in such a way that anyone could understand what happened to cause the ultimate disaster to the Virginians at the Angle. Yet that would deprive us of sharing (as feebly as we now can share) the experiences of those who fought there-- to witness their emotions, their jealousies, their honor, their deaths, their glory, and their cowardice. Many chose to relegate the assault into a vacuum of these sterile phrases, enumerating regimental designations, division and brigade commanders, and batteries interspersed with colorful

²⁹⁰From a letter of Col. Rawley Martin to his father after the battle. Clement, p. 251.

²⁹¹Herman Melville, "Gettysburg. The Check", in Cohen, pp. 88-89.

and descriptive wording. Some of these are mere paragraphs while others attempt more but achieve less.

Of the earlier battle and war histories we have selected a few of those most exemplary of this kind of historical writing, summarizing the great events to the point of objectivity which lulls us to a tranquility which certainly did not exist on the battlefield:

"The Thirteenth and Sixteenth [Vermont] swing out from the trench, turn a right angle to the main line, and face the north. They move forward a few steps, pour a deadly volley into the backs of Kemper's troops. With a hurrah they rush on, to drive home the bayonet. The Fifteenth, Nineteenth, Twentieth Massachusetts, and Seventh Michigan, Twentieth New York, Nineteenth Maine, One Hundred Fifty-first Pennsylvania, and other regiments catch the enthusiasm of the moment, and close upon the foe." 292

And there you have the whole of the attack from the flanking movement by Stannard's Brigade to the repulse neatly summed up in four sentences. Why historian Coffin has even managed to include the names of nine regiments within this paragraph, so that at least those participants could not be slighted! With all of that detail on the charge of Pickett's Division, why, you might ask, would there ever be need for ANOTHER history of the battle?

Some of the histories were little better. A local historian tried his hand at interpretation of these events, and, because of the small format of his book, was likewise limited in his discourse:

"Had there been no deviation from the original point of direction Pickett would have struck the divisions of Caldwell and Doubleday. But when about half the distance had been traversed an oblique movement to the left brought

²⁹²Charles Carleton Coffin, The Boys of '61 or Four Years of Fighting. . . . (Boston, 1896), p. 314.

him directly against the front of Gibbon's division. The supporting brigades of Perry and Wilcox on his right, failing to conform to this change of direction, made a wide gap between Pickett and his supports, and left Stannard's brigade upon his flank. General Hancock, always in the thickest of the fight, moved this brigade and other regiments of Doubleday's division into an advantageous position to deliver upon the exposed flanks of the separated Confederates an effective and galling fire, whilst from the front of Gibbon's division they were swept with a tornado of lead." 293

While this paraphrasing of the action is understandable and fairly accurate, it still gave credit for the flanking movement to Hancock, which was not the case, as already examined in the memoirs of Stannard, Randall, &c.

This type of generalization was not confined to post-war authors and historians, but crept into the speeches and reminiscences of participants as well. As active and vital a participant as brigade commander Alexander S. Webb, who held the ultimate point of contention, became less and less specific as to the conflict as the years went by:

"[Hancock] had the old Second Corps and Doubleday's Division of the First; and well he knew how to use us! Stannard was to be used to stay the supporting column on the Rebel right, and well he did it. Gates, of Rowley's First Brigade, was enabled to assist in this movement. Harrow and Hall, of our own division, were near to help us, and Hays on our right with the Third Division, with Smith's Brigade, was well able to hold his own." 294

Interestingly, Webb did not even mention the contributions of his own brigade in this one! He also attributed Stannard's movements to Hancock's directions, and does not mention the fire of the Vermonters into Kemper's flank but only into "the supporting column" of Wilcox and Lang. He also

293J. Edward Wert, A Complete Hand-Book of the Monuments and Indication and Guide to the Positions on the Gettysburg Battlefield (Harrisburg, 1886), p. 43.

294New York Monuments Commission, In Memoriam Alexander Stewart Webb 1835-1911 (Albany, 1916), p. 121.

erred in stating that Gates' demi-brigade had anything to do with the movement by Stannard's 16th Vermont against this supporting column of Alabamans and Floridians. Perhaps Webb should have followed the advice of some of the soldiers of the rank and reported only on those events which he himself witnessed and ordered.

If all else fails, the participant-historian could always quote another participant-historian:

"Another Federal account of Kemper's attack says-- 'up to the rifle pits, across them, over the barricades-- the momentum of the charge swept them on.'

"Our thin line could fight, but it had not weight enough to resist the momentum. It was pushed behind the guns. Right on came the enemy. They were upon the guns --were bayonetting the gunners--werewaving their flags above our pieces. But they had penetrated to the fatal point. A storm of grape and canister tore its way from man to man and marked its way with corpses straight down its line. They had exposed themselves to the enfilading fire of the guns on the western slope of Cemetery Hill. That exposure sealed their fate.'

"The line reeled back, disjointed already, in an instant in fragments. Our men were just behind the guns. They leaped forward in a disordered mass. But there was little need of fighting now. A regiment threw down its arms and with colors at its head, rushed over and surrendered. All along the field detachments did the same. Over the field the escaped fragments of the charging line fell back--the battle there was over. A single brigade, Harrow's, came out with a loss of 54 officers and 793 men. So the whole corps fought--so too they fought further down the line.'" 295

It is uncertain which guns are referred to as being overrun and the gunners bayoneted. The surgical history of the battle does not reveal any such wounds in artillerymen in this area. Cushing's gunners, as already mentioned, were decimated and retired when the guns ran out of ammunition. Rorty's artillerymen were the only ones in the area of concern who actually had

295Ashe, "The Pettigrew-Pickett Charge," pp. 149-150.

hand-to-hand conflict with Pickett's men. In addition, the figures given for Harrow's losses are quite overstated. The official returns for the two days of battle in which the brigade participated do not indicate any more than a total of 768 casualties. This account would have Harrow totalling 847 casualties, by implication all lost on July 3, 1863 during the charge of Pickett's men. Finally, it is uncertain where Comrade Ashe got the information concerning the surrender of one of Pickett's regiments. Of course, none of Pickett's regiments admit to a wholesale surrender on this field of battle, so it would be nigh impossible to ascertain from their records if there is any truth to this statement. Although it seems unlikely, there is considerable evidence of high numbers of captures in Pickett's Division (as opposed to Pettigrew's command, where most of the captured were wounded), and too many of the regimental accounts on the Union side claim vast numbers of prisoners from Pickett's ranks.

Yet it is hard to blame the above writers and speakers for generalizing and confusing facts. Even the earliest reports of the battle are sketchy and uninformative. Witness these dispatches sent out to the press by the official dispatcher sent from headquarters to the War Department during the battle, and released to the Associated Press late on the night of July 3:

July 3d, 4.30 P.M.--". . . Longstreet's whole Corps seems to have been swept away, from our fire. . . .

July 3d, 5 P.M.--"An immense column of the enemy. . . . attacked our left center and were utterly destroyed by our fire. . . . The Philadelphia Brigade is almost destroyed. They met the most violent rush of the enemy and lost terribly. . . ."

July 3d, 10 P.M.--"The Rebel Generals Garnet and Kemper, fell in front of the 69th and 71st Pennsylvania Volunteers. All the field officers of the former regiment are killed." 296

²⁹⁶Reply of the Philadelphia Brigade Association to the Foolish and Absurd Narrative of Lieutenant Frank A. Haskell, which Appears to be Endorsed by the Military Order of the Loyal Legion Commandery of Massachusetts and the Wisconsin History Commission (Philadelphia, 1910), pp. 39-40.

The absolute dearth of detail in these dispatches speak for themselves that they are next to useless for an understanding of the battle tactically, and could easily be overlooked by any historian. But there is a sense of urgency and gratitude in these brief messages which speak volumes more than anything churned out by the Coffins, Werts, Swintons, and Stines. The utter destruction of a column as impressive as Pickett's 4500 by Union firepower was a sight burned into the dispatcher's memory. "Swept away". "Utterly destroyed." And then, proudly--"Our fire". But the relief of winning such a victory was counterbalanced by the melancholy of losing such a famous and veteran unit as Webb's Philadelphia Brigade, which was itself "almost destroyed." This must be the closest we can ever come to that battlefield on July 3, 1863. These dispatches were written during and immediately after the repulse. All other accounts were either sketchily written in diaries late that night, or days, weeks, or years later. There is still a tone of uncertainty in these dispatches, for the author of them did not yet know whether the battle was now over or would be renewed on the morrow. There is no semblance of philosophizing about the purpose of the war, of recounting grand tactics, or heralding the champions of victory. There is only a hint of surprised relief, a sense of remorse for the loss and the terror of killing. We are left, with the rest of the nation, to determine the rest and wonder about the unmentioned events and names. It was a far cry from Walter Cronkite and the CBS Evening News, but it at least revealed that the Union army had won that day (with cost) and that Lee's army was badly beaten.

The War Department tried over the years to better this description by commissioning official histories and maps which were never completed. By the 1890s, however, the army controlled the battlefield park and stood by its own interpretation of the battle. One of the battlefield commissioners

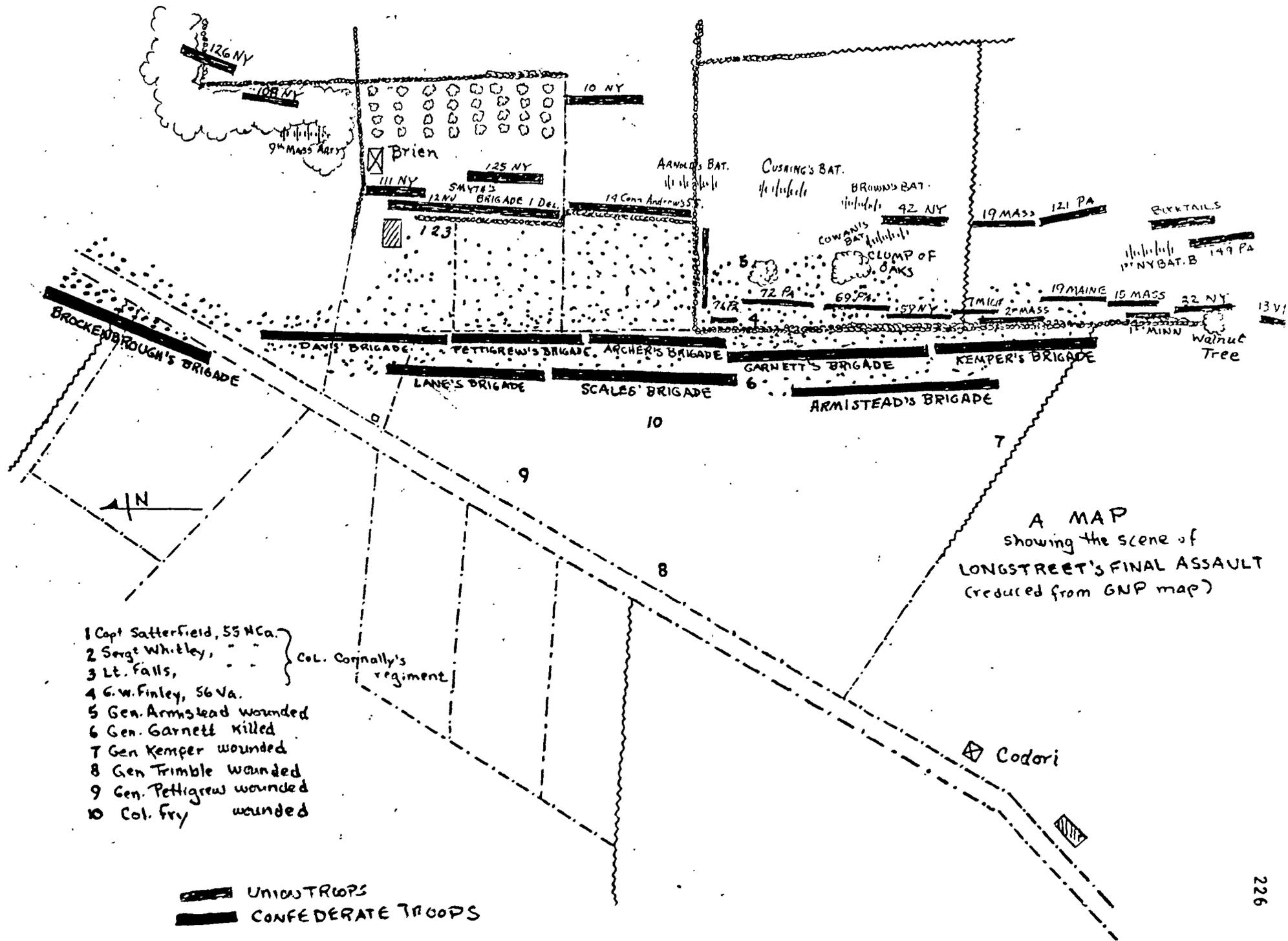
during that time period revealed that "doctrine":

"As soon as the Confederate front line had crossed the Emmitsburg road it raised the well-known battle yell and pressed forward against the Union breastworks. Kemper and Garnett were met by the fire of Harrow's and Hall's and part of Webb's Brigades in front, and Kemper also received an oblique fire on his right from two regiments of Stannard's Vermont Brigade which had been moved out somewhat in advance of the main line. This caused Kemper's men to incline still more to their left, whereupon Stannard wheeled those two regiments to his right and struck Kemper's right flank, inflicting severe losses in killed and wounded and capturing over 200 men. General Kemper also fell desperately wounded about this time 75 yards from the Union works; but his brigade, though much disorganized by its losses, especially of officers, pushed on until it reached the stone fence or wall behind which the Union front line, just west of the copse of trees /, lay/. . . . Garnett's Brigade, though suffering fearful losses, also pushed on to the stone wall, General Garnett himself falling dead from his saddle twenty-five yards west of it."

"It was but a few minutes after the weakened front line reached the Angle when the brigades of Armistead, Scales and Lane rushed forward and mingled with it." 297

Robbins' explanation is interesting in that, even though he himself was not a participant or observer of the attack, his discourse was based on interviews with participants during the years in which he served as commissioner at the park (1895-1905). As a result of these interviews, the Gettysburg National Park Commission made a blueprint of the field of battle during the attack, and the map became part of the annual report of the commission for the year 1896. A copy of this plan, reduced to scale, is included on the following page, so that the reader will get an idea of the distances involved in Major Robbins' commentary--particularly, the locations where Garnett and Kemper fell.

²⁹⁷Robbins, "Longstreet's Assault," pp. 106, 107.



Robbins also related that Garnett and Kemper reached the wall of the Angle "a few minutes" before Armistead. This "theory" has not been widely publicized, basically because most of the histories of the battle have been written using Union commentaries, regimental histories, and reports. Most, if not all, Union accounts imply that Armistead's Brigade was the only one to reach the wall and pierce the Union line, and only a handful of men at that. Recollections from Garnett's Brigade, particularly, deny that Armistead was the sole interloper in Union lines, but state that members of that brigade held the wall until Armistead came up, and while in that position of momentary victory Garnett was killed. Union histories, like their reports, did not admit that the line was broken, or that a flag was lost, or any man was a coward when duty called. Because they were victorious in the battle and in the war, the Union was able to subjugate the truth of history at times in order to glorify and aggrandize their efforts in their winning cause. It appears that the actual fighting in the Angle may have been longer than Union witnesses admit. Whereas Confederate accounts often submit that the battle there may have lasted as long as twenty minutes, Union reminiscences deride this as an aspersion on their quality as fighting heroes. To admit that Confederates, unsupported, and in such small numbers could pierce the line and hold it for twenty minutes would be tantamount to saying that Webb's line ran and no one came up to counterattack until absolute necessity dictated that they do so. As we shall see from the participant accounts to follow, there is a dichotomy between Confederate and Union recollections as to the lapse of time before the final defeat in the Angle. Both are eager to gain prowess for their fighting abilities--the Confederates by stating they held the line, undermanned and alone, for a lengthy period of time;

As an overview of the attack as seen through the commanding general's eyes, this report is remarkably detailed and accurate. Amazingly, Hancock was quite frank in admitting that Webb's Brigade (while probably doing all that was possible under such circumstances) retreated and had to be saved by the troops of Hall's Brigade. That he even mentioned the services of Stannard's flanking regiments (although he took credit for ordering them into the fray) is noteworthy. Stannard's troops were from the First Corps, and were praised for their "good conduct", while troops from his own Second Corps were singled out for abandoning their position and showing "weakness" in front of the enemy. Perhaps Hancock was not as biased in his report as he might otherwise have been because he was so new to command of the Second Corps (appointed June 9), and had not had command or service with Webb's Brigade until that time; therefore, he had not yet formed any sympathies for the brigade involved. In addition, Hancock was scarcely able to personally observe the conduct of Webb's Brigade after the wall was assaulted, since he himself was down by Stannard's position at Codori Grove, lying wounded and concerned with bleeding to death.

In the spring of 1864 Hancock again examined the attack before the Congressional committee investigating the charges and countercharges surrounding Meade and Sickles: In his testimony before the committee on March 22, 1864 Hancock stated that

"The shock of the assault fell upon the 2d and 3d divisions of the 2d corps, and those were the troops, assisted by a small brigade of Vermont troops, together with the artillery of our line, which fired from Round Top to Cemetery hill at the enemy all the way as they advanced whenever they had the opportunity.

Those were the troops that really met the assault. No doubt there were other troops that fired a little, but those were the troops that really withstood the shock of the assault and repulsed it." 299

It is interesting to note that before one year had elapsed since the attack of Pickett's Division, Hancock no longer praised the services of Stannard's Vermonters, denigrating their contribution to a reference that they were just a "small brigade" which happened to help out the implied two big divisions of Hancock's Corps. He also overlooked the two regiments under Gates (diminished in size though they may have been) who also "withstood the shock of the assault and repulsed it" and fired more than "a little." By this time he also lumped the services of all Second Corps troops involved in the repulse as performing the same, not mentioning the behavior of Webb's Brigade.

Augmenting these recollections of Hancock were those of his chief of staff, Lieutenant Colonel C. H. Morgan:

"During the evening of the 2d Caldwell's division was reformed and brought up to the line. The 1st corps under General Newton had been moved down from Cemetery Hill to occupy the ground vacated by Caldwell's when moved to the support of Sykes. When Caldwell returned, General Hancock, at Gen. Newton's solicitation, permitted the division to form on the left of the 1st corps, a circumstance afterwards regretted, as it placed the division some what out of control."

". . . / The / 69th Penn. was badly posted, being thrown upon the descending slope of a little knoll by the formation of the General line, and its front was imperfectly covered by a few rail and half-constructed rifle-pits. The enemy, . . . pushed vigorously for this point and the 69th Pa. broke from the line. On their right

299 Report of the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War, p. 408.

the Yankees by saying that each Union soldier was a Samson, fighting under his own orders, and crushing the enemy's assault within seconds after it reached the wall. To find the truth from these opposing stories, over one hundred years after the fact, will be as difficult as trying to get either Union or Confederate soldier then to admit any shortcomings in that conflict.

We will start, however, with an examination of the Union side of the struggle during the Confederate repulse, particularly with those soldiers of Webb's, Hall's, and Harrow's Brigades, which held the wall and fence under the attack of Kemper and Garnett, and lastly Armistead. Major General Winfield S. Hancock, who had overall command of the Union line in this sector, submitted an undated official report of the campaign which covered the activities of the enemy on his front as well as the measures taken by his own troops:

"The column pressed on, coming within musketry range without receiving immediately our fire, our men evincing a striking disposition to withhold it until it could be delivered with deadly effect.

"Two regiments of Stannard's Vermont Brigade (of the First Corps), which had been posted in a little grove in front of and at a considerable angle with the main line, first opened with an oblique fire upon the right of the enemy's column, which had the effect to make the troops on that flank double in a little toward their left. They still pressed on, however, without halting to return the fire. . . . The right of the attacking line having been repulsed by Hall's and Harrow's brigades, . . . assisted by the fire of the Vermont regiments before referred to, doubled to its left and also re-enforced the center, and thus the attack was in its fullest strength opposite the brigade of General Webb. This brigade was disposed in two lines. Two regiments of the brigade, the Sixty-ninth and Seventy-first Pennsylvania Volunteers, were behind a low stone wall and a slight breastwork hastily constructed by them, the remainder of the brigade being behind the crest some 60 paces to the rear, and so disposed as to fire over the heads of those in front. When the enemy's line had nearly reached the stone wall, led by General Armistead, the most

of that part of Webb's brigade posted here abandoned their position, but fortunately did not retreat entirely. . . .

"Emboldened by seeing this indication of weakness, the enemy pushed forward more pertinaciously, numbers of them crossing over the breastwork abandoned by the troops. The fight here became close and very deadly. The enemy's battle-flags were soon seen waving on the wall. Passing at this time, Colonel Devereux, commanding the Nineteenth Massachusetts Volunteers, anxious to be in the right place, applied to me for permission to move his regiment to the right and to the front, where the line had been broken. I granted it, and his regiment and Colonel Mallon's (Forty-second New York Volunteers on his right) proceeded there at once; but the enemy having left Colonel Hall's front, as described before, this officer promptly moved his command by the right flank to still further re-enforce the position of General Webb, and was immediately followed by Harrow's brigade. The movement was executed, but not without confusion, owing to many men leaving their ranks to fire at the enemy from the breastwork. The situation was now very peculiar. The men of all the brigades had in some measure lost their regimental organization, but individually they were firm. The ambition of individual commanders to promptly cover the point penetrated by the enemy, the smoke of battle, and the intensity of the close engagement, caused this confusion. The point, however, was now covered. In regular formation our line would have stood four ranks deep."

"The colors of the different regiments were now advanced, waving in defiance of the long line of battle-flags presented by the enemy. The men pressed firmly after them, under the energetic commands and example of their officers, and after a few moments of desperate fighting the enemy's troops were repulsed, threw down their arms, and sought safety in flight or by throwing themselves on the ground to escape our fire. The battle-flags were ours and the victory was won.

"Gibbon's division secured 12 stand of colors and prisoners enough to swell the number captured by the corps to about 4,500.

"While the enemy was still in front of Gibbon's division, I directed Colonel (sic) Stannard to send two regiments of his Vermont Brigade, First Corps, to a point which would strike the enemy on the right flank. I cannot report on the execution of this order, as Colonel General Stannard's report has not passed through my hands; but from the good conduct of these troops during the action I have no doubt the service was promptly performed." 298

were three guns of Cushing's battery of the 4th U.S. Artillery, Lt. Cushing, one of the most promising officers of the army was mortally wounded and the three guns were temporarily abandoned. Fortunately the 69th Pa. did not retreat far. Gaining the reserve slope of its knoll, they reformed and commenced firing. The 72nd Pa. which had previously been formed behind this knoll retired with the 69th. On these two regiments there formed at once the unemployed Regt. from the left of Gibbon's line, embracing Hall's Brigade, &c.

"No regulating characterized this hurried formation. The men were crowded together in ranks three and four deep and were held to their work only by the example of their officers."

"Stannard's fire was more than the already hard pressed enemy could stand, and thousands of them sought safety by throwing away their arms and flying to the rear. Here as on Hays front seventeen stand of colors and over 2000 prisoners were secured. Of these colors but twenty-seven could be secured to turn in to the War Department, the remainder being secreted by the men." 300

After reading the reports of Hancock and Morgan, it would be well to remember their comments concerning the fact that the 69th Pennsylvania Infantry left its position along the low stone wall, because the 69th would spend the rest of the nineteenth century shielding its honor and adamantly refuting the testimony of others. Portions of their own version concerning the repulse of the enemy will be included in this chapter.

Lieutenant Frank A. Haskell, aide to division commander John Gibbon, wrote a famous letter to his brother which was published in later years. Within this letter was a lengthy account of Haskell's observations and experiences during the attack and repulse of Pickett's Division. Haskell's story begins when he saw the flags of the Virginia division converging to the Union right where Webb's Brigade was positioned. According to Haskell

". . . it was easy to discover the reason and the manner of this gathering of Rebel flags in front, of Webb. The

³⁰⁰Lt. Col. C. H. Morgan, undated account to Col. John B. Bachelder, in Bachelder Correspondence, New Hampshire Historical Society, Microfilm Reel 2.

enemy, emboldened by his success in gaining our line by the group of trees and the angle of the wall, was concentrating all his right against and was further pressing that point. There was the stress of his assault; there would he drive his fiery wedge to split our line. In front of Harrow's and Hall's Brigades he had been able to advance no nearer than when he first halted to deliver fire, and these commands had not yielded an inch. To effect the concentration before Webb, the enemy would march the regiment on his extreme right of each of his lines by the left flank to the rear of the troops, still halted and facing to the front, and so continuing to draw in his right, when they were all massed in the position desired, he would again face them to the front, and advance to the storming. This was the way he made the wall before Webb's line blaze red with his battle flags. . . .

"[Hall] gave the order, and in briefest time I saw five friendly colors hurrying to the aid of the imperilled three; and each color represented true, battle-tried men, that had not turned back from Rebel fire that day nor yesterday, though their ranks were sadly thinned, to Webb's brigade, pressed back as it had been from the wall, the distance was not great from Hall's right. The regiments marched by the right flank. Col. Hall superintended the movement in person. Col. Devereux coolly commanded the 19th Massachusetts. His major, Rice, had already been wounded and carried off. Lieut. Col. Macy, of the 20th Mass., had just had his left hand shot off, and so Capt. Abbott gallantly led over this fine regiment. The 42nd New York followed their excellent Colonel Mallon. Lieut. Col. Steele, 7th Mich., had just been killed, and his regiment, and the handful of the 59th, followed their colors. The movement, as it did, attracting the enemy's fire, and executed in haste, as it must be, was difficult; but in reasonable time, and in order that is serviceable, if not regular, Hall's men are fighting gallantly side by side with Webb's before the all important point. I did not stop to see all this movement of Hall's, but from him I went at once further to the left, to the 1st brigade. Genl Harrow I did not see, but his fighting men would answer my purpose as well. The 19th Me., the 15th Mass., the 32d (sic) NY and the shattered thunderbolt, the 1st Minn. . . . all men that I could find I took over to the right at the double quick." 301

301 Frank Aretas Haskell, The Battle of Gettysburg (Wisconsin History Commission, 1908), pp. 123-125.

Just how Lee was "concentrating all his right against" Webb's position, as described by Haskell in his letter, is unclear. There was no right to shift except perhaps that fragment of Kemper's Brigade which was not shattered by Stannard, Hall, or Harrow, or the whole of Armistead's Brigade. No other troops comprised what could be termed the assault column on the right. Compared to the number of troops on the left of the entire assault column, i. e. Pettigrew's command, any concentration by the left could not be perceived as a major "stress" of the assault. The Confederate left was not concentrating on this "weak" point, nor made any disposition to do so. Any concentration on Webb's front must be attributed more to Kemper's desire to take the guns of Cushing, Cowan, and Rorty, as well as the flanking fire of Stannard's regiments than to any predilection to attack a weak chink in the Union armor. As a matter of fact, we will later see how at least one Confederate participant was disgusted that his men could not have won such a poorly held line!

One of Haskell's biggest faults, as detailed by most post-war "comrades", was his tendency to enlarge facts in proportion with his own involvement with them. He would exaggerate the importance of all events in his sector if that exaggeration would influence his own importance. Members of those regiments slighted by Haskell took particular relish in discrediting his recollections, especially since he was dead and could not refute their charges. More specifically, the survivors of Webb's Brigade were incensed that a mere lieutenant could claim he brought over Harrow's Brigade; that Haskell told how the brigade fell back from the wall and were supported by Hall and Harrow, implying that Webb's men were not as good as those of Hall and Harrow; that his private letter (lengthy as it was) could be made public and widely circulated as an accurate history of the battle.

In all fairness to Haskell, however, it must be pointed out that more than one officer acknowledged the omnipresence, resourcefulness, indefatigability, and bravery of young Haskell on this day--Hancock, Gibbon, Harrow, and Hall.³⁰² Gibbon himself acknowledged Haskell's contributions in an oblique manner, by reporting officially that he had himself been trying to do exactly what Haskell finally accomplished. Haskell, in going to the left of Gibbon's line, was appealing to the regiments under Harrow, and probably Gates, to assist the Pennsylvania brigade of Webb. According to Gibbon, Haskell

" . . . ordered all the troops of the division there to the right. As they came up helter-skelter, everybody for himself, with their officers among them, they commenced firing upon these rebels as they were coming into our batteries, and took them in flank, and the rebels laid down their arms by hundreds. And if I had got those regiments in a little sooner they would have taken the rebels in flank before they got into the batteries." ³⁰³

Gibbon's efforts to move Harrow's Brigade and Stannard's troops has

³⁰²Hancock wrote in his official report: "I desire particularly to refer to the services of a gallant young officer, First Lieut. F. A. Haskell . . . who, at a critical period of the battle, when the contending forces were but 50 or 60 yards apart, believing that an example was necessary, and ready to sacrifice his life, rode between the contending lines with the view of giving encouragement to ours and leading it forward, he being at that moment the only mounted officer in a similar position." Gibbon reported that his services were "valuable" and added, "This young officer has been through many battles, and distinguished himself alike in all by his conspicuous coolness and bravery, and in this one was slightly wounded, but refused to quit the field. It has always been a source of regret to me that our military system offers no plan for rewarding his merit and services as they deserve." Harrow said that Haskell "greatly distinguished himself by his constant exertion in the most exposed places," while Hall felt that he could not "omit speaking in the highest terms of the magnificent conduct of Lieutenant Haskell, of General Gibbon's staff, in bringing forward regiments and in nerving the troops to their work by word and fearless example." ORs, vol. 27, part 1, pp. 376, 418, 421, 440.

³⁰³Report of the Joint Committee on The Conduct of the War, p. 443.

already been mentioned in chapter 7, concerning Union opposition to the attack. Because Gibbon was wounded near the 19th Maine (the walnut tree near which he was wounded still stands adjacent to the present Hancock Avenue), he was unable to fulfill his objectives. It was left to Haskell to implement the movement of Harrow's Brigade, and perhaps that part of Hall's Brigade on the front line as well.

Webb's Brigade, which caused this "panic" of Union troops to the right to bolster the weakened (if not abandoned) line, had a number of apologists as well as detractors who wrote after the war. One member of the brigade (?) penned his recollections of that action in the Angle:

"At this time the enemy were crowding over the stone fence near the clump of trees, and their red flags were waving, as it seemed to me, in triumph already; though Hall was all right and his men were steady on our left. Presently, some one near me said, that the enemy were massing their men in front of Webb, opposite the clump of trees, and we began to wish for Hall's help. By this time, the officers had stopped the falling back and were driving stragglers to the front, though we did not go forward to the stone wall, yet; but all were facing the enemy and firing heavily--not in ranks, for every one seemed going it pretty much on his own hook--but cheerfully, which was a good sign. We had wished for Hall, so he came as wished, and his right marched by a flank to our left and got mixed with our men. As the 3d brigade, (Hall's,) came up by the flank, there was a disposition, under the heavy fire to which it was exposed, to edge away from the stone wall; but the officers overcame this, and soon a compact body of men was formed, who delivered a heavy and well directed fire upon the enemy as they came over the wall and rail-fence towards us. Just then an officer, Gibbon's aide--I think it was the same who had gone for Hall--came over with some regiments from the 1st brigade (Harrow's) on our left, and from him it was reported, that the extreme right of the enemy, opposite to our left, was breaking badly, and that men there were running to the rear. This greatly encouraged us, and

we cheered and went to our work with a will. We now advanced and could see, as we did so, that the battle was raging in front of the third division. We delivered a steady fire from the crest, at short range, which cleared the wall, to which we then rushed, flags waving and men shouting. . . . No one wanted to straggle now. Other colors were borne forward; the wall was gained and crossed, and the work of taking prisoners commenced. Hundreds, who threw down their arms and rushed towards us, were sent to the rear."

"One thing struck me very much. It was the intelligence of the men. For a good part of the time, and in the heaviest of the fight, the ranks were lost, and there was no organization. The officers were in our midst everywhere; but still we kept together, and seemed to understand, without orders, what to do, and to feel that the quicker we fired the sooner the thing would be over. As to standing in line and blazing away regularly, why we never thought of it, and yet our fire was fearful, after the falling back from the wall was checked." 304

The narrator confirms through the above that Haskell was indeed instrumental in bringing up Harrow and part of Hall's Brigade; in fact, parts of his narrative sound vaguely familiar--an echo of Haskell's letter. The rest of the account will also be repeated in similar terms by many other participants. But one thing is most interesting. Was the author at Gettysburg? Since he writes as if he were a member of Webb's Brigade, he should have been a Pennsylvanian, yet his name does not appear on the Pennsylvania Monument (a listing of all state soldiers who fought in the battle or campaign). Neither does his name appear in any of Webb's regiments in the rosters as published in Bates' A History of Pennsylvania Volunteers. The only reference in the Official Records is to a Confederate officer from Maryland named R. Stuart Latrobe. Interestingly, this article from which the narration was excerpted was first printed in a Baltimore newspaper. Is there a connection between the Maryland officer and the Baltimore story?

304 Latrobe, "The Pinch of the Fight," p. 1.

Was the R. Steuart Latrobe under which this article was written a pseudonym or was the whole thing fabricated from second-hand information by another Augustus Buell (whose book The Cannoneer has been repeatedly cited in bibliographies of the battle, even though Buell did not join the army until after Gettysburg; Buell's book, however, is filled with incidents "he" experienced during the battle)? We should note that, when the Compiler reprinted the article in its columns, it prefaced the account by endorsing its accurate description of the Gettysburg area and topography, as written by a participant and observer who had taken minute and uncanny observations of his surroundings.

The defenders of Webb's Brigade, most notably the 69th Pennsylvania, were profuse in composing their own defense. As late as 1904, members of the regiment were yet giving readers their own version of the battle, complete with a unique battle formation:

"The point where Pickett's men broke the Federal line was just to the right of the Sixty-ninth. Two companies of the regiment were drawn back at right angles to guard the flank so exposed. On the left of the regiment the stone wall had been broken down the day before for the passage of artillery, and through this gap the Confederates also poured. . . .

"The Confederate General Kemper fell in front of this regiment, and Armistead to the right of it." ³⁰⁵

This account of a "glorious record" would impress you that the 69th Pennsylvania stood alone at the wall that day, with the Confederates pouring in on the left and right, and that the regiment refused its right to finish off the enemy as it crossed the wall on the right.

³⁰⁵"69th Pennsylvania has glorious record," The Philadelphia Record (May 1, 1904), in Gettysburg Newspaper Clippings Relating to the Battle, #6, p. 138.

Sergeant Joseph W. Garrett swore that while serving with the 69th Pennsylvania along the stone wall he saw the Confederates advancing toward the Emmitsburg Road, and when they were "about half way across we opened on them and they made a rush up towards the hill and broke in over the wall to our right. We were ordered to fall back and face the parties crossing the wall." This placed those companies (A and I) on the right of the 69th at "right angles to the wall" after they halted. According to Garrett, he was about "opposite the clump of trees" when he stopped.³⁰⁶

Anthony McDermott, serving as a private in Company I and one of the last men on the right of the line, was later quite active in providing the letters, recollections, and testimonies which proved to be the core of the material relating to the defense of the 69th Pennsylvania Volunteers. In a letter to Bachelder, McDermott offered his version of the events of that afternoon:

"When about two thirds of the field, that lay between the stone wall and the Emmitsburg pike, had been crossed the enemy changed his direction to an oblique march to his left, and kept this direction in as good order, as when marching directly to the front, when within about 20 yards of us we received the command to fire, our first round was fired with deliberation and simultaneously, and threw their front line into confusion, from which they quickly rallied and opened their fire upon us. The troops on our right [the 71st Pennsylvania] abandoned their position which left a blank space, that Armistead was quick to take advantage of. . . .

". . . [Many] of the enemy were here mingled with our own men some so close that while they struck at each other with the barrels of their rifles, they could not inflict an disabling injury. General Kemper who was commanding the enemy on our left and centre, I suppose saw the shuffling on the right of our regiment rushed to the

³⁰⁶Survivors of the 72nd Pa. vs GBMA, et al, p. 251.

front and pressed his men upon our colors. The fighting here at close quarters was more desperate than at any other part of our line and involved Co. 'C', 'D', 'H', 'G' and 'E'. These companies formed the line to the left of the refused companies A and I, and were still parallel to the wall.

" . . . After Kemper and Armistead fell, their men began to surrender. At this point Webb brought up the 72nd Pennsylvania, but the fight was over, at the same time, Hall's brigade came upon the scene, in an oblique direction from our left and rear. I do not think they done any firing, if they did then they fired either upon our regiment, or the unarmed rebels who we sent to the rear, if the fighting was not over when Hall's brigade came upon the scene how could they fire upon the enemy without shooting us when our men were mingled with the enemy and Hall's men did not at any time come to the stone-wall except as individuals after the fight was over, when they came to view the field."

"This regiment did not receive any credit for securing trophies in fact all the battle-flags were picked up after the fighting, there was I think at least 10 flags picked up along the stone wall between the angle and the gateway and all secured by men of other regiments, who wandered over the field from curiosity." 307

In fact, as an addenda to the last paragraph of McDermott's letter, he also testified that the flags that were "captured" by many Union regiments, while he was himself ordering captured Confederates to the rear,

" . . . were not captured in the sense that any honor would attach to it. It was just like picking up muskets that had been thrown down. I saw, myself, in the space near the wall, two stands of Pickett's colors, but I was in no hurry to take them and while I was there I saw men from the Forty-second New York grab a flag and rush back but I made a remark then that I did not see anything very brave in that but they went with the colors." 308

Interestingly, the only flag recognized as captured by the 42nd New York belonged to the 22nd North Carolina,³⁰⁹ part of Scales' Brigade in Pettigrew's

³⁰⁷McDermott, June 2, 1886 letter to Bachelder, pp. 378-380, 382.

³⁰⁸Survivors of the 72nd Pa. vs GBMA, et al, p. 235.

³⁰⁹ORS, vol. 27, part 1, p. 441.

assault column. The 22nd North Carolina, or at least a remainder of it, probably lapped the northern edge of the Angle, where Scales' right touched the enemy breastworks. It would seem unlikely that the 42nd New York (or more specifically Private Michael McDonough) engaged in any hand-to-hand or other fighting in this area of the Angle, since they were near the clump of trees when the fighting all but ended.

McDermott was obsessed with convincing anyone who would listen to him that the 69th Pennsylvania was the only regiment of Webb's Brigade to hold its position at the wall, and that they fought off Pickett's remnants and defeated them, and then supports came up just at the end of this conflict and stole all the credit. Any fighting done by these supports (whether they belonged to Webb's Brigade, or Hall or Harrow or Gates) was not at the wall or at the position of the 69th Pennsylvania Infantry. But, McDermott was always careful not to carry his charges too far, and denied that he was heard to have disparaged the 72nd Pennsylvania as cowards or that no troops helped them:

"The 69th has never claimed that no other troops came to their assistance, for we always allow that Hall's Brigade came up and were followed by the 72d, also that the 71st Penna. aided on our right, and the 59th N.Y., 19th Maine, 15th, 20th & 19th Mass. 42nd, 20th and 82nd N. York, 1st Minn., 7th Mich. and Stannard's Brigade all aided on our left in repulsing Pickett, but we claim that no troops came to the wall at our position either before, during or after the battle except the 71st Pa. on the 2nd of July. Not one of the 11 regiments . . . came to the wall as such at any time, notwithstanding their official reports say so. Hall's Brigade came no further to our right than the clump of trees." 310

310A. W. McDermott, October 21, 1889 letter to John B. Bachelder, in Bachelder Correspondence, New Hampshire Historical Society, Microfilm Reel 5.

Thus we see that McDermott, who was the later spokesman for the 69th Pennsylvania veterans, denied that any of the regiments of Gibbon's or Doubleday's Divisions advanced past them to the right (the vacant part of the Angle wall occupied by Cushing's forward guns) or came into their midst. This ran contrary to many Union official reports, as McDermott admitted. But he insisted that the man he saw, with a "42" on his cap, who took a flag from the wall where his company I had been, was the only man of any other brigade that he saw at the wall during the repulse.

Continuing to press that the 69th was the "Rock of Gettysburg", the veteran McDermott added

"The men of Company D, 4th Company, admit that when the rebels threatened their rear there was some disorder, as they were obliged to turn upon the enemy to their flank and rear and beat him back to save capture, this forced them to move a few feet from the wall. It was D company that had the hand to hand tussle and saved the remainder of the regiment from being enveloped and possible capture. The 5th, 6th & 7th companies (E, C, & H) had given way a few feet from the wall, the fear of capture had made them cautious about striking close to the wall. The remainder of the regiment remained firm at the wall. The men of company K claim that some of the enemy passed over them and the wall, they being on one knee on the ground, somewhat crouched." 311

Company D, the right center of the regiment, was the only part of the 69th Pennsylvania that McDermott was willing to concede fell back from the wall at all, and at that, it comprised only "a few feet". And, to mollify himself and the veterans, McDermott stated that Company D was also the only company to engage in a "tussle" of hand-to-hand fighting with the enemy. In other words, even though Company D retreated just a bit, they saved the rest of the regiment with the fiercest kind of fighting.

311 Ibid.

In describing the sequence of events from the perspective of the 69th Pennsylvania, McDermott again wrote to the historian Bachelder. He placed his own position in Company I at the right of the regiment, while the 72nd Pennsylvania was in the rear behind the crest of Cemetery Ridge (where they had been since the artillery duel).

"Adj't Genl of the brigade Capt. Chas. H. Banes was on horse riding along the lines of the 72nd urging the men to come up to our aid, while at the same time Genl Webb stood on the crest facing the 72nd, and of course his back to the stone wall, begging them to come up. When Armistead fell his men faltered, and in a very few minutes they gave up, that is some threw themselves upon the ground while the others ran back to the wall. / When the 72nd Pennsylvania advanced to the crest of the hill / there was no need of further fighting as the rebels threw themselves upon the ground and behind the wall, surrendering as we approached them. I saw but one man of the 72nd at the wall, and at that time there was no firing unless the artillery firing from the battery opposite. The man I saw was Capt. / Theodore I. / Wright . . . in company with Capt. / Benjamin J. / McMahon of the 71st . . . / trying / to drag one of Cushing's guns from its place at the wall to its . . . position on the crest." 312

So far, McDermott has told the readers that he saw only Confederates, his own regimental comrades, and one man from the 42nd New York and one man from the 72nd Pennsylvania at the wall during the fighting there.

Another note to Bachelder covered this same ground, and raised some questions:

" . . . Hall's men came in behind the clump of trees, also to the crest of the ridge. Their coming up to our assistance was in a line diagonal to our position, from our left and rear. . . , and if they mingled with our men it must have been on our left, certainly not on the right, while the fight was in progress. When Genl Armistead fell the fighting was virtually at an end about the

312A. W. McDermott, September 17, 1889 letter to John B. Bachelder, in Bachelder Correspondence, New Hampshire Historical Society, Microfilm Reel 5.

'Angle', that was just previous to the coming up of Hall's regiments. In reality there was no fighting in the Angle after the enemy crossed the wall, as that spot was occupied by the Rebels from the wall to near the crest where Armistead fell, for as we returned to the wall the enemy surrendered as we approached them." 313

And McDermott wanted to turn the knife a little deeper with his contempt for the 72nd Pennsylvania, who would not come up when Webb pleaded with them to do so. McDermott wanted to know "what finally induced the 72nd to advance? Was not their courage roused by the advance and appearance of Hall's command?"

