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We Found the People Much Frightened

Brig. Gen. George H. “Maryland” Stuart’s Expedition to McConnellsburg

ROBERT J. WYNSTRA

Although it earned barely a mention in the official reports for the Gettysburg Campaign, the Confederate expedition over the mountains from Greencastle to McConnellsburg in late June of 1863 provided the first clear indication of what the citizens of Fulton, Franklin, Cumberland, York, and Adams Counties would face as Gen. Robert E. Lee’s invading troops pushed north across Pennsylvania. The men from the Army of Northern Virginia’s famed Second Corps led the way in the advance, which took them through the heart of the abundant Cumberland Valley to the outskirts of the state capital at Harrisburg.

Lt. Gen. Richard S. Ewell assumed command of this newly reorganized corps on June 1 as the successor to Thomas J. “Stonewall” Jackson, who died on May 10 of complications from the accidental wounds he suffered eight days earlier during the fierce fighting at Chancellorsville. Because of Ewell’s long association with Jackson, nearly all the officers who had been closest to the fallen general greeted his appointment with outright enthusiasm. Maj. Gens. Edward “Old Allegheny” Johnson, Robert E. Rodes, and Jubal A. Early headed the three divisions in the corps.¹

Like Ewell, the forty-seven-year-old Johnson was relatively new to his position. The West Point graduate and former brevet major in the U.S. Army earned his nickname in late 1861 while leading a small Confederate army at Allegheny Mountain in

northwestern Virginia. He suffered a severe wound to his ankle a few months later while serving with Jackson during the Valley Campaign. The injury kept Johnson out of action until just after Chancellorsville, when Lee selected him to head Jackson’s former division. His new command included four brigades, led by Brig. Gens. George H. “Maryland” Stuart, John M. Jones, James A. Walker, and Col. Jesse M. Williams.²

The 1863 summer offensive commenced during the first week in June. After slipping away from the Fredericksburg area, Ewell’s troops spearheaded a bold thrust that swept the enemy out of Virginia’s lush Shenandoah Valley. Under Ewell’s direct command, the soldiers from Johnson’s and Early’s divisions gained a stunning victory over Maj. Gen. Robert Milroy’s forces around Winchester and Stephenson’s Depot on June 13 and 14. The division headed by Rodes enjoyed similar success driving the Federal troops out of nearby Berryville and Martinsburg. On June 15 Rodes’s men became the first infantry from General Lee’s invading army to splash over the Potomac River into Maryland. After resting at Williamsport for four days, Rodes moved his troops a few miles north to Hagerstown.

Throughout that time, Ewell focused on the planning for the future course of the campaign. On June 19 he traveled to Leetown, Virginia, for a conference with Lt. Gen. James Longstreet, whose First Corps had moved into place along the major gaps through the Blue Ridge Mountains. By then, the men from Lt. Gen. Ambrose Powell Hill’s newly created Third

¹ U.S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1880–1901) ser. 1, vol. 27, part 2, 442 (hereafter cited as *OR* and followed by the volume, part, and page numbers, with all subsequent citations referencing series 1); Jedediah Hotchkiss to My Darling Wife, May 31, 1863, Jedediah Hotchkiss Papers, Manuscript Division, Family Correspondence, 1853–1903, Library of Congress, Washington, DC (hereafter cited as *LOC*).

² Ezra J. Warner, *Generals in Gray: Lives of the Confederate Commanders* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), 158–59. For a detailed study of Johnson’s career, see Gregg S. Clemmer, *Old Allegheny: The Life and Wars of General Ed Johnson* (Staunton, VA: Hearthside Publishing Company, 2004).

Corps had finally left the vicinity of Fredericksburg for the Shenandoah Valley and were closing fast on the rest of the army. Ewell also made frequent visits to the headquarters of his three divisions, which were widely scattered over a large swath of northern Virginia and southern Maryland.³

Despite that activity, the advance remained on hold until all of Ewell's men crossed the Potomac into Maryland. The first move to consolidate his scattered forces came in the afternoon on June 16, when the troops from Johnson's division proceeded north from Stephenson's Depot to Smithfield. The First Maryland Infantry Battalion, which had served in western Virginia prior to participating in the recent attack on Winchester, soon joined them there and was assigned to Steuart's brigade. During their stay, Johnson temporarily detached Jones's brigade for a brief raid "to destroy a number of canal-boats and a quantity of grain and flour stored at dif-

³ OR, 27.2:503; Jedediah Hotchkiss, diary, entry for June 19, 1863, in Archie P. McDonald, ed., *Make Me a Map of the Valley: The Civil War Journal of Stonewall Jackson's Topographer* (Dallas, TX: Southern Methodist University Press, 1973), 153.

Gen. George "Maryland" Steuart. Courtesy of the Library of Congress.

Lt. Randolph McKim, Gen. Steuart's aide-de-camp. From Randolph H. McKim, *A Soldier's Recollections: Leaves from the Diary of a Young Confederate* (New York: Longman, Green, and Company, 1910), 110.

ferent points" along the Potomac River.⁴

On the next day, the main part of the division moved forward to within a couple of miles of Shepherdstown. This hotbed of Southern sympathy stood on the south side of the Potomac nearly ten miles downstream from Williamsport. The bustling trading center dated back to 1762, when the Virginia General Assembly granted it a formal charter. The historic Boteler's Ford was located about a mile east of Shepherdstown alongside an old cement mill and a small log dam. General Lee's army used this famed crossing extensively during the Maryland Campaign in September of 1862.⁵

Maj. Henry Kyd Douglas, who served as assistant adjutant general on Johnson's staff, took the opportunity that evening to visit his family's home known as Ferry Hill Place on the heights directly across the river from Shepherdstown. The extent

⁴ OR, 27.2:442.

⁵ OR, 27.2:503.

Surgeon Caspar Henkel, Thirty-Seventh Virginia. Courtesy of the U.S. National Library of Medicine.

of the damage from repeated Federal occupations came as a major shock. "My beautiful home was a barren waste," he lamented. The veteran staff officer noted that "blackened walls of the burnt barn stood against the sky as a monument of useless and barbarous destruction." The sight left him seething with anger toward the North. "I felt that it would be hard for me, going into Pennsylvania, to put aside all ideas of retaliation," Douglas acknowledged.⁶

On the following morning, the troops paraded through Shepherdstown to the ford. A soldier from the Twenty-Seventh Virginia in General Walker's renowned Stonewall Brigade reported that the men "passed through that staid old-time burg with colors flying and the blast of bugle and drum beat."⁷ An officer from the Maryland battalion in Stuart's brigade noted that they made their entrance with "the bands playing, colors streaming, & the ladies

waving their handkerchiefs."⁸ According to Pvt. John C. Henry from the same battalion, the troops "were received very enthusiastically, the ladies displaying Confederate flags and the men and boys cheering."⁹ Lt. Randolph McKim, who served as Stuart's aide-de-camp, recalled that "the general and all his staff" even had "bouquets presented them."¹⁰

Best of all was the large number of attractive women, who made up much of the crowd that lined the streets. A soldier from the Thirty-Third Virginia in Jones's brigade spotted many "nice looking ladies in town."¹¹ Sgt. Watkins Kearns, who served with the Twenty-Seventh Virginia in the Stonewall Brigade, pointed out that "the place was noted for having more beautiful women than any other town of like size in the state."¹² He added that "a great many beautiful girls, all enthusiastic and hospitable," accompanied them "down to the ford a mile below town at Boteler's Mill."

