The World Will Never See the Like:

THE GETTYSBURG REUNION OF 1913

John L. Hopkins

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For Apple, Anna, Callie, and Sarah

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACHS	Adams County Historical Society
CU	Cornell University
GAR	Grand Army of the Republic
GBMA	Gettysburg Battlefield Memorial Association
GNMP	Gettysburg National Military Park
LOC	Library of Congress
LV	Library of Virginia
NARA	National Archives and Records Administration
NYHS	New York Historical Society
PSA	Pennsylvania State Archives
RIHS	Rhode Island Historical Society
UCV	United Confederate Veterans
UNCCH	University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill
USC	University of South Carolina
UDC	United Daughters of the Confederacy
USAMHI	U.S. Army Military History Institute
VHS	Virginia Historical Society
WSL	Washington State Library

Preface

European civilization, explained the correspondent of London's *Daily Telegraph*, "with its centuries of strife and bloodshed has not yet furnished a spectacle comparable to that witnessed today on the historic battlefield of Gettysburg." He wrote those words in a dispatch published not in 1863 in the midst of the bloodiest battle of the Civil War, but in 1913 during a reunion of more than 53,000 Union and Confederate veterans held to mark its fiftieth anniversary.

From June 29 to July 5, the old soldiers filled a 280-acre encampment between the Emmitsburg Road and Seminary Ridge in the largest Blue-Gray reunion ever held. It was front-page news across the country, covered by more than 150 reporters and photographers. Colonel James Martinus Schoonmaker, a Union veteran and Medal of Honor winner who helped organize the reunion, called it "a celebration unparalleled in the history of the world."

Those who attended were convinced that its impact would reverberate through the years. "It will go down in history as an event fraught with more power for good than any event since the signing of the Declaration of Independence," declared Alfred B. Beers, commander-in-chief of the Grand Army of the Republic, the largest fraternal organization of Union veterans. "All that the great Reunion of the Blue and the Gray means to the American people is yet to be realized," wrote a daughter who accompanied her veteran father to the event. "It will be realized more and more with the flight of years—it will be talked about and written about as long as the American people boast of the dauntless courage of Gettysburg." Yet today, the 1913 Gettysburg reunion is all but forgotten.

I first stumbled upon this extraordinary event in Carol Reardon's superb *Pickett's Charge in History and Memory*. The dozen pages she devoted to it whetted my appetite, so I went in search of a book-length treatment, confident that J. Thompson Brown, a Confederate veteran who attended, had been correct in his assertion that the "history of this grand and final Reunion of the Blue and Gray . . . will surely be written." I quickly discovered that the commission created by the State of Pennsylvania to plan the reunion had produced a handsomely bound final report of some 280 pages, heavy on official documents and transcripts of dignitaries' speeches, and distributed 25,000 copies around the country, one of which landed in the library of the liberal arts college in Ohio where I worked. So far, so good. Two books had been written by participants: *From Maine to Gettysburg, 1863–1913*, by Elsie Dorothea Tibbetts, who accompanied her 15th Maine veteran father to the reunion, and *Handgrips: The Story of the Great Gettysburg Reunion*, by New Hampshire veteran Walter H. Blake, both published within a year of the event, and both offering a mixture of first-hand observations and recycled anecdotes from the newspaper coverage. John William Corrington, a professor of literature at Loyola University in New Orleans—who named two of his children Robert Edward Lee and Thomas Jonathan Jackson—published a short story titled "Reunion. Gettysburg: 1913" in the *Southwest Review* in the early 1960s, while in 2009 Carl Eeman's novel *Encampment* posited an alternative history in which thousands of black veterans participated in the reunion. In 2013, to mark the centennial of the event, James Rada produced *No North, No South: The Grand Reunion at the 50th Anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg*, a 96-page overview heavily illustrated with more than 100 photos.

And that was about it. The full story of the great reunion—its genesis and planning, the obstacles overcome on the way to making it a reality, its place in the larger narrative of sectional reunion and reconciliation, to say nothing of the often poignant, occasionally comical, at times unbelievable individual stories of the veterans who attended—had never been told. So, I resolved to do it.[1]

Acknowledgments

Any acknowledgment of the many sources of help I received during the lengthy process of researching this book must begin with the scores of nameless newspaper reporters (bylines were not in common use in the early part of the last century

1 In 2019, just as I was putting the finishing touches on this manuscript, Thomas R. Flagel's *War, Memory, and the 1913 Gettysburg Reunion* was published by the Kent State University Press. Flagel's primary focus is on what motivated men to attend the reunion and he highlights four veterans—two Union, two Confederate—to support his contention that those motivations were more complex than the narrative of national reconciliation that dominated contemporary news coverage.

who covered the great reunion, and the people at organizations like Proquest, Newspapers.com, and Newspaperarchives.com who have made a vast trove of old newspapers readily available online. The staff at the Pennsylvania State Archives in Harrisburg, which houses the records of the commission that planned and organized the reunion, as well as those at the Gettysburg National Military Park Library and Research Center and the Adams County Historical Society were unfailingly helpful and kind. Michael Sherbon of the Pennsylvania Archives deserves special thanks for his assistance in obtaining many of the images contained herein. Jana Meyer at the Filson Historical Society in Louisville, Kentucky, Shawn Connery of the Seymour Library in Auburn, New York, and Richard Mansley at the Newtown Historic Association in Newtown, Pennsylvania, provided invaluable information about three veterans who figure prominently in this tale, while Michael Mills at the Hudson Museum in Hudson, Michigan, produced a photo of a Union and Confederate veteran who had met during the war, were reunited in Gettysburg in 1913, and then traveled back to Michigan to continue their personal reunion. Mary Morris at the Clarke County Historical Association in Berryville, Virginia, supplied the letter from a Virginia veteran with which this book closes.

This book began as a nights-and-weekends project, wedged into whatever gaps I could find between my day job and my family. Over the course of almost 40 years in public relations, I have written well over a million words on behalf of various employers and clients, not one of which had a shelf life of more than a couple of weeks. This book is the most complex writing project I have ever undertaken, and by far the one of which I am most proud. I am enormously grateful to Theodore P. Savas for giving me this opportunity and to everyone on the team at Savas Beatie for their guidance and support through the publication process.

I have been richly and undeservedly blessed in this life, above all by the love of my wife, Apple, and our three wonderful daughters: Anna, Callie, and Sarah. This book is dedicated to them.

Chapter 1

The Greatest Event Gettysburg Has Ever Seen

On an early spring day in 1908, a well-dressed, silver-haired man with an empty right sleeve made his way into the Union League on South Broad Street in Philadelphia. Henry Shippen Huidekoper had recently been named to the commission charged with designing a monument to commemorate the 34,000 Pennsylvania troops who fought at Gettysburg. But today he had come to call upon Gov. Edwin S. Stuart on another matter.

"He stated that he had given much thought to the fact that in July 1913 it would be fifty years since the Battle of Gettysburg," Stuart later recalled, "and he wished to impress upon me the importance of incorporating in my next message to the Legislature in January 1909 a recommendation that the event be properly celebrated under the auspices of the State of Pennsylvania."[1]

In July 1913, it would also be 50 years since a 24-year-old Lieutenant Colonel Huidekoper suddenly found himself in command of the 150th Pennsylvania during the first day's fight at Gettysburg, after Col. Langhorne Wister had to assume brigade command. For three quarters of hour, Huidekoper and his men withstood the onslaught of Brig. Gen. Junius Daniel's North Carolinians and Col. J. M. Brockenbrough's Virginians on McPherson's Ridge. Already wounded in the leg, Huidekoper was struck by a second bullet that shattered his right arm. After applying a makeshift tourniquet to stanch the bleeding, he continued to rally the

1 Letter, Edwin S. Stuart to Lewis E. Beitler, Oct. 10, 1913, Fiftieth Anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg Commission: Correspondence, Record Group 25.24, Box 2, Pennsylvania State Archives (PSA). Hereafter cited as "Commission Correspondence."

