

War Tide Turned In 3-Day Battle

By H. D. QUIGG
United Press International
The great three-day battle of Gettysburg, turning point in the Civil War, was fought just 100 years ago this week with appalling casualties on both sides.

The rain stopped as the ceremony began. Sen. Simeon D. Fess of Ohio, acting chairman of the National Meade Memorial Commission, presided and spoke first. After an invocation, Governor Fisher presented the monument to the nation.

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First Day

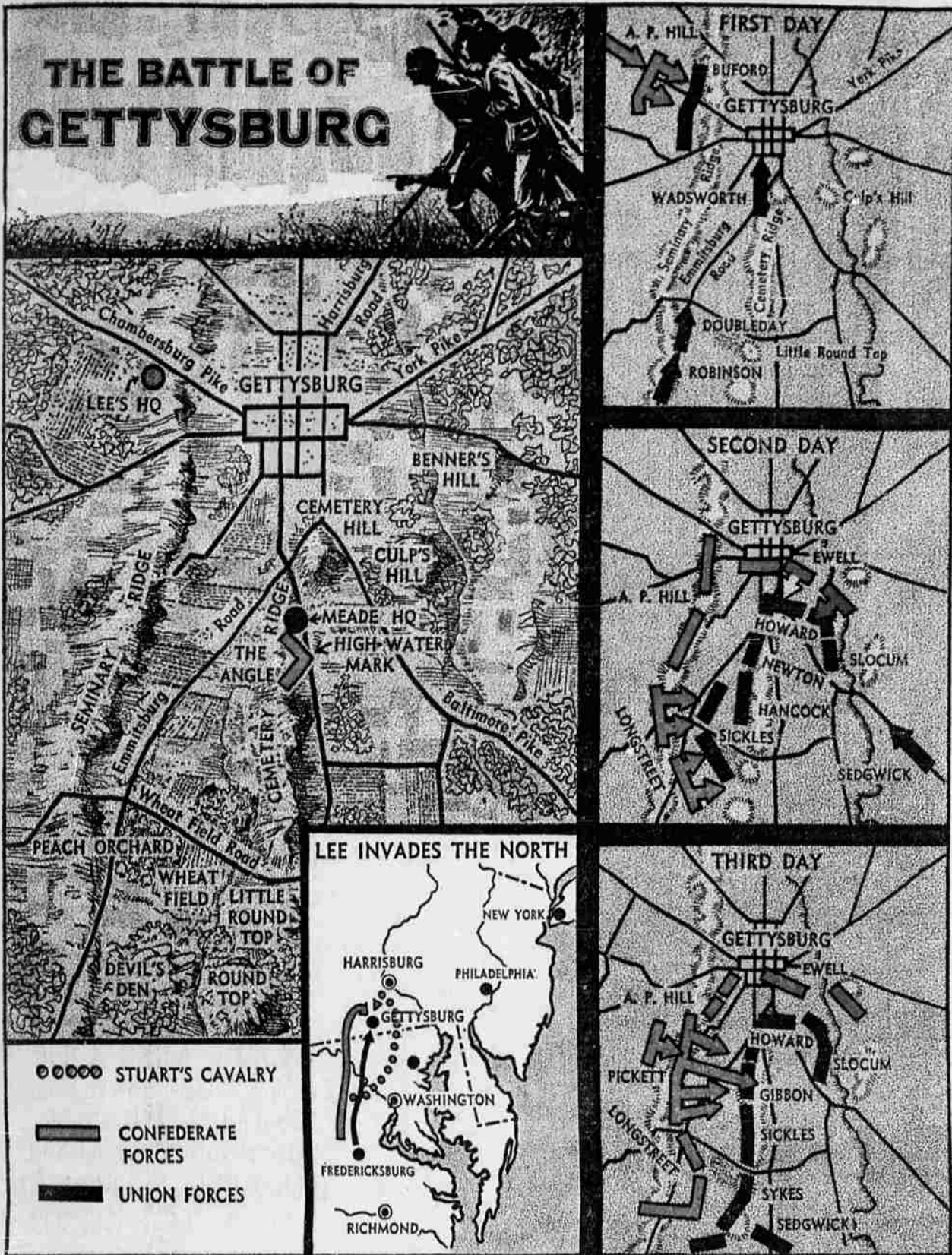
Fighting began on the morning of July 1 when Buford's Federal cavalry encountered elements of Confederate Gen. A. P. Hill's corps, who were moving into Gettysburg looking for stores. Reinforcements began to arrive on both sides but Confederates, with superior strength, pushed toward Seminary Ridge. After a brief respite, the afternoon's fighting saw the Confederates force the Federals south through the town and onto Cemetery Ridge. Union troops on Seminary Ridge also withdrew to Cemetery Ridge. The first day had been a Confederate victory but Meade's entire army was now assembled and digging in on the high ground.