Amid cheering throngs, the troops soon plunged into the fast-flowing water at the crossing. The stirring music from one of the regimental bands added to the festive mood. "Before reaching the river the excellent band of this regiment had gone forward and taken position in the middle of the stream, a little above the broad and shallow ford," Capt. James H. Wood from the Thirty-Seventh Virginia in the Stonewall Brigade recalled.¹³ He noted that "as the head of the column entered the ford the melodious strains of 'Maryland, My Maryland' floated out from the band with such forceful expression as to stir to the depths the emotions of those war worn veterans of so many fields."

A gunner from one of the Maryland batteries attached to the division reported that "hearty cheers burst from the throats of her patriotic sons" as they

8 Extracts from a diary, entry for June 18, 1863, tenth paper—second series, Second Maryland Battalion, in S. Z. Ammen, "Maryland Troops in the Confederate Army," 116, Thomas Clemens Collection, U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, Pennsylvania (hereafter cited as USAHEC).

9 Extracts from the diary of J. C. H., entry for June 18, 1863, ninth paper—second series, Second Maryland Battalion, in Ammen, "Maryland Troops in the Confederate Army," 113;

10 Randolph H. McKim, *A Soldier's Recollections: Leaves from the Diary of a Young Confederate* (New York: Longman, Green, and Company, 1910), 155.

11 John B. Sheets, diary, entry for June 18, 1863, in Dale Harter, ed., "The Diary of John B. Sheets, of Mt. Crawford, Co. I, 33rd Virginia Infantry, CSA," *Harrisonburg-Rockingham Historical Society Newsletter* 31 (Winter 2009): 3.

12 Watkins Kearns, diary, entry for June 18, 1863, Watkins Kearns Diaries, 1861–1864, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia (hereafter cited as VHS).

13 James H. Wood, *The War: "Stonewall" Jackson, His Campaigns, and Battles, the Regiment as I Saw Them* (Cumberland, MD: Eddy Press, 1910), 137.

6 Henry Kyd Douglas, *I Rode with Stonewall* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1940), 243.

7 Charles A. Rollins, "Going to Gettysburg," *Lexington Gazette and Citizen*, August 9, 1888.

waded across the Potomac.¹⁴ A soldier from the Stonewall Brigade noted that the short men “had to strip entire, as the ford was quite deep, but we were amply compensated by a refreshing and no doubt much need bath.”¹⁵ The only problems came from a sudden downpour that hit the area. Surgeon Thomas Fanning Wood from the Third North Carolina in Stuart’s brigade complained in a letter to his parents that, “as we reached the river, a tremendous thunder storm came up, and by the time we had forded the river we were thoroughly wet.”¹⁶

The torrential rain failed to deter General Stuart from displaying his overwhelming joy at making it onto the northern shore of the Potomac. According to Lt. John H. Stone from the Maryland battalion, the brigade commander immediately “dismounted & kissed the ground at sight of which the men sent up one long loud shout for My Maryland.”¹⁷ That sudden gesture caught Lt. McKim from Stuart’s staff by complete surprise. “Our horses’ feet touched the sacred soil of our native state at the same moment, but before I could guess his intentions the general sprang from his horse and dropping on his hands and knees kissed the ground,” the young staff officer recalled.¹⁸

The ranks of the Maryland battalion quickly erupted with wild rejoicing. Lt. Thomas Tolson noted in his diary that the troops “gave vent to their feelings in vociferous cheers.”¹⁹ Private Henry reported that the long-anticipated arrival in their home state became “the occasion of speechmaking by Col. Herbert, Lt. James Franklin

and others.”²⁰ Adj. J. William Thomas pointed out that the soldiers then “gathered round our standard and sang appropriate songs.”²¹ According to another Maryland officer, the celebrations along the riverbank grew so frantic that the men “seemed to be demented.”²² Maj. William W. Goldsborough claimed that many of them “were moved to tears.”²³

Surgeon Casper Henkel from the Thirty-Seventh Virginia in Stuart’s brigade was disgusted by their behavior. The doctor confided to his cousin that he had “no liking” for the Maryland troops, who had only recently joined the brigade, and “shall avoid having much to do with them.”²⁴ Most disturb-

ing of all was their overwrought antics on reaching their home state. “They made a great fuss, & many ludicrous demonstrations when they landed on Md. soil,” Henkel fumed. “Some of them went so far as to kiss the ground.” Their commander even pledged that they would never leave their home state again. Henkel reacted with the biting comment that “they will stand a good chance of remaining if we get into a fight.”

Once the celebrations settled down, the troops followed the towpath for the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal to the west and went into camp at the top of the hill near the Douglas home, about

“three miles” from the Sharpsburg battlefield.²⁵ From there, Sergeant Kearns had “an excellent view of Shepherdstown & the hills of Harper’s Ferry in the distance.”²⁶ The Federal fortifications on Maryland Heights across the Potomac from Harper’s Ferry also remained clearly visible from their perch

Maj. Henry Kyd Douglas. Courtesy of the National Park Service.

14 John William Ford Hatton, memoir, entry for June 19, 1863, Manuscript Division, LOC.

15 Rollins, “Going to Gettysburg.”

16 Thomas Fanning Wood to Dear Parents, June 29, 1863, in Donald B. Koonce, ed., *Doctor to the Front: The Recollections of Confederate Surgeon Thomas Fanning Wood, 1861–1865* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2000), 97.

17 John H. Stone, diary, entry for June 19, 1863, in Thomas G. Clemens, ed., “The Diary of John H. Stone, First Lieutenant, Company B, 2nd Maryland Infantry, CSA,” *Maryland Historical Magazine* 85 (1990): 131.

18 McKim, *Soldier’s Recollections*, 155.

19 Extracts from a diary, entry for June 18, 1863, in Ammen, “Maryland Troops in the Confederate Army,” 116. See also James R. Herbert, diary, entry for June 18, 1863, Soldier Diaries Collection, Eleanor S. Brockenbrough Library, Museum of the Confederacy, Richmond, Virginia.

20 Extracts from the diary of J. C. H., entry for June 18, 1863, in Ammen, “Maryland Troops in the Confederate Army,” 113.

21 J. William Thomas, diary, entry for June 18, 1863, Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park Library, Fredericksburg, Virginia.

22 Samuel Thomas McCullough, diary, entry for June 18, 1863, Jedediah Hotchkiss Papers.

23 W. W. Goldsborough, *The Maryland Line in the Confederate Army, 1861–1865* (Baltimore, MD: Guggenheimer, Weil, and Company, 1900), 98.

24 Casper C. Henkel to Dear Cousin, June 21, 1863, Henkel Family Correspondence, Series 1: Correspondence, 1786–1940, Modern Manuscript Collections, History of Medicine Division, U.S. National Library of Medicine, National Institute of Health, Bethesda, Maryland.

25 William R. Gilmer to Dear Sister, June 19, 1863, in “Gilmer Letters,” Russell County, VA, Civil War Website, <http://russellvets.org/letters/letterschron.html>.