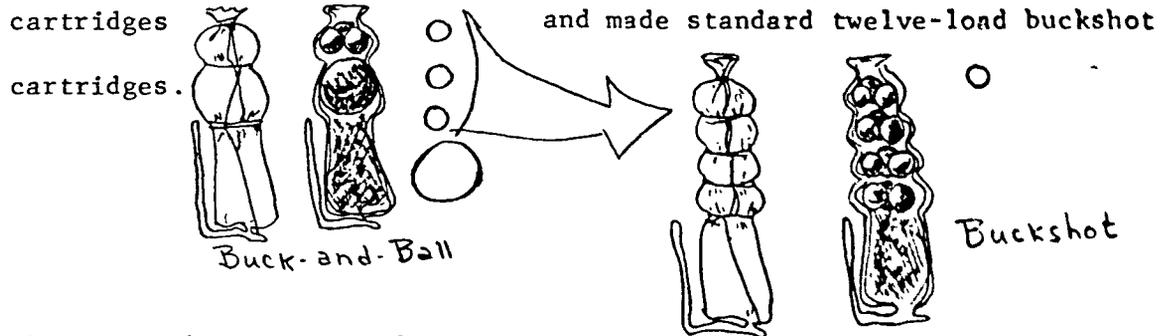
On the other end of the regimental line, John Buckley of Company K recalled that it was more than moral courage that gave the 69th Pennsylvania a fighting edge. On the evening of July 2 the regimental went out over the wall and collected the wounded of Wright's Georgia Brigade and brought them in, along with what Confederate small arms and ammunition could be gathered.

"We selected the best and reloaded, and reclined them against the wall. The ammunition we found to contain three buck-shot and a ball, and if my memory does not fail me the ammunition had a label showing it to have been manufactured in Birmingham England, and I will guarantee it inflicted more harm upon them than upon us. We abstracted the buck-shot from the ammunition and reloaded the spare guns putting in 12 to the load, and almost every man had from two to five guns loaded that were not used until Pickett got within fifty yards of the wall. The slaughter was terrific, to which fact the ground literally covered with the enemy's dead bore ample testimony." 314

313 A. W. McDermott, October 10, 1889 letter to John B. Bachelder, in Bachelder Correspondence, New Hampshire Historical Society, Microfilm Reel 5.

314 John Buckley, undated letter to John B. Bachelder, in Bachelder Correspondence, New Hampshire Historical Society, p. 371.

What Private Buckley was saying his regiment did (or at least some members of it) to the captured Confederate muskets gave this section of the line effective close range firepower. The men took the standard buck-and-ball cartridges



This gave the regiment the same

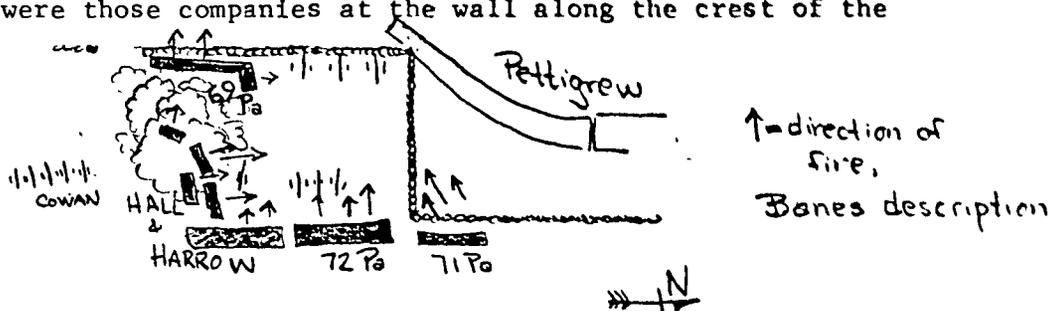
advantages that a battery would have when it converted to canister during an infantry charge. When the infantry, in close order, advanced close enough the shotgun effect of the buckshot charges could hit more targets and more accurately than sighting a rifled musket with one minie ball as the load. Add to this the fact that Buckley said many men had multiple reserves of these guns at their side, and the kind of firepower available to the 69th Pennsylvania should have enabled them to stand to their duty at the wall.

Charles Banes, adjutant of the brigade, described the kind of confusion in and near the clump of trees:

"During this time a mass of men, without any apparent formation, the First brigade, the Third brigade, or a portion of the Third brigade, crowded our men. They were firing towards the north, some of the others were firing towards the west and some of the Seventy-first were firing towards the southwest; it was really what you call a transverse fire. That lasted for some time, until a number of Confederates crossed the fence, threw down their arms, and rushed on the Seventy-second regiment. Upon my order the Seventy-second opened a passage-way through which these men were carried back as prisoners. Simultaneously a movement commenced by which the men of the Seventy-second and those of the Third brigade all moved down." 315

315Survivors of the 72nd Pa. vs. GBMA, et al, p. 274.

If we examine Banes' testimony it appears that Hall's Brigade and Harrow's Brigade were firing northward. Yet Webb's staff officer informed us that no Confederate crossed the fence (except as surrendering prisoners) until after this fire was going on for some time. That means that Hall and Harrow were not firing at any Confederate troops in the Angle, but at the flank of the remnants of Pettigrew's Brigade, who were outside the northern boundary of the Angle wall and attacking the 71st Pennsylvania and Hays' Division. The assumption is that the members of the 71st Pennsylvania who were firing to the southwest were those companies at the wall along the crest of the ridge.



It is also evident from even Banes' testimony that the 72nd Pennsylvania and other troops did not advance back down to the wall until the fighting in the Angle was over, since the former regiment opened its ranks to permit prisoners through to the rear.

In a letter to his wife, dated July 6, 1863 (three days after the attack), Brigadier General Alexander S. Webb described his discomfiture with the overall performance of his brigade:

"Seeing two companies driven out, all my artillery in their hands, I ordered up my reserve regiment and led it up myself. . . . As soon as I got my regiment up to the wall the enemy was whipped for good and all. When they came over the fence the Army of the Potomac was nearer being whipped than it was at any time of the battle. When my men fell back I almost wished to

get killed. I was almost disgraced but Hall (Colonel) on my left saw it all and brought up two regiments to help me. . . .

"This is the only case I have known of the two commanding officers (Generals) passing each other in front." 316

It is uncertain which two companies Webb is referring to as having been "driven out"--the two companies of the 71st Pennsylvania which fell back to the Cemetery Ridge line with the 72nd Pennsylvania, or the two right companies of the 69th Pennsylvania who were perpendicular to their regiment at the clump of trees. Realistically speaking, Webb could not possibly have been too worried that "all" his artillery were in enemy hands. At the most, Confederates controlled three of Cushing's guns that were down at the wall, and these were out of ammunition. Unless Pickett's men were

carrying their own artillery charges with them, Cushing's guns there were useless to them. The three other guns of Cushing's Battery were disabled or unserviceable, too. We suppose Webb was more concerned about the dishonor of having the guns taken by the enemy than about having them used against him. To abandon the guns and the position as well was as much a "disgrace" to Webb as it was an irritant to Hancock. It is revealing that, in this early letter to his confidant (his



Brigadier General
Alexander S. Webb

wife), Webb revealed he was happier with the performance of Hall's two regiments than he was with any of his own, and that he was saved from "disgrace" by the actions of Hall on his left coming over to help his faltering line.

The reference made by Webb in this letter to passing the commanding general in front referred to Armistead passing Webb after the Confederate remnants crossed the wall. At that time, Webb was down near the 69th Pennsylvania, and Armistead passed north of him in the direction of Cushing's disabled guns near the crest of the ridge. Webb referred more specifically to this incident in a letter to his father some two weeks after the event:

"The Rebels were determined to break through and they actually took from me nearly one third of my fence and wall. Gen^l Armistead was mortally wounded after he had passed me. I was a few paces in front of my men and he jumped the wall with about 150 of his men. Himself, and 42 men died suddenly. I took six battle flags and more than double my number prisoners. The statement in the papers that I piled up the dead is correct. A Reb Col. when brought in my lines said 'pshaw'! when he saw my numbers My loss was truly fearful and I was almost disgraced. But all my command knew that we were never to leave that hill or mound. The 69th lost all its field officers. It obeyed orders. After the Rebs were inside the fence I went to them & told them to fire to front & rear, and to a man they replied that I could count on them I have been through many battles, in all sorts of places, under all fires but never have I heard such cannonading as they opened upon our line, and when they concentrated 110 pieces upon myself & the Brigade on my left it was terrible. The assault was nobly made. It was a magnificent and terrible military manœuvre and for a while they fairly overwhelmed me. Col. Hall Comdg the Brigade on my left a young West Pointer helped me at the right time. He sent few men but a good many colors. It looked like strong reinforcements." 317

By implication, Webb was satisfied with the performance of the 69th Pennsylvania but not with the actions of the rest of his brigade at the Angle. In fact, Webb testified against the 72nd Pennsylvania when they tried to glorify

³¹⁷Alexander S. Webb, July 17, 1863 letter to father, in Webb Papers, Yale University. Copy in GNMP files.

their contributions at the wall of the Angle. The 72nd had obstinately refused to leave their position at the crest of the ridge, even though they were taking considerable losses in that open position because they stood out against the horizon with no shelter, presenting perfect targets to artillery and musketry alike. Webb even tried seizing the colors of the regiment to motivate the regiment forward, but the color-bearer refused to yield the colors or his ground, and the 72nd did not move forward in a "counter-charge" until the Confederates were indeed whipped at the wall itself. The fire they poured into the Confederates at and on the other side of the wall may have been effective in itself, but a counterattack by the 72nd would have ended the Confederate resistance before Armistead and his followers had an opportunity to cross the wall. It would have had not only a tactical effect, but also a demoralizing one on the Confederates who had survived such a hell on the way to the wall. With no reinforcements and diminishing numbers, they would have yielded so much the sooner if confronted by a strong showing of Union force. Indeed, the mere appearance of the flags of the small regiments in Hall's Brigade were recognized by Webb as having been the cause for the Confederate surrender at this sector.

Webb was not the only one to deride the fighting ability of the famous Philadelphia Brigade, but Webb at least protected the reputation of the 69th Pennsylvania. Others did not. One who fought behind the 69th was one who did not believe they stayed to their duty. Captain Andrew Cowan, whose 1st New York Battery occupied the crest near the trees behind the 69th and the 59th New York remembered an incident of later years that concerned these memories:

"The 69th Pennsylvania Regiment Monument was dedicated that day, just ahead of ours; and Col. Bachelder and I were seated on their stand. The Adjutant of the Regiment made the dedication address and mentioned that an order was given for the Regiment to 'change front', or something of the sort, and it was not understood by those Companies at the left of the trees, which caused much confusion. I had made an address there the year before and had then described the advance and repulse of Pickett's Virginians, and how the regiment in our front 'wavers and breaks, but is rallied by Webb, their gallant General, around the colors in rear of Cushing's guns.' I then described our canister fire. . . . The Battery Association held the annual reunion at Gettysburg July 3, 1886. Bachelder was with us. . . . Col. Bachelder said to me, later in the day, when he was with me to locate a place for the monument which we intended to erect-- 'Col. Cowan you are the first man to charge here that the 69th Pennsylvania Regiment left the wall.' I exclaimed, 'In the name of Heaven Colonel, if they had remained at the wall how could we have fired double canister at less than twenty yards.'

"The dedication of the First New York Battery Monument followed immediately. . . . I humorously mentioned that some seemed to believe that all stood fast and that no one ran away, but I had not been in their position, at which everyone laughed. I omitted that sentence when I wrote out my speech for publication."

"I got a tip before I left Gettysburg, July 4, 1887, that every Regiment of the Philadelphia Brigade claimed that none of them had left the wall, and held a grievance because General Webb had not claimed it for them. If my knowledge of the fact that Webb's Regiments left the wall, and fought, in the angle, as far back as where Hancock Avenue now is, has caused resentment towards me and the First New York Battery, what may be said of the story in the Haskell pamphlet, published years after I made my statement?" 318

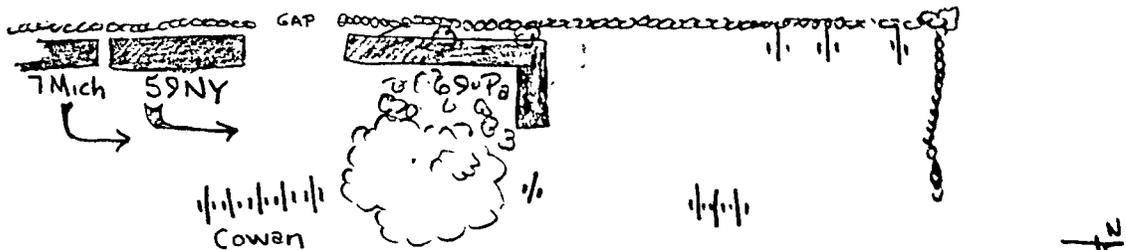
The Haskell "pamphlet" (letter) to which Cowan referred has already been mentioned, but it is interesting to observe Cowan's reactions to that account also:

"There was no such terrible panic as he describes. I cannot believe that General Webb and General Hunt,

318 Andrew Cowan, December 10, 1913 letter to John P. Nicholson, in Gettysburg Newspaper Clippings #6, Relating to the Battle, p. 208, i - ii.

who had left me to go to him a few moments earlier, were rallied by Lieut. Haskell, as one would infer from the dramatic description in that pamphlet. There was a good deal of confusion and some cowardice. Two or three companies of the 69th Pennsylvania Regiment . . . lay along the wall at the left of the trees in front of five of my guns. When Armistead broke through at the right, these companies of the 69th rose up and rushed through the trees, or most of them went that way, while numbers fled to the rear through my guns I saw, a few moments later, at least three U. S. Regimental flags and an Irish flag, back as far as where Cushing's guns had stood on the ridge. The flags were surrounded by hundreds of men, not in orderly line, but loading and firing at will, as rapidly as they could." 319

Cowan's claim that he could not have fired had the 69th been at the wall may not be as credible as he would have us believe. For one thing, Cowan's Battery was to the left of the clump of trees, while the 69th Pennsylvania was in front of the trees with its left extending to the opening in the wall.



Since Hall's Brigade left Cowan's front and moved off to the right toward the trees, he should have had a clear field of fire to the southwest and west. The 69th could have interfered with his fire only if Cowan was discharging canister to the northwest, which would have been impossible anyway. He would then be firing into the clump of trees and the mass of fragmented regiments gathering there. Only the extreme left companies of the 69th could have been anywhere near Cowan's front.

³¹⁹Ibid., p. 207

When Webb's line was pressured the units to his left reacted as soon as they could practicably leave their own fronts. Stannard's movement was pre-occupying the most of Kemper's Brigade on the front of Harrow and on Hall's right towards the end of the fighting, relieving these regiments to assist Webb. How these units moved over to his relief, and what they did there, has been interpreted in different ways by different historians and observers. The earlier twentieth-century historian Pierce offered a unique but erroneous version of Harrow's movements:

"Hall, at the left of the break through Webb's front, makes a half-wheel to the rear with his brigade, thus saving his exposed flank while forming line on Pickett's right, into which he pours a point-blank fire. Harrow, swinging round on his right, takes the crowding Confederates practically in rear with his left. Humphreys sends Carr's brigade to help check and destroy the fierce driving wedge." 320

This interpretation by Pierce would have us believe that Harrow's Brigade swung out over the wall with its left flank and took Pickett's right and center from the rear. An examination of accounts by Harrow's participants will contradict this theory. In addition, this coverage of the repulse of Pickett's Division did not even mention the movement by Stannard's Brigade on Pickett's right flank. Stannard's operations were only mentioned in connection with the 16th Vermont's action against Wilcox's advance.

Another twentieth-century writer, "Miles" (Walter E. Day), also made errors of omission and fact in his accounts of the repulse:

"Armistead's brigade had driven a wedge into Gibbon's line, and were enfilading Hall's brigade on Webb's left. Hall threw in his supports at right angles to his front line to meet this attack, and Harrow's brigade, hitherto in reserve, was thrust in wherever there was room. (foot-note: Hall's report). The Confederate battle flags flew in a long line on the stone wall, and each became the

320 Pierce, p. 214.

special mark of Union bullets. The batteries, which Colonel Alexander had sent forward to follow up the storming column,* did good service at this point, their shot cutting lanes through the crowded masses of Hall's brigade (footnote: Gibbon's report)." 321

*These would entail at least the five guns moved forward by Major John C. Haskell of Henry's Battalion, which will be mentioned again later.

First of all, there is no mention of the advanced Confederate guns "cutting lanes" through Hall's or anyone else's men in Gibbon's official report. In any event, none of Hall's accounts confirm this kind of awful artillery fire. Major Haskell, who directed the fire of five guns at Stannard's Brigade, admitted that though his time there was short he produced confusion in the ranks of the flanking party. Haskell did not mention firing toward the Angle or at troops along the wall. Secondly, "Miles" proclaims that Harrow's Brigade had been in reserve, which is of course untrue, since Harrow was in the front line all day.

J. H. Stine, writing in the 1890s, completely misinterprets Harrow's movement. Like Pierce, Stine reported that Harrow crossed the works and helped turn Kemper's flank:

"When Pickett's line struck the Union forces, Gibbon's left brigade, under Harrow, was not heavily pressed, so Harrow advanced and partially turned Kemper's right flank. Hall, in the center, held his own, but saw Webb on his right attacked by Armistead. Turning to the left he (Hall) saw two regiments in reserve. He directed them to move by the right flank, intending to take them to Webb, but in the confusion these troops joined Hall's brigade. When Webb was forced back Hall was again attacked and compelled to yield slowly retiring and firing every step or two. Hall was an artillery officer in Fort Sumter when the war broke out, and a clear-headed soldier of splendid nerve. His report of the final

321 "Miles", The Campaign of Gettysburg (London, 1909-1912?), pp. 120-121.

result is given in such a way to impress one with its simplicity and correctness. Part of it is here given:

During this time the 15th Massachusetts Volunteers, 1st Minnesota, and 19th Maine Volunteers, from the First Brigade of this division, had joined the line, and are entitled to a full share in the credit of the final repulse. The line remained in this way about ten minutes, rather giving way than advancing, when, by a simultaneous effort upon the part of all the officers I could instruct, aided by the general advance of many of the colors, the line closed with the enemy. . . ." 322

Stine made a multitude of errors in his coverage, first of all saying that Harrow was not heavily pressed and that he "advanced and partially turned Kemper's right flank". Where he got this information is uncertain. The history of Hall's movements are sketchy at best and somewhat confused in Stine's delineation of them. Since Hall's movements were so minutely chronicled by participants, it would be best to look to them for the correct version of his movements.

But first, it might be well to get an overview of this moment when Hall and Harrow would come to Webb's relief and would eventually complete the defeat of Pickett. The historian of the Army of the Potomac provided a good description of these general movements and events:

"As the hostile front of attack was quite narrow, it left Hancock's left wing unassailed. From there he drew over the brigades of Hall and Harrow (footnote: One Hundred and Fifty-first Pennsylvania and Twentieth New York State Militia, both under Gates of Doubleday's division, First Corps, participated); and Colonel Devereux, commanding the Nineteenth Massachusetts Regiment, anxious to be in the right place, applied for permission to move his regiment to the front--a request gladly granted by Hancock,

³²²Stine, p. 530.

who also gave Mallon's Forty-second New York Regiment the same direction; while Colonel Stannard moved two regiments of his Vermont brigade to strike the enemy on the right flank. These movements were quickly executed, but not without confusion, owing to many men leaving their ranks to fire at the enemy from the breastworks. When the new line was formed, it was found that the situation was very peculiar; for the men of all brigades, while individually firm, had in some measure lost their regimental organization--a confusion that arose from the honorable ambition of individual commanders to promptly cover the point penetrated by the enemy. The essential thing was secured, however--the breach was covered, and in such force that in regular formation, the line would have stood four ranks deep.

"It will be remembered that the brigade of Stannard held an advanced point on Hancock's left. As the assaulting column passed his right to strike Webb, he moved to the right, changed front forward, and opened a very savage fire on the enemy's flank. At the same time, the colors of the different regiments were advanced in defiance of the long line of battle-flags presented by the Confederates, and the men pressing firmly after them engaged in a brief and determined combat and utterly overthrew the foe." 323

This two-paragraph version of the repulse (viewed from the Union side) is sufficient for a general understanding of the troops involved (although Webb's command is not mentioned) and the resulting confusion and movements, but it does not entail specific incidents or locations, which would necessarily interest the serious historian or interpreter. For such things, it is necessary to examine the records left by the participants.

Lieutenant William Driver, acting assistant adjutant general on Colonel Hall's staff, described what he saw of Pickett's repulse and what he later learned of events that transpired:

³²³Swinton, pp. 360-361.

"After crossing the Emmitsburg Road the right of the column had about 1,200 feet to pass before it reached the works, while on the left the distance was but about 250 feet. In front of Hall's Brigade the infantry fire was opened by the 7th Michigan regiment at his (Hall's) direction,* and taken up by the other regiments almost immediately. The skill of the Michigan men soon had the gratifying effect of causing a crowding to the left by the men in that part of the column at which it was directed, and, as Hall said, settled the question on that part of the line. On our right, Hayes's men poured a well-directed fire of musketry and artillery upon the left wing of the column. . . . The brigades composing the division had become amalgamated, and, losing their formation, were merely a mass of struggling men. Finding them inclined to use the wall as a defence, their officers endeavored to urge them forward, and some followed over the wall which Webb's men had left and into the grove. Colonel Hall moved such of his troops as he could by the right flank into the gap. General Hancock directed Colonel Devereux. . . to 'put his men in there quick'. The regiments of Harrow's Brigade came up from the left, and the entire space at the right and in front of the trees was filled by these two masses, firing into each other's faces at a distance of less than fifteen paces. . . . General Webb and Colonel Hall hastily agreed that something more must be done, and the latter sent an officer to General Newton near by with a request for some troops to put in against the enemy's right flank." 324

*Hall was the former commander of the 7th Michigan.

Although it is impossible to ascertain what events Lieutenant Driver actually saw with his own eyes, the account reflects those written by Union and Confederate participants which contradict the recollections of Webb's veterans that Hall and Harrow did no fighting near the Angle. They also affirm the memoirs of Confederate survivors that the fighting was not instantaneously over, and that it raged from ten to twenty minutes in the Angle. Driver also mentioned that the Confederates used the stone wall bordering the Angle as a

³²⁴Brevet Lt. Col. William R. Driver, "Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg," Campaigns in Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania 1862-1863, Papers of the Military History Society of Massachusetts series, vol. 3 (Boston, 1903), pp. 354-355.

defensive position, a fact that at least one Confederate participant detailed and which will be examined later.

Another interesting item from Driver's account is his statement that General Webb and Colonel Hall decided that their joint efforts around and in the clump of scrub oaks would not be sufficient in turning back the remnants of Kemper's, Garnett's, and Armistead's Brigades. Driver recalled that Hall sent an officer to General Newton to request troops from the First Corps which could be used against the enemy's right flank. Why this was necessary if Stannard's men were doing this same thing is unclear, but it at least confirms the likelihood of the description by Lieutenant Barrows (pp. 188-189) of going to Newton for troops. Barrows, however, was sent much later than his letter implied, if he was the officer sent by Hall to Newton near the end of the fighting. Hall confirmed that Barrows brought up "two regiments only".³²⁵ Who these two regiments could have been was not stated, but the implication would be that they would have been part of Newton's First Corps. The only troops recognized by Doubleday as having actively participated on the front line during July 3 were the three regiments of Stannard's Brigade and the two regiments in Gates' demi-brigade. Since the Vermonters were already flanking the enemy before Hall and Webb made this decision by the clump of trees, Barrows must have brought the demi-brigade of Gates to "finish off" the Confederates. Unfortunately, Hall died in 1867 without solving the identity of these two regiments and Gates never admitted that the idea for his movement to the right was anyone else's orders but his own.

³²⁵Colonel Norman J. Hall, August 18, 1866 letter to John B. Bachelder, in Bachelder Correspondence, New Hampshire Historical Society, Microfilm Reel 1, p. 76a.

Aside from the flanking movement by Stannard's Brigade, the most influential movement in shutting down any attempt by Pickett's Division to establish a foothold within the Union line was by the two regiments of Hall's Brigade which were in its second line on the crest of the ridge--the 19th Massachusetts and the 42nd New York. Colonel Arthur Devereux, who was ordered to the relief of Webb's Pennsylvanians by Hancock while the latter rode down towards Stannard's position, wrote at various times of his reminiscences of that day and his participation in it. In an 1878 report Devereux noted that his position in the second line impeded his active involvement in the advance and attack stages of the charge of Pickett's Division, but that he saw the opportunity to engage the enemy during the repulse stage:

"There were no troops to support the single front line except myself. Unable to do anything actively because of our troops in front, and receiving no order, but watching an opportunity to be of service, I was about to move when General Hancock came riding up, as he always did when the commander's presence was needed, and as he rushed past the left of our line I halted him, and pointed out how completely our line was broken at that point, and asked permission to put my troops in there. I was told to 'get in there quick!' Colonel Mallon was near me, and I ordered him to put his regiment in on the double-quick, and put my own regiment instantly in motion, and side by side the two regiments went up and filled the gap. The head of Pickett's column was just breaking through the little oak grove. We were just in time to meet them, and became in this way the only force directly in their front.

"Both lines were stopped and the question was which could make an advance. The two lines stood and fired into each other, at a distance (which I carefully measured after the fight) of a little short of fifteen paces. Being able to stop their direct advance, General Webb and Colonel Hall were able to rally their men, assisted by General Alex. Hayes on the right, Harrow, Stannard and other troops from Newton's command on the left.

"Our troops made a rush forward, and it seemed as if what remained of the enemy almost simultaneously threw down their arms. . . ." 326

According to this account by Devereux, the two regiments under his immediate command met the enemy (which had obviously overrun the 69th Pennsylvania) coming through the clump of trees. This would mean that the 19th Massachusetts was east of the trees, and there they stood and fired at the Confederates until Harrow and Gates, accompanied by the rest of Hall's Brigade, came up and added their momentum, which caused a grand rush forward. Devereux strengthened these assumptions in a letter to Major Samuel Roberts of the 72nd Pennsylvania Infantry on November 11, 1883:

"In answer to your inquiry I can state that the Nineteenth regiment and the Forty-second New York were put in motion by me. Both regiments moved directly up to the front of the little oak-grove, then unoccupied by any of our troops. Webb's left being forced and Hall's right refused, and the head of Armistead's brigade appearing. . . . Webb was on the field when the large meeting took place soon after the war,* and we do not differ. I had been behind the front line, unable to use my men, but watching a chance. My men came up in perfect order and filled the gap and stopped the head of the attacking column. My previous non-connection with the fight on the third day, up to that movement, gave me an opportunity to know what was going on and move with a definite purpose. It was then that I asked Hancock's permission to put in my troops. . . . Rothermel's picture does not suit me, although he placed me further in advance. I was not there at the moment delineated. . . ." 327

*There was an 1866 meeting on the battlefield for the purpose of marking positions, &c called by Bachelder, who sent invitations to Union and Confederate officers alike.

Hall's right was really not "refused" but in the state of a "half-wheel" previous to their own move to the right towards Webb's Brigade. But, when the 69th Pennsylvania gave ground, combined with this half-wheel (pulling Hall's right flank away from the wall), there was a gap through which Confederates were pouring, and at which Cowan's 1st New York Battery would fire.

327 Survivors of the 72nd Pa. vs. GBMA, et al., p. 310.

Devereux did not waver from his assertion that his regiment was intimately engaged with the enemy on July 3, notwithstanding the statements of the Philadelphia Brigade. In the hopes of setting straight the history of the battle, Devereux wrote to the battlefield historian Bachelder during the years when the field was becoming highly competitive in regards to memorializing regimental positions:

"From my position in the second line I had been watching the course of events unable to make use of my own men up to the time when I saw Webb could not sustain the shock with his front line. I saw that the 69th Pa. were apparently run over but not retreating. The 71st Pa. were giving ground rapidly.

"General Webb had rushed back to his second line (the 72nd Pa.) with the evident purpose of hurrying them forward to meet Pickett's men now swarming over the stone wall. They were immovable notwithstanding Webb's protest and appeals. Hall, finding himself overlapped did the true soldierly act by endeavoring to refuse his right and in that way show a new front to the enemy who were now passing his flank. This left a broad gap open to the Confederates

" . . . We had to move by sharp 'right oblique'. His [Mallon's] regiment being on the right of mine became by this movement in echelon a little in advance. The two regiments passed between Hall's right and the 72nd Pa., still standing immovable.

"We left them (the 72nd Pa.) in our rear when we struck the head of Pickett's column.

"We met them breast to breast, sufficiently proven by the fact that one of my color bearers (Joseph H. DeCastro) knocked down the color bearer of the 14th Va. with his color-staff, picked up the fallen flag and handed it to me.

"As further evidence that we met (Malon and myself) the front of Pickett's charge, it is enough to state that I captured the first four colors of Pickett's column as it then stood and Malon captured another, and



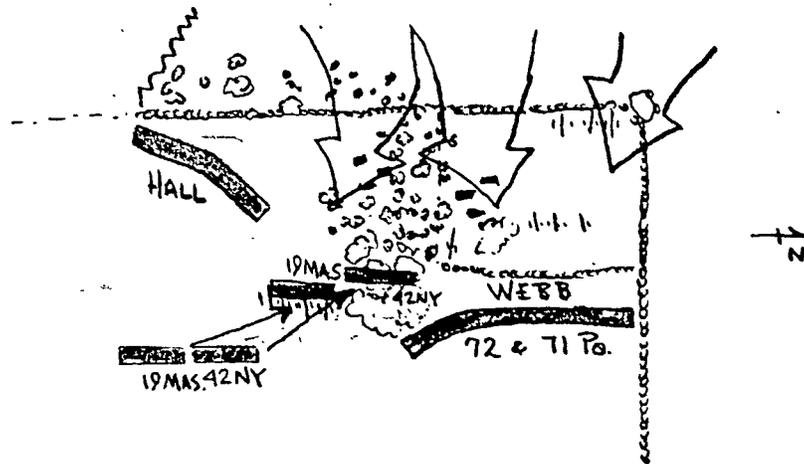
Col.
Arthur F. Devereux
19th Mass.

the bulk of those remaining alive in the enemy's ranks (after the desperate struggle at that point) surrendered through my line.

"The 72nd had not advanced when the surrender came.

"I remember, how after the fight, Gen. Webb spoke so severely of this portion of his brigade to Malon, Hall and myself, standing together in a group at the copse of trees just after I had reformed the division line to its original position, that matter having been intrusted to me." 328

The movement as described by Devereux is illustrated below to show where the two regiments were engaged at the start, before the grand rush forward by everyone.



As already stated, Devereux's comment that he and Mallon captured five flags between them from "Pickett's column" is not enough to justify that they did indeed meet the enemy's front. The 42nd New York's captured flag was not from Pickett's column anyway; the 22nd North Carolina belonged to Scales' Brigade, which was not a front line to begin with, but supports which came up to the front at the close of the action (and primarily on Hays' front).

It is also worth noting Devereux's comments regarding Webb's reactions to

328 Colonel A. F. Devereux, July 22, 1889 letter to John B. Bachelder, in Bachelder Correspondence, New Hampshire Historical Society, microfilm reel 5.

the failure of the 72nd Pennsylvania to advance at the critical moment.

Because Devereux, like Theodore Gates further down the Union line, had quasi-command of a demi-brigade, he wrote at various times in later years in order to accurately report the movements and activities of his separated unit. Because Devereux's two regiments were advanced just as the survivors of Pickett's Division were breaking through the Union line, their arrival at this critical time and place is of more importance than the subsequent movements from the left of the Union line (e.g., Hall, Harrow, and Gates). Devereux himself saw his role in the battle reflecting this importance:

"I have always felt a reverential awe of the responsibility resting on these two regiments during that conflict. They were advanced before I could anticipate what use could be made of them and halted just at the spot, as it proved, where they could hurl, with full effect, right against the front of Pickett's column which had actually pierced our lines and gained its objective point. They were the only troops in prompt striking distance. They were under full command and perfect order, sent forward to the performance of a specific purpose. Their arrival steadied Hall's and Harrow's swaying line; enabled Webb to rally his command once more; made effective Stannard's throwing out perpendicularly to the line, on the left, and Hayes' rush from the right; formed a cul-de-sac, and held the enemy in the jaws of a vise whose resistless pressure must inevitably crush. If they had not been there, who will say what might have happened?" 329

Although Devereux certainly overstated his case (especially regarding the flanking movements by Stannard and Hays' right wing), it is true that the two regiments effectively "plugged" the dam which would hold this High Water Mark of the Confederacy. Had not Devereux's command been there, the Union line would have been split in two momentarily, and perhaps the Confederacy

329 Waite, pp. 245-246.

would have had a chance to establish a foothold with the few regiments left after the attack. However, Devereux was there and his two regiments blocked the path through the little oak grove between the brigades of Webb and Hall which would have led to a different history of the battle. By effectively "damming up" this "High Tide", the Union forces in the Angle did indeed form a cul-de-sac, which surrounded the survivors following Armistead on three sides. From this semicircular position they were able to finally defeat the last of Pickett's men, whose end was hastened by the arrival and participation of the second wave from the left--Hall, Harrow, and Gates.

The 19th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment was proud of the reputation it won at Gettysburg, and the history of the regiment detailed the events leading to the capture of the four Confederate colors:

"The four rebel colors taken were all captured during the hand to hand fighting. Corporal Joseph H. DeCastro, of Co. I, and Private John Robinson, Co. I, Sergt. Benjamin H. Jellison, Co. C, and Private Benjamin Falls, of Co. A, each got one.

"Benjamin Falls captured his flag at the stone wall, taking it from the rebel color bearer's hands. When he reached the wall, he saw the flag flying above it, and supposing it to have been left there, he took hold of it, but it could not be moved. Looking over the wall, he saw that a rebel soldier still had hold of it. Falls raised his musket on which was the bayonet, and, holding it like a spear over the Johnnie, said, 'Hut, Tut! Let alone of that or I'll run ye through.' He captured the flag and the 'Johnnie too.'

"The flag of the Fourteenth Virginia regiment was captured by Sergt. Benjamin H. Jellison, of Co. C, and, in addition, he succeeded in capturing a squad of prisoners, bringing them in with the captured flag. This flag was handed to Second Lieut. Joseph Snelling." 330

330 Ibid., p. 246.

Hall gave a receipt to Devereux on July 4, 1863, for the battle flags of the 57th Virginia, 53rd Virginia, 14th Virginia, and "one with the number of the regiment torn out, supposed to be the 19th Va. Inf'y," which were all captured by the regiment on July 3. The first three belonged to Armistead's Brigade, while the 19th (?) belonged to Garnett's.

Devereux had doubts whether all four should have been credited to the 19th Massachusetts, but often conveniently forgot about these doubts (as can be seen in his 1889 letter to Bachelder, p. 260). In the regimental history, however, Devereux confessed to these doubts:

"In reference to the capture of four stands of colors by my regiment, I believe it to be true that the colors of one of the regiments, which were handed by Gen. Alex. S. Webb to one of my men, who in turn handed them to me, were captured by the Seventy-second Pennsylvania, and the credit belongs to them." 331

As already noted by Devereux and McDermott, the 72nd Pennsylvania did not advance to the wall until after the fighting was over, so how much "credit" that regiment deserved for obtaining the flag is unclear.

The adjutant of the 19th Massachusetts Infantry, William A. Hill, described the movements and participation of the regiment over twenty-five years after the battle:

"[General Hancock] came riding along the line. Colonel Devereux was in company with the Forty-second and he brought him and called his attention to the break in our front, and a little to the right, down to the stone wall. Some conversation passed between them, which I did not hear. At once a command was given that two regiments to move on a right oblique in the direction of the copse of trees. The regiment immediately, together with the Forty-second New York, on its right, moved by a right oblique into the copse of trees and engaged the head of Pickett's column, having a hand-to-hand fight in the copse of trees and beyond it

331 Ibid., pp. 247, 254.

to the stone wall directly in front and to the right."

"After reaching the copse of trees, the 42nd New York was on the right of the Nineteenth. As they right-obliqued into the copse of trees, the left of the Nineteenth seemed to wheel more and came into the enemy's flank. I was directly near the regimental line and as near to the colonel as possible; as near as you could locate the right in the confusion of a movement like that; it was a grand rush."

"When we got into the copse of trees, there was, as I have already said, a hand-to-hand fight between the enemy and the Forty-second New York and the Nineteenth Massachusetts. That fighting continued desperately without any appreciable results for some minutes. At times the advantage seemed to be with the enemy. At other times it seemed to be with us, at all events, after some minutes, there seemed to be a pressure forward with our men, and all at once, with that movement, the enemy came in in large numbers, into our lines, it seemed to me there must have been two thousand men. We remained in that position, between the copse of trees and the stone wall, not joining at the time the line with the Sixty-ninth at the stone wall. The fighting, of course, ceased, as soon as those men threw down their arms and came in. Then there appeared to be a lull in the battle and our men went down to about the angle, where the Sixty-ninth were, at all events, only, I suppose, to see the Sixty-ninth. . . . There was no fighting at this point after the enemy came in. The few who retired to get back across the field were not followed up and there was no fire, except an occasional shot. There was no organized fire I mean. The men who went down there afterward seemed to be prompted more by a sense of curiosity than through any need of their presence there. I am free to say that when I got there the fighting was practically over.

"I captured four flags. They were captured between the copse of trees and the extreme point reached by our men. The colors belonged to the Fourteenth, Nineteenth, Fifty-seventh and another, which I have forgotten, all Virginia regiments."

"The Sixty-ninth appeared to be fighting on their own hook. They did not yield one inch and the enemy swarmed right over them but whenever they got a chance to get in a shot here and there they let the enemy have it. They

seemed to be, say, from the edge of the copse of trees to the middle of it.

"[After the Confederates got over the stone wall they discovered] they were surrounded by troops on three sides, the front, flank and rear, and the men were fighting them wherever they found them, regardless of any orders or formation." 332

This testimony of Lieutenant Hill confirmed many of the claims made by the 69th Pennsylvania; viz., that that Pennsylvania regiment did not retreat or fall back from the wall, but was overrun and in a confused state, fighting hand to hand in places with the enemy. He also agreed that those regiments other than the 69th Pennsylvania who claimed to have made it to the wall did not get there until the fighting was "practically over." Hill also stated that his regiment did most of their fighting within the copse of trees area, where they first met the enemy overrunning Webb's line.

The regimental history of the 19th Massachusetts dealt with their sphere of activity during the attack and repulse, supplementing the testimony of Lieutenant Hill:

"Hall's right, overlapped has to sag back, swaying to the rear because of the pressure, but swaying forward again as the ocean surges against a rock. Regimental organization is lost, ranks are eight or ten deep,-- pushing struggling, refusing to yield, but almost impotent for good.

"A gap opens between Webb and Hall for a brief instant, at the time when there was a sudden lull in the firing of the cannon. . . .

"'Mallon! We must move!' shouts Col. Devereux to his friend, the commander of the Forty-Second New York. Just then a headlong rush of horses' feet, spurred to the utmost, comes up the hollow from behind. . . .
[Hancock] nearly tramples upon the men of the Nine-

332Survivors of the 72nd Pa. vs. GBMA et al, pp. 208-211 passim.

teenth. His horse is thrown upon his haunches and just then Col. Devereux cries out to him:--'See! Their colors! They have broken through! Shall I get in there?'

"Like a bolt of flame the little line is launched upon the enemy on the south side of the 'Clump of Trees.' The first line is struck and broken through. The heroic regiment pauses an instant to gather breath and then, with a furious bound, goes on to the second line. As the men break through the first line, Maj. Rice is in front. With a cry 'Follow me, boys!' he dashes forward and is the first man to come into contact with the second line. He is severely wounded through the thigh and falls inside the enemy's lines.

"The two lines come together with a shock which stops them both and causes a slight rebound. For several minutes they face and fired into each other at a distance of fifteen paces, (as measured after the battle). Everything seems trembling in the balance. The side that can get in forward motion first will surely win.

"The men in blue are jammed in, five and six deep. Sometimes there are groups which are even deeper and every time a man stoops to load, others crowd in ahead of him so that he will have to elbow his way through in order to get another chance to fire.

"All can not be in the front rank, and the men in the rear are dodging around, firing through openings made by the changing crowd, no matter how small. There is little doubt that many are wounded in this manner, because of the rapid changes being made as the entire mass forges ahead. Muskets are exploding all around, flashing their fire almost in one's face and so close to the head as to make the ears ring--and so the battle rages.

"A battery had followed the Nineteenth Massachusetts and Forty Second New York, and, in an instant more, from rear, right and left, at pistol range, these guns poured in an iron shower.* Webb's brigade came charging down upon the left. It cleared its front. Downward to the wall they forced the rebels back and for another twenty minutes, with ball and steel and rifles clubbed, hand to hand, they plied the awful work.

*Probably Parson's New Jersey Battery or Fitzhugh's Battery K, 1st New York. See ORs, vol. 27, part 1, p. 896.

"A rebel color bearer came out between the trees in front of Webb and placed his battle flag upon one of Cushing's guns,--and fell dead beside it. Another ran out to get it, but before reaching the gun he too fell dead. Then several men rushed out together. They all fell about the piece and the rebel flag still waved on the Union cannon. Subsequently two more flags were placed upon the gun, all of which were captured, one of them by Corporal Joseph DeCastro, of the Nineteenth Massachusetts, who had become separated from his command and had joined the 72d Pennsylvania regiment in the tumult."

"Although organizations were more or less broken up and confusion reigned everywhere, most of the men of the Nineteenth gathered about its colors, thus, in a measure, holding its identity. Col. Mallon and the Forty-Second New York had by this time wrapped around the right of the grove a little. The opposing lines were standing as if rooted, dealing death into each other. There they stood and would not move.

"Foot to foot, body to body and man to man they struggled, pushed, and strived and killed. Each had rather die than yield. . . .

"The gallant Vermont brigade closed in upon the right flank of the great column in front. Woodruff advanced his battery far out upon the plain in front of Howard's corps and opened fire upon their left rear. . . ."

"Ben' Jellison of Co. C, instantly grabbed both [of our] colors and planted them within three yards of the enemy's front.

"Inspired by that brave deed, the men sprang forward like a thunderbolt and followed their colors. A strange resistless impulse seemed to seize the whole Union line. It seemed actually to leap forward at every point. The enemy stood their ground and for a moment the scene of blood was all renewed."

"The Republic was the stake for which they had played amid that 'Clump of Trees,' through which were scattered the dead and wounded of the old Nineteenth Massachusetts." 333

It is interesting to note that the regimental history stated that the fighting in the Angle area, from the clump of trees to the stone wall, progressed

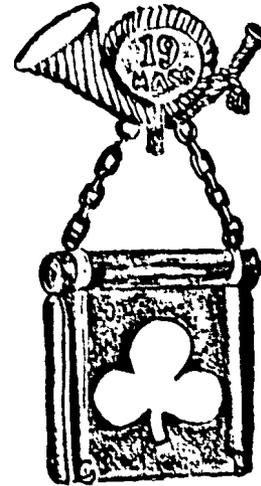
333 Waitt, pp. 239-243 passim.

for some twenty minutes. As will be seen from many accounts this figure (or something between fifteen and thirty minutes) was frequently quoted by participants as the duration of the fighting in this critical area. While the 69th Pennsylvania disagreed with that figure--noting that the fighting was quickly over before any other unit was heavily engaged--many Union and Confederate memoirs contradict the "instant victory" claim. Latter-day historians (even those writing in the nineteenth century) accepted the word of the 69th Pennsylvania, and derided all accounts such as the above, saying it was impossible for so small a force of Confederates to have held the Army of the Potomac at bay for twenty minutes. According to these types, the soldiers were too confused as to duration of time because the fighting was so intense. After all, a soldier in battle does not stop to check his watch for the time every five minutes or so. Each second seemed an eternity, so reasoned the historians. But, the historians did not reckon that these were veteran soldiers, accustomed to marches, picket duty, drill, battles, and sometimes boredom. Every one of these units (except one) in Gibbon's Division had seen service since the first year of the war; only the 19th Maine had a shorter span of service, having been organized in 1862. It seems more probable to trust the time estimates of veteran soldiers than recruits, but to accept the word of Confederate memoirs and those Union accounts that theorized a twenty-minute conflict would mean that the Confederates came awfully close to achieving their objective (if supported). Many historians were not willing to concede that point, and were therefore not willing to accept the twenty-minute conflict repeated by the soldiers on both sides. But, for Harrow's Brigade and the demi-brigade of Gates to have been engaged at all near the clump of trees, it would have to have been more than the quick fight described by the 69th Pennsylvania. The troops on the division's

left would have needed at least the twenty minutes to leave their positions by regiment or brigade and move to the right.