Second Day

In the absence of J. E. B. Stuart's cavalry, on July 2, Lee lacked complete information on the Federals' strength and disposition. Against the advice of Longstreet, he attempted to turn the Union flanks by sending Ewell's corps against the Union right on and around Culp's Hill and hitting the Union left, in front of Little Round Top, with Longstreet's corps. Bitter fighting took place in "Sickles' Salient"—the Peach Orchard, Devil's Den and Wheat Field. Sickles' corps was thrown back but poor coordination between Confederate attacks along the whole line enabled Meade to parry each one in turn.

Third Day

July 3 dawned with Confederate morale still high. Lee, reinforced by Pickett's division, determined to assault the Federal center. His intention was guessed by Meade. At about 1:45 p.m., 10 brigades—15,000 men—commanded by Pickett, Pettigrew and Trimble, advanced in parade formation across the mile of fields separating Seminary and Cemetery Ridges. A few men reached the Federal line at the Angle—the "high tide of the Confederacy"—but were repulsed. The Union forces had won a great victory but were, in Meade's judgment, too badly mauled to follow it up. Northern rejoicing was tempered by the fact of Lee's escape back to Virginia.



The Strategy Behind Lee's Invasion of the North

All roads led to Gettysburg in the last days of June, 1863. There was nothing important about the little Pennsylvania town; no one in either the Confederate or Union camps was planning a battle there.

But because it was the junction of nine major roads, Gettysburg was like a magnet drawing two great armies—the Army of the Potomac and the Army of Northern Virginia—toward a bloody clash that would be the greatest battle ever fought in the Western Hemisphere.

Gettysburg had its beginnings in the days following the disastrous Union defeat at Chancellorsville, Va., on May 1-4. The Confederate government decided to launch a counterstroke into the North, for a number of reasons:

In the West, U. S. Grant was laying siege to Vicksburg, last Confederate stronghold on the Mississippi; an invasion of the North might pull Union troops away from there.

A Southern victory in the North might also encourage the growing peace movement in the North. More important, it might cause Britain and France to recognize the Confederacy. The capture of Washington could even end the war.

Besides, Virginia was war-torn and bleeding while the

North was fat and untouched, its fields lush and green under the summer sun.

So the invasion began. Seventy-five thousand men under Robert E. Lee hit the dusty roads through Maryland into Pennsylvania.

By the end of June the advance guards were as far north as Harrisburg while the rear was in Chambersburg, northwest of Gettysburg.

Eastward, the Army of the Potomac—88,000 strong—was also on the move. More than 160,000 men in all were converging on Gettysburg. Every third one of them was to become a casualty.

Lee operated in the dark during those important last days in June. "Jeb" Stuart, the brilliant cavalry commander who was to guard Lee's right flank and reconnoiter the Federals' movements, had gone off on a wide-sweeping, glorious but useless foray into the North.

It was not until the night of June 28 that Lee learned that the Federals, now commanded by Lt. Gen. George Gordon Meade, had paralleled his route north, keeping between him and Washington and now threatened his line of communication.

Lee was forced to call his strewn-out army together.

The logical place was Gettysburg, because all roads led there.

So they met, the men of North and South, on July 1, 1863. When it was finished three days later, the North left 23,000 killed, wounded or missing on the fields and hills around Gettysburg.

The South lost 28,000 men, a loss all the more grievous because she had not the means to replace them.

Militarily, Gettysburg was the end of one era and the precursor of another: Never again would an army dress right and march in formation against the guns of another army.

But not until the 20th century would the world witness massed artillery duels to compare with those of Gettysburg.

Politically, it was the end of the South's hopes for independence (though the war dragged on for 20 more months). But it was the beginning of a stronger United States.

Today we, the heirs of the men of Gettysburg, can forget the blood and remember only the glory. We remember Gettysburg and, a full century after the battle, "take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion."

General Lee Stole March On Meade After Gettysburg

By MERTON T. AKERS
United Press International

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

Lee and his army were in a tight spot. He had lost the biggest and climactic 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.

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.

Must Reach River

His problem was to reach and cross the river before Meade, moving in parallel, could cut him off. His chances of doing so seemed slim. The Potomac was runny, 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 alight 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 Confederates

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."

Citizens Hit Wagons

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 (June 28) until today (July 7) 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 that time as in the last thirty years."

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

Wagon trains from Westminster, 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.

Politicians After Meade

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

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 supertime the attack was called off.

Meade met with his corps commanders that night. He favored the 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.

Lee Forms Army

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 so 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.

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 rickety 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.

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