150th as the fighting grew more desperate, but soon became faint from loss of blood and was forced to leave the line and make his way through the streets of Gettysburg to a field hospital that had been set up in St. Francis Xavier Roman Catholic Church on West High Street. There his arm was amputated, and there he remained when the Union lines west and north of town finally collapsed and the Confederates poured in.[2]

Huidekoper would rejoin his regiment in December but found that the loss of his arm hampered his ability to serve and resigned his commission in March 1864. He went on to live a long and full post-war life—as commander of the Pennsylvania National Guard, postmaster of Philadelphia, and vice president and general manager of the Metropolitan Telephone and Telegraph Company—but his wartime service remained a defining moment, as it was for so many of his comrades. He was elected president of the 150th Pennsylvania Regiment Veterans Association and commander of the Pennsylvania Commandery of the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States and attended reunions faithfully. In 1905, he was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions at Gettysburg.[3]

* * *

Through the four years of the Civil War, more than 2 million men served in the Union Army and Navy, a bit more than half the Northern military age male population, while the Confederacy put some 750,000 men under arms, three out of four military-aged men in the South. When the war ended, they returned home not just to starkly different conditions, but to different receptions as well. True, the boys in blue were hailed as the saviors of the Union and were cheered to the echo as they marched in the Grand Review in Washington, D.C., on May 23 and 24, 1865. But as they mustered out regiment by regiment in the weeks and months that followed and made their way home, their travels often marked by the consumption of copious amounts of liquor, incidents of petty theft, and fistfights with the locals in the communities through which they passed, the Northern press began to voice concerns about this horde of semi-savages now let loose upon the civilian population. "By midsummer," historian Brian Matthew Jordan writes, "gasping editors declared that the nation was fatally afflicted by an 'epidemic' of veteran misdeeds." The defeated Confederates, on the other hand, returned home to a far less ambivalent reception, in no small measure because the people and land to which they returned had been so thoroughly devastated. The war had destroyed "two-thirds of the assessed value of Southern wealth, two-fifths of the

2 David G. Martin, *Gettysburg July 1* (Cambridge, MA, 1995), 245, 378, 456.

3 H. S. Huidekoper obituary, *The Harvard Graduates' Magazine* (March 1919), 27:325-327.

South's livestock, and one-quarter of her white men between the ages of 20 and 40. More than half the farm machinery was ruined, and the damages to railroads and industries were incalculable . . . Southern wealth decreased by 60 percent." And while there were no parades, receptions, or speeches in the town square as there had been when they went off to war, those who returned were welcomed home as something akin to tragic heroes, men who had fought long, hard, and well, despite all hardships and against long odds.[4]

The initial contrast in Northern and Southern attitudes toward their returning veterans would carry over in many ways through the post-war decades. "In the South," writes James Marten in *Sing Not War*, "veterans would always be those proud, ragged, honorable men who limped home with their heads held high. If they succeeded in their postwar lives, they would do so despite the hardships they survived. If they failed, who could blame them?" But in the North, "marginalized veterans were often seen as agents of their own decline, almost purposefully swimming against the stream of progress, economic growth, and opportunity. They may have served bravely in the war, but as the country moved deeper into peacetime, they were expected to get over their experiences and move on."[5]

For the first decade or so after the war, most veterans focused on trying to pick up the threads of their pre-war lives. For tens of thousands, that meant learning to navigate life with a missing arm or leg, a wound that refused to heal, or memories of the carnage of combat that could not be laid to rest. In the South, it also encompassed the rebuilding of a shattered infrastructure and economy and resisting and subverting Reconstruction by every possible means in order to maintain effective white control of millions of newly emancipated African Americans. But as the years passed, veterans on both sides became increasingly concerned with preserving the history of what they had done, and the memory of those who had died. The former Confederates, who had more to explain and justify in defeat, were first into the literary arena. "The most that is left to us is the history of our struggle," Jubal A. Early wrote to Robert E. Lee in November 1868, "and I think that ought to be accurately written. We lost nearly everything but honor, and that should be religiously guarded." Early himself had already published the first book-length work by a significant commander on either side, *A Memoir of the Last Year of the War for Independence, in the Confederate States of America*, in late 1866, and exercised significant influence over what viewpoints were printed in the *Southern*

4 Brian Matthew Jordan, *Marching Home: Union Veterans and Their Unending Civil War* (New York, 2014), 48; James M. McPherson, *Ordeal by Fire: The Civil War and Reconstruction* (New York, 1982), 476.

5 James Marten, *Sing Not War: The Lives of Union and Confederate Veterans in Gilded Age America* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2011), 20.

Historical Society Papers. In the decades that followed, dozens of other major figures would follow suit, including James Longstreet, William T. Sherman, and Ulysses S. Grant, whose publisher rang up advance sales of 300,000 copies of the Union commander's memoirs, completed just days before he died. Campaign studies and regimental histories appeared by the score, and thousands of enlisted men and officers offered their personal recollections and fought out controversies about the details of engagements large and small in the pages of publications like *Confederate Veteran* and *The National Tribune*. In the 1880s and 1890s, memorials to the dead moved gradually outward from cemeteries to town squares and the downtowns of major cities, growing larger and more elaborate as they did so. Cleveland's magnificent Soldiers and Sailors Monument, dedicated on July 4, 1894, soars 125 feet above Public Square and cost $280,000 to construct. The formal dedication of the Robert E. Lee monument, the first and largest of the memorials on Richmond's Monument Avenue, drew more than 100,000 people in May 1890.[6]

The last decades of the nineteenth century were the heyday of fraternal organizations in America, and Civil War veterans were not immune to their allure. They formed regimental, brigade, and corps associations, as well as specialized groups for Signal Corps veterans and former prisoners of war, many of which held annual reunions. Towering above them all in both membership and political clout was the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), the largest organization of Union veterans, with almost 7,000 local posts across the country, including every state of the old Confederacy. The influence of the United Confederate Veterans (UCV), founded two decades later, was more narrowly confined to the South. While the GAR's membership probably never included much more than a third of surviving Union veterans at any given time, that still added up to more than 425,000 men at its zenith in 1890. If that number is suggestive of the political power wielded by veterans in the post-war decades, it is only one of many such data points. Five of the seven U.S. presidents who held office between 1869 and 1901 were Union combat veterans: Ulysses S. Grant, Rutherford B. Hayes, James A. Garfield, Benjamin Harrison, and William McKinley. A sixth, Chester A. Arthur, served as quartermaster general for the state of New York. Due in no small measure to their political influence, by 1893, "pensions for Union veterans accounted for 43 percent of federal expenditures" and 19,518 of those veterans were living in federal or state soldiers' homes. Historian William B. Heseltine has calculated that south of the Mason-Dixon line "[the] 585 top military and civil leaders

6 Jubal A. Early to Robert E. Lee, Nov. 20, 1868, quoted in Gary W. Gallagher, "Jubal A. Early, the Lost Cause, and Civil War History," in Gary W. Gallagher & Alan T. Nolan, eds., *The Myth of the Lost Cause and Civil War History* (Bloomington, IN, 2000), 39; Gaines M. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South* (New York, 1987), 101.

of the Confederacy furnished to the postwar South 418 holders of elective and appointive offices," from governor's mansions and state legislatures to both houses of Congress, an outcome he attributes "in part to their own abilities and thanks in no small measure to the imbecility of their conquerors." And while Confederate veterans had access neither to federal pensions nor federal soldiers' homes, in that same year of 1893, just over 27,000 Confederate veterans were receiving state pensions or living in state soldiers' homes, at a total cost of $1,126,736. This was less than one percent of the total spent in the North on 876,068 Union veterans, but it was nonetheless a significant amount in a region still recovering from the economic and demographic impact of the war.[7]

With regimental and national associations, reunions and monument dedications, soldiers' homes, and periodicals written by and for themselves, Civil War veterans in the 1880s and 1890s created a place they could call their own in a rapidly changing nation. "Quite literally 'marching to the beat of a different drummer,' veterans marked time on a calendar now solemnized by enlistment dates . . . discharge dates, and the anniversaries of wounds, imprisonment, and battles—both great and small," notes Brian Matthew Jordan. "Certain sacrifices could not be shared; certain nightmares could not be explained," James Marten adds. "And those experiences had cemented relationships among soldiers stronger than any other connection."[8]