Captain John P. Reynolds, who designed the regimental badge of the 19th Massachusetts, confirmed the reminiscences of the regimental history:

"A Battery had followed these two regiments [19th Massachusetts and 42nd New York] into the vortex of fire and within pistol range 'goes into battery' pouring in its iron shower. The remainder of Hall's Brigade rushes towards the left (sic?). For twenty minutes, at this point, ball, steel and clubbed musket plied their awful work. A Confederate color bearer rushed upon Cushing's Battery, planted his color against one of the guns, and died instantly. Another rushed out to recover the color, and he, too, fell dead. Subsequently several rushed to the gun. They all fell about the piece, but the Confederate color, still waved over the Union gun. Two more Confederate colors were planted upon this gun. Corporal Joseph H. DeCastro of the Nineteenth Massachusetts grabbed one of them, dodged to the rear, handed the color to his commander, and returned to the encounter. . . . Although organizations were broken up, the Nineteenth gathered around its colors, thus in a measure holding its identity. The Forty-second New York had wrapped itself around the left of the little grove. What was left of the Union and Confederate lines at this point stood as if rooted, dealing death at each other. Foot to foot, body to body, man to man, both Union and Confederate would rather die than yield. The mass of wounded, dead and dying, entangled the feet of the contestants, and still the work of slaughter among the living went on, deaf to the agony of the sufferers." 334



Unfortunately, this memoir is so much an echo of the regimental history in places, that one or the other has plagiarized the earlier writing.

³³⁴Reynolds, "The Nineteenth Massachusetts at Gettysburg," p. 9.

Major Edmund Rice would receive a medal of honor in later years to honor the "conspicuous bravery" he showed on this day, when he (and not Devereux) personally led the 19th Massachusetts in the counterattack toward Webb's lines. But Major Rice was severely wounded, as already noted, in the thigh "whilst his foot was placed on a man in the enemy's front rank who had partially fallen or purposely kneeled."³³⁵ Rice's account is one of the classics on the charge included in Battles and Leaders:

"The men on the left of our regiment heard the command, and were up and on the run forward before the 42d New York, which did not hear Hancock's order until Colonel Devereux repeated it, had a chance to rise. The line formation of the two regiments was partially broken, and the left of the 19th Massachusetts was brought forward, as though it had executed a right half-wheel. All the men who were now on their feet could see, to the right and front, Webb's wounded men with a few stragglers and several limbers leaving the line, as the battle-flags of Pickett's division were carried over it. With a cheer the two regiments left their position in rear of Hall's right, and made an impetuous dash, racing diagonally forward for the clump of trees. Many of Webb's men were still lying down in their places in ranks, and firing at those who followed Pickett's advance, which, in the meantime, had passed over them. This could be determined by the puffs of smoke issuing from their muskets, as the first few men in gray sprang past them toward the cannon, only a few yards away. But for a few moments only could such a fire continue, for Pickett's disorganized mass rolled over, beat down, and smothered it.

"One battle-flag after another, supported by Pickett's infantry, appeared along the edge of the trees, until the whole copse seemed literally crammed with men. As the 19th and 42d passed along the brigade line, on our left, we could see the men prone in their places, unshaken, and firing steadily to their front, beating back the enemy. I saw one leader try several times to jump his horse over our line. He was shot by some of the men near me.

"The two regiments, in a disorganized state, were now almost at right angles with the remainder of the brigade,--the left of the 19th Massachusetts being but a few yards distant,--and the officers and men were

³³⁵Arthur F. Devereux, "Some Account of Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg," in Bachelder Correspondence, New Hampshire Historical Society, Microfilm Reel 5.

falling fast from the enfilading fire of the hostile line in front, and from the direct fire of those who were crowded in among the trees. The advance of the two regiments became so thinned that there was a pause. Captain [Wilson B.] Farrell, of the 1st Minnesota, with his company, came in on my left. As we greeted each other he received his death wound, and fell in front of his men, who now began firing. As I looked back I could see our men, intermixed with those who were driven out of the clump of trees a few moments before, coming rapidly forward, firing, some trying to shoot through the intervals and past those who were in front.

"The gap in the line seemed to widen, for the enemy in front, being once more driven by a terrible musketry in their very faces, left to join those who had effected an entrance through Webb's line.

"The men now suffered from the enfilading fire of the enemy who were in the copse. Seeing no longer an enemy in front, and annoyed by this galling fire from the flank, the 7th Michigan and 59th New York, followed directly by the 20th Massachusetts, and the regiments of Harrow's brigade, left their line, faced to the right, and in groups, without regimental or other organization, joined in the rush with those already at the edge of the clump of trees, all cheering and yelling, 'Hurrah! for the white trefoil!'. . . .

"This was one of those periods in action which are measurable by seconds. The men near seemed to fire very slowly. Those in rear, though coming up at a run, seemed to drag their feet. Many were firing through the intervals of those in front, in their eagerness to injure the enemy. This manner of firing, although efficacious, sometimes tells on friend instead of foe. A sergeant at my side received a ball in the back of his neck by this fire. All the time the crush toward the enemy in the copse was becoming greater. The men in gray were doing all that was possible to keep off the mixed bodies of men who were moving upon them swiftly and without hesitation, keeping up so close and continuous a fire that at last its effects became terrible. I could feel the touch of the men to my right and left, as we neared the edge of the copse. The grove was fairly jammed with Pickett's men, in all positions, lying and kneeling, Back from the edge were many standing and firing over those in front. . . . Every foot of ground was occupied by men engaged in mortal combat, who were in every possible position which can be taken while under arms, or lying wounded or dead.

"A Confederate battery, near the Peach Orchard, commenced firing, probably at the sight of Harrow's men leaving their line and closing to the right upon Pickett's column. A cannon-shot tore a horrible passage through the dense crowd of men in blue, who were gathering outside the trees; instantly, another shot followed, and fairly cut a road through the mass. . . . [It] was but a few steps to the front, where they could at once extinguish that destructive musketry and be out of the line of the deadly artillery fire. . . ." 336

Some of the more striking points in this excerpt from the Rice account include his affirmation that Pickett's men swept over the 69th Pennsylvania and extended into the clump of trees; that Rice saw a mounted officer shot from his horse on Hall's front who could only have been General James Kemper;³³⁷ that the remainder of Hall's Brigade came to the right only after being enfiladed by Confederate fire from the clump of trees, forcing them to change front; that many of the Union forces were injured by "friendly fire" in the confusion in the clump of trees area; that the Confederate "battery" (probably the five guns run forward from the Peach Orchard by Major Haskell of Henry's Battalion) advanced by Alexander to support Pickett hurt Harrow's Brigade (as well as Stannard's Brigade) during their flanking movement to the right.

Whereas Major Rice stated that the 59th New York joined the remainder of Hall's Brigade during their movement to the clump of trees, most other authorities disagreed, claiming that the 59th (like the 69th Pennsylvania) did not leave their position. First Lieutenant Henry N. Hamilton wrote Colonel Bachelder within a year after the battle to capsulize the participation of his small regiment (only four companies present):

³³⁶Rice, "Repelling Lee's Last Blow at Gettysburg," pp. 388-389.

³³⁷Kemper was the only officer unhorsed that close to Hall's front.

"Severe skirmishing was kept up until 4 P. M. of the 3rd inst. All the Rebel batteries concentrated themselves upon our Division.

"Pickets' Division (Rebel) advanced and engaged us, both the Regts. on our right and left gave way, leaving our Regiment to contend with them alone. Fortunately we received timely aid, and the entire Rebel Division were either captured, killed or wounded." 338

Lieutenant Hamilton's assertion that the four companies remained steadfast while the 7th Michigan and 69th Pennsylvania "gave way" is not very credible, considering the claims of the Pennsylvania regiment and the fact that the 7th Michigan remained on the brigade line until the brigade moved to the right. However, considering the confusion of the fighting in this area, with the Virginians overrunning the Union line while units were leaving that line to assist other hard-pressed regiments, it is likely Hamilton believed his left "gave way" and that the right was beaten back (and not overrun). In any event, Hamilton's account affirms that the 59th did not join the movement to the trees, but stayed on the brigade line. Cowan's artillery fire, from behind the 59th New York, would necessarily have to compensate for these troops on his left front and on his front across the open gateway.

Major Sylvanus Curtis, who would eventually become acting regimental commander, reported the following concerning the participation of the 7th Michigan Infantry:

"The enemy's first line advanced to within 20 rods, when they commenced moving by the left flank, which obliged us to direct our fire to the right oblique, in order to keep them within range as long as possible. Our right flank having been completely turned by the giving way of a portion of the Second Brigade / Webb's_, we were ordered to fall back a short distance Again rallying to the assistance of other regiments which now came up, the enemy were finally driven back, and the

338 First Lieutenant Henry N. Hamilton, April 22, 1864 letter to John B. Bachelder, in Bachelder Correspondence, New Hampshire Historical Society, Microfilm reel 1, pp. 113-114.

regiment again occupied its former position.

Lieutenant-Colonel Steele fell near the close of the engagement, and while gallantly rallying his command to repel the (for a time) successful advance of the enemy."

"They soon came within a very short distance, and our fire was opened upon them with terrible effect, mowing them down by scores. Still they came on till within a few yards of us, when the order was given to fix bayonets. . . . Many of the enemy at this time crawled on their hands and feet under the sheet of fire, and, coming up to our lines, surrendered themselves prisoners. The enemy, soon finding our fire too hot for them, moved by the left flank, and joined in the assault upon the crest of the hill, driving our line from its position.

"At this time Colonel Steele received an order to form the regiment nearly at right angles to its then position, with the intention of attacking the enemy's right flank, which had become exposed. Owing to the great noise, the order was not understood by any excepting those nearest Colonel Steele. The rest of the officers seeing the men, as they supposed, retreating, made all efforts to rally them. A part of them came back; the remainder kept on with Colonel Steele, who advanced with them to the crest of the hill, when he fell, instantly killed by a bullet through his brain. The greater part of the regiment remained in their works and did great execution by a well-directed fire upon the flanks of the enemy." 339

The latter, supplemental report of Major Curtis is more reflective of the kind of activities in which the Michigan regiment was engaged. For one thing, it is a better indication than most of the kind of firepower commanded by the front of Hall and Harrow, without resorting to the military cliches of the Civil War reports--e. g., "terrible musketry", "withering fire", "great effect", &c. Here, Major Curtis describes the very effect that his fire had upon the attacking Confederates. It caused many to literally sink to their knees beneath it, and crawl into the Union lines to escape it, while others were forced to either move to their left (where Webb's fire had all but ceased) or die on their feet.

339 ORs, vol. 27, part 1, pp. 448, 450.

Furthermore, Major Curtis imparts to us an insight into the confusion that reigned along the division line during this repulse. While the commanding officer of the 7th Michigan was trying to get his men to follow him to the clump of trees, his subordinate officers were working against him trying to rally the men back to the original line. That they were successful in undermining Colonel Amos Steele's unheard orders is indicated by Major Curtis' bland statement that the "greater part" of the unit remained on the line, while only a portion of the regiment accompanied Steele. This is also borne out by the remark of General Webb to his father that Hall sent him few men, but many flags, which gave the enemy the impression that Webb was getting many reinforcements. (see page 248 for Webb's reference) Poor Steele did not live to see the justification of his efforts, although his mere presence steeled the swaying line of the 72nd Pennsylvania.

G. W. LaPointe, also of the 7th Michigan, believed that the movement by Steele, Devereux, and Mallon was less important in steadying the line than a morale booster of a familiar cry:

"Do you remember the influence brought upon the soldiers, in order to have them rally and recapture the works or line, forced from them by Longstreet's famous charge? After our line had been forced back on the hill and all was confusion, and all the troops of different Regiments were mingled in one mass, some Staff Officer came riding through the ranks and said 'For God's sake men, hold the line a few moments longer. Genl McClellan is within a short distance with fifty thousand militia,' and upon that, all seemed to join in spreading the news, and the whole line made for the front again, forcing back the enemy, recapturing the guns, with many prisoners." 340

In this version of an oft-repeated tale, LaPointe told of the doubts many Union soldiers still had about the outcome of the battle and about their commanding

³⁴⁰G? W. LaPointe, May 24, 1882 letter to John B. Bachelder, in Bachelder Correspondence, New Hampshire Historical Society.

general, George G. Meade. The very name of George McClellan was still able to inspire the soldier to his duty, just as the man was still believed by many to be the only salvation for the Army of the Potomac. McClellan had not commanded since 1862, but his influence was still powerful over the minds of many soldiers who still regarded him as a new Napoleon. LaPointe was not the only one who remembered this ploy by officers to get their soldiers to hang on just a little while longer. Different versions of this same story were recounted by troops all along the line, and in every corps. The ironic part of this story could be that the staff officer responsible for rallying the 7th Michigan with this cry of McClellan-to-the-rescue, was the one who was most responsible for returning the regiment to its works, and abandoning Colonel Steele to his fate.

On the extreme right of Hall's line was the 20th Massachusetts Regiment, whose late commander (killed the day previously) was a descendant of the patriot Paul Revere. The regimental history of this unit detailed the movements and defense by the 20th Massachusetts during the repulse:

"Hundreds fell at every discharge, and as Stannard's brigade struck the column on the left, the men crowded toward the centre; and before the stone wall, behind which stood Webb's brigade, was reached, all alignment had disappeared and a great mass of men came rushing on with the heroic Armistead at their head waving his sword. . . . Colonel Hall quickly moved his brigade by the right flank a little to the rear, so that when halted and brought to the front, it formed another curved line, and the two brigades nearly joined, making a half circle about the enemy. The opposing forces were but a few yards apart: . . ." ³⁴¹

While this description is quite sparse and vague, it recapitulates the half-circle line or cul-de-sac formed by the brigades of Webb and Hall, which encapsulated the Confederate survivors.

³⁴¹Bruce, pp. 293-294.

The report by the senior surviving officer, Captain Henry Abbott, gave a more detailed description of the participation of the 20th Massachusetts Volunteers:

" . . . [The] enemy having got within 3 or 4 rods of us, when the regiment rose up and delivered two or three volleys, which broke the rebel regiment opposite us entirely to pieces, leaving only scattered groups.

" . . . [Colonel] Macy drew my attention to a spot some rods to the right of us, near a clump of trees, where the enemy seemed to have broken in. The regiment immediately got orders to face to the right and to file to the right, with the intention of forming a line at right angles with the original one; in other words, changing front to the right. The noise was such, however, that it was impossible to make any order heard. An order having been given, though it could not be heard, was naturally interpreted to be an order to retire and form a new line not outflanked by the enemy. The regiment accordingly retired a few rods, but in the most perfect order. . . . [The] regiment was hurried to the important spot. When they arrived there, there was a very thin line contending with the enemy, who was behind a rail fence, with the exception of a small number that climbed over, who were speedily dispatched. The enemy poured in a severe musketry fire, and at the clump of trees they burst also several shells, More-over, the contest round this important spot was very confused, every man fighting on his own hook, different regiments being mixed together, and half a dozen colors in a bunch, it being impossible to preserve a regimental line." 342

Captain Abbott remembered an almost identical event in his regiment as in the 7th Michigan, to his right. The noise and confusion of the battle drowned out the orders of the colonel, which attempted to rally the regiment to the right at the trees. Unlike the 7th Michigan, however, which mostly stayed along the brigade line, the 20th Massachusetts fell back to the ridge. Whether or not they were in "perfect order" depends upon the honesty of the reporter. Regardless of order, the regiment eventually moved to the clump of trees, where they joined the "thin" line already there, adding to the disorganized mass. The statement that half a dozen colors were together

³⁴²ORs, vol. 27, part 1, pp. 445-446.

in a bunch reinforces the idea that the Confederates probably had; that many enemy regiments were descending upon them from all sides.

Lieutenant Colonel G. W. Macy, commanding the 20th Massachusetts on that day, was severely wounded before the movement to the right was completed, which left Captain Abbott in command. Macy, however, wrote later of the incidents which directly related to his command before he was wounded:

" . . . [The] right of the 20th rested on the 7th Michigan and on the right of the 7th was the 59th New York a very small body of men.

"It was immediately on the right of the 59th that the enemy broke through and in my opinion the enemy had penetrated as far as the guns* when I got my order from Col. Hall to move my command upon the flank of the enemy and go at them. My order was brought by Capt. [George W.] Leach and was this: 'Col. Hall directs that you move the 20th in rear of the line and attack the flank of enemy as they come in, at once.'

"Seeing the impossibility of executing any regular movement I at once ordered Abbott who commanded the right Company to move in a mass on the enemy, knowing that a hand to hand fight was coming.

"I told Abbott that I would follow with the other companies. Capt. Abbott led gallantly off and his men followed him without regard to order; but in a small compact body with guns charged and bayonets fixed, other companies followed in the same way." 343

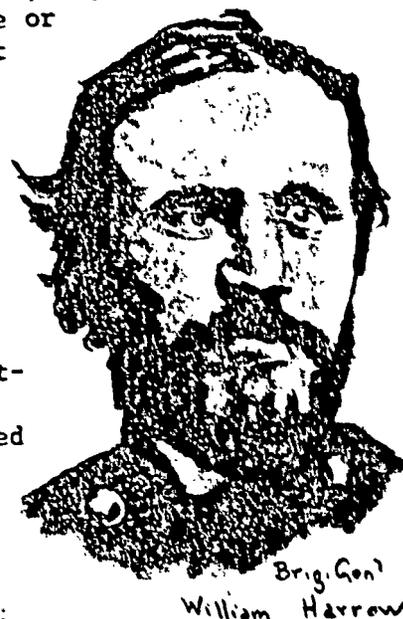
*Should be the guns of Cushing's Battery which were not drawn down to the wall, but were almost at the crest of Cemetery Ridge.

From Macy's account it is obvious that the 20th Massachusetts was broken up and disorganized before it even got to the clump of trees, with each company separated and in mass, following each other in wave after wave. But the regimental history of the unit presented a different view, indicating that

³⁴³ Colonel G. W. Macy, May 12, 1886 letter to John B. Bachelder, in Bachelder Correspondence, New Hampshire Historical Society, Microfilm Reel 1, pp. 95-96.

the 20th Massachusetts was in an organized line at the trees until the conflict there endured for a while:

"Eager men broke from the line and pushed up close to the enemy, until all appearance of formation was lost, and the regiment was no longer an organization. In little groups or singly these heroic soldiers stood up to the work and poured forth the deadly bullets, unconsciously moving forward until in actual contact, when they used the butts of their muskets and in this manner beat down the foe. No one can tell exactly how long this contest lasted, but Major Abbott, than whom no braver soldier stood on Cemetery Ridge that day, or one better qualified by his coolness to give a correct estimate, reported that it was about thirty minutes. Whether more or less it is useless to attempt to determine, but the time came when the survivors of Pickett's men saw that further effort was useless, and fourteen hundred of them surrendered in close proximity to the rail fence. Others attempted escape and were persuaded by our victorious troops as far as the Emmetsburg Road, and many more prisoners were taken by the way." 344



Brig. Gen.
William Harrow

Here is another testimony by a participant that the fighting around the clump of trees was longer than that claimed by the 69th Pennsylvania. Since the 20th Massachusetts was the last unit of Hall's Brigade to reach the clump there would have been sufficient time for units farther down the line on the left to have reached the area in time for the conflict.

Brigadier-General William Harrow, who commanded the left brigade on Gibbon's Division, added his own estimate of the duration of the fighting at the Angle in his official report of the battle: In that report, Harrow stated that the command met

" . . . the shock from the enemy's heaviest lines and supports near the crest of the ridge. Here the contest raged with almost unparalleled ferocity for

344 Bruce, pp. 294-295.

nearly an hour, when the enemy was routed and fled in disorder.

"I have no words to express the unwavering courage and daring of the entire command in this the final struggle. Many prisoners, including many officers, were taken here; also many battle-flags were captured." ³⁴⁵

While Harrow's report may not have clarified details of the movement and fighting, it certainly was paramount among all accounts and reports in stretching the length of the fighting around the clump of oaks to an hour. Perhaps because Harrow claimed his brigade fought there for such a long period of time, Webb resented him and his claim. As already noted, Webb gave any credit of relief to Hall, primarily, and would acquiesce only in that Harrow and others assisted him, but did not save him. This dispute between Harrow and Webb will be examined further in the appendix regarding monumentation on the field after the war.

Within Harrow's Brigade, the participants later had more to say relative to their actions during the repulse than Harrow himself did in his official report. On the right of Harrow's Brigade, just left of Hall's Brigade-left (the 20th Massachusetts) was the 19th Maine Infantry. The regimental history of that unit described the events along the line:

"General Gibbon, in his life-time, informed the writer that while hurrying with the Nineteenth Maine and 20th Massachusetts toward the captured angle of the wall, he fell wounded among our troops. . . . The Nineteenth Maine hurried to the right and joined the troops in front of Pickett's men. It was here that Colonel [Francis E.] Heath was wounded. Several regiments from our own Brigade and that of Colonel Hall hurried to Webb's assistance, and without much organization, were massed, many deep, around the hapless Confederates who penetrated our

³⁴⁵ ORs, vol. 27, part 1, p. 420.

lines. For ten or fifteen minutes the contending forces, in some places within rifle length of each other and in other places hopelessly mingled, fought with desperation. Those in front used the butt ends of their rifles, and those in the rear of the crowd of Union soldiers fired over the heads of those in front, and some of them hurled stones at the heads of Confederates." 346

Silas Adams, then a private in Company F of the 19th Maine, gave his version of the repulse and how it affected the regiment in a paper delivered some years after the war:

"When Pickett's division came within a short distance of our lines, they faced to the left and marched some distance toward our right, thus uncovering that part of the line where the Nineteenth Maine was stationed. By miscalculation that division had struck our lines too far to their right and this movement was necessary in order to throw their greatest weight upon the position around the hill and stone wall held by the Second Division.

"Again they struck our lines at an angle, their left coming into contact with our lines long before their right became engaged and the movement to the left with a left wheel was necessary, while these movements were being made the Union lines were decimating their ranks fearfully. The Nineteenth Maine moved into a position to do, and did do fearful execution in stopping their further progress in that direction. . . .

"When Pickett got within range we opened upon him, but his line of march struck the Second Brigade of our division, which gave way under the shock. / Colonel Heath / immediately put the Nineteenth Maine in motion for the gap, but it was impossible to get them in any order. Everyone wanted to be first there and we went up more like a mob than a disciplined force. However, we got there and in time to help stop the invasion.'

"The position the regiment went into was a little to the left of the copse of trees, where they found troops falling back still fighting heavily. The regiment pressed forward without orders or order, firing and stepping back, allowing the rear men to step forward and fire. Soon they found themselves in front of other troops. Not having time to load, the regiment used bayonets, clubbed with

³⁴⁶Smith, p. 82.

their muskets, and hurled stones to break up their charge and to turn back the determined assault. Finally, the enemy broke in confusion, the Nineteenth Maine following, charging down over the western and most broken slope of the hill, just south of the angle and in front of the copse of trees. . . ." 347

Adams was guilty of hindsight, like other post-war writers, attributing the movement toward the Angle by Pickett's Division to a "miscalculation" by Pickett, so that he had to adjust the direction of his attack to strike the Angle with his "greatest weight". As we shall see, Garnett's men never diverted their attack in any direction, whereas Kemper's Brigade was forced to the left by the flanking movement by Stannard. Armistead never had much choice, since he was following the two other brigades, and would scarcely have followed the same disastrous footsteps taken by Kemper without being seriously enfiladed himself.

Adams placed the point of conflict between the Nineteenth Maine and Pickett's infantrymen just south of the clump of scrub oaks, where their initial contact followed the falling back of some of the 69th Pennsylvania. These troops were probably those companies on the left of the 69th who were engaged in the hand-to-hand fight and overrun. He is also the first participant who said that his regiment, or portions of it, followed the retreating Virginians back over the wall, harrying them on their way with a countercharge. This countercharge, over the "most broken" part of the ridge's slope, was probably over the ground in front of the position of the left of the 69th Pennsylvania, and over the rocky knoll in front of the Angle.

³⁴⁷Captain Silas Adams, "The Nineteenth Maine at Gettysburg," in Ken Bandy and Florence Freeland, compilers, The Gettysburg Papers, vol. II (Dayton, Ohio, 1978), pp. 949-950.

That the 19th Maine suffered from the advanced Confederate cannon during its move to the right, just as Stannard's men were injured by it, was verified by at least one eyewitness account of such a personal tragedy. Sergeant Samuel Smith, Company F, saw the mortal wounding of his first sergeant, Thomas T. Rideout, who fell by his side during the flank movement to the right.³⁴⁸ Sergeant Rideout would die of his wounds on July 18. The chronicles of the Maine regiments at Gettysburg did not mention these incidents specifically, but at least made passing mention of the effects of the artillery firing during the repulse:

"When they came nearer the infantry began to fire, the Nineteenth beginning when they were within three or four hundred yards. The Confederates, as they advanced, obliqued to their left, bringing the weight of their charge to the right of the Nineteenth, and impinging upon Webb's brigade, of Gibbon's division. Webb's Pennsylvanians gave way before it; but their comrades of the Second corps rushed up to restore the line. The Nineteenth Maine was among the first, followed by several regiments on its left. It was a wild charge, with little regard for ranks or files. Volleys were given and received at close quarters. In their anxiety to reach the foe, men thrust their rifles over the shoulders, under the arms and between the legs, of those in the front ranks of the melee. All this went on while Batteries far and near, and of both friend and foe, were throwing shot and shell into the area crowded with the struggling combatants. A little copse of trees, which remains to this day, marked the place of severest conflict. . . . The Nineteenth was at the south edge of the copse of trees. The Confederates were at that moment holding the portion of the Union line where they had broken through, and were within a few yards of the copse. The Nineteenth, with the other troops at hand, were at once ordered forward by General Webb. They moved along the left of the copse down to the wall where the Union line had been, but which was now in possession of the Confederates; there the fighting was hand to hand until the enemy were, by sheer strength pushed beyond the wall. . . ." ³⁴⁹

³⁴⁸ Smith, p. 90.

³⁴⁹ Hamlin, et al., pp. 296-297.

The lieutenant-colonel of the 15th Massachusetts, on the left of the 19th Maine, was George Joslin, whose report after the battle gave no indication of the intensity of the struggle during the repulse. Colonel Joslin dully paraphrased the fighting of the 15th Massachusetts and its movement with the brigade to the right by saying that "an attack of infantry was made by the enemy on the right of our lines and we moved by the right flank a short distance and became hotly engaged."³⁵⁰ Once again we have the stock cliches of the nineteenth-century military format--"hotly engaged"--with no elaboration of the facts beyond that. The regimental history, pertaining particularly to the engagement by the regiment on the previous day, similarly glossed over the actions of the 15th Massachusetts on July 3 after Pickett's Division broke the Union line. The reason for this vagueness may be tied to the fact that Colonel Joslin was the one who again wrote of the incident. In that history, however, Joslin at least indicated that the 15th Massachusetts was beset with the same kind of disorganization which plagued the other units of Hall's and Harrow's Brigades, stating that the regiment moved "by the same spontaneous impulse to meet and hurl back the foe," toward the group of trees.³⁵¹

The only one who seriously considered the involvement of the 15th Massachusetts in the repulse appeared to be A. C. Plaisted, then a private in Company B. Amos Plaisted wrote within five years to Colonel Bachelder, as the spokesman for the regiment in accurately recording the history of the 15th Massachusetts:

³⁵⁰ORS, vol. 27, part 1, p. 423.

³⁵¹Andrew E. Ford, The Story of the Fifteenth Regiment Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry in the Civil War 1861-1864 (Clinton, 1898), p. 276.

"When Webb's Brigade was forced back, Harrow's Brigade was ordered to his support at double quick; we ran all in a huddle and took a position immediately to the left of the copse of trees, and opened fire as best we could, the enemy was safely laid down behind the wall, having planted their flag in the stones and poured a deadly fire into us from behind it, while our shots affected them little more than to prevent their advance further. We stood their fire perhaps five minutes possibly more and lost fearfully, when a private soldier named George H. Cunningham of Co. 'B' of the 15th Mass. Regt. (Harrows' Brigade) cried out 'For God's sake, let us charge, they'll kill us all if we stand here;' and we did charge towards the wall, all in a mass; and the enemy jumped up to run and several attempted to take their flag off the wall, but as soon as they started we stopped and gave them a volley and nearly all lay down again and cried out to stop firing and let them come in, which we did and while a few were coming over the wall, the rest again started on a run towards the Emmitsburg road, when we again opened fire and kept it up until they got out of range. We were obliged to fire through those who were ready to come in and many were killed coming towards us; but nearly all lay down until we ceased firing. A rebel Major crawled over the wall where I stood and I called him a coward. . . . You perhaps remember that the papers stated that the 19th Regt. Mass. Vols., led the charge, which was not true for I claim that the Fifteenth followed Cunningham in advance of Harrow's Brigade. I remember well as soon as we started, Col. Hall of the Second (sic) Brigade, cried out 'forward that Mass. color,' which happened to be another Brigade, and thus the reporters gave the credit to the wrong regt. As evidence of the exact position of the Fifteenth I will say that some of our dead were found close to the trees and I saw one of Co. 'A' fall just to the left of the battery and close to the wall, were in advance of the rest of the Brigade." 352

Plaisted, although sincere in believing the reporters misstated the facts, was obviously confused as to the drift of histories of the battle. As we

352A. C. Plaisted, June 11, 1870 letter to John B. Bachelder, in Bachelder Correspondence, New Hampshire Historical Society, Microfilm Reel 1, pp. 97-98.

have already seen, the 19th Massachusetts under Colonel Devereux did indeed lead the van (along with Mallon's 42nd New York) of regiments which eventually overthrew the remnants of Pickett's Division in the clump of trees area. If Plaisted was casting about for some honors or paramount credit for his regiment, perhaps he should have been more specific in stating that the 15th Massachusetts was the first unit (following the advice of George Cunningham) to drive the enemy from the trees and fight them at the wall itself, thus providing momentum for the other units in the area to do likewise.

Plaisted mentioned in passing a sobering detail which many historians of the battle, as well as casual tourists and uninformed interpreters, overlook--that some of the Confederates who were in the act of surrendering were shot down because the Union soldiers were eager to kill those trying to run away on the other side of them. Why Plaisted called the Southern officer a coward because he crawled over the wall by him is inexplicable, considering the fact that his unit was shooting down unarmed and surrendering prisoners. Supposedly, the braver man would have stood adamantly in front of Plaisted waiting for the bullet to come (mistakenly) crashing through his brain! While retribution for two days of losses was eagerly sought by the 15th Massachusetts, it was regrettable that their frenzy for revenge caused them to inadvertently murder those who had made it that far and so handsomely. Others went to great pains to prevent senseless effusion of blood during the repulse, but there was apparently no one along this sector who was able to speedily halt the fire of the 15th Massachusetts.

The tiny remnants of the 1st Minnesota Infantry joined the brigade in the movement to the clump of trees, and were strengthened in their joint efforts by the addition of the provost guard companies. Companies C and F

of the First Minnesota augmented the number of the regiment, but their close conflict in this repulse would again shatter the unit, since at least 45 more casualties were taken.³⁵³ John W. Plummer recorded briefly the participation of these survivors:

"As they closed together, we (our brigade) marched by flank to confound them, firing at them continually, pouring most of our shot into their flank, where every shot must tell. The Second brigade gave way before the rebels got to them, and commenced to fall back. Our brigade was hurried up, and the Third were brought up to the rescue, and with the Second, which soon rallied again, we charged the rebels. . . ." ³⁵⁴

As brief as Plummer's statement was, it was also riddled with mistakes, and with the kind of arrogance of regimental or brigade pride that discolors later histories with bias and prejudice. As already examined, there was very little of Webb's Brigade that fell back, especially since only the 69th and part of the 71st Pennsylvania Regiments were along the wall; furthermore, the 69th did not fall back before the rebels got to them, but were turned and overrun rather than yield their ground. Plummer also implied that Harrow's Brigade was sent first to the rescue of Webb's position, and that Hall's Brigade came up last.

The report for the 1st Minnesota was about as succinct, but added more details to the story:

"As the enemy approached, we were moved by the right flank to oppose them, firing upon them as we approached, and sustaining their fire, together with the fire of batteries which they had brought up to within short range. . . . At length the regiment and others closed in upon the enemy, and nearly the whole

³⁵³John Quinn Imholte, The First Volunteers--History of the First Minnesota Volunteer Regiment 1861-1865 (Minneapolis, 1963), p. 125.

³⁵⁴Frank Moore, The Rebellion Record: A Diary of American Events, vol. 10 (New York, 1867), p. 180.

of the rebel force which remained alive were taken prisoners. About 500 were captured by this regiment; also the colors of the Twenty-eighth Virginia. . . ."355

The colors of the 28th Virginia, Garnett's Brigade, were captured by Marshall Sherman, of the provost Company C, who was awarded a medal of honor for his deed. Unfortunately, some confusion reigned over just what flag Private Sherman captured. The records published concerning the medal state that Marshall Sherman took the colors of the 58th Virginia, and not the 28th. This would be highly unlikely, since the 58th Virginia was not at Gettysburg, but was in Winchester, Virginia at the time. In another instance, a veteran of the 1st Minnesota implied that Sherman captured a North Carolina flag:

"The last of the color guard when close upon the enemy, was shot through the hand and the flag staff cut in two; Corporal Henry D. O'Brien, of Co. "E", instantly seized the flag by the remnant of the staff, and waving it over his head, rushed right up to the muzzle of the enemy's muskets. Nearly at the moment of victory he too was wounded in the hand."

"The above refers to the time when Pickett's division made the charge, and when the 28th North Carolina Regt. was so close to one artillery that they placed small flags on it." 356

Although the 28th North Carolina was part of the grand assault on July 3 as part of Lane's Brigade, it is unlikely that they were planting flags on Union guns of Cushing or Cowan or Rorty, since they were somewhat further northward. In addition, because Captain Coates specifically mentioned the 28th Virginia in his report as being on the front of the 1st Minnesota, the above account was apparently confused as to state origin of the 28th.

Sergeant James Wright remembered the movement of the 1st Minnesota in its dash to help repel the enemy at the Angle:

³⁵⁵ORs., vol. 27, part 1, p. 425.

³⁵⁶H. D. O'Brien, March 23, 1883 letter to John B. Bachelder, in Bachelder Correspondence, New Hampshire Historical Society, p. 511.

"It was a grand rush to get there in the quickest time, without much regard to the manner of it--and we knew very well what we were there for--and proceeded to business without ceremony. Closing in on them with a rush and a cheer; there was shooting, stabbing and clubbing, for there was no time to reload, and then the bloody work was over. . . . We rushed for the low stone wall where the break had been made, and very quickly all who had passed it were killed, captured or had fled.'" 357

Sergeant Alfred P. Carpenter also recalled the events that surrounded the 1st Minnesota on that day, but his memories were not much more concise. In fact, Sergeant Carpenter stated that desperate fighting continued for two hours, by far the longest duration of fighting mentioned by any participant.

"Men fell about us unheeded, unnoticed. . . . Our muskets became so heated we could no longer handle them. We dropped them and picked up those of the wounded. Our cartridges gave out. We rifled the boxes of the dead.'" 358

Because of the generalities of these statements, it is hard to ascertain what part of the fighting Sergeant Carpenter was describing when he asserted that the fighting lasted two hours. Perhaps he was including all the time that the 1st Minnesota fired, from the time the Confederates crossed the Emmitsburg Road until the end of the repulse. Still, the time could not have surpassed one hour at the most.

Lieutenant William Lochren gave the most detailed description of the action of the 1st Minnesota during the repulse:

". . . [By] the time the Confederates had captured Cushing's Battery, our brigade, mingled with Webb's, was in front of it in a strong, though confused, line at a few rods distance. Just here we were joined by Captain Farrell with Company C of our regiment, the division provost guard, who had promptly obeyed Gibbon's

357 Hage, p. 256.

358 Ibid.

order to join the regiment in resisting the attack. The fire from both sides, so near to each other, was most deadly while it lasted. Corp. Dehn, the last of our color guard, then carrying our tattered flag, was here shot through the hand, and the flagstaff cut in two. Corp. Henry D. O'Brien of Company E instantly seized the flag by the remnant of the staff. . . . O'Brien, who then had the broken staff and tatters of our battle flag, with his characteristic bravery and impetuosity sprang with it to the front at the first sound of the word charge, and rushed right up to the enemy's line, keeping it noticeably in advance of every other color. My feeling at the instant blamed his rashness in so risking its capture. But the effect was electrical. Every man of the First Minnesota sprang to protect its flag, and the rest rushed with them upon the enemy. The bayonet was used for a few minutes, and cobble stones, with which the ground was well covered, filled the air, being thrown by those in the rear over the heads of their comrades. The struggle, desperate and deadly while it lasted, was soon over. Most of the Confederates remaining threw down their arms and surrendered, a very few escaping. Marshall Sherman of Company C here captured the colors of the Twenty-eighth Virginia Regiment. . . . Our loss in killed and wounded in this day's fight was seventeen. Among the killed was Capt. Nathan S. Messick, our commander; also Capt. Wilson B. Farrell, who succeeded to the command on the fall of Capt. Messick, both most gallant and capable officers. . . . Corp. Dehn, the last of the color guard, carried the flag that night, and in the repelling of Pickett's charge, until wounded in the hand when the flagstaff was cut in two as stated. Corp. O'Brien, who then seized the flag, received two wounds in the final melee at the moment of victory; but the flag was grasped by Corp. W. N. Irvine of Company D. The staff was spliced by the staff of a Confederate flag on the battlefield, and so carried till the regiment was mustered out, and still remains with the same splice in the capitol at St. Paul." 359

Although Lochren's memoirs are detailed, they deal almost specifically with the color guard and the colors of the 1st Minnesota. This is explained by the Civil War soldiers' almost mystic worship of the national and regimental

359 Andrews, pp. 37-38.

colors he carried into battle. Because of the paramount importance given to the colors, in that they led all actions and directed the direction of march, they received a significance beyond that of even the attachment of pride by the regiment. To lose a color was the supreme shame, and to capture an enemy flag was rewarded, as can be seen, by mention in reports and later medals of honor. Because of this lopsided greatness attached to capturing (or possessing) enemy flags, many acts of bravery on the battlefield were overlooked in favor of those soldiers who may have picked up a fallen enemy battle flag without a contest.

One of those soldiers who did not take a flag that day, but lost his life by leaving another post of duty to join his command in the fray, was Captain Wilson B. Farrell, the commander of the provost guard for Gibbon's Division. According to his commanding officer, Farrell was a "distinguished" officer, whose company C, 1st Minnesota, was "particularly noted for discipline, drill and fine appearance." This appearance was attributed partly to the fact that the company, while acting as provost guard, wore the full dress uniform, including hats. This was in contrast to the regiment itself, which no longer had time for such finery, wearing "slouch hats without feathers and the Blouse" into battle.³⁶⁰ The sight of Company C coming up from the Taneytown Road to meet their comrades at the clump of trees must have been an inspiring and encouraging sight to the depleted ranks of the 1st Minnesota, as well as the rest of the division. It would be understandable that the company, dressed in its finery and limited to guard and courier and escort duties, was eager to prove itself on the field of battle. Captain Farrell himself went into the battle meaning business, leaving his horse behind and leading his

³⁶⁰Colonel W. Colvill, August 30, 1866 letter to John B. Bachelder, in Bachelder Correspondence, New Hampshire Historical Society, p. 85.

company on foot. As already recounted by his comrades, Captain Farrell was mortally wounded almost immediately after reaching the clump of trees and rejoining his regimental fellows.

Perhaps the sparsest information concerning the activities of a regiment in Harrow's Brigade comes from the 82nd New York Infantry. The official report of the regiment merely stated that when the enemy advanced, the 82nd New York (2nd New York State Militia) was "ordered to the right toward a small grove, and charged through it, driving the enemy" before them, and capturing two colors from the 1st and the 7th Virginia Regiments.³⁶¹ The official New York publication heralding the dedication of state monuments at Gettysburg after the war contained little more than a paraphrasing of this official report:

"In front of the Second New York and Harrow's Brigade were some Virginia troops of Pickett's Division, who, after firing a volley in reply, were unable to stand the storm of bullets, and, facing by their left, moved to a point in front of Cushing's Battery, where a breach in the Union line had been effected. The Second New York, with the other regiments of the brigade, hurried to this point--charging through the copse of trees--in time to pour a close fire into the flank of the Confederate column. The fight here was close and deadly, the regiment capturing two flags from the First and Seventh Virginia Regiments of Pickett's Division."³⁶²

Since the 1st and 7th Virginia were in Kemper's Brigade, it seems apparent from the reports that the 82nd New York did not penetrate to the Angle itself, but were contained by the other masses of Union and Confederate troops to the area left (or south) of the clump of trees, on Kemper's final front.

³⁶¹ORs, vol. 27, part 1, p. 426.

³⁶²William F. Fox, New York at Gettysburg, vol. 2 (Albany, 1902), p. 666.

Before continuing with an examination of the movements of infantry in Doubleday's Division of the First Corps, it would be timely to inspect the services of the artillery on Gibbon's front during the repulse. Sergeant Frederick Fuger, now commanding the remainder of Cushing's Regular Battery A, continued with his story concerning the brave defense of his battery, now silent and separated at the wall and on the crest of the ridge:

" . . . [My] devoted cannoneers and drivers stood their ground, fighting hand-to-hand with pistols, sabers, handspikes and rammers, and with the arrival of the Philadelphia Brigade, commanded by the gallant General Webb, the enemy collapsed and Pickett's charge was defeated.

"I want to say here that we had about twenty-eight handspikes, which were all brought up to the guns; those handspikes are the finest weapons for close contact." 363

Fuger's estimate of the battery's loss on this day was 83 of the 90 horses killed, two officers killed, and seven men killed. In addition, one officer was wounded, 38 suffered wounds, nine ammunition chests were blown up, and not a sound wheel was left. Just how many men Fuger really had exchanging blows with handspikes against the enemy is uncertain, particularly since we have already examined one account by a battery survivor who stated that only four battery members were left by the time of the Confederate attack. How four men wielded 28 handspikes between them is amusing to conjecture. Perhaps they threw them at the enemy like the infantry threw cobblestones!

Another account by a Cushing's Battery survivor was made over thirty years after the battle by Christopher Smith:

"Then the rebels charged on over the hill with a rush, but it was a fatal charge for them. Our infantry was in reserve just over the hill and met them with a vengeance. A few minutes later Gen. Hancock's second army corps came up and surrounded them and the poor

363 Fuger, "Cushing's Battery at Gettysburg," p. 409.

devils were obliged to throw down their arms to prevent being slaughtered to the last man.

