

Lee Escapes From Gettysburg

By MERTON T. AKERS
UPI Correspondent

Lee stole a march on Meade after the battle of Gettysburg.

All day on the Fourth of July 1863 the Army of the Potomac, commanded by Maj. Gen. George Gordon Meade, and the Army of Northern Virginia, under Gen. Robert E. Lee, lay exhausted on the parallel hills of Cemetery Ridge and Seminary Ridge at Gettysburg after three days of fighting. Both were content to call it a day and to sort out the wreckage, human and material, of the Civil War's bloodiest battle.

The weather was rainy. A smog lay over the battlefield,

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part gun-smoke, part natural fog. It was no day for fighting and everyone seemed grateful. (Tomorrow the first of the never-ending line of tourists would arrive at the Gettysburg battleground on an excursion train from Harrisburg, Pa.)

Lee and his army were in a tight spot. He had lost the biggest and climatic battle of the war — a fact not fully realized at the time. But as he had done at Antietam (Sharpsburg), Lee defiantly held his army in battle position for a full day in the face of superior numbers before he began to retreat on the night of July 4-5 through the mountains of south central Pennsylvania and western Maryland toward the Potomac.

Short of Ammunition

As the crow flies he had about 35 miles to go to reach the river at Williamsport, Md., about five miles southwest of Hagerstown, Md. He was short of ammunition and provisions. He was burdened with wagon trains of wounded. His losses at Gettysburg — about one-third of his force — and straggling and desertion had thinned his retreating army to little more than 35,000 men.

His problem was to reach and cross the river before Meade, moving parallel, could cut him off. His chances of doing so seemed slim. The Potomac was running high and the rains were making it higher.

Meade moved his army cautiously and slowly. He was under orders from Washington to fight on the defensive and to keep his army between Lee and the capital. He had two choices. One was to chase Lee's army west through the mountain passes, which likely would be fortified and defended. The second was to slant to the southwest through



Maryland and cut off Lee around Hagerstown.

On the basis of scanty information about the position of Lee's army, he chose the second route but lost a full day in making the decision. Lee made the most of Meade's delay and pushed his army hard through the mud and rain.

Suffering of the Confederate wounded in the convoy of wagons was intense.

Brig. Gen. John D. Imboden, commanding the convoy, described the trip:

"The column moved rapidly, considering the rough roads and the darkness, and from almost every wagon issued heart-rending wails of agony. . . . Scarcely one in a hundred had received adequate surgical aid. . . . Many of the wounded. . . had been without food for 36 hours. Their torn and bloody clothing, matted and hardened, was rasping the tender, inflamed and still oozing wounds. Very few of the wagons had even a layer of straw in them and all were without springs."

Convoy Attacked

The convoy was attacked several times by Federal cavalry. At one point citizens set upon the wagons with axes and cut the spokes of the wheels. At another point 100 wagons were captured.

When the convoy reached Williamsport, Imboden forced every family in town to cook for the wounded.

By July 7 Meade's army was slogging southwest through the mud and rain along the same roads in Maryland that they had marched north over in the dust only a week or so before.

That day Meade rode into Frederick, Md., where he had assumed command of the army, to the plaudits of the loyal citizens and went to

a hotel for a bath. Then he wrote to his wife:

"From the time I took command (July 28) until today (July 1) I . . . have not had a regular night's rest, and many nights not a wink of sleep, and for several days did not even wash my hands and face, no regular food, and all the time in a great state of mental anxiety. Indeed, I think I have lived as much in the time as in the last thirty years."

He also asked her to send him two pairs of eyeglasses.

Wagon trains from Westminister, Md., the Federal supply depot, brought in new uniforms, shoes and other equipment and important supplies of ammunition.

The Federals pushed on over the mountains west of Frederick and by July 11 began to skirmish with the Confederates south of Hagerstown above the old Antietam battlefield.

Washington was prodding Meade to hurry and strike Lee's army on the north side of the Potomac. President Lincoln applied the spur.

President's Anxious

Maj. Gen. Henry W. Halleck, overall army commander, telegraphed Meade:

"The President is urgent and anxious that your Army should move against him (Lee) by forced marches."

That was what Meade was doing but his caution and lack of information slowed him down.

"My Army is and has been making forced marches short of rations and barefooted," Meade replied testily.

On July 12 Meade had his army placed around Williamsport for what he hoped would be the decisive blow. Late in

the day he was ready to attack when a heavy thunderstorm broke. About supper-time the attack was called off.

Meade met with his corps commanders that night. He favored attack the next day. Only two of the commanders went along with their chief, Maj. Gen. James S. Wadsworth of the I Corps and Maj. Gen. O. O. Howard of the XI Corps.