As the new century began, the world outside the one the veterans had formed for themselves was changing in ways that must have seemed little short of magical to men who, in their teens, had followed mounted officers into battle, torn paper cartridges open with their teeth, and marveled at the sight of the world's first ironclad warships. In 1903, the Wright brothers electrified the world with the first powered flight. Five years later, Henry Ford's first Model T rolled off the assembly line. Fresh from victory in the Spanish-American War, where the sons of Union and Confederate veterans had fought side by side, the United States was assuming a larger role on the world stage, and in December 1907, President Theodore Roosevelt dispatched the 16 battleships of the "Great White Fleet" on a globe-circling, muscle-flexing cruise to drive home the point. Henry Huidekoper and his fellow veterans were also keenly aware that their ranks were thinning. GAR membership

7 Stuart McConnell, *Glorious Contentment: The Grand Army of the Republic, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1992), 153; William B. Heseltine, *Confederate Leaders in the New South* (Baton Rouge, LA, 1950), 95; Marten, *Sing Not War*, 17. Wallace C. Davies provides a fine overview of the growth and impact of the GAR and UCV in their heyday in *Patriotism on Parade: The Story of Veterans' and Hereditary Organizations in America, 1783-1900* (Cambridge, MA, 1955). For further insight into the GAR, see Mary R. Dearing, *Veterans in Politics: The Story of the G.A.R.* (Baton Rouge, 1952).

8 Jordan, *Marching Home*, 74; Marten, *Sing Not War*, 258.

had fallen by almost a third from its peak in 1890. "The wartime conditions, remembered as of yesterday," observed the *Philadelphia Public Ledger* in 1903, "seem infinitely remote, as though they must have belonged to some elementary period of civilization with which we no longer have anything in common."[9]

The semi-centennial of those three bloody days in July would be an opportunity to remind their fellow citizens, perhaps for the last time, that the unity and prosperity the nation enjoyed in the twentieth century had its roots in the hallowed ground of a hundred Civil War battlefields, of which none loomed larger than Gettysburg.

* * *

Five months after Huidekoper first broached the idea to the governor, Col. John P. Nicholson, a veteran of the 28th Pennsylvania and chairman of the Gettysburg National Park Commission, invited 30 prominent Gettysburg citizens to a meeting at the Eagle Hotel and urged them to take the lead in organizing a suitable commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the battle. At a subsequent town meeting on September 25, a committee of seven, chaired by the Reverend J. A. Singmaster, president of the Gettysburg Theological Seminary, was appointed to take up the matter with Governor Stuart.

There were many reasons to celebrate the battle's anniversary, Singmaster told the citizens gathered in the courthouse that night, but "the commercial reason, the benefit it would be to the community, was not one of the motives that should urge the commemoration." Moreover, "it should not be celebrated as a matter of mere local pride, for the event belonged to the nation and not the community." Judge Samuel McCurdy Swope concurred, declaring that the "patriotism of the suggestion of a celebration ought not to be questioned because it comes from the town."[10] "[It] promises to be the greatest event Gettysburg has ever seen or ever will see," said the *Gettysburg Star and Sentinel*. "Not only will the citizens of Gettysburg be interested, but all who participated, as well as many influential men throughout the country."[11]

If Singmaster's forswearing of "the commercial reason" seemed a tad defensive, there was good cause. When the Army of Northern Virginia began its retreat

9 *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, July 3, 1903, quoted in Jim Weeks, *Gettysburg: Memory, Market, and an American Shrine* (Princeton, NJ, 2003), 58. For GAR membership over time, see *Proceedings of the 53rd Annual Encampment of the Dept. of Ohio G.A.R.* (Columbus, OH, 1919), 66. For UCV membership, see Caroline E. Janney, *Remembering the Civil War: Reunion and the Limits of Reconciliation* (Chapel Hill, 2013), 180.

10 "50th Battle Anniversary," *Gettysburg Compiler*, Sept. 16, 1908.

11 "Fiftieth Anniversary," *Gettysburg Star and Sentinel*, Sept. 16, 1908.

southward on July 4, 1863, with the Army of the Potomac following cautiously in its wake, Gettysburg's 2,500 citizens emerged from their cellars to find a shattered landscape: crops trampled, orchards destroyed, fences tumbled down or burned, barns and stores stripped of provisions, livestock and poultry gone, and thousands of dead horses and mules, swollen to twice their size and rotting in the heat. Then there were the men: more than 7,000 Union and Confederate dead, some hastily buried in shallow graves, others still lying where they had fallen, and more than 20,000 wounded. "This town, and the vicinity within a space of country surrounding it of eight or ten miles, is literally one vast and over-crowded hospital," reported the *Philadelphia Public Ledger*. Gettysburg, one local observed, was "one vast, hideous charnel house."[12]

Surveying the devastation, many townspeople wondered, not unreasonably, how and by whom they would be made whole for their losses. But in their haste to answer that question, the impression they made on Union officers and enlisted men was not favorable. "They are a miserly crew," wrote Lt. Robert S. Robertson of the 93rd New York, "and have no souls or conscience where a penny is concerned. Some took the pumps out of their wells, and others charged the soldiers for the privilege of drawing water. I paid a dollar and a half for a small loaf of bread which could be bought in New York for 8 cents."

"After satisfying themselves that there was really no further danger to be apprehended from the Rebels," recalled a Connecticut private, "the fugitives of the people of Gettysburg came sneaking back and expressed their gratitude for the saving of their homes from destruction by charging wounded officers five dollars each for carrying them back two miles to the officers hospital, and five cents a glass for cool water for the parched and fevered lips of wounded soldiers. Others hurried to headquarters, before the dead had all been buried, whimpering and whining even to tears about the timber cut for breastworks, or the fence rails used to cook their defenders' meals, and wanting to know how they were to get their pay for them; as well as for the trampled wheat where there had been such agonizing struggle in defense of our common country during those bloody hours."

Lorenzo Crounse, a reporter for the *New York Times*, was equally scathing in his assessment. "[I]nstead of lending a helping hand to our wounded, and opening their houses to our famished officers and soldiers, they have only manifested indecent haste to present their bills to the military authorities for payment of losses inflicted by both armies," Crounse wrote in an article that appeared on July 9. "Their charges, too, were exorbitant—hotels, $2.50 per day; milk, 10 and 15 cents

12 Gregory A. Coco, *A Strange and Blighted Land: Gettysburg: The Aftermath of a Battle* (El Dorado Hills, CA, 2017), 40, 169. Coco provides an extraordinarily detailed and brutally vivid portrait of the battle's impact on the landscape and people of Gettysburg and Adams County.

per quart; bread, $1 and even $1.50 per loaf; twenty cents for a bandage for a wounded soldier! And these are only a few specimens of the sordid meanness and unpatriotic spirit manifested by these people, from whose doors our noble army had driven a hated enemy."[13]

Crounse was just one of the horde of reporters, photographers, and artists who descended on the town to document the aftermath of the longest, bloodiest battle ever fought on American soil, and again four months later for the dedication of the new national cemetery. John B. Bachelder, who arrived three days after the battle, was another. In *Gettysburg: Memory, Market, and an American Shrine*, historian Jim Weeks writes, "Bachelder believed Gettysburg represented the climactic struggle he had been anticipating since attaching himself to the Army of the Potomac the previous year. Unlike other photographers and bohemians who recorded Gettysburg and then departed, Bachelder spent the remaining three decades of his life promoting Gettysburg as the focal point of his trade in images. In the process, he shaped public perceptions of Gettysburg as both a shrine and a tourist site."[14]

Bachelder's panoramic "isometrical map" of the battlefield, published the year after the battle, was an immediate hit and ultimately sold thousands of copies. He followed up in 1873 with a popular guidebook, *Gettysburg: What to See and How to See It*, which was informed by his post-war interviews and correspondence with hundreds of Union and Confederate officers. And it was Bachelder who popularized "the copse of trees" near the center of the Union line where the Confederates briefly broke through during Pickett's Charge as "the High Water Mark of the Rebellion," a phrase that he coined.