"Toward evening Fieger and myself went back to the stone wall to see what had been the effect of our last shots. The ground was literally covered with bodies and very few of the men showed any signs of life. As we walked along we noticed an officer raise his hand and feebly speak Fieger's name. Fieger bent over him and saw that it was none other than Gen. Armistead. "I thought it was you, Sergeant," said the General, "and if I had known that you were in command of that battery I never should have led the charge against you."

"I never saw such a meeting before. I soon learned that Fieger and Gen. Armistead were old comrades. They had been together in the regular army at Salt Lake City years before. . . ." 364

Without coming out and denouncing Smith as a bald-faced liar, we will just say that he was right in saying he "never saw such a meeting [before]". That General Armistead would lay wounded at the Angle until "toward evening" is hard enough to believe, but to say that the Confederate officer quoted all the above to Sergeant Fuger is so improbable it must be impossible. First of all, Fuger served in this same battery from 1856 as a private, corporal and sergeant. Armistead was in the 6th Infantry from 1856. Although both served in the Utah expedition in 1858, it is unlikely that the two men would have had much contact with each other during that period. Armistead had been a captain, and Fuger (at the most) a non-commissioned officer in another unit. Smith would have us believe that Armistead was so aware of Fuger's abilities in "command" of a battery that he would never have ordered his men to assault such a position. More improbably, Smith may have been implying that Armistead would not have attacked had he known a "comrade" was on the other side. In a fratricidal war such as the Civil War, Armistead must

364Smith, "Bloody Angle," p. 42.

have faced many a comrade on the battlefield before to feel so squeamish about it on July 3, 1863. It is a shame that Cushing's Battery did not have better spokesmen or historians to portray the honest fighting done by the heroic artillerymen on July 3. Sergeant Fuger's and Smith's accounts always seem to smack of self-aggrandizement and exaggeration on more than a modest scale.

The same problem may exist in the Gettysburg history of Cowan's 1st New York Battery because the only spokesman, though quite prolific, was the commander and active post-war veteran, Andrew Cowan. Cowan expressed his opinions and reminiscences of the battle on numerous occasions, both public and private, and we shall include a sampling of his accounts:

"When we took Brown's place Pickett's troops were forming, over at the Emmitsburg road. My last round of canister was used when the enemy had got possession of Cushing's guns, and some were rushing to take mine. I saw one officer waving his sword and calling to his men to 'take that gun' just as I shouted the command to 'fire.' What was the result we did not halt to see, for my guns were dragged behind the crest of the hill on the instant of firing and the men were dragging them to the next knoll behind, when the Limber chest that had been sent from the caisson came up, and the guns were quickly planted, on that knoll behind, and we fired a couple of percussion shells before again advancing and occupying our old place, from which we opened fire with two guns on a battery or section sent out by Lee, to cover the retreat of Pickett's remnant."

"The 69th Pa. Regt. was before our guns, but I do not think, when my guns were pulled back there was any such thing as regiments. The men were fighting pretty much at will, and there were no troops left in front of me. The action was all behind Cushing. Now Cushing had run his guns. . . to the wall, and therefore they were several yards forward of my front. I think about ten yards. . . ."

"I think no one will ever forget the sight after Pickett's repulse. In my front, it is no exaggeration to say 'the dead lay in heaps'. Our own soldiers covered the ground where my battery fought and beyond the wall the canister had done terrible execution. A few Confederates lay dead on our side of the wall, and I recognized the officer who was shouting 'take the gun' when our last round was fired. He had been killed by the canister. I buried him beside my own men, and Capt. Rorty of Pickett's / sic / battery, and I have his sword now, never could find out who he was. . . ." 355

In another letter Cowan continued or elaborated his history along this same vein:

"We opened at once and continued pouring shell upon them till they came within canister range. Then came the severe struggle. Our infantry which was a half dozen yards in front of my guns, lying down, all at once became panic stricken and broke in confusion. The enemy rushed forward with wild cheers, pouring in their volleys and planted their colors upon the guns of the Regular Battery, just on my right. . . . I fired canister low, and my last charge, two rounds in each of the six guns was fired when the advance of the enemy in my front was but ten yards distant, and while they had possession of our guns on my right. My last officer was shot away at my side just as I was directing my men how to act when we had fired this 'last charge.' . . . As soon as my last charge was fired, my men pulled their guns by hand, rapidly as they could, back under the crest, and I moved quickly to a crest 50 yards or less farther back and opened fire with percussion shell again. . . . At the moment the smoke lifted and showed the remnants of the enemy's line retreating, I rapidly moved up again and from my old position engaged their batteries, which they had advanced from their front to cover the retreat.

"Fitzhugh was on my left when I went into position and was there after the fight." 366

In a speech on the battlefield, Cowan gave even more details of the fight on his front during the repulse:

³⁶⁵ Colonel Andrew Cowan, December 2, 1885 letter to John B. Bachelder, in Bachelder Correspondence, New Hampshire Historical Society, Microfilm Reel 1, pp. 166-167.

³⁶⁶ Colonel Andrew Cowan, August 20, 1866 letter to John B. Bachelder, in Bachelder Correspondence, New Hampshire Historical Society, Microfilm Reel 1, pp. 366-367. . .

"I could see them perfectly, for there were no trees then along the wall to obstruct the view. The trees on the little knoll over there in the front have grown from stumps of small trees that were cut down there the second day. . . . The direction was oblique, and it seemed that they were marching to this copse of trees, as indeed they were. The Codori House and barn hid them from my sight for a minute, and when I saw them again they were coming at a run, without regard to alignment. There was a little elevation, covered with bushes as it then seemed to me, just where yonder bunch of trees beyond the wall has grown from suckers. A few hundred of the Virginians fell down behind that brush-covered knoll and opened fire on us. But the large body of them, to their left, rushed forward in the direction of the Angle, to our right of the trees.

"General Hunt was on horse back in my battery, and I was standing at the left side of his horse, when I opened with canister on the crowd lying down. He soon began firing his pistol at those rushing on, exclaiming: 'See 'em! See 'em!,' when in a moment his horse fell dead under him. We extricated him and . . . he rode away toward the right of the trees, calling over his shoulder to me: 'Look out or you will kill our men', meaning our infantry behind the low stone wall in front of my five guns; but I had no thought of firing over their heads at such close range.

"Then, in a flash, our infantry behind the wall in front of my guns arose and rushed to the right through the trees, for some cause I could not see. . . .

"Then the enemy, that had found shelter behind that little rocky knoll covered with brush, rushed forward toward our uncovered front. I had given the order: 'Load with double canister'. . . . The five guns, double loaded with canister, were ready, their muzzles run down to the lowest point, when I saw a young officer, waving his sword, leap the wall, followed by a number of men, and heard him shout: 'Take the gun', meaning our gun closest to the trees." 367

Cowan sent some remarks of these episodes to General Webb after the war, since both were so intimately involved in this repulse of the Virginians at the trees:

"I took position on the crest about on line with the rear of the Clump of trees and soon realized the wisdom of Cushing's move but had no time to profit by it.

367 In Memoriam Alexander Stewart Webb, pp. 66-67.

Genl Hunt, who was in my battery after I opened with Canister, was very fearful that my fire would damage our own men, but I was on foot and could see what we were doing better than the General mounted. He emptied his pistol at the Enemy as I was loading for the third round. Just then the infantry in front of 5 of my guns wavered and was about to give way when Gen. Webb rushed from the right and drew them off behind Cushing's guns. A great many men, however, ran back through my gun and I saw several Officers running away. . . . Some of the Rebels came on and crossed the Wall (then almost demolished and nowhere over a foot high in my front). Then I fired my last canister. One Rebel, a Major I thought, was killed by my fire within a few feet of the gun. . . . A number of rebels had lain down behind some large stones halfway between us and the Emmitsburg Road and fired from there with effect. Hundreds threw down their guns and ran in through my guns to the rear. We put one young rebel fellow up on a horse in one of the teams from which a driver had been shot, and kept him there awhile. . . . We had no works--nothing but the wall, and some rails, and that looked as if it had been thrown down to let Artillery pass beyond it." 368

Cowan's canister fire at "ten paces" is one of the best known tales of the Confederate repulse, but few have noted other events in these passages. For example, Cowan's fire during the repulse from his position flanking the clump of trees was not as long in duration as that from the batteries on other division fronts. Cowan's guns did not stay in position during the long hand-to-hand fighting around the trees, but were run back behind the original position of the 72nd Pennsylvania, to a knoll almost midway between the trees and the Taneytown Road to the east. From there Cowan fired percussion shell, but he did not reveal at what target he was firing. If Hunt was concerned that Cowan would injure the men in his front with canister when the 1st New York Battery was at the trees, he should have wondered what Cowan

³⁶⁸Andrew Cown, "Remarks," in Alexander S. Webb Papers, Yale University.

was up to if the latter was heaving percussion shells over the closely entangled troops of both sides at the Angle. We can only assume that Cowan was not this foolhardy, and was shooting over the conflict in his front towards the Confederate batteries beyond the Emmitsburg Road.

Another striking incident is that casually mentioned by Cowan concerning the young Confederate soldier he put up on horseback, where a driver had recently been shot. Venting his frustration at Confederate infantry who had been picking off his drivers and gunners, Cowan took revenge by exposing one of his young prisoners to the same dangers, in hopes of deterring the enemy from firing at him. In other words, since Cowan mentioned that he had no works for protection, he was hoping to use the enemy himself as a sort of protection for his men.

In almost a repetition of Cowan's major themes, he included his address at the dedication of his battery monument on the battlefield in the state publication New York at Gettysburg:

"A number of the enemy had already crossed the wall, in front of the battery, led by a young officer waving his sword and shouting, 'Take the guns!' when five guns loaded with double canister and depressed to the lowest were discharged and then dragged back by hand. The effect of the canister was so terrific that no attempt was made to take the guns, which were restored to their position, except the gun on the right of the trees that got away entirely and was not returned until an hour afterwards."

"The last charge of 'double canister' was fired at the crisis of the charge, when the enemy had broken through on the right of the trees, and had crossed the wall in front of Cowan's guns, after our infantry had withdrawn to the right of the trees, as has been described. . . . The First New York Battery, without infantry support, stood fast, and swept the already exultant foe from before it with 'double canister,' fired at the supreme crisis of the assault." ³⁶⁹

³⁶⁹Fox, New York at Gettysburg, vol. 3, pp. 1277, 1279-1280.

Two of Cowan's latest accounts of the repulse follow, with still more repetition and some more details. In all, however, Cowan never varied from the single thread holding together his story--that the troops in front of him went elsewhere, and that his guns swept away the first attackers over the Union works:

"Then suddenly the men of the Sixty-ninth regiment, at the wall in our front, jumped up and ran through the trees to the right, where, as I learned, the fighting was desperate, right up to the wall. My front was now uncovered, when a large number of the enemy, who had lain down behind a slight elevation about two hundred yards in my front, which was covered with bushes and rocks, at which we had fired three rounds of canister, leaped up and rushed forward to capture my guns.

"A Confederate officer, followed by a number of men, crossed the wall close to the southerly edge of the trees, and I heard him shout 'Take the gun!' as I shouted the order 'Fire!' hurling 220 chunks of lead from each of the five guns upon them and those who had stopped at the wall. We buried that officer with honor

...
 "We were drawing our guns back when we saw that the enemy were running and that large numbers were throwing down their arms. . . .

"Pickett's division was almost annihilated, and those who had not fallen or surrendered were in full retreat when a battery galloped down to the Emmitsburg road and opened fire on us to cover their retreat and prevent pursuit. Sergeant Vat Etten aimed one of the two guns we had in working order and exploded one of their limbers. I flung my coat on the ground and aimed the other gun. After a few shots the battery limbered up and retired, which ended our fighting." 370

The additional details added by Cowan had to do with the capture of Confederate flags, dropped by the defeated foe, which were brought into the lines by men of the 1st New York Battery:

"I have learned. . . that the 18th Va. belonged to Garnett's Brigade of Pickett's Division. A couple of my men ran across the wall, when Pickett's men in front of our guns at the clump of trees retreated, &

370 Cowan, "When Cowan's Battery Withstood Pickett's Splendid Charge."

they came back with two or three battle flags & a flagstaff which they picked from the ground close up to the wall. I was without an Officer, in my shirt sleeves, & too busy to pay any attention to the flags until an hour later, perhaps, when I learned that a Staff Officer had demanded the flags & carried them off with him. The flagstaff was not taken by him. I saw that it was of the 18th Va. Regt., the name being stencilled on the strip of canvas next the staff. There were fragments of the flag attached to the Canvas. The Color bearer had torn the flag from the Staff and got away with it." 371

Once again we see that because of the honors attached to the mere possession of an enemy color, jealousy among the ranks prompted many of the less scrupulous to appropriate the captured colors of other units when the real victor was too busy with the fighting. Not only is it a disgrace because of the lack of honor involved, but it is a shame in a historical sense because so many of these flags were picked up or stolen from other units after the fighting was over, and we now have no indication of the real position of each Confederate regimental color. If all the colors had remained on the Union front where they were originally defeated and captured, the historians would have a better idea concerning the positions of the three brigades of Pickett's Division on Cemetery Ridge.

While Cowan was skeptical of the performance of the 69th Pennsylvania on his front, that regiment held no great respect for Cowan either. After the war the regiment verified that Cowan's length of participation was not long, and (as Cowan already said) fell back before the fighting was over in and around the clump of trees:

"There was no infantry firing behind the copse of trees; there was a battery there firing, directly in rear of the left companies of the Sixty-ninth regiment. I didn't know what battery that was at the time. They

³⁷¹Andrew Cowan, July 27, 1913 letter to John P. Nicholson, in Gettysburg Newspaper Clippings #6, Relating to the Battle, p. 188.

were firing grape and canister over, and it killed some of our men. It sometimes threw up stones. I was hit by a stone; got a lump from it. I found out afterwards that it was Cowan's Battery. The battery disappeared as quick as it come. It didn't stay there until the end of the firing." 372

Unlike Cowan's Battery, though assailed but never touched by enemy hands, Rorty's Battery B, New York Light Artillery was almost taken by the Confederates. When Hall and Harrow went to the right, Rorty's front was uncovered, and all his supports gone. Kemper's troops in and on the other side of the slashing saw the helpless battery and attempted to capture it, "pushing through an opening in the line". Like Fuger's account on the right, Rorty's men resorted to "handspikes, rammers, and whatever weapons came handy." Two separate accounts covered essentially this same incident:

"As they came up one of our men loaded his gun with a three-fold charge of canister and discharged it, overturning the gun in its recoil, but dealing death amid the opposing ranks. Double canister was fired by you [Rorty's Battery] and the neighboring batteries until the last moment, Walter Bogan. . . having the honor of firing the last gun. These rapid, deadly discharges opened great gaps in the advancing host, only to be filled up again. The enemy swept on over all obstacles and around the pieces, and for the first and last time in the history of Petit's Battery, the hands of the foe were laid upon its guns. Sergeant Darveau fired his revolver at the foe as they came on, and when an officer planted his colors on a gun, exclaiming, 'This is ours!' he retorted, 'You lie!' seized a trail hand-spike, and struck him across the forehead, killing him on the spot. . . . [Now] the Union lines closed fast around the brave Confederate remnant, escape was cut off, and there was no aid at hand." 373

372Survivors of the 72nd Pa. vs. GBMA, et al., p. 135.

373Fox, New York at Gettysburg, vol. 3, pp. 1325, 1183-1184.

Sergeant Louis D. Darveau was in charge of the fourth gun of Rorty's four-gun battery, and was perhaps commanding the last serviceable gun of the battery. A different version had it that when a Confederate captain reached this fourth gun, he placed his flag upon it, saying "Those guns are ours". Darveau fired his revolver in defiance and answered "Not by a damned sight." He then smashed down on the captain's head with the handspike, but fell instantly "riddled with bullets". Poor Sergeant Darveau, who gallantly defended his last beleaguered gun to the bitter end, falling at the height of his battery's crisis, lies buried today in the national cemetery at Gettysburg recognized only as "Darvoe", 1st N.Y. Artillery, Battery B. Darveau sacrificed his life for his battery and his battery-mates carefully marked his temporary grave on the field; unfortunately no such great care was taken during the disinterment, and now the heroic Sergeant Darveau lies under an incomplete and wrong name etched into a century-old stone. If Cowan thought it an injustice that someone stole his captured flags, how about the injustice to Louis Darveau, who had lost not only his life but his correct name?

But Darveau's sacrifice gained time for others on the Union left to come to the aid of Rorty's guns:

"It all happened in about five or six minutes. We were for a moment prisoners in the hands of the rebels, but by a flank movement of our infantry these brave men were the next moment all our prisoners, and we were retaken with them. Our men took about 1,500 prisoners."³⁷⁴

Of all the batteries along the Second Corps line (other than the abandoned guns of Cushing's Battery), Rorty's Battery and his gunners

³⁷⁴Corbin, "Pettit's Battery at Gettysburg".

were the only ones captured in this massive Confederate assault on the third day. As artilleryman Corbin stated, however, the enemy's victory was short-lived.

Lieutenant Gulian Weir's U. S. Battery C, 5th Artillery was another battery summoned to aid Gibbon's threatened line when Pickett's Division struck the vital Angle area. While Fitzhugh's New York Battery and Parson's New Jersey Battery came from near General Caldwell's front (where there was little room for them due to the long line refined by McGilvery), Weir's Battery was ordered up from the Artillery Reserve. According to Weir, the battery came up just after the cannonade and took up a position somewhere along Cemetery Ridge, where it opened with canister. When the enemy's infantry was repelled, Weir followed them up on their retreat by sending after them case and solid shot.³⁷⁵ In another place, Weir stated that he came up "under a heavy fire" and was "conducted to General Webb's line".³⁷⁶ Since many confused Webb's line with the whole of Gibbon's line, Weir's statements concerning the location of his battery are very nebulous indeed. We would assume since the Batteries of Fitzhugh, Parsons, Cowan, and Rorty would have filled much of the line from the Angle southward to Harrow's brigade front, that Weir must have been to the left of Rorty.

On Doubleday's front, those troops not in the front line, did little more than watch the passage of events on their front and their right.

³⁷⁵Gulian V. Weir, undated letter, in John B. Bachelder Correspondence, New Hampshire Historical Society.

³⁷⁶First Lieutenant James C. Rush, "The Fifth Regiment of Artillery," Journal of the Military Service Institute of the United States, vol. XVII (1895), p. 220.

The 149th Pennsylvania Infantry, one of those regiments in the second line of defense, left recollections of the last moments of the battle:

"When the right of Pickett's line commenced to break in our front, and their men began jumping over the fence among us, some of them were actually scared white, but they were able to get back to our rear where they could be safe." 377

"While this fighting was going on there was nothing between the right of our brigade and the hand-to-hand contest except the cluster of trees. The noise and din of the fighting was awful; and while we were perfectly quiet and safe, we did not know what to expect. The Vermont brigade, which was part of our line, finding that Gen. Wilcox with his division had become detached from the main column, moved out front and to the left; engaged Wilcox; captured a number of men, and dispersed the balance.

". . . . A number of Pickett's men, when they found the movement hopeless, came around the bunch of trees, threw down their arms, surrendered, and were sent to the rear."

"The loss in our brigade in this fight was very light, as the break in their line prevented actual fighting in our immediate front. The hard, close fighting was all on the right of the trees down to and over the stone fence on each side of the bloody angle. The bunch of trees was about 40 feet in diameter, and the bloody angle about 150 feet from the trees." 378

It is obvious from these accounts that those in the second line had little more responsibility during the repulse than the escort of the multitudes of Confederate prisoners to the rear.

Stannard's advanced regiments, on the other hand, were front line units still engaged in front line duties. The 13th Vermont Infantry was

³⁷⁷Nesbit, p. 20.

³⁷⁸Nesbit, "Recollections of Pickett's Charge," p. 184

completing its assignment against the right flank of Pickett's Division, driving Kemper's Brigade into the slashing area and toward the Angle itself:

"Not until the dead and wounded covered the ground so as to make progress almost impossible, did they seem to realize their awful situation, and then they waved handkerchiefs, and threw up their hands as evidence of surrender. It was at this juncture that Colonel Randall at risk of his own life from the muskets of his own regiment passed rapidly down the line and shouted 'Stop firing.' Then we advanced and captured nearly all that survived of Pickett's old division. . . . The numbers we here captured were so large that Colonel Randall detailed Companies G and I to take the prisoners to the rear.

"From the moment General Pickett's command crossed the Emmitsburg Road and started on its perilous charge, to the time we of the 13th returned to our position just in the rear of the breastwork of rails, full two hours must have passed. Every moment was so appalling and the horrid scenes all about us so dreadful we took no thought of swift passing time. The carnage was terrible but wonderful and glorious the results.

"As the 13th charged forward from its last position where it had been pouring in volley after volley at short range from musket and pistol. . . some of the more revengeful and desperate continued to fire in our faces as we advanced. We opened fire again and then rushed up against them with bayonets pushed forward revengefully determined to slay the very last man unless they would heed their proffered offer of surrender. Bayonets were crossed and the desperate thrusts exchanged, and the hand to hand struggle followed. Many fell wounded and bleeding pierced with bayonet, sword and pistol and musket balls. This was the final struggle and was soon over. We were now in their front and rear and escape was impossible. The crouching rose up and all the living including the slightly wounded hurriedly and anxiously passed through our ranks to the rear turning over their guns, pistols and sabres as they passed on. . . . If there was any spot on that great field of battle that approximated more nearly than any other the malstrom of

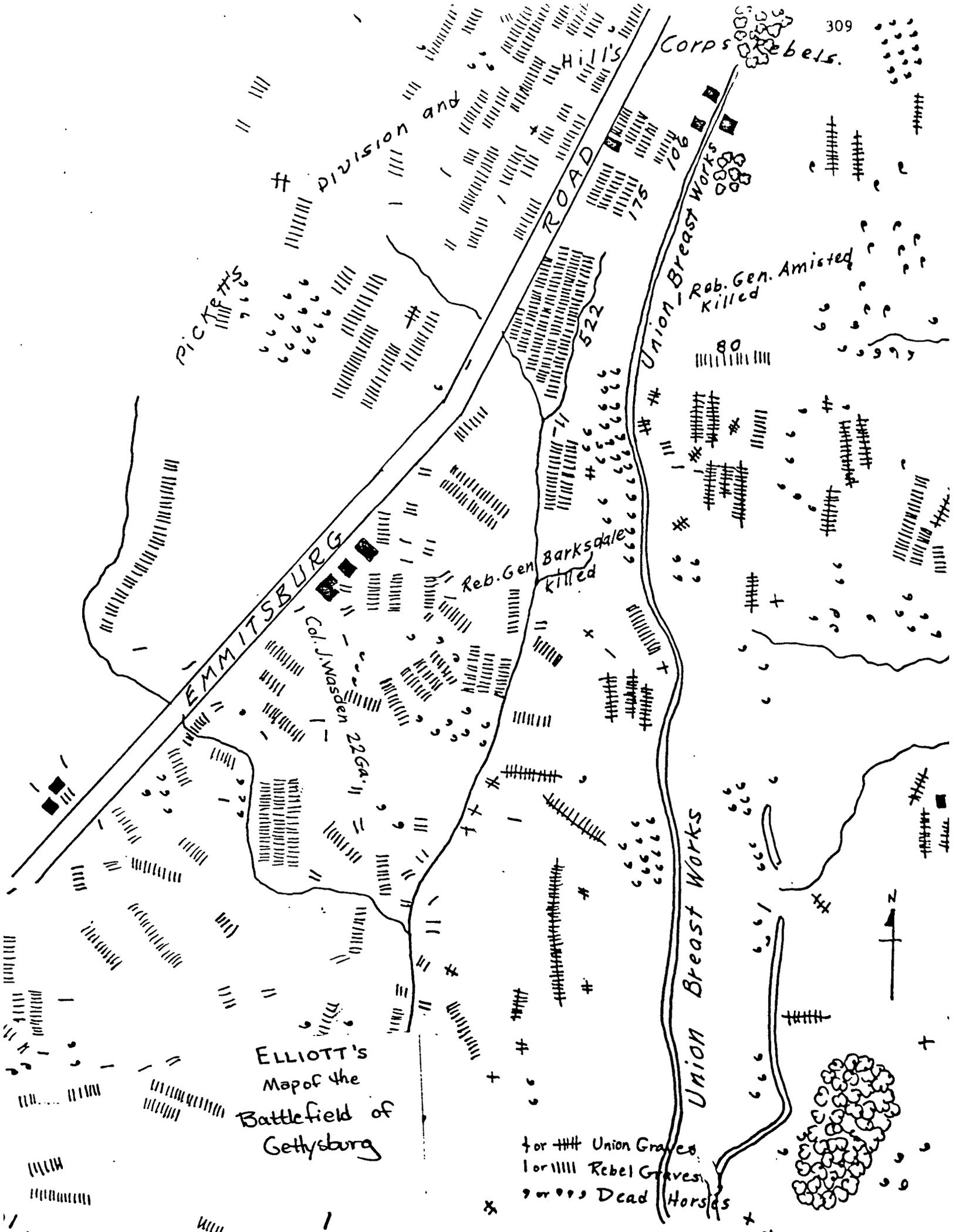


destruction, this was the place. They lay one upon the other clutched in death, side by side. The dead, dying and horribly wounded, some had on the blue, but nearly all wore the gray. . . . This was indeed the great slaughter pen on the field of Gettysburg, and in it lay hundreds of the brave heroes who an hour before buoyed up with hope and ambition were being led by the brave and intrepid General Pickett. . . .

"Brave General Garnet who was shot from his horse while leading his brigade fell only a few paces in the rear of the stone wall where General Armistead was shot and no doubt from bullets fired from the 13th Vermont Regiment who at that moment was on Pickett's flank firing at short range in that direction. First Corporal Londas S. Terrill of Company F claims the honor (if it be an honor to shoot so brave a soldier) of firing the bullet that so suddenly ended the brilliant career of this young Rebel officer. . . . Private Oliver Pariso of Company K . . . claimed that he too about the same time took aim at a mounted officer and saw him fall while looking along the sight of his gun barrel." 379

The vibrant imagery of this regimental account translates for those who could not have been there into a description of that bloody quadrant of American history. The area delineated in this sketch would include that field on the Codori farm north of the headwaters of Plum Run, and stretched across the fence forming the Codori boundary into the other deadly farm field of P. A. Small. This area, including the grounds comprising the slashing, was described by the author as a place of field of entwined bodies, mostly Confederate. This description was echoed by Colonel Theodore Gates, whose accounts will also be mentioned later. That both of these men knew first-hand what they were talking about, we have to merely look at the burial map of the battlefield on the following page. Two massive trenches held the bodies of 522 and 175 Confederates killed outright in this one small area of the field, and would have

379Sturtevant, pp. 305-309 passim.



ELLIOTT'S Map of the Battlefield of Gettysburg

for ### Union Graves
 for ||||| Rebel Graves
 9 or 999 Dead Horses

contained the remains of those slain by the combined fire of Hall's and Harrow's front, Randall's and Veazey's flanking attack, and the counter-attack by Gates' demi-brigade. There could be no sadder testimony to the effectiveness of these regiments.

It was too bad that in the months and years following the battle the troops who were comrades in battle became contenders for public attention and praise for their exclusive roles at Gettysburg. Very few were immune from this fever of self-aggrandizement and belittling of others. Even General Gibbon, whose troops performed so nobly that they needed not be defended in the public press, was jealous of his role as the savior division of the battle:

" . . . [You] attach more importance to the part played by Stannard's brigade, so far as concerns the repulse of Pickett's assault than the facts warrant, for I believe that assault was in fact repulsed before any movement of Stannard's brigade took place. That movement did not take place whilst I was on the field. Before I was wounded I tried to get the troops occupying the breastworks just on the left of my Div., to swing out to the front, take the assaulting force in flank, and sweep up along my front, but the troops failed to respond, and some officers who were with them told me they were Vermont troops. At that time a group of men on the right of Pickett's line had halted behind the bunch of brushwood in front of the left of my division and were firing, but the main line further to their left had reached the wall and was engaged in the hand to hand conflict with Webb's brigade. The actual conflict there, was hidden from my view by the clump of trees inside my line, but I could see from where I was large numbers of the enemy going to the rear and crossing the Emmitsburg road to our right of the Codori house, and called attention of those about me to the fact that the assault had been repulsed, although the firing still continued heavy, and the repulse was evidently not completely over.

Time was very precious, therefore and I rode rapidly back to my own troops and whilst trying to get the left Regt. of my division (19th Maine) to swing out and do what I had endeavored to get the Vermont troops to do, I was wounded and shortly after left the field."

"Stannard's movement had nothing to do with the determination of the failure of the assault, for that had already been practically decided by the moving up of the left of my Div. under the direction of Lt. Haskell. . . ." 380

As already seen, the movement of Stannard's two regiments westward into the Codori fields did indeed precede any movement towards the Angle by Harrow's Brigade. It may be that the Vermont troops that Gibbon was trying to get to move to the right with him were members of the 14th Vermont. That unit would have refused to leave its place in brigade line because it was supporting the 13th and 16th Vermont Regiments, and perhaps was just then noticing the advance by the two brigades of the Confederate Anderson's Division across the Emmitsburg Road. It was probably more concerned with the fighting on its own front than any fighting of Webb's Brigade over 300 yards northward.

Alexander S. Webb, who perhaps had more reason to be grateful to other troops than Gibbon, was not hesitant to applaud those who had some part in repulsing the charge by Pickett's Division:

"But Hancock, our glorious Hancock, ever near the front in action, was not to be easily overthrown by this mass of angry foes. He had the old Second corps and Doubleday's division of the First; and well he knew how to use us! Stannard was to be used to stay the supporting column on the Rebel right, and well he did it. Gates, of Rowley's 1st Brigade, was enabled to assist in this movement. Harrow and Hall, of our own division, were near to help us, and Hays on our right with the 3^d Division, with Smith's Brigade, was well able to hold his own." 381

³⁸⁰Major General John Gibbon, March 14, 1884 letter to General F. A. Walker, in Bachelder Correspondence, New Hampshire Historical Society, Microfilm Reel 2, pp. 351-352.

³⁸¹General Alexander S. Webb, "An Address delivered at Gettysburg, August 27, 1883". . . . (Philadelphia, 1883), p. 15.

Because the weight of the charge fell upon the line of the Second Corps (excluding Caldwell's Division), the troops of Doubleday's Division were often slighted in reports of the third day. Many forgot that these troops (aside from Stannard's Brigade) were in the same area, and part of that division was in the front line. While Stannard's movements were mentioned by almost all historians and other writers retelling the events of the battle, the rest of Doubleday's Division was usually excluded from any plaudits. Doubleday himself was sure of the contributions of his division:

"The prisoners state that what ruined them was Stannard's brigade on their flank, as they found it impossible to contend with it in that position; and they drew off all in a huddle to get away from it. I sent two regiments to charge them in front at the same time. / 20th N. Y. S. M. and 151st Pa. / While this was going on the enemy were subjected to a terrific artillery fire at short range, and the result was that they retreated with frightful loss." 382

While others may have recognized the participation of those handful of regiments in Doubleday's Division, few were willing to concentrate the kind of detail which was accorded to the regiments of Gibbon's Division or the artillery of the 2nd Corps. The commanding officer of the Union First Corps, whose disinclination to distinguish between units was noticeable because of his unfamiliarity with the corps, gave almost equal billing to Gates and Stannard:

". . . one heavy column, a division, by General Stannard's report, marching by battalion front, directed itself upon the front of the Third (Doubleday's) Division, First Corps, but meeting a warm fire from his front line of battle, composed of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Sixteenth Vermont Regiments, the Twentieth New York State Militia, and the One hundred and fifty-first Pennsylvania Vol-

³⁸²Report of the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War, p. 310.

unteers, swerved to the right to attack General Hancock. General Stannard immediately changed front forward, and, falling upon their flank, routed them, taking a large number of prisoners." 383

General John Newton, who reported the above on September 30 after the battle, recognized the contributions of his only regiments participating on the third day of the battle in a quite general and sketchy fashion. Others, writing years later, could get no insight concerning Gates' demi-brigade from such sparse accounts.

New York publications were kinder to the reputation of Gates' regiment, anyway, although they mention little of the smaller 151st Pennsylvania. The three-volume New York at Gettysburg covered briefly the movements and fighting of the regiment, but still provided the reader with very few details:

"On the left of Gibbon's Division two regiments of the First Corps occupied a place in the front line, the Eightieth New York and One hundred and fifty-first Pennsylvania, both under command of Colonel Gates of the Eightieth. The latter, known also as the Ulster County Guard (or Twentieth N.Y.S.M.), in company with the One hundred and fifty-first took an active part in the work of repelling the grand attack on the 3^d. When Kemper's and Garnett's brigades, after nearing the Union line, faced to the left and moved parallel with it, the Eightieth followed up this movement of the enemy, the men firing as they marched until they reached the clump of trees where they participated in the final encounter." 384

Although this description is vague, it is still better than that related to us by the official historian of losses in the First Corps, St. Clair A.

Mulholland:

"The Eightieth New York (Twentieth Militia) called the 'Ulster Guard,' Colonel Theodore B. Gates commanding, had 50 per cent. killed and wounded, 24 missing. The 121st Pennsylvania, Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Biddle, had 39 per cent. killed and wounded and 61 missing.

383ORS, vol. 27, part 1, p. 262.

384Fox, New York at Gettysburg, vol. 1, p. 81.

The 142d Pennsylvania, Colonel Robert P. Cummings, had 39 per cent. killed and wounded and 70 missing. The 151st Pennsylvania, Lieutenant Colonel George F. McFarland, had 56 per cent. killed and wounded and 100 missing. Not only did the brigade make the splendid fight of the first day's battle, but on the second and third day all the regiments were engaged, and in the last grand scene of the drama the Eightieth New York and the 151st Pennsylvania, led by Colonel Gates, rushed in, side by side with Stannard's Vermonters, to strike the flank of Pickett's line. . . ." 385

While Mulholland gave losses for the whole battle, and not just this one day or one part of the day, he was trying to make the point that the brigade (and particularly Gates' demi-brigade) suffered and participated throughout the three days of July 1863. However, Mulholland erred in having the reader believe that Gates went into the flanking movement "side by side with Stannard." Stannard and his men never recognized Gates' demi-brigade as having been part of their overall movement, neither did Gates admit to being part of Stannard's change of front.

Hancock, who tried to take the credit for Stannard's movement, again attempted to claim responsibility for the actions of Gates' two regiments. Without specifying which regiments he was talking about, Captain H. H. Bingham, Hancock's judge-advocate, apparently claimed responsibility for the movement to the right of Gates' demi-brigade. In a letter to his sister, dated ten days after the charge, Captain Bingham described what happened after General Hancock ordered him (after Hancock was wounded) to

" . . . 'take those two regiments on the left of this line, lead them to left flank of Webb's front, and pour an enfilading fire in that line of rebels just advancing.'

"I led them within 20 yards of the rebel line and poured a raking fire into the enemy that caused a break-

³⁸⁵St. Clair A. Mulholland, "Percentage of Losses at Gettysburg were the Greatest," Public Ledger (April 2, 1902), in Gettysburg Newspaper Clippings, vol. 4, p. 6.

ing of their ranks and a promiscuous retreat. It was at that time that I lost as beautiful a white horse as it is possible to obtain." 386

Captain Bingham's claim to have led a flanking movement which delivered an enfilading fire into Pickett's column, just to the left of Webb, may refer to the advance by Gates' demi-brigade after the brigades of Hall and Harrow. This would give the credit for the movement by the 20th N. Y. S. M. and the 151st Pennsylvania to Hancock and Bingham. However, Captain Bingham may have also been a notorious liar. It was Bingham who first circulated the story that Armistead's last words to him were that he had wronged Hancock and his country. That story has been suspect in Southern minds for over 100 years, and facts seem to indicate that Bingham was not above fantasizing the facts to his own (and his chief's) glory and importance.

The movements of the demi-brigade were mentioned, although again with little elaboration of details, by many post-war authors. This was probably due to the same predicament which plagues histories of the Battle of Gettysburg: no one went after the primary accounts, but kept using the same secondary histories or same vague reports as already cited. One history apparently overlooked completely the 151st Pennsylvania as part of Gates' command and movement, and mentioned only the 20th New York:

"The 20th New York (militia) also of the 1st corps, rushing through the slashing on the slope at the critical moment, closed in on the enemy in gallant style up to the fence, where after a give-and-take contest, they greatly assisted in forcing them back, capturing many of their opponents. . . ." 387

386"After Gettysburg," The National Tribune (October 17, 1912), in Gettysburg Newspaper Clippings, vol. 6, p. 74.

387Stevens, p. 326.

John E. Pitzer, one of the former guides on the battlefield, published a booklet in which he purported to tell the battle story as succinctly as possible. His account of the repulse of Pickett's Division included the complementary movements of Stannard and Gates:

"Before the Southerners could reach the second fence and stone wall they were obliged to pass under the fire of a half brigade commanded by Col. Thomas B. Gates, of the 20th New York State Militia and a Vermont brigade under General Stannard, both belonging to the corps of Doubleday. When the right of Pickett became exposed by the divergent movement of Wilcox's command, Stannard seized the opportunity to make a flank attack, and while his regiment on the left, the Fourteenth, was making a terrible fire, he changed front with his two other regiments, the Thirteenth and Sixteenth, and thus brought them in a line perpendicular to the Southern troops, and the brigade of Kemper found itself repulsed and driven toward the centre in order to avoid the energetic and deadly attack of Stannard. They were followed by Gates' command who continued firing with close ranks. This resulted in the surrender of many; others forced to retreat." 388

While this is also quite sparse in detail it is very close to what really happened to the demi-brigade, as shall be shown in their later accounts.

While one would think that the State of New York would be more generous in recognizing the actions of its native sons in this turning point of the war, the post-war monuments commission was strangely silent concerning the contributions of the state regiments which performed so valiantly on the Union left-center on July 3, 1863. In recognizing the performances of Generals Webb and Doubleday at Gettysburg, the state's officers did not dwell long on the contributions made by the soldiers in their ranks, even New York units:

"The Eightieth Regiment (Twentieth N.Y.S.M.) divided its attention and its firing between Kemper's and Garnett's brigades, and the end of the assault

388 John E. Pitzer, The Three Days at Gettysburg (Gettysburg, n. d.), p. 33.

found them at the clump of trees. General Doubleday, to whose division this regiment belonged, complimented them warmly for their valor and sacrifice during all three days of the battle."

" Three of Stannard's Vermont regiments--the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Sixteenth--with Gates's Demi-brigade--the Eightieth New York and One hundred and fifty-first Pennsylvania (both brigades belonging to Doubleday's Division)--gave battle to Kemper's regiments as they manoeuvred to the clump of trees, and together did most effective work at the final encounter." 389

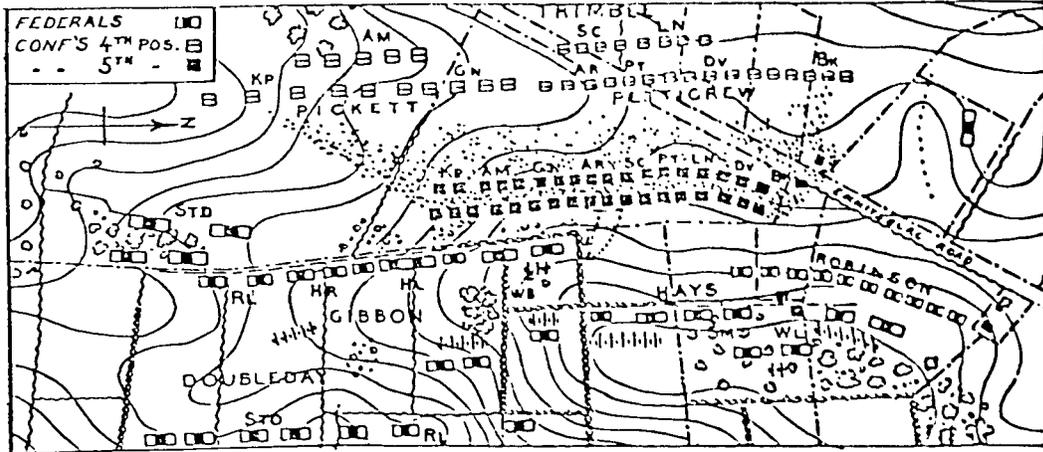
At least this address by Colonel Lewis R. Stegman recognized that the 20th New York and the 151st Pennsylvania had some part in the final repulse, and wound up at the clump of trees area like the other regiments along this section of the Union first line. Another publication by the New York Monuments Commission did not mention the demi-brigade of Gates at all, while lauding the actions of an out-of-state brigade:

" . . . General Doubleday was given position south of the Angle, where on the third day, during the repulse of Pickett's charge, Stannard's Brigade of his division captured 2,000 of Longstreet's men and several pieces of artillery." 390

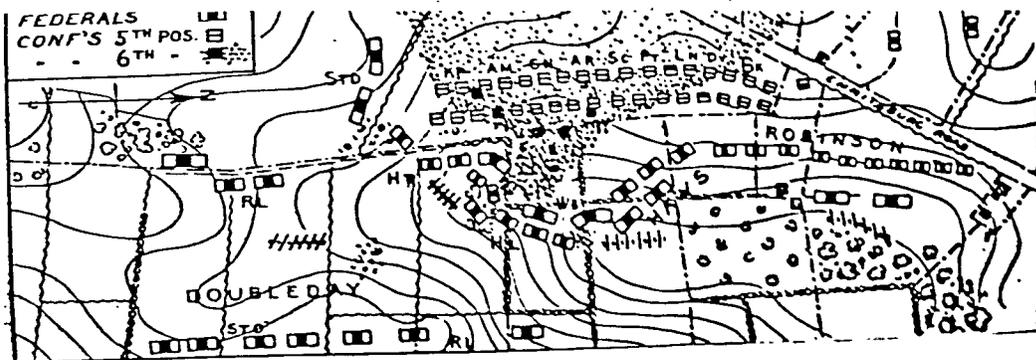
Two other publications, of more than passing fame as regards Civil War and Gettysburg books, did not mention the two regiments under Gates either, in any connection with the repulse on the third of July. Jesse Bowman Young's The Battle of Gettysburg--A Comprehensive Narrative did mention the movements of Stannard's Vermonters, but there was no hint of the services of Gates' troops. And, while William Roscoe Livermore did not mention Gates' two regiments in his The Story of the Civil War, the serious student of the battle

389 N.Y. Monuments Commission, In Memoriam Alexander S. Webb, pp. 44-45.

390 N.Y. Monuments Commission, In Memoriam Abner Doubleday 1819-1893 and John Cleveland Robinson 1817-1897 (Albany, 1918), p. 47.



would be able to ascertain the position and movements of the 151st Pennsylvania and the 20th New York by using the maps as they appear in that book and which are reproduced here.³⁹¹ The demi-brigade of Gates is labeled RL to represent a portion of Rowley's Brigade, and is in that part of Double-day's line at the left, but behind STD (Stannard) in the map above. In the map below, Gates' regiments are represented again by RL and are in the same



location. In other words, while Livermore represented Stannard's Brigade (with the exception of the 14th Vermont), Hall's Brigade, and Harrow's Brigade as moving to the right, he kept Gates' demi-brigade in position with the 14th Vermont on the old brigade line. While the remainder of Livermore's maps seem fairly accurate, especially in representing those Confederate brigades which crossed the Emmitsburg Road and which were breaking in formation, he

³⁹¹William Roscoe Livermore, The Story of the Civil War, part III, book 2 (New York, 1913), maps opposite p: 477.

did the 20th New York and the 151st Pennsylvania an injustice by excluding those two regiments from any movement to the right in pursuit of Kemper's Brigade and to assist in the repulse of the rest of Pickett's Division on Webb's front.