26 Kearns, diary, entry for June 18, 1863, VHS;

on the hill. Pvt. Powell Benton Reynolds from the Fiftieth Virginia in Jones's brigade informed his mother that "we could plainly see the 'Stars & Stripes' floating over the enemy's works in Maryland Heights some ten miles distant."²⁷

During their stay, the corps commander provided the men with a welcome share of the spoils from their recent victory. "Gen. Ewel had all the eatibles captured at Winchester divided amongst the men such as candies, segars &c. which gave great satisfaction," Surgeon Abram Schultz Miller from the Twenty-Fifth Virginia in Jones's brigade effused in a letter to his wife.²⁸ "They are all very much pleased with it," he noted, saying that "they did not get very much a piece but they like the principle, and I think he will make himself as popular as Gen Jackson." Capt. Edward H. Armstrong from the Third North Carolina in Steuart's brigade informed his father that the items they received included "candy, Segars, tobacco, cakes, &c. &c."²⁹

The troops remained in place opposite Shepherdstown until June 20, when they moved on a few more miles to the vicinity of the former Sharpsburg battlefield. Their route that day took them through the village of Sharpsburg. A clergyman and instructor at the College of Saint James, which was located about six miles south of Hagerstown, noted in his journal that he "heard very distinctly the beating of the drums in the direction of Sharpsburgh" as the soldiers strode into town.³⁰ The troops remained largely unimpressed by the sight of the war-ravaged community. Sergeant Kearns described it in his diary as "a very ordinary looking place of some 300 or 400 inhabitants."³¹

More troubling was the extent of the pro-Northern sentiment there. Lt. Samuel Thomas McCullough insisted that the town was "as thoroughly Union as Abe could desire."³² Another Maryland-

er complained in his diary that they endured "the sneers and black looks of a contemptible abolition population."³³ Surgeon Henkel griped to his cousin that "many wry faces, grim looks & hard speeches meet us here."³⁴ An officer from the Thirty-Third Virginia in the Stonewall Brigade was especially struck by the repeated shows of contempt from the women in the town. "The girls of Sharpsburg are as sour as vinegar & as ugly as any set of girls I ever saw," he grumbled in a letter to his brother. "I do not think there is any danger that I or any of our boys, will marry about Sharpsburg."³⁵

The troops eventually set up camp close by the battlefield in some woods just outside town. Everywhere they looked was evidence of what they had endured there the previous year. Pvt. Gabriel Shank from the Tenth Virginia in Steuart's brigade wrote in his diary that "the signs of battle" were still clearly "visible on the trees."³⁶ Lt. George Buswell from the Thirty-Third Virginia in the Stonewall Brigade pointed out that "the little brick church that stood to the rear is so honeycombed by shot and shell as to cause to speculate how it stood at all."³⁷ Surgeon Henkel noted in a letter home that "on every hand we see the effects of the rude missiles of war—building torn to pieces, trees shattered, & the ground strewn with bleaching bones."³⁸

Another soldier from Steuart's brigade found the exposed corpses that littered the former killing fields more upsetting than anything he had ever encountered in his life. "I saw dead Yankeys in any number just lying on the top of the ground with little dirt throwed over them and hogs rooting them out of the ground and eating them," Pvt. George Harlow from the Twenty-Third Virginia wrote in a letter to his father.³⁹ He observed many bodies "lying on the top of ground with the flesh picked off and their bones bleaching." Even two years of hard

27 Powell Benton Reynolds to Dear Mother, August 7, 1863, in Dale Whitfield, "Private, Powell Benton Reynolds," accessed April 26, 2015, <http://www.wade-hamptoncamp.org/aomo711-pbr.html>.

28 Abram Schultz Miller to Dear Julia, June 19, 1863, James A. Miller Collection, Abram Miller Civil War Letters, Stewart Bell Jr. Archives Room, Handley Regional Library, Winchester, Virginia.

29 Edward H. Armstrong to Dear Pa, June 19, 1863, Thomas J. Armstrong Papers, box 1, folder 12, William M. Randall Library, Special Collections, University of North Carolina at Wilmington, Wilmington, North Carolina.

30 Joseph H. Coit, diary, entry for June 21, 1863, in James McLachan, ed., "The Civil War Diary of Joseph H. Coit," *Maryland Historical Magazine* 60 (1965): 252.

31 Kearns, diary, entry for June 20, 1863, vhs.

32 McCullough, diary, entry for June 20, 1863, Jedediah Hotchkiss Papers.

33 Extracts from the diary of J. C. H., entry for June 20, 1863, in Ammen, "Maryland Troops in the Confederate Army," 113.

34 Henkel to Cousin, June 21, 1863, Henkel Family Correspondence.

35 George Buswell to Dear Bro., June 24, 1863, 33rd Virginia File, Confederate Regiment Files, Gettysburg National Military Park, Library, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

36 Gabriel Shank, diary, entry for June 20, 1863, in Margaret S. Mohr Weaver, "Gabriel Shank: Military Records, Articles, Letters and Diary," RootsWeb, last updated February 11, 2003, http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~varockin/shank/Gabriel_Shank.htm.

37 Rollins, "Going to Gettysburg."

38 Henkel to Cousin, June 21, 1863, Henkel Family Correspondence.

39 George Harlow to Dear Father, Mother, and Family, June 21, 1863, Harlow Family Papers, section 2, folder 7, vhs.

fighting had not prepared him for such a scene. "What a horrible sight for a human being to look upon in a civilized country," he declared.

On the following morning, the chaplains held a solemn Sabbath ceremony to commemorate their fallen comrades. An officer from the Third North Carolina in Steuart's brigade recalled that the troops "assembled and with arms reversed and to the roll of the muffled drum marched to the battle field, where the Rev. George Patterson, chaplain of the Third, read the burial services."⁴⁰ Patterson also conducted worship for the men in attendance. Lieutenant McKim from Steuart's staff noted that the clergyman "held services, preached and administered the communion."⁴¹

Some of the men attempted to offset their somber mood by going shopping in town during the afternoon. "The stores have been opened & the prices have been to us 'Dixie Boys' remarkably moderate," Sergeant Kearns happily penned in his diary.⁴² Another soldier from the First North Carolina in Steuart's brigade admitted in a letter home that the goods were "much cheaper than I expected to find them."⁴³ Sgt. Ferdinand J. Dunlap from the Thirty-Third Virginia in the Stonewall Brigade remained less pleased with the results. The young soldier griped to his sister that he had "been trying to get some Cotton and Calico or something to send to you all but everything can not be got."⁴⁴

Although Early's troops remained temporarily stuck on the Virginia side of the Potomac by high water, General Lee continued his preparations for the next phase of the campaign. "If you are ready to move, you can do so," the army commander finally informed Ewell on the afternoon of June 21.⁴⁵ "I am much gratified at the success which has attended your movements, and feel assured if they are conducted with the same energy and circumspection, it will continue."⁴⁶ Lee explained that "your progress

and direction will, of course, depend upon the development of circumstances."⁴⁷ Most emphatic of all were his directions that "if Harrisburg comes within your means, capture it."⁴⁸

The orders called for Rodes's division to lead the way along Valley Turnpike through the center of Pennsylvania toward the state capital at Harrisburg. Lee instructed Johnson's division to follow closely behind Rodes's troops. During the advance, a single brigade would be detached from the column and sent west to seize additional provisions at McConnellsburg. General Early's troops received orders to move forward through Cashtown Gap and then proceed along the eastern side of South Mountain toward the Susquehanna River. The cavalrymen from Brig. Gen. Albert G. Jenkins's brigade would screen the front of the advance and capture supplies from the surrounding countryside.⁴⁹

On June 22 Rodes's troops finally crossed the border into Pennsylvania. After a brief skirmish with a small force of Federal cavalrymen, his men settled in for a short stay at Greencastle in the southern part of the Cumberland Valley. Later that day, Rodes traveled to nearby Boonsboro, Maryland, for a meeting with Ewell. The arrangements that they worked out during the session called for Rodes to pause at Greencastle and await the arrival of Johnson's division before pushing on to the north. The corps commander also ordered him to seize an extensive list of supplies from the local residents and merchants. Ewell joined the division in Greencastle on the following afternoon after riding in his carriage from Boonsboro.⁵⁰

By then Johnson's men had already departed from the Sharpsburg area along the turnpike leading north to Hagerstown. Their route on the morning of June 23 took them through the tiny settlement at Tilghmanton. A gunner from one of the Maryland batteries attached to the division described it in his diary as "a small log village."⁵¹ Chaplain William Robert Gwaltney from the First North Carolina in Steuart's brigade spotted "some of the ugliest women in the world" as they passed through

⁴⁰ John Cowan and James I. Metts, "Third Regiment," in Walter Clark, ed., *Histories of the Several Regiments and Battalions from North Carolina in the Great War 1861-65* (Goldsboro, NC: Nash Brothers, 1901), 1:194.