The residents of Gettysburg "knew their town had made history," Weeks notes, "and that history as displayed on an epical landscape could be packaged and sold. An open letter 'to the people of Adams County' by the *Adams Sentinel*'s editor in 1865 saw the battle as 'one of the chief events in recorded history,' and an opportunity that 'the providence of God has put within the power of the people of this county.'"[15]

By the mid-1880s, Gettysburg boasted six hotels, two rail lines that brought a steady stream of visitors, and a growing cottage industry of battlefield guides, relic and souvenir vendors, and refreshment stands to serve them. Union veterans arrived regularly for reunions or to dedicate state and regimental monuments and

13 Ibid., 251-252; Lorenzo Crounse quoted in Allen C. Guelzo, *Gettysburg: The Last Invasion* (New York, 2013), 471. For more on contemporary criticism of the behavior of Gettysburg's citizens in the aftermath of the battle, see Margaret S. Creighton, *The Colors of Courage: Gettysburg's Forgotten History* (New York, 2005), 157-162.

14 Weeks, *Gettysburg*, 23.

15 Ibid., 27.

were welcomed by "a band resplendent in navy uniforms fringed by gold braids, brass-spiked Prussian helmets, and white belts."[16]

In the early 1890s, local photographer and entrepreneur William Tipton helped secure approval for an electric trolley line through the battlefield and opened Tipton Park on 13 acres near the southern end of its route at Devil's Den, complete with a refreshment stand, a dancing pavilion, and a photographic gallery. The Harrisburg and Gettysburg Railroad built a branch line that bisected the field of Pickett's Charge on its way to the Round Tops, where Round Top Park offered similar attractions to crowds of day-trippers from Baltimore and Philadelphia, some of whom never set foot on the battlefield itself.

The economic benefits of battlefield tourism, however, were a mixed blessing. As Weeks observes, "Although the local papers boosted tourism, they often regretted its stultifying effect on industry. 'It has prevented the location of factories here and has retarded the growth of the few we have,' the *Gettysburg Star and Sentinel* lamented in 1900." Three years later, the same paper complained, "Boys are brought up peddling in the streets who ought to be in school or in shops learning a useful trade; men who ought to be at work spend whole days waiting around in carriages and annoying visitors."[17] And the note struck by Crounse would reverberate over the years. In its coverage of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the battle in 1888, the *Times* declared that "[n]owhere else in the wide world is the art of squeezing so thoroughly understood and so harshly practiced as at Gettysburg."[18]

* * *

Governor Stuart did not disappoint Henry Huidekoper or the citizens of Gettysburg.

On January 5, 1909, in his biennial message to the General Assembly, he urged the creation of a commission "with authority to invite the cooperation of the other States" to plan a fitting observation of the fiftieth anniversary of the battle. He reminded the legislators that "the Commanding General of the Union forces was a distinguished Pennsylvanian, and on that memorable field thousands of Pennsylvania's sons won imperishable fame. Of Pennsylvania commands, there were engaged, or present on the field, sixty-nine regiments of infantry, ten regiments

16 Ibid., 68.

17 Ibid., 73-74.

18 Ibid., 73.

of cavalry and seven batteries of artillery. Many of the men of these commands are still living, and many will be living on the fiftieth anniversary of the battle."[19]

One could be forgiven for suspecting that when the assembled legislators heard the words "still living" they silently added "and voting."

In May, both houses of the legislature approved an act authorizing the governor to create the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg Commission (hereafter cited as the Pennsylvania Commission) and appropriating $5,000 for its preliminary expenses. Governor Stuart appointed nine men, all Union veterans and GAR members, including a past commander-in-chief, Brevet Brig. Gen. Louis Wagner, who was elected its chairman.

Wagner was born in Giessen, Germany in 1838, and came to America at age 11 with his parents, settling in Philadelphia. After serving as an apprentice to a lithographer, he started his own printing business in 1859. When the Civil War came, he helped raise a company of infantry and joined the 88th Pennsylvania as first lieutenant of Company D. Promoted to captain, he was wounded in the leg and captured at the Second Battle of Bull Run in August 1862. After being paroled, he returned to his regiment and was promoted to major. He was wounded a second time at Chancellorsville, this time seriously enough to be deemed unfit for further field service. Now a lieutenant colonel, Wagner asked to be given command of Camp William Penn, in Chelton Hills, Pennsylvania, where he was responsible for training thousands of African American volunteers for service in the United States Colored Troops (USCT). He was promoted to brigadier general just before the war ended.

After the war, Wagner returned to Philadelphia, where he served as the city's first director of the Department of Public Works, and later as president of the Board of City Trusts. A temperance man and devout Presbyterian, he was active in Union veteran organizations almost from the moment the war ended, ultimately becoming "one of Pennsylvania's most prominent Grand Army men" and national commander-in-chief of the GAR in 1880.[20]

He was not a man to suffer fools gladly. According to the *Washington Post*, Wagner, who walked with a cane due to the wound he received at Bull Run, "has adopted a novel method of avoiding questions as to the cause of his lameness. When introduced to a stranger he hands the latter a card, which reads: 'No sir; it is not either rheumatism or the gout; neither was I thrown out of a carriage or kicked

19 *Report of the Pennsylvania Commission for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg*, revised edition (Harrisburg, PA, April 1915), 3.

20 Louis Wagner obituary, *Proceedings of the 48th Annual Encampment of the Dept. of Pennsylvania, G.A.R.* (Harrisburg, PA, 1914), 32-33.

by a horse. At 5:33 p.m. on Saturday, August 30, 1862, at the second battle of Bull Run, I foolishly got in the way of a rebel bullet and lost 3 inches of the shinbone of my right leg. That is what is the matter.'"[21]

* * *

One of the Pennsylvania Commission's first acts was to write to the governors of every U.S. state, commonwealth, and territory, inviting them "to share in this important anniversary and to help make it an event worthy of its historical significance and an occasion creditable and impressive to our great and reunited Nation." Ultimately, all would appoint representatives to work with the commission, including Union veterans Joshua L. Chamberlain from Maine, Elisha Hunt Rhodes from Rhode Island, and Daniel E. Sickles of New York, and Confederates Evander M. Law of Florida and S. A. Cunningham, editor of *Confederate Veteran* magazine, representing Tennessee.

In February 1910, the members of the commission met in Washington with President William Howard Taft, Vice President James S. Sherman, and members of Pennsylvania's congressional delegation, seeking to engage the interest of the federal government in the reunion project. In June, that effort bore fruit as the House and Senate passed a concurrent resolution authorizing the appointment of a committee consisting of three senators and three representatives to confer with the Pennsylvania Commission and report back their recommendations "as to the proper action to be taken by Congress to enable the United States fittingly to join in the celebration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg."

The congressional committee was composed of four Republicans and two Democrats. It included Rep. Daniel F. Lafean, whose district encompassed Gettysburg, Sen. George T. Oliver of Pennsylvania, and two others with Pennsylvania roots: Sen. Weldon B. Heyburn of Idaho, born to Quaker parents near Philadelphia, and Rep. James A. Tawney of Minnesota, who was born and raised in Mount Pleasant, not far from Gettysburg. Five were too young to have served in the Civil War. One, Rep. John Lamb of Virginia, was a Confederate veteran.[22]

With the organizational structure for planning the great event taking shape, it was time to bring all the players together and begin work in earnest. The commission invited the members of the congressional committee and the state representatives appointed thus far—about two dozen, including those from Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina—to join them for a general conference on October 13 and 14 in Gettysburg.

21 "Interviews with Capital's Visitors," *Washington Post*, Jan. 13, 1912.

22 *Pennsylvania Commission Report*, 5-6.

They arrived by train from Harrisburg in mid-afternoon and were taken in carriages over the ground of the first day's fight west and north of town. That evening after dinner, the local organizing committee and the Citizens Band escorted them from the Eagle Hotel to a public meeting at the courthouse, where it soon became apparent that the passage of almost 50 years had not entirely reconciled the former combatants on every point.

The Reverend J. Richards Boyle, a member of the commission and veteran of the 111th Pennsylvania, began well by voicing his support for the erection of statues of Lee and his commanders on the battlefield, which "received vigorous applause from the audience." He then declared that Union victory in the war had brought about a great good—an oblique reference to the abolition of slavery—preserved the integrity of the nation, and "prevented the Mexicanization of the United States."