Vanderslice did not do likewise, but at least mentioned that Gates' demi-brigade made a contribution to the cause by advancing to the right:

"As Kemper's brigade on the right of Pickett's division executed the wheel, its front and flank were exposed to the fire of the 20th New York and 151st Pennsylvania Infantry, of Doubleday's division, and to that of Standard's brigade, . . . of the same division, which regiments were on the left of Gibbon's division; and as the assaulting columns moved on towards the copse of trees, the two first-named regiments, moving in the same direction, continued firing, while the 13th and 16th Vermont. . . . changed front forward on first company and opened directly upon Kemper's flank, nearly destroying the 24th and 11th Virginia Regiments, and causing his brigade to crowd to the left." ³⁹²

Aside from these later and often second-hand accounts there was very little mention made of the movements by Gates' demi-brigade by those brigades adjacent to them in line. We must therefore rely on the memoirs of the participants themselves. Doubleday did much to credit the small brigade, but also did little to clarify how great a contribution, and in what manner, it was made. His general orders circulated to the 3rd Division of the First Army Corps on July 4, 1863 were the basis for many other mentions of the demi-brigade in official reports and later histories, and may have contributed to the later sentiments of embitterment felt by Colonel Gates. That officer believed his contributions to have been overlooked and slighted for

³⁹²John M. Vanderslice, Gettysburg Then and Now--The Field of American Valor (New York, 1899), pp. 251-252.

July 3rd, and he felt that Doubleday's recognition of a contribution in juxtaposition with that of Stannard's Brigade should have equal weight. Doubleday gave that impression in his general orders, and may have coupled the movements of Stannard and Gates by his wording:

"The Major General commanding the division desires to return his thanks to the Vermont 2^d Brigade, the 151st Regiment Pennsylvania Volunteers, and the 20th Regiment New York State Militia, for their gallant conduct in resisting, in the front line, the main attack of the enemy upon this position, after sustaining a terrific fire from seventy-five to one hundred pieces of artillery. He congratulates them upon contributing so essentially to the glorious, and it is to be hoped decisive victory of yesterday.

By command of Maj. Gen. Doubleday." 393

Doubleday himself may have witnessed both the movements of Gates and Stannard, but never seemed to have described their movements in any detail, or as an eyewitness. Many may think that Doubleday did not actually see the movements of any of these regiments because he was wounded during the cannonade. After all, it is recorded that Doubleday was wounded in the head by a shell fragment. However, the timing of Doubleday's wounding was not during the cannonade, but after the repulse of Pickett's assault:

"After Pickett's charge on the third day the enemy opened a severe artillery fire to cover his retreat and impede the pursuit of our forces. I had sent out some stretchers to bring their wounded in, and it occurred to me they were firing at these. I was sitting on horseback with Newton and the First Corps Staff around me together with my division staff. A shell burst over my head and a piece descended and after passing through my hat lodged in the velvet collar of my coat. . . . The first I knew I was thrown over the neck of my horse and the next moment I was on the ground feeling my head to see if I had any head. I certainly thought from my first feeling that the shock had been fatal. . . . Beyond giving

³⁹³J. C. Williams, Life in Camp: A History of the Nine Months' Service of the Fourteenth Vermont Regiment. . . . (Claremont, N. H., 1864), p. 148.

me some severe headaches for a time it produced no permanent injury. I did not leave my command or go to a hospital, but was soon mounted again a ready for duty." / Doubleday had crossed out "in a short time" and inserted the word "soon" in the original. / 394

At the time of the dedication of the monument to General Doubleday on the Battlefield of Gettysburg in 1917, this same statement was verified by the New York commissioners--"Towards the close of Pickett's charge General Doubleday was struck by a shell, but not seriously wounded." 395 Therefore, it is possible that Doubleday was along the front line of his division, and not only saw the movements by Gates and Stannard, but may have ordered them. This latter possibility seems unlikely in that none of the participants mentioned Doubleday in their memoirs as having given any orders to either brigade for their subsequent movements. In fact, other than Gibbon, Hancock, Stannard, and Gates, there were apparently no contenders for ordering movements along this part of Doubleday's line.

General Doubleday himself, though, had his own version of the movements made by these two sections of his division. It is interesting to note that he never used the word "I" in detailing these movements of Stannard and Gates, indicating that he was acquiescing responsibility for their activities to other officers:

"Before the first line of rebels reached the fence it was obliged to pass a demi-brigade under Colonel Theodore B. Gates of the Twentieth New York State Militia and a Vermont brigade under General Stannard, both belonging to my command, and holding my front line parallel to that of the enemy and some distance below the crest, in advance of the main line of battle. When Pickett's right became exposed in consequence of the divergence of Wilcox's command, Stannard seized the opportunity to make a flank attack, and while his left regiment, the Fourteenth, poured

394Abner Doubleday, November 25, 1885 letter to John B. Bachelder, in Bachelder Correspondence, New Hampshire Historical Society.

395N.Y. Monuments Commission, In Memoriam Abner Doubleday, p. 99.

in a heavy oblique fire, he changed front with his two right regiments, the Thirteenth and Sixteenth, which brought them perpendicular to the rebel line of march. In cases of this kind when struck directly on the flank, troops are quite unable to defend themselves, and Kemper's brigade crowded in toward the centre to avoid Stannard's energetic and deadly attack. They were closely followed up by Gates's command, who continued to fire into them at close range. This caused many to surrender, others to retreat outright, and others simply to crowd together. Nevertheless, the next brigade--that of Armistead--united to Garnett's brigade, pressed on . . ."

"At first, however, when struck by Stannard on the flank, and when Pickett's charge was spent, they rallied in a little slashing, where a grove had been cut down by our troops to leave an opening for our artillery. There two regiments of Rowley's brigade of my division, the One Hundred and Fifty-first Pennsylvania and the Twentieth New York State Militia, under Colonel Theodore B. Gates, of the latter regiment, made a gallant charge, and drove them out. . . ." ³⁹⁶

This charge by Gates' demi-brigade then, while cooperating and complementary with the movements by Hall's and Harrow's Brigades, was a somewhat separated action concentrating on the Confederate forces seeking shelter in the fallen trees and rough-ground of the slashing. It was possible for the Virginia troops to gain refuge there because the most part of Hall's Brigade and all of Harrow's Brigade had abandoned their former position adjacent to the slashing area to assist Webb to the right. Gates' movement against the slashing was independent of the other movements, but vital in hastening the eventual defeat of all forces in front of Gibbon's Division.

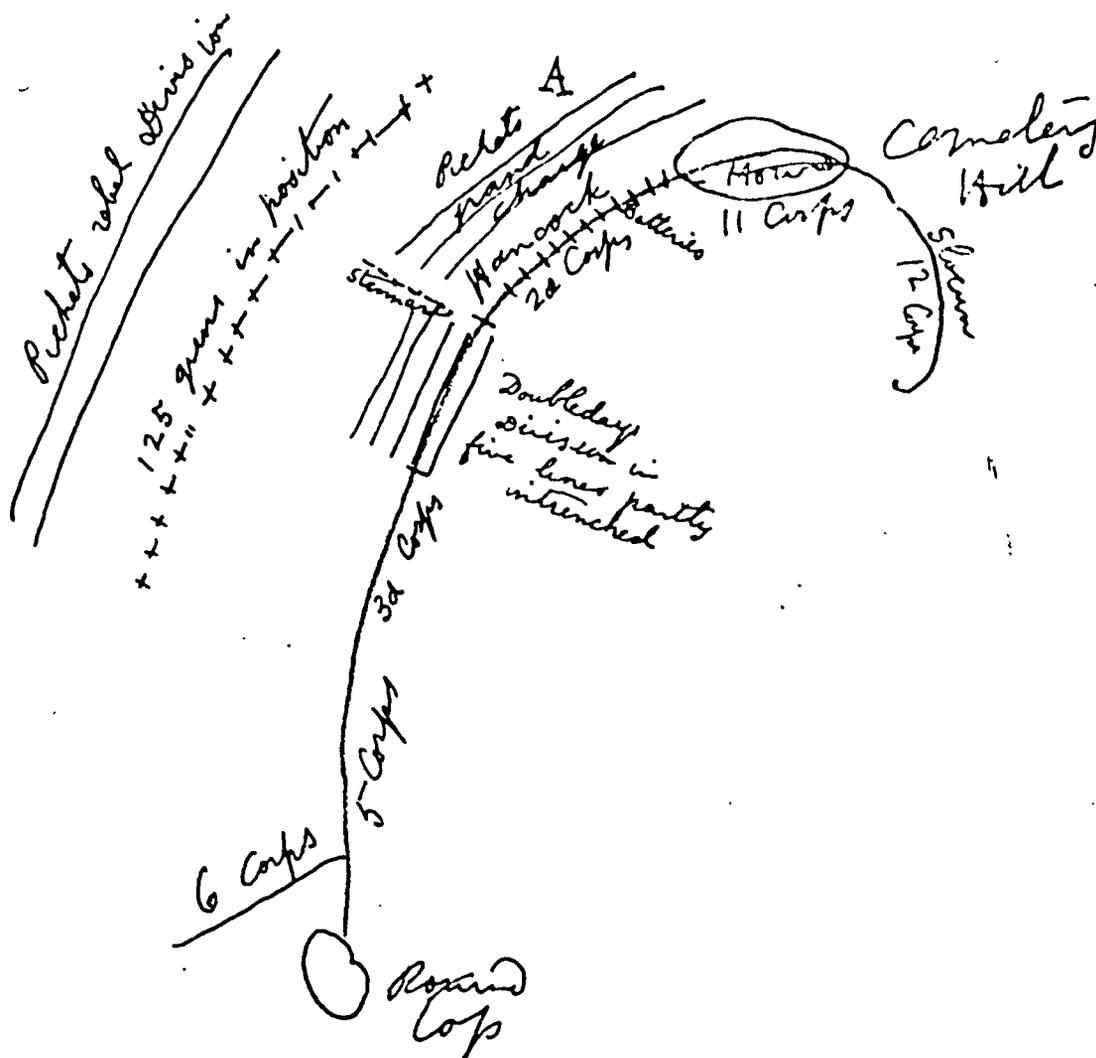
Doubleday wrote again a little later about these same movements, but his details were not as good, and once again gave the impression that the Gates action and the flanking movement by Stannard's two regiments were a united and planned effort:

³⁹⁶Abner Doubleday, Chancellorsville and Gettysburg, Campaigns of the Civil War, VI (New York, 1882), pp. 193-194, 197.

"When the severe cannonade was over, and strong masses of infantry came forward to seize the little clump of trees on the bluff, which was their objective point, the Twentieth New York State Militia and the One hundred and fifty-first Pennsylvania, forming a demi-brigade under Colonel Gates, sprang forward and interposed between the enemy and the grove he was endeavoring to reach. Gates's efforts united to those of Stannard, who acted directly against the flank, doubled up that portion of the Confederate line, confused it, and greatly embarrassed and weakened the force of its assault. Before Pickett's command gave way entirely and fled, part of it took refuge among some trees, which had been felled earlier in the day, to clear the way for our guns, but Gates gave them no rest. He charged them with his demi-brigade and drove them from their last covert, and the plain was covered with fugitives and victory was complete." 397

According to Doubleday's description, Gates' command made its movement to the right as far as the position of perhaps the 59th New York (or the gap in the works), so that the two small regiments were between the slashing and the clump of trees. That part of the enemy's command which did not make it into the Union lines on Webb's front, sought shelter in the slashing because of its natural and artificial defensive attributes. First of all, the area is a rock outcropping forming a slight "bulge" in Cemetery Ridge, which provided a natural place to lay low from the enemy's canister and musket fire and reform for a perhaps renewed attack towards the trees. Secondly, the fact that the Union forces cut down the small grove of trees on the day previously (not on July 3 as stated above by Doubleday), gave the Virginians an extra defensive advantage by providing them the stuff of artificial defenses which could be used like breastworks. A force of sufficient size and firepower could defend the slashing area against piecemeal attacks for some time and harass any enemy movements toward the clump of trees, thereby

397 Fox, New York at Gettysburg, vol. 2, p. 644.



gaining a time advantage for any Confederate follow-up and support. Gates' attack at the slashing hastened the Confederate end and kept those troops there from assisting the remainder of Pickett's command at the clump of trees.

Doubleday again described his line and its participation in the third day's battle, illustrating it with the above map:

"My men (the Vermonters) swung around on the enemy's flank. Pickett's men suffered a frightful loss and retreated in a huddle to A. There two of my Regiments under Col. Gates 20 N.Y.S.M. charged them and the rebels gave way leaving 125 guns unprotected. The 6 Corps by a simple advance could have captured the whole of them. Meade was informed of this but delayed so long that it finally became too late. The enemy sent fresh troops & withdrew them." 398

While the map is practically worthless in deciding exact locations (and even approximate locations!) of events described in Doubleday's manuscript, the description and evaluation of the events made by Doubleday are unique and quite interesting. He attributed Pickett's "frightful loss" and huddling to the slashing area to Stannard's flanking movement, taking all credit for the defeat of Pickett, since he then stated that Gates' charge completely defeated them and they retreated headlong through the 125 unprotected guns. If other versions of the battle had not been written, Doubleday's manuscript would give the impression that his division alone defeated Pickett's charge! He is also the only one thus far who even mentioned the unprotected and virtually silent guns in Alexander's line. Because these guns were advanced from the main Confederate line, and now without infantry support because of the defeat of the assault, they were ripe for capture. Doubleday, either by foresight or hindsight, saw that the Sixth Corps could have advanced and captured the lot. He attributed their eventual withdrawal before any Union movement could be made against them to Meade's slowness or indecision. But, it is not clear when indeed Doubleday came to this conclusion concerning the guns. There is no apparent record that he was urging Meade to counterattack to take them, and no where were they even mentioned.

Since Doubleday was not an active participant in the affairs of Gates' actions, his descriptions of the events were somewhat nebulous and quite general. But sometimes the descriptions of the regimental historians were also vague:

"When, on the afternoon of the 3^d, the enemy made his grand charge, these two regiments / 20th N.Y.S.M. and 151st Pa. / hastened to the right to the support of the troops at the menaced front, loading and firing

as they went. Reaching the knoll where a battery of the Second Corps was posted, and in front of which the enemy was advancing, they made a stand, and for a short time maintained a sharp fire, driving the enemy from a slashing in which he had taken refuge from a flank attack by Stannard's (Vermont) Brigade." 399

This description of the 151st Pennsylvania in the third day's actions was somewhat short even for a regimental history, and gave very little detailed information. Unfortunately, little else exists concerning the 151st Pennsylvania Infantry, at least in published form. This is somewhat extraordinary considering the fact that regiment was often called the "School-teacher's Regiment" because of the inordinate number of educated scholars in its ranks. It is unfortunate that this number of teachers did not influence the number of memoirs, recollections, dissertations, &c which were produced during the war and in later years. We do, however, have the letter of Captain Walter Owens, who commanded the regiment on July 3 after the wounding of Colonel McFarland:

" . . . a brigade of rebels [Kemper's] made its appearance a little to the left of our position but marching in an oblique direction until it had moved to the right of us. For some reason I do not know, the second corps moved to the right and the 20th NY and 151st Penn. followed, loading and firing as we ran, until we got to a small grove on Cemetery hill (The Captain alludes to the point at which our lines were crossed by the enemy. I was on the ground with him. McFarland.) which seemed to be the point aimed at by the rebels and so far did they carry out their plan that they succeeded in seizing a gun from one of our batteries immediately in front of us amid the torrent of grape cannister and musketry which we were continually pouring into them, and running it into our breastwork about 25 yards in front of us. In the meantime a large number of rebels had taken shelter behind our breastworks and were pouring a severe fire upon our exposed ranks causing us to waver and at times it

³⁹⁹Bates, History of Pennsylvania Volunteers, vol. IV, p. 680.

seemed that our line would be compelled to give way.

"In this manner we fought about 20 or 25 minutes (perhaps not so long). Seeing that to fight in that position we would not be able to hold out I started the cry that the rebels were running, and ordered a charge. The order was promptly obeyed, and, with deafening shouts and a gallant dash, the two regiments were in the breast-works, and the boasted chivalry threw down their arms and rushed through our lines to seek protection from their own shells which were still being thrown among us. . . ."400

Captain Owens' letter poses a number of problems in discerning his location on the battlefield at the time the counterattack commenced. His assertion that a captured Federal gun was some 25 yards in front of the 151st Pennsylvania should be the clue to his exact location, but it brings up more questions. We cannot be sure which gun he is talking about, but we do know that only two batteries along Gibbon's line had guns captured--Rorty's Battery had its one serviceable gun captured momentarily and the three guns run forward to the wall in Cushing's Battery. Since it is unlikely that Gates' command was just opposite Cushing's guns (they would have had to have gone through the mob fighting hand-to-hand where the 69th Pennsylvania was and have overrun the Confederate contingent in the Angle itself), Owens must be speaking of the gun of Rorty's Battery. Cowan never lost any guns, and retired his six-gun battery before Gates would have made his movement to the right. Since members of Rorty's Battery recalled that their gun was taken by the Confederates and was saved by infantry from the battery's left, we can safely presume that Owens was speaking of Rorty's gun, and should therefore have been near that position when the counterattack toward the slashing was made. This would seem logical, since the 151st Pennsylvania was on the left of the 20th New York State Militia, and should necessarily have been somewhere in the area earlier occupied by the 20th Massachusetts Infantry of Hall's Brigade.

⁴⁰⁰Owen, August 6, 1886 letter to Bachelder, pp. 10-11.

Most of the accounts dealing with Gates' demi-brigade come from Gates himself and from his officers, because of their preoccupation with trying to get proper credit for their contribution to the Confederate defeat at the Angle. Unfortunately, there is often a repetition of phrases in the letters from Gates that never varies, gives very little new information, and reminds one of a person who memorized his story and did not want to vary the information lest it lead to some "slip-up". For instance, when Colonel Bachelder wrote to the various Union officers after the battle to ask them for their recollections of events, Colonel Gates wrote back to him a second official report. This letter to Bachelder, dated January 30, 1864, was a veritable mirror image of his report after the battle, with only sentence and paragraph positions different. The wording and choice of phrases was the same, or practically the same, as what appeared in his official report. Most Union officers gave more personalized accounts of the battle in their Bachelder letters, and did not adopt the formal mode of the official report. The letter was probably delivered in person, however, and Gates may have elaborated verbally to Colonel Bachelder. This is evident from the following letter to his former commander, Abner Doubleday, on February 4, 1864:

"Mr. Bachelder called on me a few evenings since, and exhibited the draft of his proposed map of the Battle of Gettysburg. I was sorry to find it wholly inaccurate in the position it assigns to my command on the 3^d of July. He represents my regiment and the 151st Pa. Vols., (then under my command) as lying in rear of General Stannard's Brigade. The truth is the exact reverse of this. A portion of General Stannard's brigade was lying behind me, and at no time was there so much as a file of his command in front of me, saving only his skirmishers. One regiment of his brigade constructed a breast-work in the forenoon, to my left, and perhaps one hundred feet in advance of me, and in rear of the little grove, but in no wise covering my line.

"Then again he has the space between my right and the bluff where the severest fighting along that part of the line took place, filled up with other troops. When the enemy made his attack there was not a man between my right flank and the bluff--a distance of three hundred yards.

"I therefore moved my command over this interval to the bluff when it became apparent that that was the point of assault, and did so because there were no other troops there to defend it.

"Whether Mr. Bachelder will make the proper corrections I do not know, but I desire to put you in possession of the facts, and with that view send you herewith a report covering every movement of my command, not only on the third, but during the three days fighting, and it is accurate in every particular.

"It was my misfortune to be associated during the three days with strange troops, from whom I almost immediately separated, and whose interest and preference do not require them to bestow much notice upon my command.

". . . / From / the time I took position with my regiment and the 151st Pa. Vol., in the front line in the afternoon of the 2d, until after the battle on the 3d, I was the senior officer of the brigade in that part of the field.

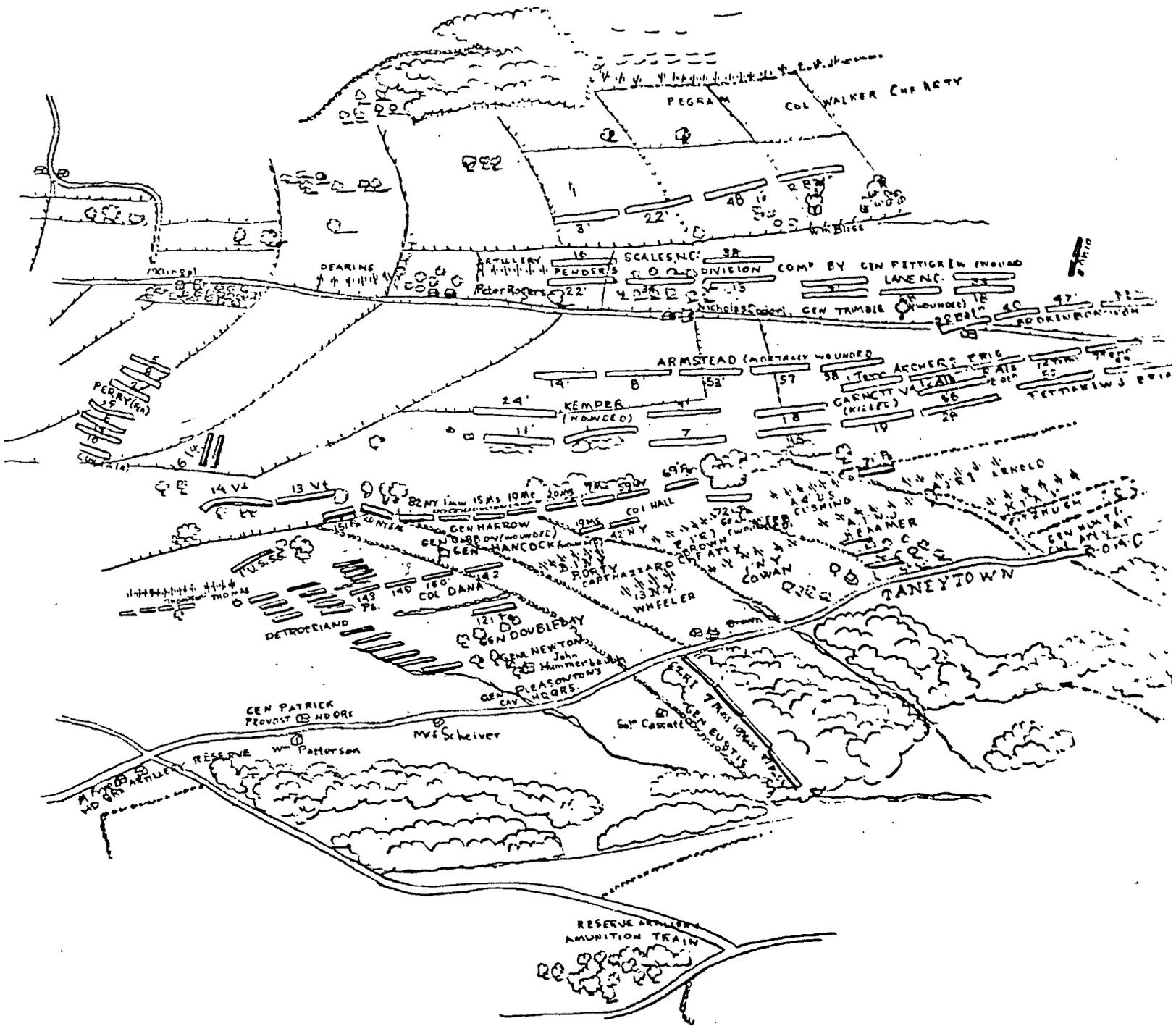
"I presume it was intended that the left of the 2d corps should fill the interval between my right and the bluff. But they did not do it. They were on the ridge in rear, and two or more regiments were massed behind the battery on the bluff while the fighting was taking place at the foot of the bluff in front. My Lieutenant-Colonel went to the regiment near the battery and endeavored to get them moved down to my support, but did not succeed. After the fighting was entirely over they came down and relieved me.

"The trenches in which hundreds of the enemy's dead are now lying, on the ground where they fought, bear witness to the desperate character of the contest, not to speak of still larger numbers wounded and captured, and larger still who surrendered unharmed. I am sorry to be driven to the belief that the troops who relieved me subsequently assumed to have done the fighting at that particular point. . . ." 401

401 Gates, The "Ulster Guard", pp.466-467.

GETTYSBURG BATTLEFIELD

(Bachelder Isometric Map 1864)



Although Colonel Gates criticized the errors of Bachelder Isometric Map (a portion of which is redrawn on the previous page), there were many who were involved with this same area of fighting who endorsed the map. Doubleday wrote to Gates on February 10, 1864, that he saw Colonel Bachelder with reference to Gates' statements to him. According to Doubleday, Bachelder "removed on his picture all troops from your front, but declines to leave the space vacant indicated by you on your right, as he considers the weight of evidence against your claim, and says he does not feel at liberty to disregard it." ⁴⁰² Doubleday was among those to endorse Bachelder's view, stating it to be "an admirable production and a truthful rendering of the various positions assumed by the troops in each of the three days combats."⁴⁰³ General John Newton, then commanding the Union First Corps also endorsed the map, saying that "as far as the positions of the 1st Corps are concerned, as well as other bodies of troops with which I am familiar, I consider it very accurate." ⁴⁰⁴ In the Second Corps, those troops on Gates' right during the July 3 action also endorsed the map without hesitation. Gibbon said that the "arrangement of my command is as accurate as possible and I am much pleased with it and the whole map." ⁴⁰⁵ F. E. Heath of the 19th Maine approved the map since "the positions of the various commands are laid down with remarkable accuracy." ⁴⁰⁶ Webb, who was usually very candid about

⁴⁰² Ibid., p. 468.

⁴⁰³ Abner Doubleday, November 23, 1863 letter to John B. Bachelder, in Bachelder Correspondence, New Hampshire Historical Society, Microfilm Reel 3.

⁴⁰⁴ John Newton, February 3, 1864 letter to John B. Bachelder, in Bachelder Correspondence, New Hampshire Historical Society, Microfilm Reel 3.

⁴⁰⁵ John Gibbon, letter to John B. Bachelder, in Bachelder Correspondence, New Hampshire Historical Society, Microfilm Reel 3.

⁴⁰⁶ F. E. Heath, May 8, 1878 letter to John B. Bachelder, in Bachelder Correspondence, New Hampshire Historical Society, Microfilm Reel 3.

distributing honor and blame on those units assisting him during the contest, wrote that he would "judge it to be accurate. I know that that portion of it which refers to the 2nd Brigade of this Division (the Brigade I commanded) is as it should be represented." 407 And when Bachelder "re-did" his isometrical map into three one-day maps of troop positions to represent all three days of the battle, he received more endorsements. One of these was from Captain Thomas Cummings of the 82nd New York, Harrow's Brigade, which was on the right of Gates' demi-brigade during the third day's action. Cummings declared that "the positions occupied by the Regiment with which I served, and other Regiments in my immediate neighborhood during the battle, are correctly laid down on the maps." 408 Since the 20th New York served in the "immediate neighborhood" of the 82nd New York (and since both were sister state outfits with a common background--one the 2nd Militia and one the 20th Militia) it seems likely that Captain Cummings would know if these positions were accurately laid down. This would be especially true since the 82nd New York and the 1st Minnesota, both of whom were adjacent to Gates, were such small units by the afternoon of July 3. Both of these suffered heavy casualties on July 2, and were depleted enough on July 3 that they would have been very close to the 20th New York.

Analyzing other portions of the Gates letter to Doubleday, it is apparent that there are many points of contradiction between what Theodore Gates said and what was stated by the regiments of other commands. For instance,

407A. S. Webb, December 23, 1863 letter to John B. Bachelder, in Bachelder Correspondence, New Hampshire Historical Society, Microfilm Reel 3.

408Thomas Cummings, June 8, 1878 letter to John B. Bachelder, in Bachelder Correspondence, New Hampshire Historical Society, Microfilm Reel 3.

Gates claimed that he moved his demi-brigade over to the "bluff" (which apparently referred to the rise on which was situated the clump of trees and Cowan's New York Battery), because "there were no other troops there to defend it." After examining the testimony and recollections from members of Gibbon's Division, this statement by Gates seems a little hard to believe. To the contrary, the "bluff" was swarming with more attention as far as defense than any other part of the Union line at that critical moment. The reason that there were then no troops to Gates' right was because all of those soldiers were gathered at the "bluff".

Other points of difference between Gates' claims and the recollections of other troops would include the position of Stannard's Brigade. Gates was sure that these Vermonters were in rear of his position, although he admitted that one regiment (the 13th Vermont) had constructed breastworks in advance and to his left. The Vermont accounts indicated that the major portion of the brigade was in an advanced line, including the 13th Vermont and the skirmishers of the 16th Vermont.

Gates' claim that he was responsible for all the destruction and enemy bodies on his front is untrue. He resented that the relief line that took his place after the fighting claimed that they had anything to do with the fighting on the front of the slashing. Gates was "sorry to be driven to the belief that the troops who relieved him subsequently assumed to have done the fighting at that particular point." But the troops that relieved him were probably the same troops that did indeed do the fighting in that area before they themselves moved off to the right. Many of the bodies in the slashing could be claimed to the terrible firing done by Hall and Harrow before they went to the assistance of Webb, while others of the bodies were due to the

effective musketry of Stannard's regiments and to the canister fired by Cowan's Battery as it sought to drive the remnants and defenders from the slashing area. These units had as much right to claim a share of the glory at the slashing as Gates' command, but at different times and from different points in the line.

Again, in 1865, Gates wrote to Colonel Bachelder, attempting to once again make his point and straighten out the erroneous maps:

"Since writing to you yesterday circumstances have occurred that prevent my leaving home as intended, and I shall not have the pleasure of seeing you.

"I regret this very much, for I desired to point out to you, on the ground itself, the different positions of my two Regiments (20th NY and 151st Pa.) on the 3d of July.

"The fact is that my demi-Brigade did the fighting in front of the left of the 2d Corps, and after all the fighting was over and when Pickett's Division was killed wounded or captured, the troops of the 2d Corps, in rear came forward and relieved me, but not a shot was fired at that point after I was relieved.

"If you should visit the ground again and will advise me a few days in advance I will try to meet you there." 409

Gates was referring to a general meeting of many Union and Confederate officers which Bachelder engineered at the battlefield after the war, and by which the historian was hoping to get positions staked out for marking by the Gettysburg Battlefield Memorial Association and for compiling more data for his own projected history of the Battle of Gettysburg. It is implied from the above letter that Gates was again pressing the issue that the 2nd Corps troops did not do any fighting in the slashing area's front. As already seen, there is sufficient evidence to disprove this. Gates was correct, however, in that none of the 2nd Corps firing was done from that position after the repulse of Pickett's Division.

⁴⁰⁹ Colonel Theodore B. Gates, October 26, 1865 letter to John B. Bachelder, in Bachelder Correspondence, New Hampshire Historical Society, Microfilm Reel 3.

Other units, jealous of their own reputation and contributions, likewise resented the claims made for Gates and for his own contributions to the battle. For instance, the Vermonters were indignant that Doubleday should imply by his writings that Gates had anything to do with their own flanking movements against Kemper's Brigade:

"As General Doubleday, in his report and history, connects the action of the Twentieth New York, Colonel Gates, with that of Stannard's brigade, in a way calculated to lead readers to suppose that they operated together on Pickett's flank, it is necessary to say that such was not the case. Colonel Bachelder's accurate maps of the battle show that the position of the Twentieth New York was some distance to the rear of the Thirteenth Vermont, and that no troops occupied an advanced position in front of the main line of battle, on the left centre, or moved upon Pickett's right flank, but the Second Vermont brigade. The careful reader of Colonel Gates' official report will also see that the movement of his regiment in repulse of the charge was not in front of, but behind, the main Union line. His regiment advanced toward, but not in front of, the fence which protected the front of Webb's brigade, and through which the enemy broke. The gallant action of the Twentieth New York was in fact part of the general rush of troops to stop the breach made by Armistead; and there is no apparent reason for connecting it with the charge of Stannard's brigade." 410

We can see from this that others could be touchy about what they themselves claimed they did alone, and without assistance.

Whenever Gates had the opportunity, however, he tried to tell his story of the battle as detailed as possible, in order to accurately represent that which he always remembered or what he himself saw. Unfortunately, he sometimes gave the impression that he won the battle all by himself, and this was probably the reason that his accounts fell on deaf ears. When the Pennsylvania artist Peter Rothermel was doing the necessary research to portray the repulse

410 G. G. Benedict, Vermont in the Civil War. A History of the Part Taken by the Vermont Soldiers and Sailors in the War for the Union, 1861-5, vol. 2 (Burlington, 1888), pp. 481n-482n.

at the Angle, he received correspondence from Colonel Gates relative to the functions performed by his units during the action there:

"I will not attempt to offer any excuse for not sooner replying to your favor of 16th January. . . .

"I can now only briefly state the positions of the two Regiments under my command on the final day at Gettysburg--These Regiments were the 80th N. Y. Vol. (better known as the 20th N.Y. Militia) and the 151st Pa. Vol. of Rowley's Brigade, Doubleday's Division, First Army Corps.

"I had been sent forward with this command at 4 P.M. on the 2d July to re-enforce Sickles and when that affair was over I posted my command in the front line on the left of Hancock's Corps & behind an old rail fence which I converted into a sort of breastwork. Stannard's Brigade came up & took position just in rear of my line lapping it somewhat at both flanks. Here I remained during the cannonading on the third and until Picket's Division advanced upon my front. When the Infantry came in range of my men who during all this time had been lying down--I ordered them up & opened fire on the advancing lines. The enemy appeared to have supposed my position undefended, for they immediately moved by the flank to my right until opposite the little natural mound in rear of the easterly end of the stone wall & then they faced to the front again and advanced rapidly upon this point. We had some artillery posted here, but the pieces could not now be depressed sufficiently to inconvenience the advancing enemy. My Major called my attention to the fact that there were no infantry present to defend this position and I immediately ordered my two Regiments to move by the right flank between the approaching rebels & this mound. The distance from my right flank to the stone wall was not more than the front of my command & I speedily took the position along the face of the mound & on our side the stone wall. Some trees had been cut down to clear range for the guns on top and among these my men rushed and for a considerable time the fight was carried on over this stone wall, some of the enemy crouching behind and firing over it until I gave the order to advance and drive them from their cover when nearly all surrendered. A few attempted to escape but not many of them reached their own lines.

"Col. Hodges of the 14th Va., whose diary I have, was killed within 50 feet of me. This was the last fighting

done along this line, & I remained here to near dusk & was then relieved by some other command.

"Gen. Stannard advanced to the position which I left at the rail ("fence" crossed out) Breastwork & threw his left Regiment forward into the clump of trees, but there was no fighting then. . . .

"I have not been willing to enter the lists with two or three officers who are ambitious to be considered the chief heroes of Gettysburg. It is enough for me to know I did all I could to turn the rebel assault into a disastrous defeat. And I may as well say that my reluctance to thrust myself forward in this matter, as I have seen a few others doing, was one reason why I did not answer your letter. But meeting my friend Gen. DePeyster a few days since in New York, he overcame my scruples and you have the result.

"I should say I took a very large number of prisoners but did not attempt to count them.

"I sent them through my lines without guard, except an officer to conduct them to the Provost Marshal of the Army." 411

Once again, although Gates provides sufficient individual or detailed material to elaborate upon his movements, his tendency to exaggerate or see things through biased eyes distorts the narrative. Like others (but usually those with more troops at their disposal), Gates assumed that it was his own fire that caused Kemper's Brigade to oblique to the right (Kemper's left). How Gates could have believed that his maximum force of perhaps 400 rifles (300 in 20th New York and 100 in 151st Pennsylvania) could have had such a powerful individual effect on the Confederate brigade is also somewhat egotistical, considering that Stannard's huge brigade of almost 2,000 men was combining its firepower with that of Harrow, Hall, and Webb, as well as Gates' small demi-brigade. And, as already mentioned, Kemper's movement to the right had nothing to do with Union firepower at all; but was done in

⁴¹¹Theodore B. Gates, April 28, 1868 letter to P. F. Rothermel, in Peter F. Rothermel Papers, Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission, General Correspondence, Research Materials.

order to effect a movement to the objective point of the Codori farmhouse. It is also uncertain how Gates got the impression that the Union artillery on the "mound" could not depress its guns sufficiently to fire at the on-rushing Confederates. Cowan was having no difficulty firing at them, and General Hunt was fearful that Cowan would increasingly depress his guns to the threat of the infantry line in front and below him. Cushing, by this time, had no guns firing at all because they were either already disabled or overrun or lacking in ammunition. No battery accounts speak of difficulties in depressing their muzzles to fire effectively at the advancing foe. In fact, there is very little slope to the "mound" which would create any problem along this line (as compared to the steepness of Raffensberger's or East Cemetery Hill).

One interesting observation by Gates, which was substantiated by other participants, was that the trees of the slashing originally extended over the fence and into the field east of the wall. The little clump of trees probably belonged to a much larger "grove" which was connected to the slashing by a belt of young growth cut on July 2. Gates specifically stated that his men rushed among these felled trees down to the wall, where the fighting raged until his men were ordered across the wall.⁴¹²

One last item requiring comment was Gates' assertion that Colonel Gregory Hodges of the 14th Virginia Infantry was killed within fifty feet of him. Hodges was on the right of Armistead's Brigade during the advance, and probably retained that same position until the end, so it is possible that Hodges got into the northern end of the slashing area. Whether or not

⁴¹²For more discussion relating to the clump of trees see Appendix B .

he was killed by the 20th New York is questionable. There were a lot of units firing into that area from the time that Armistead's Brigade reached the wall, including some artillery as well as infantry. Unless Gates specifically said that his unit killed him, which is not really stated, Hodges may have been killed by anyone. However, the site of Hodges' death will become important for us later, as his body became a "landmark" of sorts in determining positions around the clump of trees and the slashing.

One contemporary account which has survived is the diary entry of Major Walter Van Rensselaer. Van Rensselaer's account is probably the most immediate of any in Gates' demi-brigade and is worthy of examination:

"5 P.M. The enemy advanced a heavy line of skirmishers closely followed by long lines of Infantry. They steadily advanced obliquing to the left, forming two lines on their right. We followed up along the fence pouring in a tremendous fire. The old 20th took the lead. When near a slash of timber, I discovered a Rebel flag behind the fence in the hands of an officer. I demanded its surrender--he replied, 'not by a d---d sight!' and fired at me with his revolver, wounding me in the small of the back. I lunged at him with my sabre when he fired again, the ball striking my sabre scabbard--five or six of my boys came to the rescue and he surrendered, followed by his whole regiment--they came over the fence like a flock of sheep--think we captured, at least, 1500 prisoners. . . . Col. Gates and Lieut. Col. Hardenburgh behaved splendidly; they led the whole of our forces." 413

Other than a major exaggeration concerning the number of prisoners taken, Van Rensselaer's diary is quite accurate and true to the general descriptions delineating the advance of the demi-brigade along the fence. It is quite certain that the two small regiments under Gates did not capture 1500 Confederates themselves. It is stated that about 1500 prisoners from Pickett's Division were captured totally that day by all units of the Union army.

⁴¹³Major Walter A. Van Rensselaer, "Diary extract," July 3, 1863, city of Kingston, N. Y. Copy in GNMP files.

The chaplain of the 20th New York, Cornelius Van Santvoord, delivered the address at the dedication of the regimental monument at Gettysburg in the fall of 1888, in which he described the actions of the regiment during the repulse:

"This demi-brigade took the place to which it was assigned after the attack on the Third Corps had been successfully made, retaining it through the third day under the tremendous two hours' cannonade from a hundred Rebel guns which heralded Pickett's grand assault. Then its opportunity came. For as the charging battalions swept onward, these two regiments were enabled to render very effective service, by opposing the advancing columns in mid career and delivering upon their front and flank a staggering attack. They pressed close up to the enemy, pouring destructive volleys into their exposed ranks, and by the spirit and energy of their attack greatly aided the result which soon came. . . ." 414

If the chaplain of the 20th New York witnessed the fight, it would be impossible to tell from his address due to its generality and repetition of common incidents repeated by other historians and officers.

A more interesting and enlightening account was read before the Military Order of the Loyal Legion by Captain John S. D. Cook, formerly of the 20th New York State Militia:

"By this time the enemy, or what was left of them, had reached our men, and the struggle was hand-to-hand.

"A curious thing about this fighting was, that although all the men were armed with bayonets, no one seemed to be using them. Those nearest clubbed their muskets and beat each other over the head, while those not so close kept loading and firing as fast as they could.

"A few minutes ended the fray. The charge had failed and the foe turned to retreat. But as the ground over which they had come was swept by our fire, most of those near our line sank to the ground and gave up the attempt to get away.

414 Fox, New York at Gettysburg, vol. 2, p. 650.

"Our men shouted to them to come in and promised not to hurt them, and at the word hundreds rose up and came into our lines, dropping their arms and crouching to avoid the fire of their own artillery, which was pouring upon our position. . . . A short distance in front was a clump of bushes among which appeared a white cloth. At first I thought it a rag caught in the brush, but it soon appeared that someone was waving it as a signal. . . . / From / behind the bush nearly or quite a dozen men arose and came hurrying and dodging into our line. A line of skirmishers was thrown out to the front, and most of those who had not got away were thus enclosed and captured.

"The fire upon us soon died away and we had leisure to look about us. The ground near and in front of us was almost literally covered with killed and wounded.

"Just in front of us and not twenty yards away lay a group of Confederate officers, four or five in number, all dead but one, and he stretched across the body of another, gasping his last breath. As soon as he was dead some of our men went to see who they were. The one across whose body the other had died wore the uniform of a colonel. . . . His sword and scabbard were shot to pieces, but one of our sergeants detached his belt and gave it to me. . . ." 415

This dead colonel may have been the same Colonel Hodges described as being fifty feet (close to Cook's description of twenty yards) from the 20th New York and Colonel Gates.' It is rather intriguing that the men did not go down to see who the officers were until the last one died. Perhaps that would mean that they would not have to talk to a dying enemy, or personalize his death with any sense of guilt. It is also sad that, amidst all the death and dying, the killing and running, no one could think to comfort this dying Confederate with a drink of water or a few kind words.

Still, the most defensive of the chroniclers of the demi-brigade was Colonel Gates himself. He wrote to his lieutenant-colonel after the war, when others were "ambitious to be considered the chief heroes of Gettysburg".

⁴¹⁵Captain John S. D. Cook, "Personal Reminiscences of Gettysburg," in Ken Bandy and Florence Freeland, compiles, The Gettysburg Papers, vol. II (Dayton, Ohio, 1978), pp. 928-930.

His letter requesting information, however, reads more like a lawyer "leading the witness":

"Hancock says that the fighting on our left on the third day, was done by his command. . . . Now I have never believed that any equal number of men did more service on our left that day than did the 20th & 151st & I think they saved the key of the position--to wit the mound behind us, where the battery was & to which you went to try to get the infantry there to come to our support. I wish you would give me your recollection about these events. Starting. . . with our moving forward the afternoon of 2d in support of 3^d corps & taking position that night in front line & remaining there till we moved by right flank to interpose ourselves between Pickett's advance & the mound spoken of.