The ultimate decision of the council of war was for more reconnoitering.

The day before Lee had formed his army in an arc protecting the river crossing site at Williamsport. The Potomac was still too high to wade.

Lee handled the positioning of part of the army himself.

"I never before, and never afterward, saw him as I thought visibly anxious over an approaching action," Col. E. P. Alexander, artillery officer, wrote, "but I did on this occasion."

All day on the 13th Meade sent his troops probing into the Confederate lines in keeping with the council of war decision the night before.

Too Late For Action

Late in the day General Howard sent word that he feared "Lee was getting away."

But by then it was too late for action.

Meade determined to strike the next day, the 14th.

He did, but Lee was gone — he had crossed the river on the night of July 13-14. Some of his men went over on an improvised pontoon bridge covered with branches to deaden the sound of marching feet. It was a rick-

ety bridge but it was good enough to carry two corps and the artillery. The other corps waded, the tall men standing in the deep part of the river and passing along their shorter comrades.

Only a small rear guard was cut off and captured.

Lee had escaped from Maryland again, thanks to the one day the Federals had dallied as the river receded.

Springfield Man Dies Aboard Boat

Reedsport—(UP)—A heart attack claimed the life of Gain Robert Ingle, 56, of Springfield Saturday as he was deep sea fishing off Winchester Bay.

Ingle was fishing from an 18-foot outboard-powered boat when he was stricken. Two companions, George Sturgis of Eugene and Glen Taylor of Springfield, brought the boat back into the bay under Coast Guard escort.

A doctor pronounced Ingle dead here.

Agents Search For More Counterfeiters

San Francisco—(UP)—Secret service agents, working with soft-spoken, machine-line efficiency, continued their search Saturday for more members of the nation's largest counterfeit operation.

A series of quick arrests last week revealed that millions of dollars in bogus bills, described by agents as "near perfect," were run off on a small offset press in the basement of the girls' gymnasium at Alameda State college across the bay.

The Family Council

Editor's note: The Family Council consists of a judge, psychiatrist, three clergymen, three editors and a women's editor. Each article is a summary of a family disagreement presented to the Council. The Council deals with problems, major and minor, encountered by guidance counselors and social workers. Edited by Mrs. Alma Deany. (Copyright by General Features Corp.)

Mrs. B. Y. — At 72 he wants to buy the house we live in.

Mrs. B. Y. — After twenty years here it spells comfort to me.

Mrs. B. Y. — We are a retired couple with modest savings and an adequate income to continue living as we do now. The one-family house we rent is comfortable and within our means, but my husband would prefer to own it. That's a wild idea, what with school taxes and other charges going up. We have no school children. Why tie up our funds?

Mrs. B. Y. — Every nook and cranny of the house just fits us by now. It would be torture to have to move. My wife just doesn't want to face the fact that if we don't buy the place, the owner will put it on the market and we'll be forced out. How will we ever find a place half as comfortable, near our friends? And we're so proud of the garden.

The Council — Is there anything endless, Mr. Y., except time itself? Granting then that your present idyllic setup can't continue indefinitely, the question is what's your best move to minimize the jolts when they come? We feel that buying the house you live in isn't it. You may be preserving those comfy corners for cushioning old bones, but you'll be taking on twinges where none now exist — namely new headaches. There's more to home ownership than holding the deed. Even though you use your savings to pay cash and have a mortgage interest to worry about, you enter the demon-world of taxes, insurance premiums, maintenance

bills, and assessments. While this may not faze you at 72, it may turn into a Dracula-monster in five or ten years. . . . Inasmuch as you are free, why not look around? There must be other nice neighborhoods. Have an alternate house-and-garden up your mental sleeve. Any lucky landlord who gets you for a tenant should prize the rent in return for what you, your green thumb, and your artistry do for his land.

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HEAD FOR HILLS

Numata, Japan — (UP) — So many Japanese mountain climbers swarmed Sunday over Mt. Tanigawa that police with walkie-talkies helped direct the traffic. With the climbing season at its summer peak, an estimated 5,500 persons were on the slopes of the 6,380-foot mountain 70 miles northwest of Tokyo. The mountain has claimed eight lives this year.

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CLIFF ROBERTSON



The Man Who Portrays J. F. K.

The actor who is playing the President of the United States is a young man who turned to the sea as a youth to escape the life of an orphan.

Read the fascinating profile by Peer J. Oppenheimer of Cliff Robertson who is finally making it big by portraying John F. Kennedy as a young naval officer in the film "PT 109" in the coming

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