Representative Lamb of the congressional committee, who had commanded a company of the 3rd Virginia Cavalry in the war, rose next. First elected to the House in 1896 and now in his seventh term, he was known as "an earnest and forcible" speaker whose "fidelity to the 'Lost Cause' and her leaders has made him many friends outside of his own neighborhood and constituency," according to the 1907 edition of *Men of Mark in Virginia*. "He believes that the South was right in 1861, and that with five thousand more men at Gettysburg she would have established her independence."[23]

Lamb now "reviewed with great feeling the southern defeat at Gettysburg . . . [and declared] that of the men who charged with Pickett not one out of thirty owned a slave nor had their ancestors done so before them. He claimed slavery had little to do with the war and said the state's rights contention was uppermost." Lamb also took a shot at Lt. Gen. James Longstreet, almost seven years in his grave but still capable of stirring the ire of Southerners who could forgive neither his post-war embrace of the Republican party nor, even worse, the criticisms he had leveled against the sainted Lee. Lamb said a young boy had recently declared that Longstreet must have been drunk on the third day at Gettysburg. "Yes," he roared, "but there are more ways of becoming intoxicated than by drinking liquor. People become drunk with envy, with hatred and with enthusiasm."

John E. Gilman, commander-in-chief of the GAR, was next to speak and "in a more or less sarcastic way referred to a number of the former speaker's statements, especially to his depreciation of slavery as a cause of the war." Lamb leapt to his feet

23 "Friction at Commissioners' Mass Meeting, *Gettysburg Times*, Oct. 14, 1910; Lyon Gardiner Tyler, *Men of Mark in Virginia*, 5 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1907), 3:202.

to respond, but Wagner, who was chairing the meeting, refused to recognize him and told him to sit back down.

Augustus E. Willson, Republican governor of the predominately Democratic state of Kentucky and the first non-veteran to speak, attempted to calm the increasingly troubled waters. "If I did not know I was away from my state," he began, "if I did not know what I was here for, if I did not know I was in Gettysburg, I would believe you were all from Kentucky. We all look alike. We are all Americans. That is why the Civil War lasted so long. If there had been a foreign army opposing an American army the war would have been over in a hurry. But so far as this Mexican business is concerned, we don't know anything about it. That is a different breed from ours." Willson closed by pointing with pride to the fact that there were fewer immigrants in Kentucky than in any other eastern state. "His address," the *Gettysburg Times* noted, "was received throughout with great enthusiasm."

The evening's final remarks came from Senator Heyburn of the joint congressional committee, whose irritation with the back-and-forth among the previous speakers was evident. "If we are to come here in 1913 to fight again the battle of Gettysburg," Heyburn said, "and to point out when one army was victorious and the other defeated we would better stay away. Let's have done with these discussions about north and south. We are brothers and brothers, if they have a quarrel, do not on every anniversary fight it all over again. They forget about it. Let us gather here three years hence to commemorate the victory of a great national principle. If we come with any other spirit the celebration will be a failure and we would better not have it."[24]

By the following morning, passions had cooled. The weather was clear and beautiful, and the group toured the scene of the second and third days' fight before returning to the hotel and formally convening the first general conference of the commission and its state representatives at 10:45 a.m. Senator Oliver of Pennsylvania asked Wagner if the commission had prepared any tentative plans for the anniversary celebration, and was told it had not, as one purpose of the conference was to gather advice on that score. A roll of the states was called for suggestions and proceeded as far as Illinois, with each representative pledging his state's support but offering no concrete ideas for how the event should be structured.

24 "Friction at Commissioners' Mass Meeting, *Gettysburg Times*, Oct. 14, 1910. For more on the efforts of Jubal Early and others to blacken Longstreet's postwar reputation, and his own sporadic and sometimes counterproductive attempts to fight back, see William Garrett Piston, *Lee's Tarnished Lieutenant: James Longstreet and His Place in Southern History* (Athens, GA, 1987) and Jeffrey D. Wert, *General James Longstreet: The Confederacy's Most Controversial Soldier* (New York, 1993).

At this point a motion was made to suspend the roll call and "a prolonged and desultory discussion took place."[25]

"Gen. George H. Roberts of Idaho, declared he had no plans to suggest and had no thought of one, but expected that a tentative plan would be presented and thrashed out," the *Gettysburg Compiler* reported. J. B. Greenhut, a veteran of the 12th and 82nd Illinois Infantry and now a wealthy department store owner in New York City, said he supposed that the commission would have "some ideas in a crystallized form that could be approved or disapproved," while John R. King of Maryland "drew attention to the uselessness of talking and no plans to discuss." Senator Oliver thought the commission "had started at the wrong end and should formulate a plan for discussion."[26]

Dan Sickles, the last surviving corps commander on either side at Gettysburg, was asked to weigh in and said he thought it entirely proper for the commission to hear the views of the conference before preparing a plan, but that "whatever else might be determined upon, a permanent Peace Monument of some kind should, if possible, be dedicated on the field at the time of the Jubilee celebration."[27]

The meeting closed just before 1:00 p.m. with a flurry of motions: to hold the anniversary commemoration on July 1-4, 1913, "with the final day being devoted to the subject of National and International Peace"; to request that the conference members formulate tentative plans for the celebration and submit them in writing, within 30 days, to the commission; to request that each state furnish transportation for its surviving veterans to and from the event; and to confer on the commission and the congressional committee "full power to make all arrangements for the proper observance of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg."[28]

Over the course of the next several weeks, the commission received suggestions regarding the program for the anniversary celebration from several state delegates. King, the Maryland representative, suggested that the army place 50 pieces of artillery on the field, to fire a salute each day, and that the reunion culminate on the night of July 4 "with a great display of Fire Works and a great chorus to sing 'The Star Spangled Banner' and 'Auld Lang Syne.'" Samuel M. Bushman, Jr., an attorney and the delegate from New Mexico who had been born and raised in Gettysburg, declared, "I believe the celebration should be such that it will bring to Gettysburg more people who have the anti-military spirit, than those who

25 Fiftieth Anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg Commission Minutes, 13, Record Group 25.27, Box 1, PSA. Hereafter cited as Commission Minutes.

26 "The Great Anniversary," *Gettysburg Compiler*, Oct. 19, 1910.

27 Commission Minutes, 13.

28 Ibid., 13.

believe in the virtues of war. I agree most heartily with the suggestion of Genl. Sickles, that it is now time that there be dedicated upon the Gettysburg Field a great and grand monument to Peace; and that should be the concern of the National Government."[29]

Sickles himself wrote, "I would like to see the veterans of both sides—confederate and union soldiers surviving—meet at Gettysburg on this occasion. . . . If we could have both sides at Gettysburg, in goodly numbers, it would make the occasion historical—a national love feast. . . . By the way, should we not ask Congress for an appropriation?—at least for the Peace monument, of which I have before spoken?—and perhaps something added for expenses, music, printing, and a volume of all our proceedings, speeches, etc., a copy of which should be in every public library in the United States, including schools."[30]

Martin G. Brumbaugh, the superintendent of schools in Philadelphia who was serving as delegate from Puerto Rico (and would later be elected governor of Pennsylvania) submitted a professionally printed brochure in which he outlined a detailed proposal for the four days of the celebration, each of which was to have a specific theme and focus. On July 1, the veterans themselves would gather "to commemorate the close of all Sectional strife and the beginning of an era of Fraternity and Brotherhood on the part of all who participated in the memorable battle of fifty years ago." July 2 would be military day and feature a grand parade of "at least 10,000" active-duty servicemen and 5,000 state militia, reviewed by the president and the secretaries of war and the navy. The states would hold their individual exercises on July 3, and on July 4 the celebration would reach its climax with the dedication of the peace memorial by the president, before an audience that would include—in addition to the veterans, of course, who seemed to be shrinking into the background of this scenario—both houses of Congress, the justices of the Supreme Court, the governors of every state and territory, and "a male chorus of 5,000 voices massed and uniformed as a living flag and singing national patriotic songs."[31]

The minutes of the commission do not note how this ambitious proposal was received, but at their next meeting, on December 20, the members voted to appoint a four-man executive committee and charged it with preparing a plan and program for the consideration of the commission and its state representatives. The tentative

29 Letter, John R. King to Louis Wagner, Oct. 31, 1910; Letter, Samuel M. Bushman, Jr. to Louis Wagner, Nov. 10, 1910, Commission Correspondence, RG 25.24, Box 2.