"You will probably remember that at 12 or 1 o'clock on the 3^d I requested you to find Gen. Doubleday & report our position to him, as we had not seen a General officer or received any order since we went into position the previous afternoon. That as you were returning to our lines the enemys Artillery opened. That you reported to me that Gen. D. said we were all right & that he knew where we were.

"You will also probably remember that a Regt or Brigade, (which I dont recollect) was lying on the ground behind us during the cannonade. I always supposed they were Stannard's Vermonters. . . .

"You doubtless remember that soon after our men arose from behind our little barricade & opened fire on the enemys advancing line, it obliqued to the left & after passing in that way partly by our front & to our right, they faced to the front again and came rapidly towards the mound. Then it was that Van Rennsellar called my attention to the fact that the troops on our right had disappeared & that there was no infantry between the mound & the rebs, and we then faced by the right flank and moved up to the side of the mound and partly into the slashings. Seeing this infantry idle and in disorder on the top of the mound after we had been engaged in our new position some little time, I requested you to go there & have them advanced to our support. You went but could do nothing with them, although you never gave me the particulars of what took place. Who were they and what were they doing there and what condition of disarray?

"You probably remember that we received a large number of prisoners and passed them to the rear under conduct of

an officer simply and that after the fighting was all over some troops moved up from somewhere on our right & the officer in command said he was sent there to relieve us & we withdrew & gave him our position. This was my mistake but I had no idea anybody was going to claim the credit due to us, but it is just what has been done for 13 years and if I can set it right at this late date I mean to do it. . . ." 416



Col. Theodore B. Gates

It is uncertain whether Hardenburgh answered this letter or not, but he did write to Gates in October 1878 (almost two years after the above letter was composed), answering many of these same questions and "remembering" many of the incidents quoted by his colonel:

"[The enemy] suddenly and rapidly obliqued to the left and made a rush for a hill covered with some brush and trees on our right. As soon as you saw this movement you formed the regiment by the right flank, and with it followed the movement of the enemy until you reached this hill or mound, when you took a position on the brow of the hill, a little obliquely to the general line, some distance in advance of the other troops, and remained in that position while the attack lasted. After the attack was over, an officer came with some troops, and said he had been ordered to occupy that position. After some parleying between you, and some hesitation on your part, you finally retired. . . . When you commenced to move to the right there were no troops on our right between us and the mound. What had become of them I don't know, but suppose they had collected on this mound and around this grove. There was a great mass of them there in perfect confusion. As the rebs advanced they kept swaying back, and I tried to get them to move up and hold their ground, but it was no use. It struck me as being, to say the least, very ridiculous. The 20th stood, firing on the brow of the hill away in their advance, and they were huddling around this point like a flock of sheep." 417

⁴¹⁶Theodore B. Gates, December 18, 1876 letter to J. B. Hardenburgh, Seward Osborne collection. Copy in GNMP files, pp. 2-6.

⁴¹⁷Gates, The "Ulster Guard", pp.471-472.



Regimental Colors used by the 20th Militia (80th N.Y.V.) Listing Battles in which it served

Presented by the ladies of Saugerties.

The flagstaff was shattered by a bullet at Gettysburg and the gilt eagle was shot from the top of the staff.

The flag is in the State Military Museum in Albany. 418

Although Gates and Hardenburgh felt hard pressed to defend the flag of their regiment in

the years following the battle, it was also ably defended during the battle.

The flag itself, as represented above, was of blue silk on which were inscribed the battles in which it had participated up to Gettysburg. According to the

⁴¹⁸Will Plank, Banners and Bugles: A Record of Ulster County, New York and the Mid-Hudson Region in the Civil War (Marlborough, N.Y., 1963), p. 20.

records "Color Sergeant Edward Beckett was shot through the hand, the bullet shattering the flagstaff. In the third day of the battle of Gettysburg, the gilt eagle was shot from the top of the staff." ⁴¹⁹ The gilt eagle was found and claimed by some other regiment as a war trophy captured from the Confederates, which highly incensed Gates and undoubtedly caused humiliation to the "guilty" regiment.

One of the reasons Gates and his fellow comrades were so defensive and vocal in sounding their own praises for the battle has already been cited-- they were an "outsider" unit in the brigade and division, and had no champions at headquarters to look out for their interests when reports or histories were written. In fact, the 20th New York did not join the First Corps until after noon of June 30, 1863 at Emmitsburg, when the regiment was ordered to the First Brigade, Doubleday's Division, then on picket.⁴²⁰ Gates commented on this sudden attachment to the strange brigade:

"When General Reynolds crossed the Potomac to Edward's Ferry, the 'Ulster Guard' was occupying the left bank of the river opposite the Ferry. General Reynolds rode to the Colonel's tent and lunched with him, and, before leaving, wrote an order directing him to join the First corps with his Regiment, as soon as he should be relieved. This was on the 26th of June. When relieved, the First corps had twenty-four hours the start of the Guard, but it overtook it on the afternoon of the 30th by marching early and late, and was put into a brigade of Pennsylvanians, who were strangers to it and it to them. The next morning they went into battle together. The next afternoon the brigade was separated, and thereafter, until the fighting was over, the 151st Penn. and the 'Ulster Guard' were separated from the rest of the brigade and acting as a demi-brigade under command of Colonel Gates.

⁴¹⁹Ibid., p. 82.

⁴²⁰Gates, The "Ulster Guard", p. 529.

A few days afterwards the 'Ulster Guard' was transferred from the brigade and never served with it again. It was one of the cases referred to by General Patrick. . . , and while the services are appreciated the identity of the Regiment is ignored." 421

General Abner Doubleday did not overlook the services of the 20th New York. Indeed, he seemed to have gone out of his way to recognize them, and a letter dated September 10, 1863 from him was included in the regimental history because of its glowing tribute. The history, however, does not inform the reader under what circumstances the letter was written, and for whom it was intended.

"Colonel Theodore B. Gates, of the Twentieth New York, served under me in the recent battle of Gettysburg, as well as on several other occasions. The many battles in which this officer has been engaged, his great bravery and sound military judgment led me to place great dependence upon him. On the first day at Gettysburg he was assigned to the important duty of protecting the left flank of the first corps against the heavy forces which threatened it. 422 His manoeuvres were all excellent, and he held his position for several hours, until the right of the line gave way and forced him to retire, which he did in good order. Although outflanked by a whole brigade, he continued, as I have said, to hold them in check, and to fall back without disorder, to a second position on Seminary Ridge. There he formed his line again, and most gallantly checked the enemy's advance, until the corps had nearly all withdrawn. His position was that of a forlorn hope, covering the retreat of the corps and saving it from a great disaster.

"Exhausted as his command must have been, from the desperate and prolonged fighting on the first day, he nevertheless, had an equally desperate combat on the third day, after the terrific artillery assault which preceded the final attack of the rebels on our left cen-

421 Ibid., p. 434n.

422 Gates did not have sole responsibility for protecting the left flank of the First Corps. That duty was assigned to Biddle's BRIGADE. There is also the fact that the 121st Pennsylvania claimed to have been on the extreme left, and not the 20th New York.

tre. The rebels had already penetrated Hancock's line of battle, when the two regiments, under command of Colonel Gates, attacked them furiously in front, at short pistol range, charged and drove them from the protection of the felled timber in which they were sheltered, and took a large number of prisoners. On the occasions alluded to, Colonel Gates commanded the 20th New York (his own regiment), and the 151st Pennsylvania Volunteers.'" 423

General Marsena Patrick, Provost-Marshal General of the Army of the Potomac during the Gettysburg Campaign, also credited the services and reputation of the 20th New York. The regiment had served throughout most of the war as part of Patrick's Brigade and as provost guard, and was detached from the provost and assigned to the First Corps for the Gettysburg Campaign. As a favor to Colonel Gates, General Patrick responded to his request for a "letter of endorsement" to appear in the projected regimental history. Patrick wrote in November 1878:

"As Provost-Marshal-General of the Army of the Potomac, from the battle of Antietam, it was absolutely indispensable that I should have troops around me on whom I could rely. Regiment after regiment was assigned to me, only to make further changes needful, until in early January of '63, my request to have my Old Brigade assigned to my department was granted, and from that hour I felt that I had those around me who could be trusted.

"In less than six months afterwards the other regiments of that famous Old Brigade having been discharged by expiration of two years' service, the Twentieth alone remained, charged with difficult, laborious and responsible duties, increasing in magnitude and importance up to the close of the war. Although the Provost troops were not, on ordinary occasions, in line of battle, yet, in every time of peril, from Gettysburg to Petersburg, the hasty call on me was, 'Put in your Twentieth'--and 'put in' it was; and history tells the story. It records the heroic conduct of the 20th N.Y. and 151st Pa.--a demi-brigade under your own command

423 Gates, The "Ulster Guard", pp. 445-446.

in resisting the main attack of Pickett's famous division, six times your own number, for three hours, holding ground against nearly 100 guns, and eventually forcing the enemy from the field, but with the loss of Corbin and Baldwin, and Brankstone, and many others of your best and bravest."

"Belonging to no corps, but 'put in' whenever and wherever necessity demanded, its services were not recognized and honored as were the services of other regiments permanently attached to the corps in which the Twentieth might be temporarily fighting."⁴²⁴

While Patrick's enthusiasm for the regiment was apparent because of his long association with Gates and his New Yorkers on provost detail and as part of his earlier brigade command, he was writing a testimonial for something he himself did not see, since he was in the rear of the army during the Battle of Gettysburg. Patrick could only go by what he read in other reports and from what he was told by Gates. It is a certainty that, as Patrick seems to imply, Gates did not stand alone against the "main attack of Pickett's famous division". His regiment never met any unit which outnumbered it six to one on July 3, never suffered from the concentrated fire of 100 guns, and did not force the enemy from the field alone.

In addition, Patrick was not always that sympathetic or enthusiastic about the services of the 20th New York, and truthfully recorded their less "colorful" days in his diary during the war. In the reports for the battle at Gainesville, Va. on August 28, 1862, the 20th New York did not come out as the heroes of the battle that time. While Gates himself reported that "darkness put an end to the engagement before we reached the field," others gave more detail on the subject, which clarified WHY the regiment was not engaged in this pre-Gettysburg battle. Gibbon, who was to be "saved" by Gates at Gettysburg, wrote that he "sent repeatedly and urgently to Generals King, Doubleday, and Patrick for assistance, but the two regiments of Double-

⁴²⁴Ibid., p. 193.

day's brigade was the only assistance furnished me. General Hatch gallantly moved his command back toward the sound of the firing, but arrived on the ground too late to render any assistance. Patrick's brigade remained immovable and did not fire a shot." ⁴²⁵ Patrick himself wrote in his diary concerning that engagement on August 28: "Darkness came on & only by the sheets of flame could we know the position--I immediately threw out the 35' & 23' Regts., but the 20' had fled & I could not get their whereabouts for more than 2 hours." ⁴²⁶ Perhaps in an effort to atone for this questionable behavior, the 20th New York took it on the chin at the Battle of Second Manassas two days later. There they had the largest losses in Patrick's Brigade. ⁴²⁷

While the 20th New York had South Mountain inscribed on their regimental colors, their performance there on September 14, 1862 was likewise not laudable. Patrick recorded on that day: "From some cause the 20' & 23' did not follow & some delay occurred in getting them up to support the 35' but by dint of hurrying and pressing they got up--at least the 23' did, but the 20' as usual on such occasions, hung back--We all ascended the mountain rapidly, & after much trouble in placing the 20' I found that the 35' had left a wide space between its right and the left of the 21'!" ⁴²⁸

⁴²⁵ORs, vol. 12, part 2, pp. 376, 381.

⁴²⁶David S. Sparks, ed., Inside Lincoln's Army: The Diary of Marsena Rudolph Patrick, Provost Marshal General, Army of the Potomac (New York, 1964), p. 131. The underlining is that of General Patrick.

⁴²⁷Lost 32 of the 56 killed, 165 of the 334 wounded, and 82 of the 178 missing. ORs, vol. 12, part 2, p. 254.

⁴²⁸Sparks, p. 144.

One of the things that undermined Gates' accounts of the Gettysburg actions and his statements that there were no troops to his right, that the rest of Gibbon's Division were like a "flock of sheep", &c. was his penchant for overstating the contributions of his command while undermining those of other commands. This was most apparent in the reports that came out of the Battle of Antietam, the last major battle in which the 20th New York was involved until Gettysburg. Gates' report of the battle reflected this sort of aggrandizement of his own reputation while defaming that of others:

"Having crossed the road, my regiment was detached to support Battery B, which was said to be in great danger. I moved back at a double-quick and took position with the right wing of my regiment (the whole command did not number 150) in rear of the battery, and ordered the major to advance along the road next to the corn-field with the left wing. The infantry fire was very heavy during all this time, commencing from the corn-field and over a knoll in front of the battery. Major H. Hardenburgh pushed forward down the road, driving the enemy from the fences and the edge of the corn-field, and supporting the Sixth Wisconsin, which was on his left and in some disorder. For a time the enemy were completely driven from their cover, and in their flight abandoned their battle-flag (the bearer being shot down by Isaac Thomas, of Company G), which was brought off by Major H., as was also the regimental colors of the Sixth Wisconsin, which they had been compelled to leave on the field. The Wisconsin regiment falling back, and the enemy advancing, strongly re-enforced, Major H. fell back with his small party to the right wing. The enemy advanced, apparently with the intention of taking the battery, and drove the gunners from their pieces for a time, but the steady fire of my battalion checked and drove them back until the other regiments of your brigade reached the field to my right and front, when the enemy were driven to the left and rear." 429

429 ORs, vol. 19, part 1, pp. 246-247.

Gates' post-war history of the regiment elaborated upon this official report and told how his small battalion of 150 men saved the day at Antietam:

" . . . / The / Twentieth was detached and sent back to support Captain Campbell's battery, against which the enemy was seen to be advancing in considerable force. Returning at 'double-quick', the right wing formed near the guns, while the left wing under Major Hardenburgh, advanced down the field, along the road side, behind the fences of which and in the cornfield on the opposite side the enemy were posted, and from whence they commanded the position of the battery; they had also taken possession of a hollow piece of ground just in front of the guns. Major Hardenburgh pushed forward, under a hot fire, driving the enemy from their cover, and clearing the ground and the edge of the cornfield on our left: / Keep in mind that this was all being done with half of the battalion, or 75 men. / The Sixth Wisconsin, which had advanced into the cornfield on Major Hardenburgh's left, was very roughly handled by the enemy in its front, and was thrown into disorder and forced to retire. Its color-bearer was shot down, and its colors left on the field. Major Hardenburgh covered the retreat of the Wisconsin regiment, and brought off its colors. He also captured and brought off a Confederate battle-flag, the bearer of it having been shot down. . . . The enemy were soon re-enforced; and, advancing upon Major Hardenburgh in overwhelming numbers, he was obliged to fall back, which he did deliberately, delivering his fire as rapidly as the men could load. . . .

"Hardenburgh joined the right wing, and the regiment poured a steady fire into the brave fellows. . . . For a time they drove the gunners from their pieces, but they could not endure the withering fire of the regiment at close quarters, and they fell back under cover of the ridge. . . .

"Re-enforced and re-organized, on they came again. . . . Captain Campbell had double-shotted his guns. . . . The havoc was frightful. Their ranks were torn to pieces. The 'Twentieth' on the instant poured in a deadly volley, and then sprang forward with the bayonet. The remnant of the rebel line broke and fled. . . ." 430

⁴³⁰Gates, The "Ulster Guard", pp. 317-319 passim.

Comparing Gates' story of the fighting at Antietam with the reports and accounts of those participating in the same actions, it is easy to see the same contrast in histories of the event as appeared later concerning Gettysburg. The report of the 6th Wisconsin Infantry for Antietam gave a different version of the attack on them near the battery:

"At the request of Major Dawes, who was in command during my absence, I have the honor to report that the regiment conducted itself during the fight so as to fully sustain its previous reputation; that it did not abandon its colors on the field; that every color-bearer and every member of the guard was disabled and compelled to leave; that the State color fell into other keeping; temporarily, in rear of the regiment, because its bearer had fallen; but it was immediately reclaimed, and under its folds, few but undaunted, the regiment rallied to the support of the battery. The color lance of the National colors is pierced with five balls. . . .

"In this advance two stand of colors were captured and sent to the rear in charge of a wounded soldier, and have become lost or fallen into the possession of some one desirous of military éclat without incurring personal danger, so that they cannot be reclaimed by the captors." 431

The final paragraph brings to mind a disturbing question: Did the 20th New York claim the color rightfully captured by the 6th Wisconsin, who were fighting long before Hardenburgh's little battalion came up? Did the same thing happened that happened so often at Gettysburg--someone took the flag from a wounded or busy soldier and claimed its capture for himself?

Gibbon likewise had different recollections of the Battle of Antietam than Theodore Gates:

"Under repeated assaults, my men now came rapidly to the rear. . . . But no sooner did they reach the battery than the flag was planted by it and more men began to rally around it as they came to the rear. . . . Men and horses were falling thick and fast in the confined space and I was obliged to call on the division commander (Gen. Doubleday) for assistance. He sent me half of a New York regiment but their services were not called into service for nothing could withstand the fire of those double-shotted Napoleons, which finally beat off the

⁴³¹ORs, vol. 19, part 1, pp. 255-256.

enemy, and as soon as the fire slackened, the pieces were hastily limbered up and passing through the two narrow gateways again, gave up the dangerous position and with the brigade, proceed to the rear to reorganize." 432

According to Gibbon, the small contingent of the 20th New York sent to his aid was not pressed into service because the battery itself beat back the Confederate assault with double-shotted charges. Gates, however, had stated that the enemy fell back because they could not withstand the "withering fire of the regiment" (of only 150) at close quarters.

Through this digression into other battles and campaigns it is possible to see the reputation another regiment may have had before its peers, and it is also possible to see where controversies and contradictions cropped up in other battles between the same parties. In this instance, Gates vs. Gibbon. As already mentioned, no regiment would willingly admit to losing its flag, unless under extraordinary or deadly circumstances. That Gates made public in his report that he returned to the 6th Wisconsin the battle flag they "abandoned" on the field was enough to pique the resentment of Dawes and the other men of the 6th Wisconsin. That unit was a proud and now-famous regiment who had 26 men killed and 126 wounded in the action in front of the battery, more men than Gates had carried into the battle. The brigade to which it belonged, commanded by John Gibbon, had achieved a fame at South Mountain that the 20th New York did not come close to touching on the same day when they "hung back". The brigade, dubbed the Iron Brigade because of its firm stand just three days before Antietam, did not usually run and abandon its colors. It was clear from the resentment in the report of the 6th Wisconsin that they thought themselves wronged by Gates' report concerning their colors.

⁴³²Gibbon, Personal Recollections, p. 84.

It would be logical because of the ensuing ill feelings between the 6th Wisconsin and the 20th New York that the brigade commander, John Gibbon, was made aware of who the 20th New York and its colonel were. He must have remembered them from Antietam when he found them on the left of his line at Gettysburg. Perhaps that is why the actions of the 20th New York were not mentioned or recognized by those other Union troops they fought alongside. As a part of the Union First Corps at Gettysburg, where they likewise made a brave stand, the Iron Brigade should have been favorites of their corps comrades. The First Corps which surrounded Gates on the third day's battle may have resented what an "outsider" (and a provost guard, too) had done a year ago. Like Gibbon they may have chosen to remain silent concerning any contributions made by Gates at Gettysburg.

Even in the poetry that was inspired by this battle over the years, Gates was to be unmentioned. There were many others, as we have already seen, who contributed greatly to the repulse of the Virginia attack, many of whom, like Rorty and Benjamin Wright and Amos Steele, paid with their lives. Most of these were not recognized either, and many who were recognized by medals or public office or promotion may have built their reputations on the yeomen work of others. But, no matter what the individual claims, it took more than any one Union command to bring the South to its knees that day at the little clump of trees. It took men from Vermont, New York, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota working together, as a "union", to combine their efforts and preserve the nation created some four score and seven years before. It was fortunate for the Union that, at Gettysburg, the jealousies and rivalries were subjugated momentarily so that

"Around the clump, world storied spot--
 Rebellion's highest wave,
 Where Webb, and Hall, and Harrow fought
 And dug Secession's grave. . . ." 433

"The myrmidon-hosts of foemen are coming,
 Undaunted, though wildly the rifle is humming
 The death-knell of thousands. . . ." 434

"Secession's grave", where literally thousands did hear their "death-knell" on the afternoon of July 3, was almost exclusively on the small farms of P. A. Small and Peter Frey. The slashing, The Angle, and field of Garnett's and Armistead's attack were upon those farm fields of two Pennsylvania farmers, up to then anonymously carrying on their day-to-day routines. Never again could those 40 acres of American soil be thought of as mere pasture- or meadow-lands again, for they would soon be considered as the very High Water Mark of the Confederacy.

The Confederates, like their Union counterparts, were not to "forget what they did here", and many of the participants of the repulse at the clump of trees and in the Angle were to share their memories in later years through correspondence and publications. While some were general like the post-war Union histories and regimental accounts, the majority of the Southern memoirs were much more personal and had a great deal more individual details.

433J. Howard Wert, Poems of Camp and Hearth. (Harrisburg, 1887), p. 123.

434 Ibid., p. 16.

Of those who spoke in the more general terms, or offered an overall perspective of the attack, many heralded the fortitude and bravery of Pickett's Division of Virginians. The North Carolinians, who were to suffer verbal abuse from the Virginia writers after the war, were generally not sympathetic to Pickett's column in their post-war monographs. One of the least defensive of the North Carolina articles maintained an objectivity that described the final phases of the assault of the Confederate right:

"When the front line of Webb's Brigade gave way under the pressure of Pettigrew's men on the flank, they had fallen back, some to the cover of a clump of trees in the rear and others to a stone wall that crossed the ridge. From these points they maintained a desultory firing upon the Confederates, who having possession of the wall now used it as a protection for themselves. The projection was practically cleared, but, though Archer's and Scales' and Pickett's men held the angle. . . , there was no general effort made to penetrate into the enemy's line. In the meantime regiment after regiment had hurried to cover the break in the Federal line until the men stood four deep, ready to hurl back the Confederates if they should seek to advance. Such was the condition of comparative repose when Armistead's Brigade reached the wall in Garnett's rear."

"On the right Kemper had been driven back, and the battle having now ceased in front of Hall's and Harrow's Brigades, these were hurriedly advanced, at the moment the force collected in the rear of Webb rushed forward, taking Garnett and Armistead's troops in the flank as well as front, and entirely routing and dispersing them."

". . . / The / field far down the valley / was / dotted with squads of Pickett's broken regiments, while nearer were the fragments of the other commands in full retreat. Thus ended the events of those brief ten minutes--the gallant charge--the successful planting of the Confederate standards along the entire line of the Federal works--the comparative lull, save on the right, where Kemper made his fierce entrance into the enemy's line; his speedy repulse--and the overwhelming rally of Hancock's forces, enveloping and dispersing Pickett's division. . . ." 435

⁴³⁵Captain S. A. Ashe, "The Pettigrew-Pickett Charge", pp. 156-158 passim.

In a description of the participation of Garnett's Brigade at the wall, the other two brigades of Pickett's Division were also mentioned, as well as those units from Pettigrew's and Trimble's commands that fought with them at the Angle:

"When the brigade had reached within seventy-five paces of the stone wall, both its flanks were in the air, unsupported. General Kemper was some fifty or sixty yards behind and to the right, and General Armistead coming up in the rear.

"The discovery was made that Kemper's line was lapping Garnett's, and an effort was made to have the condition remedied, but Kemper was not present. . . . Captain Fry, of his staff, exerted himself to have the brigade comply, but the eagerness of the men pressing forward caused him to fail. Though Garnett's line was greatly depleted, it still kept up the advance until within twenty paces of the wall, when, for a moment, it recoiled under the terrific fire that was poured into its ranks from the Federal batteries and their sheltered infantry. At this critical moment, Kemper came up on his right and Armistead in its rear, and the three lines joined in concert, rushed forward with unyielding determination and an apparent spirit of laudable rivalry to plant the Confederate banner on the walls of the enemy."

[The Confederates advancing over the wall, they captured momentarily a number of artillery pieces.]

"By that time the troops on the right and left of the brigade were broken and driven back, and the brigade was exposed to a severe musketry fire from its front and both flanks, and the enfilading fire of the guns on the Round Tops." 436

The above description of the last moments of the attack, when all three of Pickett's brigades were jockeying for an aligned position until they were repulsed at the wall, gives some indication of the confusion that reigned amongst the division. Charles Pickett, assistant adjutant general to his general-brother, described this deterioration from a dress parade formation to the time when "everything became a regular melee; after that, the Deluge." 437

⁴³⁶John Purifoy, "Longstreet's Assault at Gettysburg, July 3, 1863," Confederate Veteran Magazine, vol. 32 (March 1924), p. 102.

⁴³⁷Stine, p. 539.

There were also those who wrote later, with the advantage of years of hindsight, who saw what went wrong and what should have been done to prevent the errors. These men were usually the officers and staff assistants to the generals, primarily of Pickett's staff. Most vocal among them was Walter Harrison, whose book about Pickett's Division is the standard treatise on the unit and its commanding general. Harrison's version of the attack was, therefore, from a staff officer's viewpoint:

"Upon getting in full view of the enemy's position, the line of attack was naturally directed against the highest point and apparent centre of the enemy. Thus their movement across the open field was necessarily a considerable oblique to the left on their first front. A small clump of trees made the enemy's centre a prominent point of direction.

"It has since been ascertained that if Pickett's command had been fortunately moved directly to the front, or still more to the right, it would have struck the weakest point of the enemy's line, about the left of Hancock's Corps, and near the spot where the general was wounded early in the action. But this could not possibly be known at that moment. The ascent from the point of their coming under fire to the enemy's front line, I find upon subsequent examination of the ground, is not so precipitous as it appeared to me on the day of battle, but it is gradual and heavy, enduring for fully three-quarters of a mile over the open field to the Emmettsburg road, which runs nearly parallel to, and about forty or fifty paces in front of, Hancock's line. This ground is intersected by a number of stiff post and rail fences, which the men had to climb in their advance. Under these disadvantages it is not surprising that our division loss should have been so heavy, more than three-fourths of the number carried in; but almost incredible how they stood up to such work, how they actually carried the first line of the enemy, and, for a brief time, were successful in the assault." ⁴³⁷

Here is the first place we have seen an account, written by a Confederate, where the clump of trees was cited as the "point of direction" for Pickett's column. As already mentioned in the previous chapters, the apparent point of direction for the column, at least originally, was the Codori farmhouse.

⁴³⁷Harrison, Pickett's Men, pp. 183-184.

Harrison's post-war assertion that the column would have struck a weaker part of the Union line had it continued to the right (the original direction of Kemper's march, for instance, before its march by the left flank), is not true. How he "ascertained" otherwise is uncertain, but Pickett's Division did indeed strike the weakest part of the left-center, and would have struck the STRONGEST part of the line had it moved to the right. There on the right was the strong brigade of Vermonters under Stannard, the massed First and Third Corps in reserve, and the long row of batteries under McGilvery's direction, as well as Caldwell's Division of the Third Corps. The Sixth Corps, practically unused in this battle, was also within much closer striking distance to the point of attack proposed by Harrison.

Harrison also led up to an interesting question concerning the whereabouts of Pickett himself during all this movement and attacking:

"Gen. Pickett led his brigades straight on the enemy's front; Kemper and Garnett front, and Armistead, getting up into line at a run, on Garnett's left. The three brigades moved across this field of death and glory as steadily as a battalion forward in line of battle upon drill."

"Two lines of guns had been already taken, two lines of infantry had been driven back, or run over in this headlong assault; but the enemy still had a dense body of reserve. The critical moment for support had arrived to this little band of so-far victors. Another wedge must be driven in, another sledge-hammer mauling given to this one, or the sturdy oak, once riven, would close in and crush it. At last, checked in front, hemmed-in on all sides, this devoted forty-five hundred, this very 'forlorn hope', must succumb at once, or fight its way back over this desperately conquered ground. Stubborn holding on was death; a forced retreat was equally death or destruction. Where then were their supports? Where were those two lines that were to follow up this glorious burst of valor? Another, alas!-- the second and third places had been too hot for them. They could not come up in the face of that withering

storm. They did not reach the first line of the enemy. Midway they wavered, and from midway they fell back in disorder. Every effort was made to rally them, but to no purpose." ⁴³⁸

Aside from the controversy that arose in later years, wherein the Virginia veterans and historians and the North Carolina veterans and historians were to carry on an exchange of blame for the defeat, Harrison's recollections led in with a very interesting statement. "General Pickett led his brigades" into the enemy's front, according to this staff officer.

Pickett's staff officers were almost unanimous in this conclusion and testimony. Captain R. A. Bright, however, contradicted what Harrison may have said by stating that the latter did not accompany Pickett into the assault:

"The only members of the general's staff that went in with him on that day were Maj. Charles Pickett, Capt. E. R. Baird, Captain W. S. Symington, and myself. "

"I have nothing to guide me as to the farthest point General Pickett reached in person. We started in where Armistead's right was . . . , and at the Emmitsburg road General Pickett sent me to General Longstreet to tell him that he would take the enemy's position, but could not hold it without help; when I returned to General Pickett with General Longstreet's answer, I found General Pickett between the Emmitsburg Road and Cemetery Heights. Then three of us, one directly after the other, were sent to urge General Wilcox to bring his brigade to our assistance. On my return I found him near the descent of the last hill, facing the Federal works. Then I called his attention to a column of the enemy which was moving by head of column around our left flank, which was much too short. He sent me at once to Deering's artillery battalion to order them to open on the column, and in this way protect his flank. Lieutenant Marshall was on left of battalion, and I came to him first. He said his battery had only three rounds of shot. He opened at once with them, after which I rode to General Pickett, who

⁴³⁸Ibid., pp. 97, 98.

ordered our men back, so as to get out before being inclosed. At this time he was near the last valley in front of Cemetery Ridge." 439

According to this account by Captain Bright, then, Pickett advanced with his Division as far as the base of the western slope of Cemetery Ridge, near the place where so many of the Confederate troops halted to seek shelter behind the rocky knolls that rose therefrom.

Captain W. Stuart Symington wrote to Longstreet long after the war, stating for him that when the division first started out, General Pickett was between the first line (Kemper and Garnett) and the second line (Armistead).

"When the N. Ca. troops (Pettigrews) on our left began to waver and fall back Pickett sent two of his staff (I was one of those sent) to try & rally these men. . . . / You / will remember my bringing back to your Hd. Qrs. a flag of one of these N. Ca. Regts. which I had torn off the staff. Fremantle in his book notices this incident." 440



Symington was not able to say where Pickett was when Armistead moved from the rear to the front line, which would be after the Emmitsburg Road had been passed. As far as the incident recounted by Symington, we are unaware of such a passage in Fremantle's diary. It would have been difficult for Fremantle to have seen such an incident in the first place, since he himself did not get into position to see the field of the assault until after the repulse. He had to learn from other eyewitnesses the details of the charge.

⁴³⁹Stine, pp. 538-539.

⁴⁴⁰W. Stuart Symington, October 26, 1892 letter to James Longstreet, in Longstreet Papers, Duke University Library.

Other than Pickett's own staff officers, however, there were no others who remembered seeing Pickett that day anywhere near the places described by Captains Bright or Symington. The North Carolinian S. A. Ashe contended that "General Pickett and staff . . . did not cross the pike and did not accompany the troops further in the charge."⁴⁴¹ Captain William W. Wood, of Company G, 14th Virginia (Armistead's Brigade) wrote in an article published earlier than most Gettysburg accounts that Pickett knew his whereabouts would be questioned by others in later years:

"Strange to say, that although throughout the artillery combat and the subsequent charge General Pickett most recklessly exposed himself, yet neither he nor any member of his staff was struck. The General afterward said to me that on the day after the battle he felt that he would have no right to resent the insult if someone should accuse him of cowardice, because he was not among the killed, wounded or captured. . . ." ⁴⁴²

Although Captain Wood stated that Pickett "recklessly exposed himself", there were others who did not see such heroic activity on Pickett's part. Most acerbate of post-war writers was Colonel Eppa Hunton, commanding the 8th Virginia of Garnett's Brigade:

"Did Pickett go with his division in the charge? The evidence is pretty strong on both sides of that question. No man who was in that charge has ever been found, within my knowledge, who saw Pickett during the charge. One of my soldiers. . . told me that he was detailed to carry water to Pickett and his Staff during the fight at Gettysburg. I asked him where were Pickett and his Staff? He said they were behind a lime-stone ledge of rocks, about 100 yards in the rear of the position we held just before the charge. This ledge of rocks

⁴⁴¹Captain S. A. Ashe, "The Pettigrew-Pickett Charge", p. 147.

⁴⁴²Col. William W. Wood, "Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg," Gettysburg Compiler (August 22, 1877), p. 1.

was as safe a place as if he had been 100 miles from the battlefield. I understand a Confederate surgeon says that he had his field hospital behind this ledge of rocks, and that Pickett was there during the charge of his division. / footnote: 'It was told by General L. L. Lomax, the Confederate representative on the Gettysburg Commission, that the ledge of limestone rock, although frequently referred to, had never been found or located.' /

"Another strong argument on that side of the question consists in the fact that neither Pickett nor any of his Staff was killed or wounded, and not one of their horses were killed or wounded, whereas every man who was known to have gone into that charge, on horse-back, was killed or wounded, or had his horse killed. Kemper was on horse-back and was dreadfully wounded. I was on horse-back and was wounded, and my horse killed. Garnett was on horse-back and was killed; and it is, I think, impossible to find a man who went into that charge on horse-back who was not either killed or wounded; and it seems the most improbable of events that Pickett and his Staff could have gone into that charge on horse-back and all of them escape, without wounds themselves and without their horses having been killed or wounded.

"On the other hand, several of his Staff say that he did go into the charge. But how far he went, or how near he was to his division, they have not informed us. . . ." 443

Hunton was so embittered by the alleged desertion of Pickett from his duties on the field with his division that his son made sure that Colonel Hunton's tombstone did not refer to the assault as "Pickett's Charge", but as the "charge of Pickett's Division". While Hunton's assertion that all other known mounted officers were either wounded or killed, or at least had their mounts injured or killed, was correct, his objectivity was sometimes clouded by his enmity for General Pickett. We have already seen that one of his staff officers was fairly specific about detailing the movements and position of Pickett during the advance and attack, putting the general between the Emmitsburg Road and the Angle at the time of the repulse. Whether

⁴⁴³Hunton, pp. 98-99.

or not Captain Bright was accurate or truthful(?) in his reminiscences about Pickett's whereabouts is contingent upon the evidence presented by others not of Pickett's staff "family".

The limestone ledge of rocks mentioned as the observation point of General Pickett, and "frequently" referred to by those writing to or speaking with the Gettysburg National Park Commissioner Lomax, is still not found. As a matter of fact, there is no limestone whatsoever in the area of the assault, or behind the lines where Pickett's Division awaited the cannonade in the morning. Perhaps the observer was not an expert geologist and did not recognize the differences between limestone and granite and shale. The latter two types of rock formations are the predominant features of the battlefield landscape. To be sure, however, no Confederate surgeon would have a hospital or an aid station on the field of the charge itself, but behind Seminary Ridge or at least under cover of Spangler's Woods. Therefore, if the word of Hunton and the Confederate surgeon can be taken, Pickett would indeed have been in a place of comparative safety, and not with his men during the charge. Since Kemper and most other officers mentioned the dearth of orders during the assault, it would seem plausible that there was no directing officer to give such orders. That directing officer should have been Pickett, and if he was in command of his division on that day he should have been giving orders and necessary direction to his commanders. That he did not seem to do so has already been examined in previous chapters concerning the advance and attack.

Another eyewitness account of the events that transpired on July 3 agreed with the Hunton memoir. Unfortunately, that account was from the same regiment as Hunton, and was by the lieutenant-colonel of that 8th Virginia, Norbonne Berkeley:

"I have frequently been asked if I believed that Gen. Pickett and his staff were in charge at Gettysburg. I have always answered that I did not believe they were. Nor do I know that he could achieve any good result by attaching himself to any particular portion of his long line, as he would necessarily have had to neglect the other part. Gen. Lee having expressed a wish for all officers who could walk to go in to the charge on foot, knowing that every horse and rider would be exposed to almost certain death, as the sequel proved. Being in the exact center of the line, I could sweep the entire field, and being carried back in an upright position, could again do so, am convinced that no group of horsemen could have escaped my vision.

"A board of three officers, consisting of Gen. Deering, Capt. Fairfax and myself, having some time previously been appointed by Gen. Longstreet to appraise all the private horses in his corps, I think I know every horse that went into that charge. Gen. Deering and Capt. Fairfax / appraised / my thoroughbred sorrel 'Rebel' by Baily Peyton, at fifteen hundred dollars, which was higher than the appraisal of any horse in the corps, Gen. Garnett's bay thoroughbred by 'Red Eye' coming next at twelve hundred, both he and his rider being killed. Capt. Jone's bay mare was shot under him as was General Hunton's. General Kemper was shot off his bay, as was Col. Williams from his brown mare*, and if there was any other horse that went into the charge, I do not know it.

"The last time I was in Richmond, I called on my old friend General Hunton, and he said to me, 'Davy,' (a nickname he used) 'do you believe that Pickett and his staff were in that charge at Gettysburg?' I said I did not, and he replied 'neither do I.'" 444

*named "Nellie" KRG

As much as Colonel Berkeley thought he knew every horse that went into the charge, it is evident that he did not see all of them, since he did not mention any of those that went into the assault in Pettigrew's and Trimble's line, neither did he mention Longstreet's staff, nor the staff officers that were mounted in Garnett's and Kemper's brigades.⁴⁴⁵ Because he did not see these other mounted officers, Berkeley's belief that Pickett did not go into the charge because he also did not see him is not foolproof. Since Bright

⁴⁴⁴Berkeley, unpublished memoir.

⁴⁴⁵See Appendix A .

and Symington place Pickett between Garnett's and Armistead's lines during the advance and attack, it would be possible for Pickett and his staff to have accompanied the column without Berkeley or Hunton seeing them. The mounted officers would have been behind the 8th Virginia, and not in front of them. Still, it would seem improbable that neither Hunton (who went back to Seminary Ridge before the attack was over because he was wounded) nor Berkeley did not look back to see their supports sometime during the advance and the attack. They could not have failed to have seen Pickett had he been between Garnett's Brigade and the supporting brigade of Armistead.

One participant in the attack, not in Pickett's Division, was Major John Haskell, commanding half of Henry's Artillery Battalion during the cannonade and the assault. Haskell would not ordinarily have seen Pickett during the attack because his position was on the right of the artillery line near the Sherfy Peach Orchard. But, as events proved, Haskell became a participant in and an eyewitness to the events of that afternoon:

" . . . I was ordered to take two batteries down the / Emmitsburg / road, and was placed by Colonel E. P. Alexander, chief of artillery of Longstreet's Corps, in the Peach Orchard, where we engaged the enemy's batteries on Cemetery Heights. . . .

"We opened fire and so commenced the great artillery duel which began what has been called the pivotal attack of the war. . . .

" . . . I was ordered to move with all the guns I could take from the line--I think only five--on Pickett's right flank. Having no special orders beyond that I was to help where I could, I moved about half way to the heights. . . . / A / large number of guns--General Hunt, who was their chief of artillery, told me after the war that there were six or eight batteries--opened on my guns at short range with most disastrous effect, killing and wounding a number of the men and dismounting two of the guns.

"My ammunition gave out entirely about this time, and I sent out the men able to go, carrying such of the wounded who could move with their help. . . . I was struck in the side by a heavy piece of shell. It was

half-spent and striking my sword hilt did not go into my body, but knocked me from my horse. For a time it disabled me so that I was assisted to a large barn which was just on the left of my guns during the duel of the morning.

"When I got there I found General Pickett and his staff, his division by this time having got back, except for those who were killed or captured, in great confusion. I have had the statement very severely questioned by General Pickett's admirers as reflecting on him and denying him the credit which history has generally given him. But I repeat it positively and solemnly as a fact, which justice to the brave men he commanded but did not lead demands.

"If any proof is needed, look at the reports. While not a single general and scarcely a field officer came out of the charge unhurt, neither Pickett nor any of his staff--and he had a large and gallant one--was touched. I left him at the barn when I went in, and I found him at the barn--unscathed, when near all of the officers outside of him and his staff were killed and wounded--when I came out. . . ." 446

Major Haskell's recollections are the most specific pertaining to the whereabouts of himself in relation to known positions on the battlefield, and from them we can perhaps ascertain the whereabouts of General Pickett during this crucial time for his division. Haskell's position in the morning (?) during the cannonade duel was, as he stated, in the Peach Orchard, and probably on the extreme right of Alexander's long line of guns. (Haskell moved to this position in the morning of July 3, whereas most of Alexander's guns in and about the Peach Orchard had been there since the evening of July 2.) He remembered that there was a "large barn" just on the left of his guns during the cannonade, and that he found Pickett there before and after the attack had failed. Just how big a barn has to be to be considered "large" by Haskell is

446 Govan and Livingood, pp. 50--52.

not revealed or qualified in the account. Govan and Livingood, the editors of the Haskell memoirs, speculated that Pickett was at the Codori barn. Some historians have even speculated that the limestone ledge referred to by Colonel Hunton was perhaps the stone bridge of the embankment to the Codori barn, or the high stone foundation of that barn. These latter speculations are incorrect due to being based on false information. The Codori barn of 1863 was apparently a single-story English-type barn, and not the huge Pennsylvania barn, or bank barn, that was built some twenty years after the battle on the same site. There was no bank and very little foundation showing on the battle-era Codori barn. In addition, the speculation that Pickett was at the Codori buildings does not coincide with Major Haskell's recollections that the barn was "just on the left" of his morning position at the Peach Orchard. The only barns on the left of the Peach Orchard would be those of Joseph Sherfy, Henry Spangler, Daniel Klingel, and John Wentz. Since the first two were burned during the battle (Sherfy's on July 2 and Spangler's also on July 2). The Klingel barn seems to be too far northward to be considered by Haskell as "just" on the left of his guns at the Peach Orchard. The Wentz barn, on the other hand, would indeed be "just" on his left, since it was adjacent to the Peach Orchard. Although the 2nd New Hampshire's regimental history stated that the Wentz barn was "consumed" by flames resulting from artillery fire on the 2nd of July, there is no other verification of that fact. Apparently, the structure was damaged by shell fire but still intact on July 3. The position of the Wentz buildings is close to the ridgeline from which Pickett would have been able to observe the entire assault from the right, and would have been able to determine the precise moment to advance Wilcox and Lang in support of Kemper's right and in which direction to

guide them. It would also be logical for Haskell to have seen Pickett at the Wentz barn after the attack, since Haskell would not have been going to the Codori buildings from his advanced position anyway. Haskell's advanced position in support of Kemper's right flank was, as he stated, "about half way to the heights" from the Peach Orchard. This would have thrown him almost due east of the Rogers farm buildings and above Plum Run Valley, directly opposite McGilvery's line of "six or eight batteries." It would not have been logical for Haskell to have proceeded towards the area of fighting near the Codori buildings after he was slightly wounded. Haskell already stated that after he was wounded and had provided for the retreat of his men and guns he returned to the approximate position he held in the morning, to the right of the barn. Most importantly, then, Major Haskell said that he left Pickett at the barn, which should be the Wentz barn, when he "went in" to the battle and he found Pickett at the barn when he "came out" of the action. If Pickett and his staff were this far from the action front of the division it is no wonder that those officers suffered no injuries on the afternoon of July 3.