⁴¹ McKim, *Soldier's Recollections*, 160.

⁴² Kearns, diary, entry for June 21, 1863, VHS.

⁴³ William H. Proffit to Dear Father, June 22, 1863, Proffit Family Letters, folder 3, Southern Historical Collection, Louis Round Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, North Carolina (hereafter cited as SHC).

⁴⁴ Ferdinand J. Dunlap to Dear Sister, June 22, 1863, Ferdinand Dunlap Letters, Confederate Miscellaneous Collection, USAHEC.

⁴⁵ OR, 27:3:914.

⁴⁶ OR, 27:3:914.

⁴⁷ OR, 27:3:914.

⁴⁸ OR, 27:3:914.

⁴⁹ OR, 27:2:443.

⁵⁰ OR, 27:2:551; Hotchkiss, diary, entry for June 23, 1863, in McDonald, *Make Me a Map*, 154.

⁵¹ Hatton, memoir, entry for June 23, 1863, LOC.

there.⁵² Another soldier from the Tenth Virginia in the same brigade joked in a letter home that the town was “renowned for its ugly wimmen.”⁵³

The advance came to a sudden halt when the gatekeeper on the turnpike outside the village demanded payment of the toll before allowing the troops to proceed. “The toll-gatherer, stepped out of his toll house, let down his gate, and stood by it to bar our passage,” Major Douglas from Johnson’s staff recalled.⁵⁴ To his amazement, the man “accosted” Johnson and his staff officers, demanding that they immediately hand over the money. The brazen gatekeeper finally relented when the general informed him that he would receive the money if he sent his bill directly to Jefferson Davis in Richmond.

Despite the delay, the troops easily reached Hagerstown by midmorning. Lieutenant McCullough from Steuart’s brigade reported that they marched into town “with fixed bayonets, flying colors, bands playing, &c.”⁵⁵ The men found this bustling commercial center to be a surprisingly attractive place. Capt. Henry Roach from the Twenty-First Virginia in Jones’s brigade described Hagerstown to his wife as “a beautiful village.”⁵⁶ Sergeant Kearns from the Stonewall Brigade noted in his diary that it “was a very pretty town—very neatly laid out & presenting the appearance of having done a thriving business.”⁵⁷

The men were nearly overwhelmed by the rousing reception that the townspeople gave them. Lieutenant Tolson from Steuart’s brigade wrote in his diary that the women “received us with enthusiasm and shower us with bouquets.”⁵⁸ Lieutenant Buswell, who served in the Stonewall Brigade, admitted in a letter home that he “was much surprised to find a strong secession sentiment” in the town.⁵⁹ He noted that “the streets were filled with ladies waving their handkerchiefs & occasionally tiny secession flags.” Quartermaster Sgt. Albion Martin from the Thirty-Third Virginia in the same regiment insisted to his

wife that “we never received such demonstration of welcome in any Va. town.”⁶⁰

The soldiers resumed the advance during the late afternoon. After a short march, they went into camp about one hundred yards south of the border near Middleburg. Surgeon Wood from Steuart’s brigade noted that “the line between Penna & Md. passes through this little village.”⁶¹ Pvt. John William Ford Hatton from one of the division’s batteries reported that it was “a small and unattractive” settlement.⁶² Although the town was far from appealing, the nearby area overflowed with all kinds of useful supplies. Lt. Henry H. Harris from the division’s engineering staff wrote in his diary that “foraging is profitable as every thing in plenty, and one need give only as much money as he chooses.”⁶³

The men from Rodes’s division lingered at Greencastle for nearly two full days before moving forward to Chambersburg early on June 24. Johnson’s troops trailed behind them on the march from their camp near Middleburg. After crossing the border that morning, Johnson’s troops quickly pushed on to Greencastle. One soldier from Steuart’s brigade described it in his diary as “a pretty hard looking place.”⁶⁴ Another veteran from the Twenty-Fifth Virginia in Jones’s brigade spied “a pretty young girl” holding “a small United States flag in her hands” as they passed through the streets.⁶⁵ To his surprise, the feisty youngster repeatedly taunted them with the banner. He sheepishly admitted that some of the troops “were not courteous to her.”

While the troops took a brief rest, Johnson detached Steuart’s brigade, along with Capt. John C. Carpenter’s four-gun Virginia battery, for a quick strike over the Cove and Tuscarora Mountains into Fulton County. The thirty-four-year-old Steuart was a native of Maryland. He graduated from West Point and served with the U.S. Army on the western

52 William Robert Gwaltney, diary, entry for June 23, 1863, W. R. Gwaltney Papers, folder 1, SHC.

53 Samuel Angus Firebaugh, diary, entry for June 23, 1863, folder 1, SHC.

54 Douglas, *I Rode with Stonewall*, 244.

55 McCullough, diary, entry for June 23, 1863, Jedediah Hotchkiss Papers.

56 Henry Roach to My Dear Sue, July 22, 1863, Almira Sue Browning Harvey Letters, folder 1, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

57 Kearns, diary, entry for June 23, 1863, VHS.

58 Extracts from a diary, entry for June 23, 1863, in Ammen, “Maryland Troops in the Confederate Army,” 116.

59 Buswell to Bro., June 24, 1863, 33rd Virginia File, Confederate Regiment Files.

60 Albion Martin to My dear Annie, June 23, 1863, “Dr. Albion Martin Letters,” accessed June 25, 2010, <http://hometown.aol.com/Vir33rdreg/am.html> (site discontinued).

61 Wood to Parents, June 29, 1863, in Koonce, *Doctor to the Front*, 101.

62 Hatton, memoir, entry for June 23, 1863, LOC.

63 Henry Herbert Harris, diary, entry for June 23, 1863, in W. Harrison Daniel, ed., “H. H. Harris’ Civil War Diary (1863–1865),” *Virginia Baptist Register* 35 (1996): 1770.

64 Firebaugh, diary, entry for June 24, 1863, SHC.

65 John R. King, *My Experience in the Confederate Army and in Northern Prisons Written from Memory* (Clarksburg, WV: United Daughters of the Confederacy, 1917), 13.

Richard S. Ewell's Corps moves through Maryland and Pennsylvania. Map by Phil Laino.

frontier. After resigning his commission in 1861, Steuart joined the First Maryland Infantry as lieutenant colonel. He earned a promotion to brigadier general in March of 1862. The newly appointed brigade commander suffered a severe wound soon afterward while serving under Stonewall Jackson in the Shenandoah Valley. Just prior to the start of the 1863 summer campaign, Lee selected him to head one of the brigades in Johnson's new division.⁶⁶

Steuart's command included the First and Third North Carolina; the Tenth, Twenty-Third, and Thirty-Seventh Virginia; and the newly arrived First Maryland Infantry Bat-

talion. Ewell's orders called for this force of about 2,250 troops to proceed as far west as McConnellsburg, where they would "collect horses, cattle, and other supplies which the army needed."⁶⁷ The corps commander expected that the raid would also protect his left flank from the Federal militia and the remnants of General Milroy's command that had moved into place around the town. While that was going on, the remainder of Johnson's division would continue straight north to Chambersburg and then move on through Shippensburg to Carlisle.