30 Letter, Daniel E. Sickles to Louis Wagner, Nov. 23, 1910, Commission Correspondence, RG 25.24, Box 2.

31 Letter, Martin G. Brumbaugh to Louis Wagner, Nov. 5, 1910, Commission Correspondence, RG 25.24, Box 2.

program sketched out by Wagner in a letter to newly elected Pennsylvania Gov. John K. Tener a few weeks later followed generally the lines of Brumbaugh's four-day proposal, albeit without some of the more eye-popping specifics concerning the size of the parade and the number of singers in the chorus. But Wagner was quite clear that the commission expected the celebration would culminate in "the laying of the cornerstone of a permanent Peace Memorial, to be authorized and erected by the Government of the United States."

"We shall request the General Government to furnish the camp equipage that may be found necessary," Wagner wrote, "and the several States to provide transportation for the veteran soldiers residing within their jurisdiction. We shall ask the Gettysburg National Park Commission to locate the various camps, and shall invoke the aid of Pennsylvania to defray the transportation expenses of her own surviving soldiers, and the actual cost incurred in providing the chorus and the officially invited officers of the State and General Government."[32]

When the executive committee, composed of Wagner, R. Dale Benson, J. Richards Boyle, and Lewis T. Brown, who was elected chair, held its first meeting in Philadelphia on December 30, it authorized Wagner "to confer with the officers of the Railway Companies centering at Gettysburg regarding the matter of improved transportation to that place; and also to communicate with the Citizens' Committee of Gettysburg, suggesting a conference between that Committee and the Commission on the subject of transportation and other matters of public accommodation."[33]

Brown died in March 1911 and was not replaced on the executive committee; Wagner succeeded him as chair. By the time the next meeting of the full commission convened in July, the Pennsylvania legislature had authorized further expenditures up to a total of $250,00 for the semi-centennial celebration, which, assuming the federal government set up and ran the camp itself, would be more than sufficient to cover the costs of programming, transportation for the state's veterans, and accommodations for VIPs. There had been little other activity, however, and the minutes begin to suggest some concern on that score. On a motion from Benson, "it was ordered that at its next meeting the Commission should invite authorized representatives of the various railroads and railways centering in Gettysburg,

32 Letter, Louis Wagner to John K. Tener, Feb. 17, 1911, Commission Correspondence, RG 25.24, Box 2. Tener was born in County Tyrone, Ireland, and pitched for two seasons with the National League's Chicago White Stockings (later the Cubs) before going on to a successful career in business. He was elected president of the National League in December 1913 and juggled those duties with his final year as governor.

33 Commission Minutes, 16.

and the Gettysburg Citizens' Committee, to meet with it, to confer respecting transportation, entertainment, and kindred matters."[34]

Three more months went by, and in October, Boyle moved that the members of the Gettysburg National Park Commission be invited to meet and confer with the commission. A further motion from Benson authorized the executive committee to employ a field secretary and a press agent "to aid in extending and publishing the work of the Commission."[35]

As 1911 drew to a close, the meetings with the citizens' committee, the park commission, and the railroad representatives, first called for a year earlier, still had not been scheduled. Lieutenant Colonel Lewis E. Beitler of the National Guard of Pennsylvania had been appointed field secretary for the Pennsylvania Commission and he, in turn, was dickering with William A. Connor of the Associated Press, who had expressed interest in taking on the press agent job for a salary of $100 per month. The commissioners wanted to spend no more than $50, and he was ultimately hired at that salary for a period of 10 months, to commence January 1, 1912. Beitler was also endeavoring to arrange a joint session with the members of the congressional committee, who had not met with the commission in more than a year.

Meanwhile, the idea of confining the celebration to four days, to say nothing of the desultory pace at which preparations seemed to be proceeding, was beginning to cause some uneasiness among the citizens of Gettysburg. The front page of the December 27 edition of the *Compiler* sounded the alarm:

> With hundreds of thousands of veterans as proposed guests, it follows that many of these guests will bring a wife, a daughter, a son, a granddaughter or grandson, and the guests and their immediate relatives will be a tremendous throng such as Gettysburg has never seen since the great battle. . . .
>
> Limited to survivors of the battle and as many more of the general public gives a grand total of 100,000 which is more than likely to be swollen to two, three, four or many times that number . . .
>
> The two railroads entering the town are single track roads and these two roads with their well known ability to handle crowds can not carry more than 20,000 a day, take care and return the cars and provide for a freight traffic such as this big a throng will require. . . .

34 Ibid., 20.

35 Ibid., 22.

> Next, if every one of the 1,000 residences in Gettysburg were thrown open to the visitors, if every public place was prepared for their lodging, this town would be crowded to its utmost capacity with 15,000 people . . .
>
> Again, the water system of Gettysburg that has successfully taken care of encampments forming a community of four times the population of the town might be able to provide for 50,000 or more but not for hundreds of thousands for a four days' celebration. . . .
>
> [T]he physical impossibility of a four days' celebration demands an anniversary of such length as the circumstances require, two weeks, three weeks, or as long as the Gettysburg campaign covered, two months.[36]

A number of local residents also weighed in. J. Frank Hartman of the Gettysburg Department Store declared that "preparations to provide provisions for an enormous four days' crowd would be such a plunge that it would be doubtful whether any of our business men would be willing to take the risks. To stock up to meet the emergency and run the chance of a fizzle of a four days' show was not an inviting prospect."

"I would say it is impossible to carry out the program as tentatively outlined," said J. A. Cox, local agent for the Reading Railroad. "There are almost insurmountable difficulties in transporting such a large number to and from Gettysburg. . . . I think four to six weeks would be required to hold the celebration as planned."

Robert C. Miller was secretary of the Gettysburg Board of Trade and proprietor of the Jennie Wade House, a popular Gettysburg tourist attraction. He also was editor of the Republican weekly, *The Star and Sentinel*, but he crossed party and competitive lines to share his concerns with the readers of the *Compiler*, the Democratic weekly. "It is a very grave question in my mind whether these veterans should be taken care of in tents. Hot tents, close quarters near the ground, with risk of storms might produce a condition disastrous to the health of men of their age."

William Beales, the town's postmaster, voiced the unspoken concern on many minds that "a four days' celebration would be such a crowded, unsatisfactory thing that the town would be more hurt than helped, [and] that the visitors would leave with impressions that might keep them from ever returning."[37]

* * *

36 "50th Anniversary Plans," *Gettysburg Compiler*, Dec. 27, 1911.

37 "Four Day Anniversary of the 50th Anniversary Is a Physical Impossibility," *Gettysburg Compiler*, Jan. 3, 1912.

On January 11, 1912, more than a year after the executive committee had authorized Wagner to reach out to the town, J. A. Singmaster of the citizens' committee finally met with the members of the Pennsylvania Commission, along with Senator Oliver, chairman of the joint congressional committee, John Nicholson of the Gettysburg National Park Commission, and the commanders of the GAR and UCV, in Washington. He read a lengthy communication from the committee, which outlined its concerns about the available water supply, transportation, accommodations, sanitation, medical facilities, and public safety. Based on the town's past experience with reunions, he estimated the probable number of visitors, veteran and non-veteran, at "not less than seventy-five thousand" and broached the idea of extending the celebration for a full month, "which was actually the period of the Gettysburg campaign in 1863." Several large tents could be erected at different points around the battlefield, which "great orators, singers and bands might visit in turn" during the course of the month.