In reconciling the accounts of Pickett's staff, his own "edited" (?) letters to his sweetheart,⁴⁴⁷ and the other versions written by field officers, we must examine the motives of the writers and the veracity of their own words.

⁴⁴⁷The letters, published by his wife in 1908, were a collection of romantic excuses for Pickett's lackluster career, hoping to glorify him through such triteness as an endearing and noble chap. How much of the letters are authentic is questionable. If they are, indeed, authentic then Pickett was unfit for command at all. For example, Pickett supposedly was writing these letters at inauspicious moments, when he should have been exercising command. He wrote to his girlfriend that "I have ridden up to report to Old Peter" to ask permission to attack, and scribbled on this last note "If Old Peter's nod means death then good-by" &c. With the most important movement of his career moments away, Pickett is still writing letters to his girl on the pommel of his saddle?

We must also remember Doubleday's dictum that staff officers will lie for their chief. And wives will surely lie for their husbands. In this examination, Pickett and his staff did not measure up well. Considering Pickett's post-battle career and reputation, when he was once again absent at a critical moment to attend a shad bake, would it be surprising to find the general not attending to his line of battle?

Haskell's reminiscences brought with them the account of at least five guns advancing with Kemper to cover his flank, and it was those guns which gave such trouble to Stannard's Brigade during its movement out into the Codori fields, and was perhaps the same battery which fired into Hall and Harrow as they advanced to the Angle. Colonel Edward P. Alexander, charged with the arrangements for the cannonade and the support for the Confederate advance, remembered the contributions of the artillery in a letter to his father two weeks after the battle:

"I collected a few of the most serviceable guns near me and rushed them on after the infantry for a short distance when Pettigrew's Divn. on Pickett's left broke and fell back under the fire, the enemy having brought up new Batteries, and a strong force advancing against both his flanks, as he went into their lines in front and took their guns. Those on the right were nearest me and I turned my guns on them and drove them back, but those on the left, assisted by their reserves in his front broke Pickett's lines and his Divn. fell back in disorder losing many prisoners and colors. Had he been properly supported the result would have been very different for the charge was as gallant as was ever made." 448

Dismayed to discover that the howitzers he had left in reserve to support Pickett had been taken from him without his knowledge, Alexander was forced to cover Pickett's advance in any way he could with his depleted resources.

⁴⁴⁸Alexander, July 17, 1863 letter to father.

Pettigrew was without any support whatsoever from Alexander; only the artillery on Seminary Ridge along Hill's and Ewell's lines could help him. It is interesting to note that Alexander was not critical of the infantry for failing to provide "proper support", but was critical of his own branch of the service. He was particularly pointed in referring to the absence of adequate ammunition and of supporting batteries (primarily the howitzers relocated by General Pendleton from reserve). Thus, there is yet another slant to the interpretation of Lee's chagrin at lack of "proper support". While others have criticized Pettigrew and Wilcox in turn, and this historian placed blame on the shoulders of the inactive divisions of Longstreet's Corps, Alexander blamed the inadequate support on the artillery of the Army of Northern Virginia.

While Alexander could look back and deplore the lost opportunity, General Kemper did not usually do so, confining himself to personal experiences and activities of his own brigade. Kemper wrote of the cannonade, the advance, and the attack, but also remembered the agonies of the repulse of his brigade and of his own wounding during the attack phase:

"I recollect that very shortly after I was shot, a Federal Captain with a squad of men came out to where I was, placed me on a blanket and were about to carry me to their rear, when some of my own command dashed upon them, drove them off and carried me back to my own field-hospital. ⁴⁴⁹ It was when they were moving me back that you saw a brief interview between Genl. Lee and myself. I recollect that the line on the left of Pickett's division reeled, got in disorder and broke while we were advancing." ⁴⁵⁰

⁴⁴⁹Kemper was taken to the division field hospital at Bream's Mill, where he remained for at least three weeks.

⁴⁵⁰Kemper, September 20, 1869 letter to Alexander.

Since Kemper remained wounded in the hands of the enemy after the battle, the brigade report was made by the senior officer still present, Colonel Joseph Mayo, Jr. of the 3rd Virginia Infantry. Colonel Mayo recited the events that occurred after the brigade "rushed with a cheer upon the works" of Gibbon's Division:

"The entrenchments were carried, the enemy was driven from his guns; but our shattered ranks, showed at what fearful sacrifice the work was done. We had scarcely a line of skirmishers now to oppose the enemy's reinforcements, which were pouring down from the right and left on this devoted band. Our right flank was entirely exposed & but for the promptness with which a small portion of the 11th and 24th Regts were thrown back at right angles to our line, under the direction of Col. Terry and Capt. Fry, the enemy would have penetrated our rear." 451



Col.
William Richard Terry
24th Virginia

Mayo's memories of Stannard's movement against

his right flank were relieved by the stirring recollections of the prompt counter movement by the handful of companies under the direction of Colonel William R. Terry of the 24th Virginia.

Terry's contributions were also mentioned in the report of that regiment submitted on July 9, 1863.

"With the exception of three or four company officers & a few men the regt. returned the torrent of iron and leaden hail with great gallantry & returned the fire with some effect. When we had gotten some four or five hundred yards to the left we reached a point a few paces from the enemy's works which afforded some cover and protection & there Col. Terry with a few men and officers endeavored to rally the regt. A few minutes later the forces on our left gave way & the enemy was closing in upon our left & right. . . ." 452

451 Report of Colonel Joseph Mayo, July 25, 1863.

452 Report of _____ for 24th Virginia, July 9, 1863.

This place where Terry apparently stopped to rally the regiment was probably at the same slashing where Gates' demi-brigade attacked. The slashing would have "afforded some cover and protection" to the remnants of Kemper's Brigade. It was also "a few paces from the enemy's works", and was about the farthest point reached by those of Pickett's right brigade.

The 11th Virginia, which found itself assisting Colonel Terry's 24th Infantry in trying to repel the attack on the flank by Stannard's Vermonters, experienced the repulse in a manner similar to Mayo's description for the brigade. An address by Major John W. Daniel (assistant adjutant general of Jubal Early's Confederate Division in Ewell's Corps) included a description of the assault which included the Virginia version of the repulse as well as an account by an officer of the 11th Infantry:

"But alas! they stood alone. For at least twenty minutes (I am told by Captain John Holmes Smith, of the Lynchburg Home Guard,* who, though wounded, climbed that perilous height), the few who got there held undisputed possession of the field. . . . And now, upon their right, the gap left by Wilcox was being filled by Federal troops; and marshaling in their front the Federal reserves, summoned from every point to the rescue, stood in masses four lines deep.

"Anxiously they look for support, but instead of succor their antagonists closed upon them front and flank, and this little wasted band could not more live, in the concentric lines of fire emptied on their devoted heads, than the child's play-boat could breast the surge of an ocean storm.

" . . . [The] surviving handful of Pickett's men relaxed their hold, and sullenly turned their faces back to the Confederate lines and toward the setting sun. The sun, alas! whose waning rays lighted for the last time to many a fallen hero the scenes of earth--the sun, alas! whose waning rays seemed prophetic of the waning cause, dearer to them than light or life. And so Virginia's spear was broken--the banner of the Confederacy was blighted--the battle of Gettysburg was done!" 453

*Company G, 11th Virginia KRG

453 Major John W. Daniel, "Address", in J. William Jones, Army of Northern Virginia Memorial Volume (Dayton, 1976), pp. 115-116.

Captain John H. Smith confirmed once again the oft-repeated claim by Federal participants that the battle at the wall and works of Gibbon's Division lasted twenty minutes. Whether or not Pickett's Virginians had "undisputed" possession of that part of the Union line is questionable. Since Early's staff officers were probably east of Rock Creek at the time of the charge and should not have been eyewitnesses to the assault, it is likely that Major Daniel got his version of the charge from those Virginians who, like General Early, built the fame of Virginia upon the corpses of her sister-states. He was correct, however, in mentioning that Pickett's men "anxiously" looked for their supports.

Lieutenant John T. James of Company D, 11th Virginia was one of those anxious officers who waited and fought during those twenty minutes, watching for any sign of help from the Confederate lines. His description of the repulse was penned on July 9, 1863, before a week had passed:

"After terrible loss to the regiment, brigade and division, we reached and actually captured the breast-works. Some of the men had taken possession of the cannon, when we saw the enemy advancing heavy reinforcements. We looked back for ours, but in vain; we were compelled to fall back and had again to run as targets to their balls. Oh, it was hard, too hard to be compelled to give way for the want of men, after having fought as hard as we had that day. The unwounded . . . soon got back to the place where we started from. We gained nothing but glory and lost our bravest men." ⁴⁵⁴

Lieutenant James confirms another sad fact--that the retreat from Cemetery Ridge was just as dangerous as the advance toward it, and that no sullen, slow, or determined retreat was contemplated nor executed by the Virginians.

⁴⁵⁴ ~~Huston~~, "Storming Cemetery Hill," p. 22.

It was an easier escape from the retreat with backs to enemy fire to simply surrender, and enter the enemy's lines as prisoners. For this reason, many of the casualties in Pickett's Division were listed as missing, and many of these missing were actually captured. Kemper's Brigade, to be sure, lost many of its men captured during Stannard's enveloping movement on the right, while others were captured during the last moments of the repulse when retreat looked more dangerous than a prison camp.

An intriguing observation by Lieutenant James was his concluding line that the division "gained nothing but glory and lost [its] bravest men". He knew already, on July 9, 1863, that the attack by the division would be termed as glorious by generations of Americans and Southerners, and even more so by the Virginians. In fact, James would be shocked to learn that the loss was more often sterilized into a percentage ("only one out of three would return", &c) to heighten the "glory" that the attack gained. Since the attack proved fruitless and led to the ultimate collapse of Lee's ability to prolong an offensive, it was looked to more for its "glory" than for its losses, its fighting duration, or its orders. Line after line would be expended detailing and eulogizing the glory of Pickett's men, but few would analyze the more mundane, but more difficult, questions that arose. It was indeed "hard, too hard" for the Virginians to yield at the wall, and it became harder for them to yield the glory won there in post-war years. None but Virginians were brave that day, according to some of the more vehement of state writers; there was plenty of glory that day, but not enough to share with out-of-staters. As a result, Pickett's Division won glory which was tarnished by the selfishness of some authors, and those who really did gain glory that day (men such as Kemper, the Berkeley brothers, Martin, &c) were to

lose a part of it every time the division survivors attempted to steal some glory from others, just as valiant and just as dead, of other commands.

On the left of Kemper's Brigade, Colonel Mayo was with his 3rd Virginia Regiment, and remembered all sorts of incidents that occurred in the brigade during this deadly time span from the Emmitsburg Road to the wall and back again:

" [I remember] the impetuous Kemper, as rising in his stirrups and pointing to the left with his sword, he shouted, 'There are the guns, boys, go for them.' It was an injudicious order; but they obeyed with a will, and mingled with Garnett's people pushed rapidly up the heights.

"Within a few steps of the stone fence, while in the act of shaking hands with General Garnett and congratulating him on being able to be with his men . . . I heard someone calling to me, and turning my head, saw that it was Captain Fry. He was mounted, and blood was streaming from his horse's neck. Colonel Terry had sent him to stop the rush to left. The enemy in force (Stannard's Vermonters) had penetrated to our rear. He told me that Kemper had been struck down, it was feared mortally. With the help of Colonel Carrington, of the Eighteenth, and Major Bentley, of the Twenty-fourth, I hastily gathered a small band together and faced them to meet the new danger. After that everything was a wild kaleidoscopic whirl. A man near me seemed to be keeping a tally of the dead for my especial benefit. First it was Patton, then Collicotte, then Phillips, and I know not how many more. Colonel Williams was knocked out the saddle by a ball in the shoulder near the brick-house, and in falling was killed by his sword. His little bay mare kept on with the men in the charge. I can see her now as she came limping and sadly crippled down the hill. I saw her again at Williamsport in care of his faithful man Harry, who asked me what I thought old master would say when she was all belonging to Mars Lewis he had to take home. Seeing the men as they fired, throw down their guns and pick up others from the ground, I followed suit, shooting into a flock of blue coats that were pouring down from the right, I noticed how close their flags were together. Probably they were the same people whom Hood and McLaws had handled so roughly the day before. . . ." 455

455 Mayo, "Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg," p. 333.

Mayo's recollections about the death of Colonel Lewis Williams, commanding the old 1st Virginia, near the Codori farmhouse was one not oft repeated by historians of the battle or the charge. Coddington, who so delighted in analyzing the strategy and tactics of the battle, overlooked the meaning of the battle to the participants themselves. Stewart, although mentioning the death of Williams and comparing him to an "antique Roman soldier" falling upon his sword, says little else in passing. But the death of Lewis Williams warrants more than ignoring altogether or some casual mention. Not yet 30 years of age, Colonel Williams had been a lawyer and a professor at the Virginia Military Institute before the war, leaving that institution in the spring of 1861 to place his lot with Virginia's troops. He died in the service of his chosen country in a manner unbecoming his station, not being killed gloriously while taking an enemy gun or shot down by the enemy, but by an accident of chance. It is curious to presume what may have happened to Williams had he obeyed General Lee's wishes and left Nellie behind. But he was supposedly still incapacitated by his wounds from Williamsburg the year previously, and used this as a means of keeping his mount with him. Had he not been riding Nellie, Williams may not have been shot in the shoulder in the first place. (the ball that hit him would have gone over his head had he been on foot), and he would surely not have fallen on his sword had he been walking instead of being violently thrown to the ground from his horse. Of the thousands of soldiers who were killed at Gettysburg, Williams deserved a better death.

Mayo continued with his account of the repulse:

"Then I remembered seeing lank Tell Taliaferro, adjutant of the Twenty-fourth, jumping like a kangaroo and rubbing his crazy bone and blessing the Yankees in a

way that did credit to old Jube Early's one-time law partner, and handsome Ocey White, the boy lieutenant of Company A, taking off his hat to show me where a ball had raised a whelk on his scalp and carried away one of his pretty flaxen curls, and lastly, 'Old Buck' Terry, with a peculiarly sad smile on his face, standing with poor George and Val Harris and others, between the colors of the Eleventh and Twenty-fourth, near where now is the pretty monument of Colonel Ward, of Massachusetts. I could not hear what he said, but he was pointing rearwards with his sword, and I knew what that meant.

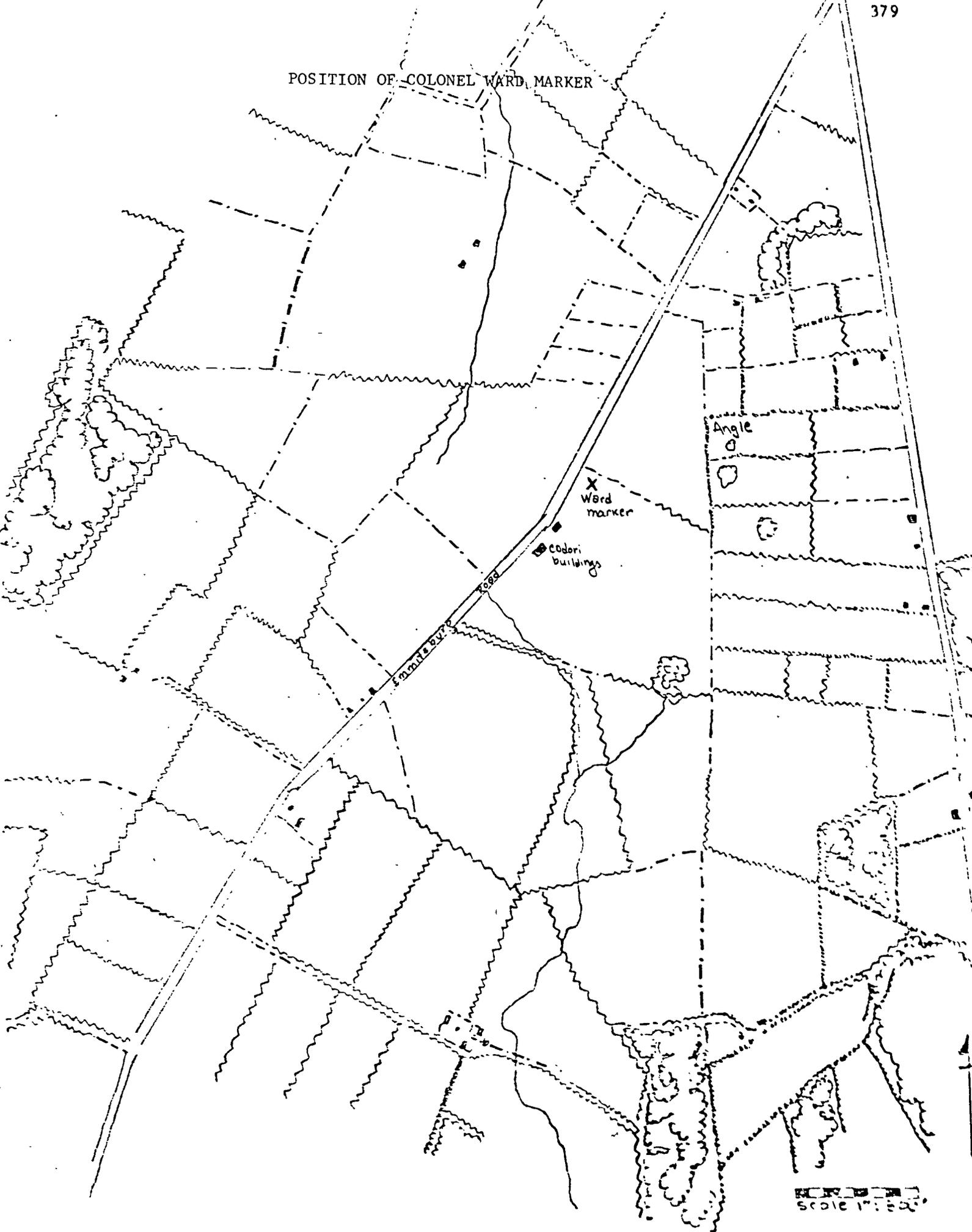
"As I gave one hurried glance over the field we had traversed, the thought in my mind was repeated at my side; 'Oh! Colonel, why don't they support us?' It was Walker, General Kemper's orderly, unhorsed, but still unscathed and undaunted, awkward, ungainly, hard-featured, good-natured, simple-minded, stout-hearted Walker, one of the Eleventh boys, I believe; only a private doing his duty with might and main and recking no more of glory than the ox that has won the prize at a cattle show.

". . . . Calling to the group around me to spread themselves, I led the way back to the woods in rear of our guns on Seminary Ridge." 456

One of the more important passages in this account by Mayo may be his reference to the location of Colonel Terry and the flags of the 11th and 24th Virginia Regiments at the time they decided to retreat. His statement that they were "near" the marker to Colonel George H. Ward would imply that at least the troops with Terry (who were trying to fend off the flank attack by Stannard on their right) never got near the Angle wall, but remained out in the field towards the Codori buildings. The location of the Ward marker is denoted on the map on the following page, and indicates the relative distance from that position and the Emmitsburg Road, the Codori buildings, and the climactic struggle near the clump of trees. That Colonel Mayo, commanding the 3rd Virginia, was able to distinguish Terry's "sad smile" and recognize two other members of the brigade reveals that Mayo must have also been near the area.

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid., pp. 334-335.

POSITION OF COLONEL WARD, MARKER



It also indicates that Colonel Mayo's regiment, which had previously been on the extreme left of the brigade, was now almost intermixed with the extreme right of Kemper's Brigade (as represented by Colonel Terry's 24th Virginia). The flanking movement by Stannard succeeded in piling one regiment upon another in Kemper's ranks, and creating a disordered mass by the time of the repulse.

Another revealing passage from Mayo's history is his confirmation of what the Union general Webb wrote to his father. He remembered seeing "how close their flags were together", referring to the numbers of flags of the Federal regiments near the clump of trees as Hall's and Harrow's Brigades joined Webb there. Mayo speculated that these multitudes of flags were reinforcements from the left of the line, where Hood and McLaws had met Third and Fifth Corps troops on July 2. Like many another soldier trying to take that ridge, Mayo probably thought that it was now impossible because so many reinforcements had arrived. Little did he realize that the presence of the flags did not reflect numbers of men usually represented by similar numbers of colors, but as Webb implied there were many flags, but few men sent to help him out.

In Mayo's own regiment there were those who had aversion to following Mayo back to Seminary Ridge, after the repulse was realized. An incident was recounted concerning this retreat back to the Confederate lines, over the same hostile open fields they had crossed with such hopes and expectations, relative to Second Lieutenant Fenton Eley Wrenn. Lieutenant Wrenn was the only officer with his Company I of the 3rd Virginia at the repulse of Kemper's Brigade in front of the Angle. According to his biographer

"That was his last duty, and he performed it well. He passed unhurt with his thinned line into the captured works on Cemetery Ridge, and when the order to fall back was given, although against his judgment he at-

tempted to obey. Only four of his men were willing to follow him, and with these he passed out into the valley of death." ⁴⁵⁷

We are not told what happened to the four men who chose to follow their lieutenant, but assume that at least one survived to tell the story repeated above. Lieutenant Wrenn, however, was never seen again after the retreat commenced and was probably killed while trying to comply with Mayo's orders to fall back to the original Confederate lines.

Others who stood out in Kemper's Brigade and were killed or mortally wounded during this charge of the division included Captain James Hallinan of Company C, 1st Virginia Infantry; Captain C. Crawly Phillips, Company F of the 3rd Virginia Regiment; Captain David G. Houston, Jr., Company D of the 11th Virginia; and Captain George H. Guiger, aide-de-camp to Kemper. Captain Guiger had his horse shot from under him in the charge, but continued on to be mortally wounded in the retreat. After lingering in pain in a hospital in Gettysburg, Guiger died on July 17 at the age of 37.⁴⁵⁸ Lieutenant Colonel A. D. Colcott of the 3rd Virginia was also killed on July 3, and was buried on the field of battle. Colonel Waller Tazewell Patton, who commanded the 7th Virginia Infantry at the age of 28 years, fell at the head of his regiment with a wound in the mouth, and died on July 21 before he could take up the seat he had recently won in the Virginia Assembly. His struggle before death was recounted by one who was with him:

"It is gratifying to know that he was nursed by a Baltimore lady with as much tenderness as if she had been his sister, and that even the Federal officers were kind to him. Being wounded in the mouth, he could only communi-

⁴⁵⁷Johnson, The University Memorial Biographical Sketches, p. 484.

⁴⁵⁸Ibid., p. 437.

cate with his friends by writing on a slate. The prominent thoughts of his mind seem to have been his Saviour, his mother, and his country. In a letter to his mother, written a few days before his death, he says, 'My sufferings and hardships during two weeks that I was kept out in the field-hospital were very great. I assure you that it was the greatest consolation, whilst lying in pain on the cold, damp ground, to look up to that God to whom you so constantly directed my thoughts in infancy and boyhood, and feel that I was His son by adoption. When friends are far away, and you are in sickness and sorrow, how delightful to be able to contemplate the wonderful salvation unfolded in the Bible! Whilst I have been very far from being a consistent Christian, I have never let go my hope in Jesus; and find it inexpressibly dear now. I write these things to show you my spiritual condition, and to ask your prayers continually for me.' Again he said, 'Tell my mother that I am about to die in a foreign land; but I cherish the same intense affection for her as ever.' The Federal officers who saw what he had written seemed astonished at the phrase foreign land as applied to Pennsylvania. He told the lady who nursed him that though he was 'a young man, and prized life,' he would 'cheerfully lay down fifty lives in such a cause if necessary.' He requested that a lock of his hair might be sent to his mother, and his watch to his sister; gave directions about some small debts, and expressed a great desire that his body might be sent home. His relative who was by his side says, 'He was aware of the approach of death, and met it as became a soldier and a Christian. He said, "My trust is in the merits of Christ; my all is intrusted to Him," and often repeated these words, "In Christ alone perfectly resigned." When he became too weak to write, he tried to repeat the hymn "Rock of Ages, cleft for me." His friend read the hymn, and he tried to repeat it after him. He then called upon the chaplain, Mr. Morton, of the 33d Virginia (I think), to read the 14th chapter of St. John. After prayer, he called us all to his bedside, and shook hands with us, one by one. He retained to the last the utmost patience under his sufferings, and expressed his gratitude for every little service rendered him, by taking us by the hand.' And thus he fell asleep in Jesus, amid the tears of all around him, including some Federal officers." 459

459 Walker, Memorial, Virginia Military Institute, pp. 426-427.

While the circumstances of Colonel Patton's death are well recorded because his ultimate death from wounds happened in the midst of a number of friends at a more peaceful surroundings, the death of General Richard Garnett after leading his brigade across the Emmitsburg Road was not as well documented. James W. Clay, Company G of the 18th Virginia in Garnett's Brigade, described what he remembered of the death of Garnett, as well as the activities entailing his regiment during the repulse:

"Gen. Garnett was killed while leading his brigade in Pickett's charge across the field and up the slope between the two contending battle lines. Immediately after the great artillery duel, during which many of the enemy's guns were silenced, orders came for the general advance of Pickett's Division, but it was not until we had covered nearly the entire distance between the two lines that Gen. Garnett received his death wound.

"I was struck down by a fragment of shell about one hundred yards from the clump of trees near the farthest point reached by our brigade--now indicated by a bronze tablet.* Semiconscious, my blood almost blinding me, I stumbled and fell among some rocks, severely injuring my knee. The last I saw of Gen. Garnett he was astride his large black horse in the forefront of the charge and near the stone wall, just beyond which is marked the farthest point reached by the Southern troops. The few that were left of our brigade advanced to this point.

"... During the next fifteen minutes the contending forces were engaged in a life-and-death struggle, our men desperately using the butts of their rifles. At this time a number of Federals threw down their arms and started across the field to our rear. Two of them came to the clump of rocks where Capt. [Archer] Campbell and I were and asked to be allowed to assist us to our rear, obviously for mutual safety, and the kind offer was accepted. These men told us that our brigade general had been killed, having been shot through the body at the waist by a grapeshot. Just before these men reached us General Garnett's horse came galloping towards us, with a huge gash in his right shoulder, evidently struck by a piece of shell. The horse in its mad flight jumped over Capt. Campbell and me." 460

*This should be a reference to the High Water Mark tablet.

460 "About the Death of General Garnett," Confederate Veteran Magazine, vol. 14, no. 2 (February 1906), p. 81.

Clay's account of Garnett's death, therefore, was based not on his own witnessing of the incident, but on the hearsay attributed to Union prisoners. Intriguingly, none of the veterans who survived Garnett's charge wrote about the specific death of Garnett; apparently many knew he was killed, but none saw the incident. The history of Pickett's Division, written by Walter Harrison of the staff, dealt with this mystery:

"Although I knew about the spot where Garnett fell, killed instantly, it could not be exactly designated by any of these officers. Gen. Hunt, chief of artillery on that field, an old companion and friend of Garnett, in the United States Army, told me that he made diligent search in person, for Garnett's body, the day after the battle, but could not identify it. He remained unrecognized by any one, among the many dead, and was doubtless buried in the trenches near the spot where he fell. The bodies of our Col. Hodges and Edmonds were identified by papers on their persons, and buried in the same manner. Those who were mortally wounded, and died subsequently in the field hospital, were buried separately and their graves marked. I think Col. Williams and Magruder were among this number. The horrors of this once bloody battlefield have been long since obliterated. . . but the exact situation of these hastily opened, and as hastily closed, trenches of the dead is sufficiently indicated." ⁴⁶¹

The indications of the trench graves were indeed still apparent at the time Harrison was writing this in 1870. The remains of Pickett's Division were shipped to Richmond in the following two years, unidentified and packed in boxes with about ten to twelve bodies each. Garnett's remains were apparently mixed in with his fallen comrades of all ranks, and should be buried with these unknown dead at Richmond's Hollywood Cemetery.

In his brigade, the fighting was intense and desperate during this phase of the assault. Company G of the 18th Virginia, originally in advance of the brigade as skirmishers, were overtaken by their brigade by the time

⁴⁶¹Harrison, pp. 184-185.

the enemy's defenses were reached. The repulse there was described by a member of this skirmish line, R. Fergus:

"Sergeant-Major J. C. Gill, formerly of Company G, fell at my side wounded in the loins. While I was endeavoring to aid him and J. C. Webb (also of Company G, who was wounded just below the eye), both of whom died, there was a momentary cessation in the firing. Our scattered men were trying to save themselves from capture by a hasty retreat. I remember to have seen Chas. Atkinson, who was wounded, and Ovid Williams, who it is supposed was killed, running back. Seeing, the next instant, the fresh troops in our front, who opened immediately upon our retreating men, and knowing it would be certain death to attempt escape across the open field, I laid down and commenced firing, and continued until I saw it was useless. . . ." 462

This indecision by Fergus whether or not to retreat and face death or stay and face death, was made over and over again on that field in front of the breastworks. Kemper's men also remarked about the certain death that awaited any who tried to retreat, and now Garnett's infantry echoed these fears in their memoirs. Fergus was one of the more stalwart who made a determined stand in hopes of some miraculous support or victory until he was himself overwhelmed and compelled to surrender.

H. T. Owen, also of the 18th Virginia Infantry Regiment, gave an indication of the incredible firepower of the Union defenses which were still left, and wrote of the eventual repulse of the attack by his regiment by a counter-charge of the enemy (probably a combination of Gates' demi-brigade and Hall's Brigade):

"Pickett's men were within a few feet of the stone wall when the artillery delivered their last fire from guns shotted to the muzzle--a blaze fifty feet long went through the charging, surging host with a gaping rent to the rear, but the survivors mounted the wall, then over and onward, rushed up

⁴⁶²Irby,, p. 28.

the hill close after the gunners who waved their rammers in the face of Pickett's men and sent up cheer after cheer as they felt admiration for the gallant charge. On swept the column over ground covered with dead and dying men, where the earth seemed to be on fire, the smoke dense and suffocating, the sun shut out, flames blazing on every side, friend could hardly be distinguished from foe, but the division, in the shape of an inverted V, with the point flattened, pushed forward, fighting, falling and melting away, till half way up the hill they were met by a powerful body of fresh troops, charging down upon them, and this remnant of about a thousand men was hurled back out into the clover field." 463

Once out in this clover field in front of the wall, the "men showed a disposition to return for another charge," probably selecting that over a retreat under enemy fire.⁴⁶⁴ But, no stand could be made for long under such a grueling fire. One unit, the Danville Grays (Company B), of the 18th Virginia, suffered considerably under such a fire as was inflicted upon the brigade from the Emmitsburg Road to the wall. The captain of the company, Robert McCullough, wrote that

"Every member of my company on that day was hit by a bullet, many killed, some only slightly wounded. I received two shots; the man who shot me last was, perhaps, less than twenty feet away, and I fell beside a gun carriage, on which I was taken from the field." 465

Captain McCullough's account reflects the Kemper wounding, in that he also saw the man who fired the shot that brought him down. Like Kemper, McCullough would have been able to distinguish the features of his enemy's face since he

⁴⁶³Owen, "Pickett's Charge," p. 1.

⁴⁶⁴Hoke, p. 390.

⁴⁶⁵Captain Robert McCullough, "St. Louisans Among Gettysburg Heroes," St. Louis Globe-Democrat, (March 9, 1913), p. 15.

was less than twenty feet from him when the shot was fired.

Lieutenant William N. Wood, advancing with his Company A of the 19th Virginia, the center regiment of Garnett's Brigade, had been hoping that the great cannonade that preceded the attack had caused the Union hill to fall. He would find out now that his expectations and confidence in the powers of Major James Dearing were too high:

"Just beyond the Emmetsburg pike was the bottom, the greatest depression between the two armies. The bottom was speedily reached and up Cemetery Hill we start. Grape and canister scour the ground. Down! down! go the boys. The remainder press forward. The enemy's line--a stone and dirt wall--is just in front. Suddenly the firing in our front ceases and the brave boys renew their efforts to reach the goal. Just then, when within twenty yards of the rock fence, I received a blow on the right leg. Am I wounded? Leaning against a rock, I ascertain it to be only a bruise, and again went forward with the small remnant. Stopping at the fence, I looked to the right and left and felt we were disgraced. Where were those who started in the charge? With one single exception I witnessed no cowardice, and yet we had not a skirmish line. Less than two hundred yards to my right the enemy was forming a line of battle on our side of the fence. Their right was at the fence, their left was being rapidly extended into the field to our rear. I watched them as they began to move in our direction. To remain was life in prison. To retreat was probable death in crossing the field, but possible safety within our lines, and without a moment's hesitation I turned my back to fence and started across the nearly three quarters of a mile over which we had so recently come. Warm, tired and thirsty I limped down the hill, and felt like taking shelter behind a pile of rails that lay invitingly in my way just as the enemy opened upon us again. . . .

"In returning across the field between the lines, I saw enough to account readily for the thin line that reached the much-talked of stone fence, and when General Pickett silently extended his hand, and as he turned aside almost sobbed out the words, 'My brave men! My brave men!' I felt that after all we were not disgraced." 466

466Wiley, ed., pp. 46-47.

The line which Lieutenant Wood saw snaking its way out into the field on the right of the division, threatening to envelop the Virginians, were the two large regiments of Stannard's Vermont Brigade. The threat of this envelopment was enough to cause Wood, at least, to recognize the futility of staying longer with the assault and prompted him to break off the attack himself. In this way it is once again evident that Stannard's movement hastened the defeat of Pickett's Division by persuading many, who may have continued the struggle on their front much longer and may have defeated the limited numbers of Union defenders in the Angle, to give ground or surrender. Wood's memories of the casualties in his company on that day included Captain John C. Culin, who was wounded "as usual"; Lieutenant John Hill, who was captured and who would die in prison; Sergeant James R. Buck and Corporal George T. Johnson were also captured, along with Privates William M. Dudley and James H. Dudley; John D. Durrett was badly wounded, Polk Points was wounded; and John W. Houchens was wounded and captured; John A. Bowen was the only member of the company killed.⁴⁶⁷

The left center regiment, the 28th Virginia, of Garnett's Brigade, could make a claim not officially made by any other of Pickett's Division. Lieutenant John A. I. Lee of Company C was the "first man in Pickett's Division to cross the stone wall." The incident was told by Lee himself, but was corroborated by several eyewitnesses. Lieutenant Lee and his regiment did not claim any undue honor from this incident, however. As they stated, "There is no more honor due the first man across that wall than the second or tenth, just a distinction, which justifies recognition."⁴⁶⁸ Lieutenant Lee had

⁴⁶⁷Ibid., p. 48.

⁴⁶⁸Ida Lee Johnson, "Over the Stone Wall at Gettysburg," Confederate Veteran Magazine, vol. 31 (July 1923), p. 248. This incident was first mentioned in "Craig's Share in the War Between the States", a United Daughters of the Confederacy publication pertaining to New Castle, Craig County, Virginia.

another distinction that day--he was to become unofficial color bearer of his regimental flag when the standard bearers were incapacitated. John J. Eakin, of Company C, was wounded three times and forced to yield the colors to a man named Graybill, who was shot almost instantly. Colonel Robert C. Allen picked up the colors and handed them to Lieutenant Lee. Lee jumped over the wall with the flag, waving it to hearted the men, but it was shot out of his hands and fell backward over the wall. Lee picked it up, but himself fell wounded, still holding onto the broken flagstaff and trying to break his sword to keep it from falling into the enemy's hands. A "big, burly German, belonging to a Michigan brigade [sic? regiment?], commanded him, sword drawn, to surrender. A comrade of Lieutenant Lee's, seeing his plight, dispatched the German with his bayonet." Unfortunately, both the lieutenant and his savior were captured, and the flag with them.⁴⁶⁹ Since the writer stated that the flag was in a Michigan museum at the time of the memoir (1923), it might be that this was the flag captured by William Deming of the 7th Michigan Volunteers in Hall's Brigade. That regiment captured one battle flag, but its designation was not known.⁴⁷⁰ If so, Deming defended his captured flag with as much courage as Eakin, Graybill, and Lee. According to Major Sylvanus Curtis of the 7th Michigan,

"Private William Deming, of Company F, during the assault on the crest of the hill, had shot a rebel color-bearer and taken the color from him. While loading his piece, with the flag by his side, a colonel rode up to him, and, menacing him with his saber, forced the color from him; even threatening to cut him down if he did not give it up. I regret to say that it was impossible to identify the officer alluded to. The act was witnessed by several who stood near." ⁴⁷¹

⁴⁶⁹Ibid., p. 249.

⁴⁷⁰ORS, vol. 27, part 1, p. 441.

⁴⁷¹Ibid., p. 450. It may also be that there was an error in the state. The 1st Minnesota was credited with the capture of the 28th Virginia's colors.

Captain Michael P. Spessard, commanding Lieutenant Lee's Company C, had advanced with his company after tending to his dying son as the advance began. While his men fell about him, Captain Spessard made it to the wall, climbed over it, and "fought the enemy with his sword in their own trenches until his sword was wrested from his hands by two Yankees".⁴⁷² One can almost imagine this grief-fraught man delivering vengeance upon the heads of his enemies with the sword of an avenging angel. His bravery and conduct was particularly noted and cited by Major Charles Peyton in his official report for Garnett's Brigade after the battle. Small consolation, however, for the loss of a son.

While Captain Spessard escaped to return to his dead boy, others were not to return at all. T. C. Holland wrote that his company, Company G of the 28th Virginia, had 88 men going into the battle, but only seven answered the roll call that night. Holland mentioned that he saw Colonel R. C. Allen of his regiment killed after the 28th had gotten "within some two hundred yards of the stone fence." The next officer he saw fall was General Garnett, but Holland did not specify at what point, other than that it would have had to have been between this 200-yard mark and the wall.⁴⁷³

One of the better accounts written by a Confederate survivor of that repulse was by G. W. Finley of Company K, 56th Virginia, on the extreme left of Garnett's Brigade:

"The Federal gunners stood manfully to their guns.
I never saw more gallant bearing in any men. They fired

⁴⁷²Ibid., part 2, p. 387.

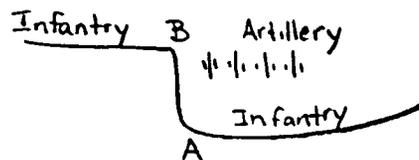
⁴⁷³Captain T. C. Holland, "With Armistead at Gettysburg," Confederate Veteran Magazine, vol. 29 (February 1921), p. 62.

their last shots full in our faces, and so close that I felt distinctly the flame of the explosion, and not until we had crushed their supports did they abandon their guns. Just as I stepped upon the stone wall I noticed for the first time a line of troops just joining upon our left. Springing to that flank I found they were from Archer's Tennessee Brigade and part of Heath's Division. This gallant brigade had been terribly cut up in the first day's fight, and there was but a fragment of them left. Some of them with us seized and held the stone wall in our front. For several minutes there were no troops in our immediate front. But to our left the Federal line was still unbroken. This fact is impressed upon my mind by my taking a musket from one of my men who said he could not discharge it and firing it at that line to my left and obliquely in front, and further by seeing our brave Brigadier-General Garnett, who, though almost disabled by a kick from a horse while on the march from Virginia, would lead us in action that day, riding to our left, just in my rear, with his eyes fastened upon the unbroken line behind the stone fence, and with the evident intention to make such disposition of his men as would dislodge it. At that instant, suddenly a terrific fire burst upon us from our front, and looking around I saw close to us, just on the crest of the ridge, a fresh line of Federals attempting to drive us from the stone fence, but after exchanging a few rounds with us they fell back behind the crest, leaving us still in possession of the stone wall. Under this fire, as I immediately learned, Gen. Garnett had fallen dead. Almost simultaneously with these movements, Gen. Armistead, on foot, strode over the stone fence, leading his brigade most gallantly, with his hat on his sword and calling upon his men to charge. A few of us followed him until, just as he put his hand upon one of the abandoned guns, he was shot down. Seeing that most of the men still remained at the stone fence I returned, and was one of the very few who got back unhurt.

"Again there was comparative quiet for a while in our immediate front, but bullets came flying still from the unbroken line to our line. During one of these pauses I took a rapid but careful look at the ground over which we had advanced and was surprised to see comparatively so few men lying dead or wounded on the field. Doubtless many of the wounded had gotten back before I looked. But the fact was that the loss did not seem to be anything like so great as I had supposed it must be. But we were not left long at leisure to survey the field. We were in plain view of the Federal officers and they saw that we were but few in numbers and well nigh exhausted by what we had already accomplished. . . .

While we were lying there and the Federals were completing their disposition of forces to repulse and capture us, someone ran rapidly along our line calling out to the men, 'Gen. Lee says fall back from here.' Many of the men attempted to obey, but a few of us not recognizing the order as authentic, held our men in line and encouraged them to look for support. Just then the Federals advanced in heavy force. The bullets seemed to come from front and both flanks, and I saw we could not hold the fence any longer. I again looked back over the field to see the chances of withdrawing. The men who had begun to fall back seemed to be dropping as they ran, like leaves, and in a very few moments the number on the ground was four or five times as great, apparently, as when I had looked before. It seemed foolhardy to attempt to get back. The Federal line pressed on until our men fired almost into their faces. Seeing that it was a useless waste of life to struggle longer I ordered the few men around me to 'cease firing' and surrendered. Others to the right and left did the same, and soon the sharp, quick huzza! of the Federals told of our defeat and their triumph. As we walked to the rear I went up to Gen. Armistead as he was lying close to the wheels of the gun on which he had put his hand, and stooping looked into his face, and I thought from his appearance and position that he was then dead. I have since learned that he did not die until some time during the night. As soon as the Federal cheer announced our repulse our batteries opened a brisk fire upon the hill, on friend and foe alike, to check any advance that might be contemplated.

"The stone wall at the Angle was 7 about three feet (3 ft.) in height. On the left it retained its original position and height--say $4\frac{1}{2}$ to 5 feet and afforded fine shelter against infantry. It was something like this:



"The left of the 56th Virginia Regiment and some of Archer's men struck it at A. The rest of Archer's men and those on their left when we were in possession of the stone fence, while in line with us, were, as you see, still 75 to 100 yards from the stone fence in their front. . . .

" Our loss, I am inclined to think, was greatest in the three combats at the stone fence, where we broke

first the line that held it, and second repulsed the attempt to retake the fence, and third resisted the effort that overwhelmed us. The lines were so close the fire was unusually fatal. And then the men who attempted to run back to our original line suffered dreadfully." 474

It would be hard to find any account, Union or Confederate, which surpasses Finley's accurate recollections for detail, timing, and validity, pertaining to the repulse of Pickett's Division at the Angle. Finley, as already mentioned, wrote only of the events which he witness himself, and did not speculate about the overall tactics of the battle or recount a general history of events which he did not see. Some of his observations bear closer examination and repetition for sake of stressing their importance and significance.

For example, Finley recalled that he did not see Pettigrew's troops to his left until he reached the stone wall of the Angle itself. This would confirm that they did indeed reach the Federal works there, and joined Garnett's left to prevent an enfilade there from Union advancing troops. The criticism made by many of the Virginians that the North Carolinians (meaning all the forces on the left) did not advance with Pickett's Division is thus proved untrue. Because topographic features did not allow them to see the left, they therefore assumed there was no advance on the left.