From Greencastle, Steuart's column headed northwest through the mountains past Upton and on toward Mercersburg. The brigade command-

Professor Philip Schaff. From Luther Allen Weigle, Stanely Thomas Williams, and Ralph Henry Gabriel, eds., *The Pageant of America: A Pictorial History of the United States* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1928), 10:221.

er quickly moved to resolve his biggest problem, which was the lack of any cavalry to screen his advance through enemy country. "When we were already eleven miles on our march, the general sent me back to Hagerstown after the Maryland cavalry, which had not yet reported to him as ordered," Lieutenant McKim from Steuart's staff recalled.⁶⁸ The young officer eventually located Maj. Harry Gilmor and five companies of horsemen from the First Maryland Cavalry Battalion resting at Hagerstown and ordered him to move forward as fast as possible.

During midmorning, Gilmor's troopers finally linked up with

the brigade "at the top of the mountain and immediately took the advance."⁶⁹ The renowned cavalry leader had only recently assumed temporary command of the battalion as the replacement for Maj. Ridgeley Brown, who was absent after being badly wounded in the leg at Greenland Gap, Virginia, during late April. Prior to joining up with Steuart's command, Gilmor carried out a daring raid against a large force of Federal troops at Frederick, Maryland, and failed in an attempt to seize a key bridge over the nearby Monocacy River.

About noon, Gilmor assembled his three hundred horsemen for a sudden dash into Mercersburg. This quiet town with a population of about

⁶⁶ Warner, *Generals in Gray*, 290–91; John W. Busey and David G. Martin, *Regimental Strengths and Losses at Gettysburg* (Hightstown, NJ: Longstreet House, 1986), 152.

⁶⁷ OR, 27.2:503.

⁶⁸ McKim, *Soldier's Recollections*, 163.

⁶⁹ Harry Gilmor, *Four Years in the Saddle* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1866), 93–94.

nine hundred was best known as the home for the theological seminary of the German Reformed Church.⁷⁰ Professor Philip Schaff watched in despair from his house as “the advance pickets” charged down the Main Street and “dismounted before the gate of the seminary.”⁷¹ The rest of Stuart’s troops followed closely behind the cavalry into the town. Schaff noted in his diary that the soldiers “made a most motley appearance, roughly dressed, yet better than during their Maryland campaign last fall, all provided with shoes, and to a great extent with fresh and splendid horses.”

Stuart immediately placed Major Goldsborough from the First Maryland Infantry Battalion in charge as provost marshal for the town. While the guards moved into position, the general called together some of the “leading citizens” for a brief meeting.⁷² According to Schaff, the brigade commander then read Lee’s recent proclamation “to the effect that the advancing army should take supplies and pay in Confederate money, or give a receipt, but not violate private property.”⁷³ Stuart followed up with a demand “that all the stores be opened.”⁷⁴ The frightened officials reluctantly complied with the orders.

Quartermaster and commissary details from the brigade were soon busy searching the local businesses for any usable supplies. The items that the troops uncovered in the stores were all that they could have asked for. “Some of them were almost stripped of the remaining goods, for which payment was made in Confederate money,” Schaff grumbled in his diary.⁷⁵ “They emptied Mr. Fitzgerald’s cellar of sugar, molasses, hams, etc., and enjoyed the candies, nuts, cigars, etc., at Mr. Shannon’s.” Major Goldsborough reported that they also obtained “a goodly quantity of shoes” during the searches.⁷⁶

The men in the ranks were just as pleased with the goods on hand there. Lieutenant McCullough from the Maryland infantry battalion bragged that they “bought bacon, coffee, Sugar, &c. paying in

Confederate money at Baltimore prices.”⁷⁷ Another soldier from the Tenth Virginia wrote in his diary that he “got plenty of apple butter and Butter to eat.”⁷⁸ The only downside was the hostile reaction from some of the citizens in the town. Captain Armstrong from the Third North Carolina grumbled in a letter to his father that the people “look very sour at us.”⁷⁹ Chaplain Gwaltney from the First North Carolina complained that he even encountered “some strong abolitionists” during his stay.⁸⁰

While the bulk of the troops departed from town in early afternoon, Captain Armstrong’s company stayed behind as provost guards. Their presence caused a major stir among the citizens. “Some

Maj. William W. Goldsborough, First Maryland Infantry Battalion. Courtesy of Peter Skillman.

thought that I had been left behind to burn the town, and children came to me and asked if such was the case,” Armstrong explained in a letter home.⁸¹ “I assured them it was not.” The Tar Heel encountered further problems when he prevented several local women from passing through the lines. He noted that “they became very much enraged said some

70 For details on the town’s history, see Woman’s Club of Mercersburg Pennsylvania, *Old Mercersburg* (Williamsport, PA: Grit Publishing Company, 1912), 19–71.

71 Philip Schaff, diary, entry for June 24, 1863, in Philip Schaff, “The Gettysburg Week,” *Scribner’s Magazine* 16 (1894): 232.

72 Goldsborough, *Maryland Line in the Confederate Army*, 101.

73 Schaff, diary, entry for June 24, 1863, in Schaff, “Gettysburg Week,” 232.

74 Schaff, diary, entry for June 24, 1863, in Schaff, “Gettysburg Week,” 232.

75 Schaff, diary, entry for June 24, 1863, in Schaff, “Gettysburg Week,” 232.

76 Goldsborough, *Maryland Line in the Confederate Army*, 101.

77 McCullough, diary, entry for June 24, 1863, Jedediah Hotchkiss Papers.

78 Firebaugh, diary, entry for June 24, 1863, SHC.

79 Edward H. Armstrong to Dear Pa, June 29, 1863, box 1, folder 12, Thomas J. Armstrong Papers.

80 Gwaltney, diary, entry for June 24, 1863, William Robert Gwaltney Papers.

81 Armstrong to Pa, June 29, 1863, Thomas J. Armstrong Papers.

Lt. Col. Jacob Szink, Forty-Sixth Pennsylvania Emergency Militia. From Regimental Committee, *History of the One Hundred and Twenty-Fifth Regiment, Pennsylvania Volunteers 1862–1863* (Philadelphia, pa: J. B. Lippincott, 1906), 22.

pretty hard things but it did no good.” Armstrong complained that “the ladies in this state are decidedly the hardest looking people I have ever seen.”

From Mercersburg, the main part of Steuart’s force proceeded west through Cove Gap and over Tuscarora Mountain toward McConnellsburg. That town of about six hundred inhabitants was nestled in a bountiful valley just west of the junction with the main roads leading from Chambersburg and Greencastle. The settlement sprang up in the late 1700s along an old trader’s trail that ran west from Philadelphia to the Ohio River. That road was later upgraded into a macadamized turnpike. The resulting influx of commercial traffic quickly transformed the town into a major transportation hub for the region, which had already made it a target for a brief raid by some 250 troopers from Jenkins’s brigade on June 19.⁸²

As Steuart’s men continued their ascent over the mountain, a force of militiamen and a few survivors from Milroy’s command took up position along the turnpike in an effort to block the advance. The largest contingent consisted of 120 troops from the Forty-Sixth Pennsylvania Emergency Militia under Lt. Col. Jacob Szink, who set up on both sides of the road at the top of the mountain. About a dozen troopers from the Twelfth Pennsylvania Cavalry under Lt. Col. Joseph L. Moss, who had escaped from the disastrous fighting at Winchester, assembled just west of there, near the junction of the Chambersburg and Mercersburg Turnpikes. A single company of Huntingdon County militia under Capt. William W. Wallace remained farther in the rear at McConnellsburg.