"We pledge our hearty cooperation to make the celebration a success," Singmaster declared, "but we feel that the great project must in no sense depend for execution on our feeble efforts. Its accomplishment rests on the wisdom and the available resources of the Commission. We have no fears of its success, provided the seriousness and magnitude of the celebration be properly apprehended."[38]

Wagner made no formal acknowledgment of Singmaster's statement, which covers five full pages in the meeting minutes, but did report on the commission's work to date, including the broad outline of the four-day celebration, the appointment of state representatives, and Pennsylvania's appropriation of $250,000. He then asked the members of the joint congressional committee to help secure passage of legislation directing the U.S. Army to lay out, equip, supply, and operate the camps that would house the veterans during the celebration and authorizing the federal government to take the lead in securing a design for, and funding the construction of, "a permanent Peace Memorial [that] shall take the form of an imposing gateway, or entrance to the Gettysburg National Military Park . . . signifying National Unity and Peace" and topped with a heroic statue of Abraham Lincoln reading the Gettysburg Address. "It is our judgment," Wagner declared, "that such a work as this would fittingly express the spirit and meaning of the proposed observance of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg; that its cost would not exceed an expenditure such as Congress would willingly authorize—say, a maximum of $500,000; and that standing as a Benedictus above this great bivouac of our patriot dead it would be, for all time, an eloquent object lesson in American unity, valor and good-will. We regard the erection of this

38 Commission Minutes, 33-34.

memorial as by far the most important part of the proposed celebration of this anniversary, and we hope . . . that such measures will be taken through you by the National Legislature as will guarantee the laying of the cornerstone of the structure by the President of the United States, at high noon, on July 4, 1913."[39]

Had the veterans taken a closer look at the composition of the Congress in 1912, they might have been less confident in their assertion that it "would willingly authorize" $500,000 for the design and construction of a peace memorial. Twenty years earlier, when their political power and influence in the life of the nation was approaching its zenith, 178 Union and Confederate veterans were serving in Congress: fully half the Senate and four out of every 10 members of the House. By 1912, there were just 23: one senator out of 10 and three congressmen out of 100. A half-million dollars for yet another monument on a field already crowded with them was not going to be an easy lift.[40]

In April, the members of the joint congressional committee shepherded through the House and Senate a concurrent resolution directing the secretary of war to prepare a detailed report on the logistics of operating a camp for 40,000 aging veterans—a seat-of-the-pants estimate, but the only one offered by the commission—from drinking water and sanitation needs to tents, field kitchens, and medical facilities. [41] "This resolution of Congress was in line with the suggestions of the Citizens' Committee as conveyed by Dr. J. A. Singmaster to the Pennsylvania Commission [in January] and ignored by them," the *Gettysburg Compiler* noted with satisfaction, and echoed "what the Compiler has been advocating for many months."[42]

The report that was presented to Congress on May 10 estimated the total cost of running the camp at just over $358,000, a figure later pared to $300,000.[43]

That same week, the three-man executive committee of the Pennsylvania Commission finally met with representatives of the two railroads serving Gettysburg—the Western Maryland and the Philadelphia and Reading—who estimated that their combined maximum daily capacity was 18,500 passengers. They also stressed that in order to achieve that maximum "it would be necessary to have the expected traffic gathered at main points in the respective states, and

39 Ibid., 27-28.

40 These numbers were compiled by reviewing the Wikipedia biographies of every member of the 52nd and 62nd Congresses.

41 The largest reunion of Union and Confederate veterans to date, at the dedication of the Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Park in September 1895, had drawn about 25,000.

42 "50th Anniversary Plans," *Gettysburg Compiler*, Apr. 10, 1912.

43 *Pennsylvania Commission Report*, 12.

forwarded thence by special trains and on special schedules to the final transfer points on the Reading and Western Maryland Roads. Otherwise . . . there would be danger of congestion and failure."[44]

Meanwhile, tensions were growing between Wagner and the town of Gettysburg. "Our work of arranging the Fiftieth Celebration of the Battle of Gettysburg is hindered," he wrote to Singmaster, "and the people interested with me [are] annoyed by the general circulation of one of your papers which seems to have reached the conclusion that it is its business to see that this Celebration does not take place. Would it not be well for you to call a meeting of your Committee to consider this subject and to determine that so far as the people of Gettysburg are concerned they will cooperate with our Commission, instead of endeavoring to spread abroad the impression that your city is not large enough to take care of the Celebration?"[45]

"The cry that the town cannot handle the crowds has reached New York," noted the *Gettysburg Times*, "and had such an effect, according to General Wagner, that the matter of withdrawing the state appropriation to send veterans here was seriously considered. Other states may view the matter in the same light if the agitation is continued."[46]

"The policy of the head of the Commission of doing nothing along the many practical details of the event," the *Compiler* shot back, "would have made the celebration a monumental failure, if the Congressional Committee had not realized the wisdom of the suggestions of our people and had them studied, with the result that the success of the celebration is assured by the transfer of all authority over the details to the Secretary of War."[47]

As the criticism in the Gettysburg press mounted, Wagner—in a dynamic that will be familiar to any public relations person—became increasingly frustrated with W. A. Connor, the commission's press agent. He complained repeatedly to the other executive committee members about Connor's performance and declared that "his services to date were unsatisfactory."[48]

Whatever headaches the editors of the *Compiler* and the citizens' committee were causing Wagner must have paled to insignificance with the arrival of two letters from Senator Oliver of the joint congressional committee. The first informed him that the committee had drawn up a tentative bill, based on the report of the

44 Commission Minutes, 57.

45 Ibid., 58.

46 "Might Hurt the 50th Anniversary," *Gettysburg Times*, May 8, 1912.

47 "Grand Army of Republic," *Gettysburg Compiler*, Jun. 12, 1912.

48 Commission Minutes, 53, 83.

secretary of war concerning the cost of the camp, and "was willing to recommend an appropriation of $150,000 by the National Government, provided a similar amount be contributed by the State of Pennsylvania out of the $250,000 pledged by her Legislature for this Celebration." The second declared, "If this is done I will prepare the necessary bill and introduce it just as soon as I hear from you, but, if immediate action is not taken, I want to say plainly that neither I nor the Congressional Committee will be responsible for the failure of this scheme." The commission also was advised to defer the question of the Peace Memorial until the next session of Congress.[49]

The letters arrived just ahead of the second general conference of the commission and its state representatives, which had been scheduled for May 27–29, 1912, in Washington, to enable the state delegates to lobby their respective congressional delegations in support of the reunion appropriation. Only now, instead of seeking support for $300,000 to fully fund the costs of the camp plus another $500,000 for the peace memorial, the goal had been reduced by 80 percent.

"I am feeling very sore and disappointed over the action of the Congressional Committee," wrote Dale Benson of the executive committee. "I feel like a bird with its wings clipped."[50] "[T]he indisposition of that Committee seriously to consider the proposition of the Commission for the erection of a substantial and worthy Peace Memorial, by the General Government . . . has likewise disappointed me," admitted fellow executive committee member J. Richards Boyle. "In my opinion this proposed Memorial is by far the most important feature of the celebration which the Commission has suggested."[51]

A few weeks later, Boyle resigned from the Pennsylvania Commission.

* * *

When the *Compiler*'s editors got wind of Boyle's resignation, they laid it squarely at the feet of their nemesis: "General Louis Wagner, as Chairman of the Commission, has been autocratic and often unpleasant in insisting upon having his way. The Commission, composed of men advanced in years naturally have no desire to antagonize him and let him have his way. This has led straight to a do-nothing policy with a necessary day of reckoning ahead. The present condition of affairs must be some unpreparedness which can not help but reflect upon the

49 Letter, George T. Oliver to Louis Wagner, May 17, 1912, Commission Correspondence, RG 25.24, Box 2.

50 Letter, R. Dale Benson to Lewis Beitler, June 1, 1912, Commission Correspondence, RG 25.24, Box 2.

51 Letter, J. Richards Boyle to John K. Tener, June 26, 1912, Commission Correspondence, RG 25.24, Box 2.

Commission and it is not surprising that this should result in a resignation. The surprise is that all the Commissioners do not resign and allow their Chairman to face the reckoning for which in a great measure he is responsible."[52]

To fill Boyle's place on the commission, Governor Tener appointed James Martinus Schoonmaker, a Union cavalry veteran, Medal of Honor winner, successful businessman and railroad executive, and one of Pittsburgh's wealthiest men. In notifying Wagner, the governor admitted that the appointment violated "the sentiment which has heretofore controlled such selections, in appointing only those who participated in the engagement. However, this sentiment should not control, in my opinion, when we can command the service of a man of Col. Schoonmaker's ability."[53]

Congress finally passed the $150,000 appropriation in late August. It explicitly gave the war department full responsibility for the establishment and operation of the reunion camp, leaving the Pennsylvania Commission in charge of "the order of exercises during the celebration" and, by default, anything having to do with the accommodation of non-veteran visitors and the transportation of tens of thousands of people to and from Gettysburg. With the appropriation passed, the joint congressional committee considered its work complete. "The concurrent resolution . . . specifically defined [our] duties to be the recommendation of such legislation as might be necessary to enable the United States Government to participate in the celebration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg," Senator Oliver wrote to Wagner. "No further duty was imposed on the commission [sic] and I therefore cannot construe the resolution any other way than to regard its mission as terminated."[54]

Summer turned to fall and at last, with some prodding from Governor Tener, the commission met on October 1 for the first time since the second general conference in May. Benson, the only remaining member of the executive committee besides Wagner, again raised the critical question of rail transportation, and the urgent necessity of "the early appointment of an experienced and expert railroad man of recognized ability and standing in his profession to be the Master of Transportation, with supreme authority in all matters pertaining thereto." His motion that such a position be created, and the executive committee be authorized and directed to appoint someone to fill it, passed unanimously.[55]

52 "Anniversary Official Resigns," *Gettysburg Compiler*, Aug. 21, 1912.