Finley likewise was the only one to pass down a fairly specific story as to the location of Garnett's death. As described by him, the general was gunned down by the volley fired by the 72nd Pennsylvania on the crest of the ridge (from which they would not advance) while he was yet on horseback

⁴⁷⁴G. W. Finley, "Bloody Angle," pp. 43-44.

near the very angle of the stone fence. This location, as well as the spot where Finley was crouched behind the stone wall, was pointed out to the War Department's battlefield commissioners after the war and was plotted on the map reduced on page 226. Since Garnett fell so close to the wall, and near the Union lines, it is not surprising that his body was never recovered nor identified when it was buried on the field. Union soldiers would have been free to cross the wall and strip the body of any trophies they wanted--swords, personal papers, collar insignia stars, &c--after the fighting was over. Garnett would have appeared very much like any other enemy footsoldier after stripped of his designations of rank, and was buried on the field as a common infantryman of Pickett's Division in one of the trench graves in front of the Angle. In this instance, Garnett's death and burial is a profound reminder that death is, indeed, the great leveler.

Another interesting statement made by Finley was his observation that there were few bodies or wounded men from the division behind him once he had time to look back from the Angle. The bodies and wounded did not litter the fields in the rear (west) of the Angle until after the Confederates fell back and attempted to retreat back to their lines. If true, the Virginians who chided other states for not being sufficiently heroic during the charge may themselves be guilty. Great numbers of Pickett's Division (perhaps one third) were captured in this attack. If most of the casualties sustained in wounded and killed were suffered during the retreat to Seminary Ridge, then few were suffered during the fighting itself. This seems contradictory to Finley's own statement that the close fire was "unusually fatal".

While not in Pickett's Division, it might be helpful to look briefly at the accounts written by those on the immediate left of the 56th Virginia, who also made it to this angle in the Union lines. Of those already mentioned by Finley were the Tennessee regiments of Archer's Brigade. J. H. Moore, of the 7th Tennessee Infantry, recollected what happened on his front during the attack and repulse at the wall:

"Our stay in the road could not be called a halt. In a moment the order to advance was given, and on we pressed across the next fence, but many of our comrades remained in the road and never crossed the second fence, many being wounded in crossing the first and in the road.

"With our line materially weakened by the loss of those who remained in the road, we pressed on and struck the enemy behind a fence or hastily constructed breast-work, over which the First and about one-half of the Seventh Tennessee Regiments passed. The rest of our command who crossed the second fence had not reached the works because of their horseshoe-shape and because the point that they were to have reached was to the rear and left of where we entered. As we encountered the enemy in his works all was excitement. Our men fought with desperation and succeeded in driving the enemy from his line. It was a hand to hand encounter, lasting but a moment, and as victory was about to crown our efforts a large body of troops moved resolutely upon our left flank, and our extreme right at the same time began to give way, as did our left. Still we in the centre held the works, but finally, being unsupported, we were forced to fall back. Those of the second line who reached the Emmitsburg road never moved beyond that point to our assistance." ⁴⁷⁵

Contrary to the above recollections, however, Captain S. A. Ashe wrote otherwise in his history of North Carolina participation in the charge. Ashe, formerly adjutant on Pender's staff, may not have been a witness to the attack since records indicate he resigned his duties in the fall of 1862 and was

⁴⁷⁵ Moore, "Longstreet's Assault", p. 30.

assigned as ordnance officer at Fayetteville. In any event, whether writing from personal experience or from the recollections of others as told to him, Ashe wrote:

" . . . / While / Garnett was struggling for the possession of the stone wall on the Confederate right, and Kemper was engaged with Harrow and Hall still further to the right, seeking unsuccessfully to penetrate into the enemy's line and turn the left of the hill, the advance of Pettigrew's command beyond the projecting wall, taking Webb's exposed brigade on the right flank, caused it to give back from the wall and yield that part of the projection to the regiments of Archer and Scales that pressed them in front.

"Captain / David M. / McIntyre, acting Adjutant-General of Scales' Brigade, says: 'My brigade, or a larger part of it, went inside of the enemy's works.'

"Captain / Hugh L. / Guerrant, acting as Brigade Inspector, says that 'Scales' Brigade entered the breastworks and remained in possession until driven out by the enemy's advancing on their flanks.' Major / Joseph A. / Engelhard, the gallant Adjutant-General of the two brigades of Pender's Division commanded by Trimble, says: 'The point at which the troops with me struck the enemy's works projected farthest to the front. I recollect well, my horse having been shot, I leaned my elbow upon one of the guns of the enemy to rest, while I watched with painful anxiety the fight upon Pickett's right, for upon its success depended the tenableness of our position.'

"Surrounding me were the soldiers of Pender's, Heth's and Pickett's Divisions and it required all the resources at my command to prevent their following en masse the retreating enemy, and some did go so far that when we were compelled to withdraw, they were unable to reach our lines, the enemy closing in from the right and left. We remained in quiet and undisputed possession of the enemy's works, the men flushed with victory, eager to press forward.'

"But when the right of Pickett's Division was compelled by the overpowering attack upon its right flank to give way, there was nothing left for us to do but surrender ourselves prisoners or withdraw in confusion before the converging lines of the enemy, those in our immediate front not having rallied.'" 476

⁴⁷⁶Ashe, "The Pettigrew-Pickett Charge", pp. 151-152.

As illustrated by the above accounts, Garnett's Brigade had company from their compatriots of the states of Tennessee and North Carolina in the Angle area after Webb's lines had fallen back. Indeed, according to this chronicler of events, the advance by Archer's Brigade (accompanied by the remainder of Pettigrew's Division) to the north of the projecting angle in the wall was the cause of Webb's falling back. That Pickett's men alone did not occupy the Angle was confirmed by the words of Major Engelhard, that while he stood among Cushing's guns he was surrounded by troops of Trimble's, Pettigrew's, and Pickett's Divisions.

These forces, however, were not advancing much further than the wall itself, using it as a defense and a stronghold upon which to establish a line until the expected supports came up. It was not until the arrival of Armistead's Brigade that there was any kind of attempted charge beyond the wall, mostly because of the momentum brought along by the arrival of that brigade. Armistead's five regiments had been behind Garnett and Kemper during the advance, and, contrary to the words of some historians, Armistead apparently did not come up between the two at any time during the advance or attack. While Kemper was busy fighting on the right and being mown down at the slashing, Garnett's forces had advanced to the stone wall on Webb's front and established this temporary defensive line of their own. Some of Garnett's men overran the 69th Pennsylvania and were struggling in the clump of trees, but most of Garnett's front was engaged in laying down a steady fire into the forces on the crest of the ridge gathering for the counterattack. Armistead came up primarily behind Garnett's front, his right lapping on Kemper's confused masses toward the slashing. The arrival of his brigade encouraged the advance from the wall, the men following Armistead himself, still leading the

brigade on foot.

This moment was remembered and written about more than any other during the repulse because of the dramatic nature it entailed. Armistead was the last brigade commander in Pickett's Division, and was leading the last effectives from that division in a last, desperate dash to pierce the Union reserve line. One who was with Armistead as he crossed the wall and saw him fall was D. B. Easley, with Company H of the 14th Virginia:

"I saw a gap in our line to the right and hurried through it and ran to the front, looking back to locate my company, and unexpectantly I ran into a whole line of Yankees. I brought down my bayonet, but soon saw that every man had his arms above his head; so I crowded through them with no other idea than to locate my company. By the time I was through them I struck the stone fence in a battery of brass pieces. I mounted the fence and got one glance up and down the line, while General Armistead mounted it just to my left, with only a brass cannon between us.

"I forgot my company and stepped off the fence with him. We went up to the second line of artillery, and just before reaching those guns a squad of from twenty-five to fifty Yankees around a stand of colors to our left fired a volley back at Armistead and he fell forward, his sword and hat almost striking a gun. . . .

"I am not claiming any credit for being there, and acknowledge that I was out of my place, for General Armistead was killed on the left of the 14th in a space between it and the 57th." ⁴⁷⁷

Easley wrote again of the incident a year later, when he described essentially these same circumstances:

"I glanced to the right and left but the wall was vacant with the exception of the two squads, and my recollection is they huddled around the colors, and they seemed to have given us a little more breathing

⁴⁷⁷D. B. Easley, "With Armistead When he was Killed," Confederate Veteran Magazine, vol. 20, no. 8 (August 1912), p. 379.

room to our right. I could not locate our left. I struck the wall with two brass guns to my right, and two to my left pointing over the wall.

" I . . . then saw Armistead. We went up to the second line of guns almost as close together as if we had been marching in ranks. He fell to our left of the gun and I stepped in to the right. I might say here that our line was crossing the wall when I looked back; possibly half of them came over. They went back to a man. The squad that killed Armistead was just about where the monument of the 71st Penn. is located, I dropped in behind the gun and commenced firing back at the squad that killed him using the gun as a rest. I fired several shots and then they paid their respects to me pouring back a volley similar to the one that killed Armistead. I was behind the gun between it and the wheels but something seemed to strike me all over. They must have fired too low and knocked gravels against me. I felt of myself and when I found I was not hurt I grabbed for my ramrod to return their compliment and found it was shot off just where it enters the stock. I did not see that I could do much without a ramrod and so bore to the left in order to avoid them and went back to the stone wall, looking for a gun. One of our men gave me his gun saying 'He was wounded'. I rammed a ball about half way down when it hung, and I began driving the rammer against the stone fence when he turned over and said 'Don't load it; it's loaded' I went off the handle and said 'Where are you wounded anyhow; I don't see anything the matter with you.' He turned over and groaned and made no answer. I clubbed the musket and started to burst his head with it, but happened to think and raising it as high as I could dropped it on the back of his head. From the way he groaned he thought a shell struck him. I grabbed another gun with the bayonet twisted like a cork screw, and blew through it. I expected if I had fired if the bullet would have hit the bayonet, but just as I got it loaded three bayonets came against me and they hauled me in. . . . I forgot to say that Armistead did not groan or move while I fired several shots near him, and I thought him dead, but he was an old man 63 and was probably exhausted. . . ." 478

Easley's recollections were perhaps colored by the fact that fifty years had elapsed since the events of which he was writing. While the highlights and essence of the story may ring true, certain details were erroneous. The guns

478 Easley, July 24, 1913 letter to Townsend, pp. 2-3.

which were overrun by Armistead and his followers were the iron guns of Cushing's Battery A, 4th U.S. Artillery, and not brass pieces as repeated in a number of places by Easley. In addition, his belief that Armistead was an "old man" aged "63", while not correct, may indicate only what Easley thought the age of the general was. Perhaps Armistead had the appearance of an old man of 63 during the time of the battle, but in reality he was almost twenty years younger, being 46 years of age. That Easley may have been correct in his appraisal because of Armistead's appearance was relative to the physical and mental condition of Armistead at the time of his wounding.

T. C. Holland was one who was also with Armistead at the end, writing

"We then crossed the stone fence almost at the mouth of Cushing's Philadelphia Battery, and here is where General Armistead fell. I was a little to his left and had passed only a few paces when I fell, unconscious as to what was going on. During that afternoon General Armistead and myself, and quite a number of officers were removed to the temporary hospital over beyond Cemetery Heights.

"While on our way to the trees where we were taken no one stopped our carriers but once, and he seemed to be an ambulance officer or surgeon, who only directed the ambulance party. 479

The reason Holland digressed from his story to state that no one spoke to the wounded party except for the surgeon was to contradict the statements made by Hancock's judge-advocate, Captain H. H. Bingham, regarding Armistead's death-bed "confession" to him. Bingham had charged that Armistead told him how he regretted attacking Hancock's line and that he had done his country a great wrong. Naturally, this offended all former Confederate patriots, and Holland was one who stated the defense of Armistead, by saying that only one

⁴⁷⁹ Captain T. C. Holland, "With Armistead at Gettysburg," Confederate Veteran Magazine, vol. 29 (February 1921), p. 62.



Union officer came to them while Holland was with Armistead, and that was the man who directed the ambulance to the field hospital.

Dr. D. G. Brinton, in charge of the 2nd Division, 11th Corps Union hospital at the George Spangler farm, was the attending physician to the Virginia general. Shortly after the war the doctor described the circumstances under which Armistead died at the hospital:

"On the afternoon of the 3rd of July about 4 o'clock the General was brought to my hospital and myself and Dr. Henry, late of Rochester, N.Y., examined and dressed his wounds. They were two in number, neither of them of a serious character, apparently. The one was in the fleshy part of the arm, the other a little below the knee in the leg on the opposite side. Without being positive I think the leg wound was on the left side. Both were by rifle ball, and no bone, leading artery, or nerve was injured by either.

"In conversation with the General he told me he had suffered much from over-exertion, want of sleep, and mental anxiety within the last few days. His prospects of recovery seemed good, and I was astonished to learn of his death. It resulted not from his wounds directly, but from secondary fever and prostration." 480

From the surgeon who attended to Armistead is the confirmation that the general was in an exhausted state of health during the last days of the campaign, and this "prostration" was one of the reasons he was weakened too much to fight the death caused by the fever. Dr. Brinton also contradicts all

480 D. G. Brinton, March 22, 1869 letter to John B. Bachelder, in Bachelder Correspondence, New Hampshire Historical Society, Microfilm Reel 3.

of the sensational historians who depict Armistead falling to his death, riddled with bullets. In fact, according to Captain Holland, who was with Armistead from his wounding until his death, the general did not die on the field of the battle at all. Holland remembered that Armistead died at about 9:00 A. M. on July 5, 1863, after intense suffering. He wrote, "I shall never forget his request after we were moved to a temporary hospital beneath the shade of some trees. 'Please don't step so close to me,' said he to the surgeons and nurses as he lay on the cot on the ground."⁴⁸¹

After the battle, J. F. Crocker of the 9th Virginia, made special arrangements to try to locate his commanding general before being escorted as a prisoner from the field.

"On my way to town I called by the Eleventh Corps Hospital, to which General Armistead had been taken, to see him. I found that he had died. They showed me his freshly made grave. To my inquiries they gave me full information. They told me that his wound was in the leg; that it ought not to have proved mortal; that his proud spirit chafed under his imprisonment and his restlessness aggravated his wound. Brave Armistead! The bravest of all that field of brave heroes!"⁴⁸²

One of those "brave heroes" whose death and body would become a landmark on the battlefield was Colonel James G. Hodges, commanding the 14th Virginia Infantry. The enemy noted his death as often as the Confederates did. Colonel Theodore Gates of the 20th New York wrote that Colonel Hodges was "killed within a hundred feet of me", and that "he led his regiment up almost to the muzzles of the muskets of my men, through a fire that thinned his ranks at every step."⁴⁸³ Captain John D. S. Cook informed Senator Daniel

⁴⁸¹Holland, "With Armistead at Gettysburg," p. 62.

⁴⁸²J. F. Crocker, Gettysburg--Pickett's Charge and Other War Addresses (Portsmouth, Va. 1915), p. 54.

⁴⁸³Gates, The "Ulster Guard", p. 415.

that Colonel Hodges fell at the stone fence within 150 feet of the Union lines and directly in front of his regiment, the 20th New York. After the repulse, men of the 20th New York went out to where the officer was lying and identified him as Colonel Hodges through papers found on the body. Cook commented that Hodges' "sword and scabbard had been destroyed by a shot, but a soldier detached his sword belt and handed it to him and that he had kept it as a treasured relic of the battle. . . ."484

Lieutenant Madison J. C. Woodworth of Company A, 20th New York, placed the body of Colonel Hodges much closer to the Union lines than Captain Cook. Woodworth wrote that

" . . . Col. Hodges was killed within four feet of the stone wall, and as I remember now nearly opposite of the center of our right wing--at the time he was killed we were on one side of the stone wall and they the Confederates just on the other. None of the enemy got over the wall in my company front except as Prisoners and the Col. did not get quite up to the wall but his men did."485

J. F. Crocker, adjutant of the 9th Virginia of Armistead's Brigade, was an 1850 graduate of the Gettysburg school then known as Pennsylvania College, and was familiar with the landscape and people of the town and surroundings. His memories of Gettysburg after July 3, 1863 were therefore bittersweet; there were the many memories of pleasant families of the town with whom he had dined and conversed, and there were the many memories of friends and acquaintances who had died in its houses and barns, and on its fields. It was Crocker's duty to help the family after the battle in trying to locate the body of James Hodges. So visible and noteworthy when he fell,

⁴⁸⁴James F. Crocker, "Colonel James Gregory Hodges," Southern Historical Society Papers, vol. 37, pp. 195-196.

⁴⁸⁵M. J. C. Woodworth, October 13, 1888 letter to T. B. Gates, in Seward Osborne, Jr. collection. Copy in GNMP files.

Hodges could be likened to the anonymity suffered by General Garnett after the fighting was over. His body, even though identified and commented about by many Union soldiers, was buried in an unidentified trench grave with men of all ranks. Crocker wrote about Hodges in later years:

"His family made every effort to ascertain where his body was buried, but all in vain. He sleeps in the trenches with those who made the charge of Pickett's division immortal. . . .

"Adjutant J. F. Crocker, of the Ninth Virginia, in the course of his remarks, in receiving from Col. Andrew Cowan, of Cowan's Battery, the sword of the unknown Confederate officer who fell within a few feet of the guns of the battery, while giving the order: 'Men! take these guns,' alluded to the sad memories awakened by the scenes of the day. In this connection, and as illustrative of them, he had come to the battlefield of Gettysburg bearing a sacred request from the invalid widow of a gallant Confederate officer who was killed in the charge of Pickett's division, asking him to make a prayer at the spot where her dear husband fell, for his long sorrowing widow and orphan sons, with the hope that God, in some way, would bless the prayer to their good. That gallant officer was Col. James Gregory Hodges, of the Fourteenth Virginia regiment, the brother of the speaker's wife. He stated that early and careful but unavailing efforts had been made to find the place of his burial and he now desired to find and have identified the spot where he fell. The simple story brought tears to many who stood around. When the speaker closed his address, General H. J. Hunt, chief of artillery of the Union army, in whom kindness and courage are equal virtues, came promptly forward and gave his hand warmly to Adjutant Crocker and in sympathetic tones said, 'I can tell you something of Colonel Hodges, of the Fourteenth Virginia; I can carry you to the very spot where he fell.' The general said that immediately after the battle, hearing that General Garnett, whom he knew in the old army, had been killed, he went out to look for him and when he came to the stone wall a long line of Confederate dead and wounded, lying along the wall, met his view, but his attention was arrested by the manly and handsome form of an officer lying dead on his back across other dead. He thought he had seen

the face before, and on inquiry was told that it was Col. Hodges of the Fourteenth Virginia, whom he remembered to have seen in social circles before the war. The spot where Col. Hodges fell was identified by General Hunt and others, and is at the stone wall near the monument of the Sixty-ninth Pennsylvania." 486

It was a pity that Crocker and Hunt did not permanently mark the spot where Hodges fell, for that would have been a monumental landmark on the battlefield. Not only would it have denoted the location of heavy fighting, where men were killed and literally piled on top of each other, other than in the Angle proper, but would serve as a tribute to the devotion of men who were not generals (like the Armistead marker) to the cause. In addition, it would have marked the site where other officers and men of the 14th Virginia fell.

Among these were Major Robert H. Poore and Adjutant John Summerfield Jenkins, whom Crocker remembered as friends. It was hard indeed for one who survived the action to detail the deaths of friends who did not:

"You command me to renew an inexpressible sorrow, and to speak of those things of which we were a part."

". . . Col. James Gregory Hodges, of the 14th Virginia, of Armistead's brigade, fell instantly killed at the foot of the stone wall of the Bloody Angle, and around and over his dead body there was literally a pile of his dead officers around him, including gallant Major Poor. On the occasion of the reunion of Pickett's Division at Gettysburg, 1887, General Hunt. . . who had known Col. Hodges before the war, pointed out to me where he saw him lying dead among his comrades. He led his regiment in this memorable charge with conspicuous courage and gallantry. . . .

"And there, too, fell my intimate friend, John S. Jenkins, Adjutant of the Fourteenth Virginia. He, doubtless, was one of those gallant officers whom General Hunt

486 Crocker, "James Gregory Hodges," pp. 194-195.

saw when he recognized Colonel Hodges immediately after the battle, lying dead where he fell, who had gathered around him, and whose limbs were interlocked in death as their lives had been united in friendship and comradeship in the camp. He fell among the bravest, sealed his devotion to his country by his warm young blood, in the flush of early vigorous manhood when his life was full of hope and promise. He gave up home which was particularly dear and sweet to him, when he knew that hereafter his only home would be under the flag of his regiment, wherever it might lead, whether on the march, in the camp or on the battlefield. His life was beautiful and manly--his death was heroic and glorious, and his name is of the imperishable ones of Pickett's charge." 487

Another who may have died near Colonel Hodges, near the slashing and the stone wall in front of the 69th Pennsylvania, was Captain Richard Logan, Jr., commanding Company H of the 14th Virginia. A graduate of VMI and now 34 years old, Captain Logan may have had a promising career, but "at the close of the action, after having aided in capturing the enemy's guns, [he] fell facing the enemy, pierced by a ball, which passed entirely through his body about the region of the heart. He died instantly, without uttering a word." 488

While Crocker was a member of the 9th Virginia, his account of the repulse was not as specific as his details pertaining to the lives and deaths of his friends in the Ninth and other commands. Another picturesque description of the repulse, while not detailed nor informative, offers the impression of John H. Lewis of the 9th Infantry:

"There are shouts, fire, smoke, clashing of arms.
Death is holding high carnival. Pickett has carried
the line. Garnett and Kemper are both down. Armistead

487 James F. Crocker, "Gettysburg--Pickett's Charge," Southern Historical Society Papers, vol. 33 (1905), pp. 118, 132, 133-134.

488 Walker, Memorial. Virginia Military Institute, p. 344.

dashes through the line, and, mounting the wall of stone, commanding 'follow me', advances fifty paces within the Federal lines, and is shot down. The few that followed him and had not been killed fall back over the wall, and the fight goes on. . . . Men fall in heaps, still fighting, bleeding, dying. The remnant of the division, with scarce any officers, look back over the field for the assistance that should have been there; but there are not troops in sight. . . .

"We see ourselves being surrounded. The fire is already from both flanks and front; but yet they fight on and die. This can not last. The end must come; and soon there is not help at hand. All the officers are down, with few exceptions, either killed or wounded. Soon a few of the remnant of the division started to the rear, followed by shot, shell, and musket-balls." 489

The most lamented member of the 9th Virginia to fall that day in the charge was its colonel, John C. Owens. According to Crocker, Owens fell "mortally wounded on the charge, and died in the field hospital* that night." Owens had recently been promoted to the colonelcy from the captaincy of Company G, but was admired by his adjutant as "intelligent, quiet, gentle, kind and considerate. . . . He fell while gallantly leading his regiment before it reached the enemy's lines. . . ."490

The center regiment, and thus the color, guiding regiment, was the 53rd Virginia. This regiment was with Armistead at the repulse, and the last of the color company dared each other to see who could keep the flag at pace with Armistead. Robert Tyler Jones had carried them to the wall and waved them triumphantly from it, though wounded in the arm. It was here that he was again shot and fell severely wounded.

*Colonel Owens died and was originally buried at Bream's Mill on Marsh Creek.

489Lewis, pp. 82-83.

490Crocker, SHSP, pp. 132-133.

A member of the color guard of the 53rd Virginia Regiment, James T. Carter, wrote of the repulse at the Angle:

"When the brigade reached the wall there were very few men left, and Armistead, turning to Lieut. Col. R. W. Martin, said: 'Colonel, we can't stay here.' Col. Martin replied, 'Then we'll go forward!' and over the wall the remaining few went, but there were only seven or eight left--Gen. Armistead, Col. Martin, Lieut. H. L. Carter, Lieut. J. W. Whitehead, Thomas Treadway, James A. Coleman, and some others.

"When Jones fell forward, Lieut. H. L. Carter seized the colors and ran forward among the enemy's artillery, which they had abandoned; but reinforcements coming up, the enemy returned. . . . Col. Martin was wounded, his left leg being shattered by a ball; his friend, Thomas Treadway, who ran to his assistance, was shot and fell across his body. The others fell also, and Lieut. Carter finding himself alone in the enemy's lines, surrendered, and was sent a prisoner to the rear, leaving the flag among the guns, with seventeen bullet holes in his clothes, and yet without a scratch.

"The flag of the Fifty-Third Virginia Regiment had been carried to the farthest point in the enemies lines that day. Of its ten guards eight had been killed outright, Jones and myself severely wounded.

"Last winter on hearing that Congress would return old Confederate flags, I wrote and tried to get that of the Fifty-Third, but on investigation it was found to have been lent out soon after the war, to adorn some festival in the north, and never to have been returned." 491

Other versions of this same desperate struggle at the very end were written by other members of the regiment. Captain Benjamin L. Farinholt commanded Company E of the 53rd Virginia during this encounter:

"There, in a hand-to-hand engagement, where bayonet and pistol and butt of musket were liberally used, we captured all who were not killed or had not fled, virtually conquering and holding for a time the strongest

⁴⁹¹Carter, "Flag of the Fifty-Third Virginia", p. 263.

position of the Federal line of battle. . . . Gen. Armistead claimed the day as ours, and, standing by one of the captured pieces of artillery, where the brave Federal Capt. Cushing had fallen, with his dead men and horses almost covering the ground, calling on us to load and use the captured cannon on the fleeing foe.

". . . . The writer was shot through the thigh, and Col. Martin, our gallant regimental leader, received a shot through the hip which almost proved fatal. Pandemonium reigned complete, and for a time no quarter was asked nor given, and many on each side lost their lives. . . .

". . . [At] the extreme climax of this fight the writer saw a grandson of President Tyler, Robert Tyler Jones, himself already bleeding profusely from a serious wound, wave his pistol and threaten to shoot the very first man who offered to surrender." 492

Farinholt's mentioning that Armistead called on the regiment to load the guns of Cushing's Battery against the Union lines was repeated again, but this time with more dramatic, if not fictional, impact, since the guns at the wall were out of ammunition and probably shy all the implements (which were always carried away by the gunners to prevent their falling into enemy hands and enabling them to use the guns against them). Nevertheless, Captain James A. Harwood of Company K, 53rd Virginia remembered that

"We rushed on through the most terrific fire of shot and shell that mortals ever encountered, Garnett's and Kemper's brigades having, as it were, almost melted away, whilst Armistead's was about one-third of what it had been when it started; but still onward they pressed, closing up ranks as each soldier would fall and charging as it seemed into the very jaws of death. . . ."

"The gray-haired Armistead seeing this, and being the only surviving Brigadier, waved his sword aloft, exclaiming, "Come on, boys, I will lead you." And so he did until we swept over the works and captured several

⁴⁹²Colonel B. L. Farinholt, "Battle of Gettysburg--Johnson's Island," Confederate Veteran Magazine, vol. 5 (September 1897), p. 469.

pieces of artillery. Then General Armistead turning to the writer, said, "Lieutenant, we must use their own guns on them." Taking charge of one himself and ordering the writer and his sergeants to do likewise, we fired only three rounds when a brigade of Gen. Hancock's corps swept in at double quick, and the remnant of Pickett's division, that the day before was 17,000 strong [sic!], seemed to disappear at the first fire. . . . The gallant Armistead fell mortally wounded while working one of the guns. The writer and his two brave sergeants fell, working the guns they had captured. I suppose seeing us using their own guns exasperated the enemy.'" 493

Aside from the fact that it would have been illogical for the gunners to have left the guns in a condition wherein they could have been turned against themselves, and the probability that there was no ammunition laying around the wall for Armistead and Harwood's sergeants to have used, the fallacy of this story is reinforced by the fact that absolutely no one on the Union side recalled the incident. Surely, if Armistead had fire three rounds of canister or shot at them from such a close range, the men of Webb's, Hall's, and Harrow's Brigades would have reported it. In addition, Confederate memoirs likewise do not substantiate Harwood's bizarre claim, most saying that Armistead was killed reaching for a cannon, but surely was not killed while working one. Another major weakness in this account is the fact that Harwood used the figure of 17,000 for the strength of Pickett's Division. Needless to say, no division in Lee's army was that strong, and Pickett's maximum strength could have been only 5070.⁴⁹⁴ For dramatic effect, the passage by Harwood cannot be surpassed, but for accuracy and truthfulness it is totally unreliable.

Lieutenant J. Irving Sale of Company H, 53rd Virginia Infantry, wrote his reminiscences of Armistead's words during the attack. His quotations of

⁴⁹³Wert, A Complete Hand-Book of the Monuments, p. 55.

⁴⁹⁴See Appendix C for statistics.

these utterances by Armistead have found their way into the mythology of the charge, and are accepted as gospel. After examining the post-war accounts by men such as Harwood, it is remarkable how many of the romanticized versions may be fictional, including this one by Lieutenant Sale:

"When we got right up . . . a few feet from the stone wall you fellows were behind, we all lay down and blazed away at the top of the wall wherever we could see a head. You blazed back so hard that in about a minute we gave that up and rushed over the wall. General Armistead was right ahead of me. Just before we started from behind our batteries away over there he tore off his cravat, put his hat on his sword and cried: "Remember your homes, your wives, and your sweethearts!" When we poured over the wall he waved his hat and sword and yelled: "Now give 'em the cold steel, boys!". . . . I never saw so many dead men in my life as there were in here. The blue coats were lying all over so thick that you could scarcely help stepping on them."495

The "Give 'em the cold steel, boys!" exhortation by Armistead has generally been repeated by historians and interpreters of the battle as if they were Armistead's dying words. As already seen, Armistead did not die until a considerable time later, and we do not know if he really did utter this dramatic cheer. The color guard of the 53rd Virginia, who were with him until the end, did not mention these words in any of their post-war reminiscences.

The commanding officer of the 53rd Virginia, Lieutenant Colonel Rawley Martin, was also with Armistead as the last surge went over the wall. Falling with a gunshot wound of the upper femur, he was to be hospitalized in the Gettysburg area for at least two months. While still on the road to recovery at Camp Letterman general hospital east of town, Martin wrote to his father

495 "Pickett's Charge", Philadelphia Weekly Press, p. 1.

on September 10, 1863, describing his expectation of being sent to an officer's prison camp and his concern for his Confederacy's future:

"I expect to be with them at Sandusky or Johnson's Island in a short time. I am not able to walk yet on account of the tenderness of the left leg where it was shot. Some of my wounded comrades are going off this morning. I guess I shall see them again soon.

"My love to all at home, and tell them to pray for me and for the success of the Confederate cause, which is so near to the hearts of us all. Oh, my country, my country!" 496

The agony of Rawley Martin, as reflected in his last lamenting sentence, must have been the outcome of his realization of the full meaning of their defeat at Gettysburg. The depth of feeling which Martin shared with so many other of Lee's soldiers is apparent in his cry of concern for his young, adopted "country".

Perhaps Colonel Martin's despair was in knowing he and his regiment did all that was humanly possible, showing great courage and endurance, yet still lost. His thoughts may have been summed up Captain George K. Griggs, commanding Company K, 38th Virginia Infantry on July 3, 1863. Captain Griggs and his regiment were on the extreme left of Armistead's Brigade during the assault and repulse:

" . . . [Having] no reinforcement, and the enemy in strong force on our left and rear, the few surviving men cut their way back. The loss was irreparable to the regiment as well as the division; the noble and beloved Colonel E. C. Edmonds killed; Lieutenant-Colonel Whittle, who had lost an arm at Malvern Hill, was seriously wounded in thigh; Captain Towns killed, and all the other company officers more or less seriously wounded. Never did men more than these on that day." 497

⁴⁹⁶Clement, p. 251.

⁴⁹⁷Griggs, "Memoranda of Thirty-eighth Virginia Infantry," p. 253.

Colonel Edward Edmonds, commanding the 38th Virginia at the age of 28, fell at the head of his command, and was one of seven colonels who fell that day who had been comrades at V.M.I. Although Captain Griggs stated that Edmonds was killed in this post-war account, it was not until six weeks after the battle that his regiment learned the fact. Up until that time the 38th Virginia believed that their colonel was a prisoner of war, and had been trying to make contact with anyone who knew his prison or hospital whereabouts.⁴⁹⁸

A general account of the repulse of Armistead's Brigade was written after the war by W. H. Swallow, and included a general history of the repulse of the division:

"On the right of the assaulting column General Kemper's brigade was cut to pieces and its commander seriously wounded, nearly all his command were killed, wounded, and captured.

"General Armistead, who was before the works with his brigade toward the closing scenes of the assault, rushed up to a part of the wall which had been abandoned by Webb's right, which was at the time falling back before Archer and Garnett, and seeing that his men were using the works as a line of defense, as some of the first line to the right and left were doing, cried out, 'Come forward, Virginians!' He then drew his sword and, placing his hat on the top of it, raised it high up into the air and, jumping over the wall, again cried out, 'Come on, boys, we must give them the cold steel; who will follow me?'

"Lieutenant-Colonel Martin, with over a hundred men, responded to the call and followed their brave General: Many brave men, however, weakened, and looked into each other's faces with awe and astonishment. At this moment the Federal brigades of Hall and Harrow rushed to the right (Kemper having been repulsed in their front) and attacked Armistead in flank, and at the same time Webb's second line advanced and fired.

"The Emmittsburg road was literally choked up with the dead and wounded, while the space between the enemy's

⁴⁹⁸Walker, Memorial, Virginia Military Institute, pp. 186-187.

fortifications and the road was covered with the dead and dying victims of the struggle, to which might be added thousands who lay upon the ground extending their arms in token surrender.

"The cries of the wounded for water, mingled with their shrieks of agony from pain, greatly intensified the horror of the scene. Three fourths of the assaulting column were killed, wounded, or captured in less than half an hour." ⁴⁹⁹

While the repulse was taking place, the commanding general of the Army of Northern Virginia was apparently watching from the area approximating the site of the present Virginia Monument, where Spangler's Woods had its northwest⁴ corner. Colonel James Thompson Brown, chief of the Confederate Second Corps Artillery, stated that he was with Lee at the time that Stannard's flanking movement against Pickett's right flank was in progress. When that movement, combined with the movements of Hall, Harrow, and Gates, ultimately broke the division's right, Brown was still with Lee and commented on his reactions there:

"When so done the federals cheered, which cheer aroused General Lee from what I took to be prayer--as he was during the whole time of the charge seated on a big oak stump, about two feet wide, his oil-cloth spread on the stump. In his left arm were the reins of his horse, "Traveler," while the elbow of his arm was on his right leg supporting his bowed head in his right hand, which attitude impressed me that he was in prayer." ⁵⁰⁰

This was a unique observation on the part of Colonel Brown, since everyone else testified to Lee's actions and position when his defeated soldiers returned across the open fields and not during the attack itself. If true, this passage may reveal more than any other why the charge was doomed to

⁴⁹⁹Swallow, "The Third Day at Gettysburg," p. 569.

⁵⁰⁰"Lee Statue Site," Industrial School News (Scotland, Pa.), n. d., in Virginia Monument Correspondence, GNMP archives.

failure. Having given his general orders to Longstreet and Hill for carrying out, Lee was resigned to letting events be directed by his subordinates without interference from himself. He obviously had not yet realized that this was not still Chancellorsville, when he could relinquish the details of command and movement to his able lieutenant, "Stonewall" Jackson. It was not yet the Wilderness or Spotsylvania Court House, when Lee would personally take command in a desperate moment to rally his men and force the victory. Considering the mistakes of the past two days, and especially the tragedy that moment enacted before him, Lee had cause for praying. But there was more need for resolute decisions and actions than for prayer on the afternoon of July 3. A resignation to fate and to all-too-human subordinate officers led Lee to unwittingly abandon Pickett's Virginians (as well as that host under Pettigrew and Trimble), when they demanded support and commitment.

With the repulse effected, the retreat from the field of battle by the Virginia division commenced. According to General Lafayette McLaws, who may have been able to assist Pickett had he demonstrated on his front, the Confederates "rebounded like an India rubber ball"⁵⁰¹ after the Federals got the upper hand along the wall. The battlefield historian, John B. Bachelder, summarized his interpretation of the repulse in an 1877 letter:

". . . Pickett's Division and the right of Pettigrew's and Trimble's commands struck this advanced position just that much sooner than the troops to their left; but the left of the column continued to move on toward the second wall, threatening the right and rear of Gibbons' Division, which held the advanced line; General Webb, whose brigade was on the right, had hurried back to bring up his single reserve regiment from the second line. But before this could be accomplished the first line broke under the tremendous pressure which threatened its front and flank, and fell back upon the reserve. . . .

⁵⁰¹Captain Louis G. Young, "Pettigrew's Brigade at Gettysburg, 1-3 July, 1863," in Walter Clark, ed., Histories of the Several Regiments and Battalions from North Carolina in the Great War 1861-1865, vol. 5 (Goldsboro, N. Ca., 1901), p. 128.

"At this moment (for it was all the work of only a few minutes and almost a simultaneous occurrence) Armistead's Brigade, which had followed closely, dashed up to the wall already abandoned by Webb's right. But seeing that his men were inclined to use it as a defense, as the front line was doing, General Armistead. . . cried, 'Boys, we must use the cold steel; who will follow me?'"* Lieutenant-Colonel Martin with less than one hundred men responded to the call, only four of whom continued with their officers to the crest, passing as they advanced. General Webb, who was returning to his front line. At this moment Hall's and Harrow's brigades, the fighting having ceased on their front, rushed to their right and struck Armistead in flank.** Webb's second line advanced at the same moment. Both Armistead and Martin were instantly shot down, forty-two of the men who crossed the wall lay dead, and few if any returned unhurt to tell the tale."

*Bachelder noted that this was based on a statement of Lt. Col. Rawley Martin, 53rd Virginia, "made at the hospital at Gettysburg but a few weeks after the battle."

**Bachelder added that "/ this / movement was also participated in by the Twentieth New York State Militia and the One Hundred and Fifty-First Pennsylvania Volunteers."

As a commentary on the whole of the assault and the repulse of Lee's forces by Meade's left-center, Bachelder found it difficult to point out any one body of troops as more "heroic" or "gallant" than another:

"It is sometimes asked, 'which troops conducted themselves most gallantly in this grand assault?' But this is a question very difficult to answer. To do so one must fully take into consideration the condition of each command when the charge commenced, the distance which each had to move, the character of the obstructions which each had to overcome, the cover by which each was protected, the relative strength of the defenses assailed, and the character of the troops which each met." 502

In other words, one body of troops may have been more gallant than another because it had the longer distance in open fields to cross, but less gallant than another because it did not have as great obstructions in its path. The conditions set down by Bachelder still apply today in any evaluation of the assault, with very little change in the composition of each consideration.

502Bachelder, "The Third Day's Battle," pp. 36-37.

The Comte de Paris, in his history of the battle in the war, gave an indication of the kinds of preparations made by Meade's forces after Longstreet's forces were repulsed at the Angle. It also is a revelation into the type of defenses at Meade's disposition under any further attack by Lee on that front:

"On the side of the Federals there is great anxiety during the struggle. Meade, who was on the left, has hastened to the spot at the moment of Pickett's defeat, followed by the reduced battalions of the Third Corps. It is not to be believed, however, that Lee risked the fate of the battle in this partial attack, and that he will not yet make decisive effort with all the rest of his army. Everyone, therefore, is waiting; the wounded are carried off and the ranks re-formed. Along the front, where the struggle has been carried on hand-to-hand, the combatants, coming from the right and left, are all mixed up. Humphreys has massed his troops behind the Second corps; a portion of Birney's division . . . has taken position on the left, ready to strike the enemy in flank should he attempt to advance farther; the whole of Doubleday's division has marched toward the elevated point occupied by Stannard; while Robinson arrives at the same time to reinforce the right of the Second corps. Two brigades of the Twelfth corps, summoned by Meade from the other extremity of the line, appear shortly after the termination of the struggle." 503

Some of the incidents which occurred during the repulse or just after the repulse of Pickett's Division at the Angle did not reflect so honorably upon individual soldiers in the Army of the Potomac. Perhaps all were too eager to enter the fray and decisively whip Lee's army. One of the members of the 19th Massachusetts described the scene:

"Most of the remaining men of the regiment pushed ahead, directly through the grove and over the fence into the field beyond. This was covered by dead and wounded rebels, and the men were here exposed to the fire of the enemy's artillery which opened as soon as their infantry retired. A few of the men got behind

503 Comte de Paris, History of the Civil War in America, vol. III, p. 669.

defensive, almost to the state of paranoia, concerning the contributions of Pettigrew's Division at Gettysburg, it is uncertain whether his statements are as factual as they are biased:

"Troops on the extreme right were the next to go and after a few minutes the whole line retired. Trimble's men fell back only when directed by him and returned in good order. Pickett's men were panic-stricken, and it was several days before one thousand of them could be got together. That afternoon was the only time they did any fighting during the year 1863, and the outcry they raised about their slaughter was heard all over Virginia and its echo is still heard in the North. I have the amusing fact, upon the authority of a Georgia commissary, that after our army crossed the river and had assembled at Bunker Hill [W. Va.], Pickett's Division of dead men drew more rations than any division in the army." 509

Bond's comments regarding the exaggerations spread about the state of Virginia pertaining to the "slaughter" of Pickett's Division reminded one of similar comments showing exaggeration by one of Pickett's men, and noted by Captain Cowan after the war:

"I once heard a Major of one of Pickett's regiments, twenty four years after the battle, telling his comrades, out at the angle, how they carried two strong breastworks before his horse was killed under him and fell into the ditch of a big fort we still held in the angle." 510

If you were not familiar with the Gettysburg battlefield, the above description of the field at the Angle would give the impression that this was the Petersburg battlefield, with intrenchments and forts.

Notwithstanding the exaggerations, the state and unit biases, the inter-sectional animosities, and sometimes touches of egotism reflected in the accounts which have been quoted and examined in relation to the attack and

⁵⁰⁹W. R. Bond, "Pickett's Men at Gettysburg," Philadelphia Weekly Times, in Gettysburg Newspaper Cillipngs #6, Relating to the Battle, p. 14.

⁵¹⁰Cowan, December 5, 1913 letter to Nicholson, p. 207, ii.

repulse of Pickett's Division on July 3, 1863, there is a common cord that ran throughout most of them. This common strand was expressed in relation to Union soldiers, but could just as well be applied to the Virginians:

"Any soldier that could face General Pickett's desperate charge was brave and heroic."⁵¹¹ Conversely, any soldier who could participate in General Pickett's desperate charge was brave and heroic. Bravery and heroism were many times exhibited during that afternoon, on an area of the American continent comprising less than 400 acres, and (as shown in the quoted passages) neither was confined to one side. Union and Confederate soldiers alike were noteworthy for their gallantry, their devotion to their country, and their simplicity of nature which permitted them to be sentimentally attached to flag, mother, country, comrades, and God. While none of the readers of these passages could have been an observer of the events of that afternoon's conflict, we are privileged and fortunate to be able to read accounts written by participants in those historic moments. It is by reading these accounts, many still fresh in the memories of the soldiers when they were written, that we can attempt to realize the meaning of the battlefield today. Looking at the manicured shoulders alongside the avenues, the placid cattle grazing in the field where Pickett's killed were buried, the rows of dramatic and sturdy markers and monuments, it is hard for us to envision the place as a killing ground. We see a memorial park. But there is something beyond; there is that terrible but noble day that was described by Webb, Gibbon, Martin, Carter, and Cowan which we should not forget or misplace because of later improvements and changes. Perhaps a poet and author translated this meaning better than the historians can:

"So peaceable it was, so calm and hot,
 So tidy and great skied.
 No men had fought
 There but enormous, monumental men
 Who bled neat streams of uncorrupting bronze,

Even at the Round Tops, even by Pickett's boulder,
Where the bronze, open book could still be read
By visitors and sparrow and the wind;
And the wind came, the wind moved in the grass,
Saying. . . while the long light. . . and all so calm. . .

'Pickett came
And the South came
And the end came,
And the grass comes
And the wind blows
On the bronze book
On the bronze men
On the grown grass,
And the wind says
"Long ago
Long
Ago." " 511