During midafternoon, Szink spotted the Confederate troops moving rapidly on the road toward his location. He immediately fired a signal to notify Moss’s cavalymen that the enemy was fast approaching. Szink also sent a courier into McConnellsburg calling for Wallace to send his men forward to reinforce his defenses. Captain Wallace’s

⁸² Waterman, Watkins, and Company, *History of Bedford, Somerset and Fulton Counties, Pennsylvania, with Illustrations and Biographical Sketches of Some of Its Pioneers and Prominent Men* (Chicago: Waterman, Watkins, and Company, 1884), 627. For details on the earlier raid, see *Fulton Democrat*, June 19, 1863, reprinted in “The Visit of Jenkins’ Cavalry to McConnellsburg and Mercersburg,” *Gettysburg Compiler*, June 29, 1863; “The McConnellsburg Telegrams,” June 19, 1863, *New York Herald*, June 21, 1863; and Adam Cook to Dear Son, June 23, 1863, in M. Patrick McCrary, ed., *Private Cook and the College Company at Gettysburg* (Anchorage, AK: NBF Publishing, 2013), 31–32.

company by that point numbered fewer than thirty inexperienced militiamen. Despite the small size of his force, Wallace hastened his troops out of town toward Szink's position. Along the way, they linked up with Moss's handful of horsemen.⁸³

To their surprise, the militiamen soon encountered Szink's entire command in full flight from the oncoming enemy troops. "Just as we reached the foot of the mountain we met Zinn's regiment on the retreat," Pvt. Samuel A. Steele from Wallace's command recalled.⁸⁴ "Our company halted them and Wallace begged them to stay with us but they had business far in the rear and away they went with coat tails fluttering in the breeze." He noted that their panicked withdrawal also "stampeded the 12th cavalry who went to the rear as fast as their horses would take them."

The only exceptions were a lieutenant and four troopers who bravely offered to stay behind as scouts for Wallace's intrepid band. The militia captain readily accepted their help. Despite Szink's shameful retreat, Wallace proceeded with his plans to ambush the Confederate invaders. According to one account, he instructed the cavalymen to "ride ahead as far as you can with safety and return with timely information of the approach of the enemy before they see us."⁸⁵ With two of Moss's horsemen at the front, Wallace's troops were soon on the march up the mountain toward the enemy.

While that was going on, Steuart's men moved forward toward McConnellsburg. The first hint that the soldiers had of the presence of the militia along their front occurred when they came on to a barrier blocking their way.⁸⁶ That obstacle caused only a momentary delay. "At the top of Tuscarora Mountain we encountered a barricade of stone across the road, guarded by but one person, who fled on our approach," Lieutenant Tolson from the Maryland infantry battalion explained in his diary. "Removing

the obstruction we passed on, moving slowly and feeling our way."⁸⁷

The sudden appearance of the Confederate troops sent the Federal scouts scurrying for safety in the rear. Private Steele noted that, "when about half way up" the mountain, they "heard the rebels coming driving our two scouts ahead of them."⁸⁸ Captain Wallace immediately "divided his company into five squads placing them about sixty feet above the road and about the same distance apart." As the scouts pulled back, Steuart's men suddenly opened fire on them, which sent them into a hasty retreat. In the hustle to get away, one of the horsemen suffered a slight wound.

Wallace's men waited patiently until the enemy column moved closer, before responding with a barrage of their own. Lt. James Pott from Wallace's company complained that they opened fire sooner than planned when one "impetuous" militiaman "prematurely discharged his musket."⁸⁹ Steuart's troops reacted to the sounds of gunshots along their front by immediately deploying a line of skirmishers. Pott noted that "the Johnnies threw out flankers which came very near trapping us all, but we all escaped and not one of us was hurt, although volley after volley was rained in among us, but mostly over our heads."

After a brief exchange of gunfire, Steuart called a halt in the shooting and demanded the immediate surrender of Wallace's command. Despite being hopelessly outnumbered, the tiny band remained defiant. "We did not heed this request but kept up a continuous fire, the rebels all the while concentrating their fire upon us," Private Steele recalled.⁹⁰ The relentless shooting sent the men scrambling for any shelter they could find along the hillside. Even that provided little real protection from the steady barrage of musket fire. Steele complained that the incoming bullets were "striking the bushes and rocks like hail."

The outcome was much different for Steuart's troops. Despite the short range, the return fire from Wallace's small force proved little more than an

83 John H. Nelson, *Confusion and Courage: The Civil War in Fulton County, Pa., June 1863* (McConnellsburg, PA: Fulton County Civil War Reenactment Advisory Committee, 1996), 12–14.

84 Samuel A. Steele to Editor Journal, November 24, 1884, *Huntingdon Journal*, November 28, 1884. See also Historical Committee of the Old Home Week Association, *Historic Huntingdon, 1709–1907* (Huntingdon, PA: Historical Committee of the Old Home Week Association, 1907), 138.

85 Regimental Committee, *History of the One Hundred and Twenty-Fifth Regiment Pennsylvania Volunteers, 1862–1863* (Philadelphia, PA: J. B. Lippincott, 1906), 196.

86 John Goldsborough White, "A 'Rebel's' Recollections of Bloody Days That Led to Gettysburg," *Baltimore Sun*, May 26, 1929.

87 Extracts from a diary, entry for June 24, 1863, in Ammen, "Maryland Troops in the Confederate Army," 116.

88 Steele to Editor, November 24, 1884, *Huntingdon Journal*, November 28, 1884.

89 James Pott, letter reprinted in Albert M. Rung, "Confusion and Courage at North Mountain," *Huntingdon Daily News*, August 31, 1963.

90 Steele to Editor, November 24, 1884, *Huntingdon Journal*, November 28, 1884.

annoyance for the advancing Confederates. Major Gilmor recalled that “a few shot were fired at us; but it did not amount to much.”⁹¹ Lt. Whitfield Kisling from the Tenth Virginia estimated in a letter to his cousin that the Federal troops “fired 30 or 40 rounds at our advance but without effect.”⁹² Lieutenant Tolson from the Maryland infantry battalion bragged that “we returned our compliment, with the effect of putting the enemy to flight.”⁹³

Moments later, Steuart’s men unlimbered one of their artillery pieces and opened fire on the beleaguered militiamen. “Finally they threw several shells into our midst and by this time had almost completely surrounded us,” Private Steele recalled.⁹⁴ “It was then surrender or run. Our company thinking discretion the better part of valor chose the latter and everyone took care of himself.” He noted that “the result was that we all escaped in squads of two or three without losing a man.” Despite the flurry of action, Wallace’s company sustained only two casualties during the encounter.

The situation was just as dire for the small detachment from the Twelfth Pennsylvania Cavalry. Sgt. John H. Black reported in a letter home that their tiny group of horsemen soon became embroiled in “a pretty brisk skirmish” along the mountain road.⁹⁵ Within moments, the advancing Confederates forced the troopers into a hasty retreat down the rugged heights. “Finding they were too many for us we fell back slowly firing all the while,” the sergeant explained. “Sorry to say we had three men wounded in the affray, among which was my highly esteemed friend Sergeant Stiffler.”