53 Letter, John K. Tener to Louis Wagner, Sept. 7, 1912, quoted in Commission Minutes, 88.

54 Letter, George T. Oliver to Louis Wagner, Jan. 23, 1913, Commission Correspondence, RG 25.24, Box 2.

55 Commission Minutes, 89.

The motion met the same fate as many that had preceded it. Wagner took no action, and when the commission next met, on December 13 in Gettysburg with Governor Tener in attendance, the position remained unfilled.

The commissioners were losing patience. Following Schoonmaker's presentation of a detailed report on his meetings with the senior management of the Reading and Western Maryland railroads, including maps and blueprints of the work they had undertaken, at the cost of several hundred thousand dollars, to expand the capacity of their Gettysburg facilities, the commissioners unanimously referred "the entire subject of increased railroad accommodations at Gettysburg, the appointment of a Master of Transportation, the securing of reduced Gettysburg rates for the Veterans, etc." to him "as a Sub-Committee on Transportation, with full power to act." It also authorized Schoonmaker to add to his subcommittee whatever additional members he deemed best, whether they were part of the Pennsylvania Commission or not.[56]

In turn, Schoonmaker suggested the establishment of a half-dozen additional subcommittees, on entertainment, invitations, and other critical topics, whose composition also would not be restricted to members of the Pennsylvania Commission. Wagner objected vehemently, but other commissioners supported the idea, as did Governor Tener, who spoke at length of the importance of the reunion and how "the eyes of the entire country were upon Pennsylvania." He framed the issue as delicately as he could, saying that Wagner should not be allowed, "however willing and able, to burden himself with the vast amount of work, every day growing larger and larger, nor should the present Commissioners seek likewise to do it all themselves."[57]

Wagner, who alone seemed serenely unconcerned that the opening of the reunion was barely six months away, was unmoved. Such an approach would be a mistake, he insisted, and in any case a decision to completely alter the plans and organization of the commission should not be undertaken lightly; it should be deferred until the next meeting in January. Governor Tener asked for and received Wagner's assurance that the question would be settled at the January meeting, and on that less than satisfactory note, the commission adjourned. Its third general conference was scheduled for January 23, 1913.

On December 21, Dale Benson resigned. The executive committee of the Pennsylvania Commission was now officially a one-man band.

* * *

56 Ibid., 101.

57 Ibid., 104.

When the commissioners met with Governor Tener on January 23, just prior to the opening of the third general conference in Philadelphia, several things quickly became apparent. First, the army officers detailed to plan and lay out the great camp on 280 acres of battlefield land leased from local farmers by the war department had that work well in hand, and Schoonmaker was working closely and effectively with the railroads on the transportation question. So far, so good. On the other hand, the $250,000 appropriated by the Pennsylvania legislature was not going to be sufficient to cover the state's share of the camp expense, plus the cost of transportation for all Pennsylvania veterans to and from the reunion, plus the cost of accommodating and entertaining hundreds of dignitaries and special guests. This was to say nothing of providing any of the support the citizens of Gettysburg were begging for in terms of additional police, hospital, and sanitation resources, as well as thousands of cots to provide temporary accommodations in public buildings and private homes for the expected throng of non-veteran visitors.

Perhaps most alarming, Wagner revealed that he had not yet invited President-elect Woodrow Wilson or any of the other dignitaries the commission was counting on to attend, and that none of the details of the program for the four days of the reunion had been finalized. He suggested to the other commissioners that "the opinions of the Representatives in attendance upon the General Conference might first be obtained thereon."

In executive session, Governor Tener reopened the question of establishing subcommittees, which had been tabled at the last meeting. Wagner remained adamantly opposed and Schoonmaker was just as firmly in favor, stressing that they were the only way to accomplish "the vast amount of work that now confronts the Commission, and that will daily grow larger." Tener reminded Wagner of the two resignations he had already received, warned that others were pending, and stated bluntly that the subcommittees must be formed "if success and not failure is to result." At last, the old general gave way.[58]

The public sessions of the third general conference were no less contentious. On behalf of the citizens' committee, J. A. Singmaster continued to press for assistance for the town. As usual, this was met with derision from Wagner who, according to the *Gettysburg Times*, "declared that we are neither patriotic nor progressive enough to sacrifice a little to make the celebration a success." "When Dr. Singmaster said there were a number of buildings in town like the Court House, school houses, etc. that could be converted into sleeping quarters if 5,000 cots would be provided

58 Ibid., 111, 118.

for the purpose," the *Star and Sentinel* added, "he was interrupted by Gen. Wagner shouting 'Get the money and put the buildings in shape.'"[59]

Editor Robert Miller of the *Star and Sentinel* had had enough, and in the January 29 edition he let Wagner have both barrels:

> General Wagner's remarks may be taken to indicate a disposition to unload the responsibility for possible failure on Gettysburg and he may as well be told now that the town does not propose to be the official scapegoat to relieve him.
>
> If it is General Wagner's desire to provoke an exchange of opinion he may understand that Gettysburg considers a man of his pugnacious and irritable temperament a positive calamity in a position in which he can control the preparations for a great celebration like this and in which he can insult at will the other parties interested who are compelled to appear before him. . . .
>
> Whatever is the reason, General Wagner has shown a spirit of positive animus toward the town that was manifest before any opposition to him or any of his plans had developed here. He has taken advantage of every opportunity in public speaking to display that sentiment. His domineering attitude has caused several of the more active members of the Commission to resign, and it has impaired the efficiency of the efforts of the others. His conduct in this matter considered, as well as his feelings of hostility and bias toward this community, leads to the conviction that the successful issue of the work with which the Commission is charged, depends upon the immediate resignation of its Chairman.[60]

Governor Tener had come to the same conclusion. Days after the conference ended, he asked for Wagner's resignation. The general, obstreperous to the last, told his fellow commissioners that he would "retire" from the commission on March 1. He asked that, upon his retirement, the commission's scrapbook be presented to him and, with what must have been a mixture of incredulity and relief, the commissioners readily agreed.[61]

When the news broke, an unnamed member of the commission told the *Gettysburg Times*:

> General Wagner's methods as an executive were displeasing almost from the start, and at times threatened to impair the commission's usefulness. A man of indomitable courage and marked will-power, and evidently feeling that in his capacity as president his wishes

59 "Slap for Gettysburg," *Gettysburg Times*, Jan. 25, 1913; "50th Anniversary Plans," Gettysburg Compiler, Jan. 29, 1913.

60 "Gettysburg vs. Gen. Wagner," *Gettysburg Star and Sentinel*, Jan. 29, 1913.

61 Commission Minutes, 121.

> were entitled to more consideration than those of other members, he frequently assumed an arbitrary attitude. Of kindly heart, the general is given to abruptness of expression. Not infrequently members of the commission feel humiliated by the general's autocratic air during conferences of the commission.[62]

"With the passing of General Wagner from the Commission," declared the *Compiler*, "it is believed that the situation is cleared for quick, and as thorough work as can be done in the next four months."[63]

There was plenty of work to do.

62 "Wagner Out But Did Not Resign," *Gettysburg Times*, Mar. 1, 1913.

63 "Wagner Out," *Gettysburg Compiler*, Mar. 5, 1913.