Even then, the dangers for the handful of Federal defenders were far from over. Private Steele acknowledged that the survivors were quickly “scattered in all directions.”⁹⁶ A few of them had such a narrow escape that their clothing was “cut by balls.” With enemy patrols scouring the countryside all

around them, many of the men found it impossible to make it back to their own lines. In some instances, they took shelter deep in the woods or at the home of a sympathetic farmer. Steele pointed out that some of the militiamen remained in such peril that they were trapped “between the rebel lines for several days.”

Although nightfall was fast approaching, the Confederates pushed on from the top of the mountain toward McConnellsburg. Surgeon Wood from the Third North Carolina was awestruck by his first view of the town spread out on the floor of the fertile valley in the distance. He noted that it “looked like a miniature village, as though you could throw your hat over it and cover it.”⁹⁷ The doctor found the other sights that surrounded him just as impressive. “The road was beautiful and at the top was a fine spring from which the water was carried in wooden troughs to the village at the foot of the mountains,” Wood recalled.

As the troops neared the bottom of the hill, Major Gilmor deployed his cavalrymen for an immediate attack. “When within a half mile of the town, we heard that a force of infantry and cavalry were there, and I was ordered to charge in,” he recounted.⁹⁸ “It was so dark we could see nothing in our front. I rode along the flank of the column, made the men dress up their sections, and then started down the turnpike at a trot.” The horsemen quickly thundered straight into town. “Charging through the main street, I threw out detachments to right and left in each cross street, but no Federals could be discovered,” Gilmor explained. The major immediately “returned to the centre of the town, sounded the ‘assembly,’ and formed in line.”

The citizens watched in terror as the riders sped past their homes and halted in front of the Fulton County Courthouse on Second Street. “The cavalry dashed into town on a charge, expecting, as they alleged, to find Milroy’s forces here,” the local newspaper reported.⁹⁹ “In this they were disappointed, the small force which was here during the day having moved westward about dark, after having a slight skirmish with the rebel advance on the top of the mountain.” The newspaper noted that “the

91 Gilmor, *Four Years in the Saddle*, 94.

92 Whitfield Kisling to Dear Cousin, June 25, 1863, Soldier Letters Collection, Eleanor S. Brockenbrough Library, Museum of the Confederacy, Richmond, Virginia.

93 Extracts from a diary, entry for June 23, 1863, in Ammen, “Maryland Troops in the Confederate Army,” 116.

94 Steele to Editor, November 24, 1884, *Huntingdon Journal*, November 28, 1884.

95 John H. Black to Dear Jennie, July 1, 1863, in David J. Coles and Stephen D. Engle, eds., *A Yankee Horseman in the Shenandoah Valley: The Civil War Letters of John H. Black, Twelfth Pennsylvania Cavalry* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2012), 46.

96 Steele to Editor, November 24, 1884, *Huntingdon Journal*, November 28, 1884.

97 Wood to Parents, June 29, 1863, in Koonce, *Doctor to the Front*, 100.

98 Gilmor, *Four Years in the Saddle*, 94.

99 “McConnellsburg Taken,” *Fulton Democrat*, July 10, 1863.

Maj. Harry Gilmore, First Maryland Cavalry Battalion. Courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration.

invaders placed the town under guard, ordered the citizens to remain in their homes, and took up and placed under guard for the night several citizens who were found on the streets.”

The men from the Maryland infantry battalion followed closely behind the horsemen into the center of town. The extent of the fear among the citizens whom they encountered along the way came as a major shock for the troops. Lieutenant Tolson reported in his diary that they “moved forward rapidly, and occupied the place, finding the people scared to death.”¹⁰⁰ Lieutenant Kisling from the Tenth Virginia noted that the inhabitants “were literally quaking in their boots,” when the rest of the brigade entered the town soon afterward.¹⁰¹ Some of the people became so frightened that they fled into the surrounding countryside.

The local telegraph operator was among those who hurriedly escaped from town. He traveled about a dozen miles west along the turnpike before finally halting. The harried operator immediately set up his equipment at nearby McIlvaine’s Hotel, which stood along the road on the eastern flank of Ray’s Hill. From that temporary station, he soon sent out the first detailed reports of the sudden Confederate attack to Federal authorities. During the following days, the hotel would also become a primary location for reforming the widely scattered Federal forces in the area.¹⁰²

One of the first tasks for Steuart’s men was to restore some relative calm among the terrified populace in McConnellsburg. “We assured those remaining that they need expect no injury and soon brought them to feel comparatively at their ease,” Lieutenant Tolson reported.¹⁰³ Private Henry from the Maryland infantry battalion observed a similar turnaround in the attitude of the town’s residents. “We found the people of McConnellsburg much frightened at our first appearance, but afterward very clever and hospitable,” he commented in his diary on the following day.¹⁰⁴

While that was going on, other troops moved

into place as sentries on nearly every street corner. Major Gilmor quickly posted his cavalry pickets “on all the roads.”¹⁰⁵ He also sent a courier with reports to General Steuart, who set up his camp about a mile outside town. While the men from the Maryland infantry battalion secured the streets, the cavalrymen fed their horses “upon the oats and corn” they seized there. Gilmor insisted that his men enforced such strict order that “not a house was allowed to be entered until the next day, when the commissary and quartermaster came and took possession.” Even the local newspaper acknowledged that “nothing was disturbed during the night.”¹⁰⁶

Early the following morning, General Steuart established his headquarters in town at the historic Fulton House Inn, which first opened in 1793. From there, he dispatched several squads to search the local businesses for usable supplies. According to the town’s newspaper, the soldiers assigned to those details “entered the stores and took such things as they wanted, in most instances, we believe, offering to pay in Confederate money.”¹⁰⁷ The results certainly proved better than Steuart’s men could have hoped for. The newspaper reported, in fact, that “all our stores and shop keepers lost heavily by them.”

Among the biggest losers were Thomas and John Greathead, who had more than \$300 in groceries, teas and spices, salt, tobacco, and dry goods taken from their mercantile business. The troops also confiscated about \$190 worth of dry goods, shoes, threads, laces, and sewing silk from W. S. Fletcher’s store. Local physician and druggist S. E. Duffield suffered the loss of fifty pounds of candy and a case of surgical instruments. Henry M. Hoke, who owned the Fulton House, fared no better. Before departing, Steuart’s men seized nearly \$500 worth of goods, including eighty gallons of rye whiskey. They even carried off his linen table cloths, knives and forks, and all kinds of food.¹⁰⁸

The soldiers in the ranks also gathered up huge quantities of food as they foraged through the town and the neighboring farms. Lieutenant Kisling wrote in a letter home that “pots of apple butter,

100 Extracts from a diary, entry for June 24, 1863, in Ammen, “Maryland Troops in the Confederate Army,” 116.

101 Kisling to Cousin, June 25, 1863, Soldier Letters Collection.

102 “McConnellsburg Taken,” *Fulton Democrat*, July 10, 1863.

103 Extracts from a diary, entry for June 24, 1863, in Ammen, “Maryland Troops in the Confederate Army,” 116.

104 Extracts from the diary of J. C. H., entry for June 18, 1863, in Ammen, “Maryland Troops in the Confederate Army,” 113.

105 Gilmor, *Four Years in the Saddle*, 94.

106 “McConnellsburg Taken,” *Fulton Democrat*, July 10, 1863.

107 “McConnellsburg Taken,” *Fulton Democrat*, July 10, 1863.

108 T. and J. Greathead Claim, W. S. Fletcher Claim, S. E. Duffield Claim, Henry M. Hoke Claim, all in Glenn R. Cordell, ed., “Civil War Damage Claims from Fulton County, Pennsylvania,” *Fulton County Historical Society Publications* 22 (2001): 20, 17, 15, and 23.

milk, bread, &c. were forthcoming” from the terrified residents.¹⁰⁹ He watched in disbelief as the men returned from one foray “with a spring wagon loaded with onions, buttermilk, apple butter, hams, &c. and the boys are now enjoying themselves over it highly.” Lieutenant Tolson noted that the people were so scared that they “gave our boys plenty of bread and butter and would take no pay.”¹¹⁰ Another soldier reported that citizens would provide the men with “the last thing they have if we only spare their lives.”¹¹¹

Some of the men even went shopping in town for goods to send home to their relatives. “I have bought a dress for you and some calico for Fannie,” Lieutenant Kisling informed his cousin.¹¹² “I don’t know if you fancy the dress much but I think it will look pretty well.” He noted that “it was the nicest I could get.” The available supplies amounted to more than just those few items. The young Virginian admitted that he “could have gotten any quantity of needles, thread &c, but suppose you have plenty of them.” He asked her to let him “know what you want,” so that “I can get them for you.”

Surgeon Henkel from the Thirty-Seventh Virginia had much less success in purchasing any scarce items from the stores. “I have found it a very difficult matter to procure anything in the way of goods that is desirable,” he complained in a letter to his cousin.¹¹³ “Persons owning them are very loath to sell.” The need to obtain a written pass before even entering the town added to the considerable problems in obtaining clothing or household goods for his family. The doctor openly grumbled that “it requires a permit from a major general to visit a town or to stop along the way.”

The situation proved more positive for Gilmor’s cavalymen, who remained busy sweeping through the nearby farms for horses and livestock. Major Gilmor proudly boasted that “we brought in a number of horses and cattle.”¹¹⁴ The losses to the landowners in the area were not limited only to their livestock. One farmer complained in his postwar

claim for damages that “a squad of rebel cavalry” camped on his property for three days, destroying his “entire crop” of forage grass.¹¹⁵ John B. Patterson, who lived just south of town, reported in his claim that the raiders seized forty bushels of corn, a wagon, all the riding gear, nine barrels of flour, and six head of cattle from his farm.¹¹⁶

The men from Stuart’s brigade were nearly overwhelmed by all the loot that fell into their hands during the raids around McConnellsburg. Pvt. John Futch from the Third North Carolina boasted to his wife that “we have prest a grate menny horses & bear of[f] evry thing we want.”¹¹⁷ Best of all was the huge variety of goods among the plunder. “I will tell you what we seize as we go along,” Private Shank from the Tenth Virginia gloated in a letter to his sister.¹¹⁸ “Anything we want for use of the army such as horses, cattle, molasses, bread, flour, coffee, shoes, hats, &c.” The only damper on their enthusiasm came from a massive rainstorm that engulfed the area later that night.

Not surprisingly, the townspeople displayed open hatred toward the occupying troops. Pvt. Hiram Kibler, who also served in the Tenth Virginia, noted in a letter home that the women there “seem to look on a rebel with contempt.”¹¹⁹ Surgeon Henkel griped to his cousin that “sour looks would meet our eyes, & cutting speeches would greet our ears on all occasions.”¹²⁰ He further pointed out that the citizens “are all uncouth in their manner.” The doctor was especially struck by their lack of education. “They are mostly of little intelligence about on a par with the most common peasantry of our own country,” Henkel ranted.

If anything, Lieutenant Kisling was even more disgusted by the citizens he encountered during his stay. He directed some of his harshest words at the women who made up much of the crowd along the streets. “As a general thing the people are a narrow minded, ignorant, selfish German population with

109 Kisling to Cousin, June 25, 1863, Soldier Letters Collection.

110 Extracts from a diary, entry for June 24, 1863, in Ammen, “Maryland Troops in the Confederate Army,” 116.

111 Firebaugh, diary, entry for June 25, 1863, SHC.

112 Kisling to Cousin, June 25, 1863, Soldier Letters Collection.

113 Casper Henkel to Dear Cousin, July 12, 1863, in Casper C. Henkel, “Letter Delivered after Many Years,” *Confederate Veteran* 16 (1908): 407.

114 Gilmor, *Four Years in the Saddle*, 94.

115 George Finiff Claim, in Cordell, “Civil War Damage Claims,” 16.

116 John B. Patterson Claim, in Cordell, “Civil War Damage Claims,” 30.

117 John Futch to My Dear & loving Wife, June 29, 1863, Futch Papers, North Carolina Archives, North Carolina Office of Archives and History, Raleigh, North Carolina.

118 Gabriel Shank to Dear Annie, June 29, 1863, in Weaver, “Gabriel Shank: Military Records, Articles, and Diary.”

119 Hiram Kibler to Unknown Miss, July 18, 1863, Hiram Kibler Letter, Civil War Collection, Pearce Museum, Navarro College, Corsicana, Texas.

120 Casper Henkel to Dear Cousin Maggie, July 21, 1863, Henkel Family Correspondence.

the *ugliest* girls I ever saw,” Kisling complained in a letter to his cousin on the day after their arrival.¹²¹ The young Virginian insisted that this assessment was not a matter of mere prejudice on his part. He argued, in fact, that “they are the most uncouth, ungainly females I ever saw.”

Even the people’s compliant responses to the demands for them to turn over their goods left Lieutenant Tolson fuming. He proudly pointed out that such conduct stood in marked contrast with that of the citizens in the Confederate states. Their fawning behavior symbolized for him the clear superiority of the Southern culture that he was fighting so hard to preserve in this brutal war. “Their servile and politic course toward us, so different from the independent and uncompromising manner of non-combatant Southerners hits off to a nicety the different natures of the two peoples,” the Marylander proclaimed in his diary.¹²²

The town’s ordeal finally came to an end early on June 26, when the Confederate troops departed along the turnpike to the east. While Stuart’s men proceeded past Fort Loudon and St. Thomas to Chambersburg in a driving rainstorm, Gilmor’s cavalymen swarmed through the surrounding valley as far north as Burnt Cabins. The troopers searched nearly every farm along the way, capturing large numbers of horses and other livestock. In one foray around St. Thomas, they rounded up forty horses, sixty head of cattle, and a few mules. The raids continued over the next couple of days as the cavalymen pushed on through Fannettsburg

¹²¹ Kisling to Cousin, June 25, 1863, Soldier Letters Collection.

¹²² Extracts from a diary, entry for June 25, 1863, in Ammen, “Maryland Troops in the Confederate Army,” 116.

before finally joining up with Stuart’s main column north of Chambersburg.¹²³

The outcome of the expedition provided some valuable lessons for the troops from Lee’s invading army. The pattern of forced confiscations from the local businesses and surrounding farms would be repeated time after time during the following days. The rich haul of goods that they seized during their stay further revealed the extent of the bounty available to the men in this land of plenty. Their brief skirmish with the enemy also confirmed that the inexperienced Federal militia forces they may face along the way would likely provide little or no real opposition. All of that removed any doubts that General Lee’s troops could successfully live off the land during the advance and served as an early warning of exactly what would be in store for the citizens along their route through Pennsylvania.¹²⁴

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¹²³ See Andrew J. P. Giddings, *Diary and Ledger of Income and Expenses (1863–1865)*, entry for June 26, 1863, Joyner Library, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina; Gilmor, *Four Years in the Saddle*, 95; McKim, *Soldier’s Recollections*, 165; Jacob Hoke, *The Great Invasion of 1863* (Dayton, OH: W. J. Suey, 1887), 152.

¹²⁴ For a detailed account of the Confederate advance through Pennsylvania, see Wilbur Sturtevant Nye, *Here Come the Rebels!* (Dayton, OH: Morningside Press, 1988), 212–366.